



International Civil Aviation Organization

**The Twentieth Meeting of the APANPIRG ATM/AIS/SAR Sub-Group
(ATM/AIS/SAR/SG/20)**

Singapore, 05 – 09 July 2010

Agenda Item 6: Review of ATS coordination group meetings

FUTURE OF THE ATFM TASK FORCE

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

This working paper presents a background with regard to a proposal to dissolve the ATFM Task Force, whose work was related to implementation of air traffic flow management across the Bay of Bengal, coupled with the development and operation of the Bay of Bengal Cooperative Air Traffic Management System (BOBCAT). The working paper also looks at ongoing ATFM initiatives which could be a reason to continue with the present task force methodology.

This paper relates to

Strategic Objectives:

- A: Safety – Enhance global civil aviation safety*
- C: Environmental Protection – Minimize the adverse effect of global civil aviation on the environment*
- D: Efficiency – Enhance the efficiency of aviation operations*
- E: Continuity – Maintain the continuity of aviation operations*

Global Plan Initiatives:

- GPI-1 Flexible use of airspace*
- GPI-6 Air Traffic Flow Management*
- GPI-7 Dynamic and flexible ATS route management*
- GPI-8 Collaborative airspace design and management*
- GPI-16 Decision support and alerting systems*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The meeting would recall that ATFM is part of the ATM family in developing procedures to provide a safe, efficient and environmentally friendly service for use by the Asia and Pacific States and International airlines in the region.

1.2 This ATFM services relates to ICAO objectives A, B, D and E and in addition, to the Global Plan Initiatives (GPI), GPI 1, 6, 7, 8 and 16.

1.3 The meeting would recall that an ATFM Task Force was formed in 2005 to develop an ATFM system to cater for westbound aircraft departing from Southeast and South Asia airports entering the Kabul FIR during the busy night-time period.

1.4 Extensive development of the ATFM system over many meetings took place between States concerned, ICAO and IATA and their airlines, which culminated in an agreed fully operational system being implemented in July 2007.

2. DISCUSSION

Deliberations on the outcome of the ATFM Task Force

2.1 In 2005, the first meeting of the ATFM Task Force was held, to progress the substantial work required to implement and cooperatively manage an ATFM service to cater for westbound flights departing Southeast and Southern Asia airports. Several meetings took place over the next 2 years as well as trials of the new ATFM system which finally resulted in a fully operational flow management service in July 2007. The implementation of long range international ATFM procedures across the Bay of Bengal and South Asia during July 2007 was one of the outstanding milestones this year and would long stand as an example of what could be achieved in a cooperative manner between States, ICAO, IATA and their member airlines for the systemic benefit of the region.

2.2 During ATFM/TF/12 (July 08) meeting held in Cairo, Egypt, it was agreed that the implementation program dealing with the management of Kabul FIR transit flights should be considered as completed. This meeting also recognized many aspects of the Phase 2 and Phase 3 implementation objectives described in the terms of reference (TOR) had also been addressed. It was therefore possible that the ATFM/TF could be considered for dissolution in due course.

2.3 ATFM/TF/12 was also informed that the Key Priorities for CNS/ATM Implementation in the Asia/Pacific Region adopted by APANPIRG/18 (September 2007) include ATFM, in which States are to consider and implement aspects of ATFM including:

- a) centralized ATFM;
- b) inter-regional cooperative ATFM;
- c) establishment of ATFM databases;
- d) application of strategic ATFM planning;
- e) application of tactical ATFM planning; and
- f) assessment of economic and environmental impact of the implementation of the ATFM system

2.4 The meeting would recall that the ATM/AIS/SAR Sub Group Task List identifies the implementation of ATFM as Priority A (tasks of a high priority on which work should be expedited). This task supports Global Performance Indicators GPI/6-Air Traffic Flow Management; GPI/8-Collaborative Airspace Design and Development and GPI/16-Decision Support and Alerting System. Further, as a 3-day Regional ATFM Seminar/Workshop had been planned to be held in Fukuoka, Japan, during October 2008 to address APANPIRG Conclusion 18/7 and given the expectation that this Seminar/Workshop will engage in further discussions on the TOR established for the ATFM/TF, and the possibility that revisions may be recommended that will expand the work to include implementation within the Asia/Pacific Region, the meeting considered that it would not be appropriate to recommend dissolution of the ATFM/TF at this time.

2.5 The ATM/AIS/SAR/SG/18 considered that participants at the ATFM Seminar/Workshop would be expected to develop a shared appreciation of the broader context of ATFM as a logical extension of the provision of basic air traffic control (ATC). The Workshop component could be tasked with identifying and recommending appropriate regional objectives to include, amongst other things, a review of the activities of the Bay of Bengal ATFM/TF and consider variations to its TOR.

