



Remote Towers Task Force

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background:

The development of the Digital Air Traffic Services (DATS) concept and its implementation is spreading all over the world. Like all the virtualisation and digitalisation processes of the last years, DATS implementations and tests have occurred faster than the regulatory process itself at international, national and regional levels. Therefore, while some States are facing this development now, some others have shown their interest to learn about the events in remote operations.

In our understanding the DATS concept is not to be deemed as a mere technological implementation, as it implies a radical change in the acquisition of data and affects the nature of the controllers' work itself. Accordingly, IFATCA, as the leading international organization of Air Traffic Controllers is expected to have a position based in the policies that have been previously developed by PLC and TOC, and to follow this fast evolution in a systemic manner.

A Remote Towers Task Force (RTTF) was first established during the Conference of Toronto 2017 as a specialised team tasked with the drafting of a position paper on DATS operations. The group had more than 40 people from all regions and was coordinated through email and Basecamp.

For one year the group developed its task and presented the position paper to committees B & C during the Conference of Accra 2018. Guidance Material was then prepared and uploaded to the IFATCA website just before the Conference of Costa Rica 2019 where it was presented.

During the 2018 Conference, Committee B approved to give to the RTTF the status of standing committee. After consultation with the CAC, it was considered appropriate to introduce instead the concept of Task Force in the Administrative Manual in order to maintain the flexibility of the group. In 2025, the RTTF was renamed to the Digital Air Traffic Services (DATS) Task Force to highlight that the scope is wider than just remote towers.

Scope:

AREA OF INTEREST:

The origin and main driver of the group is the interest in DATS implementations. The generalisation of DATS Operations from towers to air traffic services in general must also be considered.

ACTIVITIES:

- Gathering information: The members of the DATS TF will cover all areas and monitor all developments and deployments of DATS operations in order to collect and share information on DATS operations.
- Establish contacts with the industry and research institutions: Due to DATS operations already being a reality, it is important to contact the main stakeholders working on the concept. This is to ensure that its development meets the standards of quality and safety that are expected by the operating professionals. The DATS TF will work to create contacts and maintain links with industry developers and research entities.
- Write Guidance Material: The DATS TF will continue to provide guidance, addressing stakeholders and regulators (EASA, ICAO, etc.) in order to steer the regulatory processes.

- Develop and update policy: The DATS TF will ensure the harmonisation of any new material with the existing policy. To achieve this goal, it will propose new policies or modify existing policy, always in coordination with TOC and PLC.

Structure:

- The DATS TF will be chaired by a coordinator appointed by the EB.
- The coordinator will report to EVPT who will inform the rest of the EB, especially EVPP, of the activities of the task force.
- To maintain the maximum flexibility the DATS TF uses an open membership. The number of member associations is not limited. The coordinator can establish separate working groups if this is considered necessary.
- The DATS TF can include observers of other organisations.
- Members of the DATS TF will coordinate their work mainly through telematic tools including, when needed, teleconferences. If a face-to-face meeting is required, participation will be on an invitation only basis, being the participants selected by the coordinator in consultation with EVPT.
- These terms of reference will be reviewed at least once a year, after the annual Conference.