



Resilience Capability - Framework for Critical Systems Analysis

Briefing Document

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Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction2
- 2 Framework Overview.....2
 - 2.1 Introduction2
 - 2.2 Purpose of Critical Systems Analysis2
 - 2.3 Documentation Required for Critical Systems Analysis2
 - 2.4 Risks2
 - 2.5 Overall Process.....3
 - 2.6 Activation of an Analysis4
 - 2.7 Reporting4
 - 2.8 Actioning Results4
 - 2.9 Ongoing Maintenance Regime4
- 3 Information Gathering and Collation.....4
 - 3.1 Guidelines5
 - 3.2 Types of Questions5
 - 3.3 Peer Review.....6
 - 3.4 Use of the xx_crit_sys.xls Spreadsheet.....6
- 4 Automated Systems Analysis6



1 Introduction

This document details a framework for the collation of a comprehensive and authoritative set of business system requirements for business continuity planning or disaster recovery management. This document is to be used by those undertaking a Critical Systems Analysis and/or providing information for a Critical Systems Analysis. The purpose of this document is to provide a guideline only for collation of Critical Systems Analysis information.

Reference to the Critical Systems Analysis Briefing Document is made together with the Excel spreadsheet xx_crit_sys.xls.

2 Framework Overview

2.1 Introduction

This framework is a way to collect key information quickly around critical systems (process, function, entity) for disaster recovery, crisis management and business continuity purposes. The framework focuses on the critical business functions and dependencies and relies upon people who understand the business and related ICT (Information Communication Technology) being able to provide information and make pragmatic business calls. Having capable moderators to drive and facilitate the process, who can see “what is important”, is pivotal to the success of any implementation of the framework.

An optional systems investigation for the provision of supporting information is also included within the framework.

2.2 Purpose of Critical Systems Analysis

A Critical Systems Analysis is a document created by an area of business in an organisation and details the key dependencies (systems, functions, processes or entities) for critical business functions. This document serves as a guide in decision making for business continuity, disaster recovery and crisis management.

2.3 Documentation Required for Critical Systems Analysis

The following documents are required to conduct a Critical Systems Analysis:

- Critical Systems Analysis Framework Briefing Document – This document, describing the framework and approach.
- Critical Systems Analysis Briefing Document – Details what information to collect.
- xx_crit_sys.xls – An Excel spreadsheet for storage of the captured information.
- Results from an automated systems analysis may also be used to compliment the analysis and provide further details.

2.4 Risks

The following risks associated with the framework are identified:

- Moderators – High calibre moderators are required to drive the process and make decisions.
- Subject matter experts (SMEs) – People who understand the business and related ICT need to spend time on the activity.



- Information Collection – The results presented are only as good as the information provided.

2.5 Overall Process

The overall process is shown Figure 1 and consists of the following:

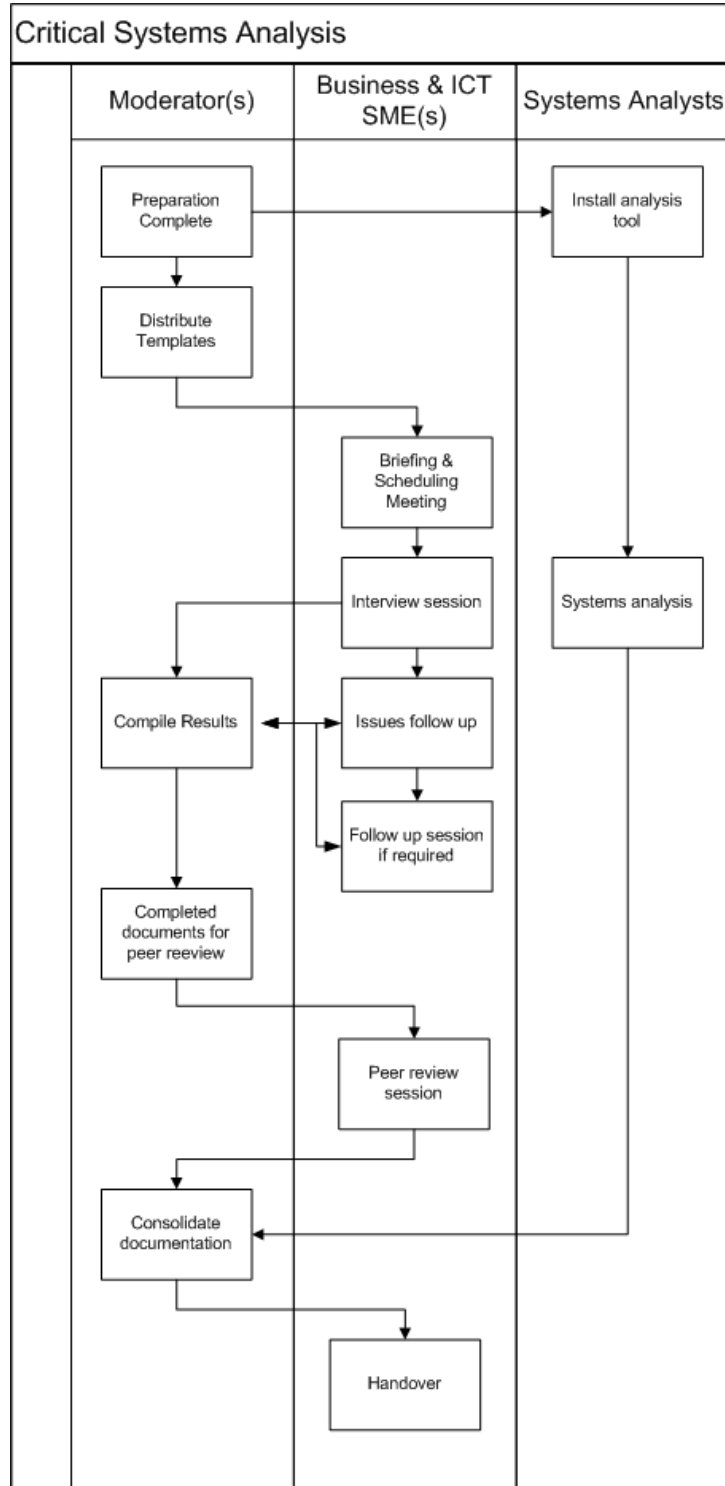


Figure 1. Summary of the process for conducting a Critical Systems Analysis.



- Moderators – Who facilitate the overall process and are capable of asking questions, eliciting information and making decisions.
- SMEs – Subject matter experts from the business and ICT (Information Communication Technology) who provide the critical information.
- Systems Analysts – Implement an automated systems analysis tool if required.

2.6 Activation of an Analysis

A Critical Systems Analysis should be completed as follows:

- Annual review.
- New systems implemented.
- Significant change in business environment.

Senior management should instigate a Critical Systems Analysis as well as having ongoing maintenance of the information as part of routine business operations.

2.7 Reporting

For effective reporting, an organisation determines, according to their need, the following:

- To which people / entities the results are presented. Typically this includes:
 - The entity responsible for crisis management, disaster recovery and business continuity.
 - Senior Leadership in ICT.
 - Senior Leadership in critical business areas for risk and issues management.
- The reporting needs of the respective audiences are determined according to needs but are likely to include:
 - Identification of major gaps, i.e. a critical business function relies on a system which takes a long time to recover and there is no sustainable contingency.
 - Regular reporting on issues.
 - Regular reporting of progress in addressing issues.

2.8 Actioning Results

Each organisation would determine its own needs and priorities and this would link to the normal funding, business planning and project management activities within an organisation.

2.9 Ongoing Maintenance Regime

Aligning to business need, the establishment of a regular review and ongoing document maintenance regime would be desirable. This is at the discretion of an organisation.

3 Information Gathering and Collation

The framework is about asking key people simple questions and having the resulting information provided and collated.



3.1 Guidelines

The following considerations apply:

- Keep the session short and focused.
- Build report with the SME(s) and establish why it is of benefit for them to be involved in this exercise.
- Ask SME(s) the best way for them to do the exercise and implement accordingly.
- It is the outcomes that are important for the SME(s).
- Operate on a minimal intervening basis.
- Have the participant lead the conversation where possible but keep them focused.
- Thank the participant and advise of what happens next.

Use the following as a guide to the process:

Requirements

Briefed participants

Capable moderator

Copy of xx_crit_sys.xls spreadsheet and Critical Systems Analysis Briefing Document

Informal atmosphere away from distractions

Instructions

- 1) Moderator to take participant(s) to an informal atmosphere away from distractions.
- 2) Moderator put participant at ease and ensuring a non-threatening engagement.
- 3) With a focus on listening to the participant, moderator asking open ended questions to complete the relevant parts of the xx_crit_sys.xls spreadsheet.
- 4) Complete the document in plain English, with highly pragmatic focus on outcomes.
- 5) Moderator return results as soon as possible to participant for peer review.
- 6) Clarify action items and next steps.
- 7) Moderator to discuss issues and revisions with participants and advise of next step in the process. Remember it is the participants view that counts and NOT that of the moderator.

3.2 Types of Questions

The information required is driven mainly by the information required in the xx_crit_sys.xls spreadsheet. Although pick lists exists where possible, questions to help the process may include:

- What do they see as critical?
- Is there anything else about that system which may impact the business?
- Based on your experience is this really critical?
- From your perspective, what do you see as the priorities?



- Is there anything else you need to tell me about your systems and operations?

3.3 Peer Review

It is important for the results to be collated as soon as possible and returned to the participant for peer review. In the review sessions guide them through, seek clarification on points and try and close off any gaps.

Peer review is asking for their view, respect it. This can always be changed latter.

3.4 Use of the xx_crit_sys.xls Spreadsheet

Details on completion of the xx_crit_sys.xls spreadsheet are presented in the accompanying Critical Systems Analysis Briefing Document. The spreadsheet should be completed for each critical business area. It is better to state sensible worse case timeframes. The focus is on the “must have” systems but the spreadsheet can be used for all systems and all business areas.

4 Automated Systems Analysis

This is an optional part of the process and extended details are not presented in this document. The focus should be on any discrepancies, e.g. systems analysis shows this application to be important yet the interviews did not. It is not important to address why a discrepancy occurred, it is the resolution of the discrepancy that is important.

