



NEFAB Programme Annual Report 2020

Section 1: Programme Report

Version 1.0

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1. Introduction

The NEFAB Programme Annual Report 2020 is divided into two sections:

- ▲ Section 1: NEFAB Programme Report (this document)
- ▲ Section 2: Finance and Safety.

Section 1 is intended for general publicity to ensure transparency about NEFAB Programme activities for all NEFAB stakeholders. Section 2 is intended for NEFAB ANSPs internal use.

2. NEFAB and its Objectives

2.1. NEFAB Objectives

NEFAB ANSP Programme is based on the Cooperation Agreement signed by the Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) of the NEFAB states – ANS Finland (Finland) – Fintraffic ANS from 01 January 2021, AVINOR (Norway), EANS (Estonia) and LGS (Latvia).

The objective of NEFAB is to achieve optimal performance in the areas relating to safety, environmental sustainability, capacity, cost-efficiency, flight efficiency and military mission effectiveness, by the design of airspace and the organization of air traffic management in the airspace concerned regardless of existing boundaries, in line with Single European Sky requirements.

The Programme is organised on several levels to ensure strategic and tactical decisions and daily management of NEFAB co-operative activities.

NEFAB ANSP CEO Board (CEOB) is the ultimate and strategic decision-making body for the NEFAB ANSP cooperation. It is composed of the Chief Executives of the NEFAB ANSPs.

NEFAB Management Board (MB) is the supervisory body for execution of the Business Plan. It is composed of senior executive representatives from the ANSPs. The long-term chair of NEFAB MB Heikki Jaakkola (Fintraffic ANS) stepped down from this position in May 2020 and the MB continued its duties with four members, one from each ANSP.

NEFAB Programme Management Office (PMO) manages the NEFAB Programme and supports the ANSPs and states to reach the NEFAB objectives and performance targets, including information exchange and stakeholder engagement.

In 2020 the PMO was staffed with one full-time position (PMO Manager) and two part-time position (PMO Coordinator who served also as NEFAB Communication Manager, and Financial Controller). From June 2020 Coordinator left office and PMO Manager took over the coordinating and communicating duties.

Considering the COVID pandemic related difficulties in 2020 and changes regarding administering of ANSPs cooperation as above, the MB and CEOB decided to combine the MB and CEOB activities and to reduce the PMO workload.

2.1.1. NEFAB Safety Support Group

NEFAB Safety Support Group (SSG), the collective support function is composed of Safety managers and experts of NEFAB ANSPs. Its focal role is facilitating of harmonised safety management, also organising the safety data exchange and joint analyse in NEFAB ANSPs.

2.2. NEFAB Common Representatives

2.2.1. Network Management Board

Network Management Board is supervisory body for Network Manager, which is the centralised function to optimise European Air Traffic Management network performance. NEFAB ANSPs have had a representative in the NMB, nominated by European Commission. The representatives of NEFAB in NMB are Üllar Salumäe (member, EANS) and Tormod Rangnes (alternate, AVINOR).

2.2.2. Air Navigation Services Board

Air Navigation Services Board (ANSB) is the consultation body to discuss and give guidance to Eurocontrol business plan, work programme and budget. NEFAB member in ANSB for the two-year term 2020-2021 is Tor-Øivind Skogseth (AVINOR), Ivar Värk (EANS) serves as an alternate member.

2.2.3. Deployment Manager Stakeholders Consultation Platform

The SESAR aims to modernise ATM in Europe, implementing the endorsed by Member States Common Projects. For that, the regularly updated Deployment Programme is developed by SESAR Joint Undertaking. The implementation is coordinated and monitored by SESAR Deployment Manager (SDM).

The adopted in 2014 Pilot Common Project has been analysed and revised during 2019-2020. This resulted in rationalised and streamlined Common Project One, with more realistic deadlines and stronger link with performance plans.

NEFAB Programme has been represented in the SESAR Deployment Stakeholders' Consultation Platform (SCP) being the instrument through which the SDM consults operational stakeholders on the Deployment Programme to ensure the involvement of the operational stakeholders to the greatest possible extent.

