Innovation Hub

Concept of Operations (ConOps)
Sandbox Guidance

ConOps Guidance

Overview

A Concept of Operations (ConOps) is a mandatory requirement for an entity (the applicant) to be considered for onboarding to the Innovation Hub's Regulatory Sandbox[1] (the Sandbox). The purpose of a ConOps is for the applicant to provide an overview of their proposed trials, along with supporting information such as timelines and details of any novel technologies. This guidance highlights the sections that must be included in order to provide the minimum required information. Applicants should also shape their ConOps to their proposal; adding any sections they deem applicable/necessary. The innovation hub website contains guidance on specific topics (BVLOS etc.) which may be useful reference material when putting together a ConOps. As part of the pre-Sandbox phase the ConOps may be refined between the Innovation Hub and the applicant until a final version is agreed. The ConOps will be used to assess an applicant's proposal to be onboarded to the Sandbox.

Best Practice Guidelines

Based on our experience from the Regulatory Sandbox, we advise that you consider the following when completing the ConOps:

- Version control
- A glossary of all unique terms and acronyms
- A table of contents
- Use figures, images, diagrams, and tables where relevant
- A list of all referenced standards, codes, and publications
- If you need to expand the document by adding any sections, please keep a logical document structure
- Equations and mathematical relationships need to be derived from, or referenced to, a recognized standard or text. All algebraic parameters should be defined, including the units of all numerical values
- A legend or key that identifies all symbols used for any schematic diagrams

Point of contact

Any enquiries relating to this guidance should be made to the CAA's Innovation Hub at: innovation@caa.co.uk

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[1] For more information on the Regulatory Sandbox please refer to our website

ConOps Guidance

The ConOps should include the following sections as a minimum:

1. Introduction

Provide an outline of the project along with its objectives and goals, as well as the nature of support you require from the Sandbox. A background of the company/entity/consortium should be presented, along with confirmation that resources (such as funding) are in place, in order to see the project to completion.

2. Overview of proposed trials

Describe in detail your intended trials/operations. This should include as a minimum any locations, operating procedures, duration, dates/times, and involved personnel. Provide as much information as possible (and relevant). This will shape the scope of how the sandbox can support you.

3. Proposed Solution

Provide details as to how you intend to achieve your proposed trials. Explain the capabilities and/or solutions you will be making use of, whether technological, operational, or otherwise. If technical, provide details of it, diagrams, explanation of parts, and how everything works. Demonstrate that your technical solution has reached a readiness level (TRL) that is sufficient to begin testing.

4. Operating Environment

Explain in detail where the trial is expected to take place, and how the necessary and required capabilities will be tested and demonstrated before commencement of trials. If a safe environment and/or testbed will be established, please provide details.

This needs to show considerations for both Airspace and Ground risk if applicable.

5. Timelines

Present a detailed project plan, timeline and major milestones. This will serve as a starting point and might need to be refined as the sandbox project progresses.

Provide an overview of any progress made to date and what, if any, previous trials/tests have taken place.

6. Annex

Provide any relevant data and/or supporting information.