

CERTIFIED NEWS

Intelligence for Independent Aircraft Modifiers



IAMA CERTIFIED NEWS – November 2024

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Managing Director's Message: Nina Schulz

2024: A Challenging Year

2024 has been an intense year for the alliance. We have experienced some changes in the IAMA team that were challenging but also sad. Our Alliance Manager, Annelouse van Dijke, decided to pursue a new challenge outside the aviation industry. She had been with IAMA almost since day one and is obviously missed because of her experience and dedication to our alliance.

However, after such a long period of time it is also completely understandable that she would want to further broaden her horizons. It was a difficult decision for Annelouse to leave IAMA, and all of us wish her only the best in her new endeavors!

In July we unfortunately had to bid farewell to Frans van de Pol. Representing Fokker Services as a member and as Chairman of our Executive Board, Frans had been shaping IAMA for a long time. His spirit and motivation were great assets, and his passing left us in deep grief. We are grateful for the inspiration he gave us and will continue to honour his legacy.

The aircraft modification environment is driven by several external factors. Companies throughout the industry report full order books and exciting projects. At the same time capacity shortages in all trades are still everyone's concern. This combination of conditions imposes challenges on all stakeholders involved. But these are not the only influences on daily business. Known issues in the supply chains, increased Authority

demands, multiple geopolitical crises, struggles in some major economies around the world are all leading to uncertainties and concerns. Despite this, I am truly grateful for the IAMA community and the commitment of our member organizations.

The IAMA operational team and the executive board continue intensive discussions about the right priorities for IAMA in the coming years. And while we believe the mission set in 2019 is still valid, we feel that networking and cooperation are some of the strongest elements for our association.

Today's challenges affect every human being on so many levels—be it professional or private—and can only be tackled through effective and true partnerships. Credibility is key, and we are fortunate that IAMA created an environment of trust among likeminded professionals.

Experiencing this high level of trust and belief in a joint vision is energizing and satisfying to observe. With this in mind, we have decided to further foster and invest in fostering increased networking among IAMA members, and to start to utilize IAMA as collaboration platform to ideally share scarce resources.

I am eager to see the development of this platform, and I am convinced that this networking element will start to deliver first-results soon. Collaboration, in times of uncertainty and insecurity, can be a therapeutic element to help create a sustainable future for our joint business.

Until next time, I remain optimistic about how IAMA can weather these economic and geopolitical challenges the aircraft modification industry must navigate, while helping our members to come through stronger than before.

— [Nina Schulz](#)
Managing Director

TOP STORY

IAMA Presents Key Industry Insights at EASA's June SMS Workshop

With the deadline approaching for Design Organizations to implement Safety Management System, IAMA's presentation at the workshop held this past June was an excellent opportunity for the alliance. "I was honoured to present to a broad cross-section of aviation organisations, including EASA, national authorities and aircraft modifiers," said [Anthony Attoumani](#), founder and CEO at Infinity Aviation Support, who presented on IAMA's behalf. "The seminar highlighted a wealth of interesting points, and the IAMA presentation, focused on Part 21J companies, was well received by all."



The presentation underscored the strengths of IAMA's collaborative community and resonated with industry professionals and EASA representatives. They appreciated the holistic feedback and comprehensive data presented on behalf of IAMA's diverse member base. The feedback was intended to help EASA understand modifier and manufacturer challenges and questions and to clarify what was required for organizations to achieve SMS compliance by the March 2025 deadline.

"A small organisation, and even a large organization, can provide feedback to EASA, but with the power of the many voices speaking as one, with IAMA's backing, adds strength to that feedback," Attoumani reflected. "Although many large organizations are already or nearly compliant, some small or young organizations feel a bit lost."

Despite the original 2020 discussions on safety management systems (SMS), with the imminent compliance deadline for Part 21J organisations, the industry seemed surprised. “Our survey data showed that some in the industry wondered whether they would have to restart their implementation from scratch using SM-0001 or the EASA MSAT (Management System Assessment Tool), and were unsure of which system they should use,” Attoumani explained. “This is precisely why IAMA surveyed its members: to understand their greatest challenges.”

