

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.

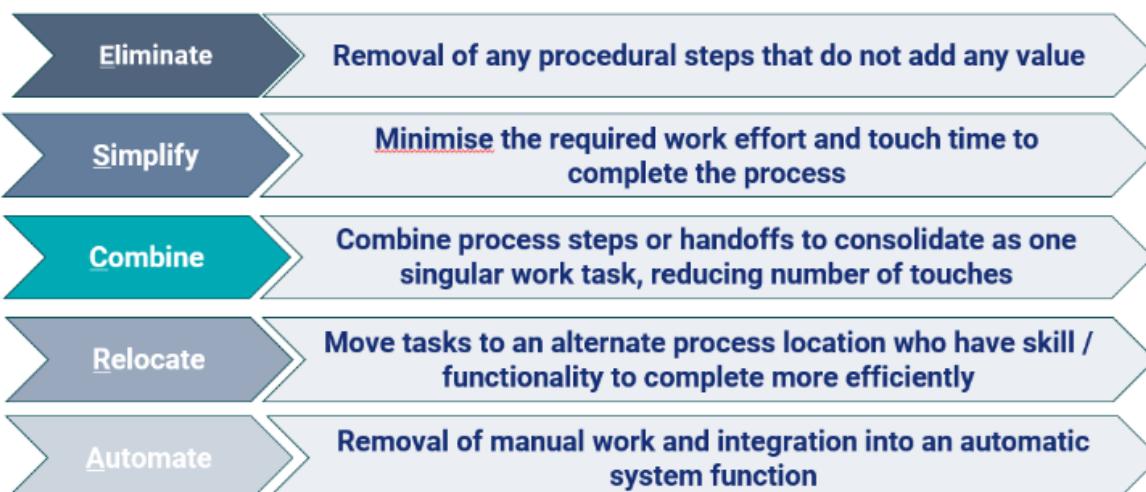


Figure 1: ESCRA image

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%.