

ICB/13/3
12th November 2006

INDUSTRY CONSULTATION BODY

Report on the activities of the ICB Interoperability Sub-group

This paper summarises the activities of the ICB Interoperability Sub-group between ICB/12 and ICB/13. During this time the sub-group has progressed work on the priorities for further proposed Community Specifications.

1 Purpose

This paper summarises the activities of the ICB Interoperability Sub-group between ICB/12 and ICB/13. During this period, one ICB sub-group was held (3rd November 2006). The sub-group discussed the following topics:

- The Role of the Interoperability Sub-group in IR and CS development;
- Review of CS priorities following stakeholder comments received;
- Interoperability CSs for systems affected by the R&TTE Directive;
- Conformity Assessment in respect of the Interoperability Regulation.

This paper summarises the main findings of the sub-group - details are provided in [ref 1].

2 Meeting Attendance

Airline representatives were again not present at the November 3rd sub-group meeting. The ICB needs to ensure adequate attendance from members at future sub-group meetings in order to properly support the work of the sub-group.

The results of the November 3rd meeting will need to be verified by the airspace users. Consequently, the output of the meeting remains draft output, to be confirmed at the next meeting of the sub-group.

3 The Role of the Interoperability Sub-group in IR and CS development

The Interoperability Sub-group plays a key role in initiating work on development of CSs and IRs. Decisions to initiate work on CSs and IRs that are made by the Interoperability sub-group are flowed through the ICB and the Commission and initiate activity in the various European standardisation bodies.

It was agreed that there is a need to increase awareness in the ICB, and in the aviation community in general, of the important work being carried out by the sub-group as part of its role as the initiator of interoperability regulations.

It is less clear how information flow is to be achieved from the various organisations involved in standardisation back into the sub-group and to the ICB. It was agreed that there is a need to look at this process. Helios will put together a proposal on this in time for the next sub-group meeting, and, as a first step, there will be a regular item on the sub-group agenda to allow the relevant standardisation organisations to provide regular updates on their activities.

4 Review of CS priorities following stakeholder comments received

The stakeholder organisations had been asked for written comments on the current list of candidate CSs prior to the November 3rd meeting. Input had been received from CANSO, Eurocontrol, Eurocae, and ACI Europe, and was taken into account in a reassessment of the priorities of the candidate CSs. The meeting either affirmed or reassigned the priorities of all the candidate CSs, with the exception of AMAN and DMAN, and two MET CSs, where further information is sought in time for a decision at the next sub-group meeting.

The meeting agreed on development of four interoperability CSs to begin in 2007. A further 7 CSs may require development in 2007 as a result of parallel EN development under the R&TTE directive (see Section 5). Details of the CSs involved can be found in the sub-group meeting minutes [ref 1].

Interoperability CSs to await development of an associated IR

It was agreed that development of 14 of the candidate CSs were dependent on prior development of a related IR. In particular, all the surveillance-related CSs should await the forthcoming IR on Surveillance Requirements. This IR would be ready around June 2007. There was concern expressed that production of an IR should not cause unnecessary delay to development of related CSs.

5 Interoperability CSs for systems affected by the R&TTE Directive

For a number of the CSs, it was found that there is a need for development of the interoperability CS because of parallel development of European Norms (ENs) on the same systems to satisfy requirements of the R&TTE Directive. These requirements, which had previously exempted ATM ground-based equipment, became applicable to such equipment on 20th October 2005.

The development of EN specifications addressing R&TTE requirements is due to be initiated shortly by ETSI, and many are likely to be completed by mid-2007. The R&TTE specifications will not address interoperability. However it is believed that there will be an expectation that interoperability aspects should be addressed for systems for which an R&TTE specification is also being produced.

The need to address R&TTE for these systems changes considerably the priority agreed by the sub-group. The ICB is hereby informed about this development and asked for approval to go ahead, when needed, with this activity.

6 Conformity Assessment in respect of the interoperability regulations

The interoperability regulations require conformity assessment to be undertaken on ATM systems and/or constituents. However the sub-group has been made aware that ANSPs and equipment manufacturers are realising very different interpretations of the interoperability regulations in respect of the required conformity assessment. There is confusion over the interpretation to be applied to the legislation, and there is concern that this could delay the implementation of new systems or constituents, and increase costs for ANSPs and manufacturers to certify their systems and products. DFS are having particular difficulties.

The Commission produced a guidance document which aimed to answer questions that had been put to the Commission by the ANSPs. However the document provided has been of little practical use. Further clarification needs to be provided by the Commission with a more in-depth explanatory document, including worked examples of how the legislation should be applied in Member States. The Commission agreed to discuss this again at the next sub-group. In the meantime, the Commission's original guidance document will be circulated.

7 Next Meeting

The next Interoperability Sub-group meeting will be held on Wednesday the 20th of December 2006 at Eurocae premises in Paris, starting at 10.00 am.

8 Requested Action

The ICB is requested to:

- Note the decisions made by the Interoperability Sub-group;
- Increase awareness of the importance of the work of the Interoperability Sub-group;

- Ensure attendance from all stakeholder groups at future Interoperability Sub-group meetings;
- Note the need for development of interoperability CSs for systems affected by the R&TTE Directive, and approve initiation of this activity by the sub-group, when needed;
- Note the need for greater clarity to be provided by the Commission on the interpretations to be applied to the interoperability regulations.

9 References

- [1] Interoperability Sub-group Meeting 6 Minutes v0_1.