The Backbone of EATC's Missions!

EATC uses a large variety of software applications and tools to support its daily operations. Some of these tools are off-shelf. But to optimise air mobility on behalf of seven member nations, EATC draws on a unique, tailor-made, in-house solution, called Management of European Air Transport or just MEAT.

What Makes MEAT Out?

MEAT is EATC's C2 tool *par excellence.* It is an innovative and one-of-a-kind application. It is working in the background, but all the more, it is the backbone of scheduling, planning and conducting of EATC's air mobility missions.

Firstly, MEAT is a made-to-measure sophisticated high-end product. It is developed within EATC for EATC. To this end a group of highly professional experts are integrated into a dedicated branch within EATC's Operational Division. This multinational team is composed of up to 14 military and civilian business analysts, web application developers and test engineers. They are responsible to develop the MEAT software, to ensure a continuous maintenance of the tool, as well as to re-tailor new functionalities and increase the performance of the application.

Secondly, operational planning for seven nations demands a holistic approach and this is why MEAT connects all actors with one common software system. The stakeholders include the requestors, as well as the executing agencies responsible to fly the missions and of course EATC who plans and executes the missions. This trilateral bond is one of the keys to effective and efficient mission planning. Currently, MEAT registers more than 3,400 authorised users. At peak times more than 900 users connect simultaneously.

Thirdly, MEAT offers – to each and every user – access to a fine degree of detailed up-to-date restricted-classified information. The data includes information on air mobility missions in all different stages of planning or execution, from the initial air transport request up to the final mission report.

Finally, MEAT is revisited continuously to offer at all moments an enhanced tool. To do so, the MEAT team takes into account the needs and requirements of in-house and external users. They organise yearly boards coordinating the various requests for development or improvement. The

◁ *Working with MEAT. (Photo: EATC)*

EATC team also analyse ad-hoc change requests and incident reports adapting the software in consequence.

From a Classical Software Package to MEAT New Generation

The first MEAT version was launched in 2011 as a classical software package installed on a user's workstation. As of September 2014, MEAT changed into a web-client based network service, hosted by the Dutch *Joint Informatie Voorziening Commando.*

Now, it is time to look into the new decade and take an evolutionary step with MEAT New Generation (MEAT NG). MEAT NG will be based on evolving legal frameworks and adapted to modern software development tools and designs. It will give the EATC in-house experts the possibility to take into account requests that were not to be implemented by the current setup. Moreover, it will offer new opportunities to approach functional requirements from the users.

EATC plans to release MEAT NG into production in late 2024 or early 2025 with a "minimum viable product". This will include the set of functional features of the last MEAT version, plus several improvements outlined in an issue-related project initiation document. The transition phase will offer full functionalities to the users and the current MEAT will continue to be developed and maintained until MEAT NG is successfully launched.

Digitised Operational Air Mobility Management

MEAT is the backbone of EATC's military air mobility efforts. To offer high performance, EATC needs to draw also on complementary applications. This includes, for example, specific software for military flight planning. The output of such a tool is used through data import to support the MEAT application. The military flight planning tool analyses, improves and streamlines redundant tasks through automated workflows. It also maximises payloads with precise, reliable performance calculations and enhances the operational flight plans or optimise route calculation. MEAT and the additional software applications provide fully digitised operational air mobility management. Together, they enhance operations, ensure effectiveness, improve safety and efficiency and ultimately lead to overall readiness.

MEAT NG will lead EATC into the future. As its predecessor, it will be innovative and unique. It will be tailored in-house and meet the needs of the users. It will be the backbone interconnecting all partners via one common, efficient tool for reliable air mobility missions.

MEAT Branch

Italian flight crew inserting the flight plan, with MEAT data, into the aircraft system. (Photo: Italian Air Force)