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The following table identifies all management authorities who have successively approved the present issue of this document.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this Document

This document specifies the minimum requirements for the development, configuration and use of Short Term Conflict Alert (STCA) by all Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSP) in the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) area. STCA is a ground-based safety net intended to assist the controller in maintaining separation between controlled flights by generating, in a timely manner, an alert of a potential or actual infringement of separation minima.

1.2 Scope of this Document

Regulation (EC) No 552/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2004 on the interoperability of the European Air Traffic Management network (the interoperability Regulation) contains *inter alia* the following essential requirements:

- *“Systems and operations of the EATMN shall achieve agreed high levels of safety. Agreed safety management and reporting methodologies shall be established to achieve this.”*
- *“In respect of appropriate ground-based systems, or parts thereof, these high levels of safety shall be enhanced by safety nets which shall be subject to agreed common performance characteristics.”*

The European Convergence and Implementation Plan (ECIP) contains a pan-European Objective (ATC02.2) for ECAC-wide standardisation of STCA in accordance with the EUROCONTROL Specification of Short Term Conflict Alert (this document). This document specifies, in qualitative terms, the common performance characteristics of STCA as well as the prerequisites for achieving these performance characteristics.

Note.— The current edition of this document is subject to agreement through formal consultation using the EUROCONTROL Notice of Proposed Rule-Making (ENPRM) process. Once agreed, this document could become an acceptable means of compliance to appropriate aspects of the referred essential requirements.

ECIP ATC02.2 requires that STCA is implemented and brought into operational use in all airspace in the ECAC area in which radar services are provided. Military ATC units are invited to consider implementation of STCA in ATC units providing area services.

1.3 Structure of this Document

Chapter 1 clarifies the purpose and structure of the document.

Chapter 2 contains conventions regarding terms. It lists reference documents, explains terms and contains a list of abbreviations.

Chapter 3 describes the STCA concept of operations. It provides the contextual information for interpretation of the requirements contained in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 lists the requirements. The requirements in this chapter are normative in the sense that:

- The word “shall” denotes a mandatory requirement. Mandatory requirements are explicitly numbered with the prefix “STCA-”.
- The word “should” denotes a preferred requirement.
- The word “may” denotes an option.
- The word “will” denotes a statement of intent.

Chapter 5 identifies the comprehensive guidance material available to assist in implementing this specification.

2. CONVENTIONS REGARDING TERMS

2.1 Reference Documents

[EURO-HRS]	Guidelines for Trust in Future ATM Systems: Principles, HRS/HSP-005-GUI-03, Edition 1.0, May 2003
[Doc 4444]	ICAO Doc 4444: Procedures for Air Navigation Services - Air Traffic Management
[Doc 9426]	ICAO Doc 9426: Air Traffic Services Planning Manual
[SRC-POL2]	SRC Policy Document 2: Use of Safety Nets in Risk Assessment & Mitigation in ATM, Edition 1.0, 28 April 2003
[SRC-ESARR4]	ESARR 4: Risk Assessment and Mitigation in ATM, Edition 1.0, 05-04-2001

2.2 Explanation of Terms

This section provides the explanation of terms required for a correct understanding of the present document. Most of the following explanations are drawn from [Doc 4444] and [Doc 9426]. In general, other definitions are only used where there is no ICAO definition. If not, it is explained why another definition is preferred to the ICAO one.

alert	Indication of an existing or pending situation that requires particular attention or action. <i>Note.— The term “situation” in the context of STCA is to be understood as related to the proximity of a pair of aircraft as well as their relative positions and speed.</i>
conflict [derived from Doc 9426]	Converging of aircraft in space and time which constitutes a predicted violation of a given set of separation minima.
false alert	Alert which does not correspond to a situation requiring particular attention or action (e.g. caused by split tracks and radar reflections).

