



INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION
Fourth Meeting of AFI Region Directors General of Civil Aviation (DGCA/4)
(Matsapha, Manzini, Swaziland, 8 to 9 November 2010)

Agenda Item 4: Air Navigation

IMPLEMENTATION OF ICAO NEW FLIGHT PLAN FORMAT

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

This paper provides information on ICAO work to facilitate the implementation of Amendment 1 to *Procedures for Air Navigation Services — Air Traffic Management* (PANS-ATM, Doc 4444), and related activities in the AFI Region. It also draws States' attention on the need for a coordinated transition and the consequences of States not meeting the 15 November 2012 deadline.

REFERENCES

- ICAO Special AFI RAN 2008, Report (Doc 9930)

Related Strategic Objectives: A. Safety – Enhance global civil aviation safety and D. Efficiency – Enhance the efficiency of aviation operations.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In 2008, after 4 years of discussion by the FPL study group, the amendments to *Procedures for Air Navigation Services — Air Traffic Management* (PANS-ATM, Doc 4444) were agreed on behalf of the ICAO Council by the President of the Council.

1.2 The changes are necessary due to the rapid advancement in aircraft capabilities as we head towards Performance Based Navigation (PBN).

1.3 These changes will allow Airspace users to more fully utilise their aircraft's capabilities and will deliver them significant benefits in terms of reduced delays, fuel savings, and greater flight profile efficiencies. As a result there will be consequential environmental benefits.

2. WHAT HELP TO STATES IS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE FROM ICAO?

2.1 ICAO has produced guidance material aimed at helping States tackle the task ahead. ICAO implementation guidelines were circulated to States and international organizations under State Letter Ref.: AN 13/2.1-09/9 dated 6 February 2009.

2.2 ICAO convenes, facilitates and often hosts regional Task Forces meetings where States within a region can discuss, define and agree strategies for their regional implementation and transition.

2.3 ICAO also provides workshops and seminars available to all States within the regions where issues are discussed, worked examples of the changes are explored, experiences are shared and suppliers can inform States of their progress in delivering solutions and upgrades to their systems.

2.4 ICAO has produced an internet-based website which contains information on every flight information region (FIR) and their associated States. This is used to primarily track the progress of States as they move through the various stages of implementation and provide a fully open forum for States, aviation users and any other stakeholders to view the global progress of ANSPs towards 15 November 2012.

2.5 This website is titled Flight Implementation Tracking Systems (FITS) and is available at <http://www2.icao.int/en/FITS/Pages/home.aspx> or by using any search engine to look for ICAO FITS, should provide rapid access. Please note that this website is not password protected as there are multiple stakeholders, from general aviation users, through to military, who will be interested to know how States are progressing.

2.6 ICAO is working on the following phases of the FPL 2012 Programme in order to ensure global harmonization:

- Negotiation and Approval Phase (This phase is complete (01 May 2010))
- Impact Assessment and Requirements Phase (which is ongoing and planned (Until 31 December 2010))
- Solution Production Phase (Should be completed by 31 December 2011)
- Transition Phase 1 (ANSP Implementation) (1 January 2012 to 31 March 2012)
- Transition Phase 2 (Transition into operations) (1 April 2012 – 30 June 2012)
- Transition Phase 3 (Airspace user implementation) (1 July 2012 - 15 November 2012)
- Closure Phase (New only filing of flight plans) (15 November 2012 onwards)

3. **PROGRESS TO DATE (OCTOBER 2010)**

3.1 Although the amendments to the ICAO flight plan have been promulgated for some time many States are failing to respond to requests from ICAO regional offices for progress updates.

3.2 One reason for this we suspect is that these changes to automated Flight Data Processing system software and in many cases additional hardware, have not been budgeted by states and thus States have been slow to contact their system suppliers.

3.3 It is also likely to be the case that some States do not have the technical expertise to either evaluate their systems capabilities and the consequential impact of the changes on their systems and likely also that they do not have the project management skills to implement and transition the changes into operational service.

4. **SOME OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF STATES NOT MEETING THE 15 NOVEMBER 2012 DEADLINE.**

4.1 There will be aviation chaos in those States which are not ready to accept the New Flight Plan form on 15 November 2012.

- a) flights will be delayed;
- b) flights will miss slot times;
- c) airspace user dispatch staff or agencies will be overwhelmed with rejection and re-submission of flight plans;
- d) ANSP staff are likely to be overloaded with requests from aviation users as to why their flight plans were rejected and may be requested to modify the FPL online;
- e) airspace users may choose to take an alternate route via an ANSP which can make use of their aircraft capabilities and so deliver efficiencies expected by that airspace user;
- f) aircraft likely to be subject to holding if airport gates have not been vacated due to departing aircraft missing their slots;
- g) aircrew may be overloaded by having to file Flight Plan modifications on route; and

- h) controllers and aircrew could become overloaded due to increased voice communication if significant modifications to flight plans are required whilst on route, leading to a possible reduction in separation of aircraft.

5. **PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES IN THE AFI REGION**

5.1 The Special AFI/8 Regional Air Navigation Meeting (SP AFI/8 RAN) Durban, South Africa, 24 to 29 November 2008, noted that the impact of the modifications to flight data processing systems would vary from one air navigation service provider and State to another depending on their data requirements, the level of validation necessary and the types of systems in place, and would require significant effort and lead time for States, air navigation service providers and aircraft operators.

5.2 Furthermore, the RAN Meeting recognized that because the change-over should be coordinated with all stakeholders, the planning and implementation regional groups (PIRGs) should develop coordinated transition plans with common strategies and mitigation measures. The RAN Meeting therefore agreed to a basic checklist in the form of a Performance Framework Form (PFF), to be followed by States and used by APIRG to monitor transition efforts. Accordingly, the SP AFI/8 RAN formulated Recommendation 6/5 – *Implementation of the new ICAO model Flight Plan Form*. The content of the PFF as amended was adopted by the APIRG 17 meeting in August 2010 under Conclusion 17/41: *ATM Performance Framework*.

5.3 In order to enable the optimum contribution of relevant stakeholders in the transition to and implementation of the new ICAO flight plan model provisions, APIRG/17 established a Flight Plan Transition Task Force (FPLT/TF); and requested ICAO Regional Offices to arrange workshops to sensitize and inform States, ANSPs and related entities, and facilitate a better understanding of the planning and implementation implications, resultant tasks and timelines.

5.4 The Task Force held its first meeting from 12 to 14 September 2010 in Johannesburg, South Africa. A second meeting, which will be preceded by a workshop, will be held early next year in order to develop the Regional transition and implementation plan, with which States could align their national plans.