

Report of the ICAO Air Traffic Management Operations Panel (ATMOPSP)

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SUMMARY

This paper describes the recent and planned activities of the ICAO ATMOPSP, including the contributions of the IFATCA member and the IFATCA advisors.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The objectives of the ICAO ATMOPSP are to: a) develop strategy and coordinated solutions for ATM, airspace management and air traffic flow management (ATFM) stemming from the aviation system block upgrades and other requirements, consistent with the need to ensure a harmonised global ATM operational environment; and, b) develop and maintain standards, procedures and guidance material for air traffic services (ATS), ATFM, procedures and phraseology for air traffic control (ATC), airspace management, and civil military control.
- 1.2. Since the 2023 IFATCA Annual Conference, the ATMOPSP has conducted one in-person meeting in Montréal, during late January 2024. Meanwhile, the working groups of the ATMOPSP have continued to meet frequently online to progress the development of standards, recommended practices, procedures and guidance material.
- 1.3. The ATMOPSP is an important panel for IFATCA as many of the topics of interest to the TOC and PLC, as well as the wider air traffic controller community, are discussed, reviewed and/or developed within this panel.

2. DISCUSSION

- 2.1. It continues to be a pleasure to represent IFATCA as a member of the ATMOPSP, having taken over the duties in 2021 from IFATCA President and CEO Duncan Auld. As the member of the ATMOPSP I receive invaluable support from my IFATCA advisors: Katariina Syväys and Adam Rhodes contribute to the digital aerodrome ATS work, Adam Exley reviews inter-panel coordination and assists in the various day-to-day tasks of the Panel, Duncan Auld supports the Federation's interests during meetings, and new advisor Bertrand Foucher contributes to radiotelephony work.

- 2.2. The current ATMOPSP job cards relate to the following areas: a) ATFM; b) cold temperature altitude corrections; c) guidance for the provision of the aerodrome flight information service (AFIS); d) guidance for the planning and implementation of ATS; e) provisions related to radio communication failure; and, f) digital ATS.
- 2.3. In addition to the working groups established by the Panel to pursue these topics, the Panel also maintains an active working group concerned with radiotelephony and phraseology, as well as an active joint task force with the Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems panel (RPASP) concerned with RPAS-ATM integration. This working paper will summarise the recent and planned work of each of these groups as well as the expected outcomes.
- 2.4. **ATFM** is a priority topic for the ATMOPSP, and IFATCA actively participates in the work of the ATFM Working Group (ATFM WG). ATFM-related proposals for amendment to Annex 11 — *Air Traffic Services* and the *Procedures for Navigation Services — Air Traffic Management* (PANS-ATM, Doc 4444) were endorsed in by the Panel in April 2023, and since then the ATFM WG has dedicated itself to updating the ATFM guidance contained in the *Manual on Collaborative Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM)* (Doc 9971). With a proposed applicability date of November 2026, it is planned to finalise the guidance in late 2024 to assist the implementation activities of States. The guidance material under development is planned to set out the new rationale for ATFM and provide *ab initio* States with guidance to successfully implement ATFM ‘everywhere and always’ in accordance with the operational concept of the proposed SARPs and PANS.
- 2.5. **Cold temperature altitude corrections** are a longstanding topic of interest to IFATCA, and proposals for amendment to the PANS-ATM and the *Procedures for Navigation Services — Aircraft Operations* (PANS-OPS, Doc 8168), Volume III — *Aircraft Operating Procedures* were agreed in April 2023. Since then, the Cold Temperature Correction Working Group (CTC WG), which IFATCA leads, has turned its attention to developing a new ICAO manual supporting the proposed changes. In addition to the cold temperature correction procedures, the proposals for amendment also clarified the pilot and controller responsibilities regarding terrain and obstacle clearance, including during vectoring and direct routing, which were also an enduring topic of interest to IFATCA. It is hoped that the November 2026 applicability of the changes to the PANS-ATM and the PANS-OPS Volume III, supported by the guidance to be contained in the new ICAO manual, will finally resolve the difficulties and confusion associated with these topics.
- 2.6. **Guidance for the provision of AFIS** is a Panel task which has taken longer than expected to finalise, due to difficulties associated with the relationship between the guidance and existing SARPs in Annex 11. It was found that some States have instituted additional responsibilities for ATS personnel at AFIS aerodromes such as exercising control over vehicles and pedestrians; however, this does not translate well into guidance at the ICAO level. Nonetheless, with a renewed focus of the AFIS Working Group on alignment with ICAO SARPs, it is expected that the guidance will be finalised in the near future and published soon after. The guidance will be a valuable

resource for ATS authorities seeking to implement AFIS, including those intending to implement AFIS in combination with digital aerodrome ATS systems.

- 2.7. **Guidance for the planning and implementation of ATS** is a task which is led by IFATCA and is currently focussing on finalising guidance for ATS personnel handing aircraft in a state of emergency. This guidance, first proposed many years ago, is intended to facilitate the effective implementation of existing SARPs and PANS in case of aircraft emergencies by recommending a structured ATS emergency response process supported by checklists and decision-making models. This guidance is planned for finalisation in 2024, when the focus of the group will shift to establishing more general guidance for the planning and implementation of ATM globally.
- 2.8. **Digital aerodrome ATS** is a topic which has been under the intense scrutiny of IFATCA for a number of years, and IFATCA actively participates in the DATS Working Group (DATS WG). Early work of the DATS WG sought to rectify issues which were foreseen to cause difficulty as DATS was implemented. Recent work by the DATS WG has focussed on developing guidance material for States intending to implement DATS, and the Panel as a whole is currently reviewing human factors-focussed guidance.
- 2.9. **Radiotelephony** is an ongoing focus of the ATMOPSP and IFATCA actively participates in the deliberations of the Phraseology Working Group (P WG). Updates to the content and format of the *Manual of Radiotelephony* (Doc 9432), as well as potential changes to the PANS-ATM remain under the consideration of the P WG. These proposals are intended to provide additional guidance for approach phraseology, rectify outstanding inconsistencies between the guidance and PANS, and facilitate new proposed ATM procedures.
- 2.10. **The RPASP-ATMOPSP Joint Task Force (RA-JTF)** is jointly led by panel members from IFATCA and CANSO, and for a number of years has been developing 'the ATM integration package' for RPAS. The proposals for amendment affected Annex 2 — *Rules of the Air*, Annex 10 — *Aeronautical Telecommunications* Volume II — *Communication Procedures including those with PANS status*, Annex 12 — *Search and Rescue*, the PANS-ATM, the PANS-OPS Volume III, and the *Procedures for Air Navigation Services — Aeronautical Information Management* (PANS-AIM, Doc 10066). The proposals for amendment received mixed feedback during a preliminary review by the ICAO Air Navigation Commission (ANC) in 2023, so the RA-JTF has been revisiting its work and responding to the ANC feedback. These activities have resulted in a necessary delay to the expected applicability date of the ATM integration package – from November 2026 to November 2028. While the delay is regrettable, it will allow the development by the RPASP of other supporting changes such as required link performance, and the ATM integration package to be optimised in accordance with ANC feedback.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1. The ICAO ATMOPSP continues to work on various matters related to ATM. The development of guidance supporting upcoming changes to SARPs and PANS, as well as supporting new technology, continues, with benefits to controllers and other stakeholders expected in the coming years.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

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