The SCP consists of a Steering Group and Thematic Sub-Groups to perform detailed analysis on specific issues. In 2020 these groups worked very much combined.

The Consultation Campaign 2020 was completed with some delay because of COVID-19 crisis at the end of December, including:

- Monitoring View 2020
- DLS + ADS-C / EPP Deliverables Note on a synchronised deployment approach towards AF6
- ADS-B Implementation Programme Edition 2020

Preliminarily scheduled GBAS CBA has been put on hold in consequence of COVID-19 crisis.

2.2.4. Local Single Sky Implementation

EUROCONTROL is contributing to the Deployment Programme through Pan-European planning, monitoring and reporting activity by producing the set of annual Local Single Sky Implementation (LSSIP) documents, which demonstrate the progress made and detail the plans for each ECAC stakeholder in relation to their local implementation of the ATM Master Plan.

A NEFAB LSSIP coordination group, composed of representatives from all ANSPs and working closely with PMO, has successfully made the required harmonised/common reporting on FAB related items in the beginning of 2020. The NEFAB LSSIP common text has been supplemented with information on major NOP relevant events in NEFAB area.

3. Strategies and Business plans

3.1. NEFAB Strategy for years 2020 - 2024

NEFAB ANSP cooperation in 2020 was planned to execute in accordance with the updated in 2019 NEFAB Strategy for years 2020-2024 and the corresponding 5-year Business Plan.

These long-term steering documents lie on the NEFAB ANSPs' strategic vision for continuously improving performance to airspace users, extending to the following elements:

- provision of air traffic services according to the customers' requirements at fair price and optimal capacity, demonstrating the best performance in the region
- striving and achieving additional performance gains and operational contingencies through regional cooperation and cross-border activities, more particularly developing:
 - advanced flexible use of airspace and dynamic airspace management solutions,
 - interoperable systems, harmonised procedures, compatible software and datasets
- contributing to improved European ATM network performance.

3.2. NEFAB Business Plan 2020 – 2024

NEFAB Business Plan for 2020-2024 was developed with full regard of the regional and European trends and future perspectives that were likely to impact the operations and business. NEFAB ANSPs considered the topical recommendations of the Airspace Architecture Study and the Wise Persons Group and aligned the NEFAB ANSPs Strategy and the Business Plan activities with the relevant recommendations of those high-level studies.

The Programme Business Plan has been updated along the renewed Strategy for years 2020-2024, identifying similarly to Strategy six target areas and associated business deliverables for further 5 years business planning cycle.

But the bursting and still destroying the air transportation sector COVID-19 pandemic has forced the States and ANSPs to take swift and effective measures for mitigating dramatic drop in air traffic. To cope with declining cash flows, the ANSPs were cutting costs and deferring investments. This has also caused the considerable changes in NEFAB Programme for 2020 and further planning the 2021 cooperation.

