PayNest

بنك دبي التجاري
Commercial Bank of Dubai

Digitization Strategy

Current State Assessment

Escrow Operations

Commercial Bank of Dubai (CBD)

Objective

Defining the scope and goals of the Current State Assessment

The CSA focuses on assessing CBD's escrow operations through system walkthroughs, process reviews, and stakeholder recon sessions to uncover inefficiencies and identify improvement opportunities.

Gain a comprehensive mapping of the entire backend escrow operations processes.

Identify all relevant stakeholders and their roles within the process.

Analyze all involved systems, including their functionality and inter-dependency

Establish a clear understanding of how each system contributes to overall operations.

Timeline

Overview of engagement milestones and next steps

The timeline outlines the CSA journey—from initial engagement to current progress— while presenting next steps.

Where We Are

Meeting Overview	Kick-off	Initial Process Mapping	Demonstrations & Further Assessment	CSA Report Submission	Solution Proposal
Dates	February 27, 2025	March 6 -March 10, 2025	March 10 - March 17, 2025	March 28, 2025	April 11, 2025
Area of Focus	❖ Introduction & Context Alignment ❖ Discussed high level procedure ❖ Understanding Escrow operations & systems ❖ Problem identification	❖ Started work on journeys ❖ Interviewed operations team in detail ❖ Requested sample files and screenshots to analyze each step	❖ Conducted several demonstrations (online and in-person) ❖ Includes collection, payments, guarantees, and owner association processes ❖ POV journey visualizations ❖ Progressed journey mapping and initiated CSA work	❖ Submit CSA Report & Process Mapping Documentation ❖ Schedule Solution Discovery Session (If Applicable) ❖ Create Solution Features Prioritization Matrix	❖ Detailed Solution Proposal submission ❖ PRD Document Submission. ❖ Early Stage, Design Wireframing

Problem Breakdown

Identifying core operational issues and their stakeholder impact

The assessment incorporates breaking down **key operational challenges**, identifying **where issues occur** and how they **impact stakeholders.**

Problem statement: The current manual processes for backend escrow operations in CBD lead to inefficiencies, delays, and compliance risks due to lack of system integration and automation.

High Level Challenges

Inefficiency

Time-consuming manual processes; data entry & report updates

Human Errors

Manual workflows prone to mistakes, inspecting data accuracy

Disjointed Systems

Lack of integration between relevant systems

Regulatory Risks

Difficulty ensuring compliance due to fragmented processes

Stakeholder Impact

Operations Team

Increased workload and frustration due to repetitive tasks

Developers

Delays in fund disbursements impacting project timelines

Regulators

Incomplete or delayed compliance reporting causing regulatory scrutiny

Consequences

Short term

Operational bottlenecks: Slower approvals and fund transfers delay immediate project timelines.
Workload increase: Higher workload frustrates teams managing repetitive manual tasks.
Compliance risks: Fragmented reporting struggles to meet compliance requirements.
Customer dissatisfaction: Client dissatisfaction arises from inefficiencies and errors.

