



**Agenda Item 2: Report of activities of the GESEA and Subgroups**

**a) Review of air navigation priorities in the ATM field**

**PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVING THE PROCESS FOR UPDATING ATS OPERATIONAL  
LETTERS OF AGREEMENT**

(Prepared by Argentina)

**SUMMARY**

This paper provides an analysis of opportunities for improvement in relation to the process used between adjacent States for the update of ATS Operational Letters of Agreement (OTA) between two (2) or more adjacent States.

**References:**

- Annex 11 – Air Traffic Services.
- DOC 4444 - Procedures for Air Navigation Services - Air Traffic Management (PANS ATM).
- DOC 9426 - Air Traffic Services Planning Manual.
- SAM Region ATS Contingency Framework Plan (MCATS/SAM).

**1. Background**

1.1 Annex 11 - "Air Traffic Services" - establishes coordination requirements, both for normal operations as well as for contingency situations, among the units of the Navigation Services, so that they may be provided in an efficient and safe way.

1.2 Doc 4444 - PANS ATM - "Air Traffic Management" - (Chapter 10) stipulates provisions regarding the technical-operational aspects to be considered by ATC units for the coordination and transfer of flight control.

1.3 In addition, the aforementioned regulations also provide, where appropriate, for the inclusion of agreed operating procedures in regional air navigation agreements.

1.4 Doc 9426 - "Air Traffic Services Planning Manual" - recommends that the Operational Letters of Agreement - in view of the evolution of the technical-operational context - be reviewed and - if necessary - amended as often as required.

1.5 At the Twenty-sixth Workshop/Meeting of the SAM Implementation Group (SAM/IG/26), Study Note NE/2. 13 was presented, which referred to the need for a quick and dynamic mechanism for updating contingency measures agreed between two or more adjacent States, based on the fast evolution of the operational context, thus promoting the development of Appendix I to the "SAM Region ATS

Contingency Framework Plan (MCATS/SAM)" - HARMONIZATION PROCESSES FOR LEVEL 2 ATS CONTINGENCY PLANS. This Appendix contemplates a procedure for updating such measures and their detachment from the ATS LOAs (Letters of Operational Agreement), in order to streamline and make this process more flexible.

1.6 At the First Workshop/Meeting on Optimization of ATS Coordination and SAM/ATS/ATFM - SAM SUR Contingency Plans, held in Lima -Perú-, between last September 5 and 9, the "RECOMMENDATION SAM SUR-01" was issued, referring to the introduction of improvements in the ATS Operational Letters of Agreement, regarding their content, application, validity and subscription, which would contribute to efficiency and operational safety in the provision of ATS and the transfer of aircraft between adjacent dependencies, This would contribute to the efficiency and operational safety in the provision of Air Traffic Services (ATS) and the transfer of aircraft between adjacent dependencies, thus promoting the post-pandemic recovery of the industry and the reestablishment of air connectivity in the SAM Region.

## 2. Analysis

2.1. It has been noted that, although there are no regulatory provisions related to the methodology for reviewing, updating and subscribing ATS LOAs these - in general - are subject to an initialing process that requires the intervention of the highest authorities, both the Civil Aviation Authorities (CAA) and the Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSP); this has an impact on the deadlines for updating these Letters of Agreement and on their availability in the ATC units reached.

2.2. Likewise, the influence of the "time" factor in the aforementioned process is of utmost importance, considering the variations in the technical-operational context, which are increasingly faster and more frequent, due to the evolution of the industry and the permanent innovations in aircraft capabilities and ATM/CNS infrastructure. This has an impact on the airspace structure, thus revealing the need to enhance the updating processes of the ATS LOAs in order to optimize the operational procedures applied by the ATS units for the provision of Air Navigation Services (ANS) and, consequently, of air operations, thus contributing to the post-pandemic recovery of such operations. Hence, it is necessary to identify the aspects related to the processes of change management in the ANS and CNS/ATM Systems and, in turn, their impact on the procedures contained in the aforementioned Letters, since their updating or amendment is not an equally dynamic process.

