



ICAO

**Thirty First Meeting of the Asia/Pacific Air Navigation
Planning and Implementation Regional Group
(APANPIRG/31)**

Video Teleconference - Bangkok, Thailand, 14 to 16 December 2020

Schedule: 10:00 – 13:15 Bangkok Time [UTC+7hrs]

**Agenda Item 1C: ICAO APAC COVID-19 Contingency and Recovery Planning Group
(ACCRPG) Activities**

CANSO COVID-19 RELATED ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF ATM

(Presented by CANSO)

SUMMARY

Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, CANSO has been working closely with industry partners in support of ATM during the crisis. This paper presents some of CANSO's activities in support of ATM as well as its guidance publications such as the CANSO COVID 19: ANS Restart and Recovery Guide which examines the human resource as well as the operational and safety considerations for ANSPs as the aviation industry enters its restart and recovery phases. This paper also briefly discusses the potential impact of the pandemic on ANSPs in the planning and provision of air navigation services by drawing on the survey results of ANSPs in a CANSO/Egis webinar entitled 'New Normal': What about the New Possible? Building a Better Future for ATM.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 While aircraft can be grounded and airports closed, ATM systems cannot be shut down and ANSPs must continue to keep our skies open for cargo, repatriation and humanitarian flights. So, in many respects, ATM is not restarting as it never really shut down. However, when the recovery comes, air traffic demand levels and traffic patterns will not be like before. ANSPs must therefore be ready to manage the variable traffic flows and ensure that they are handled safely and efficiently.

1.2 When we look ahead much uncertainty remains in terms of when and how fast traffic will recover. Air traffic operational complexities will vary greatly depending on how long the downturn lasts and how fast traffic resumption occurs. In this regard, while the focus has been on the airline passenger and public health issues, CANSO has been working on the ATM front to assist ANSPs during the COVID-19 crisis and in preparation for the recovery.

1.3 This paper provides an overview of some of the activities and partnerships undertaken by CANSO during the crisis and briefly discusses the potential impact of COVID-19 on ANSPs in the planning and provision of air navigation services by drawing on the survey results of ANSPs in a CANSO webinar entitled 'New Normal': What about the New Possible? Building a Better Future for ATM.

2. DISCUSSION

CANSO COVID-19 Guidance Publications

2.1 As COVID-19 infection became more widespread early this year, CANSO published its first guidance document entitled COVID-19: Ensuring Continuity of ATS Service Globally. This publication covers measures to mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19 for ANSPs as well as measures for ensuring operational business continuity.

2.2 With the focus shifting to the restart and recovery of aviation, CANSO published its second guidance document entitled COVID-19: ANS Restart and Recovery Guide. This Guide looked at factors that must be addressed by ANSPs as traffic recovers including how to deal with increasing traffic while ensuring staff safety and keeping operations safe and efficient. The publication covers the following areas:

- Safety: Maintaining Staff Competencies and Skills during downturn
- Traffic and Resource Management: Demand prediction tools
- Regulatory Coordination: Renewal of licenses, oversight activities.
- ATM Maintenance: Operating status of ATM infrastructure, NOTAMS
- Collaboration: Airport Collaboration, CDM

2.3 The CANSO COVID-19 ANS Restart and Recovery Guide can be downloaded from the CANSO website or through a link in the updated ICAO Take Off and Guidance Document (TOGD) of the ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Taskforce (CART) guidance for States and Industry.

Industry Partnerships & Stakeholder Collaboration

2.4 To help ANSPs navigate the crisis, CANSO has partnered the industry to provide data driven insights, air traffic demand analyses and prediction as well as ATC simulator training support.

- CANSO has partnered Aireon, the provider of satellite-based ADS-B services to develop data driven insights and analysis of traffic trends. These are published in CANSO's monthly ATM Traffic Analysis Reports to help ANSPs understand how the pandemic is impacting the industry and to assist in their recovery plans.
- CANSO has teamed up with Metron Aviation (a CANSO associate member with strong expertise in ATFM) to provide ANSPs with a complimentary traffic demand prediction tool to support the recovery process.
- CANSO has also partnered with Micro Nav to offer its ATC radar and tower simulator as a complimentary cloud-based tool to ANSPs to enable controllers to practise with higher traffic levels in order to maintain proficiency.

