



WORKING PAPER

MULTIDISCIPLINARY MEETING REGARDING GLOBAL TRACKING

Montréal, 12 May to 13 May 2014

Agenda item 2: Explore the need for ICAO guidance on global tracking

GLOBAL TRACKING AS AN INDUSTRY INITIATIVE

(Presented by the ICAO Secretariat)

SUMMARY

Recent events have reiterated the need to ensure that there is a capability to track airline flights across the globe. This working paper outlines a way forward to meet this need in the short term through an industry-led initiative.

Action: Action for the meeting is contained in paragraph 5.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Events such as AF447 and the disappearance of MH370 for a prolonged period of time have again focused attention on the need to improve global flight tracking. Given available technologies and capabilities there is an expectation that this issue be addressed in the short term.

1.2 Some operators are already using various systems and procedures for tracking their own fleets and it may be appropriate for such solutions to be assessed for wider application. In preparation for this meeting, ICAO distributed a questionnaire to vendors who either presently provide equipment and/or services to support flight tracking or are anticipating providing such services in the near future (Working Paper 1 of this meeting refers). A summary of the results of this questionnaire are posted on the meeting website. It is anticipated that the results of this questionnaire will provide needed insights into the capabilities of existing technologies and the indicative costs associated with those capabilities.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 World-wide implementation of flight tracking will require development of global solutions which, in turn, could take the form of international Standards. However, the development of international Standards can take anywhere from two to three years from the initial proposal through to its adoption by the Council of ICAO. Additional time is also required for States to promulgate national regulations based upon these international Standards. Some States can enact or have already enacted national requirements for monitoring flights, but these may not meet the requirements needed to ensure global flight tracking capability.

2.2 While some States have established requirements for their airlines to monitor flights, there are wide variations in those requirements. Flight tracking by airlines also varies quite extensively

from one operator to another. Some operators make use of flight operations officers/flight dispatchers to track their fleet, while other operators use a less formal process, sometimes using commercial aircraft tracking applications.

2.3 An industry-led initiative would be the most expeditious means to promote the implementation of global flight tracking. IATA announced during its Operations Conference in Kuala Lumpur in April 2014, that it would convene an expert task force to undertake this effort and identify potential solutions by the end of this year. IATA and ICAO have agreed to work together in this regard.

2.4 This task force will examine all of the options available for tracking commercial aircraft considering parameters such as implementation, investment, time and complexity to achieve the desired coverage. A performance-based concept will be considered to address elements such as, but not limited to, reporting parameters and intervals, reliability, accuracy and global coverage, without specifying a particular technical solution. Target levels of performance could be established and serve as a basis for global guidelines. This, in turn, would allow airlines the flexibility to determine their means of compliance based upon their own operational scenarios and what would be the most cost-effective solutions to meet the target levels of performance. Working Paper 3, presented by the Secretariat, outlines the need for international Standards. Lessons learned from developing a performance based approach for flight tracking should be considered in the planning process for future Standards.

2.5 An industry-led initiative to develop criteria for flight tracking will require a wide range of expertise including, but not limited to air operators, manufacturers, flight tracking service providers and air traffic services. It is also anticipated that the criteria would require some vetting by regulatory authorities. ICAO involvement in this process will provide a necessary conduit between the industry-led initiative and States. The outcome would lead to guidance material on global flight tracking to be used by all stakeholders. Working Paper 4, presented by IATA, outlines the specific arrangements and target timeframes for the task force work.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 States, ICAO, operators and all appropriate stakeholders should work together to analyse existing technology and develop guidance to enable global tracking capability in the near term. ICAO should support an industry-led initiative to develop technical solutions. To the extent possible, the criteria should be performance-based, thus allowing airlines flexibility to implement effective and cost-efficient flight tracking. Lessons learned from developing a performance based approach for flight tracking through the industry-led initiative should be considered in the planning process for future Standards.

4. ACTION BY THE MEETING

4.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information in this paper and support the industry-led initiative; and
- b) agree that lessons learned from developing a performance based approach for flight tracking through the industry-led initiative should be considered in the planning process for future Standards.