ground-based safety nets	<p>Ground-based safety nets are system functions that alert controllers to potentially hazardous situations in an effective manner and with sufficient warning time for the situation to be resolved.</p> <p><i>Note.— The term “hazardous situations” in the context of this definition is to be understood as an imminent or actual infringement of separation minima, required spacing or minimum safe altitude, or an unauthorized penetration into an airspace volume.</i></p>
human factors principles [Doc 4444]	<p>Principles which apply to aeronautical design, certification, training, operations and maintenance and which seek safe interface between the human and other system components by proper consideration to human performance.</p>
human performance [Doc 4444]	<p>Human capabilities and limitations which have an impact on the safety and efficiency of aeronautical operations.</p>
nuisance alert	<p>Alert which is correctly generated according to the rule set but is considered operationally inappropriate.</p>
radar service [Doc 4444]	<p>Term used to indicate a service provided directly by means of radar.</p>
separation [Doc 9426]	<p>Spacing between aircraft, levels or tracks.</p>
short term conflict alert [derived from Doc 4444]	<p>A ground-based safety net intended to assist the controller in maintaining separation between controlled flights by generating, in a timely manner, an alert of a potential or actual infringement of separation minima.</p>
warning time	<p>The amount of time between the first indication of an alert to the controller and the predicted violation of the applicable separation minima.</p> <p><i>Note.— The achieved warning time depends on the geometry of the situation.</i></p> <p><i>Note.— The maximum warning time may be constrained in order to keep the number of nuisance alerts below an acceptable threshold.</i></p>

2.3 Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACAS	Airborne Collision Avoidance System
ADS	Automatic Dependent Surveillance
AGDL	Air-Ground Data Link
ANSP	Air Navigation Service Provider
ATC	Air Traffic Control
ATCC	Air Traffic Control Centre
ATS	Air Traffic Service
EATMN	European Air Traffic Management Network
EC	European Commission
ECAC	European Civil Aviation Conference
ECIP	European Convergence and Implementation Plan
ENPRM	EUROCONTROL Notice of Proposed Rule-Making
FUA	Flexible Use of Airspace
GAT	General Air Traffic
HMI	Human Machine Interface
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IFR	Instrument Flight Rules
OAT	Operational Air Traffic
RVSM	Reduced Vertical Separation Minimum
VFR	Visual Flight Rules
SRC	Safety Regulation Commission
STCA	Short Term Conflict Alert

3. STCA CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

3.1 Purpose of STCA

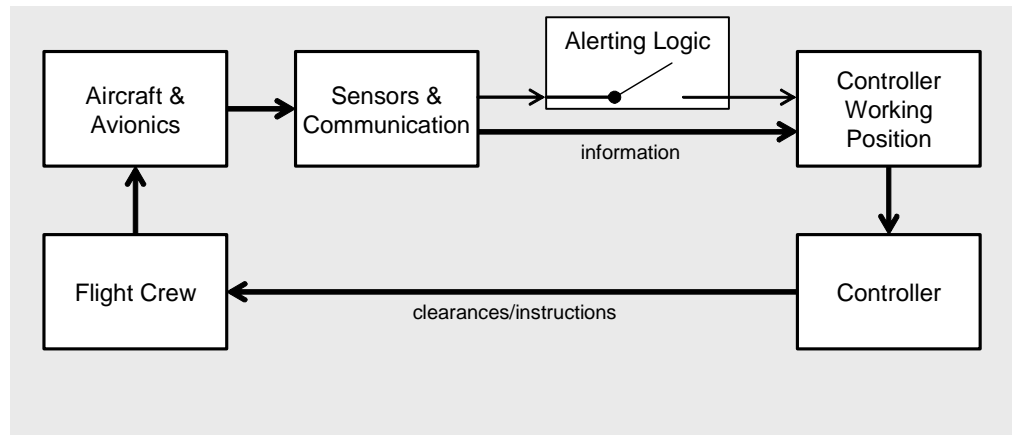


Fig. 1: Simplified ATC Control Loop

As illustrated in Fig. 1, today's ATC system is human centred: based on processing of a continuous stream of information, the controller issues clearances and instructions to prevent or resolve conflicts.

However, the drive for consistency in cognitive information processing tasks leads to selective perception/exposure, selective attention and selective interpretation. As a result, conflicts and deviations from clearances or instructions leading to aircraft proximity can remain unnoticed.

STCA adds independent alerting logic to the control loop by generating indications of existing or pending situations, related to the proximity of aircraft as well as their relative positions and speed, which require attention/action.

STCA is intended to function in the short term, providing warning times up to 2 minutes.

3.2 Operational Context

When STCA was first introduced in the mid nineteen-eighties, radar services were in most cases provided using mixed (raw radar data amplified with computer-generated synthetic data) situation displays. In the meantime, the norm for provision of radar services has become full-synthetic situation displays in most ECAC States. Decision support tools are gradually being introduced to enable the controller to handle more traffic in order to cope with the ever increasing demand. At the same time, automated support systems have become more robust and trustworthy but also more complex and

interdependent. These changes imply a different operational context for STCA.

