



Gate One Position on the final version of the Airspace Architecture Study Proposal

Bucharest 3 June 2019 - Gate One Members support the overarching objective of the study aimed at addressing the current capacity issues and at preparing the European ATM system for future traffic growth. There are several aspects of the final proposal that Gate One Members would like to particularly appreciate:

- The study identifies a number of barriers and problems that are currently truly limiting further capacity increases
- The study is open about its own limited scope
- The study now at least acknowledges the need for further exploration of the regulatory, financial as well as the human and social dimensions
- The study is not primarily driven by further cost-efficiency considerations and it confirms that creating capacity and the transition towards the new system will have its associated costs and investment needs

Gate One members have prepared a position on the Airspace Architecture Study early conclusions published in late 2018. After the publication of the final version of the Airspace Architecture Study it was analysed, how main recommendations of the said Gate One position were addressed in the final text:

1. Target capacity needs to be defined

- The study does not define the target capacity to be provided by the future Single European Airspace System, it rather works with the notion of a scalable capacity to be offered under the proposed architecture where ALL capacity demand would be satisfied at ALL times and where the aircraft operators would be able to operate along their preferred business trajectories (to the maximum level possible)
- At the same time, the notion of scalability means that in case of a drop in demand, the capacity of the system would shrink too so that no unnecessary overcapacity is offered within the system
- Gate One members are of the opinion that this completely new approach is impossible to realize in the current set-up of the ATM system, where capacity building is a long-term process based on careful consideration of long-term traffic predictions and associated cost optimums



2. Optimal level of capacity, considering trade-off between capacity and environment and cost efficiency

- Introducing the new approach to capacity building and provision, the study does not consider the concept of optimal level of capacity, nor it considers the trade-offs between capacity and cost-efficiency or environment
- It is understood that under the new ATM architecture, these trade-offs will no longer be needed, as the capacity would be allowed to be stretched or shrunk much more flexibly without significant associated costs, and without any unnecessary environmental inefficiencies
- Gate One members consider this a crucial aspect of the future airspace architecture and will follow related developments closely

3. Enhance network predictability

- The study rightly identifies limited predictability to be one of the limiting factors that requires attention and accordingly proposes several solutions and concepts, including increased data sharing, trajectory based operations, etc., that are aimed at overcoming this barrier to scalability and resilience of the system
- However, the study again puts much of the blame on some stakeholders only – e.g. upstream ACCs' decisions impacting the predictability of a given flight for downstream ACCs, or a late passenger, or a late tow truck. Without acknowledging that actions of airspace users too play a major part in the predictability, the study ends up painting an incomplete picture of the problem it aims to address
- Gate One members encourage further analysis of roots of insufficient predictability; only when complete picture is drawn, efficient solutions can be developed
- We consider that capacity forecasting could be a self-standing network function in the governance of which airspace users also participate through the NMB mechanisms

4. Acknowledge that ANSPs are not the only cause of and they alone cannot solve the capacity crisis: contribution of all stakeholders is needed and should be recognized

- The study correctly emphasizes on several occasions that successful transition to the proposed architecture is only possible through collaboration and commitment from all ATM stakeholders
- Yet the study is actually limited in its scope in terms of fully analyzing the limits of the system, the root causes of capacity issues, or the roles and contributions of each stakeholder to both the problems as well as to their solutions



- In fact, the study acknowledges that it is focused on en route ATM provision only, leaving out terminal services and airports, and – given the nature of all the proposed solutions – basically puts the whole transition towards the new architecture on the ANSPs shoulders only. Key stakeholders such as airport operators or airspace users are virtually missing from the study
- Gate One members are of the opinion that part of each stakeholder in solving capacity crisis should be analysed
- Since the Performance Scheme for RP3 is in place at least until 2024, Performance Plans will be drafted accordingly and will be subject to already established incentive schemes. It is unclear how the more concrete proposals will be incorporated in the Performance and Charging Scheme; current mechanism in place (CEF) mechanism does not provide additional incentives for early movers

5. Appropriate incentive schemes needed to support ANSPs in the transition:

- The regulatory assessment included in the final study offers initial overview and legal assessment of potential incentives for early movers – for both the airspace users as well as the service providers
- Support to the ANSPs will be crucial in the transition phase and the proposed incentives to service providers seem to go in a good direction; however, the incentives proposed for airspace users – while their contribution to and role in improving airspace capacity is barely, if at all, acknowledged in the study - seem to offer airspace users incentives for merely equipping their aircraft with SESAR technologies
- Gate One Members would like to see that airspace users' role in addressing the capacity is fully explored and, hence, appropriately incentivised – for instance, airspace users should be incentivised for their behaviour contributing to better predictability in the system, to fly as filed, to use available/spare capacity when and where available, etc.

6. EU vs States' Competences

- The solutions proposed by the study are weakened by the lack of a legal analysis, especially considering the fact that States have to fulfil international public law obligations in respect of air navigation services provision on the basis of the Chicago Convention
- In section 1.3.4 the study reads that it focuses merely on technical aspects; it does not touch upon institutional and regulatory changes these would potentially require
- However, feasibility of implementation of the solutions proposed cannot be credibly assessed without knowing, how these would impact division of competences between states and international organizations or between international bodies themselves



- Gate One members encourage the Commission to assess and propose institutional changes as well as changes to the division of competences between States and the EU and/or other bodies/institutions

7. Liability:

- It is acknowledged that the matter of liability for cross-border provision of ATS remains a complex and open issue and it is advised in the Annex F of the study that guidance or even EU level legislation would be beneficial to facilitate dynamic cross-border ATS provision as recommended in the study
- Gate One Members consider this a crucial challenge to be addressed if States are to pursue implementation of cross-border ATS provision as a tool to increase capacity of the European airspace

8. Clarify the role of humans in ATM service provision: evolution of ATCO role, change management, social aspect

- The study acknowledges that the “human will remain at the centre” of the Single European Airspace System even though “the proposed target architecture and associated evolution of service provision will generate changes in the work, skills, and therefore training, of the staff and in particular ATCOs and ATSEPs”; yet, the human and social dimension of the transition is treated only marginally and full effects of the transition are not identified
- Gate One members believe that in order to prevent undermining the buy-in and commitment of those very people who will be expected to execute the transition, more focus should be put on to human/social dimension

9. Detailed evidence-based transition plan is needed

- The study does not clarify what policy objectives the SES initiative should follow
- The study brings a variety of technical solutions in support of capacity, many of which are based on high-level strategic assumptions rather than detailed justification
- The transition plan should filter out any unrealistic proposals and include only those based on detailed technical analysis
- At the same time the transition plan should bear in mind that the changes will be implemented by professional staff already on top of their engagement in service provision and system maintenance during the period of continuous traffic growth – therefore realistic time-frame and pace of change should be established