



ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization

THE THIRTIETH MEETING OF THE
COMMUNICATIONS / NAVIGATION AND
SURVEILLANCE SUB-GROUP (CNS SG/30)
OF APANPIRG

Bangkok, Thailand, 06 – 10 July 2026

Agenda Item 3: Aeronautical Fixed Service (AFS)
3.1 Review Report of the Thirteenth Meeting of the Aeronautical
Communications Services Implementation Coordination Group
(ACSICG/13)

CONSIDERATIONS ON DRAFT CONCLUSION ACSICG/13/02

(Presented by Thailand)

SUMMARY

This paper provides feedback on *Draft Conclusion ACSICG/13/02 Transfer of Ownership of AFTN/AMHS-based Interface Control Document (ICD)* regarding the approval mechanism for the Asia/Pacific Regional AFTN/AMHS-based Interface Control Document for Air Traffic Flow Management. Based on the Terms and Reference (TOR) and core technical expertise of the respective contributory bodies, this paper proposes re-considering the approval routing to ensure technical oversight remains under the ACSICG and the CNS SG.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The proposed amendments to the Asia/Pacific Regional AFTN/AMHS-based Interface Control Document (ICD) for Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM), version 2.0, was reviewed during the Thirteenth Meeting of the Aeronautical Communication Services Implementation Coordination Group (ACSICG/13) held from 20 to 24 April 2026. Prior to this review, the proposed amendments of the document had been developed and agreed by the Fifteenth Meeting of the Air Traffic Flow Management Steering Group (ATFM SG/15) held from 28 April to 2 May 2025, and resulted in *Draft Conclusion ATFM/SG/15-2 Adoption of AFTN/AMHS-based Interface Control Document (ICD) to the Asia/Pacific Regional Framework for Collaborative ATFM*.

1.2 While acknowledging the collaborative effort between operational (ATFM SG, currently ATFM & A-CDM SG) and technical (ACSICG) groups, a review of the institutional approval process is necessary to maintain proper technical validation and alignment with established Terms of Reference (TOR) of the respective groups.

2. DISCUSSION

Terms of Reference (TOR) and Expertise

2.1 The core responsibility and specialized technical expertise concerning AFTN/AMHS infrastructure, messaging protocols, and network interfaces reside within the ACSICG. As defined in

the current ACSICG TOR, the group is explicitly mandated to lead the implementation, continuous development, and technical validation of regional aeronautical telecommunication networks and voice/data systems.

2.2 Conversely, the scope of the ATFM and Airport Collaborative Decision Making Steering Group (ATFM & A-CDM SG), under the Air Traffic Management Sub-Group (ATM SG), is fundamentally operationally focused. According to the current ATFM & A-CDM SG TOR, their primary objective is to identify, research, and recommend appropriate guidance regarding capacity assessment and adjustment mechanisms, maintain an overview of ATFM and A-CDM programs within the region to promote harmonized procedures, and review the effectiveness of existing and planned ATFM and A-CDM programs in APAC. While they represent key operational users of the data exchanged via AFTN/AMHS, their mandate does not extend to engineering and validating underlying technical infrastructure.

Technical Document Ownership and Historical Precedent

2.3 An Interface Control Document (ICD) is, by definition, a highly specialized technical document that specifies the architectural, data elements, and protocol specifications required to establish system interoperability. Because the structural integrity, routing rules, addressing plans, and messaging syntax of an AFTN/AMHS network are strictly engineering and telecommunication domains, primary document ownership should remain with the technical group rather than an operational group.

2.4 Previous editions (Versions 1.0 and 2.0) of the document were developed by the ATFM SG (at ATFM SG/9 and ATFM SG/10) to accurately capture user requirements, and were subsequently endorsed by the ACSICG and approved by the CNS SG (at CNS SG/23 and CNS SG/24) due to the underlying technical changes required to fulfill the identified operational users' expectations. During those sessions, the ICAO Secretariat for the ATFM SG noted that this approval routing was necessary because the ATFM SG functions as an operational user of AFTN/AMHS, whereas the responsibility for the implementation, development, and maintenance of the AFTN/AMHS infrastructure fall under the purview of the ACSICG.

Feedback on Draft Conclusion ACSICG/13/02

2.5 In light of these factors, it is recommended that *Draft Conclusion ACSICG/13/02* be reconsidered. Because the ATFM & A-CDM SG, under ATM SG, functions as an operational user group rather than an engineering or technical group for communication protocols, assigning final ownership or structural approval of an APAC Regional AFTN/AMHS-based ICD for ATFM to an operational group, ATM SG, introduces technical governance and standardization risks.

2.6 To ensure network system integrity and compliance with regional CNS standards, the primary document ownership and ultimate approval mechanism for this ICD should remain under the purview of the ACSICG and, subsequently, the CNS SG.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper;
- b) recommend the amendment of *Draft Conclusion ACSICG/13/02* to reflect that the primary ownership and final approval of the Asia/Pacific Regional AFTN/AMHS-based ICD for ATFM reside with the ACSICG, with subsequently approval by the CNS SG before regional implementation; and

- c) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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