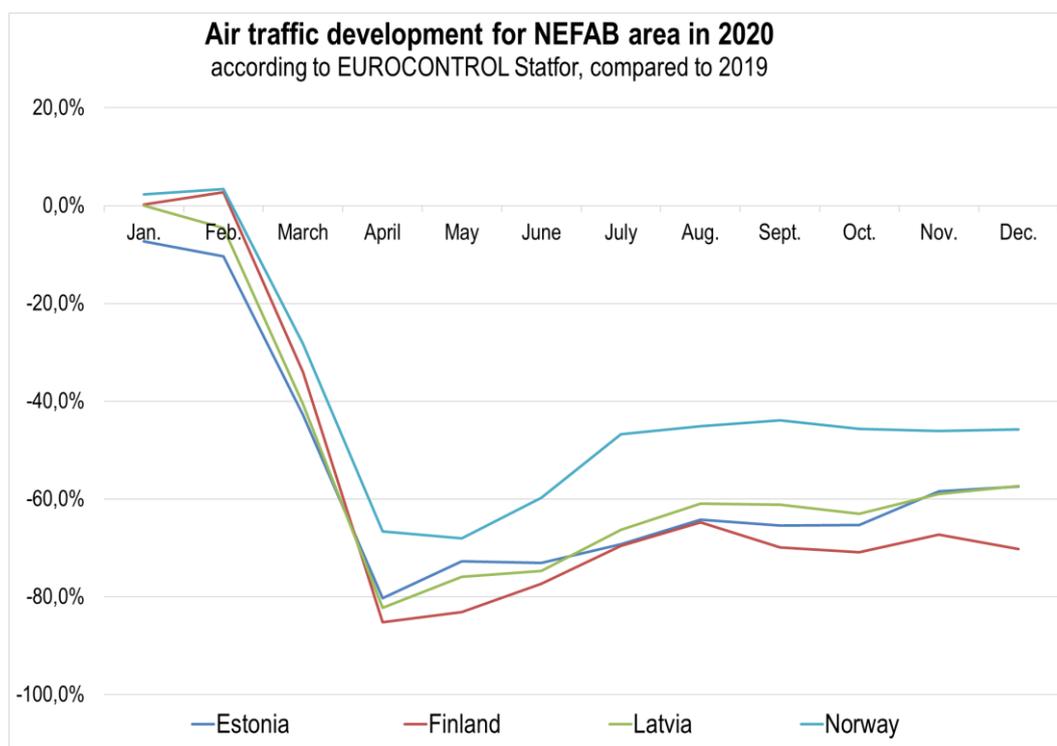
3.3. Execution of the annual Business Plan 2020 and outlook for 2021

Aviation sector has considered the enormous traffic decrease worldwide because of COVID pandemic during 2020 since March. At the very extreme in April this decrease in NEFAB area ranged 67...85%, average over the year was around 42...58%. The dynamics of air traffic development – drastic decrease and persistent recovery for NEFAB area is demonstrated in a graph below.

As a result of this crisis, and with a view to mitigating the dramatic drop in cash flows, the NEFAB ANSPs were cutting costs and deferring investments, at the same time keeping skies open.

This has led to a situation where ANSPs had limited abilities to continue with the common development projects and activities. CEOB/MB informed about these problems also NEFAB Council and Committees.

NEFAB ANSPs have revised and approved the reduced NEFAB Business Plan 2020 and accordingly the lean common budget. The Business Plan and Budget for 2021 has been drafted with more reduction.



3.3.1. Improvement of airspace use, continuing to promote the best practices

Improvement of airspace use has been the major focus in FAB establishment and the most of progress within SES initiative has been made in this domain. This has continued being the focal activity within the NEFAB as well as at the interfaces with neighbouring FABs and third countries.

Removal of route structure in FRA areas

The need for fixed route network was discussed at NEFAB Customer Consultation workshop in September 2017. Afterwards, the MB nominated the experts from ANSPs who prepared the detailed plan on how to proceed with fixed route network removal.

The key enabler for such change was the implementation of Free Route Airspace in autumn of 2015. From this change and subject to airspace availability, routing is possible via intermediate waypoints, without reference to the air traffic service (ATS) route network.

The eventual changes of ATS routes removal in Estonia and Finland have been implemented from 23 April 2020. Norway started the stepwise removal process earlier with deleting 4 routes in fall/winter 2019.

With these changes flying in North-European airspace is becoming even more efficient. Flight operators can plan to fly to their destinations using the shortest trajectories possible, the air routes have remained in history.

Working to cope with XMAN requirements in NEFAB airspace

This cooperative activity between NEFAB and DK-SE ANSPs has been planned according to the PCP requirements but was delayed due to DK-SE inactivity. Later, in the process of revising PCP and drafting CP1 this requirement was removed at all.

Opening the border for FRA traffic between NEFAB and Lithuanian airspace

After the initial proposal from Lithuanian ANSP Oro Navigacija to establish seamless FRA interface between Lithuania and NEFAB, LGS and Latvian authorities have communicated with the Lithuanian partners in February requesting confirmation of willingness to join NEFAB/NEFRA Free Route Airspace area.