As it turns out, based on member responses, regulation clarity (rule wording and how it was communicated to the industry) and how to comply are the biggest hurdles. According to Attoumani, these issues arose due to two main factors: high workloads and a shortage of resources. EASA, like many organisations, struggles with resources and workload. For organizations working to implement their SMS, this has meant longer question response times. Additionally, although organizations received feedback, some questions required contributions from internal EASA staff, which were delayed due to workload. The responsiveness of the DOA team leaders varied, as in any organization.

There is a silver lining behind the industry challenges. It is commendable that EASA invited IAMA to provide such feedback, and the other presentations also offered unique insights into SMS implementation processes. “EASA provided an update, and we heard from Rolls Royce, Advanced Aerospace Developments and Airbus,” Attoumani explained. “What I found most exciting was the opportunity to learn about SMS implementations from different companies. It was interesting to see the various compliant systems, and inspiring for the people attending the Workshop to see that each organization’s business requirements and strategies direct the choice of SMS structure, and that they all can achieve compliance.”

The essential workshop takeaways included knowledgeable discussions of the SMS implementation process and its critical importance within design organizations; meaningful exchanges between industry authorities and organizations, fostering greater understanding and cooperation, and the presentation of clear, actionable pathways to help organizations successfully achieve their SMS implementations before the upcoming compliance deadline.

Attoumani observed: “The key to a successful SMS implementation is what the organization gets out of it; it needs to be helpful to you.”

We invite you to explore our [presentation](#), which offers detailed insights into the role of SMS within design organizations and highlights our collaboration with EASA in driving industry-wide improvements. To become an IAMA member and learn more about our work, visit <https://iamalliance.aero/home.html>.



Meet A Team Member: Dagmar Elten

With 20-plus years in the design organization at Lufthansa Technik, Dr. Dagmar Elten's vast experience is a tremendous resource for IAMA. For 20 years, she reported to the Head of the Design Organization as the Head of Quality Management, and her passion for the subject is unmistakable.

"Over the 20 years in the Design Organisation, I initially cared about the design part of the organization's quality manual and converted it into an integrated computer-based Management Manual System for the design organization," Elten explained. "This was just before the change from following LBA—at the time, the German Civil Aviation Authority was responsible—to following EASA regulations and organisations approval. I also led the program to qualify staff members and was responsible for holding Design Organisation Approvals of further authorities."

With a doctorate in Electrical Engineering, Elten cares deeply about the DOA function and design organization approvals. Having not started in the aviation industry nor expressly harboured a passion for it, it's a testament to her knowledge, skill, and expertise that she built a long and distinguished career in aviation.

Elten has been involved with the alliance since its beginning and was a member of the Certification & Authority Affairs working group from 2018 to 2021. She brings to IAMA her deep understanding of aircraft modification and recognizes the challenges modifiers and aircraft operators face in maintaining airworthiness while enhancing aircraft. Her expertise in EASA Part 21 organisation has helped advance the alliance's goals.

Recently retired, Elten offers her experience in the aviation design, engineering and certification arena through the CAA working group. Her extensive knowledge of project engineering, quality management systems, aircraft system engineering, design organization management and aviation authorities is invaluable to the team.

"I'm currently supporting [Ian Devine](#) with the CAA working group," she said. "Having the opportunity to work with IAMA and help the alliance to build its reputation in the marketplace is gratifying. As I see it, harmonizing the rules to align modification requirements across aviation authorities is essential. So many aircraft worldwide are certified by different authorities, and trying to adhere to the various complex rules is not necessarily making things safer. IAMA's influence can help increase and maintain safety."

Her global perspective and desire to see the world means she continues to enjoy travelling and has an abiding love of the outdoors, with a passion for hiking, cycling and kayaking. You can connect with [Dr. Elten](#) on LinkedIn. Visit our [Members & Memberships](#) page to learn more about joining the alliance and being invited to participate in a working group.