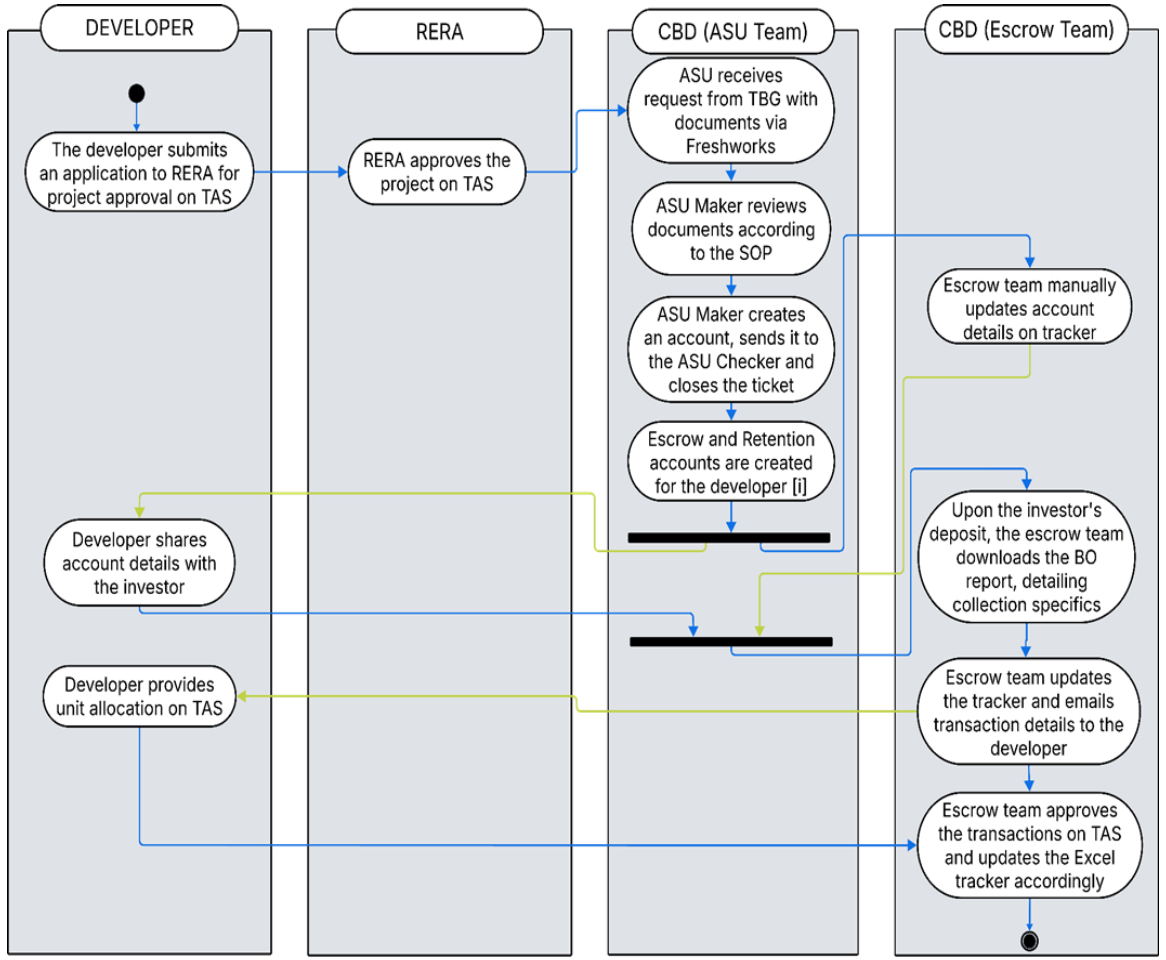
Long term

Financial losses: Operational inefficiencies and compliance penalties
Scalability challenges: Challenges in handling increased transactions
Stakeholder trust issues: Persistent inefficiencies damage stakeholder confidence
Higher operational risks: Heightened vulnerability to errors and fraud

Current Collection Journey

Mapping the end-to-end fund collection process

The first process examined is collection—from developer account setup to investor deposits—highlighting fund inflows and stakeholder responsibilities.



[i] Identify the deposits and transfer 5% of all the identified unit holder deposits/ purchaser deposits to "retention account" on a weekly basis or as per the required frequency of the governing agency.

DEVELOPER
The entity initiating the project, receiving investor funds into the escrow account, and submitting unit allocation details on TAS.

CBD (ASU Team)
The team responsible for creating the Escrow and Retention accounts after project approval to enable fund collection.

CBD (Escrow Team)
Manages the collection tracker, monitors investor deposits, generates BO reports, and approves unit allocations on TAS.