The bi-lateral meeting on expert level of both ANSPs to discuss possible options and work plan was initially planned in March but considering the crisis and mass reduction of all activities on ANSPs level, further steps are postponed.

3.3.2. Improvement of ATS provision in NEFAB area

Improvement of ATS provision across the FAB consists of many different activities aimed at implementing advantageous dynamic cross-border service provision solutions, enhancing cross-border contingencies, and reviewing the possibilities for optimisation and rationalisation of infrastructure.

NEFAB NAV SUR strategy

The FPC has agreed earlier in 2018 to include the harmonisation of CNS/NAV strategies into the NEFAB Strategy Implementation Plan and to recommend the States taking leading role in drafting national NAV strategies and implementing Performance Based Navigation (PBN), also governing the implementation in cooperation between all stakeholders.

The MB has revisited the status of NAV developments in 2019 and coordinated between ANSPs in drafting the national PBN Transition Plans, also exchanging the experience in coordinating plans with CAAs and militaries during 2020.

FINEST

FINEST programme is a cooperation programme between EANS and Fintraffic ANS, which objective is to achieve optimal performance in the areas of service provision, cost-efficiency, capacity, flight efficiency, environment, continuity and safety.

The planning phase was finished in 2019 and the ANSPs moved on to the implementation phase in 2020. FINEST airspace as the cornerstone for the future operations have been chosen, final fixes are going on. Operational procedure simulations were started in autumn 2020. The project is following activities identified within FINEST roadmaps.

Cooperation with different internal and external stakeholders (e.g., employee unions, Network Manager, NSAs, militaries, NEFAB etc) have been started to assure the goals of the programme will be achieved together.

The aim is to implement the programme by April 2022. This means that all needed technical solutions and interfaces must be finalized by that time. As both companies have been using Thales TopSky system for more than a decade, the upgrade to unified solution is the cornerstone for this dynamic service provision. As we aim for the efficiency in all areas of the cooperation, the environmental aspect has been taken seriously into account.

The COVID-19 situation has not yet influenced the FINEST programme, but the ANSPs are monitoring closely the affects.

U-space cooperation and sharing of information between NEFAB partners

EANS and ANS Finland were working within the Gulf of Finland U-Space consortium to complete the SESAR call on U-space demonstrations. The live demonstrations of drone operations were successfully completed in 2019. The consortium delivered the detailed final report of the results to SESAR JU with the end of the project in March 2020. SJU has consolidated input from all VLD projects and published the report on SESAR Joint Undertaking U-space research and innovation results.

In January 2020, a new call for VLD projects opened under H2020 financing scheme by SESAR – “U-space capabilities and services to enable Urban Air Mobility”. Core members of the GOF U-space consortium, EANS and Fintraffic ANS included, submitted a proposal to continue with the work on evaluating and demonstrating the maturity of European U-space concept and services. The submitted proposal was successful and funding was granted to execute the project. The GOF2.0 consortium is currently finalising the legal agreements and preparing the kick-off of the project activities.

EANS has finalized the work on the Development of UTM Concept consulting project with UTM technology company Aimap. As a result, UTM Estonia Concept of Operation together with Operations Plan and roadmap for nationwide implementation has been developed. The business model for Estonian U-space service provision considers various implementation scenarios with cost and revenue predictions until 2024 but needs to be further adjusted depending on the operational solution to proceed with. In parallel, Estonian U-space regulatory framework has initialized several legislative changes to support technical implementation and accommodate upcoming European regulations. Unfortunately, COVID-19 impacts on the aviation sector are also affecting UTM related investments.

Borealis Alliance and CANSO UTM working groups are discussing and addressing regulatory issues with U-space regulatory framework draft and EASA opinion published in March 2020. All involved countries are preparing for U-space development with ANSPs actively managing collaboration with technology partners.

3.3.3. Implementation of Single European Sky objectives

Several NEFAB development initiatives are linked to the ATM Master Plan to provide SESAR contributions to achieve the European SES performance objectives. SESAR Deployment Manager is driving the deployment to ensure that new technologies and solutions are delivered into everyday operations across Europe. The SESAR Deployment Programme is supporting and guiding through the implementation of Pilot Common Project (PCP).