2.3. On the other hand, the context of isolation caused by the 2020 pandemic prompted States to adopt digital tools and means to be able to continue their activities, which led to the implementation of new practices that even improved the work methodologies applied so far and their results. It is therefore proposed to evaluate the implementation of such practices - more frequently - in the process of updating the ATS LOAs, when they do not include complex changes for their implementation, including their methods or rubric systems.

2.4. Regarding the arrangements foreseen in the Letters of reference - without prejudice to the powers of the intervening parties to agree on measures and provisions - in order to standardize and harmonize the operating procedures applied by the States of the Region, it is deemed appropriate to determine the minimum content to be included in such Letters, contemplating the advances in Air Navigation Services, such as, among others, the implementation of *Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM)* and *ATS Interfacility Data Communications (AIDC)*, which implies agreeing and including measures in this regard.

2.5. In addition, it was noted that it would be pertinent that the aforementioned updating process - when involving two or more adjacent States - take into account the analysis of those agreed aspects that

require modifying or constituting regional air navigation agreements, which would lead to - if appropriate - amending Doc 7030 - Regional Supplementary Procedures (SUPPS) and/or the Regional Air Navigation Plan for the CAR/SAM Region.

2.6 In addition, Appendix I of the MCATS/SAM, mentioned in 1.5, establishes a procedure for updating contingency measures agreed between two or more adjacent States, the basic premise of which is to disassociate such measures from the ATS Operational Letters of Agreement signed between them, proposing to include in such Letters a documentary reference to the AIPs of the relevant States. Thus, considering the technical-operational nature of these measures, it would be convenient that they be elaborated, reviewed and approved by the ANSPs, through working groups, either in person or virtually, in order to speed up the updating tasks, thus dispensing with the signing of such agreements by high-level officials of the CAAs / ANSPs of the States. Finally, it establishes that the agreed measures shall be included in a minutes or meeting report, as an instrument of standardization or harmonization among the Parties.

2.7. Finally, attention is drawn to the existence of agreements or documents agreed between adjacent States (MoU ATFM, MoU Longitudinal Separation, MoU CNS, etc.), which refer to aspects and procedures contemplated in the ATS LOAs, which leads to the dispersion or atomization of information, thus making it difficult for the Air Traffic Controllers personnel of the ATC units affected by such content to have access to it.

2.8. By virtue of the foregoing and in order to meet the needs expressed, it is deemed appropriate to establish the following:

- a) Standardized mechanisms that promote coordination actions among the States of the SAM Region in order to update the ATS LOAs involving two or more adjacent States.
- b) Standardized mechanisms for amending and/or updating International Letters of Agreement, including a procedure for their homologation - taking into account the nature of the Agreements and the legal regimes of each State, as well as their impact on regional air navigation agreements.
- c) The establishment of a methodology for intervention in the review and signing of such Letters or measures, which contemplates the delegation of the signature to competent authorities that are part of Upper Management, but whose decision making is directly related to the subject matter; and the creation of technical committees for their preparation that dispense with the physical presence of the intervening parties for their implementation.
- d) Criteria on the aspects or contents to be included in the operational procedures agreed between two (2) or more adjacent States, proposing the elaboration of an *ATS Operational Agreement Letter* that includes clauses referring to the most dynamic aspects or requiring frequent updates in annexes or attachments whose homologation mechanism by the States involved is flexible and dynamic, without prejudice to their legal regimes. Likewise, it would be pertinent to integrate or include in the ATS LOAs any agreement or document related to the provisions and procedures contemplated therein, in order to have an integrated document. On the other hand, the content to be included in the ATS LOAs should be concise and clear, limited to the actions to be implemented by Air Traffic Controllers, facilitating decision making in ATC units, especially during coordination and aircraft transfer tasks.

- e) The preparation of guidance material for the States of the SAM Region that includes the mechanisms listed in the previous points and the procedures derived from them, including aspects related to the language/s of the text to be homologated, considering, in addition, that the arrangements contained therein must be understandable for the Air Traffic Controllers that will apply them.

### 3. **Suggested actions**

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) take note of the information provided in this study note; and
- b) to consider the establishment of an AD HOC Working Group to develop the proposals contained in this study note.

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