

# **EASA AOC LEAFLET 001**

## **5 phases to an AOC**

### **1 Purpose and scope**

The purpose of this leaflet is to provide information to all prospective air operator certificate (AOC) applicants.

An AOC authorises an operator to conduct commercial air transport operations in compliance with the applicable regulations and rules, and in particular Commission Regulation (EU) No 965/2012.

EASA AOCs are issued on behalf of a Member State following a transfer of responsibilities to the Agency under the Articles 64 or 65 of Basic Regulation (EU)2018/1139.

### **2 Prerequisite**

The issuance of an EASA AOC is subject to the establishment, between EASA and the Member State where the operator has its principal place of business (PPoB), of a detailed arrangement concerning the reallocation of responsibilities for the tasks concerned, in accordance with Article 64 or 65 of Regulation (EU)2018/1139 under the underlined conditions.

The definition and agreement on a fees and charge scheme are as well taking place prior to the certification process.

This leaflet does not address the transfer arrangements and the fees and charge scheme but solely addresses the 5-phases of the AOC issuance process once these arrangements are established.

#### **2.1 Principal place of business (PPoB):**

The verification that the effective principal place of business (PPoB) of the operator is effectively located in the Member State (State of the Operator and State responsible for the issuance of the Operating License), which transferred its certification and oversight responsibility for the considered operator to EASA under Art.64 or Art.65 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1139, will be performed during the initial certification process. However, this criterion is considered to be a pre-requisite for an AOC as the issuance of the AOC may not take place if the effective PPoB is located on the territory of another (Member) State.

Should the effective PPoB be assessed as different compared to the one submitted in the AOC application and/or located in a different (Member) State, the certification process will be put on hold until the issue is resolved by the operator and evidence is provided allowing to perform a re-assessment of the PPoB.

The Regulation provides that the principal place of business of a community air carrier is either its head office or its registered office which are situated in the Member State where the principal financial functions and

operational control, including continued airworthiness management, are exercised. "Head office" refers to the actual central office, the headquarters of the company, while "registered office" is the official seat of the undertaking as registered by the relevant authorities of the Member State concerned under its national law. Furthermore, the principal financial functions must be exercised in the same Member State to ensure that the authority or authorities of the Member State which are responsible for the economic and safety oversight of the air carrier are capable to fulfil their obligations by exercising real, effective regulatory control.

Guidance related to the determination of the PPoB will be provided to the operator during the pre-application phase and a dedicated C/L will be used by EASA for the determination of the operator's PPoB during the review of the formal application package.

### 3 Processing time

As stated in ARO.GEN.310, the formal application for an AOC should be submitted **at least 90 days** before the intended start of the operations.

However, the processing time may be:

- extended in case the prospective operator does not manage to provide all the required information on-time or does not manage to correct any identified non-conformity within the 90 days timeframe; or
- suspended during the process in case of major deficiencies not corrected by the operator.

The total duration of the application process and the time needed for the issuance of an AOC will depend on multiple factors, such as:

- Complexity of the planned operations,
- Quality of the documents and deliverables provided by the applicant,
- Availability of the applicant,
- Responsiveness of the applicant,
- Number of discrepancies identified during phase 3 and phase 4 of the certification process.

## 4 AOC application process

The application process for the issuance of an initial AOC is organised in five (5) phases along the following sequence:

- [Phase 1](#) - Pre-application;
- [Phase 2](#) - Formal application;
- [Phase 3](#) - Document evaluation;
- Phase 4 - Demonstration and inspection; and
- Phase 5 - Certification.



# 5 PHASES TO AN AOC

## 1 Pre-application meeting

During this meeting, the business model and planned operations are discussed. EASA's expectations are communicated.



## 2 Formal application

The applicant submits the formal application form, the filled checklists and its manuals (incl. operations manual)

## 3 Document evaluation

EASA conducts a thorough review of the manuals submitted and provides feedback on any issue identified.



## 4 Demonstration and inspection

The applicant demonstrates to EASA its ability to comply with the applicable regulations.

## 5 Certification

EASA formally issues the AOC to the applicant.



The AOC process will be managed by an EASA Certification Project Manager (CPM), who will be nominated at the start of the certification process.

## 4.1 Pre-application:

### **1** Pre-application meeting

During this meeting, the business model and planned operations are discussed. EASA's expectations are communicated.



