LETTER OF AGREEMENT

BETWEEN VATSIM UK AND VATSIM SUB-SAHARA AFRICA

REVISION 2022/01 - EFFECTIVE 31 JANUARY 2022

DISTRIBUTION AND SCOPE

This letter of agreement (LoA) outlines the agreements between VATSIM UK and VATSIM Sub-Sahara Africa for the provision of Air Traffic Control services at St. Helena.

EXCLUSION OF LIABILITY

The procedures in this LoA are for use on the VATSIM Network only and should never be adopted for real world use.

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AMENDMENT HISTORY

Revision	Effective Date	Notes
2022/01	31 January 2022	Initial Publication

VALIDITY

This Letter of Agreement becomes effective 31 January 2022 (AIRAC 2022/01).

Agreed by:

- David Woodward – VATSSA – Division Director
- Kieran Hardern – VATSIM UK – Operations Director
- Liam Pickering – ACCRAC – ACC Manager
- Jack Edwards – VATSIM UK – Operations Department

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

St. Helena is situated in the mid-Atlantic Ocean. It is a part of the United Kingdom Overseas Territory of St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha.

The VATSIM Code of Regulations states that St Helena is a part of the VATSIM Sub-Sahara Africa Division, within the Europe, Middle East and Africa Region.

Controllers from both VATSIM UK and VATSIM Sub-Sahara Africa may provide Air Traffic Control services at St. Helena, subject to the regulations set out in this agreement.

This agreement also defines the co-ordination and hand over procedures to be applied between Luanda ACC and St. Helena when providing Air Traffic Services. These procedures are supplementary to those specified in ICAO, VATSIM Regulations, inter-Division or inter virtual air traffic services provider's agreements and/or National documents.

If a translated version of this Letter of Agreement is available in any other language, when there is a difference in interpretation, the English version shall be the overriding authority.

SECTION 2 GENERAL

IFR traffic is limited to airways as published on the appropriate charts. Operational air traffic (military) may fly outside of controlled airspace within the policies and procedures of the respective airport as published in the respective AIP, and will be subject to ATC requirements at that time.

All aircraft operations, both civil and military, must file a flight plan. No specific provisions for Special Operations are made in this agreement. Normal rules and regulations governing special operations on VATSIM apply.

The ATC language used is English.

The landing altimeter setting will normally be QNH.

The transition altitude is 6000 feet.

2.1 Sector Files

Sector files for FHSH are available within the FNAN file at https://files.aero-nav.com/. An up-to-date sector file must be used at all times.

SECTION 3 AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PROVISION OF ATS

3.1 Airspace Structure and Classification within the Area of Common Interest

3.1.1 St. Helena

Lateral limits: The limits of the area of responsibility correspond to the boundary of the St Helena CTR and TMA as published in the St. Helena AIP.

Vertical limits: SFC to FL195

Airspace Structure and Classification

Area	Vertical Limits	Airspace Classification
St. Helena Control Zone	SFC– 3800ft	D
St. Helena TMA	3800ft– FL195	D

3.1.2 Luanda ACC

Lateral limits: The limits of the area of responsibility corresponding to the boundary of the Luanda FIR as published in the AIP of Angola.

Vertical limits: SFC to UNL

Airspace Structure and Classification

Area	Vertical Limits	Airspace Classification
Luanda FIR	FL145 and below	G
Luanda UIR	Above FL145	A

3.2 Sectorisation

The coverage priority for all sectors is defined left to right.

3.2.1 Luanda ACC Sectors

3.2.1.1 Luanda Control

Luanda Control provides a radar derived service throughout the Luanda FIR. It covers St. Helena top-down.

FNAN_CTR
118.500 MHz

Note: *VATSSA members with an ATC rating of at least C1 may control this position. VATSIM UK members are not certified to control this position.*

3.2.1.2 Africa Central Control

Africa Central Control provides a radar derived service throughout the Luanda FIR above FL245. It does not cover St. Helena top-down.

AFRC_FSS
129.075 MHz

Note: *Only suitably qualified VATSSA members may control this position (see division documentation). VATSIM UK members are not certified to control this position.*

3.2.2 St. Helena

3.2.2.1 St. Helena Approach

On VATSIM, St. Helena Approach is a radar equipped station providing approach control services to aircraft operating within the CTR and TMA. It also provides UK Flight Information Services to aircraft operating outside controlled airspace up to the lateral and vertical limits of the St. Helena TMA.

