

Knowing me, knowing you

Understanding and integrating the strategies of all stakeholders is the basis for quality services, says Dr. Alejandro Herrera, Director General of the Dominican Institute of Civil Aviation.

What difference has the new air control centre (ACC), which opened in December 2013, made to your day-to-day operations?

The main difference is that the new ACC is completely automated. It gives us the tools to co-ordinate without voice – known as the Silence Coordination Concept – as well as radar signal processing, including Mode S.

The new ACC also has the capability to receive and process different types of advanced surveillance sensors, such as Automatic Dependent Surveillance (ADS-B, ADS-C), Multi-lateration and Controller-Pilot Data Link Communication.

These associated systems give us greater efficiency and allow us to segregate and optimise duties. Since more control positions are available, the workload is reduced.

Furthermore, we now have more conflict prevention alerts available, which increases the controller's situational awareness and helps prevent incidents from occurring. And, of course, there are many other day-to-day operational advantages.

What other improvements do you have planned for Dominican Republic ATC?

In the short term, the Dominican Republic has two priorities.

The first is the completion of performance-based navigation (PBN) implementation, which is about 80% completed.

And the second is the implementation of air traffic flow management (ATFM) and collaborative decision-making (CDM) for the Santo Domingo flight information region.

These projects are aligned with ICAO's Aviation System Block Upgrades (ASBU) programme.

What are the measurable benefits to safety from these and other measures by IDAC?

Safety is the top priority of the Dominican Institute of Civil Aviation (IDAC). Consequently, we work hard to improve our safety performance and our organisational focus is on making decisions based on risk management.



For this, we directed our initiatives around the following themes:

Organisational Development. This involves the implementation of an integrated management system that meets the requirements of a Safety Management System (SMS) and a Quality Management System (QMS) certified to ISO 9001: 2008 standards. Another important aspect is the implementation of ATFM that will allow us to make strategic decisions for air traffic management.

Infrastructure. The Dominican Republic is one of the main tourist destinations in the Caribbean, with an increasing number of visitors coming to our beaches from all over the world. Since 2008, we have expanded our infrastructure to meet the growing demand placed on our air navigation system. We will continue to be active in improving our infrastructure to achieve sustainable growth.

Human Resource Training. The key to the success of IDAC is its human resources. The Academia Superior de Ciencias Aeronáuticas (ICAO Regional Training Centre of Excellence) produces a sufficient number of aviation professionals to ensure we can replace retiring staff and have enough personnel to keep expanding our system.

You mentioned ICAO's ASBU programme. How does the IDAC strategy match its guidelines?

The ASBU programme proposes a harmonised planning process for the improvement of the global civil aviation system. To respond to this proposal, we have translated global expectations to the national level to ensure complete alignment.

ASBU constitutes an axis of IDAC strategic planning. It means we can use the improvement of civil aviation as a tool for achieving the long-term vision we have as a nation.

Which technologies do you believe have the most positive impact on IDAC services?

The implementation of ATS Inter-facility Data Communication (AIDC) has been crucial for control centre co-ordination. It enables us to integrate the processing of flight data that uses multiple formats.

Our new ACC has this capability and we are completely ready. However, connectivity with adjacent ANSPs takes longer and we are about 80% there in that regard. We expect regional co-ordination to be operational by the first quarter of 2016.

What are the main regional issues and how closely do you work with neighbouring ANSPs?

An IDAC representative leads the Air Navigation Implementation Working Group (ANI/WG) for the North American, Central American and Caribbean (NACC) regional office of ICAO. This is evidence of our commitment to the operational performance objectives of the region.

PBN implementation is the first priority of the region. IDAC will continue to be very active in this project, not only on the regional level but also ensuring that our national implementation plans are fully compliant with regional advances.

How do you collaborate with airlines, airports and industry players in these efforts?

IDAC has all of its services certified to international standards; for example, ISO 9001:2008 for quality management, ISO 14001:2004 for environmental management and OHSAS 18001:2007 for safety and occupational health.

All of this has led us to implement external communication procedures and client satisfaction surveys that keep us in direct contact with all applicable stakeholders. The implementation of ATFM and airport-CDM is a good example of collaboration. We need everybody involved to have a solid basis for gate-to-gate operations.



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CANSO plays an important role too. The organisation is a platform for improving collaboration among ANSPs. CANSO Members are partners in the important task of safely guiding air traffic, and we must work together to address the major challenges with which we are all presented.

Of course, each airspace is unique. But it is necessary that in each phase of flight our customers receive a consistent, high-quality service that meets their expectations and requirements so that the transition from one airspace to another is almost undetectable.

This goal requires detailed knowledge of the strategies that each member uses for the provision of services. The Dominican Republic, for example, has a relatively small airspace but is strategically located in the centre of the Americas, where many routes converge to connect a multitude of important destinations worldwide.

CANSO provides the forum to fulfil this ambition. ANSPs can exchange experiences with other organisations from around the world, gather best practices, and discard those initiatives that have not been successful. With everybody contributing useful knowledge on important topics, ANSPs worldwide are able to develop in the proper manner. ➔