Manual Excel Updates

No Real-Time Reporting

No Automated Alerts

Delays in Approvals

Problem Identification in the Collection Process

Key inefficiencies and breakdowns in the collection flow

This journey reveals several inefficiencies, including manual interventions, delayed confirmations, and unclear process ownership.

Manual Excel Templates

Project-specific data is tracked manually, increasing the risk of errors. (No Integration with TAS)

No Real-Time Reporting

Collection status is not available instantly, limiting decision-making.

Disjointed Data Sources

CBD's Internal Systems like CIB, BO reports, and Freshworks are not integrated.

Delayed Unit Allocation Approvals

Tracker-based approvals slow down account creation, fund transfers, and transaction processing.

Lack of Automated Alerts

The workflow relies heavily on manual processes, reducing efficiency and increasing operational workload.

Multiple Handovers

Critical approvals and transaction details are shared via email, causing delays and difficulty in tracking progress.

Unclear Process Ownership

Tracking is done using Excel sheets instead of a centralized system, making real-time monitoring difficult and prone to mistakes.

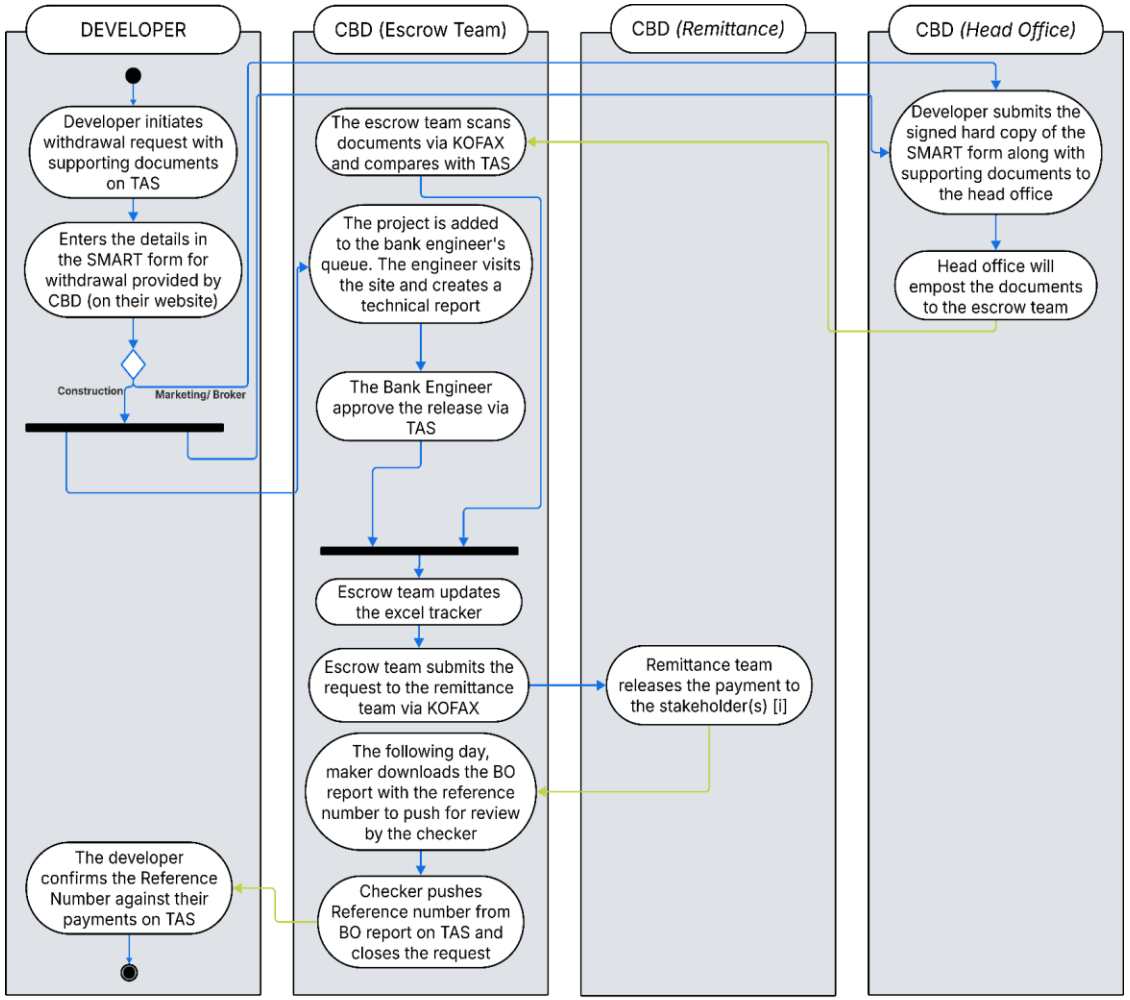
Data Duplication

Information is manually entered into multiple systems, increasing the risk of errors and inconsistencies.

Current Journey : Payments

Understanding the disbursement journey and fund outflows

The next focus area is the payments process, covering how funds flow out to support construction, marketing, and related activities.



[i] Payments are released from the owner association account for maintenance, utility, landscaping, and other after completion services.

DEVELOPER
