



DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION-MIDDLE EAST REGION

First Meeting (DGCA-MID/1) (Abu Dhabi, UAE, 22-24 March 2011)

Agenda Item 4: Air Navigation Issues

INFPL IMPLEMENTATION

(Presented by IATA)

<p style="text-align: center;">SUMMARY</p> <p>This paper presents IATA's Efforts to address the ICAO Flight Plan Changes which will become effective on 15 November 2012.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">REFERENCES</p> <p>– PANS ATM – Doc 4444.</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 On 25 June 2008 ICAO issued State Letter AN13/2.1-08/50 amending the 15th edition of the PANS-ATM, Doc 4444. The timing of this State Letter allowed over 4 years of lead-time to all stakeholders in preparation. Although the format will remain relatively consistent with that being used today, numerous changes will be required in the abbreviations, sequencing and various Field descriptors used in the ICAO Flight Plan form.

1.2 Airline systems will need to conform to the new data fields, sequence and alphanumeric coding. Likewise, adaptation within the ATS Providers' flight data processing systems will need to ensure that the new flight plans filed are accepted without any cause for reject or denial of service. Although the effective date for the changes in the Filed Flight Plan (FPL) is November 15, 2012, airlines and States can transition to the new format at any time.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The main rationale for the NEW FPL format is to allow users to benefit from modern aircraft capabilities, such as PBN. Such changes are fully embraced by the airlines and without exception likely to be ready for the 2012 deadline.

2.2 There are however many complexities that emerge in the changeover process and in the timeframes leading up to the November 2012 cutover. These complexities are generally manifested at the implementation level at the time when airlines file flight plans. For Airlines as users, three principal areas of concern emerge;

2.2.1 **Supporting dual systems ‘PRESENT’ or ‘NEW’ before or after 2012.**

A significant portion of the problem should be addressed by limiting the exposure to two different systems – the ‘PRESENT’ and the ‘NEW’. From an internal software logistics perspective, for an airline this avoids the complexities involved in updating and modifying flight planning systems by means of a direct cut-over.

From an external procedural perspective and given the variable transition period leading up to the November 15, 2012 deadline, users will also face the dilemma of whether to maintain the functionality of the ‘PRESENT’ system up until the cut-off date. This decision will be dictated by the transition program adopted by the major ANSP that they usually interface with.

Therefore, supporting and maintaining two FPL systems for an extended period, as well as planning for a flight that crosses successive FIR’s that fall in different stages of implementation is clearly impractical from both a service and logistical point of view.

2.2.2 **Understanding the Importance of ‘Global’ Applicability of Common Standards**

The airline flight planning/dispatch services today operates to a high degree of automation. Likewise, the data flow in the flight plan filing process within the ANSP is also reliant on a high degree of data transfer capability between ATS units. Without significant increases in workload it would be inconceivable to anticipate any manual modifications. Any ‘weak link’ in the data chain results in lost or corrupted flight information. In view of the enhanced services that these new data elements should provide, they can only be justified by airlines as a one-time effort.

2.2.3 **Transition to the NEW Format**

Significant risks associated with a large-scale cutover on the Applicability Date of November 15, 2012 have been identified for the inability of ATC host automation or software to cope with rejections or manual data modifications on a mass scale.

ANSP’s that are currently planning to carry out the 2012 changes have chosen therefore to phase-in and trial these changes in a staggered manner.

These trials will be limited in scope and time. To note that any ANSP’s choosing to implement the “NEW” system before the applicability date will be required to ensure “backward compatibility” for the ‘OLD’ format.

3 IATA Efforts

3.1 IATA has been working closely with ICAO and other industry stakeholders through various initiatives to ensure a smooth transition of the FPL changes. The following will provide an overview of some of these initiatives;

3.2.1 **Flight Plan Implementation Tracking System**

The <http://www2.icao.int/en/FITS/Pages/home.aspx> site has been developed and hosted by ICAO to help Air Navigation Service Providers and airspace users (Airlines) to monitor the

implementation status of the NEW ICAO flight plan form established by the Amendment 1 to PANS-ATM (Doc 4444), Fifteenth Edition.

The site displays an interactive map with all FIR demarcations providing status of each state. Several documents are also available for reference.

3.2.2 ICAO FPL 2012 Changes Regional workshops

The objective of the workshops are to present the contents of Amendment 1 to 15th Edition of Doc 4444 that modifies the format of the ICAO flight plan and discuss ways and means to foster a harmonised and coordinated implementation of these changes in the ICAO Planning and Implementation Regional Groups (PIRG) and globally.

3.2.3 ICAO FPL 2012 Task Force

ICAO Regions have formed Task forces specifically to coordinate the detailed changes to the interface specifications and operational procedures, including deployment and transition issues, necessary to achieve a smooth implementation by 15 November 2012.

IATA is an active participant in the task force groups, and has been encouraging airlines to take part and actively provide feedback to the group.

3.2.4 IATA White Paper

In order to create awareness within member airlines, a White Paper providing a summary of the changes that will become effective 15 Nov 2012 is being developed and will be circulated to all member airlines.

3.2.5 Support of Tests and Trials

IATA is encouraging all its member airlines to participate with their ANSPs in limited time trials using the 'NEW' format, sometime before November 2012.

4. ACTION BY THE MEETING

- 4.1 The meeting is invited to note the content of this information paper.