



The European Space Agency – A Case Study

The European Space Agency (ESA) is an inter-governmental agency established in 1975 in order to promote the exploration of space. It has been sending European astronauts into space since 1983 and became the market leader in commercial space launches in the 1990s. The ESA is headquartered in Paris, where the policies and programmes are decided, and has specialist facilities throughout Europe. It currently employs around 2000 people (scientists, engineers, technicians and administrative/support staff) and its annual budget for 2009 is estimated at €3.6billion.

The Challenge

The European Space Agency is currently undergoing a period of rapid growth and transformation. As part of the Director General's 2007 agenda, many areas of management and/or function are being streamlined and rationalised. One such case is the merger of the Facilities Department under the management of IT. The main challenge for ESA is to bring synergy to the management practices and the operational processes of both teams. As ITIL (the IT Information Library best practice framework) has been used to drive improvements to the IT Services at the various ESA sites for some time, ESA believe there are significant benefits to be gained by taking the processes that have proved so successful in the IT Service environment and adopting and adapting to the Facilities Service offering.

The First Steps

ESMI has been engaged to design and facilitate a series of workshops across Europe with the aim of conveying an understanding and relevance/benefits of the ITIL methodology amongst facilities operations staff, who until now have had no direct experience with the IT best practice framework. This month long educational campaign will incorporate visits to several of the ESA's European facilities including the **European Space Operations Centre (ESOC)** in Germany and the **ESA Centre for Earth Observation (ESRIN)** in Frascati, Italy.

These workshops will be focused on communicating what ITIL® is in the context of ESA, it's practicality, value and benefits, and will also be a forum where staff can engage with the process and have any concerns addressed by industry experts.



ESA aims to be rolling out ITIL best practices in its operations facilities throughout Europe. The project will be an excellent example of the utility, flexibility and practicality of ITIL® in a large, dynamic and mission critical environment.