Change Management in the ATM Industry
Principles and Process

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Foreword

We are pleased to present these Change Management Guidelines which are a joint effort of the European Social Partners (ESP) in Air Traffic Management – ATCEUC, CANSO and ETF. The aim of these guidelines is to offer advice on best practices to assist in the management of significant change processes. The document was formally adopted on 3rd October 2018 in Vienna in the context of the final Conference of the joint EU-funded project 'Reinforcement of Social Dialogue in the field of Air Traffic Management (ATM)'. The three ESP recommend to their affiliates to use these guidelines when they face significant changes. It is important for the stability of the organisations and for the smooth development of the process.

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Background

In the framework of their joint social dialogue project entitled 'Reinforcement of Social Dialogue in the field of Air Traffic Management', the ATM Social Partners (ATCEUC, CANSO and ETF) jointly identified change management, the social impact of the introduction of new technologies and automation as key priorities for their future work.

These issues were discussed during the project workshop held on 20 – 22 September 2017 in Faro (Portugal) and developed subsequently by a subgroup of the social partners.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to define principles for the management of significant changes which will impact the company, management and staff and to outline guidelines for both managers and unions to enable the change management process to operate smoothly. It is recognised that any significant transformation programme will create people issues, involving changes to jobs, development of new skills and capabilities which will cause uncertainty and possible resistance.

Within the ATM industry safety will always remain paramount. While cost efficiency is one of the goals of SES implementation, it is not the only driver of significant change in the ATM industry. Cost efficiency should be balanced against a progressive working environment for staff which also takes account of the business requirements of the ANSP.

It is important that the change management process is sustainable, efficient and accepted by all. The guideline will also deal with how to avoid blockages in the change process.

Finally, the aim of this paper is to provide the social partners with guidance when dealing with the change management process. It represents best practice which may be adapted to suit local arrangements and regulatory requirements. It is to be remembered that the information contained in this document is in no way mandatory. Existing national and European legislation and regulation will prevail.

Context

Definition of change:

It is accepted that change is a normal part of an ANSPs day to day business. This paper is intended to focus only on significant organisational change leading to major work process change e.g. downsizing, restructuring, cost containment, outsourcing, major technological change etc that impacts personnel.

Single European Sky and SESAR

Since 2004, the EU has gained competence in air traffic management and started implementing the Single European Sky (SES). As the name suggests, this project aims, amongst other targets, at defragmenting the European airspace while increasing flight efficiency, reducing costs and maintaining the highest safety levels. The SES process generates a significant pressure on Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) by imposing strict performance targets[1] across the 4 Key Performance Areas of Safety[2], Environment, Capacity and Cost-efficiency.

Closely linked to the SES is its technological pillar SESAR – the Single European Sky ATM Research programme. Its objective is to modernise European ATM by defining, developing and delivering new or improved technologies and procedures. This vision is enabled by a progressive increase of the level of automation support, the implementation of virtualisation technologies as well as the use of standardised and interoperable systems[3].

Technological Changes

Technology generally supports Air Traffic Controllers in the performance of their duties, over time technology and automation will reshape the delivery of air traffic management. Recent developments and the introduction of automation is significantly changing the nature of the job. The introduction of Digital Tower Technologies can be utilised to enable the provision of remote aerodrome services, which may impact on the location/environment of a workforce. Together with other phenomena such as increases in air traffic volumes, climate change, political

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1 https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/eusinglesky/
2 https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/single-european-sky/ses-performance-and-charging/performance-and-charging-schemes_en
3 http://www.sesarju.eu/vision

crises etc, they generate a pressing need for change in air traffic management.

External Factors (Legislation)

The change management principles outlined in this document may be adapted to suit local arrangements and regulatory requirements. However, nothing in this document is intended to interfere with the existing national and European legislation or existing collective agreements.

Commitment of the European ATM Social Partners

The European ATM Social Partners' role is crucial to ensure the smooth transition of significant change programmes in a proactive and cohesive manner. They jointly endorse the following principles of successful change management and they will undertake all efforts so that they are understood within their respective organisations.

Principles of Change Management

1. Importance of social dialogue

One of the key preconditions for a successful change management process is a good functioning social dialogue at EU, ANSP and at local level. Effective early engagement with staff and their representative bodies plays a significant role in ensuring the buy-in of ANSP staff. A common understanding between management and staff and the support of the workforce will facilitate the implementation of the proposed changes. At the same time, it will help that the changes are managed in a socially acceptable manner. A regular exchange between management and workers should not only take place before the change(s) but during the change management process. Besides the formal requirements mandated under EU and national legislations, informal exchanges also play an important role.

2. Building trust

Managers and staff representatives value and listen to each other's contribution. Both parties recognise how both informal and formal discussions contribute to good

employee relations. A process of building trust must be shared between the social partners. There is a shared responsibility for resolving issues in a timely way, and local problem solving is the approach recommended.