It is essential that individual ANSPs establish a clear STCA policy for their particular operational context to avoid ambiguity about the role and use of STCA using the following generic policy statements as a starting point:

STCA IS A SAFETY NET; ITS SOLE PURPOSE IS TO ENHANCE SAFETY AND ITS PRESENCE IS IGNORED WHEN CALCULATING SECTOR CAPACITY.

STCA IS DESIGNED, CONFIGURED AND USED TO MAKE A SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SEPARATION PROVISION AND COLLISION AVOIDANCE.

STCA is only effective if the number of nuisance alerts remains below an acceptable threshold according to local requirements and if it provides sufficient warning time to resolve hazardous situations, governed by the inherent characteristics of the human centred system.

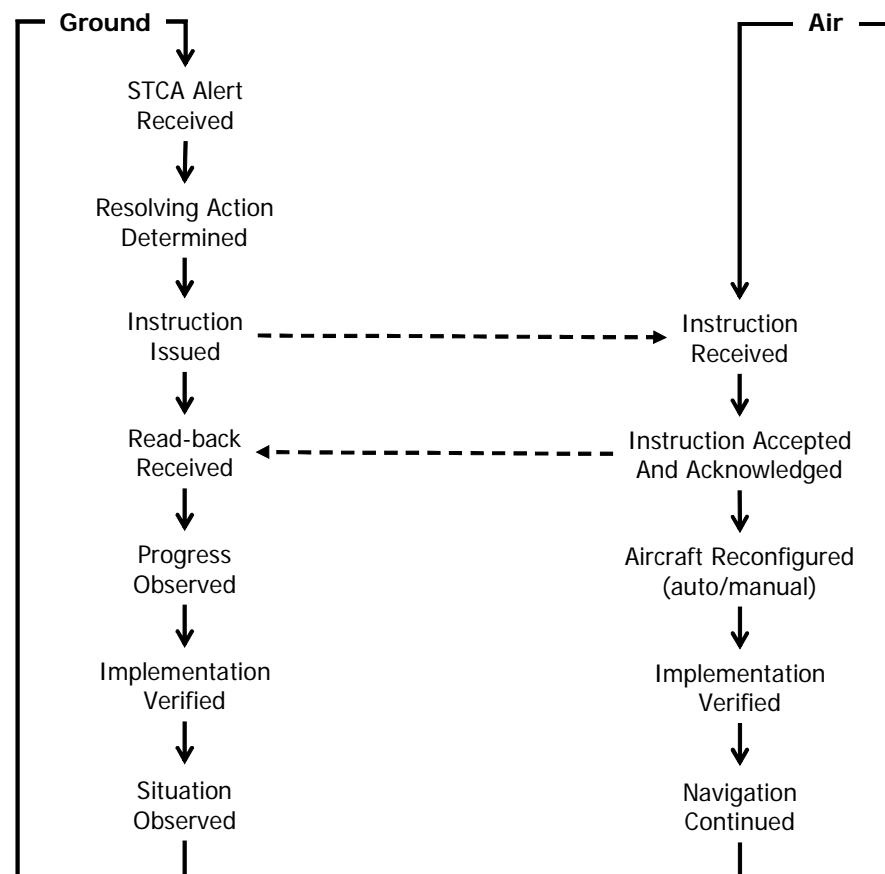


Fig. 2: Expanded ATC Control Loop (triggered by STCA)

Fig. 2 illustrates the nominal sequence of events to resolve a particular situation as two loosely coupled state charts. Being a human centred system,

the Ground chart reflects the states of the controller and the Air chart reflects the states of the flight crew. For each state transition to occur certain preconditions have to be met and actions performed, complicated by many fixed or variable delays and anomalous cases.

3.3 Operational Concept

3.3.1 Human Performance Considerations

In order to be able to process all available information, the controller must acquire situational awareness and build a mental model of the airspace and traffic pattern. To control the situation and make decisions, the controller has to establish a sector plan, which includes strategies and tactics to handle the traffic flows and conflicts.

Furthermore, there is a natural tendency for the human being to search for information that supports already taken decisions and avoid information that would be critical of it (accept as true information that conforms to pre-existing knowledge; reject as false or irrelevant information that does not conform).

The use of STCA will depend on the controller's trust. Trust is a result of many factors such as reliability and transparency. Neither mistrust nor complacency is desirable; training and experience is needed to develop trust at the appropriate level (see [EURO-HRS]).

