

<b>Title</b>	Type-A processes in a corporate environment		
<b>Date</b>	October 2013	<b>Reference</b>	TIN008-1310
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<b>Key Terms</b>	Implementation, Type-A Processes, ISO 9001, Scoping		

The core standard in the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> scheme is ISO 9001 and as such it contains all necessary requirements for the effective running of an organisation, including senior management responsibilities and activities, human, infrastructure and facility resourcing, and those related to the design, development, delivery and support of the products and services.

TickIT<sup>plus</sup> is specifically aimed at the IT sector and as such introduces process structures in a more specific manner than would necessarily be needed to satisfy ISO 9001. It also requires a Process Reference Model to be created, which again is not required under a conventional ISO 9001 audit.

If the scope of certification covers the entire organisation then there wouldn't be any issues in terms of ensuring that the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> approach is address across the organisation. However, it is not uncommon to see the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> scope being restricted to a smaller part of the organisation, e.g. a business unit or department within a corporate group. In this situation the Type-A processes, those typically implemented at the organisational level can cause challenges for the part of the organisation using TickIT<sup>plus</sup>.

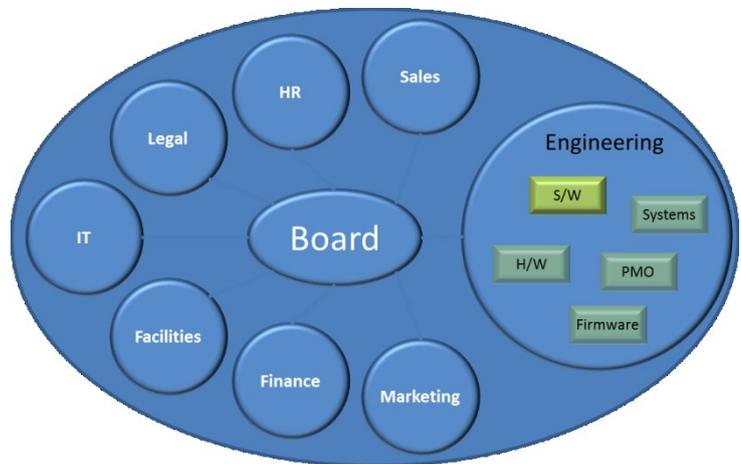
The Type-A processes cover ISO 9001 requirements from sections 4, 5, 6 and 8 and are applicable to all organisations whereas the Type-B processes address the design, development, delivery or support of the product and services, i.e. the requirements in section 7. In effect the Type-A processes contribute to the Plan, Check and Act of the PDCA cycle. In situations where the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> scope is less than the whole organisation, these Type-A processes would often be undertaken by other organisational groups or functions that are not necessarily involved, or even interested in, the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> approach.

This can cause difficulties for the part of the organisation adopting the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> scheme when these other groups do not or cannot adopt the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> approach and specifically the need to create a Process Reference Model. Nevertheless, during a TickIT<sup>plus</sup> assessment, all Type-A processes must be included and demonstrated through a complete Process Reference Model.

It's not uncommon to hear people working on the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> scheme to say "we don't do some of those Type-A processes" or "we would not be able to get the organisational groups responsible for them to follow the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> approach". In other cases, the organisation may have various components required by TickIT<sup>plus</sup>, such as a business plan, but they might not be fully complete, formally managed, or readily available.

For example, the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> Human Resource Management process may well be undertaken by a corporate HR department, the Infrastructure and Work Environment Management process activities could be outsourced, the Management Framework process may be managed by a central QA or process group and the Corporate Management and Legal process could be at such a high level in a large global organisation that the information available at the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> part of the organisation is minimal.

While the above situation may exist in practice, it is not a reason to say that these Type-A processes are not applicable. Ignoring TickIT<sup>plus</sup>, or indeed any of the standards, for a moment, all parts of an organisation, irrespective of how small or big they are, should be able to rely on the Type-A processes working well for them. Whether it is the



The S/W group are looking to use TickITplus to improve their development processes and therefore the TickITplus scope would be that group



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software development department, a small firmware group or a support function, there is an inherent need to

- understand the business objectives and how they contribute to the customer focus,
- obtain the necessary human and non-human resources,
- participate in improvements that work for the organisation and not in isolation
- generate and use measures that support the business objectives
- work within the organisational management framework and not duplicate it.

