



International Civil Aviation Organization

**The Special Coordination Meeting for the Bay of Bengal area (SCM/BOB)
and The Sixteenth Meeting of the Bay of Bengal ATS Coordination Group
(BBACG/16)**

Bangkok, Thailand, 31 January – 4 February 2005

Agenda Item 3: Review current operations across the Bay of Bengal and identify problem areas

**AIR TRAFFIC FLOW MANAGEMENT (ATFM)
IN THE BAY OF BENGAL AND WESTWARDS**

(Presented by Thailand)

SUMMARY

The purpose of this working paper is to support the introduction of ATFM in the Bay of Bengal and westwards and to recommend to the meeting a strategy for implementation.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Since the implementation of the EMARSSH revised route structure on 28 November 2002, which allowed additional ATS routes to be used across the Bay of Bengal and westwards to European and Middle East destinations, it became increasingly apparent that one of the negative side effects was the increasing amount of aircraft which could now plan to depart from Southeast Asian and South Asian ports during the evening westbound rush period.

1.2 Over a relatively short period of time, especially after the introduction of RVSM on 27 November 2003, it also became obvious that, due to flight level and routing restrictions within Afghanistan airspace caused by military operations, as well as other impediments in this airspace such as the need for aircraft to transfer to a conventional flight level allocation system prior to entering the Kabul FIR, some type of ATFM would be required to manage aircraft movements through this area.

1.3 A further issue to be addressed was the steady increase in the amount of aircraft departing westwards from Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore during this busy period. To add to the issues mentioned within Afghanistan, this increase also had an additional effect on aircraft proceeding to or via the Middle East from either Bangkok or overflying the Bangkok FIR crossing the parallel northwest route structure used by aircraft out of Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 It should be noted that the present IATA forecast on traffic growth in the Asia/Pacific region has been established at 6% p.a. for the next 15 years. This effectively means that air traffic will double in the next 13 years based on these estimates. However, over the past 12 months, this 6% figure has been significantly exceeded in many Asian States. With the increase of low-cost airlines now coming into the market place as well as many airlines indicating that their fleet size will increase

substantially over the next few years, it could be expected that the doubling of traffic in this area will be much earlier than previously forecast.

2.2. The meeting is invited to note that Thailand has supported the introduction of a robust ATFM system to overcome the present and future traffic requirements over the Bay of Bengal and beyond. The meeting may also recall that at the Fifteenth Meeting of the Bay of Bengal ATS Coordination Group held in Bangkok 13-17 September 2004, Thailand raised several issues affecting efficient traffic flow across the Bay of Bengal and beyond and further stated that they would give full support and assistance by working with ICAO, other States concerned and IATA to quickly move forward on this important issue, which was currently detrimental to the operational efficiency of the international aviation community as well as ATS providers in the area.

2.3. Thailand has already commenced work on developing an ATFM computer model to meet the requirements in overcoming the present and forecast difficulties on air traffic flow management issues and has set a target date to complete testing, completion and acceptance by the third quarter of 2005. It is also understood that some other States involved have also commenced work in this area which gives added encouragement in addressing this issue. Therefore, Thailand wishes to advise the meeting that we are now prepared to take a proactive role in the establishment of an effective ATFM system for the area under consideration.

2.4. The meeting is advised that, due to the complexities and size of this matter as well as the relative urgency in overcoming these deficiencies, Thailand is also interested in working with partners to share ideas and workload for the purpose of putting in place a system or systems to remedy present and future obstacles and allow a smooth flow of traffic for the years to come in an expeditious manner.

2.5. The meeting should also note that it is the view of Thailand that any system or systems to increase the efficiency of traffic movements in the area under consideration, should not only be practical and robust, but also have the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances such as adverse weather conditions, which occur frequently in the Bay of Bengal area as well as restrictions and requirements in Afghanistan. For this reason, the overall management of any proposed ATFM system should be given to a State or States within the area of operation so that adjustments can be made with minimum disruption to air traffic flying in or planning to fly in this area.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note that Thailand is now prepared to take a proactive role in the establishment of an effective ATFM system for the area under consideration.
- b) note the initiative already taken by Thailand in the on-going development of an ATFM model to overcome the present and future concerns in air traffic flow across the area in question;
- c) note that Thailand is willing to work with partners to expedite the implementation of ATFM in the area under consideration;
- d) support the concept that any proposed ATFM model should be robust as well as practical and have the ability to adjust to changing circumstances such as adverse weather conditions, which occur frequently in the Bay of Bengal area as well as restrictions and requirements in Afghanistan;

- e) because of d) above, endorse that the overall management and responsibility of ATFM in this area should be delegated to a State or States within the area of concern; and,
- f) the target date for implementation of ATFM in the Bay of Bengal and westwards within the area of concern to be within the third quarter of 2005.

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