

## Organisational Preparation for Initial Certification MSAT Review

Sofema Aviation Services reviews the key elements & aspects which need to be considered when applying for an Initial EASA approval – Operator, CAMO, AMO & Airports

### Introduction

The following is provided as a structured, domain-agnostic preparation & guidance document as to how an organisation should prepare to receive an EASA MSAT review when applying for initial certification.

It draws directly on the principles from the MSAT v2.0 (Sep 2023) and aligns with the expectations for Present and Suitable maturity before approval is granted.

### Purpose of Preparation

The goal is to demonstrate to the Competent Authority that:

- All management system (MS) elements required under ICAO Annex 19 and EASA regulations are documented, tailored, and ready for use.
- The MS is suitable for the organisation's size, nature, complexity, and risk profile.
- There is a credible plan to move quickly from Present and Suitable to Operating and Effective once operations begin.

### Key Preparation Steps

#### Step 1 – Understand the MSAT Framework

- Familiarize management and key staff with:
  - Four SMS pillars: Safety Policy & Objectives, Safety Risk Management, Safety Assurance, Safety Promotion.
  - EASA-specific compliance monitoring & interface requirements.
  - PSOE maturity model definitions.

#### Step 2 – Establish Governance & Accountability

- Appoint Accountable Manager (per domain rules) with documented SMS responsibilities and authority over resources.
- Define safety accountabilities for all management levels and staff.
- Identify key safety personnel (Safety Manager, Compliance Monitoring Manager, ERP Coordinator, etc.) with competence records.

### Step 3 – Develop Core Documentation

- **Safety Policy** signed by Accountable Manager, including:
  - Commitment to continuous improvement.
  - Just culture principles.
  - Provision of necessary resources.
- **Safety Objectives** aligned to State Safety Programme (SSP) and sector risk profile.
- **Management System Manual** (e.g., MOE, CAME, Aerodrome Manual) integrating SMS & compliance monitoring requirements.
- **ERP Plan** with roles, resources, and contact lists.
- **Internal safety reporting procedures** (confidential, accessible, with feedback loop).
- **Document** hazard identification process, risk assessment methodology, and mitigation tracking.

### Step 4 – Resource & Competence Planning

- Demonstrate sufficient, competent staff for all safety-critical functions.
- Provide training and competence records for safety, compliance monitoring, and management roles.
- Forecast and plan resources for start-up and growth phases.
- Ensure tools, facilities, and IT systems supporting MS are ready.

### Step 5 – Internal Verification

- Conduct a self-assessment using the MSAT tool:
  - Verify all features are Present and Suitable.
  - Record evidence (documents, procedures, forms, records).
  - Identify and close gaps before the CA visit.
- Perform desktop reviews of all manuals to ensure alignment across documents.

### Step 6 – Culture & Communication

- Brief all personnel on:
  - The safety policy.
  - How to report hazards and occurrences.

- Their role in achieving safety objectives.
- Demonstrate leadership involvement in safety meetings, safety messages, and ERP drills.

### **Step 7 – Interface Management**

- Map all internal and external interfaces (e.g., contractors, service providers, partner organisations).
- Put documented agreements in place defining roles, responsibilities, and data-sharing protocols.
- Ensure contracted organisations required to have their own MS are aligned with your processes.

### **Step 8 – Prepare for Interviews & Demonstrations**

- Prepare key managers to explain their roles, responsibilities, and safety processes.
- Train frontline staff to describe:
  - How they access procedures.
  - How they report hazards or incidents.
  - Awareness of the safety policy and just culture principles.
- Have example hazard reports and ERP exercise outputs ready to show.

### **Key Considerations for Initial Certification - Preparation**

When the Competent Authority conducts the initial MSAT review, they will expect:

#### **a) Primary Evidence**

- Documentation showing each MS element exists (*Present*).
- Evidence that it's tailored and fit-for-purpose (*Suitable*).

#### **b) Depth of Understanding**

- Senior management and staff can clearly explain how MS processes work and how they will be used once operations start.

