AOC – Air Operator Certificate

First Certification Guidance Material

Records of revisions

Reference	Revision no	Effective date
First issue	00	23.7.2009.
Revision	1	22.04.2013.
Revision	2	02.09.2013.
Revision	3	31.10.2014.

List of effective pages

Page no	Revision no	Effective date
1 Records of Revisions	3	31.10.2014.
2 List of effective pages	3	31.10.2014.
3 Contents	3	31.10.2014.
4	3	31.10.2014.
5	3	31.10.2014.
6	3	31.10.2014.
7	3	31.10.2014.

Contents

1 Foreword

This Guidance Material describes the process of applying for and obtaining an Air Operator Certificate (AOC) to conduct commercial air transport operations under EASA Operations Rules (EASA OPS). The certification process may appear to be a complex undertaking, particularly to a "first-time" operator. This Guidance Material provides basic information applicable to the certification process.

This Guidance Material will assist the applicant in completing the "five phase certification process" with minimal delays and complications. Additional information will be found in the related documentation as referenced under paragraph 1.2 and 1.3 below.

2 Background

The CCAA recognises the responsibility of Commercial Air Transport Operators to provide air transportation with the highest possible degree of safety in the public interest. The certification process is designed to ensure that prospective AOC holders understand and are capable of fulfilling this duty. When satisfactorily completed, the certification process should ensure that the operator is able to comply with the Croatian Air Traffic Act, CCAA regulations, EU Regulations and the international standards pertaining to the operation of aircraft as published in relevant ANNEXES to the convention on international civil aviation organisation (ICAO).

There are five phases in the air operator certification process defined. Each phase is described in sufficient detail to provide a general understanding of the entire certification process. The five phases are:

(1) Pre-application
(2) Formal Application
(3) Document Evaluation
(4) Inspection and Demonstration
(5) Certification

In some cases, the guidance and suggested sequence of events in this Guidance Material may not be entirely appropriate. In such situations, the CCAA and the operator should proceed in a manner that considers existing conditions and circumstances. The operator, however, should not expect to be certificated until the CCAA is assured that the Croatian Air Traffic Act, its Civil Aviation Regulations and the applicable EU regulations will be complied with in an appropriate and continuing manner.

The five phases are to be seen as steps. In order to continue the certification process, the previous phase shall be completed. Therefore no continuation of the certification process will be undertaken if not all points, articles and individual tasks are completed in the previous certification phase.

3   Pre-application phase

The Guidance Material has been written to give an overview about the Air Operator Certificate (AOC) 5 phase certification process in general. The 5 phase certification process is a standard published by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). Each phase must be completed before starting the next one.

An application for an AOC is a time consuming and expensive work. This work is very often underestimated. The Croatian Civil Aviation Agency (CCAA) accepts an AOC application by EASA OPS standards only. All application forms must be duly signed by the people requested in original, electronic signature are not yet accepted.

The project may be delayed because of other applications already in progress or due to the quality of the submissions or missing parts. Even if one of the proposed nominated persons has missed the necessary score in the assessment, a project could get further delay until all management personnel has been accepted.

If an applicant has the need for further information, please write to the following address:

Hrvatska agencija za civilno zrakoplovstvo

Avenija Vukovar 284

10000 Zagreb

Hrvatska

The prospective operator is expected to inform CCAA of his intention to start the certification process in the form of Letter of Intent. Letter of Intent should describe in brief the intended type of operation, aircraft types intended for use, area of operation, plan of intended infrastructure, staff etc.

Once the Letter of Intent is received, CCAA will organise pre-application meeting. The purpose of the pre-application meeting is to provide critical certification information to the applicant. It is imperative that the operator's Accountable Manager and nominated persons attend the pre-application meeting and be prepared to discuss in general terms the plans and specific aspects of the proposed operation. Many problems can be avoided by discussing all aspects of the proposed operation and the specific requirements, which must be met to be certificated as an air operator.

It is important to establish good working relationships and clear understandings between the CCAA and the operator's representatives. The CCAA recognises that a wide range of capabilities and expertise exists among operators. This background experience will be considered by the CCAA and adjusted to during these initial meetings.

Subsequent to the pre-application meeting the certification team will evaluate the results of the meeting. Should the certification team consider that the applicant is not ready to make a formal application, advice should be given on further preparation and another pre-application meeting scheduled or, alternatively, the applicant may be advised to withdraw the intent to apply for certification.

Should the certification team establish that the information provided in the letter of intent is satisfactory, and that the applicant has a clear understanding of the certification process, then the applicant should be invited to prepare and proceed with a formal application phase.

4   Formal Application Phase

The formal application shall be submitted to CCAA as early as possible.