For STCA to be effective, the controller must have a positive attitude towards STCA. This requires that the following aspects are addressed:

- **Appropriateness and timeliness**
The rule set for generating alerts should be appropriate; dissonance with normal control practices (and/or decision support tools with a longer look-ahead time) should be avoided. False alerts and nuisance alerts should be reduced to a minimum.
- **Effectiveness**
The controller in charge may not notice or recognise the reason for an alert for the same reasons that left the conflict undetected. This should be addressed in HMI design.
- **Comprehensibility and performance monitoring**
The increasing complexity of STCA and the environment in which it is used should be addressed through appropriate initial and recurring training. Practices and controller perception of the effectiveness of STCA should be evaluated periodically and following changes to STCA. Lessons from particular situations or incidents in which STCA was involved should be shared through appropriate mechanisms.

3.3.2 Design Considerations

STCA should perform in concert with the airspace design and classification, variety of airspace users, Flexible Use of Airspace (FUA) and the applicable procedures for air navigation services.

Depending on the diversity of these aspects, STCA should be capable of using different parameters for generation of alerts in different volumes of airspace at different moments in time. A large number of volumes of airspace may need to be defined so that parameters can be tuned according to the use of individual volumes of airspace, including which flights are eligible for the generation of alerts.

Local instructions concerning the use of STCA should be established to ensure that STCA is used in a safe and effective manner. Pertinent data should be regularly analysed in order to monitor and, if necessary, optimise the performance of STCA.

3.3.3 Technical Aspects

STCA is suitable for use in any airspace covered by adequate surveillance.

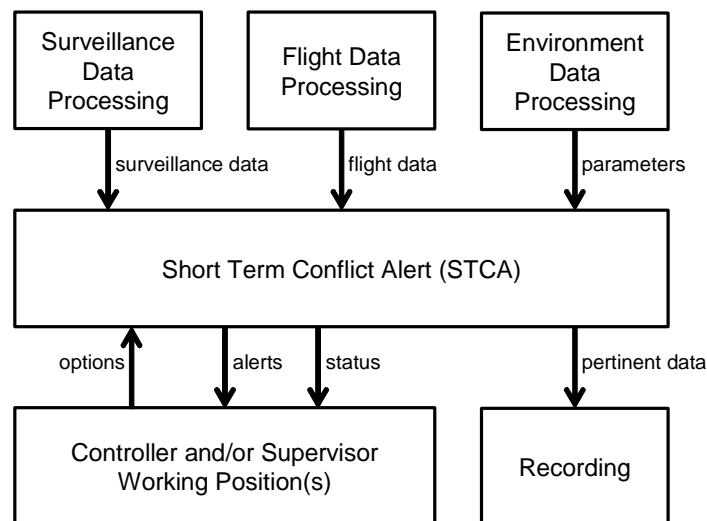


Fig. 3: STCA Context Diagram

As illustrated in Fig. 3, STCA should obtain information from Surveillance Data Processing, from Environment Data Processing and possibly from Flight Data Processing in order to generate alerts:

- Surveillance data including tracked Mode C should be used to predict conflicts
- Flight data should be used as follows:

- Type/category of flight: to determine the eligibility for alert generation
 - RVSM status: to apply appropriate parameters in RVSM airspace
 - Concerned sector(s): to address alerts
 - Cleared/Block Flight Levels: to increase the relevance of conflict prediction
 - Type of aircraft/wake turbulence category
 - Number of aircraft: to apply appropriate parameters for formation flights
 - Manually entered Flight Levels: to compensate for missing Mode C data
- Parameters (from Environment Data Processing) should be used to configure STCA for distinct volumes of airspace

Alerts should be generated at least at Controller Working Position(s) of the control sector(s) working the aircraft. Status information regarding the technical availability of STCA is to be provided to Supervisor and Controller Working Positions. Selectable options of STCA related to eligibility and configuration may be available at Supervisor Working Positions.

All pertinent data for offline analysis of STCA should be recorded.

3.4 Safety Aspects

The [SRC-ESARR4] applies in full, i.e.:

- A safety case should be established by applying the established safety methodology;
- The contribution of STCA towards separation assurance may be counted when calculating safety levels within the scope of [SRC-ESARR4]; but
- Conforming to [SRC-POL2], the contribution of STCA towards collision avoidance may not be counted when calculating safety levels within the scope of [SRC-ESARR4].

