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**Agenda Item 2:           Review of Air Navigation matters**  
**2.3       Air Navigation specific activities**  
**2.3.1   Air Traffic Management (ATM)**

**INITIAL DISCUSSIONS OF A PROJECT TO IMPLEMENT  
50 NM LATERAL SEPARATION IN THE GULF OF MEXICO**

(Presented by the United States)

**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this Information Paper is to inform the group that the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and SENEAM, the Air Traffic Service (ATS) provider for Mexico, have held initial discussions of a project to implement 50 NM lateral separation and a new area navigation (RNAV) route system in the Gulf of Mexico.

**1.           Introduction**

1.1           The purpose of this Information Paper is to inform the group that the U.S. FAA and SENEAM, the Air Traffic Service (ATS) provider for Mexico, have held initial discussions of a project to implement 50 NM lateral separation and a new area navigation (RNAV) route system in the Gulf of Mexico. Representatives from the U.S. FAA and SENEAM met in Merida, Mexico from 17-19 February 2009. Participants included representatives from the SENEAM Mexico City Office, U.S. FAA Headquarters, the U.S. FAA Eastern Service Area and Merida, and Monterrey and Houston Centers.

**2.           Proposed Gulf of Mexico 50 NM Lateral Separation Project Objectives**

2.1           The meeting covered a number of agenda items related to Gulf of Mexico operations. One of them was to begin discussion of a project that would be undertaken to do the following:

- a)       reduce lateral separation in the Gulf from 100 NM to 50 NM between aircraft authorized Required Navigation Performance 10 (RNP 10) or RNP 4;
- b)       implement a redesigned RNAV route structure based on a minimum 50 NM track spacing;
- c)       harmonize the proposed RNAV route structure with adjacent ATS providers;
- d)       have 90% or more of Gulf flights conducted by operators/aircraft authorized RNP 10 or RNP 4; and

- e) accommodate the operation of a small percentage of operators/aircraft not authorized RNP 10 or RNP 4.

2.2 The group agreed that the implementation of 50 NM track spacing can enable additional routes to be established in the Gulf of Mexico to enhance operations for air traffic operating between North America and South America. The group agreed that additional routes provide the potential to do the following:

- a) Increase airspace capacity;
- b) Add more direct, cost efficient routes; and
- c) Reduce delays during periods of heavy traffic volume.

### **3. Project Planning Documents**

3.1 In the course of discussion, the following draft documents were reviewed.

- a) A draft Concept of Operations was reviewed to start the discussion of policies and procedures necessary to apply 50 NM lateral separation between aircraft authorized RNP 10 or RNP 4.
- b) A draft Summary Task List was reviewed to begin planning for the completion of the tasks necessary to meet the project objectives listed in paragraph 2.1 above.
- c) A first draft RNAV Route design was reviewed to start the process of locating RNAV routes and associated waypoints in the affected Flight Information Regions.

3.2 The group agreed to review the documents between meetings and progress them at the next meeting.

### **4. Proposed Follow-up Meeting and Coordination**

4.1 SENEAM and U.S. FAA representatives agreed to continue to pursue the project and tentatively scheduled their next meeting for 25 June - 1 July 2009 in Mexico City, Mexico.

4.2 When the project is sufficiently mature, the group recognized the necessity to broaden project coordination.

### **5 Conclusion**

5.1 The meeting is invited to note that the U.S. FAA and SENEAM have begun initial discussions of a project to reduce lateral separation in the Gulf of Mexico to 50 NM between operators/aircraft authorized RNP 10 or RNP 4.