Letter of Agreement (LOA)

Between

Philippines vACC (VATPHIL)

And

Hong Kong vACC (HKvACC)

Effective Date: 30 October 2025

1. PURPOSE

1.1. This agreement establishes standard procedures and coordination responsibilities of air traffic control between Manila FIR (RPHI), Philippines vACC, Southeast Asia Division (VATSEA) and Hong Kong FIR (VHHK), Hong Kong vACC, Southeast Asia Division (VATSEA).

2. CANCELLATION

2.1. This document supersedes any agreements previously established in verbal or written form between Hong Kong vACC and Philippines vACC.

3. SCOPE

3.1. The information contained herein are supplementary to the rules established under VATSIM regulations, Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region published by the Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department and the AIP of the Republic of the Philippines published by the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines.

3.2. While such regulations shall generally be strictly followed on the VATSIM network, in some circumstances exemptions or modifications to the real-world regulations are necessary due to operational need in an online environment. Such deviation shall be discussed in this document.

4. DISCLOSURE

4.1. Both parties shall make this Letter of Agreement available for public access on their respective official websites. The information contained herein is for the exclusive use on the Virtual Air Traffic Simulation Network (VATSIM) only. Under no circumstances shall such information be used in the real world, including but not limited to, real-world air navigation or real-world air traffic control.

5. LANGUAGE

5.1. This Letter of Agreement is officially and originally prepared and documented in the English language. Both parties are encouraged to translate this LOA into local languages for reference purposes, but this is optional. The English version of this LOA shall always prevail, and future revisions to this LOA shall base upon the English version.

6. GENERAL PROCEDURES

6.1. Unless otherwise stated or coordinated,

6.1.1. En-route control (CTR) of both parties shall keep traffic away from the **5 nautical miles (nm)** margin of the boundary between Hong Kong FIR (VHHK) and Manila FIR (RPHI) under all circumstances. The margins on both sides constitute a buffer zone of width **10nm**. Except during a standard handover procedure, controller in charge of the corresponding airspace or sector must coordinate and point out such aircraft to the controller of the other party when it becomes necessary for traffic to enter or cross such margin.

6.1.2. Controllers shall make every effort to follow the radar separation minima defined in ICAO Doc 4444. In particular, as radar coverage is universally available in the VATSIM ATC environment, the **separation minima based on distance using Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) and/or GNSS (i.e. ICAO Doc 4444, Section 5.4.2.3)** shall always be observed except in rare circumstances in which these separation minima become unavailable. The separation minima are not discussed within this LOA document as this shall be part of the ATC training for both FIRs.

6.1.3. Controllers of each side shall initiate each handover **ten to thirty nautical miles (10 – 30 nm)** before crossing the Transfer of Control Point (TCP). Handoff must be completed at least **ten nautical miles (10nm)** from the TCP.

6.1.4. **No controller shall clear an aircraft directly to a waypoint outside of the FIR** at which the controller controls unless prior coordination is made and proper permission of such clearance is obtained. This also applies when there is no en-route/terminal ATC available at the adjacent FIR through which a flight will transit.

6.1.5. Proper liaison between Hong Kong FIR and Manila FIR shall be established for handover. Controllers shall advise the requested cruising level (i.e. the altitude at which the aircraft will be flying during the handover) of a particular aircraft prior to entering the neighbouring FIR. As per ICAO Doc 4444 Section 5.3.3.1, **aircraft may not be cleared to change altitude during a handoff unless prior clearance has been obtained from the accepting controller.**

6.1.6. Controllers shall ensure that all aircraft are flying under **real-time speed (1x rate)** prior to the initiation of a handover and during a handover. **Crossing FIR boundary while under acceleration mode is strictly prohibited.**

6.1.7. En-route or Terminal controllers should advise controllers of the other FIR when a sector is combined or separated and provide corresponding information.

6.1.8. If the route of the filed flight plan of a flight flying between Manila FIR and Hong Kong FIR does not include a valid TCP or does not include an airway that contains the valid TCP, a controller shall amend the route of such flight plan following standard procedures per ICAO Doc 4444, the Hong Kong AIP and/or the AIP of Manila FIR so that the amended route will include a valid TCP. If the pilot is unable to amend such route, proper coordination shall be made to accommodate such situations.

6.1.9. Unless otherwise specified, all handovers shall be conducted between two en-route controllers (CTR).

6.1.10. Controllers should refer to the Sector Ownership Priority table in Appendix B to determine which position to handoff to. If sectorisation deviates from this standard (e.g. due to extra sectorisation during events), controllers must explicitly coordinate this through ATC channels or otherwise.

7. ROUTING REQUIREMENTS

7.1.1. Flights via NOMAN and landing at VHHH/VHHX shall route in accordance with the routes listed below. Other flights landing at VMMC/ZGSZ/ZGGG shall be re-routed via SABNO as per Section 7.1.2.