Initiates withdrawal requests by submitting required documentation and ensures compliance for fund disbursement from the escrow account.

CBD (ASU Team)
Responsible for validating documents, processing fund release requests, and executing disbursements from the escrow account to the developer or vendors.

CBD (Escrow Team)
Reviews the withdrawal request, ensures regulatory checks are in place, coordinates with internal teams, and updates transaction records on the tracker.

Manual Excel Updates

Inefficient Process

Conventional Reconciliation

Delays in Approvals

Problem Identification of the Payments Process

Operational gaps and risks in the payments process

Pain points emerge around fragmented workflows, heavy manual load, and limited visibility, increasing operational risk.

Manual Excel Templates

The escrow team manually updates account details, leading to inefficiencies, delays, and potential human errors.

Reporting Delay

The escrow team waits for deposits before downloading reports, delaying transparency and transaction reconciliation.

Multiple Handovers

The process involves manual coordination between multiple teams, increasing the risk of miscommunication and slowing down approvals.

Multiple Approvals

Multiple approval checkpoints slow down account creation, fund transfers, and transaction processing.

Limited Automation

Heavy reliance on manual processes leads to inefficiencies and increases operational strain.

Email Dependency

Key approvals and transaction information are exchanged through email, leading to delays and making it hard to monitor progress efficiently.

Multiple Spreadsheets

Using Excel sheets for tracking, instead of a centralized system, limits real-time visibility and increases the risk of errors.

