

Harmonising Military Airworthiness Through EMARs – A Golden Opportunity?



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When the European Defence Agency (EDA) was established in 2004 its expressed aims included “promoting and enhancing European armaments cooperation, strengthening the European defence industrial and technological base and creating a competitive European defence equipment market”. Clearly, a defence specific set of fit-for-purpose airworthiness standards would be required to enable cross-border cooperation and competition in the field of military aviation, if the desired efficiencies and savings were to be achieved.

So, here we are some 12 years later. The EDA has almost completed the development of the European Military Airworthiness Requirements (EMARs), a cohesive set of standards addressing the certification of products, the approval of organisations and the qualification of maintenance certifying personnel. In choosing to adapt the European civil aviation rules, the EDA has not only made life easier for those entities already holding EASA approvals to work in the defence sector, it has adopted a proven regulatory system that aligns with, or facilitates an efficient industrial support model and a means to continuously improve airworthiness. In essence, the effective implementation of the EMARs could be good for military business.

Now there's the rub! EMARs COULD be good for military 'business'.

I hope this paper will help stimulate recognition of the fact that we now have the tools we needed to realise the full potential benefits that were dreamt of back in 2004, and more. But a tick-box compliance mentality in nationally shaped silos won't cut the mustard. To achieve those original lofty, but essential aims, we need to see a more standardised implementation, allowing the acceptance of certificates across borders

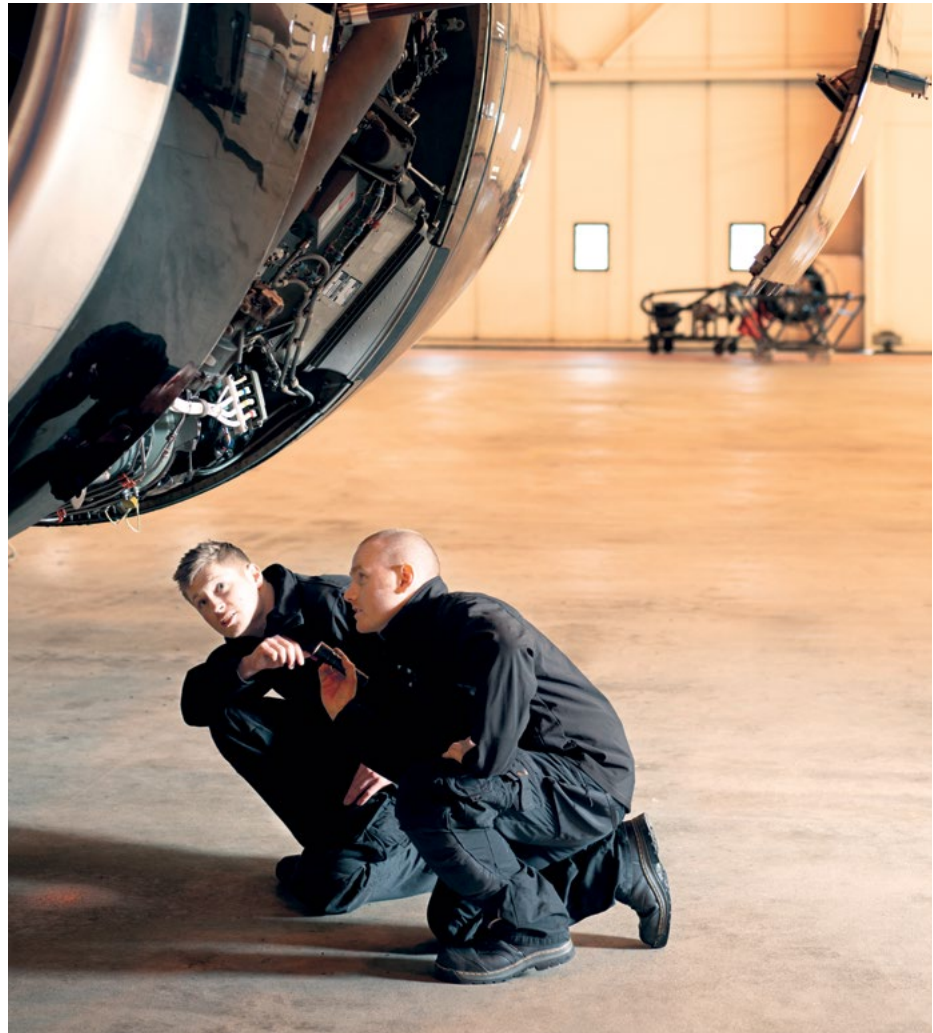
and a much greater focus on achieving the output objectives of the different EMARs.

