

Workshop Task 2 - Mock Initial Certification Evaluation

Participants will act as competent authority inspectors and evaluate the organisation's readiness for approval.

Exercise - Simulate an Initial Certification assessment of an aviation organisation's Management System (MS), using the EASA MSAT methodology and applying the PSOE maturity model (Present, Suitable, Operating, Effective).

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Scenario

A newly established Commercial Air Transport Operator has applied for its Air Operator Certificate (AOC). The Competent Authority has scheduled an on-site assessment to ensure that all Management System elements are Present and Suitable before granting approval, in line with MSAT guidance.

You have been assigned as the lead assessment team. Your goal is to:

1. Review the organisation's documented MS.
2. Interview key personnel, including the Accountable Manager and Nominated Post Holder – Flight Operations and Safety Manager.
3. Assess evidence against selected MSAT features from the four ICAO/EASA pillars: Safety Policy & Objectives, Safety Risk Management, Safety Assurance, and Safety Promotion.
4. Record maturity levels (PSOE) and justify your evaluation.

Task Steps

Preparation (Desktop Review)

- Review the organisation's submitted documentation:
 - Safety Policy
 - Operations Manual (OM-A/B/C/D)
 - Compliance Monitoring Procedure
 - Safety Management System Manual (SMSM)
 - Emergency Response Plan (ERP)

- Training Programme
- Identify 3 features from the MSAT (e.g., Safety Policy, Hazard Identification, Safety Performance Monitoring) for detailed focus during the on-site phase.
- Determine relevant regulatory references (EASA Air OPS Regulation (EU) 965/2012 – ORO.GEN.200, Regulation (EU) 376/2014, and ICAO Annex 19).

On-Site Interviews & Observations

- **Interview the Accountable Manager:** confirm understanding of the Safety Policy, commitment to adequate resourcing, and overall governance role.
- **Interview the Safety Manager:** review hazard identification methodology, occurrence reporting culture, and data analysis processes.
- **Interview operational staff** (flight crew, cabin crew, ground operations personnel): verify awareness of the safety policy, reporting processes, and ERP familiarity.
- **Observe:**
 - Safety meetings and briefing sessions.
 - Training records and competence tracking.
 - ERP drills or emergency simulation exercises.

PSOE Assessment

For each selected feature, assign a maturity level:

- **Present** – documented and signed.
- **Suitable** – adapted to organisation size/complexity.
- **Operating** – implemented with evidence of use.
- **Effective** – achieving safety objectives, measurable positive safety outcomes.

Justify each assessment with documented evidence (interview notes, record checks, observation results).

Findings & Observations

- Identify if any processes are **not Present or Suitable** (showstopper for certification).
- Note areas that are **Present/Suitable but not Operating** (requires follow-up before approval).

- Record observations for improvement (e.g., safety performance indicators not defined, hazard reporting uptake low, ERP not yet validated through exercises).

Reporting

Prepare an **Assessment Summary Report** including:

- Overview of the evaluation process.
- Maturity level results for each assessed feature.
- Key strengths and areas for improvement.
- Recommendation on certification decision.

Ensure your report is **performance-oriented**, reflecting both compliance and the organisation's ability to manage safety.

Deliverables

- Completed **PSOE Maturity Table** for the selected MSAT features.
- Written **Assessment Summary Report** with recommendation.
- List of regulatory references and justification for each evaluation point.

Workshop Debrief

After the exercise:

- Compare group findings and discuss variances in maturity assessments.
- Identify challenges in distinguishing between **Suitable** and **Operating** stages.