VITARA
Virtual Training
to Advance Revenue
Administration

REFERENCE GUIDE

REFORM MANAGEMENT SPECIFIC TOPICS
Managing a Reform Program

Inter-American Center of Tax Administrations
International Monetary Fund
Intra-European Organisation of Tax Administrations
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

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Preamble

A series of Virtual Training to Advance Revenue Administration (VITARA) reference guides has been developed based on the content of the VITARA online modules. Readers are encouraged to enroll in the online modules. For more information on the registration schedule for the VITARA courses, scan the QR code below.

This guide builds on the *Reform Management Fundamentals: Setting up a Reform Program* reference guide to provide an understanding of recognized good practices to ensure the success of implementing tax administration reform programs. It presents proven management practices for implementing reform projects that have been applied by tax administrations around the world.

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CHAPTER 1.

Program Management Methods and Tools

This chapter sets out some of the tools and approaches for program and project management relating to monitoring and reporting, managing risks, changing plans, and resolving issues.[1]

The use of proven processes, methods, and tools is critical to successful reforms. It is the role of the reform program head and reform steering committee to ensure that uniform practices are adopted and correctly and consistently applied by all reform projects across the reform program.[2] In support of this, the reform program management unit[3] (RPMU) acts as the guardian of the reform program's approved processes, methodologies, and tools.

There is a large body of general material on program management processes, methods, and tools available online to explore further, such as varying project management methodologies (e.g., waterfall, agile, Kanban).

Program and Project Planning

There are various tools and approaches to support project planning ranging from a simple document or spreadsheet to more complex commercially available project management software. The choice of tool is determined generally by cost, project complexity, and existing software that the tax administration already uses. If a third party is involved with the reform program, they may have a preferred tool.

The most common tool is the Gantt chart (see Figure 1.1). A Gantt chart is a type of bar chart that illustrates a project schedule in diagrammatic form, highlighting:

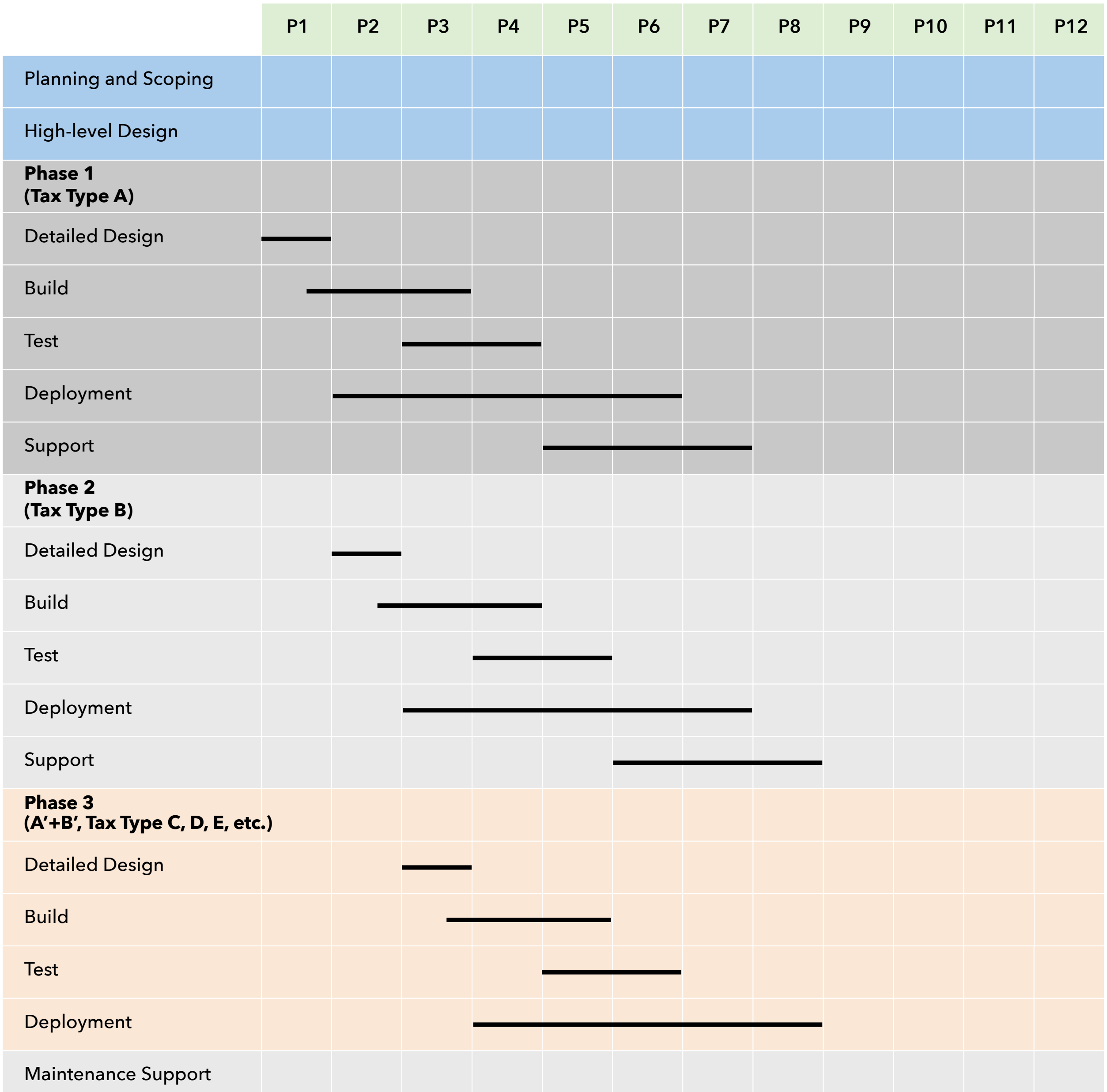
- Activities to be completed (usually as shaded bars)
- Milestones (as colored markers)
- Any dependencies between tasks (usually as lines linking the relevant ends of the task bars)

