
NEFAB Annual Report 2016

Version 1.0

Revision history

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1.0	08.05.2017		LV	

Main developments in 2016

NEFAB Strategy Implementation Plan

One of the main issues in the NEFAB cooperation was the NEFAB Strategy Implementation. During 2016 the NEFAB Strategy Implementation Plan was still in the development. In the December Council meeting it was agreed that all the changes or amendments to the Implementation Plan should be made till the end of January 2017.

NEFRA Phase 1

The North European Free Route Airspace (NEFRA) Programme was launched on March 11, 2013 by signing a Declaration of commitment for cooperation in airspace development between Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Norway and Sweden. As a first step the six States committed themselves to undertake necessary actions to ensure implementation of the FRA concept above FL 285 across the airspace of both functional airspace blocks, NEFAB and DK/SE FAB.

First milestone (Scenario 6) was reached on 12 November, 2015 when a FAB-wide FRA was implemented in NEFAB States and common FRA flight planning rules with the DK/SE were introduced.

The NEFRA "Scenario 6" is composed of three FRA volumes: Finland, Estonia and Latvia as one seamless FRA, Norway FRA (Oceanic excluded), and DK-SE FAB FRA. They all relate to common flight planning rules.

In the next step on June 23, 2016, continuous and seamless FRA was implemented between DK/SE FAB and NEFAB East (Estonia, Finland, and Latvia) above FL285, with Norway remaining in Scenario 6 due to the complex upgrade of their ATM system. This step is known as Scenario 8 and will be fully accomplished on May 25, 2017 with connecting the Norway's FRA and establishing a continuous FRA across six airspaces in Northern Europe.

The FRA procedures within Bodø Oceanic FIR were postponed to 2017 due to pending ICAO approval, and were introduced on March 2, 2017 between FL 195 and FL 660, still maintaining entry/exit fixed points on border.

NEFRA Phase 2

NEFRA Phase 2 contains the necessary system upgrades to allow for greater automation (processing and exchange) of traffic information.

The development of NEFRA phase 2 was agreed to take place within the Borealis Alliance.

Borealis

The Borealis Alliance is an industrial partnership of air navigation service providers of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Sweden and the UK. In 2015, the Alliance launched Borealis Free Route Airspace programme which builds on the FRA initiatives by its members in three functional airspace blocks – the Danish-Swedish, NEFAB and UK-Ireland - and Iceland. By 2021, it will create seamless FRA by having interfaces ready between all these areas and enabling airlines to plan and fly their preferred routes across the whole of Northern Europe.

Following a workshop in March 2015 with the representatives from NSAs and ANSPs, the NSAs of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Sweden and the UK established a working group to explore the best way to improve regulatory cooperation across all nine States for the Borealis Alliance FRA programme and its subsequent projects.

The Commission expressed interest in the Borealis as it fulfils the spirit of the EC vision to create a Single European Sky.

NAMCON

The first of the three phases of NAMCON that were set in 2011 - Quick-win phase with low cost actions to be taken the nearest year – was completed in 2016. The results of the first NAMCON phase were as follows:

- Joint Significant Weather Charts (SWC) were produced between Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI) (FIN) and Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) (SWE) – N(ord)SWC; ESTEA (EST) and LEGMC (LAT) – B(alt)SWC, as well as a joint low-level forecast was produced between SMHI & DMI (DEN) using a new interactive tool;
- Joint aviation weather briefing portal was developed to be reached at the following internet address: www.northavimet.com;
- Forecasting responsibility for Southern Sweden was moved to DMI, Copenhagen and SIGMET coordination procedure was established between all seven countries;
- Joint strategy for future aviation weather service provision was developed and the international recognition was received from WMO, ICAO and EU;
- SESAR Deployment project “Sub-regional SWIM MET deployment to support NEFRA” would fund the next generation forecast tools for 2016 - 2018.

FINEST

FINEST is a bilateral cross-border cooperation programme of EANS and ANS Finland for the business contingency, increased cost efficiency and sustainable services.

This undertaking aims to improve the utilization of resources and thus gain savings and improve service quality at the same time.

The project is ongoing, and the tasks until June 2017 include:

- mapping the ATM and support systems capabilities,
- identifying the needs for operational harmonisation, and
- developing the ConOps and Programme Management Plan.

The FINEST case will be studied in the NEFAB committees with interest as the solutions may be generalized and would help to find corresponding benefits elsewhere.

Cooperation with Denmark and Sweden

The NEFAB and DK-SE FAB ministerial network meeting was held on 5 April in Riga. The main issues were the implementation of NEFRA and Borealis cooperation. It was concluded that the NEFRA Phase 1 step 1 had been implemented successfully.

Furthermore, to formalise future cooperation opportunities between the two FABs, a decision will be required by both counterparts.

Activities in the NEFAB governance bodies during 2016

NEFAB Council

NEFAB Council had two meetings, in 11 May and 8 December in Riga. On 21 April 2016 the Council arranged a workshop with the ANSP CEOs and aviation directors to exchange views on expectations and future plans of authorities and air navigation service providers. The workshop was held in Riga and it was considered successful.

