



TickIT^{plus} Implementation Note

Title	Assessing Base Practices		
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Originator	Dave Wynn	Version	v1r0
Key Terms	Assessments, Process Assessment Model (PAM), Base Practices, Implemented Process Sample (IPS), Process Outcomes		

Processes within the Base Process Library are made up of identification details (ID, category, type, version), a process purpose, one or more outcomes, base practices, work products (both input and output) and mappings to requirements standards (currently ISO 9001:2008 and ISO/IEC 20000-1:2011).

Outcomes must be included in the implementation and assessment of a process when one or more of their base practices reference ISO 9001; these are called core outcomes. Other outcomes must be included when one or more of their base practices reference requirements standards selected by the organisation, e.g. ISO/IEC 20000-1; these are called supplementary outcomes. As a note, supplementary outcomes can be optionally included by the organisation if they are felt to be beneficial. If an outcome is included then ALL of its associated base practices must also be included in both the PRM (i.e. in the implementation) and the PAM (i.e. in the assessment).

This means that the organisational PRM (Process Reference Model) must map ALL the base practices to their IMS (Integrated Management System) when an outcome is included. Additionally, it means that ALL the base practices must be assessed against the allocated IPS (Implemented Process Sample) being used to demonstrate the process implementation. No base practice belonging to an included outcome is optional.

While implementing all base practices should be straightforward for an organisation aiming to improve their IMS using the TickIT^{plus} scheme, assessing all the base practices for a particular work group in the IPS may not always be possible. If a work group has been selected to provide evidence for the appraisal, it must provide evidence for all base practices for the included outcomes in the processes, or findings must be raised.

Only outcomes are characterised during an assessment and therefore the NYI (Not Yet Implemented) characterisation can only be applied at the outcome level, NOT at the base practice level (because characterisation is not done at the base practice level).

So, given that all practices must be assessed, but only the outcomes are characterised, there is a possibility in a number of processes that some base practices may not yet be demonstrable for good reasons. For example, in the Programme Management process, the last base practice (BP.3 Manage Changes to the Programme) might not be demonstrable for a particular work group because changes have just not happened, but the work group was selected because it can provide good evidence for all other base practices and is a key activity for the organisation. For the Project Management process, the last base practice (BP.8 Close the Project) might also not be demonstrable for a particular work group because the project has not finished yet. There are others.

There is also a secondary aspect here which although not stated explicitly in the CSR (Core Scheme Requirements) is heavily inferred and would be considered necessary in practice (this will probably be subject to a change in a future revision).

When a work group is selected to provide evidence during an appraisal to support the engineering or development processes, particularly in the Systems and Software Development and Support Scope Profile, the work group should show evidence for all the relevant and connected processes. For example,



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if a work group is a software development project it should provide evidence for all associated processes including Stakeholder Requirements Definition, Requirements Analysis, Architectural Design, Development Implementation, Integration Management, Transition and Release (if possible) and those supporting processes such as Project Management, Configuration and Change Control, Verification, Validation, Problem and Incident Management and Maintenance Management (if possible).

Clearly there can be development work groups that are important to the business, significant in size and demonstrating the defined processes but may not have reached the point in the lifecycle where some of the processes are relevant, e.g. Product Integration, Transition and Release or Maintenance Management. In this case the work group was selected as part of the ACI (Assessment Converge Index) calculations because it was right to include it but for the processes mention it would also be right to put NYI when characterising the processes. What the scheme does not expect is that a large number of work groups are selected to provide evidence of a very small number of processes, say just one or two. For example, picking one development project to show evidence of Stakeholder Requirements Definition and Requirements Analysis, a second to show evidence of Architecture Design and Development Implementation, a Third to show Verification and Validation, a fourth to show project management etc., would not provide sufficient or satisfactory evidence of effective implementation of the processes that should be working together the desired results.

In some cases, it may be appropriate to include two development project, one to show the early phases up to, say, Development Implementation and the second to show the latter stages say from Development Implementation to Transition and Release but in both cases the supporting processes would also need to be checked, e.g. Project Management, Configuration and Change Control, Verification, Validation etc. However, this would have been planned during the initial PAM preparation and recorded in the assessment plan, in which case the processes not being covered will just not be included against the respective work group and therefore NYI is not necessary. Both work groups would be included in the ACI calculations because they are providing sufficient coverage of the development and support processes.

Reverting back to the assessment of base practices, the rules require that all base practices are assessed for the work group(s) selected (in the IPS) to provide evidence of the processes being implemented. However, the scheme caters for this situation by allowing the team to judge the findings and allocate characterisations based on the findings.

The approach should be as follows. All base practices must be assessed and findings recorded in the records of the assessment. The base practices where evidence cannot be provided for a work group included in the IPS because it simply has not yet occurred, must be noted in the assessment records. During the team consolidation of the findings up to the outcome rating level, the fact that no evidence was available should be considered against the reasons (i.e. it just hasn't occurred yet) and the characterisation given in accordance with the characterisation table in the CSR (Core Scheme Requirements). If the lack of evidence is legitimate, e.g. the project hasn't completed or no valid changes have yet occurred, the finding should probably have been classed as a negative comment, which will mean that the characterisation can still be FI (Fully Implemented), given that the reason is understood.

However, there must be at least one example of every base practice implemented during the assessment. What this might mean is that in some situations, a base practice may not end up being demonstrable because it hasn't naturally occurred on the work groups selected. In these situations, an additional work group must be selected to demonstrate the specific base practice, but as it will only need to demonstrate one, or at least very few base practices, the inclusion of the additional work group does not count towards the Assessment Coverage Index (ACI) calculations because it was used to provide evidence of a very small number of base practices from the PRM.



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Evidence must show that all base practices, as defined in the PRM, can be demonstrable, i.e. that the organisation has the ability to undertake the base practices when required. Good intention cannot be assessed!