EASA ACCREDITATION PROGRAM REMOTE AUDITS GUIDANCE

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Advancement in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has allowed for development of more effective and efficient auditing processes. ICT is technology used for gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, analyzing, and transmitting information. Some common examples of ICT are hardware such as smartphones, laptops, tablets, and web cams, along with their associated software.

The confidentiality, security, and protection of electronic or electronically transmitted information is important when considering use of ICT for audits. This should be discussed and agreed upon by the auditor and auditee during the audit planning process.

Available audit methods

Two generally accepted methods of performing audits of management systems are on-site and remote.

- **On-site audit activities** – performed at the location of the auditee.
- **Remote audit activities** – performed at any place other than the location of the auditee, regardless of the distance.

Effective audits can consist entirely of remote or on-site activities, or a combination of the two.

Remote audits

Remote audit methods were formally introduced into ISO 19011 (Guidelines for auditing management systems) in the 2011 edition but various forms of remote auditing have been used for much longer. Proper planning and cooperation between the auditee and auditor are essential for remote audits, just as they are for on-site audits. Remote audits offer a great deal of flexibility as limitations imposed by travel are no longer present. In preparation for a remote audit, some important things to consider are:

- **Internet connection** – a connection suitable for transmitting information and video should be available (e.g. mobile network or WiFi),
- **Site guide** – a guide with knowledge of audited activities with scheduled availability to the auditor, using predetermined and tested ICT,
- **Documentation** – much of the documentation that will be reviewed during the audit can be gathered, organized and available in advance of the audit.

The remote audit process is generally the same as an on-site audit and using ICT, typical audit activities can be facilitated. Examples of these activities include conducting interviews, completing checklists, conducting document reviews and sampling process activities.

EASA Accreditation Audit Checklist

The EASA Accreditation Audit Checklist is used to communicate accreditation requirements to auditees and auditors. Additionally, completed checklists serve as a record of accreditation audits and internal audits.

When considering the feasibility of a remote audit with a specific auditee, the checklist can serve as a helpful planning tool. For example, the comments field in each section of a checklist could be used to describe what objective evidence (in the form of ICT) will be used to demonstrate compliance. Examples include completed process records, digital images, or demonstration via recorded or live video.

Additional information

For additional information, auditors and auditees are encouraged to review the document *ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group Guidance on: Remote Audits*. This resource is available to interested parties at no charge and can be downloaded by using the following hyperlink and then scrolling down to *Remote Audits* under the heading *2. Auditing General*.

https://committee.iso.org/home/tc176/iso-9001-auditing-practices-group.html

In addition to a variety of useful information on remote audits based on ISO 19011, this document includes guidance on performing risk assessments related to the use of ICT in auditing. It was produced for educational and communication purposes and is not intended to serve as a standard, though it does reference applicable standards and related documents.