

Annexure

Key steps to create a framework document

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Overview

It is said that no Management System can be truly effective unless it has robust and comprehensive documentation, which is the term used for “a set of documents.” This documented information helps facilitate effectiveness, and also perform the function of an audit trail, for the purposes of learning and continual improvement. Often, the minimum expected mandatory documents may be referred to as “documented procedures.” For example, the NCEMA standard specifies 17 required documents.

Typically, documentation can be divided into 2 categories:

- ♣ Procedures sometimes referred also to as “documents”, which specify the mandated way in which the organization expects its personnel to perform that activity. Typically, procedures are management approved. This gives the procedure a certain authority or weightage. So, the procedure is evidence of management intent.
- ♣ Record, which show how exactly the activity was finally performed by a particular entity. Records could be called evidence of performance effectiveness.

So the documents and procedures describe a methodology, and the record is the result of performing that methodology. A document is written, reviewed and approved, whereas a record is typically created.

Since comprehensive documentation is critical to the sustenance of any Program, before the BCM program operations can start, the organization must create the framework documents, which specify how the implementation is to be performed. These framework documents are what the rest of the organization will be guided by in the Operations stage, where the corresponding documents or records would be created. By signing off on well-written and unambiguous framework documents, Management specifies to the organization in a clear manner what is their intent and expectation with respect to the establishment, operation, review and improvement of the BCM Program.

Typically, it is the centralized BCM Team that would be tasked with the creation of the needed framework documents (could be procedures, templates, checklists, guidelines etc.), and get signoff. Since they are the subject matter experts who know BCM the best, it is they who would specify the desired contents of the needed documents. Normally, it would be the BC Manager who would need to ensure also the creation of the appropriate content of the framework documents and procedures, and then to get Management to approve these.

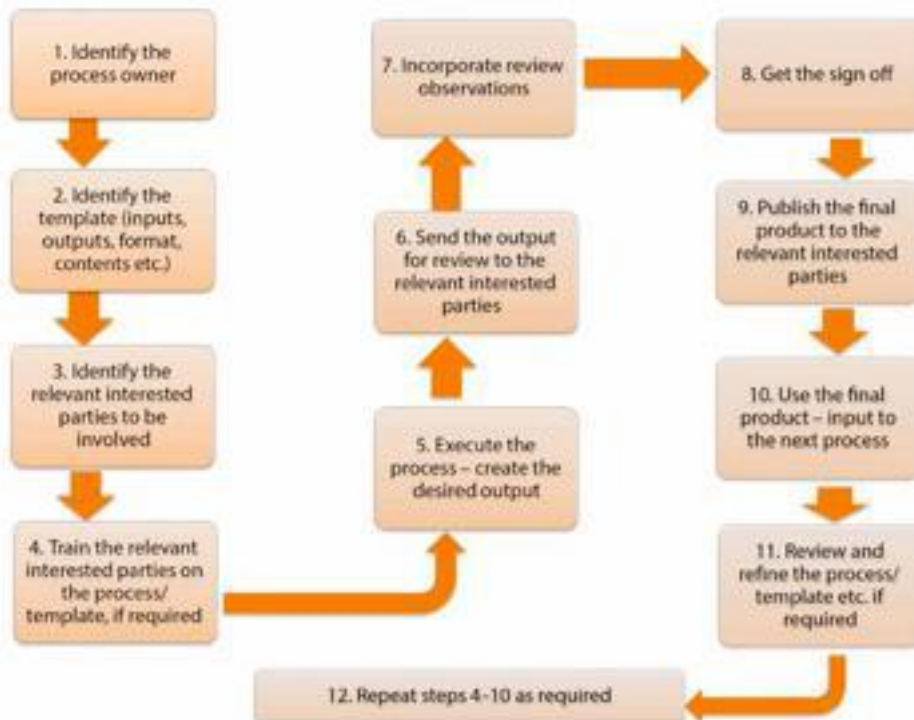
Once approved, it may be the BCM Manager or Team themselves who would in some cases fill in the contents (for example, BCM Policy), whereas in other cases (for example, Interested Parties document), the framework document may need to be populated by other teams (if so, then mostly it would be the BCM Department Representatives, who would need to arrange the needed information from their departments, and arrange Department Head signoff). Once the relevant authority has signed off on a specific document, it can be treated as final (till the next update!).

Typically, the steps to go through are the same for all documents, but the application of those steps may change according to the specific document being prepared.

With respect to performing the activity in general, a good approach would be for the team to sit together as a group (workshop mode), to identify the contents and then create the document. This utilizes the wisdom of the English proverb – “two heads are better than one.” Before this discussion, it may be good to take the views also of relevant members of the Top Management team, as applicable. This may help ensure that the document, once it is created, contains the points that are considered relevant by Top Management.

The process of creating these documents could be as indicated below, which would cover all aspects of creating a new document in a comprehensive manner. The medium of the records or documentation need not be only paper – it can be also digital, magnetic, electronic or optical. For example, a video recording of a live test could be called documentation, as could be also a photograph of a facility for the purposes of risk assessment.

Annexure 2: Key Steps to Create a Framework Document



END OF ANNEXURE SAMPLE

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