Development of turbulence detection and prediction radar for aviation safe

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There are various meteorological phenomena which may cause serious trouble to aircraft operations. Especially, atmospheric turbulence (including wind shear) sometimes brings significant aircraft accidents because it is difficult to detect it by current operational meteorological observations. In 2000-2009, more than half of accidents in large aircrafts were brought by atmospheric turbulence. At present, Pilot weather REPort (PIREP) is a major method for observing atmospheric turbulence, but it is not suitable for monitoring atmospheric turbulence because it cannot continuously observe a specific area or altitude. Therefore, the development of a new observation instrument, which continuously covers wide altitude range, is needed. On the other hand, various forecast techniques for atmospheric turbulence have been developed based on PIREP data, so there is still room for improving its prediction accuracy.

The project supported by ‘the Program for Promoting Fundamental Transport Technology Research of the Japan Railway Construction, Transport and Technology Agency (JRTT)’ started in July 2011. In the present study, the prototype of the next generation 1.3-GHz wind profiler radar (WPR) that can be observed up to the cruising altitude of the aircraft is developed, and it aims at the establishment of the atmospheric turbulence detection technique by the remote sensing. In addition, the observational data with the WPR is used as verification data to improve the prediction accuracy of atmospheric turbulence. It aims to become the foundation of the aircraft accident prevention.

It is expected that the result achieved by the present study will be built into the WPR network of Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) for the meteorological observations. In addition, it is expected to contribute to a safe service of the aircraft operation through the improvement of the prediction accuracy for atmospheric turbulence.

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