ADES	Route after entering Hong Kong FIR
VHHH	...NOMAN V533 BETTY
VHHX	...NOMAN

7.1.2. Flights via SABNO and landing at VHHH/VHHX/VMMC/ZGSZ/ZGGG shall route in accordance with the routes listed below.

ADES	Route after entering Hong Kong FIR
VHHH	...SABNO V542 BETTY
VHHX	...SABNO
VMMC	...SABNO DCT TOFEE DCT SUKER DCT ALDOM J103 ROBIN DCT CHALI
ZGSZ	...SABNO DCT TOFEE DCT SUKER DCT ALDOM J103 ROBIN DCT ALLEY DCT GOBBI DCT LANDA
ZGGG	...SABNO DCT TOFEE DCT SUKER DCT ALDOM J103 SAPAX DCT BIGEX B330 TAMOT W68 IDUMA

7.1.3. Flights via ASOBA and landing at VHHH/VHHX/VMMC/ZGSZ/ZGGG shall route in accordance with the routes listed below.

ADES	Route after entering Hong Kong FIR
VHHH	...ASOBA M772 DULOP Q1 CARSO V551 BETTY
VHHX	...ASOBA M772 DULOP M771 DUMOL
VMMC	...ASOBA M772 DULOP M771 DUMOL J103 ROBIN DCT CHALI
ZGSZ	...ASOBA M772 DULOP M771 DUMOL J103 ROBIN DCT ALLEY DCT GOBBI DCT LANDA
ZGGG	...ASOBA M772 DULOP M771 DUMOL J103 SAPAX DCT BIGEX B330 TAMOT W68 IDUMA

7.1.4. Transit flights entering Hong Kong FIR shall fly one of the following routes listed below.

Entry Route	Route after entering Hong Kong FIR	Exit Route
A461	...NOMAN DCT SANKU DCT BIMIX DCT DOTMI...	A470
	Not Available (re-route via SABNO)	A202/R339
A583	...SABNO DCT LEGOD DCT BEKOL...	A461
	...SABNO DCT SIKOU...	A202/R339
M772	...ASOBA M772 DULOP Q1 CARSO DCT NOBAD DCT SANKU DCT BIMIX DCT DOTMI...	A470
	...ASOBA M772 DULOP M771 DUMOL J103 BEKOL...	A461

8. HANDOFF ALTITUDES AT TRANSFER OF CONTROL POINTS (TCP)

8.1. Area Radar South (TRS) – Manila FIR

TCP	Route	Direction	FLAS Levels
NOMAN	A461/M501	To RPHI	F290, F330, F370, F410
		To VHHK	F300, F340, F380

8.2. Area Radar Central (TRC) – Manila FIR

TCP	Route	Direction	FLAS Levels
SABNO	A583	To RPHI	F290, F330, F370, F410
		To VHHK	F300, F340, F380 (note)

Note: FL380 is not available for flights landing at ZGSZ.

8.3. Area Radar West (TRD) – Manila FIR

TCP	Route	Direction	FLAS Levels
ASOBA	M772	To VHHK	F300, F380

9. VALIDITY, REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

9.1. This Letter of Agreement becomes valid and takes immediate effect upon the approval of the Director of the Hong Kong Virtual Area Control Centre (HKvACC) and the Director of the Philippines Virtual Area Control Centre (VATPHIL).

9.2. Should there be any changes to real-world procedures made by the local authorities, both parties shall decide whether an amendment to this LOA is necessary.

9.3. A content review of this LOA shall take place six (6) months after this LOA takes effect. During the review, both parties shall convene to discuss the implementation of this LOA and make proper amendments to it if necessary. Subsequent content review shall take place every six (6) months henceforth.

9.4. Any parties wishing to amend this LOA (by adding, omitting or changing any clauses) shall contact the other party to call for an immediate review of the LOA. Both parties must reach a consensus on any amendments before they take effect. Subsequent content review shall take place every six (6) months henceforth.

This Letter of Agreement is approved on 20 October, year 2025:

X 

(Signed Electronically)

Mark Hui
Director
Hong Kong vACC

X 

(Signed Electronically)

Willie So
Director
Philippines vACC

APPENDIX A: REFERENCES

Aeronautical Information Publication of Hong Kong FIR, published by the Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department.

Aeronautical Information Publication of Manila FIR, published by the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines.

ICAO Doc 4444

ICAO Annex 2

APPENDIX B: SECTOR OWNERSHIP PRIORITY

Positions on the right take over positions on the left if they are offline.

B1: Hong Kong FIR Positions (FL365 and above)

Area Radar South (TRS) – NOMAN			
HKG_U_CTR		HKG_S_CTR	HKG_W_CTR
Area Radar Central (TRC) – SABNO			
HKG_U_CTR	HKG_C_CTR	HKG_S_CTR	HKG_W_CTR
Area Radar West (TRD) – ASOBA			
HKG_U_CTR	HKG_D_CTR	HKG_V_CTR	HKG_W_CTR

B2: Hong Kong FIR Positions (FL365 and below)

Area Radar South (TRS) – NOMAN		
HKG_S_CTR	HKG_W_CTR	
Area Radar Central (TRC) – SABNO		
HKG_C_CTR	HKG_S_CTR	HKG_W_CTR
Area Radar West (TRD) – ASOBA		
HKG_D_CTR	HKG_V_CTR	HKG_W_CTR

B3: Manila FIR Positions

Manila FIR – NOMAN, SABNO, ASOBA		
MNL_1_CTR	MNL_N_CTR	MNL_CTR

APPENDIX C: RECORD OF REVISIONS

DATE	REV.	REVISION CONTENT
07 FEB 2017	0	Initial Release
10 APR 2024	1	Added routing restrictions for Hong Kong FIR Added altitude restriction for flights via SABNO landing at ZGSZ
28 NOV 2024	2	Updated VHHK routings
30 OCT 2025	3	Updated VHHK routings Added FL410 for aircraft entering RPHI FIR at NOMAN