A set of Common Service Quality Assurance Baseline Criteria for Research Projects



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Abstract

The purpose of this document is to define a set of quality standards, procedures and best practices to conform a Service Quality Assurance plan, to serve as a reference within the European research ecosystem related projects for the adequate development, deployment, operation and integration of services into production research infrastructures.

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1. Introduction

The Open Science realization in Europe is implementing the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC). The EOSC aims at providing researchers with a unique, federated and inclusive view of fit-for-purpose services, developed and operated by the diverse European research infrastructures, including the underlying e-Infrastructures. Consequently, the ultimate success of the EOSC heavily relies on the quality aspects of those services, such as their stability or functional suitability.

The meaning of **Service** can be regarded from different perspectives. From an IT Service Management (ITSM) standpoint, such as the EOSC Service Management System (SMS) process model, a **Service** is devised as a means to "provide value to the customer". The same goal is shared by the DevOps paradigm, but in this case there is a more pragmatic vision that the customer satisfaction is achieved through the continuous delivery of quality-assured **Services**, with a shorter life cycle, as the final outcome of a comprehensive software development process.

The ITSM model has a broader focus. A **Service** is an "intangible asset" that also includes additional activities such as customer engagement and support. Consequently, it is a much heavier process that might not be appropriately applicable for all types of **Services**. The DevOps model, on the other hand, narrows down the scope to meet the user expectations by acting exclusively on the quality features of the **Service**, which is seen as an aggregate of software components in operation.

2. Purpose

This document provides an initial approach to **Service Quality Assurance**, meant to be applied in the integration process of the **Services** existing under the EOSC-Synergy project, which eventually will be accessible as part of the EOSC offerings.

The criteria compiled in this document favours a pragmatic and systematic approach, putting emphasis on the programmatic assessment of the quality conventions. As such, the criteria herein compiled builds on the DevOps culture already established in the Software Quality Assurance baseline document [1], to outline the set of good practices that seek the usability and reliability of **Services**, and meet the user expectations in terms of functional requirements.

3. Contextualization of a Service

As a result, a **Service**, as conceived in this document, represents the following:

- Web Service [2]:
 - A **Web Service** is an application or data source that is accessible via a standard web protocol (HTTP or HTTPS).
 - **Web Services** are designed to communicate with other programs, rather than directly with users.
 - Most **Web Services** provide an API, or a set of functions and commands, that can be used to access the data.
- Web Application [3]:

• A **Web Application** or "Web App" is a software program that is delivered over the Internet and is accessed through a web browser.

• Platform / Service Composition [4]:

- Aggregation of multiple small services into larger services, according to a service-oriented (SOA) and/or microservices architecture.
- An integrated set of **Web Services**, **Web Applications** and software components.

Examples are: Web portals, Scientific portals and gateways, data repositories.

4. Goals

The herein proposed baseline, harnesses the capabilities of the quality factors in the underlying software to lay out the principles for attaining quality in the enabled services within the EOSC context. According to this view, service quality is the foundation to shape user-centric, reliable and fit-for-purpose services.

The Service Quality baseline aims at fulfilling the following goals:

- 1. Complement with a DevOps approach the existing approaches to assess and assure the quality and maturity of services within the EOSC, i.e. Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) and EOSC Service Management System (SMS).
- 2. Build trust on the users by strengthening the reliability and stability of the services, with a focus on the underlying software, thus ensuring a proper realization of the verification and validation processes.
- 3. Ensure the functional suitability of the service by promoting testing techniques that check the compliance with the user requirements.
- 4. Improve the usability by identifying the set of criteria that fosters the service adoption.
- 5. Promote the automated validation of the service quality criteria.

5. Notational Conventions

The keywords "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in RFC 2119 [5].

6. Quality Criteria - Automation

The following sections describe the quality conventions and best practices that apply to the development, operation and integration phases of a **Service** with a production infrastructure for research, such as the EOSC ecosystem. These guidelines rule the **Service** development and operation process within the framework of the EOSC-Synergy project.

The criteria in this document complements the criteria described in the "Software Quality Assurance baseline" [1], while following the same pragmatic DevOps approach of automation.

6.1. Deployment

6.1.1. Automated Deployment [SvcQC.Dep]

The automated deployment of **Services** implies the use of code to install and configure them in the target infrastructures. Infrastructure as Code (IaC) templates allow operations teams to treat service provisioning and deployment in a similar fashion as developers manage the software code.

