



International Civil Aviation Organization

MIDANPIRG Communication, Navigation and Surveillance Sub-Group

Seventh Meeting (CNS SG/7)
(Cairo, Egypt, 31 May - 02 June 2016)

Agenda Item 4: CNS Planning and Implementation in the MID Region

FREQUENCY FINDER AND COORDINATION FOR FREQUENCY ASSIGNMENT

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

This paper presents the detailed information on the ICAO Frequency Finder tool and coordination process involved in the assignment of Aeronautical frequencies.

Action by the meeting is at paragraph 3.

REFERENCES

- ICAO Doc 9718

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ICAO has started rolling out, for use by Regional Office, a special version of Frequency Finder. This tool provides for the option to maintain the ICAO global COM list 3 for VHF COM frequency assignments in the band 117.975 – 137 MHz. Workshops with the view to introduce Frequency Finder, the use of the ICAO global COM list 3 and updating the regional frequency assignment plans are now firmly scheduled for the APAC and MID Regions in 2016. Introduction and use of Frequency Finder by the EUR/NAT Regional Office has started.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The implementation of the ICAO global COM list 3 has become urgent because of:

- a) Increased use of radio frequencies in all Regions due to the increase in air traffic; and
- b) changes in the coverage of the ICAO Regions where States have been re-allocated.

2.2 Frequency Finder provides the Regional Offices with a tool that offers to assess compatibility of new or modified frequency assignments that have been uploaded to the global COM list 3. In addition, Frequency Finder provides for mechanisms to synchronize (upload and download) the global COM list 3 with the local COM list 3, in particular the local *regional* frequency assignments.

2.3 Initially, Frequency Finder is foreseen to be used by the ICAO EUR/NAT and MID Regional Offices. Use by the ICAO APAC, the ESAF and WACAF Regional Offices is expected to commence later this year, followed by the CAR and SAM Regional Offices.

2.4 Use of Frequency Finder by the EUR/NAT Regional Office is limited to the uploading of frequency assignments that have been coordinated through the Safire coordination mechanism. In addition, the EUR/NAT Regional Office can upload to the ICAO global COM list any frequency assignment that has not been coordinated through this coordination mechanism, including those for the NAT Region, as required.

2.5 Currently, with the exception of the EUR Region, frequency assignments are coordinated exclusively through the ICAO Regional Office to which the ICAO Contracting States are accredited. In this coordination mechanism Regional Offices may propose to States particular frequency assignments as requested or include, after a compatibility test, agree to specific frequencies being assigned. In both cases, these frequency assignments are to be incorporated in the relevant regional COM list 3 and uploaded to the ICAO global COM list 3. The use of Frequency Finder and an up-to-date version of the global COM list 3 allows for the Regional Offices in their frequency coordination to consider compatibility of frequency assignments with those in adjacent Regions. Regional Offices are expected to upload at the earliest opportunity any regional modification to the global COM list 3 thus providing ICAO with an up-to-date statement of frequency assignments that have been coordinated and/or are in use.

2.6 In theory, whenever the ICAO global COM list 3 is always up-to-date and Regional Offices use the current version of this list when assigning new or modifying current frequency assignments, inter-regional frequency coordination is not necessary under the assumption that Regional Offices will not assign or upload a frequency assignment that can cause harmful interference to other frequency assignments that have been uploaded to the global COM list 3, including those for adjacent Regions. Inter-regional coordination does not involve coordination between States in one Region and Regional Offices (or States) in adjacent Regions.

2.7 However, not always the global COM list 3 may be updated immediately after within a Region a frequency assignment has been coordinated. This would particularly apply to the EUR Region where no mechanism has been implemented that would upload to the global COM list 3 modifications to the Safire table of frequency assignments.

2.8 With the view to minimize the actual coordination of frequency assignments between the Regional Offices the following procedure is considered for use by the Regional Offices. When making a new assignment or modifying an existing frequency assignment, Regional Offices ensure they are using the most current version of the global COM list 3 and upload the new or modified frequency assignment to the global COM list 3 at the earliest opportunity.

2.9 Frequency Finder informs the user when the global COM list 3 has been modified:

- In principle, Regional Offices do not assign for use within their Region frequency assignments that can cause harmful interference to frequency assignments in adjacent Regions. In particular cases, where such interference cannot be avoided, the relevant Regional Office coordinates with the adjacent Regional Office, through regular email
- On a regular basis (e.g. once a month), each Regional Office checks if the global COM list 3 was modified. In case this Regional Office finds inconsistencies in the global COM list 3, including frequency assignments that are incompatible with frequency assignments in its Region, coordination with the modifying Regional Office is initiated within a period of one month.

- Under this procedure, which minimizes the coordination between Regional Offices, each frequency assignment that is in the global COM list for a period of more than two months can be assumed to have been coordinated with adjacent Regions.
- In special cases, where an urgent confirmation is required, the initiating Regional Office can request the adjacent Regional Office to look into the proposed new or modified frequency assignments.

2.10 This coordination mechanism would allow for inter-regional coordinated to be established only in cases where such coordination is required. It allows for frequency assignments to be implemented that may have an interference contour that overlaps with another Region but does not affect any actual frequency assignment in that Region.

2.11 Attention needs to be given to existing incompatibility, both within a single Region as well as between Regions. ICAO intends to address incompatibilities within a single Region during the workshops for each Region. At these workshops States are requested to confirm that the ICAO COM list 3 is complete and includes all frequency assignments that are in use or are planned to be used. ICAO will provide the results of the compatibility of these frequency assignments with the view to address these during these workshops. These workshops should also identify and correct obvious errors that over the years were inserted in the Regional COM list 3.

2.12 ICAO intends to address inter-regional coordination between the APAC, MID, AFI Regions as well as between the CAR and SAM Regions on a bi-lateral basis. The secretariat will present to the relevant Regional Offices an analysis of any (perceived) incompatibility together with a proposed cause of action.

2.13 Inter-regional coordination with the EUR Region (Safire frequency assignments) are expected to require a different approach. Quite a significant number of frequency assignments have been introduced in the EUR Region without proper coordination with nearby adjacent Regions (AFI and MID Regions) and vice versa.

2.14 To support a meaningful compatibility assessment, Eurocontrol has submitted to ICAO a list with potential errors in the MID database. This list, which was received with high appreciation has been considered by the Secretariat and in almost all cases, corrections were made to the global COM list 3. These corrections are provisional until States and the MID-Office have agreed to these. It is foreseen that these corrections will be addressed at the MID workshop in 9-13 October 2016. Any such correction to the AFI COM list 3 is in progress.

2.15 Another assessment to be completed is related to frequency assignments to MID States which are currently in the EUR Safire database as well as frequency assignments to former MID and AFI States as mentioned in paragraph 2.1 above which are currently in the MID and AFI COM list 3. ICAO is planning to coordinate with these States the removal of MID frequency assignments from the Safire database and, if necessary, introduce these in the MID COM list 3. Vice versa, ICAO is considering the removal of frequency assignments for the former MID/AFI States from the MID and AFI COM list 3 while securing that these frequency assignments will be introduced in the Safire COM database, as necessary.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information provided in this paper; and
- b) urge States to actively participate in the Frequency Finder Workshop (Cairo, Egypt, 9-13 October 2016).