3.5 Future Directions and Need for Change

STCA will have to meet future demands imposed by, amongst other things, further traffic increase, changing traffic patterns, FUA, changing aircraft

characteristics, further automation in the air and on the ground and, potentially, the introduction of new concepts.

Availability of improved or new aircraft information through Mode S, ADS and AGDL will offer new opportunities to improve STCA.

This could, amongst others, lead to changes in the following aspects of STCA:

- Correlation of ATC constraints with aircraft intent in order to further reduce the number of nuisance alerts;
- Increased look ahead time and multi-level or different types of alerts;
- Correlation of alerts from multiple sources (on the ground and in the air) to generate combined alerts.

4. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Policy, Organisational Clarity and Training Requirements

4.1.1 Policy

STCA-01 The ANSP shall have a formal policy on the use of STCA consistent with the operational concept and safety management system applied.

The policy should be consistent with the generic policy statements in section 3.2 of this Specification but may contain more detail or additional aspects called for by local factors.

The policy should be communicated to all relevant staff in order to ensure consistency of all design, configuration, operational use and monitoring activities in compliance with the intended use of STCA.

4.1.2 Responsibility for Management of STCA

STCA-02 The ANSP shall assign to one or more staff, as appropriate, the responsibility for overall management of STCA.

It should be possible for other staff in the organisation to identify the assigned staff. The assigned staff should seek advice from the STCA manufacturer, as appropriate.

4.1.3 Training

STCA-03 The ANSP shall ensure that all controllers are given specific STCA training, relevant to the STCA system that the controller will use.

Note.— The primary goal of the training is to develop and maintain an appropriate level of trust in STCA, i.e. to make controllers aware of the likely situations where STCA will be effective and, more importantly, situations in which STCA will not be so effective (e.g. sudden, unexpected manoeuvres).

4.2 Requirements on Procedures

STCA-04 Local instructions concerning use of STCA shall specify, *inter alia*:

- a) the types of flight (GAT/OAT, IFR/VFR, RVSM/NON-RVSM, etc.) which are eligible for generation of alerts;
- b) the volumes of airspace within which STCA is implemented;
- c) the method of displaying the STCA to the controller;

- d) in general terms, the parameters for generation of alerts as well as alert warning time;
- e) the volumes of airspace within which STCA can be selectively inhibited and the conditions under which this will be permitted;
- f) conditions under which specific alerts may be inhibited for individual flights; and
- g) procedures applicable in respect of volumes of airspace or flights for which STCA or specific alerts have been inhibited.

STCA-05 In the event an alert is generated in respect of controlled flights, the controller shall without delay assess the situation and if necessary take action to ensure that the applicable separation minimum will not be infringed or will be restored.

Note.— STCA does not exist in isolation; when a pilot reports a manoeuvre induced by an ACAS resolution advisory (RA), the controller shall not attempt to modify the aircraft flight path.

STCA-06 Following the generation of an alert, controllers shall be required to complete an air traffic incident report only in the event that a separation minimum was infringed.

STCA-07 STCA performance shall be analysed regularly.

The appropriate ATS authority should retain electronic records of all alerts generated. The data and circumstances pertaining to each alert should be analysed to determine whether an alert was justified or not. Non-justified alerts, e.g. when visual separation was applied, should be ignored. A statistical analysis should be made of justified alerts in order to identify possible shortcomings in airspace design and ATC procedures as well as to monitor overall safety levels.

4.3 Requirements on STCA Capabilities

4.3.1 Alerting Performance

STCA-08 STCA shall detect and alert operationally relevant conflicts involving at least one eligible aircraft.

STCA-09 STCA shall provide the ATC HMI with alert data for operationally relevant conflicts.

Note.— Conflicts are operationally relevant when covered by the adopted rule set and optimisation strategy. The rule set and optimisation strategy should be determined taking into account the relevant local factors. STCA should not be expected to alert all operationally relevant conflicts.

STCA-10 STCA shall provide alerts that attract the controller's attention and identify the aircraft involved in the conflict; STCA alerts shall be at least visual.

An audible element may be included to improve the systems ability to draw the controller's attention to the alert. If a continuous audible element is included, an acknowledgement mechanism may be provided to silence an alert.

STCA-11 The number of nuisance alerts produced by STCA shall be kept to an effective minimum.

Note.— Human factors and local circumstances determine what constitutes an effective minimum.