3. Pursuing the development of a shared vision and a cooperative culture

Management and unions should do their utmost to identify and understand the interests of both parties. Management should outline the objectives of the change management process and the unions should outline their objectives also. Such an approach should lead to develop a shared vision, agreed by both parties, inside a cooperative culture of the change management process.

4. Social Dialogue Toolbox (Information, Consultation and Trade Union Participation)

The social partners recognise the importance of stable industrial relations and are committed to maintaining a well-managed industrial relations environment to minimise disputes affecting the level of service to the public. A stable industrial relations climate has important benefits for the general public and for the ANSP. These benefits include the provision of uninterrupted services, improved productivity, staff morale and increased public confidence. Air navigation services cannot be obtained from alternative sources therefore the ATM service providers and their staff have a special responsibility to ensure that they have well developed communication channels and to seek to resolve problems before they escalate into industrial disputes.

In order to support and facilitate an effective social dialogue, in 2015 the ATM Partners developed a document called Toolbox for successful social dialogue in ATM, a best practice document providing both unions and management with a number of tools including processes for dispute resolution and external mediation, which they could use and which may help them improve social dialogue in their local specific environment. It represents best practice which may be adapted to suit local arrangements and different regulatory requirements.The aim of the Social Dialogue Toolbox[4] is to increase the quality of social dialogue and reduce the risk of conflict.

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4 The Social Dialogue Toolbox was produced by the Social Partners in 2015 and officially presented in September 2016. It is available on the ATCEUC, CANSO and ETF websites.

Change Management - Steps

1. Senior Leadership Project Team
- To manage at strategic level
- On time, on target, within budget
- May establish subgroups

2. Identify Reason for Change
- Decision e.g. introduction of remote towers
- Notify and consult

3. Social Impact on Staff
- Re-organisation of services, redeployment of personnel etc.
- Negotiate with a view to agreeing a solution

4. Communication Strategy
- Co-ordinated
- Targeted
- Continuous

5. Identify Quick Wins
- Short term targets to ensure quick wins
- Positively acknowledged

6. Build on the Change
- Assess each win and identify improvements

7. Blockages
- Dealt with as quickly as possible
- Dispute resolution process

Change Process

5. Establishing clear targets and organisation of the process

From the outset, management should be clear on what the objective of the change management process is. At all steps in the process they should consult with the unions. Management should also propose a change management plan identifying the various steps including an impact assessment and the risks. Where issues are identified which may have a social impact on staff, management and staff representatives should consult and identify solutions to mitigate the risk.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PROJECT TEAMS

Strategy and target setting are the responsibility of the senior leadership team. However, once these key decisions are agreed it is important that management engage with key stakeholders on the implementation of the change objectives. This involves the adoption by management of an inclusive approach to the change process with recognised staff representatives.

Significant organisational and service change requires robust consultation with the staff representatives which takes account of staff concerns. Where decisions may have a social impact, the issues should be discussed with the trade union representatives at appropriate levels to include a description of the planned change and an assessment of the social impact, if any, the change will have on employee numbers, rosters, earnings, redeployment/ re-skilling and family circumstances.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROCESS STEPS

1. A Senior Leadership Project team should be established.

a. The primary role of the Senior Leadership Project Team should be to manage the change process at a strategic level e.g. on time, on target and within budget etc.

b. The Senior Leadership Project Team may establish subgroups where the need is identified to address specific elements of the project e.g. Social Impact Subgroup (comprising of appropriate and mandated representatives of HR, relevant ATM operations and staff unions), safety subgroup etc.

2. Identification of the reasons for change:

a. Generally, this will be because of a strategic decision e.g. the introduction of remote towers.

b. The senior leadership team should inform and consult with senior staff representative(s) (from recognised trade unions) on the strategy and the timeline for the change. This consultation does not mean that possible proposals formulated by the staff representatives will be accepted.

c. The staff representatives reserve the right to take their own views and are free to take initiatives as their responsibility is to defend the interests of the workers.

3. *The Social Impact Subgroup should be fully briefed on the change initiative and may carry out an assessment of the social impact of the change for staff.*

a. Where changes are identified that may impact on staff e.g. re-organisation of service provision, redeployment of personnel, downsizing of operations, outsourcing etc. The mandated representatives of HR inside the Social Impact Subgroup may negotiate with the union officials and agree upon solutions to address the social impact identified.

b. In the first instance, measures to avoid or minimise compulsory redundancies should be explored such as re-deployment to another location within the ANSP, re-skilling, re-training etc.

c. Where redundancies are unavoidable and are permitted by local regulation, the Social Impact Subgroup should agree upon a mechanism to manage the process.

4. *Communication strategy:*

A co-ordinated communication strategy should be agreed to ensure all staff affected by the change are kept fully appraised and to address staff concerns openly and honestly. Information should be targeted so as to provide the right information at the right time. Information should be given continuously at all stages of the change process including where a change will impact negatively on individuals. This can help to avoid rumours and misunderstanding. The way the communication is developed is important, oral and written communication should both be used. The best change management processes reinforce core messages through regular, timely communications.

