

## **PE1804/H**

Entry Point North submission of 28 October 2020

Entry Point North is one of the largest ATS academies in the world and we train the people who make air traffic possible and who keep our skies safe. We deliver ATS training and services at our sites (in Sweden, Ireland, Hungary, Denmark, Spain and Belgium) as well as on client sites throughout Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

The Single European Sky ATM Research (SESAR) defines remote virtual tower as follows.

- A remote virtual tower is where air traffic services (ATS) are remotely provided through direct visual capture and visual reproduction (e.g. with cameras). The ATS are provided using a remote tower module (RTM), which includes operator workstation(s), ATM systems and display solutions.
- A remote tower module is the term for the complete module, including both the controller working positions (CWPs) and the visual reproduction display screens.
- A remote tower centre is a building where ATS are located to serve one or more airports. It usually includes several RTMs.

Today, we have proven technology available that will enable air traffic controllers (ATCOs) to operate remotely. It means ATCOs will no longer need to be on site in the control tower but can be far away and manage traffic at multiple airports safely.

With air traffic control services accounting for a significant part of an airport's cost base and EU regulatory changes outlawing subsidies, could be a lifeline for many of Europe's smaller airports. They will also be the key facilitator of the truly smart airport which will bring significant improvements in the cost and quality of service.

One of the clearest benefits is the way remote tower services can transform the economics of the significant number of European local and regional airports that struggles to be financial sustainable. Remote tower services will enable these airports to centralise and share their air traffic services and save up to 30–60% on air traffic control costs. This will make them more commercially viable, reduce the need for subsidy and make air transport more accessible in all geographies. That, in turn, will boost local and regional economic development outside big metropolitan areas.

Passengers will benefit too through lower costs. An airport with irregular and infrequent traffic is very expensive to operate because one or more controllers have to be employed just to manage a very small number of flights. A remote tower

enables the airport to run 24 hours a day and seven days a week and deploy services only when they are needed and so reduce costs.

Digital air traffic control services will also provide airports with the opportunity to meet the demand for more capacity. It can help airports to expand capacity to meet that increase in demand by providing more reliable services, such as when visibility is poor. Furthermore, it can also provide a back-up system to maintain capacity services, when the service levels in the primary systems are degraded.

From a staffing point of view it should be easier to attract and retain talent, as shared remote tower services centres can organise work more flexibly and provide more varied career development opportunities for controllers. Overall, there is clear potential for remote tower services to enhance and develop the role of the air traffic controller, making their jobs more secure and more attractive.

Seen from the point of a training organisation the role for an ATCO working in a remote tower centre is similar to be working as a traditional tower ATCO. The initial training will be identical as the competences and licensing rules are the same. In addition, to the initial training it is recommended that the student ATCO that will be working in a remote tower centre should have additional specific human factors training to prepare for working in a truly digital environment. For each remote tower to be operated, a unit endorsement training plan would need to be followed detailing all of the normal procedures and practices associated with the specifics of that particular location.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need further clarifications.

Yours sincerely

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