D-Flight GNSS Augmentation ICD and Integration Test Report

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ICARUS

INTEGRATED **C**OMMON **A**LTITUDE **R**EFERENCE SYSTEM FOR **U**-**S**PACE

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Abstract

This document specifies all the interfaces regarding the GNSS microservice. It describes the input and output interfaces that allow the necessary data to be retrieved to be upgraded by the outcomes of the Telespazio computing unit calculations.

Moreover, the document describes the data flows regarding the GNSS microservice through a series of use cases representative of its operations.

Finally, it contains the test to be performed in order to test and verify the communication between the GNSS microservice and the external sources of data (EDAS and Ground Reference Stations) and between the GNSS microservice and the other ICARUS microservices that need its computation.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Document

The purpose of the document is to represent, synthesise and describe all the interfaces concerning the GNSS microservice composing ICARUS.

The GNSS microservice has the aim of determining, by accessing the data from the GNSS receiver on board the drone or by accessing the drone telemetry provided by the USSPs, the goodness of the navigation performance, allowing an estimate of the signal performance as well as an estimate of the integrity parameters.

To perform this calculation, the system needs to have access to further input data such as data from the EDAS service and data from the Ground GNSS Reference Stations.

All these input sources require the definition of specific interfaces which are summarised in the following chapters.

1.2 Acronyms

Founding Members

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Table 1-1: Acronyms list

2 Inventory of GNSS interfaces

The Navigation System is a fundamental enabling factor for the proper functioning of USSPs and in particular of D-Flight, ensuring the ability to provide the central system with the precise position of all the UAS flying in the VLL airspace.

The services offered by the platform are grouped into three macro-areas:

- Real-time monitoring services
- Real-time integrity services

2.1 Real-time monitoring service

The Real-time monitoring service makes it possible to assess the quality of GNSS navigation systems in real time. This monitoring is done for each of the available GNSS Ground Reference Stations. In the event of an anomaly in the parameters of a station (high estimated errors, etc.), this implies that all drones present in the surrounding area will have problems in localisation.

The real-time monitoring service uses freely accessible dual frequency GNSS reference stations. Therefore, in the most basic form, it returns the GNSS performance in terms of accuracy and integrity on these stations to the USSP.

For the USSP this means having the operating status of the navigation systems in real time with an update every 15 minutes.

For the drone operator, real-time monitoring provides a tool to improve mission planning and management, displaying the SBAS real-time performances on the reference stations closest to the operator's flight space.

2.2 Real-time integrity service

The Real-time Integrity Monitoring service is able to evaluate the status of the GNSS on board the UAS. In this case it is possible to detect not only GNSS problems, but also any components of local errors or disturbances, in real time. In this case, GNSS receivers should be capable of acquiring and transmitting raw GNSS measurements, before the receiver performs the position calculation. In this way it is possible to detect local events that would otherwise remain undetectable.

The GNSS microservice is set up to qualify the data acquired by the on-board GNSS receiver through EDAS / EGNOS and through ARAIM algorithms making the augmentation available.

Thus, the drone operator is able to evaluate the goodness of the GNSS position during the operational phase of the flight using the protection levels (HPL, VPL) that give a guarantee and a metric on the accuracy of the position data (BVLOS Enabler).

As already stated, the GNSS subsystem provides a centralised means of reliably computing the position of registered UASs, in real-time, and is a key enabler for all the ICARUS services (details regarding architecture, requirements and system composition can also be found in the other project deliverables ([1], [2], [3]).

Through appropriate processing of raw GNSS observables from drones, and support messages and data from external entities, it will provide the PVT solution for each monitored UAS, together with its integrity parameters and a validation mechanism based on the use of data coming from a network of trusted reference stations.

The GNSS service is important for the determination of GNSS-based altimetry as a common reference datum for establish the vertical distance of everything is flying with respect to the ground.

Figure 2-1: High-level architecture of GNSS microservice

GNSS data necessary for the calculation are provided to ICARUS in two ways:

1) via UDP through direct connection with the GNSS receiver on board the drone; in this case it is possible the access to the Raw Data

2) via MQTT through connection with the USSP, in the case of no direct access to raw data, to retrieve only telemetry.

Once the calculation has been performed, the drone position, altitude/height, the signal integrity and monitoring results will be shared with the USSP and with the final user.

The GNSS microservice requires the following external elements:

- real GPS and EGNOS signals acquired via the EDAS terrestrial network;
- connection to the network of IGS stations for receiving raw GNSS data acquired by local receivers;

• connection to additional GNSS stations for monitoring sensitive areas for receiving raw GNSS data acquired by local receivers;

• interfaces with USSPs (D-Flight, Pansa UTM) for the provision of GNSS Performance Monitoring services;

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• interfaces with UAS;

• hardware for subsystem deployment and long-term storage of data suitably protected and accessible by accredited users.