An applicant willing to apply for an EASA AOC shall submit to EASA the Prospective Operator's Pre-Assessment Statement (POPS) form (TE.AOC.00093 POPS: see appendix 1) and request to meet the EASA AOC staff to present its pre-application for an AOC.

The filled-in POPS and the request for a pre-application meeting shall be sent to the following generic email address: [AOC@easa.europa.eu](mailto:AOC@easa.europa.eu)

Following the submission of the above-listed documents, the applicant will be invited to a meeting at EASA Headquarters in Cologne, during which EASA will ensure that the organisation has sufficient understanding of the appropriate regulations and requirements and will present its expectations. In addition, a full overview of the processes related to the certification and verification of compliance together with an information package (see appendix 2) will be given by EASA during the meeting, including the description of the forms, content and documents required for the formal application.

The meeting will normally address the following topics:

- Organisation of the company, where the operation will be based, the location of the PPOB, the intended AOC management structure, how the AOC will be financed, which aircraft (amount/types) are intended to be operated and in which areas the operations are planned,
- Qualification requirements for the key management personnel of the prospective operator,
- Applicable regulations regarding commercial air transport operations,
- Applicable rules related to a formal application to obtain an AOC,
- Reconciliation of the initial certification schedule,
- Required documents constituting attachments to the formal application,
- Agreement on ways of exchanging information and mutual communication between the certification process participants, and
- Detailed description of the respective roles of the Agency as the Competent Authority and the State of the Operator.

The applicant will be reminded as well of the need to apply in parallel for a CAMO approval to the related competent authority, as the AOC may not be issued without a CAMO approval. The application process for a CAMO approval issued by EASA or by any other Competent Authority is not included in this EASA AOC leaflet.

After the meeting, in order to obtain access to the required checklists and forms on the web communication platform SINAPSE used by EASA, the applicant will have to send an email to [AOC@easa.europa.eu](mailto:AOC@easa.europa.eu) with the following information:

*Subject: Access to Sinapse for Air Operators*

*Information to be provided:*


- *Applicant/Operator name*
- *Focal point(s) contact details: Name & Email address*

Once processed by EASA, the applicant focal point(s) will receive an invitation email to join the community “EASA – Air operator certificate network” on SINAPSE.

In parallel with the pre-application phase, an assessment of the financial, economic, and legal statuses of the applicant and the proposed operations will be conducted in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1008/2008. This assessment is not under EASA’s responsibility but under the Competent Authority for the “Operating Licence” of the Member States where the applicant will have its principal place of business (State of the Operator).

If the proposed operation is not considered to be viable in respect of the financial, economic, and legal factors, the certification process may be suspended until it is determined whether these deficiencies can be rectified.

## 4.2 Formal application:



### 2 Formal application

The applicant submits the formal application form, the filled checklists and its manuals (incl. operations manual)

The applicant shall submit, 90 days before the intended start of the operations, the “Formal Application for Initial Air Operator Certificate and changes to AOC and Operations Specification” form (FO.AOC.00094), which will be made available on SINAPSE. This form shall reflect the intended operations, including the specific approval(s) applied for (e.g. Dangerous goods), be signed by the proposed accountable manager and compliance monitoring manager and include the applicable attachments as indicated in the form.

As part of the application package, the operator will have to provide a statement that all the documentation sent to the competent authority have been verified by the applicant and found in compliance with the applicable requirements. To this end, the operator shall submit the related checklists with its evaluation of conformity specified in the related column with the indication of the means to comply (demonstration of compliance).

As a minimum, the following checklists shall be provided (as applicable depending on the intended operations):

- *TE.AOC.00003 ‘Area of operations’*
- *TE.AOC.00123 ‘SMS’ – Safety Management System*
- *TE.AOC.00124 ‘CMF’ – Compliance Monitoring Function*

