

**Report of the IFATCA Representative on the  
ICAO Separation and Airspace Safety Panel (SASP)**

Presented by David Perks

**SUMMARY**

*Report on the activities of the IFATCA Representative on the  
ICAO Separation and Airspace Safety Panel (SASP).*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. The following is a review of my activities as the IFATCA Representative on the ICAO Separation and Airspace Safety Panel (SASP) for the years 2023 and 2024.

**2. DISCUSSION**

- 2.1. The years 2023 – 2024 mark my sixth year as the IFATCA Member, and third year as Chairman, of the SASP.

**SASP Job Cards**

- 2.2. SASP has the following job cards
- SASP.002.04 PBN Separation minima for Terminal Airspace – RNP-1, A-RNP, RNP APCH, RNP AR APCH
  - SASP.005.04 Stabilized RNP approaches to parallel runways
  - SASP.006.04 Longitudinal and Lateral Separation Minima for Oceanic and Continental Airspace based on RNP-2, or Advanced – RNP (A-RNP) at RNP 2 and RNP 1
  - SASP.007.03 Application of PBN based Lateral Separation Minima To Special Use Airspace (SUA)
  - SASP.008.03 Airspace planning guidance for implementing PBN tracks
  - SASP.010.03 Helicopter RNP 0.3 Terminal and En-Route Operations
  - SASP.015.02 PBN Separation minima and route spacing for aircraft on SIDS/STARS ( Standard Instrument Departures/Standard Terminal Arrival Routes)
  - SASP.016.02 Development of ATM-related provisions to support the conduct of operational trials

- SASP.018.01 Expansion of upper limit of the Reduced Vertical Separation Minima (RVSM) band of flight levels
  - SASP.020.01 Improving the sustainability and efficiency of terminal operations
  - SASP.021.01 Updated guidance for airspace planning methodology for the determination of separation minima
- 2.3. SASP has proposed the following job card and is awaiting confirmation from the Air Navigation Commission (ANC)
- High Altitude Platform Systems (HAPS) (to replace SASP.013.03 Standards and Recommended Practices and guidance material to establish separation minima around medium and heavy unmanned free balloon operations).

### **Meetings**

- 2.4. I attended two SASP meetings in the last 12 months, the first in May 2023 and the second in November 2023. Due to the resignation of the SASP Secretary (appointed by the ICAO Secretariat) in August, the Panel was without a Secretary for the November meeting. As such, the tasks normally undertaken by the Secretary fell to me as Chair. Although this resulted in a considerable workload, the meeting was still a success. I've been advised that a temporary Secretary has been appointed for the May 2024 meeting, that person being Mr Anthony Ang, former IFACTA EVP Asia-Pacific and someone who many of you are familiar with.
- 2.5. I also attended numerous 'small group' meetings throughout the year to progress work between formal meetings. I am an active participant on the following small groups:
- Terminal matters;
  - Drafting group for the Manual on the Implementation of Separation Minima Based on ATS Surveillance Systems Where Communication Satisfies RCP 240; and
  - The drafting group tasked with writing Guidance Material for High Altitude Platform Systems.

### **Papers**

- 2.6. I wrote and presented the following papers on behalf of IFATCA:
- SASP/4 WP/05 Proposal for amendment – remove the requirement for 2 NM level flight for independent parallel approaches;
  - One paper for each of the Flight Operations (FLTOPS) Panel, Instrument Flight Procedure Panel (IFPP) and ATM Operations (ATMOPS) Panel requesting formal feedback on the proposal for amendment above; and
  - SASP/4 WP/06 Longitudinal separation for successive departures.
- 2.7. I also co-wrote the following papers on behalf of IFATCA:
- SASP/4 WP/03 High Altitude Platform Systems (HAPS) Guidance Material (GM) Update;
  - SASP/4 WP/07 Procedural lateral separation of aircraft on GNSS tracks with an angular difference; and
  - SASP/15 HAPS Job Card
- 2.8. All papers were received well. For the meeting in May, I should have formal feedback from the FLTOPS, ATMOPS and IFP Panels that will decide how SASP/WP WP/05 will be progressed. I will write another paper for the next SASP meeting in May to progress SASP/4

WP/06. As mentioned at [2.4], the result of the HAPS working papers is a new job card proposal.

