

Skyguide honoured for adopting EGNOS-based satellite navigation procedures

Geneva, 6 March 2012. Skyguide has been awarded a distinction for its introduction of new approach procedures based on data provided by EGNOS, the European Satellite Based Augmentation System. The award was bestowed on Switzerland's air navigation service provider by the GSA, the agency for Europe's satellite navigation systems, and the ESSP, the EGNOS Service Provider, and was presented in Amsterdam today as part of ATC Global, the annual international conference of the air traffic services sector.

Skyguide adopted its first approach procedures based on the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS) last November. The new procedures were introduced at the regional airports of St. Gallen-Altenrhein and Les Eplatures, near La Chaux-de-Fonds. EGNOS is an augmentation system that significantly enhances the accuracy and reliability of satellite navigation systems such as the GPS. EGNOS came into operation in October 2009, and has been certificated for aviation use last year. Switzerland is only the second European country (after France) to adopt EGNOS-based flight approach procedures. In the meantime, further airports in Europe have also joined in to use EGNOS services.

On the right track

"We have been working on the adoption of new technologies such as satellite navigation for the aviation sector for several years now," said skyguide's Chief Operating Officer Alex Bristol. "Satellite navigation offers substantially more possibilities than are provided by conventional ground-based navigation systems; and we're convinced that this new technology will play a major role in the further development of flight procedures over the next few years. We are delighted to receive this award," he continued. "And we regard it as clear confirmation that we are on the right track."

"Satellite navigation is a natural evolution for the aviation sector and introduces a major paradigm shift for technologies supporting Air Traffic Control and Management over the last several decades," says European GNSS Agency (GSA) Executive Director, Carlo des Dorides. "Using EGNOS is the first step in that direction".

Dirk Werquin, ESSP President, expressed his satisfaction on how the EGNOS implementation in European airports has started to boost since the service was declared available for aviation: "We are now facing very stimulating years in which EGNOS use will spread over Europe. ESSP will be there to help ANSPs in their implementation plans and to ensure that the provision of the EGNOS services achieves excellence".

Swiss innovation platform

Skyguide is collaborating with various partners to develop and adopt satellite-based flight procedures. The work here is being steered and overseen by the Swiss Federal Office of Civil Aviation, and forms part of the broader CHIPS innovation platform. CHIPS currently has over 20 projects under way at 15 locations throughout Switzerland. In addition to the new procedures for St. Gallen-Altenrhein and Les Eplatures, new GPS-based approaches have also been introduced for Zurich Airport and the Inselspital hospital in Bern.

A replacement for ground-based systems

For decades now, approaches to airports have been flown using ground-based instrument landing systems (ILS), which emit guide beams that enable the pilots to follow a precise lateral and vertical path. With the new satellite-based navigation technology, aircraft can approach an airport independently of any ground installations, with the pilots using satellite signals to determine their position and proceeding via a series of virtual waypoints within the airspace concerned.

skyguide
swiss air navigation services ltd.
media relations
CH-1215 Geneva 15

Contact:

phone: +41 22 417 4008
email: presse@skyguide.ch
internet: www.skyguide.ch

Skyguide is responsible for providing air navigation services within Swiss airspace and in the airspace of certain adjoining regions in neighbouring countries. The company guides the civil and military aircraft entrusted to its care – around 3,270 flights a day or 1.2 million a year – through the busiest and most complex airspace in Europe. Skyguide is a non-profit limited company which has its head office in Geneva. The majority of its shares are held by the Swiss Confederation. The company generated total operating revenue of over CHF 365 million in 2010, and employs some 1,400 people at 14 locations in Switzerland. Skyguide is also a member, together with its partner organizations in Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, of the FABEC initiative to create a common functional airspace block that will bring greater efficiency to Central Europe's air traffic management services and activities.