Meet A Member: ADSE Consulting and Engineering

"If you can find the budget, just do it," said Jenny van der Pols about ADSE Consulting and Engineering's Tier 3 IAMA membership. The company's Head of Design Organization, who heard about the alliance through their partner Fokker Services, highlighted the benefits of the alliance's community: "The communication amongst members and the IAMA team is open and informal. It's a group of warm, like-minded people, and becoming a member was effortless."

An independent engineering and consulting company, ADSE services the transportation industry, including planes, trains, ships and automobiles, to ensure sustainable, safe and reliable transportation systems. The company helps their clients in the aerospace, defence, maritime and rail sectors improve their products, processes and engineering, and they also hold DOA to provide certifications for aircraft and rotorcraft modifications. The company, whose tagline is "We like transportation," is based in the Netherlands and embraces the United Nations Sustainability goals, living and breathing the work leading toward more sustainable transportation systems worldwide.

"Every organization that joins IAMA as a member or subscriber brings people with unique experiences that build the association's ability to pursue building a transparent and independent retrofit market," said [Nina Schulz](#), IAMA Managing Director. "We are pleased to have ADSE Consulting and Engineering as part of our community of aviation innovators. Together, we're set to drive collaboration and foster groundbreaking innovation in the industry."

With a unique market approach, the 75-people-strong company also uses its extensive knowledge to help new entrants become DOA and POA. Additionally, the company offers predictive maintenance services and advice on how to improve aerospace policy development. “The beauty of ADSE is that although there may be 30 people working in the aerospace and defence division at any time, our employees have the opportunity to work on the various markets we serve,” van der Pols explained. “This is a true strength for us, fostering individuals who understand sustainable transportation as a whole.”

[Van der Pols](#), who has been with the company for 10 years, has a background in flight physics and is also involved in business development. She also held the position of Chief Engineer of Hydrogen Aircraft at Fokker Next Gen, bringing passion and real-life experience to ADSE’s sustainability focus.

“We like to solve complex projects, and our biggest challenge is to better leverage our DOA while managing a broad cross-section of clients and maintaining continuity in the DOA,” she explained. “This part of our company is vital to us and keeping it alive and progressing is one of the key reasons we joined IAMA. We intend to revitalise our DOA and plan to use the IAMA Rulebook to help prepare for that. We’re attending the EASA workshop this November and looking forward to connecting with other IAMA members there.”

You can learn more about ADSE Consulting and Engineering on their [website](#). To learn more about becoming a member, Tier 3 or otherwise, visit our membership [page](#).

ASK AN EXPERT:

Safety Management System (SMS) implementation challenges

Implementing a Safety Management System (SMS) can involve many challenges, but the advantages of a safety culture are clear. Since zero risk doesn't exist, identifying hazards, collecting, analysing, and reporting on the data to manage safety risks is crucial to maintaining airworthiness.

EASA, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency, has set a crucial March 7, 2025 deadline for Part 21J organizations—Design Organization Approval (DOA)—to implement compliant SM systems. With safety as the overriding objective, this deadline aims to bring risk-based decision-making to all parts of the organization to leverage efficiencies. It's a significant milestone that underscores the importance of SMS implementation to the whole aviation ecosystem.

As IAMA recently reported to EASA, although many design organizations are already compliant, especially those with CAMO (Continuous Airworthiness Management Office) approvals, some are still confused and lost. No one wants to lose their accreditation.

“The undeniable key to a successful implementation is developing and fostering a healthy safety culture throughout the organization and understanding the benefits of the safety management system,” said [Anthony Attoumani](#), industry expert and founder and CEO at Infinity Aviation Support. “This isn't always easy because safety culture isn't deeply built into every organisation the way it is for organizations, like airlines, whose pilots and crews have lived safety culture and procedures every day for decades.”

