



ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization

The Second Meeting of the South Asia, Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia ATM Coordination Group (SAIOSEACG/2)

Bangkok, Thailand, 20 – 24 March 2023

Agenda Item 3: Review of Current Operations and Problem Areas

PROGRESS UPDATE ON CAPACITY OPTIMISATION OF AIR ROUTES L642 AND M771

(Presented by Hong Kong China)

SUMMARY

This paper presents a progress update on optimisation of capacity of major trunk routes L642 and M771. States/Administrations involved and IATA agreed to jointly work together over the past year to enhance the capacity of the two air routes by reducing the longitudinal spacing between aircraft operating along them to prepare for traffic resurgence and future traffic growth in the APAC region. Active participation and contribution by all States/Administrations concerned are encouraged to materialise the implementation of 20NM longitudinal spacing while maintaining safe and orderly flow of air traffic.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Hong Kong China plays an active role in optimising the capacity of air routes within Hong Kong Flight Information Region (HKFIR), including major trunk routes (MTR) L642 and M771 in the APAC region. The plan to optimise the longitudinal spacing between aircraft operating along L642 and M771 from 50NM to 20NM was well conceived among major stakeholders. Close collaboration among all States/Administrations within the region and IATA is a prerequisite to achieve the goal of this initiative. To better prepare for post COVID traffic resurgence and air traffic growth in the APAC region, IATA urges the States/Administrations concerned to expedite the necessary internal evaluation and safety risk assessment leading to the implementation of 20NM longitudinal spacing on L642 and M771.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 A comprehensive evaluation by Hong Kong China on optimisation of the longitudinal spacing between aircraft operating along L642 and M771 from 50NM to 20NM within Hong Kong FIR was completed in Q2 2022. The study concluded that the capacity of L642 and M771 would be doubled after the implementation. It is also envisaged that such enhancement will be beneficial to operators for better fuel efficiency as more aircraft would be accommodated to operate at optimum cruising levels. This will significantly improve operators' economic performance as well as reduce overall carbon footprint. IATA has expressed full support to this initiative.

2.2 Hong Kong China is ready for the implementation of the proposed 20NM longitudinal spacing on L642 and M771 with the establishment of an additional en-route sector for MTR L642 and

M771 and full surveillance coverage by ground-based ADS-B of the associated airspace (i.e. the southern portion of HKFIR).

2.3 After the ICAO Tenth Meeting of the South China Sea Traffic Flow Review Group (SCSTFRG/10), Hong Kong China continues to play a leading role to progress this initiative and proactively communicate with all concerned States/Administrations. A draft Letter of Agreement (LOA) detailing the requirements for different operating scenarios on the implementation of the proposed 20NM longitudinal spacing between Hong Kong ATCC and Sanya ACC has since been prepared through close collaboration. Similar agreements amongst other ACCs along the routes are being worked out before the initiative may proceed to the next stage.

2.4 The proposed implementation timeline was 2023 and Hong Kong China is ready to pursue. Based on the experience from the enhancement of longitudinal spacing on ATS route A1/P901 from 30NM to 20NM in early 2020, close collaborative effort among States/Administrations is of vital importance. Therefore, concerned States/Administrations are urged to adopt a more proactive approach to materialize the initiative.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper;
- b) recognize the importance to expedite the implementation of 20NM longitudinal spacing along MTR L642 and M771 to prepare for traffic resurgence and air traffic growth in the APAC region;
- c) encourage States/ Administrations concerned (i.e. China, Viet Nam, Singapore and Hong Kong China) to delegate SMEs to participate in side meeting to expedite the discussion process and report to ICAO Regional Office; and
- d) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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