Consequently, IaC enables the paradigm of immutable infrastructure deployment and maintenance, where **Services** are never updated, but deprovisioned and redeployed. An immutable infrastructure simplifies maintenance and enhances repeatability and reliability.

- [SvcQC.Dep01] A production-ready Service SHOULD be deployed as a workable system with the minimal user or system administrator interaction leveraging IaC templates.
- [SvcQC.Dep02] Any future change to a deployed Service SHOULD be done in the form of a new deployment, in order to preserve immutable infrastructures.
- [SvcQC.Dep03] IaC SHOULD be validated by specific (unit) testing frameworks for every change being done.
 - [SvcQC.Dep03.1] IaC (unit) tests MUST be idempotent.

6.2. Dynamic testing - Black box testing

6.2.1. API Testing [SvcQC.Api]

Web services commonly use application programming interfaces (APIs) to expose the available features to external consumers, which can be either oriented to the end-user or suitable for machine-to-machine communications.

Accurate implementation of a publicly-accessible API, is driven by a clearly defined specification. The OpenAPI Specification (OAS) [6] provides the most suitable way to describe, compose, consume and validate APIs. The following requirements assume the presence of such an API specification.

• [SvcQC.Api01] API testing MUST cover the validation of the features outlined in the specification (aka *contract testing*).

- [SvcQC.Api01.1] Any change in the API not compliant with the OAS MUST NOT pass contract testing.
- **[SvcQC.Api01.2]** The use of OAS **SHOULD** narrow down the applicable set of test cases to the features described in the specification, avoiding unnecessary assertions.
- [SvcQC.Api02] API testing MUST include the assessment of the security-related criteria outlined in SvcQC.Sec section.
- [SvcQC.Api03] API testing SHOULD involve the use of test doubles, such as mock servers or stubs, that act as a validation layer for the incoming requests.

6.2.2. Integration Testing [SvcQC.Int]

Integration testing refers to the evaluation of the interactions among coupled **Services** or parts of a system that cooperate to achieve a given functionality.

- [SvcQC.Int01] Whenever a new functionality is involved, integration testing MUST guarantee the operation of any previously-working interaction with external Services.
 - [SvcQC.Int01.1] When using APIs, contract testing MUST detect any disruption in the communication between provider and consumer endpoints, through the validation of the API specification SvcQC.Api01.
- [SvcQC.Int02] Integration testing MUST NOT rely on non-operational or out-of-the-warranty services.
- [SvcQC.Int03] On lack of automation, ad-hoc pilot Service infrastructures and/or local testbeds MAY be used to cope with the integration testing requirements.
- [SvcQC.Int04] In the presence of CI environments, integration tests SHOULD be suitable for the automated testing.

6.2.3. Functional tests [SvcQC.Fun]

Functional testing is a type of black-box testing. It involves the verification of the **Service** identified functionality, based on requested requirements and agreed design specifications. This type of **Service** testing focuses on the evaluation of the functionality that the **Service** exposes, leaving apart any internal design analysis or side-effects to external systems.

- [SvcQC.Fun01] Functional testing SHOULD tend to cover the full scope –e.g. positive, negative, edge cases– for the set of functionality that the Service claims to provide.
 - **[SvcQC.Fun01.1]** When using APIs, contract testing **MUST** detect any disruption in the features exposed by the provider to the consumer, through the validation of the API specification. SvcQC.Api01.
 - [SvcQC.Fun01.2] Functional tests SHOULD include the Web Interface or Graphical User Interface (GUI) of the Service.
- [SvcQC.Fun02] Functional tests SHOULD be checked automatically.

• [SvcQC.Fun03] Functional tests SHOULD be provided by the developers of the underlying software.

6.2.4. Performance tests [SvcQC.Per]

Performance testing verifies that the software meets the specified performance requirements and assesses performance characteristics - for instance, capacity and response time [7].

Stress or Load testing, exercises software at the maximum design load, as well as beyond it, with the goal of determining the behavioral limits, and to test defense mechanisms in critical systems [7]. Stress testing is a subset of Performance testing [8].

Scalability testing is a test methodology in which an application's or **Service** performance is measured in terms of its ability to scale up *and/or* scale out the number of user requests or other such performance measure attributes, through an increase in the amount of available resources. The definition is based on [9]. *Scalability testing is a subset of Performance testing*.

