HOW TO ASSESS AND AGGREGATE ASSURANCES

September 2018

Here we show how the detail in relation to a full line of an assurance map on performance management is captured and the level of detailed information about the various assurances is retained.

There is nothing magically right about this format. Rather it captures the information that was useful to the organisation at the time, the people conducting the review and with a view to enabling a review to be performed by senior management who could then submit the papers through the governance processes to the audit and risk committee and board.

It should be noted that, in the case of performance management, the organisation took the opportunity to ask the officer collating the Map to evaluate the efficiency of the process and identify potential changes and improvements. This was regarded as a very helpful and beneficial side benefit of preparing the map.

NB

1 **Large or small**: The format can just as easily be used in a large organisation to capture a wide range of assurances as in a small organisation. The format should be adapted to suit the level of detail required and appropriate.

2 **Focus of assurances**: In some organisations the assurances focus purely on independent assurances available. This is because the assessment of risk gross and net is based on the nature of the risk and the range of management controls in place, including policies and internal control procedures. The assurances would then be based on a range of sources including: internal audit, third-party reviews such health and safety specialists, challenges by insurance advisors (and such like) as well as external auditors and any other independent assurers.

3 **Over control as well as gaps and cracks**: It is possible to use the aggregation process to help identify areas of over control just as well as gaps and cracks in the suite of controls and assurances.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – ASSURANCE ASSESSMENT

AGGREGATING ASSURANCES EXAMPLE

Expected controls	Actual controls	Evidence	Assessment	Action recommended
First line of defence				
Policy & process in place	Project management process outlines roles and responsibilities	[url] to policy and practice	High assurance	N/a
Policy & process is clear and understood	Comprehensive project management process document covers expected activities and expected outputs from project initiation, project execution and project closedown. Documentation is comprehensive and clear: • Project planning [url] • Change control [url] • Reporting [url] • Lessons learnt [url] Business planning associate provides training, guidance and reviews for projects Non-project work programmes co-ordinated by a named individual (research, statutory decisions, watching briefs investigations and relationship management): [url] to supporting documentation	Sample checks on PID, change request, reporting and lessons learnt reports. Examples attached Review of PM approach in 2017 and 2018 Sample checks	Medium assurance – review of project management processes has identified overlaps between the work of programme board and management, some gaps in reporting and communication and some opportunities to rationalise processes	The project management process should be reviewed to ensure that it allows for flexibility to deliver business critical outcomes, while maintaining control and evidence of project and programme management*

Expected controls	Actual controls	Evidence	Assessment	Action recommended
Overview ensures that policy & process is being followed	Programme Board oversees business plan project and non-project work monthly	Samples of PB notes and agendas attached	Medium assurance – review of Project Board has identified some gaps in reporting and communicating assessment	The programme board should evidence it's work for the senior leadership team and there should be a clear feedback loop between senior leadership team decisions and programme board
Second line				
Risk management process	Quarterly review of project and non-project risk registers at Programme Board and significant project and programme risks are elevated to the corporate risk register Risk management strategy [url] stipulates senior leadership team reviews corporate risk register monthly	Sample risk registers from quarterly meetings Senior leadership team notes	High assurance – review of programme board	N/a
Senior management control	BPA reports PHR/PB discussions to CEO (Programme board report (PBR)) and are copied to senior leadership team/board members	Quarterly report to CEO	Medium assurance –improvement opportunities – PHR report & quarterly monitoring reporting assessment	A clear audit trail from discussions at PB to senior leadership team and Board oversight. Outcomes and impact in performance reporting should be demonstrated
Board oversight	ARAC receive quarterly risk register updates	ARAC minutes ARAC reports	High assurance – see quarterly reporting review	N/a

Expected controls	Actual controls	Evidence	Assessment	Action recommended
	ARAC receive assurance mapping update and will receive pilots review reports			
		Quarterly performance reports		
	Board receive quarterly performance reports & agree annual report			
		Project managers		
	Board representatives on projects			
Third line				
Internal audit review	Interim audit of annual report	Audit report	No assurance – awaiting internal audit	N/a
Self-assessment processes and practices	Interested groups of colleagues support and challenge project outcomes	Meeting notes	High assurance – see programme management review	N/a
	Lessons learnt database	Lessons learnt reports. Self-assessment is shared on an *ad hoc* basis		
Fourth line				
Third party review	Quarterly performance review by HO	Quarter 2 report sent to HO	High assurance – see quarterly report review	N/a
	HO receives annual report and accounts and business plan	Annual risk assessment return to HO		
External Audit	External audit of annual report	Sign off from external audit	High assurance	