FHSH_APP
119.500 MHz

Note: *VATSIM UK and VATSSA members with an ATC rating of at least S3 may control this position.*

3.2.2.2 St. Helena Tower

FHSH_TWR
118.200 MHz

Note: *VATSIM UK and VATSSA members with an ATC rating of at least S2 may control this position.*

SECTION 4 PROCEDURES FOR CO-ORDINATION

4.1 General Conditions for Acceptance of Flights

a) Co-ordination of flights shall take place by reference to the coordination point (COP) and in accordance with the appropriate levels specified for the relevant route.
b) Flights shall be considered to be maintaining the co-ordinated level at the transfer of control point unless climb or descent conditions have been clearly stated by use of verbal co-ordination.
c) If the accepting ATS unit cannot accept a flight offered in accordance with the conditions specified below, it shall clearly indicate its inability and specify the conditions under which the flight will be accepted.
d) For any proposed deviation from the conditions specified in this LoA (e.g. COP, route or level) the transferring unit shall initiate an Approval Request using the appropriate software tool.
e) The Accepting Unit shall notify the transferring Unit in the event that communication with the aircraft is not established as expected.

4.2 ATS-Routes, Co-ordination Points and Level Allocation

Upon transfer, IFR aircraft are to conform to ICAO standard cruising levels (or agreed levels if these are different), incorporating the implementation of Reduced Vertical Separation Minima (RVSM), and also to the direction of airways as published in the relevant AIP.

4.2.1 Deemed Co-ordination of Enroute Traffic

All enroute traffic entering the St. Helena CTR or TMA shall be individually coordinated. This includes electronic coordination where appropriate.

4.2.2 Transfer of Control and Communication

Note: *The following procedures are designed to work in a low-traffic environment. During events or periods with unusually high traffic load, Luanda Control and St. Helena Approach may coordinate a temporary agreement to ensure vertical separation between inbound and outbound aircraft on the same route.*

4.2.2.1 From Luanda Control to St. Helena Approach

- Transfer of Control – coincident with transfer of communications.
- Transfer of Communications – inbound aircraft descending to FL200 or if cruising below FL200, at an equivalent lateral position and clear of known conflicts.

Note: *St. Helena Approach is required to descend inbound aircraft below FL200 within 5 minutes of reaching FL200.*

4.2.2.2 From St. Helena Approach to Luanda Control

- Transfer of Control – coincident with transfer of communications.
- Transfer of Communications - outbound aircraft climbing to FL190 or if cruising below FL190, climbing to RFL and clear of known conflicts.

Note: *Luanda Control is required to climb outbound aircraft above FL190 within 5 minutes of reaching FL190.*

Note: *Should inbound aircraft conflict with the outbound aircraft, St. Helena Approach are permitted to provide radar services above FL190 to deconflict these aircraft. Coordination with Luanda Control must take place to agree a course of action.*

Note: *When AFRC_FSS is providing ATC services above FHSH_APP, outbound aircraft shall be climbed to FL240 and transferred to AFRC_FSS when at FL180 or above.*

SECTION 5 ATS SURVEILLANCE BASED CO-ORDINATION PROCEDURES

5.1 Transfer of Aircraft Identification

a) Transfer of aircraft identification between Luanda Control and St. Helena Approach is normally performed by transfer of the radar label.
b) When discrete SSR codes are used for transfer of identification, they shall be assigned in accordance with VATSIM network defined ranges.
c) Any change of SSR code by the accepting ATS Unit may only take place after the transfer of control point.
d) The accepting ATS Unit shall be notified of any observed irregularity in the operation of SSR transponders.
e) Mode S identification, and explicitly SSR code 1000, shall not be used.

5.2 Radar Co-ordination Procedures

5.2.1 General

Transfer of radar identification and transfer of radar control between Luanda Control and St. Helena Approach will be subject to the serviceability of respective equipment used by controllers and the VATSIM data network sufficient for necessary information exchange. Additionally, two-way communication between the two facilities should be possible.

If it becomes necessary to reduce or suspend transfers of control, a 5-minute prior notification shall be observed, except in emergency situations.

5.2.2 Transfer of Radar Control

Transfer of radar control may be effected, after prior coordination, provided aircraft are vertically separated or the minimum separation between aircraft does not fall below the radar separation minima (5.3.1).

5.2.3 Silent Transfer of Control (Silent Handover)

Transfer of control for traffic inbound or outbound to St Helena may take place by means of a Silent Handover (that is, without prior coordination) provided that:

- If the aircraft concerned are following the **same route**, they are spaced by a minimum of 10NM, constant or increasing. (See *Note*).
- If the aircraft concerned are on **crossing tracks**, the aircraft will remain separated by the radar separation minima (5.3.1).

The transferring controller places any vectoring instructions or speed control in the tag and instructs aircraft to report these on first contact with the receiving controller.

Note: *The 10NM here is not a separation standard. It is the minimum spacing required for a silent transfer of control.*

5.3 Separation Minima

5.3.1 Radar Separation

The following radar separation minima are to be applied:

- Luanda Control: 5 NM
- St. Helena Approach: 5 NM

ANNEX A - UK FLIGHT INFORMATION SERVICES

5.3.1.1 General

The UK Flight Information Services are:

- Basic Service (IFR and VFR traffic);
- Traffic Service (IFR and VFR traffic);
- Deconfliction Service **(IFR traffic only);** and
- Procedural Service **(IFR traffic only) –** *not included in this document*

All of these services can be offered in **any** meteorological conditions. However, as pilots are expected to accept advice given under the service, they should not request a service which is not suitable to their qualification/ability/situation and should select the most appropriate to their conditions.

