



WORKING PAPER

FOURTEENTH AIR NAVIGATION CONFERENCE

Montréal, Canada, 26 August to 6 September 2024

- Agenda Item 3: Air navigation system performance improvement**
3.2: Phasing out legacy systems

FLIGHT PLAN 2012 SUNSETTING DATE

(Presented by the International Air Transport Association (IATA),
International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA),
International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers Association (IFATCA) and
International Business Aviation Council (IBAC))

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The introduction of flight and flow – information for a collaborative environment (FF-ICE) as a replacement for the flight plan filing process is a necessary step towards trajectory-based operations (TBO). It can only bring benefits to the airspace users if States make use of the additional information that FF-ICE provides and if the planning service, proposed to be implemented as an option in the amendment to *Procedures for Air Navigation Services — Air Traffic Management* (PANS-ATM, Doc 4444), is implemented by States. Airspace users understand that not all States can implement FF-ICE at the same time, but during the transition to FF-ICE they will need to maintain the capability to deliver FPL2012 messages as well as support FF-ICE services. A piecemeal and long transition period increases a lack of harmonization risk. While airspace users support sunsetting FPL2012, they would like ICAO and States to consider limiting the transition period as well as urging the implementation of the planning service.

Action: The Conference is invited to agree to the recommendation in paragraph 4.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Several amendment proposals have recently been approved by ICAO addressing the implementation of FF-ICE. Those amendments do not mandate States to implement FF-ICE but rather recommend that States in a position to do so adopt FF-ICE as the mechanism to file flight plan. The supporting guidance material provides a comprehensive description of how to manage the transition from FPL2012 to FF-ICE.

1.2 In the *Global Air Navigation Plan* (GANP, Doc 9750) FF-ICE is introduced as being the basis for initial TBO. FF-ICE implements collaborative coordination and maintenance of advanced flight information for planning, re-planning and air traffic flow management (ATFM). ATFM considers operator flight preferences and capacity and demand balancing improvement (better capacity utilization) due to timely and accurate flight information.

2. **DISCUSSION**

2.1 Airspace users supports the introduction of FF-ICE as it is seen as the mechanism to align flight trajectory intent with the airspace constraints and also to provide air traffic control (ATC) with more information regarding the aircraft capabilities so that better services can be offered.

2.2 The voluntary implementation as recommended by ICAO creates a piecemeal approach that is detrimental to achieving the benefits that FF-ICE entails. This manifests itself into two areas. The first one is the fact that few FF-ICE services are mandatory, while some of the optional services like the FF-ICE planning service would provide additional benefits to the airspace users. This service, if implemented, would allow airspace users to better plan their flights as it allows for a collaborative planning process to optimize the plan and reduce unexpected changes to the route, altitude, or speed once a filed flight plan is submitted. As for now airspace users have no visibility as to when optional services are going to be implemented by States it is difficult to plan their flight planning system updates

2.3 The other area of concern is the lack of clear plan for migrating to FF-ICE by a number of States, increasing the difficulty to achieve the benefits of FF-ICE when too many States within a given region are still not capable of processing FF-ICE messages, thus preventing airspace users to fully optimize the fuel onboard for a given flight. This also results in airspace users having to keep an ever-changing list of States flight planning capabilities so that each State receives the filed flight plan in the supported format (FF-ICE or FPL2012). The longer the transition takes, the longer it will take to achieve the efficiency benefits attached to FF-ICE.

3. **CONCLUSION**

3.1 Considering the above, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) welcomes the recommendation made by AN-Conf/14-WP/11 that a sunset date be agreed upon to limit the duration of the transition period. IATA would recommend the following considerations to be considered.

3.1.1 Shortening the duration of the transition is desirable given that airspace users would prefer filing a trajectory that they are confident will be granted by ATC with minimal modifications, thus increasing efficiencies.

3.1.2 To minimize the impacts of a prolonged mixed mode operations during the transition to FF-ICE, regional transition plans to FF-ICE implementation can be adopted. This would ensure that for all the flights taking place in a given region there is a consistent and unique flight plan filing process.

3.1.3 States should consider implementing the planning service as this optional FF-ICE service is helping airspace user better plan their flights and optimize the onboard fuel.

4. **ACTION BY THE MEETING**

4.1 The Conference is invited to agree to the following recommendation:

That States:

- a) start, as a matter of urgency, planning at the regional level the implementation of FF-ICE to minimize the duration of the transition period; and

- b) consider providing a timeline for implementation the optional FF-ICE services including the planning service;

that ICAO:

- c) consider advancing the FPL2012 sunset to a date earlier than 2034;
- d) develop the provisions necessary to help States understand how to sunset FPL2012 and associated messages; and
- e) provide guidance and support to States on how to efficiently transition from FPL2012 to FF-ICE.

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