



Introduction of a Raised Transition Altitude (TA) in Irish Airspace: Consultation Briefing Document

This document contains information on the consultation process for the application of a Raised Transition Altitude for the Shannon FIR in line with its application in the London and Scottish FIRs

2015

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Glossary:

ANSP	Air Navigation Service Provider
ASR	Altimeter Setting Region
CAA	Civil Aviation Authority (UK)
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
CTR	(ATC) Control Zone
FAB	Functional Airspace Block
FRA	Free Route Airspace
LoA	Letter of Agreement
NASAS	Nominated Altimeter Setting Aerodromes or Stations
NSA	National Supervisory Authority
SES	Single European Sky
SESAR	SES Air Traffic Management Research
SMS	Safety Management System
SRD	Safety Regulatory Directorate
TA	Transition Altitude
TAPT	Transition Altitude Project Team
VSM	Vertical Separation Minima

1. Introduction

A harmonised Transition Altitude (TA) of 18,000ft is proposed across Ireland and the UK, with the intention of enhancing efficiency, both inside and outside controlled airspace, through standardisation of airspace and altimeter setting procedures. This will provide the foundation for future safety, environmental and economic benefits that will be realised through improvements to the vertical profiles of aircraft arrivals and departures in the Shannon FIR (which includes Dublin airspace). It also serves as a platform for future airspace and operating concepts through programmes such as Single European Sky (SES), SES Air Traffic Management Research (SESAR), (Cross Border) Free Route Airspace (FRA) and UK/Ireland Functional Airspace Block (FAB).

Ireland has aligned with the UK in introducing a raised TA of 18,000 feet. This will be implemented at a date in the future.

Both the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the IAA Safety Regulatory Directorate, as the relevant National Supervisory Authorities (NSAs) for UK and Irish states agreed on how the proposal for a raised TA was to proceed. Operational implementation is the responsibility of the respective Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) for each state. The relevant NSAs are responsible for the oversight and consultation development of this proposal and the consultation associated with its introduction. The relevant ANSPs will support the safety assurance aspects and apply normal Safety Management Systems (SMS) provisions for operational implementation.

In advance of the introduction of a raised TA, it has been agreed, in alignment with the UK project team to consult with relevant Irish stakeholders, who may be affected by this raised TA.

This document outlines the consultation process for the different stakeholder groups.

2. Consultation Process

The (IAA) Consultation Process for the introduction of a TA has effectively already begun with the issuing of AIC Nr. 15/15 of 12th November 2015 (see **Appendix A** of this document). Following confirmation that the UK is now proceeding with its next consultation process phase, the IAA SRD has commenced its own consultation process.

The term of the process is: **23rd November 2015 to the 24th February 2016**. During this period stakeholders are invited to submit comment on the proposal to the following e-mail address: taconsultation@iaa.ie

All submissions will be reviewed and a response issue to the originator.

The supporting documentation for the TA proposal on the IAA website includes:

1. This briefing overview document for the TA project
2. The IAA TA Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for a raised TA, dated 9th October 2015
3. A list of commonly asked questions and responses
4. The joint UK-Ireland FAB Statement (*to be added*)
5. The joint UK & Ireland NSAs Letter of Intent (*to be added*)

3. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholders forums which the IAA intend to engage directly with for consultation on the introduction of a raised TA shall include:

- i. Adjacent Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) not migrating to a raised TA
- ii. ANSPs within the state for which the IAA ANSP does not provide ATS services (addressed through relevant Letters of Agreement (LoAs))
- iii. Dublin/ Cork/Shannon Airport Operations Planning (DAOPG(Monthly)/CAOPG (Quarterly)/ SAOPG(Quarterly) Meetings
- iv. Flight Operators Consultation Group(FOCG) Meeting (Quarterly)
- v. General Aviation Safety Council of Ireland (GASCI)
- vi. General Aviation Pilot Open days, run annually by IAA ANSP
- vii. Any other interested parties

Additionally, each Irish Registered AOC has a dedicated Flight Operations Inspector, who will act as a conduit for information on the TA as required.

Note 1: It is not anticipated that engagement with the ANSPs who provide an ATS Service to Irish Regional Airports will be a significant task, as these control zones (CTRs) interface directly with IAA En-route.

Note 2: The impact on the Irish Military (Air Corps) will be addressed through ongoing interface meetings.

4. UK/ Ireland FAB Statement

The UK/Ireland Functional Airspace Block (FAB) Harmonised (Raised) Transition Altitude FAB Statement is a statement jointly undertaken by the respective regulatory bodies (NSAs). See this statement included on the IAA Website.

5. Impact Assessment

At this point in the project, given that there is no agreed date for implementation, the consultation being undertaken will inform the next stage of the process for the Irish state in the implementation of a raised TA.

During this subsequent phase, the IAA Regulatory Directorate will conduct the relevant Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) and Business Impact Assessment (BIA), for the introduction of a raised TA and the associated impact on stakeholders.