Elasticity is based on how quickly **Services** in an infrastructure are able to adapt [9], in response to variable demand or workload for those service(s) [10]. *Elasticity testing is a subset of Performance testing*.

- [SvcQC.Per01] Performance testing SHOULD be carried out to check the Service performance under varying loads.
- [SvcQC.Per02] Stress testing SHOULD be carried out to check the Service to determine the behavioral limits under sudden increased load.
- [SvcQC.Per03] Scalability testing MAY be carried out to check the Service ability to scale up or scale down when its load reaches the limits.
- [SvcQC.Per04] Elasticity testing MAY be carried out to check the Service ability to scale out or scale in, depending on its demand or workload.

6.2.5. Security [SvcQC.Sec]

Security assessment is essential for any production **Service**. While an effective implementation of the security requirements applies to every stage in the software development life cycle (SDLC) –especially effective at the source code level, as discussed in [1], section *Security [SQA-QC.Sec]*–, the security testing of a **Service** is also –similarly to the diverse testing strategies previously covered– a black-box type of testing. Hence, this section focuses on the runtime analysis of security-related requirements, as part of the *Dynamic Application Security Testing (DAST)* as well as the *Interactive Application Security Testing (IAST)*.

Additionally, the compliance with security policies and regulations complements the analysis, which can be implemented, continuously validated and monitored through the *Security as Code* (*SaC*) capabilities. SaC is a particularly suitable tool for endorsing security of **Service Composition** deployments.

- [SvcQC.Sec01] The Service public endpoints and APIs MUST be secured with data encryption.
 - [SvcQC.Sec01.1] The Service MUST use strong ciphers for data encryption.

- [SvcQC.Sec02] The Service SHOULD have an authentication mechanism.
 - [SvcQC.Sec02.1] Whenever dealing with a Service Composition, such as microservice architectures, the Services SHOULD be managed by a centralized authentication mechanism.
 - [SvcQC.Sec02.2] In publicly-accessible APIs, Service authentication SHOULD be handled through an API gateway in order to control the traffic and protect the backend services from overuse.
- [SvcQC.Sec03] The Service SHOULD implement an authorization mechanism.
 - **[SvcQC.Sec03.1]** In **Service Composition** environments, the authorization mechanism **SHOULD** uniquely grant the essential access permissions for each **Service** according to the *Principle of Least Privilege* (*PoLP*).
- [SvcQC.Sec04] The Service MUST validate the credentials and signatures.
 - **[SvcQC.Sec04.1]** Credentials used in the **Service MUST** be signed by a recognized and trusted certification authority.
- [SvcQC.Sec05] The Service MUST handle personal data in compliance with the applicable regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) within the European boundaries.
- **[SvcQC.Sec06]** The **Service SHOULD** be audited in accordance with the black-box testing criteria identified by de-facto (cyber)security standards and good practices.
 - [SvcQC.Sec06.1] Dynamic application security testing (DAST) checks MUST be executed, through
 the use of ad-hoc tools, directly to an operational Service in order to uncover runtime security
 vulnerabilities and any other environment-related issues (e.g. SQL injection, cross-site scripting
 or DDOS). The latest release of OWASP's Web Security Testing Guide [11] and the NIST's
 Technical Guide to Information Security Testing and Assessment [12] MUST be considered for
 carrying out comprehensive Service security testing.
 - **[SvcQC.Sec06.2]** Interactive Application Security Testing (IAST) [13], analyzes code for security vulnerabilities while the app is run by an automated test. IAST **SHOULD** be performed to a service in an operating state.
 - **[SvcQC.Sec06.3]** Penetration testing (manual or automated) **MAY** be part of the application security verification effort.
 - **[SvcQC.Sec06.4]** The security assessment of the target system configuration is particularly important to reduce the risk of security attacks. The benchmarks delivered by the Center for Internet Security (CIS) [14] and the NIST's Security Assurance Requirements for Linux Application Container Deployments [15] **MUST** be considered for this task.
- [SvcQC.Sec07] IaC testing, from SvcQC.Dep02 criterion, MUST cover the security auditing of the IaC templates (SaC) in order to assure the deployment of secured Services. For all the third-party dependencies used in the IaC templates (including all kind of software artifacts, such as Linux packages or container-based images):
 - **[SvcQC.Sec07.1]** SaC **MUST** perform vulnerability scanning of the artefact versions in use.

