



ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization

**The Thirteenth Meeting of the South China Sea Traffic Flow
Review Group (SCSTFRG/13)**

Beijing China, 16 – 18 July 2025

**Agenda Item 2: Review of the Current and Planned CNS/ATM Capabilities and Identifying
Associated Reduced Horizontal Separation**

**JOINT INITIATIVE TO ENHANCE LONGITUDINAL SEPARATION ON ATS ROUTES
BETWEEN MANILA FIR AND KOTA KINABALU FIR.**

(Presented by Malaysia and Philippines)

SUMMARY

This paper presents the ongoing collaborative effort between Malaysia and Philippines to enhance longitudinal spacing on ATS routes between Manila FIR and Kota Kinabalu FIR. It presents recent discussions and proposed initiatives aligned with SCSTFRG objectives, emphasizing mutual commitment to improving regional air traffic flow, operational efficiency, and procedural harmonization across FIR boundaries.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The most recent engagement between CAA Philippines and CAA Malaysia regarding a collaborative project to enhance longitudinal separation on routes between Manila FIR and Kota Kinabalu FIR took place in February 2020 with the trial implementation of 50NM longitudinal spacing minimum on routes M646 and A341. A full implementation followed in March 2020 after a successful trial.

1.2 Subsequent initiatives aimed at further improvements in longitudinal spacing were temporarily suspended, largely due to the operational challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic within the civil aviation sector.

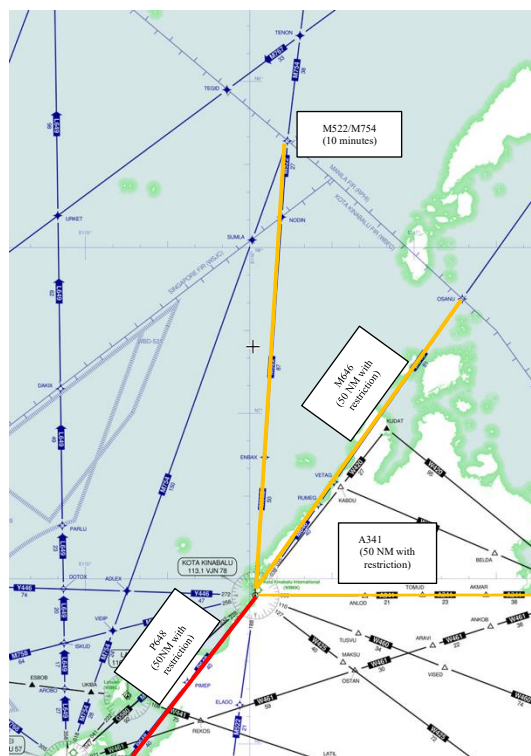
1.3 In March 2025, CAA Malaysia engaged in discussions with Manila ACC regarding SCSTFRG Task list Item 12/4, with the aim of exploring a joint initiative to enhance longitudinal spacing on routes M646 and M754/M522.

1.4 Manila ACC has agreed to collaborate with CAA Malaysia on the joint project and conveyed its openness to discuss implementation strategies and operational requirements necessary to advance this effort. Both parties recognize the mutual benefit of the initiative, particularly in mitigating spacing inconsistencies and improving major traffic flows. The collaboration also reinforces regional objectives in promoting the harmonized application of procedures and enhanced interoperability across FIR boundaries.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 During a brief exchange between CAAM and Manila ACC, several preliminary points were discussed concerning longitudinal spacing enhancements along the common FIR boundaries.

2.2 The graphic below illustrates the current longitudinal separation along the common FIR boundaries:



2.3 One proposed improvement is the reduction of longitudinal spacing on route segments of M646 and A341 between Manila FIR and Kota Kinabalu FIR, from 50NM to 30NM. A trial implementation may commence toward the end of the year, subject to the operational readiness of both parties. The corresponding procedures and requirements remain under discussion.

2.4 Another proposal involves reducing the longitudinal spacing on routes M754/M522, from the current 10-minute MNT to 50NM. Manila ACC advised that further internal preparations are necessary, requiring additional time to evaluate and finalize the applicable procedures. Accordingly, a potential trial implementation is projected for Q1–Q2 of 2026. The adoption of 30NM spacing may be considered at a later stage, contingent upon the successful outcome of the initial implementation.

2.5 Additionally, Manila ACC raised the possibility of lifting the operational restriction currently imposed by Kota Kinabalu ACC on the application of 50NM longitudinal spacing for southwest-bound aircraft pairs operating on M646 and A341. At present, this spacing minimum is limited to flights destined for airports within the Kota Kinabalu FIR. Malaysia supports the removal of this restriction, which would allow for the full realization of future spacing enhancements and support the harmonization and simplification of operational procedures. However, it is essential to engage in further discussions with Indonesia, as the restriction may affect traffic entering the Jakarta FIR and beyond.

2.6 Both CAAP and CAAM welcome this partnership and remain open to further engagement on the core elements of the collaborative initiative. The effort seeks to address technical considerations, share operational perspectives, and jointly explore implementation strategies that advance safety, efficiency, and capacity within air traffic control operations.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

- 3.1 The meeting is invited to:
- a) note the information contained in this paper; and
 - b) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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