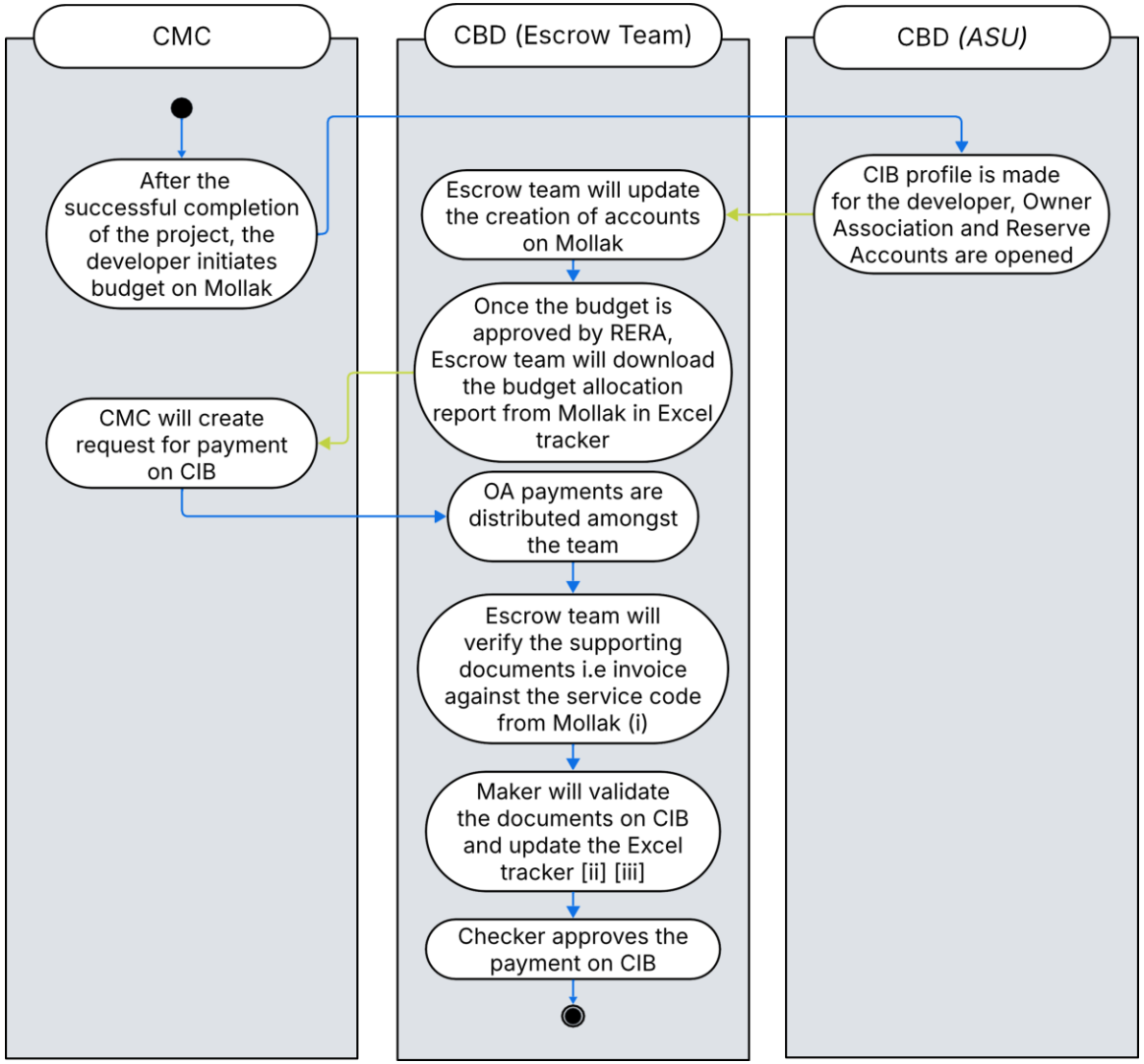
Data Duplication

Manually inputting data across various systems raises the chances of mistakes and leads to inconsistent information.

Current Owners Association Journey

Exploring post-completion processes and OA fund management

Following project completion, the journey shifts to Owners Association processes, which govern ongoing maintenance funding.



CMC (Community Management Centre)
Initiates the OA budget for RERA approval, raises payment requests on CIB, and coordinates funding for post-completion maintenance activities.

CBD (ASU Team)
Creates the developer's CIB profile and opens Owners Association and reserve accounts required to manage ongoing OA fund transactions.

CBD (Escrow Team)
Updates account details on Mollak, creates OA trackers, verifies documents, checks invoices, and processes payment approvals through CIB.

- **Manual Excel Updates**
- **Lack of data validation**
- **Conventional Reconciliation**
- **Delays in Approvals**

Problem Identification of the Owner Association Process

Governance and process gaps in the OA stage

Challenges include inconsistent account setup, minimal integration, and weak governance over post-handover operations.

Manual Excel Templates

The escrow team manually updates account details, leading to inefficiencies, delays, and potential human errors.

Reporting Delay

The escrow team waits for deposits before downloading reports, delaying transparency and transaction reconciliation.