- [SvcQC.Sec07.2] SaC SHOULD verify that the artifacts are trusted and digitally signed.
- [SvcQC.Sec07.3] SaC MUST scan IaC templates to uncover misalignments with widely accepted security policies from <u>SvcQC.Sec06</u> criteria, such as non-encrypted secrets or disabled audit logs.
- **[SvcQC.Sec07.4]** SaC **MAY** be used to seek, in the IaC templates, for violations of security requirements outlined in the applicable regulations from criterion <u>SvcQC.Sec05</u>.
- **[SvcQC.Sec07.5]** World-writable files **SHOULD NOT** be created while the service is in operation. Whenever they are required, the relevant files **MUST** be documented.
- [SvcQC.Sec07.6] World-readable files MUST NOT contain passwords.

7. Quality Criteria - Operational

This section describes the operational quality criteria that is not fit for automation, but that contribute to the assessment of the quality of the service when it's in an operational production state.

7.1. Files and documents

7.1.1. Documentation [SvcQC.Doc]

Documentation is an integral part of any Software or Service. For example, it describes how and what users can use and interact with it, or how operators can deploy, configure and manage a given Software or Service.

- [SvcQC.Doc01] Documentation MUST be available online, easily findable and accessible.
- [SvcQC.Doc02] Documentation SHOULD have a Persistent Identifier (PID).
- [SvcQC.Doc03] Documentation MUST be version controlled.
- [SvcQC.Doc04] Documentation MUST be updated on new Service versions involving any change in the installation, configuration or behavior of the Service.
- [SvcQC.Doc05] Documentation MUST be updated whenever reported as inaccurate or unclear.
- [SvcQC.Doc06] Documentation SHOULD have a non-software license.
- [SvcQC.Doc07] Documentation MUST be produced according to the target audience, varying according to the Service specification. The identified types of documentation and their RECOMMENDED content are:
 - [SvcQC.Doc07.1] Deployment and Administration:
 - Installation and configuration guides.
 - Service Reference Card, with the following RECOMMENDED content:
 - Brief functional description.
 - List of processes or daemons.
 - Init scripts and options.
 - List of configuration files, location and example or template.
 - Log files location and other useful audit information.
 - List of ports.
 - Service state information.

- List of cron jobs.
- Security information.
- FAQs and troubleshooting.
- [SvcQC.Doc07.2] User:
 - Detailed User Guide for the Service.
 - Public API documentation (if applicable).
 - Command-line (CLI) reference (if applicable).

7.1.2. Policies [SvcQC.Pol]

Policy documents describe what are the user's expected behavior when using the **Service**, how they can access it and what they can expect regarding privacy of their data.

- [SvcQC.Pol01] The Service MUST include the following policy documents:
 - [SvcQC.Pol01.1] Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP): Is a set of rules applied by the owner, creator or administrator of a network, Service or system, that restrict the ways in which the network, Service or system may be used and sets guidelines as to how it should be used. The AUP can also be referred to as: Acceptable Use Policy or Fair Use Policy.
 - **[SvcQC.Pol01.2]** Access Policy or Terms of Use: represent a binding legal contract between the users (and/or customers), and the Provider of the **Service**. The Access Policy mandates the users (and/or customers) access to and the use of the Provider's **Service**.
 - [SvcQC.Pol01.3] Privacy Policy: Data privacy statement informing the users (and/or customers), about which personal data is collected and processed when they use and interact with the Service. It states which rights the users (and/or customers) have regarding the processing of their data.

7.2. Support

7.2.1. Support [SvcQC.Sup]

Support is the formal way by which users and operators of the **Service** communicate with other operators and/or developers of the **Service** in case of problems, be it operational problems or bugs in the **Service** or underlying Software. Reporting of enhancements, improvements and documentation issues.

- [SvcQC.Sup01] The Service MUST have a tracker or helpdesk for operational and users issues.
- [SvcQC.Sup02] The Service SHOULD have a tracker for the underlying software issues [1], section [SQA-QC.Man01].
- [SvcQC.Sup03] The Service SHOULD include an Operational Level Agreement (OLA) with the infrastructure where it is integrated.

• [SvcQC.Sup04] The Service MAY include Service Level Agreement (SLA) with user communities.

