



International Civil Aviation Organization

**The Third Meeting of the Regional Airspace Safety Monitoring Advisory Group
(RASMAG/3)**

Bangkok, Thailand, 6 – 7 June 2005

Agenda Item 5: Provision by States of safety related data

**DELAY TO THE REVIEW OF FLIGHT LEVEL ALLOCATION SCHEME
IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC/SOUTH CHINA SEA AREA**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

This paper reports the delay, as a result of the non provision by some States of safety data, to the scheduled review of the Flight Level Allocation Scheme (FLOS) in use in the Western Pacific/South China Sea. The paper raises concerns at the delay in addressing an identified safety need in respect of RVSM transition arrangements required to facilitate differing FLOS arrangements.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 During the review of regional Flight Level Allocation Scheme (FLOS) issues undertaken by RVSM/TF/22 (September 2004), States reached agreement in regard to commencing a work programme aimed at reviewing and amending the modified single alternate FLOS presently in use in the Western Pacific and South China Sea.

1.2 The review of FLOS arrangements had been precipitated as a result of the RVSM implementation in the Bay of Bengal and Beyond area in November 2003 using a single alternate FLOS, requiring transition arrangements between the modified single alternate FLOS used in the WPAC/SCS areas. MAAR had provided an update to RVSM/TF/22 of reported large height deviation (LHD) occurrences in the RVSM airspaces submitted by States in both the WPAC/SCS and Bay of Bengal and Beyond areas. Based on the information submitted, MAAR had found that the LHD occurrences were more significant in the WPAC/SCS transition areas.

1.3 In accordance with ICAO safety management provisions, RVSM/TF/22 recognized that any change to the current FLOS arrangements required the successful completion of appropriate safety assessment activities before a change could be authorized. Accordingly, safety assessments would need to be carried out by the States concerned and MAAR would also be required to undertake a safety assessment. At that time, it was expected that the required safety assessment activities could be completed in time for review by a further meeting of the RVSM/TF scheduled in late April 2005 for this purpose.

2 DISCUSSION

2.1 In support of the proposed changes, the Monitoring Agency for Asia Region (MAAR) was required to carry out a safety assessment for the Western Pacific/South China Sea that included, amongst others, consideration of the revised level assignments proposed and resulting transition areas

and associated procedures. In order to undertake these activities, MAAR required the provision by States of complete traffic sample data (TSD) for the month of July 2004, and RVSM Large Height Deviation (LHD) data for a continuous 12 month period.

2.2 Although many affected States were able to provide data to MAAR as requested, in spite of frequent reminders by MAAR and a State letter issued by the Regional Office, several States responsible for significant portions of the airspace in the South China Sea area failed to submit the required data in time for MAAR to complete the safety assessment to be reviewed at the scheduled April FLOS review meeting.

2.3 As a result, the MAAR safety analysis has been unable to be completed and will not be able to be completed until appropriate data has been provided by the States concerned. In the absence of the MAAR safety assessment, no change to the existing FLOS arrangements could be authorized.

2.4 Without suitable safety assessments being available for review, very little could be achieved by continuing with the April 2005 FLOS review meeting as scheduled. Accordingly, the Regional Office advised States that the scheduled April RVSM/TF/26 FLOS review meeting had been postponed. In recognition of the Regional Office meeting schedule and the MAAR responsibilities resulting from the implementation of RVSM in Japan (domestic) and Republic of Korea FIRs in early September 2005, the FLOS review meeting was tentatively rescheduled during 5 – 9 September 2005, as RVSM/TF/27.

2.5 During SEACG/12 (May 2005) Hong Kong, China expressed concern over the number of changes that had taken place in the SCS airspace in recent years with the introduction of the revised SCS route structure and reduced lateral separation in 2001 followed by RVSM in 2002. Also, the Japan and Republic of Korea RVSM implementation schedule had changed from June 2005 to November 2005, and at RVSM/TF 25 in Incheon on 21-25 March 2005 the date was again revised to 29 September 2005. Hong Kong, China found it difficult to keep readjusting their training schedule.

2.6 With the RVSM FLOS review meeting tentatively scheduled shortly before the Japan/ROK implementation on 29 September 2005, Hong Kong, China considered that it would not be viable to complete all activities related to the RVSM FLOS change. Also, the Japan/ROK implementation would use a single alternate FLOS, therefore requiring additional RVSM transition arrangements in respect of the SCS FLOS. It was suggested that any change to the SCS FLOS should be delayed until after the 90-day review meeting of the Japan/ROK RVSM implementation.

2.7 SEACG/12 recognized the difficulties of coping with frequent changes to the operational environment and agreed that a period of stability should be allowed for after the Japan/ROK implementation and recommended to the RVSM/TF to postpone the FLOS review meeting until after the 90-day review, which would be held in January 2006. The Regional Office would schedule the FLOS review meeting accordingly.

3 ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper, including the postponement of the SCS FLOS review meeting from April 2005 until January/February 2006;
- b) discuss the impact of the delayed review in relation to the identified need to harmonize the FLOS arrangements as a result of transition issues, including reported LHD occurrences.