STCA-12 The number of false alerts produced by STCA shall be kept to an effective minimum.

Note.— Local circumstances determine what constitutes an effective minimum.

4.3.2 Warning Time

STCA-13 When the geometry of the situation permits, the warning time shall be sufficient for all necessary steps to be taken from the controller recognising the alert to the aircraft successfully executing an appropriate manoeuvre.

Note.— Insufficient warning time may be provided in cases of sudden, unexpected manoeuvres.

STCA-14 STCA shall continue to provide alert(s) as long as the alert conditions exist.

4.3.3 Alert Inhibition

STCA-15 STCA shall provide the possibility to inhibit alerts for predefined volumes of airspace and for individual flights.

Note.— It may be necessary to inhibit alerts for predefined volumes of airspace (e.g. exercise areas) to suppress unnecessary alerts. It may be necessary to inhibit alerts for individual flights (e.g. formation flights) to suppress unnecessary alerts.

STCA-16 Alert inhibitions shall be made known to all controllers concerned.

4.3.4 Status Information

STCA-17 Status information shall be presented to supervisor and controller working positions in case STCA is not available.

4.3.5 Adaptability

STCA should be adaptable for the procedures in use in all distinct volumes of airspace at any moment in time.

STCA may need to take into account the specific volume of airspace in which each aircraft is flying, in order to apply appropriate parameters or trajectory predictions. Different parameters may be applied in the case of system degradation (e.g. unavailability of one or more radar stations).

In RVSM airspace, STCA should be able to selectively assess the applicable vertical separation minimum of either 300 m (1 000 ft) or 600 m (2 000 ft), as determined by the current RVSM approved or non-approved (incl. unknown and exempt) status of the flight concerned.

4.3.6 Data Recording

STCA-18 All pertinent STCA data shall be made available for off-line analysis.

Note.— Off-line analysis may need access to other data sources as well (surveillance data and voice recordings) for complete analysis.

5. GUIDANCE MATERIAL

5.1 Structure of the Guidance Material

Comprehensive guidance material to assist in implementing this specification covers the full STCA lifecycle:

- Definition of objectives
- Implementation or change
- Tuning and validation
- Operating and monitoring

The guidance material consists of a document titled **EUROCONTROL Guidance Material for Short Term Conflict Alert** with several appendices. Most appendices can be used as stand-alone documents for particular purposes. Table 1 shows the structure of the guidance material.

Title	Purpose
EUROCONTROL Guidance Material for Short Term Conflict Alert	General description of the full STCA lifecycle, aimed at staff with responsibility for overall management of STCA.
Appendix A: Reference STCA System	Detailed technical explanation of typical implementation details of STCA with emphasis on parameterisation and performance optimisation. Optimisation concepts are also covered in detail.
Appendix B: Safety Assurance	A set of three documents that can be used as starting point for STCA safety assurance work in a particular local context.
Appendix B-1: Safety Argument for STCA System	ANSPs may find it convenient to present the safety argument as a stand-alone document initially, as is the case with this document. However, the argument will ultimately become part of the safety case document and the stand-alone version will then become defunct.
Appendix B-2: Generic Safety Plan for STCA Implementation	Describes what safety assurance activities should be considered at each lifecycle phase, who should do them, and what the criteria for success are.

Appendix B-3: Outline Safety Case for STCA System	Addresses in detail the assurance and evidence from the System Definition stage and outlines the likely assurance and evidence for the later stages.
Appendix C: Cost Framework for the Standardisation of STCA	Assists in identifying potential financial implications of standardisation of STCA in compliance with the EUROCONTROL Specification for Short Term Conflict Alert.
Appendix D: Case Study	A set of two documents describing the (partial) application of the optimisation and safety assurance guidance material in a demanding environment.
Appendix D-1: Optimisation of STCA for ATCC Semmerzake	Identifies potential solutions for handling military formation flights and a large number of primary tracks in STCA whilst keeping the number of nuisance alerts to an effective minimum.
Appendix D-2: Functional Hazard Assessment of STCA for ATCC Semmerzake	Describes the Functional Hazard Assessment of the identified potential solutions for optimisation of STCA, performed as initial step of safety assurance activities.

Table 1: Structure of the guidance material

5.2 Availability and Feedback

The guidance material is freely available at www.eurocontrol.int/safety-nets and regularly updated based on feedback received.

Feedback and questions can be addressed to the contact listed in each document and to safety-nets@eurocontrol.int.

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