### **SASP working groups**

- 2.9. Over the last year I have an active participant in three SASP working groups:
- The Small Group Meeting of Terminal Members – this group considers all SASP matters in terminal airspace;
  - The drafting group for the Manual on the 'Implementation of ATS Surveillance Separation Where Communication Satisfies RCP 240'. The secretariat has formally requested that this manual be combined with the manual on the 'Implementation of Separation Minima Based on ATS Surveillance Systems Where Communication Satisfies RCP 240' a draft of which will be ready for the May meeting; and
  - The drafting group tasked with writing Guidance Material for High Altitude Platform Systems, that is for aircraft operating in airspace above FL600. This has been requested by the Commission and has also resulted a new job card proposal.

### **Work Program**

**15 NM surveillance separation minima between two identified aircraft with a communication capability of RCP 240 or better.**

- 2.10. This will be published in the November 2024 edition of PANS-ATM and will be supported by the publication of Implementation guidance material (see [2.10]).

### **GNSS lateral separation minima from a common waypoint**

- 2.11. In conjunction with an advisor from Australia, I co-wrote a paper proposing the alignment of separation minima for aircraft tracking from a common waypoint or VOR. Initial feedback from the panel was positive however the work has not been progressed due to other priorities.

### **Terminal Matters**

- 2.12. A SASP working group, of which I am a member, has been progressing work to, amongst other things, provide an update of Doc 9643 - Manual on Simultaneous Operations on Parallel or Near-Parallel Instrument Runways (SOIR). It may also result in amendments to the parallel runway ruleset in PANS-ATM.
- 2.13. The group has also been tasked with reviewing Cir 324 (Guidelines for Lateral Separation of Arriving and Departing Aircraft on Published Adjacent Instrument Flight Procedures), Doc 9992 (Manual on the Use of Performance-based Navigation in Airspace Design) and Doc 9689 (Manual on Airspace Planning Methodology for the determination of Separation Minima).

### **High altitude platform systems (HAPS) – amended job card**

- 2.14. The 'high altitude balloon' job card was initially created with a view to managing operations similar to that of Google Loon. With the termination of that program, the ANC invited SASP to consider expanding the scope of the job card to include supersonic, autonomous vehicle, high altitude loitering platforms, etc.
- 2.15. The initial HAPS job card proposed to the Commission last year was deliberately limited in scope. Upon review, however, the Commission has requested that the scope of the job card be expanded given the proliferation of operators in airspace above FL600. An amended job card has been proposed to the Commission and we are awaiting its outcome.

### **Expansion of the upper limit of the RVSM flight levels**

- 2.16. Work on the expansion of the upper limit of the RVSM flight levels stalled during COVID but work has recommenced, mainly due to the work of the US and Canadian delegations and IATA. Issues include the cost of certifying aircraft for RVSM above FL410, automation system changes and controller training.
- 2.17. However, the demand for flights in the existing RVSM band of flight levels (FL290-FL410) has increased to the point where it is generating congestion similar to that which prevailed before the implementation of RVSM. As such, operators (as evidenced by the interest from IATA) are beginning to see the cost-benefit equation shift.

### **Updated guidance for airspace planning methodology for the determination of separation minima**

- 2.18. This job card has recently been expanded to include a complete re-write of Doc 9689 Manual on Airspace Planning Methodology for the Determination of Separation Minima. It will identify obsolete, superseded or duplicated material; and guidance that should be retained and updated and result in a holistic, comprehensive manual for ANSPs and regulators to ensure that the provision of air traffic services is done so meeting the requisite level of safety.

### **Integration of Advanced Air Mobility (AAM)**

- 2.19. Several papers were brought to the November 2023 meeting examining the integration of AAM into terminal airspace. Collision risk modelling was carried out leveraging off the modelling done for the new surveillance separation minimum using space-based ADS-B and RCP 240.
- 2.20. Discussion also ensued around the target level of safety and whether it should be applicable to AAM. An extensive literature review was undertaken to inform the panel of current thoughts.
- 2.21. The panel also received a brief from the secretary of the ICAO AAM Study Group.
- 2.22. This is a fast emerging area of interest to the SASP and may require the creation of a job card in the near future.

## **3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1. Once again, the breadth of the topics discussed at SASP was both stimulating and challenging. There is no doubt that being given the opportunity to influence on the panel is a major benefit to IFATCA Member Associations.
- 3.2. On a personal note, I'd like to acknowledge IFATCA's ongoing support for my participation on the panel. I hope that my work on the panel, including my leadership as Chair, reflects well on IFATCA and continues to raise the esteem in which our representatives are held.

## **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1. It is recommended that this report be accepted as information paper.

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