The CCAA will review the application to determine that it contains the required information, documents and attachments. If there are omissions or errors, the formal application and all attachments will be returned with a letter outlining the reasons for its return. If the operator has a good understanding of the requirements, the formal application should be of sufficient quality to allow any omission, deficiency, or open question to be resolved during the formal application meeting.

The Operator's Accountable Manager, Compliance Monitoring Manager, Safety Manager and Nominated persons shall attend the formal application meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to present the project manager, delegated inspectors, experts and specialists and to discuss the formal application and resolve omissions, deficiencies, or answer questions from either party. For example, this meeting may be used to resolve questions concerning the applicant's package or scheduling date conflicts, or to ensure the applicant understands the certification process. This meeting should also be used to reinforce open communication and working relationships.

5   Document Evaluation Phase

After the formal application has been accepted, CCAA inspectors will begin a detailed evaluation of all submitted manuals, forms and documents. Inspection of the Operations Manual System may, depending on the size of operation, be done on the whole manual or on different parts at different times with different experts. The CCAA will endeavour to complete these evaluations in accordance with the agreed schedule of events. If a manual or document is incomplete or deficient, or if non-compliance with the regulations or safe operating practices is detected, the manual or document will be returned for corrective action. Once the manuals and documents are positively evaluated, certification process may continue with the Demonstration and Inspection phase.

6   Demonstration and Inspection Phase

Prior conducting the Inspection and Demonstration Phase, it is expected, that the applicant for an AOC has implemented all the procedures and operating practices as described in the Operations Manual System and that the Compliance Monitoring System has successfully reviewed all different fields of operation by the means of audits and inspections. ICAO & EU regulations require an operator to demonstrate its ability to comply with regulations and safe operating practices before beginning actual revenue operations. These demonstrations include actual performance of activities and/or operations while being observed by CCAA inspectors. This includes on-site evaluations of aircraft maintenance equipment and support facilities. During these demonstrations and inspections, the CCAA evaluates the effectiveness of the policies, methods, procedures, and instructions as described in the operator's manuals and other documents. Emphasis is placed on the operator's management effectiveness during this phase. Deficiencies will be brought to the attention of the operator and corrective action must be taken before entering the certification phase.

Although the document evaluation and the demonstration and inspection phases have been discussed separately in this Guidance Material, these phases may overlap in the training aspect, or may be accomplished simultaneously in actual practice. The following list provides examples of the type of items which are evaluated during the inspection and demonstration phase.

Compliance Monitoring System

Facilities and Infrastructure

Training and checking (classroom, simulators, aircraft, flight and ground personnel training).

Operational control and supervision

Flight Dispatch

Company communications procedures

Station facilities (equipment, procedures, personnel, fuelling/defuelling, de-icing, technical data).

Document control (control, analysis and storage of records, flight documents, additional information and data).

Maintenance Program / Maintenance Contract

CAME – Continuing Airworthiness Maintenance Exposition

The effectiveness of Emergency Response

Complete Demonstration Flights. Includes full-scale simulation of revenue operations to demonstrate the ability to operate independently, safely, and in compliance with all applicable EASA OPS, including diversions and/or landing on route for abnormal and emergency situations.

Note

An applicant for an air operator certificate (AOC) may concurrently seek CCAA approval of its maintenance arrangements. The applicant needs to co-ordinate the progress of both certification projects. Both certification projects must be in the Inspection and Demonstration Phase at the same time. This is because the Demonstration Flights require the applicant to demonstrate to the CCAA all proposed flight and ground operations.

7 Final Certification Phase

When corrective actions out of findings given by the demonstration and inspection phase are completed and closed, the CCAA will issue the Air Operator Certificate (AOC). The operations are then specified, listed and approved within the operations specification document (OPS SPECS). The head of Flight Operations Department signs the AOC and produces thereafter the Operating Licence for the applicant.

The certificate holder is responsible for continued compliance with regulations according his authorisations, limitations, and specifications. The process for changes, variations or amending of specifications is similar to the certification process. The CCAA is responsible for conducting periodic inspections and audits of the certificate holder's operation to ensure continued compliance with the regulations, safe operating practices and airworthy aeroplanes. Nevertheless the compliance with all laws and regulation remains at all times with the operator.

8 Costs and Time Schedule

A complete certification process is time consuming for the applicant and the authority. The costs and the time schedule vary very much on the quality of the submitted manuals and the resource available with the CCAA. From the experience in the industry the work for a first certification of the operational part the amount of 600 working hours must be calculated.

A first estimate for the time schedule might be possible after the cursory review at the beginning of the Formal Application Phase. At this point a first estimate about the time schedule and costs might be possible.