



*International Civil Aviation Organization*

CAR/SAM Regional Planning and Implementation Group (GREPECAS)

**Eighteenth Meeting of the CAR/SAM Regional Planning and Implementation Group (GREPECAS/18)**

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### **Agenda Item 3: Air navigation activities at global, inter-regional and intra-regional level**

#### **3.2 PROGRESS OF THE INFORMAL GROUP FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES OVER THE SOUTH ATLANTIC (SAT)**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

##### **SUMMARY**

This paper presents information on an ongoing discussion to explore a better mechanism to increase efficiency in the management of flights in the airspace over the Atlantic and improve necessary coordination among the regional groups concerned. The paper also provides information on the work in progress by the ICAO Secretariat in this regard.

##### **References:**

- Report of the Twenty First Meeting on the Improvement of Air Traffic Services Over the South Atlantic (SAT/21, Lisbon, Portugal, 6-10 June 2016)
- Report of the Fifty-Second Meeting of the North Atlantic Systems Planning Group (NATSPG/52, Paris, 27 to 30 June 2016)
- Report of the Fifty-Third Meeting of the North Atlantic Systems Planning Group (NATSPG/53, Paris, 26 to 29 June 2017)

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 An Informal Group for the Improvement of Air Traffic Services over the South Atlantic (SAT) was established in 1988 and served as an implementation coordination group for several initiatives, including reduced lateral and vertical separation minima and the establishment of a regional monitoring agency. And yet, the work programme of the SAT has not been formally governed by any of the planning and implementation regional groups (PIRGs) concerned<sup>1</sup>.

1.2 The efforts of the Group in recent years have been focused on the implementation of air traffic services (ATS) data link communications, performance-based navigation (PBN), performance-based communication and surveillance (PBCS), and air traffic flow management (ATFM). However, it was observed by airspace users that the progress and/or the outcome of these initiatives had not been

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<sup>1</sup>AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG) and CAR/SAM Regional Planning and Implementation Group (GREPECAS)

satisfactory for various reasons, one of which was the lack of a formal mechanism to ensure consistent engagement and commitment from stakeholders concerned. In addition, a need for a better mechanism for the North Atlantic Region (NAT) to coordinate and share best practices with the adjacent regions was highlighted during its recent PIRG meeting.

1.3 This paper presents information concerning an ongoing discussion to explore a better mechanism to increase efficiency in the management of flights across the Atlantic oceanic airspace and improve necessary coordination among the regional groups concerned. The paper also provides information on the work in progress by the ICAO Secretariat in this regard.

## **2. DISCUSSION**

### ***Concern and Proposal from Airspace Users regarding SAT***

2.1 At the twenty-first meeting on the improvement of air traffic services over the South Atlantic (SAT/21, Lisbon, 2016), IATA expressed its members' concern on the lack of coordinated SAT regional vision/strategies, and highlighted a need for more efficient working structure and improved alignment with the NAT.

2.2 Proposals put forward to the meeting by IATA included: a) development of "SAT Region Commitment and Action Plan (SATCAP) Go Team" which would identify related projects from the Aviation Systems Block Upgrades (ASBU) modules and the various SAT decisions/conclusions for implementation; and b) development of a process to facilitate sustainable coordination with ATM personnel having the requisite multi-disciplinary skill sets in the adjacent regions.

2.3 After extensive discussions on the IATA's proposals, a general consensus was reached to improve effectiveness and efficiency in the work of the SAT. However, the SAT was of the view that more studies were required, in close collaboration with the NAT, to determine the best working structures for the SAT. In this regard, the following decision was agreed.

#### **Decision 21/10 – SAT Working Structure and collaboration with NAT region**

The SAT region collaborates with the NAT region in order to share working experiences, best practices, pool resources and harmonize operations for the benefit of airspace users and increase efficiency in the management of flights across the two regions.

### ***Need for better coordination between NAT and other adjacent regions***

2.4 At the fifty second meeting of the North Atlantic Systems Planning Group (NATSPG/52, Paris, 2016), it was noted that the operational and technical considerations from other adjacent ICAO Regions would need to be taken into account in considering potential components for the *NAT Future Concept of Operations* (NAT CONOPS). To ensure an appropriate level of inter-regional coordination during the development of the CONOPS and to achieve a harmonized, seamless and synchronized implementation, the NATSPG agreed to the following conclusion:

#### **NAT SPG Conclusion 52/17 – Coordination with ICAO Regions adjacent to NAT Region on the NAT Concept of Operations**

That the ICAO Regional Director, Europe and North Atlantic:

- a) review the NAT Region coordination mechanism with adjacent ICAO Regions to be used during the development of the NAT Future Concept of Operations; and
- b) identify/create opportunities whereby the NAT Region can engage with adjacent ICAO Regions on the development and sharing of best practices.

2.5 The fifty third meeting of NATSPG (NATSPG/53, Paris, 2017) reiterated the importance of its continuing coordination with SAT, not only for ensuring inter-regional harmonization and interoperability but also for avoiding duplication of efforts. In this regard, the ICAO Secretariat was invited to facilitate the better coordination between the two Regions and bring this matter to the attention of the Caribbean and South American (CAR/SAM) Regional Planning and Implementation Group (GREPECAS).

***Proposed way forward under development by the Secretariat***

2.6 Considering the outcome of the meetings of SAT and NATSPG in the past two years, ICAO Secretariat, including all Regional Offices concerned, initiated a study to analyse challenges and opportunities of both SAT and the NAT Region in an effort to develop a proposed way forward. The work is still on-going, but the initial assessment indicated the SAT needs a more formal structure with efficient working arrangements in order to increase the benefits of the airspace users and to reduce duplication of efforts by all stakeholders concerned. The new structure should allow as a minimum the following:

- a) a more project-based approach in the initiation, monitoring and completion of work programmes;
- b) application of best practices and lessons learned from a large-scale projects in other ICAO regions;
- c) consistent coordination with adjacent regions in the planning and implementation of new initiatives; and
- d) increased and dedicated support from a single ICAO regional office that has expertise in data link implementation.

2.7 Based on the above-mentioned considerations, several options are currently being analyzed by the Secretariat. Once the proposals are mature, they will be presented to the next SAT meeting (venue, dates), then to the relevant PIRG meetings for discussion and endorsement.

### **3. SUGGESTED ACTIONS**

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) take note of the information provided in this working paper; and
- b) discuss aspects that need to be taken into account in formulating the final proposals for the SAT