During the meetings the Council discussed the accomplishments and future development of NEFAB, the status of NEFRA implementation and the Borealis cooperation. The Council reviewed the NEFAB Strategy Implementation Plan and the airspace policy for NEFAB.

The NSA Committee

There were four meetings during 2016. NEFAB NSAs share information of all international meetings the members are attending. The main purpose was to exchange relevant information and as appropriate to find common/harmonised NEFAB views on the relevant issues.

The NSA Committee has five expert subgroups: performance, change management, reporting, airspace management and oversight. Considering the tasks at hand and the resulting NSA cooperation at the NEFAB level, subgroups have produced the following deliverables:

- Building up the monitoring and reporting process of the RP 2 performance plan, 2015 NEFAB performance monitoring report developed and delivered to the EC;
- Exchange of safety information;

- NEFRA phase 2 in Estonia, Finland and Latvia was implemented in on June 23rd and full implementation for FRA cross border connection with Norway is planned for May 2017.

The NSA Committee in 2016 completed and adopted the first version of the NEFAB NSA handbook, which was developed with the support of the Eurocontrol. The handbook is a living document, which is being updated as necessary by the NSA committee.

Airspace policy was adopted by NEFAB Council on 15 January.

The NSAC Committee members exchanged information on NEFRA implementation progress and related oversight activities, shared experience and best practice from EASA and ICAO audits and inspections and were introduced to EUROCONTROL's NSA and FAB Human Resources Assessment tool in order to explore the benefits or its implementation within individual NSA to ensure regulatory compliance or for any potential future benefits within NEFAB.

The Civil-Military Committee

CMC has had two meetings in 2016.

NEFAB wide ASM functions. CMC conducted a study for NEFAB wide ASM functions. There were not identified formal regulations, sovereignty requirements or national requirements preventing a NEFAB wide AMC functions. CMC visited EUROCONTROL CIMAC and NM to get deeper understanding on FAB ASM functionalities. As conclusion, CMC considered that there are no substantial benefits to gain in emerging AMC functions. However, CMC recommends States to further enhance cooperation between AMCs in the future.

Regarding NEFAB Military Airspace Requirements (NEMAR), CMC reactivated Military-Military Expert Group (MMEG) and gave the task to develop NEMAR.

Further development of Performance Indicators for performance monitoring of the Military Mission Effectiveness will not be done before LARA and PRISMIL is in use.

CMC identified differences between nations regarding FUA application. CMC keeps open FUA harmonization topic to be coordinated between respective States.

CMC assessed that military requirements and procedures is at a satisfactory level for training purposes. Wider harmonization will be launched if seen appropriate.

Harmonized view on efficient use of airspace e.g. NEFRA. CMC concludes that airspace use of military users must be measured on how efficient they reserve and release airspace making sure that they do not utilize more airspace than what is needed.

Experience with implementation of Free Route Airspace. In most countries, FRA implementation was not a challenge for military. However, Norway military experienced reduced possibility to get suitable airspace therefore influencing overall performance.

The Financial and Performance Committee

The FPC has met three times in Helsinki during the year 2016; in February, April and October.

In February the focus was on the to-do list from the 8th NEFAB Council. Several documents needed to be finalised and distributed. The ANSPs brought up the idea would it be possible to digitalize AIS and have it as a centralized service from Eurocontrol. The Strategy Implementation Plan was elaborated. Co-operation with neighbours was discussed. The preparations for the workshop of the Council with ANSP CEOs and DGCAs were started. This was the last NEFAB meeting of Erik Rosenberg whose effort and professionalism for the good of NEFAB over the years since the very beginning were highly appreciated.

In April there were only three items on the agenda: the implementation plan and the coming workshop and Council's 9th meeting in May.

In October the outcome of the workshop was reviewed. There was a discussion about the activities at the ministry level and lack of concrete tasks for NEFAB. The possibility of reducing the minimum number of Council meetings from two to one per year was raised. It was concluded that much is happening at the NSA and ANSP level. There is a need for new political boost after NEFRA completion. The unit rate, charging zones and common charging policy were discussed.

The Air Navigation Services Consultative Board

The fourth NEFAB Air Navigation Services Consultative Board (ANSCB) took place in Riga on 7 December and was attended by representatives of the ministries and national supervisory authorities of the NEFAB States, as well as air navigation service providers, airspace users and staff associations. Mr. Anders Sætre from the NEFAB Programme Office briefed stakeholders about the NEFRA status, early experiences and next steps in the development of NEFRA. The airlines and labour unions presented their points of view regarding the NEFAB cooperation and the implementation of the free route airspace. It was pointed out by social partners that the more intensive consultations at the early stage of decision making is needed.

The High-Level Workshop on the development of air navigation services

NEFAB Council invited ANSP CEOs and Aviation directors to a joint workshop to discuss and have an open dialog about the development of air navigation services in NEFAB. The workshop was held in Riga on 21 April. In the workshop there were discussed the issues regarding the expectations of authorities, the future plans of ANSPs, the desired development and role of Eurocontrol and the co-operation with neighbours.