2.6 It was agreed that the outcomes of the October 2008 ATFM Seminar/Workshop and other relevant commentary from APANPIRG/19 (September 2008) should be reviewed by the ATFM/TF prior to making a decision on the future of this highly productive Group. Accordingly, discussion on the establishment of the BOBCAT Scrutiny Group to oversight ATFM operations was deferred indefinitely.

2.7 At the ATFM/TF/13 meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand on 22 – 25 September 2009, extensive discussion took place in relation to the next meeting of the Task Force and the way forward on ATFM matters in general, with questions being raised as to whether there was a need for further meetings. It had been 14 months since the last ATFM/TF and the meeting recognised that the ATFM procedures, with the exceptions noted in this report, had performed adequately during this time. The meeting had identified some actions and initiatives which, when implemented, would further increase the robustness of ATFM operations.

2.8 Additionally, the recent APANPIRG/20 meeting had adopted Conclusions establishing an ATFM Steering Group to progress ATFM matters on a regional basis, and for the conduct of an ATFM survey in early 2010.

2.9 Noting that the BBACG was responsible for the future direction of the ATFM/TF, the meeting agreed that these matters should be informed to the annual Bay of Bengal ATS Coordination Group (BBACG) meeting in the first quarter of 2010 for their consideration. Any decision relating to the further scheduling, deferring or dissolving of the ATFM/TF should be made by the BBACG at that time. Accordingly, no future meeting date was established by the meeting.

2.10 Due to several factors, the BBACG has not met as scheduled, however other forums have taken place which may indicate that the dissolution of this ATFM group may be premature at this stage.

2.11 The meeting is reminded that, the Twentieth meeting of the Asia/Pacific Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APANPIRG/20) was held from 7-11 September, 2009 in Bangkok, Thailand, a number of ATFM matters were discussed. The meeting should note that there were three important Conclusions adopted by APANPIRG/20 relating to the development of ATFM within the Asia and Pacific region as follows:

Conclusion 20/11 – ATFM Steering Group and Concept of Operations

That a regional ATFM Steering Group be constituted and tasked with preparing an Asia/Pacific Regional ATFM Concept of Operations based on analysis of regional data and traffic flows. The ATFM Steering Group should consider the outcomes and recommendations from the October 2008 ATFM Seminar/Workshop (Fukuoka, Japan) and information about the CAR/SAM ATFM Project contained in IP/3 to APANPIRG/20 as guidance in deriving its Objectives and Terms of Reference.

Conclusion 20/12 – Adopt ATFM Communications Manual

That the *Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM) Communications Handbook for the Asia/Pacific Region*, as shown in Appendix B to the APANPIRG/20 Report on Agenda Item 3.2, be adopted and circulated as regional guidance material.

Conclusion 20/13 – Conduct Regional ATFM Survey

That a survey of Asia/Pacific States be conducted based on the questionnaire at Appendix C to the APANPIRG/20 Report on Agenda Item 3.2, with the objective of benchmarking the current status of Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM) activities in the Asia/Pacific Region.

2.12 With regard to APANPIRG Conclusion 20/11 mentioned above, it is considered timely that this meeting should give guidance to the structure and work programme of the Regional ATFM Steering Group. In this regard, it is suggested that other relevant information which was discussed at the ATFM Seminar and Workshop should also be considered.

ATFM Regional Concept of Operations

2.13 The ATFM Workshop held in Fukuoka, Japan, recognized that the preparation of an ATFM regional Concept of Operations document for the Asia/Pacific Region represented a significant body of work, which would need to be undertaken in a collaborative manner between States over a period of time. In particular, analysis was necessary to identify major traffic flows which would benefit from ATFM solutions. As a result of the size and complexity of the Asia/Pacific region it was likely that an approach whereby specific areas or sub regions were identified would be necessary, under overriding arrangements which ensured interoperability between the respective sub regions. For example, such ATFM sub regions could include:

- North Pacific
- East Asia (Fukuoka, Beijing, Shanghai, Incheon, Taipei, Hong Kong, Manila FIRs)
- South China Sea
- Bay of Bengal/Arabian Sea
- Cross polar route network Asia – North America

2.14 The Workshop also examined the methodologies utilized and lessons learned from the implementation of long range ATFM procedures in the Bay of Bengal, as well as pre-tactical experiences with the Centralised Traffic Management System (CTMS) in Australia.

2.15 The meeting should understand that this task is sizeable but with good planning and diligence can be achieved in a step-by step approach to achieve operational efficiency gains throughout the region in recognized areas and along regional major traffic flows.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the work already achieved in ATFM implementation in parts of the Asia and Pacific region;
- b) agree that the present ATFM Task Force which has already been established, could be directed for other ATFM projects within the region;

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