Contributing to the Pilot Common Project and Deployment Programme

NEFAB ANSPs have had an active role and joint representation on the FAB level at the Stakeholder Consultation Platform (SCP) established by the Deployment Manager (DM), particularly in the DM SCP Steering Group and Thematic Groups. Objective is to identify common interests for co-funding, but also to coordinate and support the individual interests of ANSPs, or common interests under Borealis alliance.

In 2019 the Planning view and Monitoring view 2019, SWIM Service Provisioning (Policy, Agreement, Governance Handbook) and ADS-B Implementation documents were consulted at the DM SCP. PCP/CP1 proposal and DLS architecture and deployment strategy were launched for consultation in 2019 and are expected to finalise in February 2020.

Cooperative implementation of SWIM components

The activity for mapping the status of SWIM implementation in ANSPs/NEFAB was continued in 2020. Further discussions and decision-making were postponed until the adoption of CP1 and when more clarity from SDM consultation cycles is available.

3.3.4. Assurance and enhancement of ATM safety

NEFAB members have agreed in the State-level Agreement to develop common safety policy aiming at creating a harmonised Safety Management System, to support expanding NEFAB cross-border activities.

Safety Support and SMS Harmonisation

The NEFAB Safety Support Group (SSG) has been working along two main workstreams:

- sharing and analysing the NEFAB safety data according to the agreed procedures and content
- analysing the Commission IR (EU) 2017/373 new requirements and making the recommendations for further cooperation in NEFAB if necessary.

In 2020 more emphasis has been devoted on change management procedures and handling the multi-actor changes.

3.3.5. Systematic organisation, development and networking of the ATM domain

Systematic organisation, development and networking, particularly cooperating with international organisations, developing collaborative customer relations management and streamlined public relations – all this supports and improves the NEFAB strong and appreciated position in European aviation community.

Contributing to the European ATM network and participating at NMB

NEFAB ANSPs representative in the NMB has been contributing to the development and operation of European ATM network, also maintaining NEFAB proactive role in the NM evolution process.

CANSO communications and contributions

NEFAB representatives in CANSO bodies actively presented their views and experiences on mitigating the issues of COVID crisis.

3.3.6. Co-operation with States

The NEFAB ANSPs co-operate with their respective State authorities and NEFAB state-level bodies to optimise the working arrangements and FAB structures, harmonise the procedures and operational requirements which bring added value to participating ANSPs and enable efficient resource usage and programme management.

COVID crisis management

NEFAB ANSPs took cooperative measures and coordinated their efforts in sharing with States their views and positions in the outbreak of COVID crisis.

States were requested to discuss the NEFAB position on EUROCONTROL with their representatives in Single Sky Committee, Provisional Council and NMB. State representatives were advised and urged to request EUROCONTROL and NM to reconcile the current activities alike the Member States' ANSPs, i.e., to cut operating costs and to defer the investment plans.

Support to Council and State Committees

NEFAB ANSPs are supporting States' level FAB strategy drafting, also contribution to the EU initiatives. In 2020, the ANSPs made recommendations to states to consider for updating the States' Strategy Implementation Plan.

4. Strategic alliances and Cooperation with other FABs

4.1. Borealis Alliance

The alliance is established to facilitate cooperation between the members on commercially recognised business partnering principles and for the achievement of Single European Sky and ICAO performance targets. The Borealis Alliance Framework Agreement sets up basics for this industrial partnership between 9 European ANSPs – ANS Finland (Finland), Avinor (Norway), EANS (Estonia), IAA (Ireland), ISAVIA (Iceland), LFV (Sweden), LGS (Latvia), NATS (UK) and Naviar (Denmark). The objective of the alliance is to enable joint initiatives to improve flight efficiency and reduce environmental impact, delivered across the whole area in a move which will also streamline cost of services and operational/technical infrastructure.