2.5 CANSO ANSPs from the APAC Cross Border Multi-Nodal ATFM Collaboration (AMNAC) Group have also worked with the ICAO APAC Office to share their pandemic-related information in a regional COVID-19 Pandemic Preparedness APAC ATM/ATFM Status Update Document hosted on the ICAO APAC website. It is important that such updated information is shared during the crisis and the recovery so that airlines, airports and ANSPs have a common situational awareness of the expected traffic demand and the available ATM capacity.

A New Normal in ANS provision and planning?

2.6 To gain insight on how COVID-19 has impacted ANS provision and planning, CANSO and Egis hosted a webinar entitled 'New Normal': What about the New Possible? Building a Better

Future for ATM. How much of ANSPs' focus on capacity building has shifted to recovery and business continuity management and does the depressed traffic warrant a rethink of project implementation timelines? The following highlights the shifts in ANSPs' strategic priorities (other than safety) from a survey that was conducted:

- According to the survey results, the top 3 strategic priorities of ANSPs before the pandemic from a list of 10 were: technological leadership, automation of services and increasing revenue. Cutting costs was number 5 and service scalability was No.8.
- As a result of the pandemic, the top priority is now cost cutting (from No. 5 to No. 1) followed by a tie between increasing revenue and automation of services at No. 2. These are followed closely by technological leadership at No. 3 while service scalability has moved from No.8 to No. 4. Service scalability has increased in importance, reflecting the difficulties that ANSPs face in delivering safe and efficient services from the same cost base, with reduced revenues.
- In response to the urgent need for cost cutting the most implemented measure to save cost is project postponement or cancellation followed by staff related measures.

2.7 How then will ANSPs re-prioritise capital investments in the New Normal? It is likely that ANSP priorities will shift to technologies that offer lower costs and enhanced resilience and scalability. For example, greater use of cloud-based digital technology, use of space-based technologies, data sharing, remote service provision, regional/sub-regional service provision etc.

2.8 There will be a stronger focus on the essentials. Current reduced traffic demand provides ANSPs with an opportunity to focus on implementing strategic changes and to review what are the really important investments. For example, improving resiliency to the aviation industry as a whole, investing in technology that relies less on people and creating operations to keep people separated when needed.

2.9 While the pandemic has brought respite to the airport and airspace capacity crunch in the APAC region, it has drastically reduced ANSP revenues. As evident from the survey results, cost-cutting is now the top priority of many ANSPs and this will significantly impact their investment plans. However, in re-prioritising capital investments and undertaking resource planning ANSPs should be conscious of the long lead time for technology implementation as well as the recruitment and training of staff.

2.10 In this crisis there are opportunities for ANSPs to “build back better”. The down-turn is a pause in air traffic growth and an opportunity to improve service provision. We should look at how best to use that pause to better harmonise our efforts and ensure that benefits are optimised across the region. With reduced traffic levels, there are opportunities to review current airspace restrictions and look for ways to improve service provision to minimise operational delays and inefficient routings. As we look to the future, our eye should be on those measures that enhance the resilience and sustainability of ATM operations.

2.11 There are also opportunities for greater collaboration and partnerships. New operating models are needed that will facilitate greater collaboration with external partners to share risks, and greater use of digitalisation and automation for improved efficiency, flexibility, scalability and resilience. An ATM system designed around operational needs rather than one tied to specific geographical locations or national borders, and one that can innovate while still providing safe services.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) Note the information contained in this paper;
- b) Encourage States and ANSPs to avail themselves of the CANSO COVID 19 related guidance material, in particular its ANS Restart and Recovery Guide;
- c) Encourage industry partnerships and stakeholder collaboration in support of ATM during this crisis;
- d) Note the potential impact of COVID-19 on ANSPs in the planning and provision of air navigation services; and
- e) Discuss any other matters as appropriate.

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