

ESCRA

What is it?

A structure to help you question each step of a process to see where improvements can be made, based on what is valued by the customer. It may also be known as **SECAR** or **ESCAR**, depending on the order in which the steps are applied.

Benefits at a glance....

- Provides a structured, practical approach to reviewing and improving **processes**
- Lays the groundwork for successful automation by helping teams simplify and improve processes first — making automation easier and more effective

When to use it?

Once you have [mapped your current process](#) and have identified the [process waste](#) you can use ESCRA to help identify where improvements can be made.

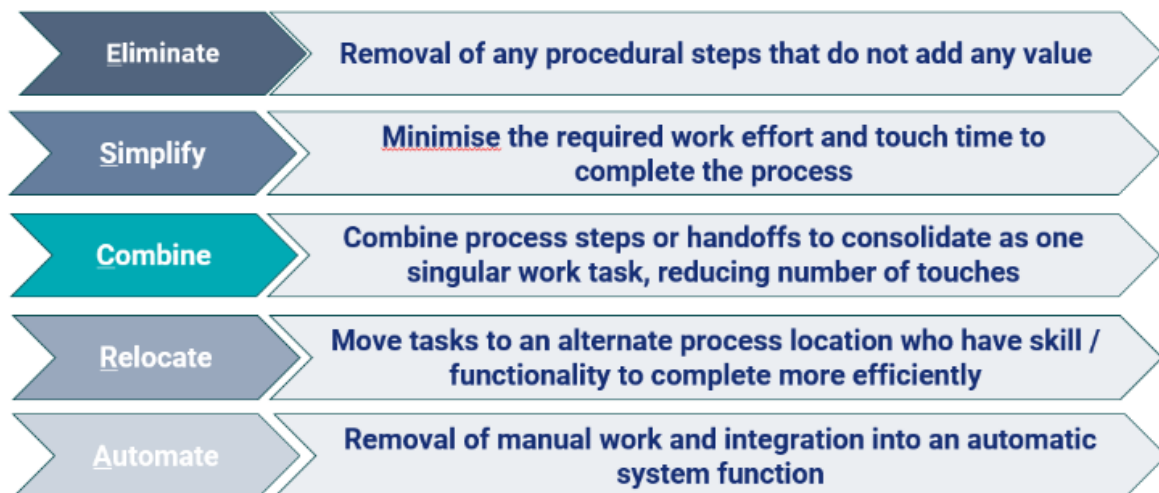


Figure 1: ESCRA image

How to use it?

For each step in the process, consider whether you could:

Eliminate - is the step adding value? Is it necessary?

Simplify - can the effort be reduced? Could clearer instructions or signage help make that part of the process quicker?

Combine - can you reduce the number of handoffs by combining tasks, or could tasks be done in parallel?

Relocate - could the steps be carried out in a different order to make the process more efficient? Is somebody else better placed to carry out certain steps?

Automate - could any of the manual steps be replaced by Power Automate flows or other automated approaches to reduce human error, and to free up staff for more value-added tasks?



Tips

- Used alongside current state process maps, ESCRA can be a powerful way of building a future state process.
- Asking the questions in the ESCRA order (rather than SECAR or ESCAR) makes automation easier and more effective. This order ensures the process is as efficient as possible *before* the automation is built. This reduces the complexity of the automation and significantly increases the likelihood that the automation will actually work as intended.

Case study: The BioEscalator, Oxford University's biotech incubator, provides lab space and support for high-growth start-ups. However, the onboarding process for new companies was lengthy, labour-intensive, and inconsistent.

After mapping the process and identifying waste, the team used the ESCRA tool to tackle key issues. They **eliminated** duplicated information, **simplified** steps, **combined** data inputs, and **automated** parts of the registration. As a result, onboarding time was more than halved (from 45 to 21 days), and email traffic dropped by 82%.