- TE.AOC.00006 'OM-A' – Operations Manual – Part A
- TE.AOC.00007 'OM-B' – Operations Manual – Part B
- TE.AOC.00008 'OM-C' – Operations Manual – Part C
- TE.AOC.00009 'OM-D' – Operations Manual – Part D
- TE.AOC.00010 'Aircraft equipment(A)' or TE.AOC.00159 'Aircraft equipment (H)';
- TE.AOC.00142 'Part-26 (A)' or TE.AOC.00158 'Part-26 (H)';
- TE.AOC.00011 'MEL' – Minimum Equipment List
- TE.AOC.00012 'IFTSS' or TE.AOC.00127 'FTL Subpart Q' – Flight and Duty Time Scheme
- TE.AOC.00015 'FCTC programme' – Flight Crew Training Programme
- TE.AOC.00017 'CCTC programme', if applicable – Cabin Crew Training Programme
- TE.AOC.00022 'Cargo operations' if applicable
- TE.AOC.00023 'Fuel scheme'
- TE.AOC.00033 'DG approval' (if the operator applies for a SPA.DG approval) or TE.AOC.00034 'DG training (no SPA)' – Transport of Dangerous Goods (if the operator does not apply for a SPA.DG approval)
- TE.AOC.00101 'Approval-Acceptance of Accountable Manager-Nominated Person(s)'
- TE.AOC.00004 'Nominated persons qualification review'
- TE.AOC.00145 'OPS Minima' – Operating Minima

For any additional approval applied for, the applicant shall submit the related checklist downloaded from SINAPSE and filled in.

Note: The operations manual (OM) and the related demonstration of compliance (prefilled OM Part "A", OM Part "B", OM Part "C", OM Part "D" checklists, management system evaluation checklist) may be submitted later, but not later than 60 days prior to the date of intended operation.

All documents for the application must be submitted in electronic format unless hard copies have been explicitly authorised and preliminary agreed with EASA.

The CPM will then perform an initial review of the application package and of the supporting documentation and in particular determine the effective operator's PPOB. An access to the manufacturer related operations documentation (e.g. FCOM, AFM, OSD, MMEL, QRH,...) shall be provided to the CPM by the applicant.

If the information in the formal application package is considered complete and on a general basis acceptable by the CPM, he will schedule a formal application meeting which will aim at:

- confirming that the management background information satisfies regulatory requirements for a complex or non-complex operator,
- addressing potential errors or omissions in the application package,
- resolving any scheduling date conflicts and agreeing on a process for revising event dates,
- reinforcing the communication and working relationships between the EASA's certification team and the applicant's personnel, and
- formally confirming the acceptability of the formal application package.

The acceptance of the formal application package by the CPM does not constitute acceptance or approval of any of the attachments which will be subjected to a later in-depth review.

### 4.3 Document evaluation:

**3 Document evaluation**

EASA conducts a thorough review of the manuals submitted and provides feedback on any issue identified.



Once the formal application has been accepted, EASA will initiate a thorough review of all documents and manuals submitted.

The complexity of the information that needs to be addressed in the applicant's documents and manuals depends upon the complexity of the proposed operation and of the operator's organisation.

It is determined by the combination of the following factors:

- Number of staff employed (full-time equivalent FTE) and in particular if it exceeds 20 FTEs,
- The extent and scope of the contracted activities subject to approval,
- Number of aircraft types operated (aeroplanes and/or helicopters),
- Number of aircraft in operations (aeroplanes and/or helicopters),
- Aircraft characteristics (e.g. single-engine, multi-engine, aeroplanes and/or helicopters, short-haul/long haul),
- Amount and type of specific approvals requested, and
- Geographical areas intended to be covered by the operations (e.g. offshore, mountainous,...).

The outcome of this assessment (complex or non-complex operator) has in particular an impact on the structure and organisation of the operator's management system.

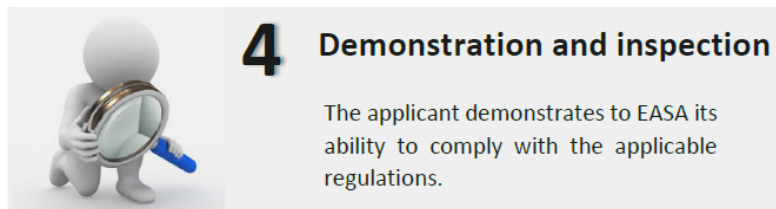
If a document or manual is incomplete or deficient, or if non-compliances with regulations or safe operating practices are detected, the CPM will inform the applicant about these issues and request corrective actions to be implemented before the next step of the process may be initiated.

Documents or manuals that are found satisfactory will be approved or accepted, as required by the regulations. The approvals will be indicated by a signed document or certificate.