[1] A **reform project** is a time-bound work activity to deliver a specific product or service; it has a defined start and finish date, with a documented scope of work. Projects are managed by a dedicated project manager and governed through the reform program. A **reform program** is a set of multiple related reform projects to be completed within a three-to-five-year time frame to achieve a tax administration's strategic/reform goals. Reform programs are governed through a reform steering committee and managed by a reform program head supported by a reform program management unit.

[2] The **reform program head** is the member of the executive leadership team with authority and accountability to ensure the smooth running and realization of the reform program. The **reform program steering committee** is the principal oversight and decision-making body on reform-related matters.

[3] The **reform program management unit** supports the reform program head with governance and management of the entire reform program to ensure that all reform projects and activities within it adhere to the goals, objectives, scope, timelines, priorities, sequencing, budgets, and quality standards set out in the approved reform program.

Figure 1.1: Gantt Chart



A Gantt chart also identifies the critical path—the longest sequence of activities in a project plan that must be completed on time for the project to be completed by the due date. Slippage of any activity on the critical path cannot be recovered, and, therefore, close monitoring of the activities on this path is vital.

Monitoring and Reporting Progress

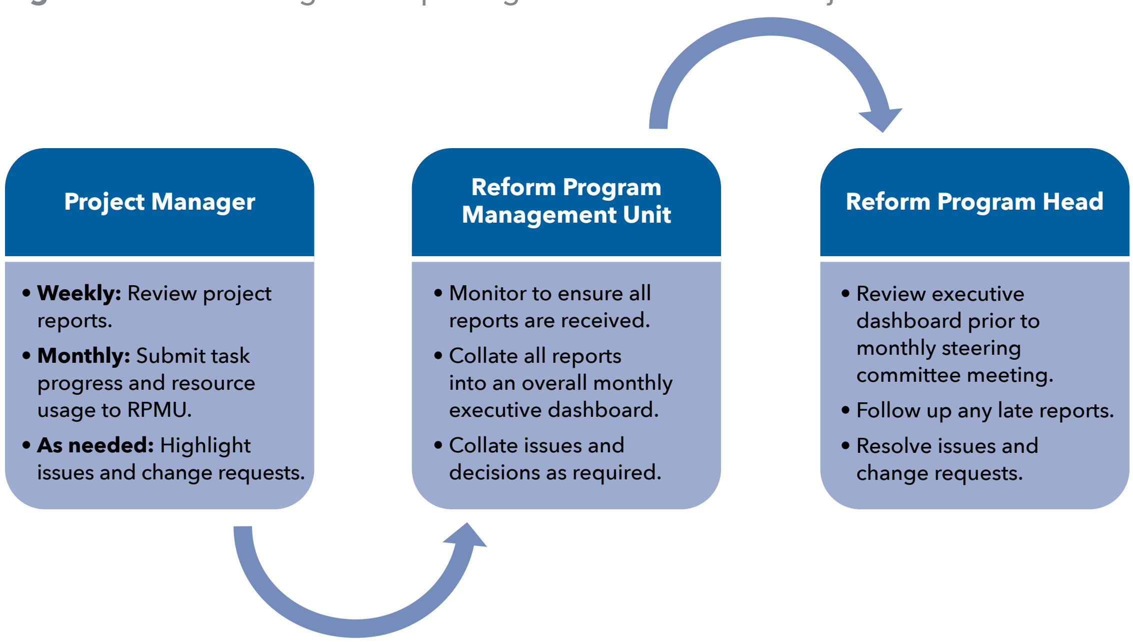
Monitoring and reporting are key elements of the governance required to ensure successful implementation of the reform program. It happens at both the project level and the overall program level.

Project Level

All projects are time bound, resource bound, and scope bound. Therefore, in addition to daily monitoring of the project activities, the project manager[4] must also review project reports from team leaders on a weekly basis. Monthly reports must be submitted to the RPMU. Where significant issues emerge, the project manager should not wait until the monthly report is due and should escalate these issues to the reform program head for resolution without delay.

There are a variety of planning and reporting tools that should be used for all projects within the reform program. Irrespective of the tool chosen, there should be a predetermined deadline for submitting reports to the RPMU. The process for monitoring progress at the project level, along with reporting time frames, is illustrated in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2: Monitoring and Reporting of Activities at the Project Level