WHAT DO WE WANT FROM OUR ARMED FORCES' AIRCRAFT?

How about “*always ready to reliably deliver their military flying role, safely, efficiently and at minimum cost*”. Well, the framework is now in place, so it's time to turn it on. The EDA participating Member States (pMS) spend billions of one currency or another on equipment and spares and then just do the same old traditional military thing to look after them – the same way they always have... The easiest way to realise the full potential benefits is for every EDA participating Member State to adopt the EMARs in their purest form, bringing instant standardisation and harmonisation. This would allow international partnerships, co-operation and the now familiar EU principles of freedom of movement of services and people to flourish. Of course, I recognise that this is a pipe dream as the Member States' legal systems and the interfaces with non-airworthiness stakeholders have to be considered – but please, no more “we do things different in the military...”. Not only does this mean we don't get the best out of our military assets, it also makes us rely on individuals taking risk as a



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regular fallback and costs the tax-payer a lot of money. Really?

For starters, the recognition of certificates from each of the nations in itself would be a major win. It would allow for the optimal use of approved organisations, the transfer of people and skills and bring to reality the benefit of having an expanded spares pool available internationally. It would even bring competition – good, healthy, commercial competition.

But here's the key to making this all happen. Whether at a strategic military level or an organisational level, you need to stay focussed on what you are trying to achieve. So, whether your output is the conforming

design or manufacture of a product, or the management of its continuing airworthiness to ensure it is safe, reliable and cheap to maintain/operate, or that your maintenance services are safe and compliant, we need to have a structure and management system to achieve the desired output within the framework of the applicable EMAR/s. But most importantly of all, we need to ensure that the system enables you to get the aircraft you need as well as realise potential commercial and financial gains by *working in a smarter way*.

The standardisation elements, including the contract with appropriate commercial levers, will look after the organisation interfaces, roles and



responsibilities and just make it easy to do 'business', of course.

It's important that we recognise that the contract, with its clear division of responsibilities, definition of relevant standards and operator's procedures is the glue that holds it all together (along with cross domain safety and airworthiness reporting, of course). Additionally, we have to challenge the traditional separation of commercial and financial management from contract technical aspects and service delivery performance. I predict that partnered organisations will engage in a different way if the end-users more clearly hold

them to account and, as a result of greater competition, there should also be an increased focus on costs and benefits.

Although the objectives of the EMARs, on the face of it, are all about airworthiness, there are potentially wider and more significant benefits to be gained through greater collaboration, cooperation and cross-border trade. Moving away from the national 'silo approach' to airworthiness in order to obtain greater value from your assets is a challenge that needs to be faced head on.

The pMS are now sat on a golden egg. Let's not kill the goose.



About the Author

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Bob is a co-founder of Baines Simmons. As a technical aviation safety expert, Bob brings his passion, experience and problem-solving strengths to bear across a wide spectrum of compliance, airworthiness and safety-related subjects. He provides insightful strategic and technical leadership support to clients' regulatory and airworthiness engagements. Under his directorship and with his technical oversight, Baines Simmons training courses and consulting services are recognised and respected around the world for the impact they have on skills and competence development, particularly in the fields of regulatory compliance, CAMO and airworthiness performance improvement.

Bob joined the UK Royal Air Force in 1978 before becoming a civil licensed aircraft maintenance engineer qualified on a range of Boeing, Airbus and Douglas aircraft. He has also served as a UK CAA Senior Airworthiness Surveyor with responsibility for Continuing Airworthiness policy, implementation and standardisation in the UK. Bob now leads a team of consultants delivering Regulatory and Compliance consultancy services to military and civil clients worldwide. In 2007 he was appointed the first Chief Surveyor with the Isle of Man Aircraft Registry, creating and launching the entire airworthiness and certification system under which some 850 aircraft have now been certified. More recently, Bob and his team have worked with the European Defence Agency (EDA) and UK MAA on the development of continuing airworthiness requirements.

Bob is an Incorporated Engineer with the Engineering Council, a Member of the RAeS, sits on the Airworthiness Technical Advisory Committee of the I Mech E and is a Non-Executive Board Member of the International Federation of Airworthiness.

About Baines Simmons

We are specialists in aviation regulations, compliance and safety management and partner with the world's leading civil and defence aviation organisations to improve safety performance. As trusted advisors to businesses, armed forces, governments and regulators across all sectors of aviation, we help to advance best practice, shape safety thinking and drive continuous improvement to safety performance through our consulting, training and outsourced services.