ICAEW
AUDIT AND ASSURANCE FACULTY
HELPSHEET

HOW TO MANAGE COMMON PITFALLS WHEN ASSURANCE MAPPING

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The table below provides a simple and succinct document to remind readers of the potential pitfalls and risk areas that arise throughout the preparation of an assurance map.

Risk	Mitigating action
Lack of support from the sponsor.	Ensure that the sponsor's message to the organisation is clear and compelling so as to ensure collaboration.
Scope is too broad and tries to cover all aspects of a large organisation.	Keep the scope directed to particular risks or one part of the organisation to begin with; make it manageable. This will ensure timely completion and enable the organisation to see the benefits of an assurance map. Develop a plan to cover other risk areas or other parts of the organisation.
Elements requiring assurance are not complete.	Perform a detailed review to identify elements requiring assurance. Collaborate across management and with the sponsor.
The list of assurance providers is not complete.	Review assurance activities and reports which may identify additional providers. Discuss with senior managers.
Identified assurance providers are not providing assurance; rather they are delivering on tasks.	Review the activities provided by assurance; and interview those who receive the assurance from that provider to understand what assurance they are gaining.
Assurance activities identified are not complete.	Perform detailed research for each assurance element and interview users and the sponsor. Check the assurance reports.
Amount of required or desired assurance is not assessed appropriately by management.	Discuss the nature, extent and focus of the assurances needed with the users of the assurance map including the audit committee members and sponsor where appropriate.
Amount of assurance gained from an activity is not assessed appropriately by management.	Develop a consistent approach for assessing assurance activity and apply to the assurance activities. Advise and coach the management team on what constitutes assurance and what does not.
Change in, or discontinuance of, an assurance activity and the assurance map owner is not made aware.	Ensure there is a detailed plan in place for the maintenance of the assurance map and that the owners receive the necessary information to maintain the map in an accurate and up-to-date state.
Users of the assurance map do not understand how to interpret the map.	Ensure there is appropriate awareness of, and training around, the use of the assurance map and related covering report.