Multiple Handovers

The process involves too many teams, increasing the risk of miscommunication and slowing down approvals.

Multiple Approvals

Several layers of approval create delays in setting up accounts, transferring funds, and processing transactions.

Limited Automation

The workflow relies heavily on manual processes, reducing efficiency and increasing operational workload.

Email Dependency

Critical approvals and transaction details are shared via email, causing delays and difficulty in tracking progress.

Multiple Spreadsheets

Relying on Excel for tracking limits real-time visibility and increases the likelihood of errors due to the absence of a centralized system.

Data Duplication

Information is manually entered into multiple systems, increasing the risk of errors and inconsistencies.

Process Maturity Framework

Assessing process maturity across automation, control, and scale

Each process is evaluated using a maturity framework to assess automation, control strength, and scalability readiness.

Collection

2	Account opening process
3	BO Report Generation
1	Data Entry from BO Report into Excel Tracker
1	Transaction Approval and Tracker Update

Payments

2	Developer Withdrawal Request Process
2	SMART Form Submission
1	Document Courier/Transfer
3	Bank engineer site Assessment & Release Approval
1	Escrow Back-office Updates & Verify
2	Withdrawal Submission Process
3	BO report download & review
2	Request validation

Collection

2	Developer: Budget Allocation Account Creation for CMC
1	Budget Approval & Allocation
2	Document review & Tracker Update
1	Payment Approval by Checker

Grading Scale

1. Fully manual, **no automation**
2. Manual with **some automation**
3. **Semi-automated**, with key parts still manual
4. **Mostly automated** with a few manual exceptions
5. Fully **optimized** and **automated**

Process Automation Score

Total	Average
29/ 80	1.8 / 5

Percentage	Grade
36.25%	D

Gap Analysis

Comparing current and future states to highlight improvement areas

The gap analysis compares current operations to a future state, identifying areas where digitization can drive efficiency and accuracy.

	Process area	Current Gap	Root Cause	Impact
Collection	• BO Report Generation • Approvals and Updates	• Delay in Reports • Lack of Automation	• Systems are not unified • No Digital Workflow	• Time consuming & prone to error • Data Inconsistencies
Payments	• Manual Document reporting • Back office updates and verification	• Smart forms sent via EMPOST • Time consuming verification	• Lack of integration • Lack of automation	• Time consuming & prone to error • Document error and Approval Delays
Owners Association	• Account creation for CMC • Budget Approval and Allocation	• Manual entry across systems • Daily Data download and tracking	• Lack of integration • Manual Workflow	• Automate data entry with system integration • Develop a unified system

Pain Point Heatmap Framework

Visualizing high-impact issues and prioritization opportunities

A heatmap highlights critical pain points,, enabling prioritization based on impact and effort.

Process Steps	Pain Point Description	Severity
Account Creation	Manual from system TAS to Escrow Excel Tracker Excel are prone to errors.	
BO report generation & data entry	BO report takes 24 hours to generate, download & paste in excel tracker times consuming	
Transaction Approval & Tracker Update	Updates to Excel are error-prone during transaction approvals.	
Escrow Back-office Updates & Verify	Verifying documents & updating records increases workload, leading to potential errors	
Budget Allocation Request	Entry of data across multiple systems slows the process	
Document Review & Tracker Update	Reviewing documents and updating trackers is time consuming, prone to human error	

Understanding Current Ecosystem

Quantifying manual work and spotlighting key areas for change

Key statistics quantify the scale of manual work and reinforce the need for targeted operational improvements.