7.3. Monitoring and Metrics

7.3.1. Monitoring [SvcQC.Mon]

Monitoring is a periodic testing of the **Service**. It requires a monitoring service from where tests are executed or sent and results of those tests are shown. The tests can be the same, in part or in total of the Functional, Security and Infrastructure tests. The technology used for the monitoring is left to the developers of the underlying software to decide eventually with input from the infrastructure(s), where the **Service** is foreseen to be integrated.

- [SvcQC.Mon01] The Service in an operational production state SHOULD be monitored for functional-related criteria:
 - [SvcQC.Mon01.1] The Service public endpoints MUST be monitored.
 - **[SvcQC.Mon01.2]** The **Service** public APIs **MUST** be monitored. Use functional tests of criteria SvcQC.Fun01.1.
 - **[SvcQC.Mon01.3]** The **Service** Web interface **MAY** be monitored. Use functional tests of criteria SvcQC.Fun01.2.
- [SvcQC.Mon02] The Service MUST be monitored for security-related criteria:
 - **[SvcQC.Mon02.1]** The **Service MUST** be monitored for public endpoints and APIs secured and strong ciphers for encryption. Use Security tests of criteria <u>SvcQC.Sec01</u>.
 - **[SvcQC.Mon02.2]** The **Service SHOULD** be monitored with DAST checks. Use Security tests of criteria <u>SvcQC.Sec06.1</u>.
- [SvcQC.Mon03] The Service MUST be monitored for infrastructure-related criteria:
 - [SvcQC.Mon03.1] IaC (unit) tests SvcQC.Dep02 SHOULD be reused as monitoring tests, thus avoiding duplication.

7.3.2. Metrics [SvcQC.Met]

A metric is a quantifiable measure used to track and assess the status of a specific process.

In the case of **Services**, some relevant metrics are the number of users registered in the **Service**, or of active users. Also accounting is important to track resource usage per user or group of users, either or both computing and storage resources.

Although the metrics may be published in external services managed by the infrastructure, this is a common case in federated infrastructures such as EOSC.

- [SvcQC.Met01] The Service SHOULD implement the collection of metrics.
 - **[SvcQC.Met01.1]** The collection of metrics **SHOULD** be cumulative over time and timestamped, so that the values can be queried per time interval.

- **[SvcQC.Met01.2]** The metric *Number of registered users* **SHOULD** be collected.
- [SvcQC.Met01.3] The metric *Number of active users over a given period of time* MAY be collected.
- **[SvcQC.Met01.4]** The metric *Amount of computing resources per user or per group* **MAY** be collected. The metric unit depends on the type of service and infrastructure. An example is CPU x hours.
- **[SvcQC.Met01.5]** The metric *Amount of storage resources per user or per group* **MAY** be collected. The metric unit depends on the type of service and infrastructure. An example is TByte x month.

7. Glossary

API **Application Programming Interface AUP** Acceptable Usage Policy CLI Command Line Interface **DAST Dynamic Application Security Testing EOSC** European Open Science Cloud **GDPR** General Data Protection Regulation GUI **Graphical User Interface** laC Infrastructure as Code **IAST** Interactive Application Security Testing ITSM IT Service Management **NIST** National Institute of Standards and Technology OAS **OpenAPI Specification OLA** Operational Level Agreement **OWASP** Open Web Application Security Project PID Persistent Identifier **PolP** Principle of Least Privilege SaC Security as Code **SDLC** Software Development Life Cycle **SLA** Service Level Agreement **SMS** Service Management System SOA Service Oriented Architecture **VCS** Version Control System

A1. Annex

The Quality Criteria described in this document follows a technology-agnostic approach. As such the choice of tools and services to implement the workflow for service quality assessment process, is up to the team or community developing or operating a given service.

This annex describes an implementation approach to help service developers and operators, cover the Quality Criteria detailed in this document.

A1.1. Code workflow

The workflow for service quality assessment, is shown in Figure 1. It depicts a real case example, GitHub is used in particular to host the Dockerfiles to build the service Docker image, it also hosts the Ansible role for the service deployment and configuration, thus the IaC (Infrastructure as Code).

The SQA as a Service (SQAaaS), is used to create the Jenkinsfile (pipeline) to be executed in the Jenkins service.

Before the Jenkins pipeline execution phase, the figure depicts the build and upload/publish of the service Docker image in the Docker Hub.

The Jenkins service is the main service used to execute he pipeline. The figure show a simple pipeline with automated deployment of the service, execution of functional tests and dynamic security tests, but in general the pipeline can be more complex and execute other tools to assess the other service quality criteria.

