



Upcoming North Atlantic OTS Design Exercise

The North Atlantic operation is a collaborative and dynamic aviation ecosystem where change is constant, and benefit realization is paramount for both Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) and airspace users. Over the past decade, we have worked closely together to implement impactful and meaningful improvements.

Building on this shared philosophy, during the October 2025 North Atlantic OTS Development Focus Group (NOD FG) meeting in Ireland, Gander and Shanwick communicated their intention to explore further beneficial changes for all stakeholders.

What is happening?

From **January 12–25, 2026**, Gander and Shanwick will conduct a North Atlantic Organized Track Structure (NAT OTS) design exercise. During this period, the OTS will include multiple tracks incorporating both whole and half-degree coordinates. The purpose of this exercise is to assess customer acceptance and flight planning capabilities for filing half-degree routing options. Although these routings are already permitted under current published guidance, utilisation of routings that contain half-degree coordinates remain underutilised.

During the exercise period in January, an additional track note will be added to notify operators that the OTS design includes OTS tracks that contain both whole and half degree coordinates as follows:

“Note that the OTS design includes tracks that contain both whole and half degree coordinates.”

Note: There is no change to the identification of ‘PBCS Tracks’. As per NAT Ops Bulletin 2024_001, OTS tracks spaced using 42.6km (23 NM) lateral separation minima (spacing of half degree of latitude) at any point will be designated as ‘PBCS tracks’ and will be uniquely identified in Remark 3 of the Track Message. See Section 4 (Flight Planning Provisions).

Why now?

January represents the lowest traffic period of the year, making this an ideal time to conduct such an exercise with minimal operational impact.

What are the benefits?

- Greater flexibility and efficiency in OTS placement.
- Increased availability of random route airspace by reducing structural constraints. (reduced OTS footprint)
- Encouraged use of all available routing options, supporting capacity growth on the NAT.

What does success look like?

Success will be measured against track loadings for the same weeks in previous years. If a decrease in track filing below agreed KPIs is observed, the option may not be pursued further at this time, depending on potential impact. In addition, an increase in filed flight plan utilization of whole and half degree route options would be a positive benefit from this exercise.

Your feedback is essential in helping us understand operational capabilities and any reluctance to adopt these routing options. Results of the exercise will be reviewed as the next NOD FG meeting, where we also hope to gather additional customer insights.

Thank you for your continued partnership in shaping the future of North Atlantic operations.