An Ecosystem Observed

The escrow team relies on multiple platforms like TAS, Kofax, Freshworks, SAP, CIB, Smart/Web Form, EPH, and Excel, where **manual data entry**, **limited system integration**, and **slow reporting processes** hinder performance and accuracy. These challenges lead to inefficiencies and **greater operational risks.**

Key Areas of Improvement

Technology

- **System Integration** between RERA and CBD
- **Automation** in report generation
- **Real-Time Tracking** for updated transaction details
- **Audit Trails** for accurate, traceable records
- **Compliance Reporting** to reduce manual errors
- **Digital Identity Verification** to approve documents
- **Unified Dashboards** centralize tracking for stakeholder
- **AI Parsing** automating extraction from key documents

Financial

- **Automated Escrow** Data Entry for accuracy
- **Optimized Escrow** Report Generation for efficiency
- **Invoice Validation** Automation to reduce errors
- **Real-Time** Transaction Tracking for error-free updates

Communication

- **System Integration** for improved communication
- **Automated Customer Support** for faster responses

Key Stats

In analyzing the data from the current Escrow process, it's evident that system **inefficiencies**, **manual tasks**, and integration issues significantly **impact operational performance.**

20+
Hours/Week

Manual Data Entry

Approximate time spent weekly on manual data entry tasks, entering data into Excel tracker slowing down the escrow operations.

High

Error Rate in Transactions

Manual data handling leads to high-severity errors & delays, impacting the accuracy of transactions.

03+
Days

Manual Report Creation

Reports are generated manually to be sent to the developer and RERA due to lack of automation