“The alliance’s ethos is safety,” said [Nina Schulz](#), IAMA Managing Director. “We heard from the IAMA network that 70 percent of organizations directly used SM-0001, and the remaining had referenced it as part of their implementation. Furthermore, 60 percent used the EASA Management System Assessment tool, and those who did not were either unaware of the tool, had already started their implementations, and smaller 21J organizations found it not well-suited to their needs.”



Following SM-0001, the internationally accepted standard endorsed by ICAO, the International Civil Aviation Organization, is one way to be compliant. Safety objectives, clear strategy, and business objectives are critical to SMS implementation. Each organization's SMS will be unique. A crucial concern in smaller organizations is that implementing SMS drives a large administrative burden for what is perceived as a limited safety impact.

Attoumani highlights the challenges faced by Part 21J organisations. These include the lack of clarity in the regulations, stretched DOA team leader resources leading to delayed feedback, and the demanding transition of company culture. He observes that switching to a safety mindset can be particularly challenging for design engineers. "In the design world, you design how to make something work. With a safety mindset, you have to anticipate how it could potentially fail. This shift in perspective is a significant hurdle. Safety culture is about trust and confidence to encourage people to report and moving away from 'blaming' culture so that no one will be exposed in the future." Understanding these challenges is crucial for a successful SMS implementation.

Another critical SMS challenge is analysis. KPIs are essential, but the team must be vigilant in determining if the results make sense. Is that constantly flagged risk simply demonstrating a good process, or is there another risk that is flagged fewer times that is potentially more significant? "It's not only what is in the report, but mainly the questions the team asks to help improve true risk identification and risk mitigation efficiency. This is how SMS matures in organizations and the intended benefits are achieved." Attoumani added.

"IAMA supports its members in their SMS implementation endeavours by fostering the communication of shared experiences," Schulz commented. "We will continue advocating for our membership and bringing industry challenges to EASA to improve the process for future 21J organizations. We believe that safety management systems offer great opportunities to instill a healthy safety culture, improve risk-based thinking on organisational changes and safety performance, make just culture more explicit, and bring a positive mindset change to the modification marketplace."

IAMA's [presentation](#) details insights into the role of SMS within design organizations and highlights the alliance's collaboration with EASA in driving industry-wide improvements. To become an IAMA member and learn more about our work, visit <https://iamalliance.aero/home.html>.

SMS Resources:

- EASA
- [Management System Assessment Tool](#)

- ICAO
- [Annex19](#)

- Aerospace Industries Association
- [SM-0001](#)

ENGAGE WITH US

EASA Part 21 Workshop and Certification Conference (26th and 27th Nov)

A quick point that IAMA has registered for the upcoming EASA Part 21 Workshop and Certification Conference (26th and 27th Nov) and are looking forward to the engage with both industry and the agency on the exciting agenda...the link to where the agenda and general info is:

TIER 3: IAMA'S ENTRY LEVEL MEMBERSHIP

IAMA listened carefully to our industry contacts and created a new entry level membership category, especially designed for smaller Design Organizations. For us it is extremely important to represent the full spectrum of the retrofit market. Enjoying IAMA's community and expertise is possible starting with a small invest of only **USD 950** per year!

You can find all details regarding IAMA membership options on our website, and of course we are more than happy to answer any questions you may have. Please contact us under [**info@iamalliance.aero**](mailto:info@iamalliance.aero)

BECOME AN IAMA MEMBER

The Independent Aircraft Modifier Alliance (IAMA) welcomes all participants in the aviation industry, including aircraft manufacturers, airlines, suppliers, and lessors. IAMA offers three Tiers of paid memberships—TIER 1, TIER 2, and TIER 3—as well as an Advisory level. Each membership tier provides distinct benefits tailored to the member's role within the aviation ecosystem.

TIER 1 and TIER 2 memberships are for organizations with modification capabilities, while Advisory memberships are for airframe and system OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers). Airlines and lessors may join for free. Learn more about our membership options here: <https://iamalliance.aero/memberships.html>