

FORUM ON INTEGRATION AND HARMONIZATION OF NEXTGEN AND SESAR INTO THE GLOBAL ATM FRAMEWORK

PANEL "OTHER PERSPECTIVES"

9 SEPTEMBER 2008

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Thank you very much for the opportunity to participate on this panel. And thank you to the many people who have brought us to the point where we need to discuss the integration and harmonization of the technology achievements of NextGen and SESAR.

The improvement of air navigation services has long been a shared goal of aviation stakeholders. There is not a national or supra-national provider that does not strive to improve the efficiency of the services offered. The NextGen and SESAR programmes are the fruit of the recognition that we needed to make a giant step forward, not just adjust current systems, and they stem from a common aspiration. Both systems should feed directly into the future global vision that is being developed at ICAO for a global air traffic system that will be increasingly harmonised and unified.

What I want to do here in the next few minutes is to expand the charge in two ways. First: To one of the global air transportation system which includes the airport perspective on what these technological advances mean for those of us who provide the infrastructure and services to passengers and airlines on the ground. And, secondly to consider that, with the technological progress that NextGen and SESAR have made, now there needs to be political progress. It is not too soon to work hard on both.

So, to talk about airports, let me begin with three points: a forecast, a concern and a fact.

- The forecast is that in 20 years passenger traffic will double.

- The concern is that current systems and installations will not satisfy that level of growth.
- The fact is that the time horizon for the readiness of the NextGen and SESAR technological advances is within, if not before, the capital planning and implementation time horizons for airport infrastructure projects.

As a member of various panels and committees in the United States over the last 20 years, I have been kept somewhat abreast of the concepts and project elements of the NextGen program. Yet, at a recent visit to the FAA's Mitre laboratory, I admit to being pleasantly surprised as to how much progress has been made in the development of NextGen products. However, that sense of pleasure was mixed with a sense of apprehension that airports could become the weak link in the chain of air transportation capacity if we did not start to fully understand the implications of what these improvements would bring and participate in the implementation strategies that will be needed to employ these improvements.

Airports absolutely embrace the aspirations of NextGen and SESAR to optimize the use of airspace capacity but we also recognize that system and technological changes will have repercussions on the ground that we need to manage in order to have an overall positive impact on the entire air transport system.

Until recently airports have been mostly in the background on airspace rationalisation planning. Perhaps the air traffic management professionals felt that they sufficiently understood airport needs to account for them. Perhaps airport professionals have felt that the projections of 2025 to 2050 for full implementation of the air traffic management system of the future meant that airports had plenty of time before they needed to pay attention. Both perceptions are misguided: it is time for the airports to become more directly involved - almost any change in airspace capacity will have an impact on airports.

The impacts certainly include operational ones areas but the urgency now is on airport capital planning and resulting financial impacts.

If the aircraft acceptance rate at a high demand airport will be increased, the airport will need to provide for increased capacity in its airfield, its terminal facilities, and its groundside facilities and will have to coordinate with its surrounding communities increased capacity on airport access roadways. On the other hand, NextGen and SESAR advances may defer the need for some capital programs airports are planning. For an airport that needs additional runway capacity, the possibilities for reduced runway separation for independent operation may make it cheaper for an airport to add runway capacity – a new runway that can “fit” within the confines of an airport’s current physical dimensions will be politically and financially easier to provide than a runway that requires the acquisition of additional property. I know for example that San Francisco airport has asked to be a pilot site for NextGen products that may reduce runway separation criteria. They, like other airports around the world, have constrained airfield capacity, particularly under instrument meteorological conditions, that have proven difficult to resolve due to environmental and community challenges. A significant reduction in runway separation requirements would completely alter the political landscape for those airports’ capital project aspirations. Their communities can become allies for faster implementation of NextGen and SESAR.

Airports are now developing capital plans and plans of finance for those capital plans through 2018, typically and, for many, through the 2025, 2030 time frame. Those plans need to incorporate the benefits and challenges to be brought by NextGen and SESAR air traffic management products.

Growth

This is true, not just for the current high-demand, congested large hubs. The increase in the ability of Air Traffic Management to handle more flights may stimulate traffic growth not merely accommodate it. New capacity in the air can increase traffic at small and medium airports that are looking to extend services for the social and economic welfare of their communities. NextGen and SESAR have the promise of offering better access to all airspace users. If NextGen and SESAR can ease the burden imposed on large hubs of smaller aircraft traffic, aircraft operators can escape current or planned restrictions or disincentives to serving smaller markets. Again, the airports serving these smaller markets need to understand their underlying unconstrained demand and plan facilities, environment impacts and surface access accordingly.

Just looking at SESAR, it targets a doubling of airspace capacity, but it is difficult to imagine the possibility of doubling airport capacity IN Europe. We need to understand the realistic potential capacity for the air transportation system. We aspire to ease bottlenecks in the air, but we have to do better than merely shift those bottlenecks to the ground. And the ground is not just the airfield – it includes the processing facilities for passengers and baggage in the terminal and the surface vehicle processing facilities at the airport curb, and between the airport and passenger and freight origins and destinations. Again I emphasize that the entire air transportation system must be ready to supply the capacity made possible by the new air traffic management efficiencies. This brings into play a political dimension to obtain buy-in from all stakeholders.

Political Progress

And the political dimension is the second challenge I wanted to raise. As we have heard, the scientific and engineering geniuses have already produced valuable ATM capabilities some of which are selectively in use. It is time to engage the management and political geniuses to develop the strategy to encourage speedy implementation of those capabilities. Should we put in place incentives, to, for example, encourage aircraft operators to become early adopters in equipping their aircraft? Should we tolerate a mix of the old and the new and for how long? Are we willing to let the weak fall by the wayside in order to accelerate the roll-out period? Do we have the resolve to press financially strapped airlines, business aviation and private aircraft owner operators into the new world? Will we have the political determination to have airport operators and their communities to make the investments needed on and off the airport to get the job done? Can we get a single European sky? The strategic approach NextGen and SESAR have taken to move the technology development will have to be paralleled with a strategic approach to implement the system made possible by that technology development. In the end, I don't know which will turn out to be the more difficult job.

What airports need from their ATM partners

Dare I suggest that ICAO is the best vehicle for leading, not just harmonizing the air traffic management development efforts of NextGen and SESAR but facilitating and coordinating the implementation of the air transportation system improvement efforts? ICAO has the political structure to bring participation and consensus from all of the

stakeholders. This may require expanding, shifting, combining the charge of current bureaus. It will certainly require special effort to involve stakeholders, such as airports, in multi-dimensional roles.

ACI is eager to participate in this process. Both our ACI North America and Europe offices, working with the FAA and European authorities respectively, have demonstrated their willingness to contribute.

Airports, as organizations that are accustomed to gaining consensus from multiple stakeholders with wide ranges of interests, can assist and ACI offers the ideal channel to gain the airport and community participation that will be necessary to realize the tremendous promise of air traffic modernization.

Thank you.