



ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization
North American, Central American and Caribbean Office

WORKING PAPER

NACC/WG/RAP/03 — WP/09
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**Third Meeting of Rapporteurs of the North American, Central American and
Caribbean Working Group (NACC/WG/RAP/03)**
(ICAO NACC Regional Office, from 24 to 27 March 2025)

**Agenda Item 3: Update NAM/CAR regional needs and NACC/WG objectives, its structure and
the review and reporting mechanisms**

AIRSPACE OPTIMIZATION TASK FORCE UPDATE

(Presented by Airspace Optimization Task Force Rapporteur)

| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | |
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| This working paper provides an update on the activities and progress of the Airspace Optimization Task Force (AO/TF), including key milestones, challenges, and next steps for the NAM/CAR region. The AO/TF continues to work on airspace modernization, Free Route Airspace (FRA) expansion, cross-border coordination, and procedural harmonization in alignment with ICAO's Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP) and GREPECAS objectives. | |
| Action: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take note of the AO/TF progress and updates.• Review and discuss the next steps for airspace modernization and FRA implementation.• Provide guidance on alignment with regional and global air traffic management strategies. |
| <i>Strategic Objectives:</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety• Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency• Economic Development of Air Transport• Environmental Protection |
| <i>References:</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ICAO Doc 9750 – Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP)• ICAO Doc 9854 – Global Concept of Air Traffic Management (ATM)• ICAO Annex 11 – Air Traffic Services• ICAO Annex 15 – Aeronautical Information Services• GREPECAS Regional Plan & Conclusions |

1. Introduction

1.1 The Airspace Optimization Task Force (AO/TF) was established to improve the efficiency, safety, and flexibility of regional air traffic flows by optimizing airspace structures, implementing Free Route Airspace (FRA), and ensuring seamless coordination among Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs).

1.2 This document provides an update on ongoing projects, key milestones achieved, challenges faced, and future objectives, with a focus on the next steps leading up to the full implementation of airspace optimization strategies in the NAM/CAR region.

2. Progress report

2.1 Free Route Airspace (FRA) Implementation:

- Several FRA trials have been conducted successfully in coordination with NAM/CAR ANSPs.
- Efforts are ongoing to harmonize cross-border FRA operations with adjacent FIRs and the SAM region.

2.2 Airspace Structural Optimization:

- Work continues FIR boundary adjustments and route restructuring to accommodate growing traffic demand.
- Harmonization of upper airspace procedures is being developed to improve efficiency and reduce ATC workload.

2.3 Technology and Data Integration:

- Enhanced use of Performance-Based Navigation (PBN).
- Introduction of Trajectory-Based Operations (TBO) concepts.
- Strengthened data-sharing platforms among stakeholders.

2.4 Challenges:

- Regulatory harmonization delays across different states.
- Technical limitations in some ANSPs.
- Need for enhanced cross-border collaboration in key traffic flow areas.

3. Next steps and recommendations

3.1 The AO/TF recommends the following actions:

- Strengthen FRA implementation efforts in collaboration with GREPECAS and ICAO NACC.

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- Enhance cross-border coordination to facilitate seamless airspace transitions.
- Increase ANSP engagement and training on modernized airspace structures.
- Improve regulatory alignment to ensure a common operational framework.

4. Suggested actions

4.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- Review and provide feedback on the progress of the AO/TF.
- Endorse continued efforts toward FRA and airspace optimization.
- Support further collaboration between ICAO NACC, ANSPs, and States in the harmonization of regional ATM initiatives.

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