

Conclusions

One theme that kept reoccurring was the many formats and their dialects currently in use in AIM. But when it comes to today's information technology world, such pluralism is a major barrier to automation. All of us need to overcome these barriers and swap our national AIM languages and dialects for one language we can all work with. That will enable all of us to share information without barriers. Further standardizing and conformity checking of our AIXM implementations for compliance on a global instead of a bilateral basis is the right way forward.

The Danube FAB seems to have had a head start on the rest of us. We heard about encouraging developments from the Danube FAB: How their collaboration efforts led to a harmonized cross-border AIM data set that has since enabled the introduction of free route airspace and lowered ATCO and Supervisor workload.

Austro Control has showcased how generic GIS tools can be successfully used in AIM. All of us in AIM should consider following this example. Perhaps we can use generic GIS tools in more processes, for example in cross-border data harmonisation.

When we look towards the world of unmanned aviation, a standardized format to exchange geozones is only now in the making. Unmanned aviation should learn from manned aviation and adopt the approach of creating reference implementations and conformity testing for data formats and interfaces from the get-go to avoid the data format hodgepodge we see in manned aviation today. In support of its widespread adoption we could kick-start that approach with ED-269. On the other hand, manned aviation can also learn from unmanned aviation and explore using generic GIS tools as a standard moving forward.

There is a silver lining in this terrible COVID crisis: It gives us the chance to step back and reflect on the current situation. Now is our chance to allow ANSPs to introduce higher levels of automation and better safety nets in ATM and to help the airlines to get back on their feet again by providing them with truly digital data to make their operations more efficient.

It is also worth mentioning that AIM providers have a special responsibility to help make route planning as efficient as possible. Every drop of fuel we help to save not only saves money but also saves unnecessary emissions.

Let us work together to make harmonized data sets for manned and unmanned aviation, which can be exchanged directly among all stakeholders, a reality. The signing of the declaration of the InterFAB Cooperation on AIM is an important first step in this direction. But this collaboration should be extended beyond its current signatories, for example to the neighboring FABs to the north, west and south.

A reference implementation and conformity testing system for ED-269 akin to what is in the works for AIXM seems to be the logical next step. I invite everyone to collaborate to bring aviation data to the next level and for its data to truly be the cornerstone of future air traffic management – manned or unmanned.