A more detailed representation of the units of the subsystem and the data flows can be found in the following context diagrams. The functionalities covered are shown in Figure 2-2 and in Figure 2-3.

Figure 2-2: context diagram of the GNSS subsystem when direct access to GNSS raw data is foreseen

Figure 2-3: context diagram of the GNSS subsystem when no direct access to UAS GNSS raw data is foreseen

The list of the interfaces can be found in Table 2-1: interfaces for incoming data flows (interfaces for incoming data) and Table 2-2 (interfaces for outgoing data).

Table 2-1: interfaces for incoming data flows

 2 The distinction between "internal" and "external" indicates whether the destination component belongs to ICARUS or not

¹ The distinction between "internal" and "external" indicates whether the source component belongs to ICARUS or not

Table 2-2: interfaces for outgoing data flows

Four use cases representative of the GNSS microservice operations and data flows are given below.

The first sequence diagram below demonstrates the ability of the GNSS subsystem to correctly treat EGNOS messages and GNSS raw data to evaluate the GNSS signal performance through:

- 1. Reception and decoding of raw GNSS data from the reference station network;
- 2. At the same time, reception and decoding of the EDAS data stream, retrieving the EGNOS SBAS messages and the RIMS GNSS raw data;
- 3. Processing of the retrieved data to identify and discard possible faulty satellites and to compute the integrity parameters (i.e. Horizontal/Vertical Protection Levels) over a regional grid;
- 4. Estimation of the integrity parameters corresponding to a given coordinate pair (according to a distance criterion from the nearest grid point computed)

Use Case 1: GNSS Signal Monitoring using EGNOS

Figure 2-4: Use case 1 sequence diagram

The second sequence diagram demonstrates the ability of the GNSS subsystem to correctly treat stored ARAIM-related data (ISM message) and GNSS raw data to evaluate the GNSS signal performance, through the following steps:

- 1. Reception and decoding of raw GNSS data from the reference station network;
- 2. Processing of the retrieved data to identify and discard possible faulty satellites and to compute the integrity parameters (i.e. Horizontal/Vertical Protection Levels) over a regional grid;
- 3. Estimation of the integrity parameters corresponding to a given coordinate pair (according to a distance criterion from the nearest grid point computed)

Use Case 2: GNBS Signal Monitoring using ARAM

Figure 2-5: Use case 2 sequence diagram

The third sequence diagram demonstrates the ability of the GNSS subsystem to correctly treat EGNOS messages and GNSS raw data from a UAS to compute its position and its integrity parameters through the following steps (in addition and in parallel to what is described in the first sequence diagram):

- 1. Reception and decoding of the EDAS data stream, retrieving the EGNOS SBAS messages;
- 2. Reception and decoding of raw GNSS data from the tracked UAS;
- 3. Processing of the retrieved data to compute the UAS PVT and related integrity parameters (i.e. Horizontal/Vertical Protection Levels).

Use Case 3: Positioning and integrity based on EGNOS

Figure 2-6: Use case 3 sequence diagram

The fourth sequence diagram demonstrates the ability of the GNSS subsystem to correctly treat GNSS raw data from a UAS to compute its position and its integrity parameters using the ARAIM algorithm through the following steps (in addition and in parallel to what is described in the second sequence diagram):

- 1. Reception and decoding of raw GNSS data from the tracked UAS;
- 2. Processing of the retrieved data to compute the UAS PVT and related integrity parameters (i.e. Horizontal/Vertical Protection Levels).

Use Case 4: Positioning and Integrity based on ARAIM

Figure 2-7: Use case 4 sequence diagram

Moreover, common to all the sequence diagrams an administrator has the possibility to set some specific processing options or configurations:

- 1. The administrator logs on to the maintenance interface through an ssh connection (ADM.MAN.01).
- 2. The administrator configures one of the following subsystem components by properly editing the configuration files:
	- a. Reference station interface: NTRIP client configuration (selection of stations and connection parameters).
	- b. EDAS interface: connection parameters (URL and port used).
	- c. GNSS signal monitoring: algorithm implemented (ARAIM or EGNOS), observables used.
	- d. Position and integrity: algorithm implemented (ARAIM or EGNOS), observables used.

e. Output interfaces: MQTT broker features (address, port, topics).

After the maintenance/reconfiguration activity is completed, the administrator disconnects from the module of interest and from the control logic interface.

2.3 GNSS Microservice Communication

The MQTT protocol, as described in D.4.1, was chosen to guarantee data exchange and communication to the outside (USSP) for the GNSS microservice. MQ Telemetry Transport (MQTT) is a highly reliable messaging protocol since, being based on TCP, it guarantees the delivery of messages even on degraded or slow networks.

Its main features, which make it very suitable for M2M exchange are:

- publish / subscribe mechanism
- very simple
- very low overhead

The GNSS microservice implements the MQTT Mosquitto message broker, an excellent open-source tool that is an autonomous and independent service, which centralises the connections between the most disparate IoT objects (UAS in this case), making M2M communication optimal. Through this broker it is possible to manage all messages received from and transmitted to objects that are part of the network without knowing their number, their characteristics, or the physical network address.

