

## A regional perspective



Sarinee Sangprasit, President of Thai ANSP, AEROTHAI, tells *Airspace* that harmonising development with regional partners is a crucial ingredient for success.

### What is your strategy going forward?

To achieve AEROTHAI's vision to be one of the best ANSPs in the ASEAN region, the strategy is to continue with the implementation of new technology, the development of standard operating procedures and the consideration of human factors.

To my mind, we cannot move forward if we leave any of these three behind. New technology can help to cope with the rapid growth in global air traffic. At the same time, standard operating procedures help to ensure a high level of safety. And human factors cannot be overlooked based on the fact that people are the most fallible part of a safety system.

This strategy will be developed in line with the ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan as well as regional implementation priorities. And a performance-based approach will be utilised to support all of our work.

All of these factors are important because long-term strategic planning is crucial to have the organisation growing in the correct direction.

### Does the diversity in airport size and ownership in Thailand, from Suvarnabhumi to Bangkok Airways' Sukhothai, make providing air navigation services more challenging?

Actually, the size and ownership of the airports in Thailand are not a challenge to air navigation services. It is the diversity of growth and complexity of air traffic that create a challenge.

That is why we need to make ourselves ready for growth with our long-term strategy.

Of course, different sizes of airport require specific provisions for the smooth flow of air traffic. And we do need to make sure our stakeholders understand the specific type of investment required for each airport, to provide diverse services, such as a tower or no tower or even a remotely-operated aerodrome.

### How is your organisation performing in 2014?

The target for overall performance in the fiscal year 2014 has been reached. There has been constant growth in air traffic volume in 2014, both domestically and internationally. The total number of flight movements will be around 700,000, an unexpected 14% growth compared with 2013.

With this growth, there is a challenge in terms of capacity management. We therefore have to focus on operational awareness and risk management, while balancing between demand and capacity for all airspace users to obtain their optimised services.

With our cost-recovery basis structure, over-collection from air navigation charges can be retained for future investment or also refunded to member airlines. Therefore, we have refunded the 2013 over-collection to member airlines operating flights during fiscal Year 2013 at 20% of the accumulated over-collection, which has reduced ANS charges for fiscal Year 2014 to reflect our willingness to meet our customers' expectations.

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## **How closely do you work with your partners at the airlines, airports, and government? Do you consult them on your strategy?**

We have been working closely with our partners and stakeholders as our business concepts include working in harmonisation with the aviation community and 'Partnering for Success'.

We have regular consultation meetings with the International Air Transport Association, for example, together with frequent meetings with airlines and non-commercial aviation. We also work with ICAO and CANSO to ensure that we are engaged and in line with the Global Air Navigation Plan.

Additionally, we have signed Memorandums of Co-operation with the Department of Civil Aviation, Airports of Thailand, the Royal Thai Air Force, Thai Airways, the Civil Aviation Training Center, Bangkok Airways and the National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission.

This involvement with the entire air transport community means we can co-ordinate all air traffic management-related matters, including the sharing of knowledge and resources.

The relationship with the government and its agencies is conducted at a high level too. With the new Thai government, the National Airspace Plan will be revised and all the parties involved are putting in the effort to take aviation in Thailand to the next level.

I am confident that within two years, you will see a new era of air transport in Thailand.

## **What are the best ways to improve safety and what new technologies or processes do you believe will help?**

We are in the process of modernising all of Thailand's CNS/ATM systems. This will be one of the answers to improving safety. It will also increase capacity as well as enhance the efficiency and competitive capabilities of Thai airspace. To prepare our people for the new technologies, management and staff have been given the tools to boost their competencies and improve the quality of our service. Knowledge management is another key to success. And, of course, a concerted effort from the entire aviation community is needed.

So really, there are three main ways to improve safety: new technology; the revision of processes; and engaging people.

## **How can CANSO help in your safety efforts?**

CANSO has always been a great partner to us. Our engagement with CANSO has continued for almost two decades. We always value how best practices are shared and the networking opportunities provided by several CANSO events. Our vision is aligned with CANSO's Vision 2020. There is no doubt that the CANSO Global ATM Safety Conference (the next one takes place 25-30 January 2015 in Bangkok) and regional safety meetings are a great help to all of us.

## **Do you think the ASBU modules are the best way forward for the harmonisation of airspace?**

In my opinion, the ASBU programme is a systematic method that provides a useful approach to support harmonised technology and procedure implementation among States. However, we also need to consider regional and partner

priorities while planning our deployment. For the Asia Pacific region, ICAO/APANPIRG (Asia Pacific Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group) makes this easier by including the ASBU Block 0 modules together with their implementation priority in the regional plan – APAC Seamless ATM.

## **What are the challenges for air traffic management at the regional level?**

Airspace sovereignty is at the top of the list of challenges in air traffic management in our region.

Asia Pacific is the region with arguably the greatest diversity in the world in terms of politics and society, not to mention the financial situation. That means different national interests and investment capabilities.

Many forecasts of air traffic show that Asia Pacific will have the fastest growth and handle the most movements in the years ahead. While that is clearly understood it will still take a tremendous effort to get all the States to have the same understanding of the big picture and agree on how air traffic management should be developed.

## **What can we do to make ATM more visible to governments to secure more funding?**

The Government of Thailand and the Ministry of Transport recognise the importance of air transport and its direct link to national economic growth. The Government has consequently approved a mega project for the modernisation of the CNS/ATM systems, which will solve problems associated with the growing number of flight movements.

The Government is also looking into any adjustments in the rules and regulations that would be in line with aviation trends globally.

In terms of the business opportunities concerning our related services, the Government also supports us in making use of our expertise in providing cost-saving, improved quality and reasonably priced product and services to other air navigation service providers in the region.

## **Finally, how would you describe your management style?**

I have always positioned myself as a catalyst in AEROTHAI, striving to drive people and the company to reach their full potential.

My focus is on having a clear policy and direction and then communicating the vision, mission, value, strategic objectives and performance targets, as well as risk management, in a transparent manner to all management and staff.

The ultimate goal behind all of this is to gain the trust and confidence of all stakeholders.

So I guess my management style is to inspire, involve and fully engage with my management and staff. I always inspire our staff to work to their fullest potential for the company, while also creating value to the aviation industry.

We need management and staff involvement to work effectively with partners and stakeholders in the aviation community. Full engagement among all the people in the company is also required to deliver and maintain our quality of service to achieve the ultimate goal of sustainable growth for AEROTHAI, the country, the aviation industry and global aviation harmonisation. ➔