>25%

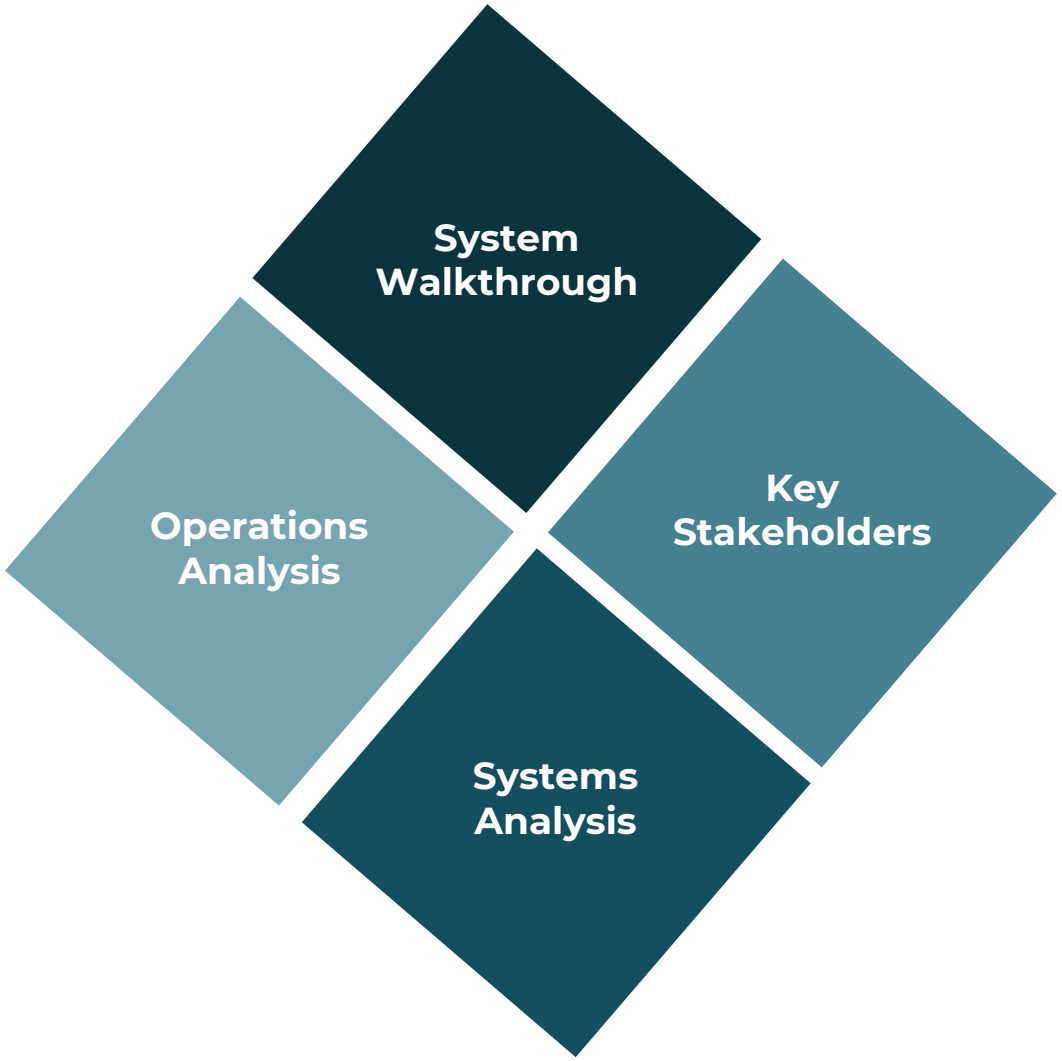
Payment Processing Delays

Percentage of payments delayed due to manual approval and multiple manual follow-up emails from the stakeholder.

Objective Assessment

Reflecting on what's been achieved against the original goals

The CSA objective is revisited to confirm what has been achieved and how insights align with initial goals.



- Understood how data is retrieved from each system and potential for integration
- Identified all key stakeholders including operations team, developers, and regulatory authorities
- Analyzed all systems including TAS, CIB, Mollak, KOFAX, EPH, and the Excel tracker
- Established understanding how the system functions and the role it plays in all Escrow processes and operations

Summary Dashboard

Consolidated view of key insights across operational pillars

A consolidated dashboard summarizes findings across key operational pillars including process, technology, compliance, and risk.

Category	Summary	Change Priority Level
Processes	Manual data entry, report updates, and invoice verification across multiple systems (Excel, TAS, OPCRM, FR).	**Medium**
Technology	Absence of system integration between TAS, OPCRM, Excel Tracker, Freshworks, core banking, and escrow platforms.	**High**
Data & Reporting	Manual compliance reporting and insufficient automation for regulatory submissions.	**Medium**
Compliance & Governance	Siloed data and inconsistent formats due to manual updates and absence of automated data matching tools.	**Low**
Internal Controls	Dependence on manual processes, limited process documentation, and absence of standardized workflows.	**Medium**
Scalability	Current systems and processes do not scale well, restricting efficiency as transaction volumes and projects increase.	**High**
Risk Management	Limited risk management capabilities due to fragmented data, manual approvals, and inadequate automation. The absence of real-time monitoring increases operational and financial risks.	**High**

Approach & Methodology

Structured and phased approach to delivering actionable insights

The CSA follows a structured methodology across phases, ensuring rigorous analysis, stakeholder alignment, and actionable outcomes.

	Key Activities	Deliverables (Right Click to Open in New Tab)
Phase 1: Discovery	☑ Kick off the project with the Escrow Department to define scope, objectives, and timelines. ☑ Conduct meetings with Escrow, ASU, and Remittance departments to identify pain points, gather requirements, and explore improvement opportunities. ☑ Review existing process documentation and systems.	• Current State Assessment Plan • Current Flowchart • Detailed Current Process
Phase 2: Solution Design	☑ Design solutions to address gaps and inefficiencies through automation and improved workflows ☐ Collaborate with the Escrow department to ensure feasibility and scalability ☐ Develop an implementation plan with timelines, resource allocation, and technology requirements	• Proposed Flowchart • Solution Design Document • Mockups of the proposed system
Phase 3: Implementation (post-assessment)	☐ Collaborate with relevant stakeholders for system integrations, tool deployment, and process automation. ☐ Monitor system performance, conduct user training, and provide support to ensure smooth transitions.	• Implementation Checklist • Training Materials and Support Documents • Development of the solution for Escrow Operations