Source: CAP 774 (CAA) Chapter 1, 2, 3 and 4.

5.3.1.2 Basic Service (BS)

A Basic Service is an ATS provided for the purpose of giving advice and information useful for the safe and efficient conduct of flights. This may include weather information, changes of serviceability of facilities, conditions at aerodromes, general airspace activity information, and any other information likely to affect safety. The avoidance of other traffic is solely the pilot's responsibility.

Basic Service	Remarks
Type	Non-surveillance-based service.
Provision	Controllers and FISOs may provide a Basic Service
Flight Rules	IFR and VFR
Identification	The controller may identify an aircraft
Traffic Information	Generic traffic information
Deconfliction	Deconfliction is not provided under a Basic Service. If a pilot requires deconfliction advice outside controlled airspace, Deconfliction Service shall be requested.
Terrain	Basic Service is available at all levels, and the pilots remain responsible for terrain clearance at all times.
Headings	Unless the pilot has entered into an agreement with a controller to maintain a specific course of action, a pilot may change heading or routing without advising the controller.
Levels	Unless the pilot has entered into an agreement with a controller to maintain a specific level or level band, a pilot may change level without advising the controller/FISO

5.3.1.3 Traffic Service (TS)

A Traffic Service is a surveillance based ATS, where the controller provides specific surveillance-derived traffic information to assist the pilot in avoiding other traffic. Controllers may provide headings and/or levels for the purposes of positioning and/or sequencing; however, the controller is not required to achieve deconfliction minima, and the pilot remains responsible for collision avoidance.

Traffic Service	Remarks
Type	Surveillance-Based service
Provision	Only provided by a controller with access to an ATS surveillance system.
Flight Rules	IFR and VFR
Identification	The controller shall identify the aircraft, inform the pilot that they are identified, and maintain identity.
Traffic Information	Traffic is normally considered to be relevant when, in the judgement of the controller, the conflicting aircraft's observed flight profile indicates that it will pass within 3 NM and, where level information is available, 3,000 ft of the aircraft in receipt of the Traffic Service or its level-band if manoeuvring within a level block. However, controllers may also use their judgment to decide on occasions when such traffic is not relevant, e.g. passing behind or within the parameters but diverging. Controllers shall aim to pass information on relevant traffic before the conflicting aircraft is within 5 NM *(CAP 774 chapter 3, paragraph 3.5)*.
Deconfliction	Deconfliction is not provided under a Traffic Service. If a pilot requires deconfliction advice outside controlled airspace, Deconfliction Service shall be requested.
Terrain	Traffic Service may be provided below MSA; however, pilots remain responsible for terrain clearance.
Headings	A pilot may operate under his own navigation or a controller may provide headings for the purpose of positioning, sequencing, or as navigational assistance.
Levels	Pilots may select their own operating levels or may be provided with level allocations by the controller for the positioning and/or sequencing of traffic or for navigational assistance

5.3.1.4 Deconfliction Service (DS)

A Deconfliction Service is a surveillance based ATS where, in addition to the provisions of a Basic Service, the controller provides specific surveillance-derived traffic information and issues headings and/or levels aimed at achieving planned deconfliction minima, or for positioning and/ or sequencing. However, the avoidance of other traffic is ultimately the pilot's responsibility.

Deconfliction Service	Remarks
Type	Surveillance-Based service
Provision	Only provided by a controller with access to an ATS surveillance system.
Flight Rules	IFR **only**
Identification	The controller shall identify the aircraft, inform the pilot that they are identified, and maintain identity.
Traffic Information	The controller may, subject to workload, pass traffic information on deconflicted traffic in order to improve the pilot's situational awareness
Deconfliction	The deconfliction minima against un-coordinated or unknown traffic are: - 5NM laterally; or - 3000ft vertically, unless Mode-C has been verified. The deconfliction minima against aircraft under a service from the same controller or have been previously coordinated: - 3NM laterally; or - 1000ft vertically - 500ft vertically (subject to regulatory approval)
Terrain	A Deconfliction Service shall only be provided to aircraft operating at or above the MSA. If a pilot requests descent below MSA, controllers shall no longer provide a Deconfliction Service, but should instead, subject to surveillance and RTF coverage, apply a Traffic Service and inform the pilot.
Headings	A pilot may operate under his own navigation or a controller may provide headings for the purpose of positioning, sequencing, or as navigational assistance.
Levels	Controllers will normally provide level allocations for positioning, sequencing, navigational assistance, or to achieve deconfliction minima.

5.3.1.5 Provision, Upgrade and Downgrade

When a pilot is provided with a service, the controller is to inform them of the service they will receive. Should the service subsequently change, the pilot must be informed so that they are aware of what information they can expect to receive.