5. *Identification of Quick Wins:*

Significant change management processes are best broken down into smaller ones with concrete achievable goals. Otherwise the change process can be so overwhelming that solutions may seem unattainable. Irrespective of
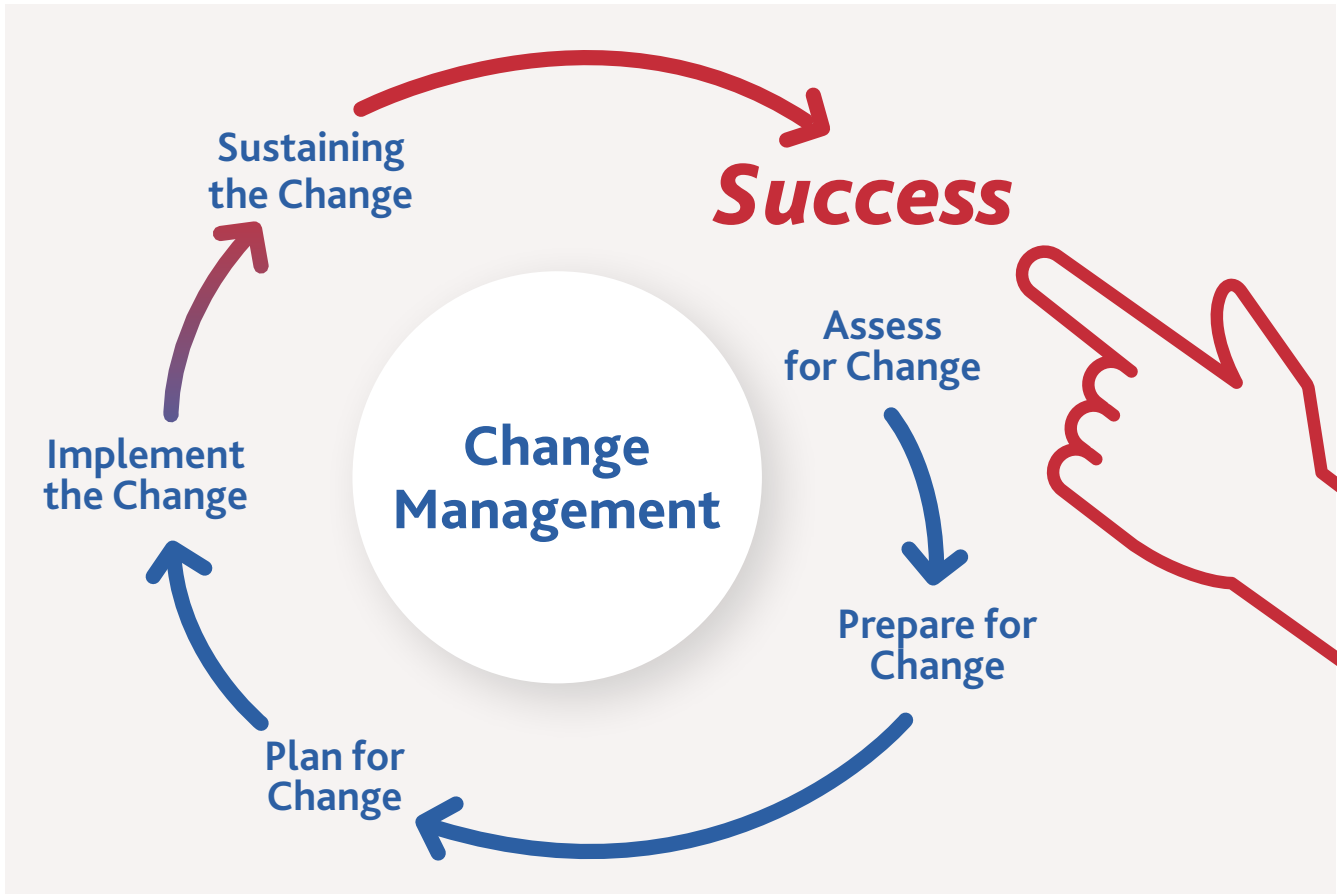
the long-term goal of the project each subgroup should create short term targets in order to ensure that quick wins, which are clearly linked to the change process, are identified and positively acknowledged.

6. Build on the Change:

Each successful short-term win should be assessed to identify improvements that can assist in improving further change targets and to build on the momentum.

7. Blockages:

Where disputes arise that impact on the change management process these should be dealt with as quickly as possible and in line with best practice and established procedures. Where required the dispute resolution processes identified in the Social Partners Toolbox should assist the parties to resolve the issues.

6. Equality of treatment

Any agreement reached between the employer and the unions should take cognisance of equality requirements and be implemented in a non-discriminatory manner.

7. Adjusting agreements

Agreements reached between the employer and staff unions should be formalised and signed by both parties.

Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.

George Bernard Shaw