If the Human Resource Management process is not working effectively, it's not necessarily the HR department that will be questioned on the low customer satisfaction results due to inadequate support staff. Similarly, if the Infrastructure and Work Environment Management process is deficient, it's not necessarily the facilities group who will be challenged on the delays to the project due to lack of test equipment. If the Corporate Strategy and Legal process does not provide a consistent and well understood direction that the business is going in, it's typically not the Execs who take responsibility for the software development department spending thousands on a new system that doesn't adequately support the corporate product roadmap.

The TickIT<sup>plus</sup> scheme includes the Type-A processes, and requires them to be demonstrated, to ensure that they are in-place within the organisation such that the area implementing TickIT<sup>plus</sup> is confident that these processes work adequately for them.

So how can this type of situation be addressed in order to satisfy the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> scheme requirements? The ideal approach would be to convince these organisational groups of the value and importance of adopting a structured and formal approach in the way TickIT<sup>plus</sup> suggests. This would have a wider benefit for other delivery and supporting parts of the organisation that do not necessarily fall within any certification scheme. It would also ensure that the PRM is constructed by the owners of the associated processes. But, what if they don't want to listen to the benefits offered by the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> scheme or just simply have their own way of doing things.

As mentioned above, these Type-A processes have been included, not just because they are linked to clauses of ISO 9001, but, more so, because they are absolutely necessary to enable the organisation to achieve and improve its products or services. The organisational groups, functions and departments involved with 'Do' part of the PDCA cycle need these processes to work and to work effectively. The TickIT<sup>plus</sup> scheme aims towards achieving this and at providing improvement opportunities for the organisation as a whole.

By implementing TickIT<sup>plus</sup> any weaknesses or gap in other parts of the organisation would be identified and must be addressed to ensure that they do not cause any unnecessary risk in the delivery of the products or services. For example, let says that the organisation doesn't have a formal staff development process in place, although it may have some element of conducting appraisals against personal objectives. TickIT<sup>plus</sup> identifies this as a very important component of managing human resources to ensure that they are adequately skilled and competent to undertake the work being assigned to them. In this situation the part of the organisation using TickIT<sup>plus</sup> to improve its processes would need to identify this gap and to fill it with some local activity, assuming in this case that the main organisation didn't want to fill the gap themselves.

Writing additional local processes or procedures may be an unnecessary overhead given that much of the requirements are already in place. However, what could be done is to create a single documented 'overview' of all the identified weaknesses or gaps and how they will be addressed for the benefit of improving the processes being used by the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> part of the organisation. This document could be in the form of, for example, a 'Group Exposition', a 'Business Manual', a 'Management Handbook' or whatever suits the existing culture. It would describe how the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> part of the organisational operates in alignment with other organisational groups and ensures that all TickIT<sup>plus</sup> requirements have been addressed.

Taking the example above regarding staff development, a S/W Group Exposition could simply provide links to the organisational personal objective appraisal process along with supplementary requirements to include a review of staff development needs at the same time as the appraisal. Clearly, the longer term goal would be to enhance the organisational approach to cover both personal objectives review and identification development needs.

In another situation for example, the organisation may have a very loose business plan or a business plan set at a much higher level than would be specifically relevant to the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> group, for example, when the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> group is responsible for control software as part of a large industrial automation product. In this case, as mentioned above,



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it is still important that the business plan is understood and meaningful to the software group and here it may be very beneficial to add an introductory section to the S/W Group Exposition that covers the relevance and importance of the corporate business plan to the software group.

Producing this 'extra' document may sound like it is being produced simply to satisfy the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> scheme requirements, but in practice it could provide numerous benefits to the group adopting TickIT<sup>plus</sup>, such as:

- clarifying the interaction between support groups and delivery groups
- providing new starters with a clear overview of how organisational aspects
- ensuring that higher level organisational requirements are fully understood and addressed by the group
- stimulating improvements across other small groups that are not adopting TickIT<sup>plus</sup> and ultimately pushing the organisation as a whole to improve its corporate processes
- bringing a greater degree of purpose to small groups operating within very large organisations

As mentioned previously, the ideal goal would be for the organisation to address all the TickIT<sup>plus</sup> requirements, but if this isn't possible for whatever reason, the concept of a local document providing the appropriate information might be a good second choice.