#### **c) Scalability & Suitability**

- MS designed to match:
  - Organisation size.
  - Operational complexity.

- Risk exposure.
- Ability to adapt as the organisation grows or changes.

#### d) Integration

- MS elements are not isolated but linked — e.g., risk assessment informs safety objectives; compliance monitoring feeds into management of change.

#### Particular Aspects & Elements Relevant to Preparation

- **Safety Policy** – signed, visible, understood.
- **Safety Objectives** – SMART, measurable, linked to risk profile.
- **Hazard Identification Process** – proactive and reactive sources.
- **Risk Assessment & Mitigation Tracking** – method documented and applied in examples.
- **Safety Performance Monitoring** – initial set of SPIs and SPTs defined.
- **Management of Change Process** – documented and scalable.
- **Training & Competence System** – covering SMS, compliance monitoring, ERP.
- **Safety Communication Plan** – how safety information is shared internally and externally.
- **Just Culture Policy** – with defined acceptable/unacceptable behaviours.
- **Compliance Monitoring Programme** – schedule, methods, reporting structure.
- **Interface Agreements** – with subcontractors and partner organisations.
- **ERP Capability** – documented, resourced, tested (tabletop exercise).

#### Measures to Demonstrate Readiness

- **Gap analysis report** against MSAT features with closure actions.
- **Records of management reviews** on MS readiness.
- **Evidence of staff engagement** in safety reporting and ERP familiarization.
- **Mock interviews or dry runs** to prepare personnel for the CA review.
- **Organisational chart** with clear reporting lines for safety and compliance functions.

#### Understand the MSAT Framework

- **Know the PSOE Maturity Model** – You will be evaluated on whether your management system elements are *Present, Suitable, Operating, and Effective*.

- **Map your processes** to the four ICAO SMS pillars and 12 elements, ensuring evidence is available for each.

## Organisation-Specific Obligations

### A. Operators (Airlines / AOC Holders)

- Maintain **approved manuals** (OM, ERP, MEL, etc.) with clear links to MSAT features.
- Demonstrate **crew and operational safety risk management** processes.
- Evidence of **Flight Data Monitoring (FDM)**, safety performance targets, and follow-up actions.
- Show **operational control processes** integrated with SMS hazard reporting.

### B. CAMO / Part-CAMO Organisations

- Approved **CAME** with explicit integration of SMS processes.
- Documented **airworthiness risk assessment** linked to continuing airworthiness activities.
- **Reliability programme outputs** feeding into risk-based maintenance planning.
- Show how **safety data from maintenance** is captured and analysed.

### C. AMO / Part-145 Organisations

- Approved **MOE** showing clear compliance with Part-145.A.65 and SMS integration.
- Hazard identification in **maintenance environment** (human factors, tooling, parts supply chain).
- Records of **occurrence reporting** and corrective/preventive action follow-up.
- Demonstrate **competence management** and recurrent training alignment with SMS needs.

### D. Aerodrome / Airport Operators

- **Aerodrome Manual** aligned with ICAO Annex 14 and SMS requirements.
- Evidence of **runway safety programme**, wildlife hazard management, and emergency preparedness.
- Show **safety data sharing** with airlines, ATC, and ground handlers.
- **Safety committees** with minutes, actions, and closure tracking.

## MSAT Audit Success Checklist

- All **required documentation** is current, approved, and accessible.

- **Hazard identification** and **risk assessment** records are up to date.
- **Training and competence** records meet regulatory and SMS needs.
- **Safety performance indicators** and trends are monitored and acted upon.
- **Corrective actions** are closed and evidence retained.
- Staff can confidently explain their safety roles and responsibilities.

### Next Steps

Sofema Aviation Services (SAS) provides the following training as Classroom or Webinar - Using The EASA Management System Assessment Tool (EASA MSAT) – 2 Days

<https://sassofia.com/course/using-the-easa-management-system-assessment-tool-easa-msat-2-days/>