6. Altimeter Setting Regions (ASRs) & ASR Bulletin

The (UK) Transition Altitude Project Team (TAPT) which includes a representative from the IAA ANSP decided that ASR boundaries should be designed to be 80-100 nm from the Nominated Altimeter Setting Aerodromes or Stations (NASAS) as a guiding principle.

The ASRs decided upon for the Shannon FIR, while not fully in compliance with this principle, have been constructed based on expected traffic below 18,000 feet in these ASRs and the proximity of such traffic to the source of the ASR QNH data, i.e. the MUNSTA ASR (to the West of the FIR) is larger than the principle provides for but the amount of traffic operating below 18,000 feet west of 12W is not significant and therefore not seen as an issue for the size of the ASR (see ASR map in the IAA CONOPS).

It has been agreed that the ASR Bulletin will issue from the UK and will be a UK/Ireland FAB Bulletin once a raised TA has been jointly implemented.

7. MET Eireann data

The MET Eireann data supplied for this stage of the TA Project related to a study undertaken in February 2013. This data is deemed sufficient for this stage of the process in order that the IAA can proceed to consultation of the introduction of a raised TA.

More detailed assessment will be undertaken as the project moves to operational implementation and will include more detailed information regarding the NASAS.

8. Questionnaires

While it is understood that the UK will engage with a questionnaire process as part of their consultation, this is not a requirement for the IAA.

Given the lower number of relevant stakeholders in the Irish case and a less operationally complex environment, the IAA is confident that each stakeholder grouping can be addressed individually and comments taken on board through the forums as referenced above, or through the consultation e-mail provided.

For Regional Airports (other ANSPs), each of these has a Letter of Agreement (LoA) with IAA En-route. Operational implementation of the raised TA and the associated procedures will be included in these LoAs.

9. Cost Impact

In line with other on-going projects that are enablers for the introduction of a raised TA, the cost for non-state ANSPs is anticipated to be minimal.

The IAA ANSP will carry the operational costs associated with simulation, procedure development, safety assessment and training.

10. Stakeholder (External) ANSPs

The main issues for operational implementation will revolve around the interface with our UK partner at the ASR boundaries.

Procedures development by the IAA ANSP as part of the next phase of the project will inform the updates to LoAs with our UK interfaces.

For ANSPs not moving to a raised TA, the relevant LoAs will require updates to reflect procedures to address the application of Standard QNH/ ASR QNH values.

11. ATM System

The IAA ATM system will be updated to include additional system requirement associated with a raised TA.

12. Challenges

The key challenge for the IAA is moving towards operational implementation.

Simulation, procedures development and safety assessment of a raised TA for the Shannon FIR will be scheduled around the agreed operational implementation date.

13. Nominal Vertical Separation Minima (VSM)

Assessment of the need for a Nominal Vertical Separation Minima (VSM) was not considered for this phase of the process and is not a block to proceeding with IAA consultation.

The IAA considers that Nominal VSM will not be required for its operation of a raised TA and that issues of cross-border vertical separation assurance will be addressed procedurally for operational implementation.

14. Conclusion

The IAA ANSP and SRD are confident in proceeding with this consultation and acknowledge the significant support received from the UK CAA and NATS in the production of the documentation required in order to proceed with this phase of the raised TA project.

Note 3: See CAA CAP 1349 for the UK Consultation Overview Document.

Appendix A: Ireland AIC Nr. 15/15 effective 23rd November 2015

IRELAND

AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION SERVICE
IRISH AVIATION AUTHORITY
BALLYCASEY CROSS
SHANNON
CO. CLARE
Tel +353 61 703750 Fax +353 61 366245

AIC Nr 15/15 12 NOV

Proposed Introduction of a Raised Common Transition Altitude

1. Purpose

- 1.1.** The purpose of this AIC is to inform all airspace users and interested parties of a proposed introduction of a raised Common Transition Altitude and to invite submissions on consultation items.
- 1.2.** Consultation on this proposal will be undertaken with affected Airspace Users, Aerodrome Operators and Air Traffic Services Provider, commencing on 23rd November 2015.

2. Consultation Items

- 2.1.** The items which the consultation process for the introduction of a raised Common Transition Altitude are as follows:

2.1.1. Raising of Transition Altitude

The UK and Ireland have for several years been jointly pursuing the goal of a harmonised Transition Altitude (TA) @18,000ft. Both the National Supervisory Authorities (NSAs), in collaboration with their respective En-Route Services Providers and militaries, have reached a consensus on how they shall proceed.

2.1.2. QNH regions

The introduction of regional QNH regions

2.1.3. Lowering of the base of controlled Airspace

A change to the base of controlled airspace will be considered as part of the consultation process.

3. Consultation Process

- 3.1.** The consultation process is planned to provide airspace users, Aerodrome Operators and Air Traffic Services Providers with information on, and input to, this proposal. All the consultation documentation/details will be available from the [IAA Web site](#) on the 23rd November 2015.