According to this widespread pattern, the *sender of a message* (called *publisher*) turns to the broker to "publish" their message. The *recipients* (*subscriber*) in turn contact the *broker* to "*subscribe*" to receiving messages. The broker forwards every message sent by a publisher to all subscribers interested in that "*type*" (*Topic*) of message. It is easy to imagine, therefore, that it is not necessary for an object to repeatedly query the broker to find out if there are new messages to be read (as in the standard mode): these are automatically notified by the broker if there is a new message to be delivered.

2.3.1 EDAS & Ground Reference Station Data

The exchange of GNSS raw data streams from the EDAS Service and from the Ground Reference Stations, in real time, is implemented through the NTRIP protocol (see Figure 2-1: High-level architecture of GNSS microservice). The main elements that define the actors involved in the distribution of data according to this protocol are:

• NTRIP Caster: this is the element that centralises the GNSS raw data flows from the GNSS receivers;

• NTRIP Server: generally co-located with the GNSS receiver, this module deals with the communication of raw data to the NTRIP Caster;

• NTRIP Client: this is the module that takes care of receiving and decoding GNSS data; the passage of data through this module is preparatory to the processing of raw data.

The EDAS data are retrieved using the EDAS Client, a COTS provided by the European GNSS Agency (GSA) for connection to the EDAS network, that connects to the EDAS server by subscribing to receive raw data catalogued as belonging to the SL1 service (Service Level 1 - RTCM data). Developed entirely in Java, it forwards the raw data received from the EGNOS RIMS via TCP.

2.3.2 Drone GNSS Raw Data

The GNSS raw data, necessary to provide the integrity calculation, are retrieved by the GNSS microservice using the User Datagram Protocol, UDP, see Figure 2-1: High-level architecture of GNSS microservice*.*

UDP is a protocol that allows connectionless transmission of datagrams in IP-based networks. To reach the desired services on the target hosts, the protocol uses the ports listed as one of the main components in the UDP header. Like many other network protocols, UDP belongs to the Internet protocol family, although it should be classified in the transport layer and therefore as an intermediary instance between the network layer and the application layer.

The UDP protocol is a direct alternative to the extended TCP; the two protocols differ in particular on one point: while transmission via TCP takes place only after the obligatory three-way handshake (mutual authentication between sender and recipient, including creating a connection), UDP forgoes this procedure to reduce the transmission duration to the minimum possible. With UDP, an application can send information very quickly, as there is no need to create a connection with the recipient or wait for a response, so the drone data can be quickly ingested and processed.

2.3.3 USSP Connection

The connection between GNSS microservice and the USSPs is made by MQTT protocol. The *sender of the message* (called *publisher*), in this case the GNSS microservice, turns to the broker to "publish" their message. The *recipients* (*subscriber*), in this case the USSPs (D-flight, Pansa UTM) in turn contact the *broker* to "*subscribe*" to receiving messages. The broker forwards every message sent by the publisher to all subscribers interested in that "*type*" (*Topic*) of message. In this way, all the calculations performed by the microservice are sent to the USSPs.

Figure 2-8 is an example of the connection via MQTT with the USSP to retrieve he necessary data.

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Figure 2-8: Example of input drone data topic when no direct access to UAS GNSS raw data is foreseen

The output of the GNSS microservice calculation will be shared with USSP by the MQTT protocol as shown in the example in Figure 2-9.

Figure 2-9: Example output GNSS module calculation to USSP when no direct access to UAS GNSS raw data is foreseen

3 Testing and validation approach

In this chapter a description of the tests will be provided, with the aim of testing the operation of the GNSS microservice with the other components of the system, not only to verify the communication with the Input sources and with the GNSS service clients, but also to validate the correct functioning of the implemented algorithms.

The following tests will be detailed:

- 1) Test connection and communication with the UAS to receive raw data
- 2) Test connection and communication with the EDAS to receive data
- 3) Test connection and communication with the Ground Reference Stations to receive data
- 4) Test connection and communication with the USSP (D-flight and Pansa UTM) to retrieve data
- 5) Test connection and communication with the USSP (D-flight and Pansa UTM) to send calculation results
- 6) Test connection and communication with internal Modules (VCS, GIS, VALS) to send calculation results
- 7) Test the functioning of the algorithm for integrity estimation (GPS + EGNOS, ARAIM)

Test results will be provided in the second release (issue 2) of this document after the testing and verification activities that are scheduled for between November 2021 and January 2022.

4 Applicable and reference documents

- [1] ICARUS D3.1, "ICARUS Concept Definition: State-Of-The-Art, Requirements, Gap Analysis".
- [2] ICARUS D4.1, "Design and architecture of the ICARUS system & services".
- [3] ICARUS D4.2, "ICARUS Prototype"