The key activity of Borealis Alliance is the initiated in 2015 Free Route Airspace programme, with the objective to create a multi-FAB FRA through the establishment of interfaces between FRA areas in 3 FABs (NEFAB, DK-SE FAB and UK-IRL FAB) and Iceland. The Borealis FRA concept of operation is based on the NEFRA concept, i.e., to connect the FRA volumes of 9 States seamlessly, so that these appear as one continuous FRA to airspace users. The NEFAB Programme has been involved with the development of the Borealis FRA concept and project management plan and is represented in the Borealis FRA Project Steering and Expert groups.

The Borealis FRA Part II implementation is still on-going in UK and is expected to be completed in 2024.

4.2. Cooperation with DK-SE FAB

NEFAB has been closely cooperating with DK-SE FAB within an agreed concept to implement a continuous and seamless FRA (North European Free Route Airspace – NEFRA) across the two FABs.

After completion of NEFRA further cooperation was discussed at the NEFAB and DK-SE FAB ministerial meeting. The meeting advised to handle practical ATM issues between NEFAB and DK-SE FAB within Borealis cooperation.

NEFAB Council recommended to call up the forum if any item to discuss between two FABs arises. One practical exercise between two FABs in 2019 was joint preparation for the Social Dialogue Toolbox Campaign Workshop.

5. Stakeholders and Communication

5.1. Stakeholders

NEFAB recognises the importance of 'one voice' policy to ensure more influence towards the international society and cooperation bodies. The Programme has been enhancing communication with stakeholders in line with the established stakeholder engagement process, based on common, aligned NEFAB messages depending on interest and influence of stakeholder group.

Stakeholder engagement and communication have been executed at Programme level and individually by each ANSP depending on the target audience. The NEFAB Programme interacts with the NEFAB Council and its Committees, and Air Navigation Services Consultative Board.

The NEFAB Programme has identified the following key stakeholders:

- ▲ States and NEFAB Council
- ▲ National NSAs and NEFAB NSA Committee
- ▲ States military and NEFAB Civil-Military Committee
- ▲ Major airlines operating in NEFAB area
- ▲ ANSP management level
- ▲ ANSP trade unions and staff representatives (ANSP level).

5.2. State-level Stakeholder Communication

5.2.1. States and NEFAB Council

NEFAB Council was working in 2020 under the chairmanship of Latvia, to be followed by Norway on rotation basis in 2021.

The NEFAB Programme has provided Council with the status report in May, also communicated the need for reducing Programme activities and budget due to COVID crisis.

No Council meeting was held in 2020.

5.2.2. Finance and Performance Committee

The Financial and Performance Committee (FPC) was chaired by Finland in 2020, to be followed by Estonia in 2021.

The NEFAB ANSP Programme Manager was providing the FPC meeting with the Programme status report in May, also forwarding this report to Council, NSA Committee and Civil Military Committee.

5.2.3. National NSAs and NEFAB NSA Committee

The NSA Committee (NSAC) was chaired by Latvia in 2020, to be followed by Norway in 2021.

NSAC was provided with ANSP Programme Report, the communication was identical to the FPC reporting.

5.2.4. States military contribution and Civil Military Committee

The Civil Military Committee (CMC) is a cooperation and coordination body between NSAs and military stakeholders. In 2020 the CMC was chaired by Latvia, to be followed by Finland in 2021.

5.3. Communication with Airspace users

The NEFAB Programme had no meeting with airspace users in 2020. The news on programme activities were disseminated on ANSPs communication events and channels.

The main messages were related to deletion of ATS routes in NEFAB FRA areas and developing FINEST cross-border collaborative ATS provision.

5.4. Communication with ANSP Staff Representatives

NEFAB Programme is not directly communicating with ANSPs personnel, trade unions or other staff representatives. Communication with the personnel and trade union representatives is the sole responsibility of individual ANSPs.

Staff representatives have been invited earlier to participate in Air Navigation Services Consultative Board (ANSCB) meeting as a standard practice, but in 2020 no ANSCB meeting was held.

-End-