

Safety and Airspace Regulation Group



All NATMAC Representatives

7th July 2014

Dear Colleagues,

CAA DECISION LETTER

PROPOSED INTRODUCTION NEW UPPER AIR ROUTES OVER SOUTHWESTERN UK AND OFF THE SOUTHERN COAST OF IRELAND

NATS propose to introduce eight new conditional routes (CDRs), two extensions to CDRs and one new upper air route, all above FL245. The route changes are proposed to provide a more efficient network over the northern Celtic Sea (off the south coast of Ireland) primarily for operators crossing southwest England or northwest France routeing to/from the North Atlantic. These routes cross the UK Managed Danger Area EGD064 complex to the west of Cornwall. Route designators and timings are detailed in the chart at Enclosure 1.

Currently when the South West Managed Danger Areas EGD064A/B/C (SWMDAs) are active in combination or individually, the flight-plans (FPL) of aircraft trying to follow Great Circle routes are deviated around the SWMDAs.

When inactive (in any permutation of the three sub-areas), ATC provide tactical shortcuts across them. Most FPL combinations still have to route around them due to the relative lack of choice of route, so the fuel carried for that FPL is often greater than that required to fly the tactical route. NATS therefore proposes to introduce these ten new CDRs across the SWMDAs in order to improve route efficiency and flexibility when the SWMDAs are inactive. NATS also proposes to introduce a permanent Upper Air Route (UAR) in the same vicinity, but avoiding the SWMDAs.

The MoD has been consulted and has accepted proposed change based on certain operational criteria that ensures the efficient operation of the SWMDAs is not compromised. The flexible use of airspace (FUA) concept will help ensure that the most efficient use of airspace is made accommodating both airspace user groups' requirements. The NATS Operational Partnership Agreement (OPA) - which represents a broad cross section of commercial aircraft operators - supports airspace and route changes where the flight-plan distance is more closely aligned with actual distance flown to improve fuel planning.

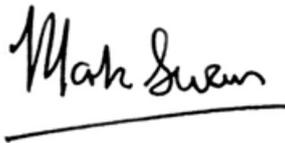
It is clear that there is some benefit to be realised from introducing these new routes as the revised airspace will serve to provide a more flexible and efficient route structure. There is no safety concern arising from the proposed changes as the

extant Airspace Management Cell UK coordination of CDRs through the SWMDAs will be maintained.

Although the routes are wholly contained within controlled airspace and managed by Swanwick centre operations, Brest ACC (France) and Shannon ACC (Ireland) have been advised of the changes through an ICAO High Seas approval letter.

As liaison has been closely maintained with the MoD to satisfy military requirements and my staff has ensured that this airspace change meets with the requisite Regulatory Requirements and does not compromise the operation of other airspace users, I have decided to approve this Airspace Change Proposal. The changes will be implemented at AIRAC 10/2014 on 18 September 2014.

If you have any queries, the SARG Project Leader is Mac Mackay, who can be contacted on 020 7453 6552, mac.mackay@caa.co.uk

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Swan". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Mark Swan
Director

Enclosure:

1. SWMDA Upper ATS Route structure.