The acceptance of submitted material that does not require formal approval will be notified by letter.

For the accountable manager (AM) and nominated persons (NP) – Flight operations, crew training, ground operations and continuing airworthiness, compliance monitoring manager and safety manager – the submitted forms TE.AOC.00101 (at its latest revision) and Curriculum Vitae submitted will support the proposed nominated persons. Interviews with the proposed AM and NPs may take place at the initiative of EASA.

#### 4.4 Demonstration and inspection:



This operational demonstration phase will cover all aspects of the proposed operation and include actual performance of activities and/or operations while being observed by inspectors of the certification team.

During these demonstrations and audits/inspections, the inspectors will evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the policies, methods, procedures, and instructions as described in the manuals and other documents developed by the applicant.

In addition, the inspectors will thoroughly investigate the capability of the applicant to conduct the intended operations. This important and more detailed phase of the investigation and assessment will require the applicant to demonstrate thorough day-to-day administrative and operational capabilities and will include demonstration flight(s) over proposed routes, the review of the adequacy of facilities, equipment, operating procedures and practices, and the review of the competence of administrative, flight and ground personnel.

The scope of these audits and inspections will include the suitability of the applicant's organisation, the number and qualifications of staff, the safety risk management process and compliance monitoring, the applicant's facilities, the training programme, the operational control, the crews rostering/planning process, the ground handling and documentation, the operational procedures linked with specific approval(s) applied for (for instance, in the specific case of an operator applying for a SPA.DG approval to carry dangerous goods, an on-site audit will always be conducted before granting such approval).

Demonstration flight(s) may include any aspect to be covered by a special authorisation in the operations specifications which will be associated with the AOC, when issued.

It may also be necessary to assess those facilities located in other States, which are to be utilised, and verify that they are adequate. Ad-hoc outbase audits may take place to achieve this.

In parallel, a security assessment will also be performed under the responsibility of the competent authority of the Member States where the applicant has its principal place of business (State of the Operator). The outcome of the assessment will be provided directly to the applicant.

All deficiencies identified by the inspectors will be brought to the attention of the applicant, which will be requested to remedy them prior to issuance of the AOC. All discrepancies and/or non-compliances must be corrected and confirmed satisfactory closed by the CPM and the involved inspectors/experts before the issuance of the AOC.

At the latest stage of the process, once the verification process is completed or it is estimated to be completed soon, the applicant will have to obtain an AOC callsign for aircraft identification for radio voice communications




with air traffic personnel, according to ICAO procedures (refer to <https://www4.icao.int/3ld>). An assigned designator is necessary prior to the start of the “certification phase”.

#### 4.5 Certification:

## 5 Certification

EASA formally issues the AOC to the applicant.



After all the demonstrations and evaluations, including review of documentation, have been completed satisfactorily, the CPM will liaise with the assigned airworthiness inspector on the issuance of Part M Subpart G Approval, since the AOC may not be issued until a Part M Subpart G/ Part CAMO Approval is issued by the CAMO competent authority.

Additionally, the State of the Operator will have to confirm that all items under its responsibility (e.g. operating license, airline security programme,...) are satisfactory and that all identified discrepancies and/or items of non-compliance have been properly addressed.

Once this step confirmed, the applicant will be awarded with the AOC and its applicable operations specifications.

The certificate holder will remain responsible for its continued compliance with regulations according to its authorisations, limitations, and specifications.

Periodic audits and inspections of the certified operator will be conducted by EASA to verify the continued compliance with the regulations and safe operating practices.

## 5 AOC change process

The processing of an application for a change to an existing AOC follows the same principles than an application for an AOC although the 5 phases may be, depending on the type of change, simplified and not formalised as such.

In principle, the following process is expected to be followed:

- The operator applying for a change is recommended to contact beforehand EASA about the intended change. For simple changes, such pre-contact is not necessary.

