

FAA's NextGen Implementation Plan 2009

FAA released an update to its NextGen Implementation Plan on January 30, 2009. With its internal NextGen planning well defined, the agency will now focus on developing parallel commitments with the aviation community, particularly on avionics equipage. To support this, RTCA, an industry association that serves as a federal advisory committee, will sponsor a NextGen Implementation Task Force, which will offer recommendations on how to get the most benefits from the NextGen mid-term operational capabilities. The Plan provides a common point of understanding for the task force's activities.

Plan Highlights

- **Mid-Term Avionics Requirements:** The Plan defines the core set of avionics that support the NextGen operational capabilities that will be deployed by 2018. NextGen benefits will be maximized when the majority of operators are properly equipped. While these avionics will also support capabilities implemented beyond 2018, additional equipage may be necessary to take advantage of capabilities introduced beyond the mid-term.
- **Governing Principles for Equipage:** The Plan defines the governing principles that will guide upcoming conversations with operators on ways to accelerate mid-term equipage. The principles span potential operational, financial, and regulatory actions.
- **Implementation Commitments:** The Plan summarizes the agency's NextGen implementation commitments for the next five years. It also highlights applied research, engineering, and demonstration activities in fiscal year 2009 that will help the agency make decisions on commitments for the following five years, and beyond.
- **Operational Description and Benefits:** The Plan describes how the NAS will operate in 2018, when all mid-term operational capabilities are in place. It also discusses the modeling and simulation tools the FAA is using to assess NextGen's benefits.
- **Technical Details:** The agency has also updated its NAS Enterprise Architecture. Published on January 30, the architecture contains detailed, technical roadmaps for NextGen's mid-term operational capabilities. Links to these technical details and project status reports are available on the Plan's Web site: www.faa.gov/nextgen

NextGen Implementation Task Force

The NextGen Implementation Task Force will bring together government and industry representatives to develop recommendations on how best to: 1) maximize the benefits of mid-term NextGen operational capabilities; and 2) address business/investment-related issues associated with implementation.

The Task Force is sponsored by RTCA, an industry association that functions as a federal advisory committee. It will deliver its final recommendations by August 31, 2009. It will not

produce technical guidance and requirements; other specialized committees address that work.

Updated NextGen Web site

- FAA has also revamped its NextGen Web site (<http://www.faa.gov/nextgen/>) in support of the Plan update.
- The site includes information on:
 - How the NAS will operate in 2018
 - Technical details behind mid-term operational capabilities
 - Preliminary benefits
 - The FAA's internal accountability structure
 - Aviation community partnerships in support of NextGen
 - Career and business opportunities
- The new Web site also boasts an expanded Question and Answer section, where stakeholder inquiries can be addressed in a public forum. Additionally, visitors to the Web site have the opportunity to e-mail their questions to NextGen@faa.gov. While the agency cannot guarantee an answer to every question, we will do our best to ensure that the most pressing questions on stakeholder's minds are addressed. Certain questions requiring more in-depth answers will be selected on a monthly basis for a response from the appropriate FAA executive or program official. In this way, the FAA hopes to make the NextGen process more transparent and accessible.

Additional Information

www.faa.gov/nextgen

www.rtca.org

Governing Principles to Accelerate NextGen Equipage

NextGen will require investment by both the government and the private sector to be successful in delivering the desired NAS performance improvements. While lesser-equipped aircraft will still be accommodated in the NAS, ensuring that a significant portion of the aircraft fleet is appropriately equipped to take advantage of NextGen infrastructure improvements is perhaps the most critical issue in achieving success. It will be extremely difficult for either operators or the FAA to realize the benefits NextGen enables without the installation of the equipment described in Appendix B. However, the FAA recognizes that a strong business case is necessary for operators to equip their aircraft.

The following high-level governing principles establish a foundation for an integrated avionics equipage strategy aimed at accelerating NextGen operational capabilities in the 2012-2018 mid-term timeframe. These principles span possible operational, financial and regulatory actions, and will serve as the basis for future FAA decision-making, specific policy development activities, and engagement with industry stakeholders:

- Target equipage and associated capabilities to maximize operational benefits for specific locations or airspace that require a higher performance level in order to elevate system performance and to satisfy demand.
 - Leverage and maximize the benefit of existing equipage.
 - Take advantage of normal maintenance cycles to minimize disruptions to operators when installing new equipment.
 - Leverage operational evaluations and other cooperative arrangements with industry to accelerate NextGen equipage.
- Consistent with safe and efficient operations, provide “best-equipped, best-served” priority in the NAS to early adopters.
- Minimize the business risk associated with early deployment of NextGen equipage, such as those resulting from application of initial certification standards; FAA may assume portions of that risk or otherwise incentivize operators.
- Target government-provided financial incentives for new equipment toward aircraft that will meet evolving environmental requirements.
- Harmonize operations, performance requirements and avionics solutions globally to ensure maximum benefits to operators who fly internationally.

The FAA will work with the aviation community in 2009 on further definition and application of these principles. The FAA expects to work through the RTCA NextGen Implementation Task Force on the policy aspects of these principles, while working on aircraft-specific application of the principles and policies with individual operators and manufacturers.

- Source: FAA’s NextGen Implementation Plan 2009, p. 13