The bottom part of the figure shows the services, tools and infrastructures that are actuated by the Jenkins pipeline execution: The IM (Infrastructure Manager) is the service that is used to deploy the service in cloud resources, fetching the corresponding Ansible role from Ansible Galaxy to instantiate and configure it.

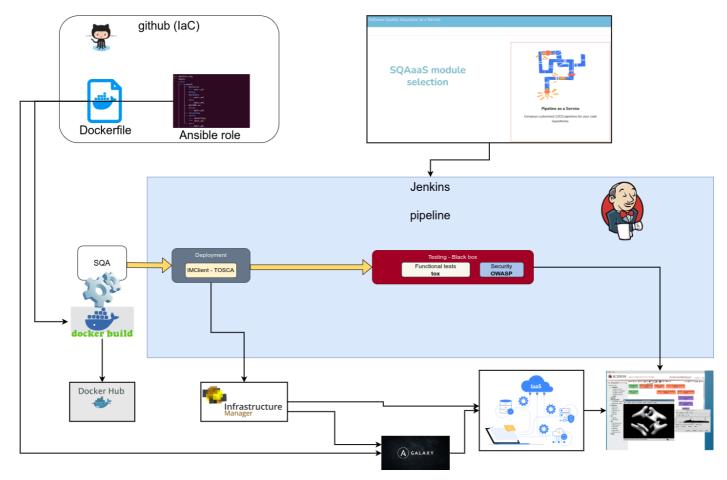


Figure 1: Workflow for service quality assessment

A1.2. Services

As it can be seen in Figure 1, multiple services take part in the execution of the CI/CD pipelines. Table 1 shows the list of services used for the service for the Quality Criteria assessment detailed in this document.

One of the most popular services for Software source code management is GitHub. It is uses Git as the Version Control System, branching and tag management.

Ansible and Ansible-Galaxy are used in many software frameworks as deployment and configuration tools.

The software is packed/built into executable artifacts that can be RPMs (case of RedHat and derivative OS), DEBs (case of Debian/Ubuntu and derivatives) and in many cases containers such as Docker images.

The artifacts are provided, in general, by public repositories and most notably Docker Hub [16/] in the case of Docker images.

Regarding the CI/CD automation, Jenkins pipelines can be easily composed through the SQAaaS platform and put into the git repositories to be used by the Jenkins CI service to perform the tests. The tools used in the CI automation are shown in section A1.2.

Kubernetes is a container management platform where services or platforms can be deployed while the IM (Infrastructure Manager) can also be used to automatically deploy services both in cloud resources or kubernetes clusters.

Service	Usage	Criteria	Repo URL or documentation	Comment
GitHub	VCS	SvcQC.D ep	https://docs.github.com/	Source code repository - git
Ansible, Galaxy	Install, Config	SvcQC.D ep	https://docs.ansible.com/	Automated deployment and configuration
SQAaaS platform	Pipeline composition	All	https://sqaaas.eosc- synergy.eu	Pipeline composition for automatic tests
SQAaaS platform	Assessment & awarding	All	https://sqaaas.eosc- synergy.eu	Badge awarding
Jenkins CI service	Automated tests	All	https://www.jenkins.io/	Execution of automatic tests
Docker Hub	Docker images	N.A.	https://hub.docker.com/	Public repository of Docker images
Kubernetes	Service deployment/manage ment	SvcQC.D ep	https://kubernetes.io/	Docker container management
Infrastructure Manager (IM)	Service deployment	SvcQC.D ep	https://www.grycap.upv.es/im	Service deployment

Table 1: Tools and services used to implement the Service QA criteria, also shown the criteria where applicable.

A1.3. Tools for CI/CD

This section shows the tools being used in the CI pipelines and the criteria that it verifies. This list is based on the template file in https://github.com/EOSC-synergy/sqa-composer-templates/blob/main/tooling.json.

Tool	Criteria	Languag e	Repo URL or documentation	Summary
kubectl	SvcQC.Dep	Agnostic	https://kubernetes.io/docs/tasks/tools/	Automated deployment
im_client	SvcQC.Dep	RADL/TO SCA	https://imdocs.readthedocs.io/en/latest/client.html	Automated deployment
ec3_client	SvcQC.Dep	RADL/TO SCA	https://github.com/grycap/ec3	Automated deployment
tox	SvcQC.Fun	Python	https://tox.readthedocs.io/	Automated test framework

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