- Based on the feedback provided by EASA, the operator may send a formal application for the related change in accordance with the principles detailed in the paragraph 4.2.
- Except for minor changes, the formal application for the change should be supported with the operator's outcome of its change management process together with the related risk assessment.
- The application should be submitted with sufficient lead time to allow EASA to perform its own assessment:
  - o In the specific case of the change of the AOC, and with the exception of unforeseen circumstances, the application should be submitted at least 30 days before the planned implementation of the applied change; and.
  - o In the case of a change of a nominated person, with the exception of unforeseen circumstances, the application should be sent at least 20 days in advance.
- EASA will thoroughly review the application and the submitted documents and manuals in accordance with the principles described on paragraph 4.3.
- If necessary, depending on the type of change, an on-site audit or inspection may be conducted by EASA to verify the adequate implementation of any mitigation or associated conditions linked with the planned change (for instance, in the specific case of an operator applying for a SPA.DG approval to carry dangerous goods, an on-site audit will always be conducted before granting such approval).
- Once satisfied that all the applicable requirements are met by the operator, EASA will issue the related approval.

If at any stage of this process non-compliances are identified, these non-compliances will be notified to the operator. Additionally, in such circumstances, the approval process will be put "on hold" until these are confirmed resolved.

The operator may not implement a change which requires a prior approval by EASA before having received a formal approval from EASA.



## 6 Appendixes

### Appendix 1: POPS



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**Prospective Operator's Pre-Assessment Statement (POPS)**
**Prospective Operator's Pre-Assessment Statement (POPS)**

PRE-ASSESSMENT STATEMENT		
<i>(To be completed by an applicant for an air operator certificate (AOC) or for approval as an approved maintenance organization (AMO). See Attachment B to this Part for instructions on completion of this statement.)</i>		
Section 1 OPERATOR DETAILS		
Section 1A. <i>To be completed by all applicants</i>		
<b>1. Company registered name and trading name if different.</b> Click here to enter text.  <b>Address of company: mailing address; telephone; fax and e-mail.</b> Click here to enter text.	<b>2. Address of the principal place of business, including telephone, fax and e-mail.</b> Click here to enter text.  <b>Secondary business address:</b> Click here to enter text.  <b>Type of operation:</b> Click here to enter text.	
<b>3. Proposed start-up date:</b> Click here to enter text.	<b>4. Requested designator for aircraft operating agency in order of preference:</b> Click here to enter text.	
<b>5. Management and key staff personnel</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Telephone, fax and e-mail</b>
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Section 1B. <i>Proposals for maintenance (to be completed by all applicants as appropriate)</i>		
<b>6.</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Air operator intends to perform its maintenance as an AMO (complete 7 and 8). <input type="checkbox"/> Air operator intends to arrange for maintenance and inspections of aircraft and associated equipment to be performed by others (complete 7 and 11). <input type="checkbox"/> Air operator intends to perform maintenance under an equivalent system (complete 7 and 11). <input type="checkbox"/> AMO (complete 8).		
<b>7. Air operator proposed types of operation:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Passengers and cargo <input type="checkbox"/> Cargo only <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduled operations <input type="checkbox"/> Charter flight operations	<b>8. AMO proposed ratings:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Airframe <input type="checkbox"/> Power plant <input type="checkbox"/> Propeller <input type="checkbox"/> Avionics <input type="checkbox"/> Computers <input type="checkbox"/> Instruments <input type="checkbox"/> Accessory <input type="checkbox"/> Specialised service	



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Page 1 of 4



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**Prospective Operator's Pre-Assessment Statement (POPS)**

<b>Section 1C. To be completed by air operator applicants</b>		
<b>9. Aircraft data (provide a copy of the lease agreement for all leased aircraft)</b>		<b>10. Geographic area(s) of intended operations and proposed route structure:</b>
a) Number of aircraft by type and model. Aircraft nationality and registration marks where available.  Click here to enter text.	b) Number of passenger seats and/or cargo payload capacity.  Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
<b>Section 1D. To be completed by all applicants</b>		
<b>11. Additional information that provides a better understanding of the proposed operation or business (attach additional sheets, if necessary):</b> Click here to enter text.		
<b>12. Proposed training (aircraft and/or flight simulation training device):</b> Click here to enter text.		
<b>Section 1E. The signature and the information contained in this form denote an intent to apply for an AOC and/or approval as a maintenance organization, as appropriate.</b>		
Type of organisation: Click here to enter text.		
Signature:	Date: Click here to enter a date.	Name and title: Click here to enter text.



