The Defence Aviation Safety Regulation (DASR) Safety Management System (SMS) Implementing Regulation (IR) establishes the criteria for the aviation domain to manage aviation safety risks and, in part, discharge obligations under the Commonwealth Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act 2011.

An SMS aims to provide a higher level of safety by supporting and extending the protection of regulations through the ongoing management of aviation safety hazards and risks. SMS IR details a comprehensive approach to managing risks to aviation safety, including the necessary accountabilities, policies and procedures. An effective SMS improves the likelihood of predicting, preventing and treating aviation hazards and risks, as well as human errors and violations.

The architecture for the SMS regulation has been, where possible, aligned with the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Chicago Convention Annex 19 framework and includes consideration of the Commonwealth WHS Act 2011.

The ICAO framework is considered best practice by most National Aviation Authorities (NAA) and has extensive supporting guidance material available for regulated entities.

The performance-based nature of the DASR SMS introduces new considerations for how oversight should be conducted in accordance with the considerations below:

- **Phased implementation** - implementation of the SMS is not instantaneous, it is a process that may take several years. Actual implementation duration will depend on:
  - the size of the organisation
  - the nature of the organisation’s operations
  - the complexity of the organisation’s aviation products and/or services
  - the existing maturity of SMS components.

- **Subjective nature** — assessing the effectiveness and performance of an SMS requires a judgement decision. Each maturity indicator will be scored according to the Present, Suitable, Operating and Effective (PSOE) Methodology. Subjective assessments will be required to determine suitability and effectiveness and is dependent on the quantity and quality of the evidence available.

- **Maturity v compliance** — the Defence Aviation Safety Authority (DASA) will conduct assessments of organisations’ SMSs to jointly determine the current maturity of the systems. DASA will expect that each element of the SMS system is present, and that there is a minimum level of improvement in the SMS maturity score over an agreed period of time.

**Long-term safety improvements include:**

- Clearly defined and established SMSs across all of Defence aviation that are producing real, measureable safety outcomes.
- Reductions in ‘paper-safety’ and compliance-seeking behaviours.
- Ongoing development and improvement of positive safety cultures.