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Page 2 of 4



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**Prospective Operator's Pre-Assessment Statement (POPS)**

Section 2 EASA DETAILS	
<i>To be completed by EASA</i>	
<b>Received by:</b> <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>	<b>Pre-application number:</b> <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
<b>Date received:</b> <a href="#">Click here to enter a date.</a>	
<b>Assigned Certification Project Manager and Certification Team:</b>  POI: <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a> AWI: <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a> Other:	
<b>Remarks:</b>  	



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**Prospective Operator's Pre-Assessment Statement (POPS)**

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE COMPLETION**

**Section 1A.** To be completed by all applicants.

1. Enter the official name and mailing address, telephone, fax and e-mail address of the company. Include any other name under which business is conducted if different from the official company name.
2. This address should be the physical location where the primary activities are based. It is where the offices of management required by legislation are located. If the address is the same as under item 1, enter "same". Include secondary business addresses and identify the type of operation conducted at such addresses.
3. Enter the estimated date when operations or services are intended to commence.
4. This information will be used to assign a company identification number, known as a designator for aircraft operating agency. You may indicate up to three, three-letter identifiers, such as ABC, XYZ. If all choices have already been allocated to other operators or maintenance organizations, another identifier will be allocated.
5. Enter the names, titles, telephone numbers and other contact details of management and key staff personnel.

**Section 1B.** To be completed by all applicants, as appropriate.

6. Indicate whether the applicant air operator intends to perform maintenance as an AMO or intends to contract out all or part of its maintenance, or perform its maintenance using an equivalent system.
7. The proposed type of air operation will be indicated. Check all applicable boxes.
8. The proposed maintenance organization ratings will be indicated. Check all applicable boxes.

*Note.— Depending on the certification framework, an alternate list of ratings can be used, such as a list of four ratings: mechanical, workshop, avionics and specialized service.*

**Section 1C.** To be completed by air operator applicants.

9. Data for all aircraft to be used to be provided. Provide a copy of the lease agreement for all leased aircraft.
  - a) Indicate number and types of aircraft by make, model and series, and indicate individual aircraft nationality and registration marks; and
  - b) Number of passenger seats and/or cargo payload capacity.
10. Indicate geographic area(s) of intended operation and proposed route structure.

**Section 1D.** To be completed by all applicants.

11. Provide any information that would assist EASA to understand the type and scope of the operation or business to be performed by the applicant. If an air operator intends to contract out maintenance and inspection of its aircraft and/or associated equipment, identify the AMO selected and list the maintenance and inspections that the contracting organization will perform. Provide copies of all maintenance contracts where applicable.
12. For air operator applicants, identify the type of aircraft and/or flight simulation training devices, including flight simulators, to be used and the training to be provided. For maintenance organization applicants, identify the types of aircraft to be maintained and in addition identify the training that the quality assurance staff, certifying staff and other maintenance staff will receive based on the ratings requested.

**Section 1E.** To be completed by all applicants.

Signature of the pre-assessment statement by the accountable manager denotes an intent to seek certification as an air operator or approval as a maintenance organization.

**Section 2.** EASA will nominate the Project Certification Manager and the Certification Team.



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Page 4 of 4



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Page 14 of 15

## Appendix 2: Content of the information package

- Overall description of the Air operator certificate and the privileges associated
- Importance and relevance of the Operator License (OL)
- What is expected from the prospective operator
- What the prospective operator can expect from EASA
- Step-by-step description of the certification process and easy to follow timeline for each step.
- Forms and checklists for the initial certification, including as a minimum the following ones:
  - TE.AOC.00003 'Area of operations'
  - TE.AOC.00123 'SMS'
  - TE.AOC.00124 'CMF'
  - TE.AOC.00006 'OM-A'
  - TE.AOC.00007 'OM-B'
  - TE.AOC.00008 'OM-C'
  - TE.AOC.00009 'OM-D'
  - TE.AOC.00010 'Aircraft equipment'
  - TE.AOC.00011 'MEL'
  - TE.AOC.00012 'IFTSS' or TE.AOC.00127 'FTL Subpart Q'
  - TE.AOC.00015 'FCTC programme'
  - TE.AOC.00017 'CCTC programme', if applicable
  - TE.AOC.00022 'Cargo operations' if applicable
  - TE.AOC.00023 'Fuel scheme(A)'
  - TE.AOC.00002 'AOC issuance (5 phases)'
- Guidance related to the determination of the principal place of business (PPOB)
- Contact details of the CPM and AOC team, if applicable
- Links to the additional information such as easy access rules and other relevant legal documents