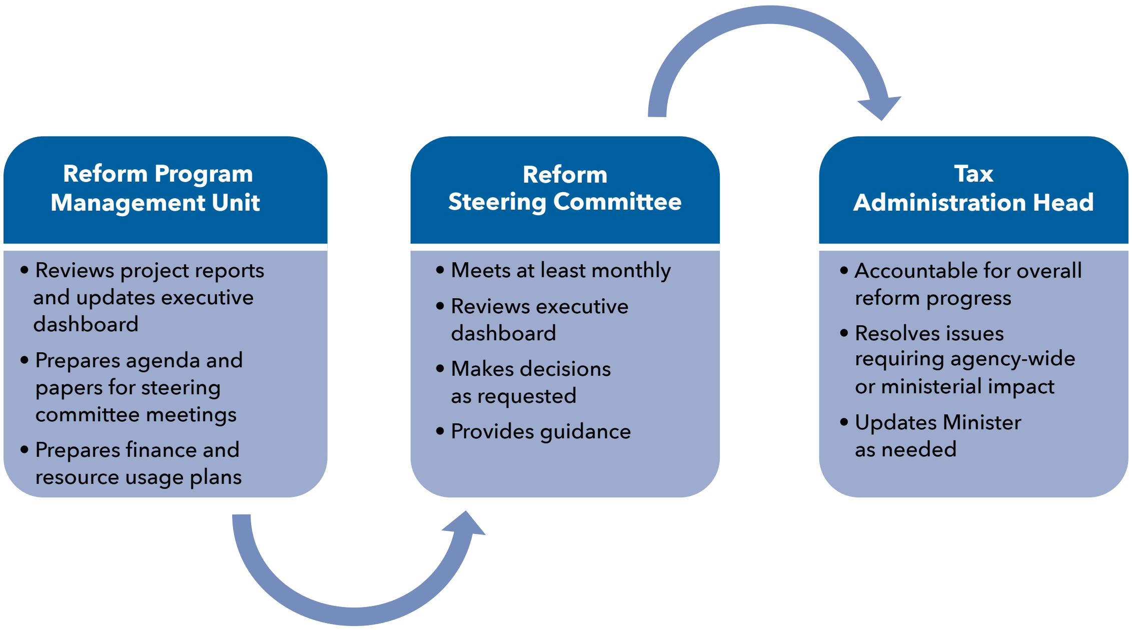


[4] Reform project managers are responsible for delivering their project objectives within the approved time, budget, quality, and scope constraints.

Program Level

The reform program head monitors the progress of all projects that comprise the reform program by reviewing reports submitted by project managers (on at least a monthly basis). The process for monitoring progress at the program level is illustrated in Figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3: Monitoring and Reporting of Activities at Program Level



An **executive dashboard** is an effective tool for presenting an overall picture of progress of the reform program. The dashboard records the status of each project using color coding and a concise summary (two or three sentences) of any issues or highlights. Ideally, this is prepared by "cutting and pasting" relevant sections from the standard project report submitted to the RPMU. A sample dashboard is provided in Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4: Executive Dashboard

Reform Program Status

Executive Dashboard			Month/Year

Strategic Goal 1: (insert goal title as per reform program)			
Objective 1.1		Describe objective as per reform program	
Project		Status	Comment
1.1.1	Project title		One to two sentence summary of project status from project report
1.1.2	Project title		One to two sentence summary of project status from project report
1.1.3	Project title		One to two sentence summary of project status from project report
Objective 1.2		Describe objective as per reform program	
		Status	
1.2.1	Project title		One to two sentence summary of project status from project report
1.2.2	Project title		One to two sentence summary of project status from project report

Strategic Goal 2: (insert goal title as per reform program)			
Objective 2.1		Describe objective as per reform program	
Project		Status	Comment
2.1.1	Project title		
2.1.2	Project title		

Legend for status ratings:

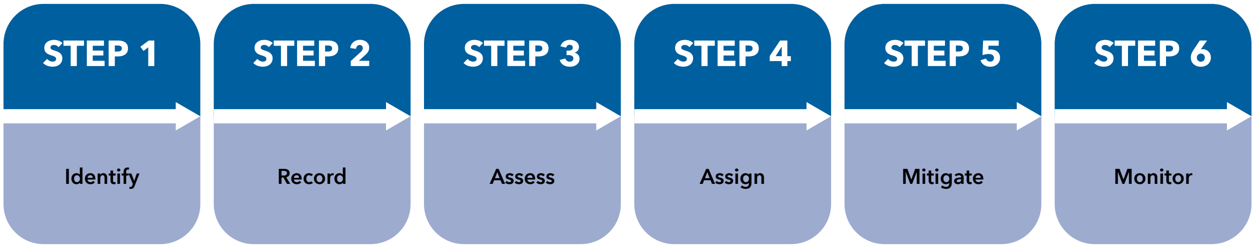
Status	Explanation
	Project is behind schedule with major variances and has issues that require immediate goverance attention
	Project is on schedule and has some issues that are under management, but if unresolved could impact delivery of the action by due date
	Project is on schedule to achieve the outcome by the delivery date
	Project not started—comment section would indicate planned start date
	Project completed

Managing Program and Project Risks

A reform project risk is an event that, if it occurs, will prevent a project's objectives (and, therefore, the reform program's objectives) from being met. Even in the best-planned reform programs and projects, uncertainties and unexpected events can occur; for example, program and project funding may be reduced or specialist project staff may leave resulting in an impact on a project's progress.

Risk management helps identify and deal with events that might prevent program and project outcomes being achieved. The steps involved in risk management are set out in Figure 1.5, and an explanation for each step is provided below.

Figure 1.5: Risk Management Process

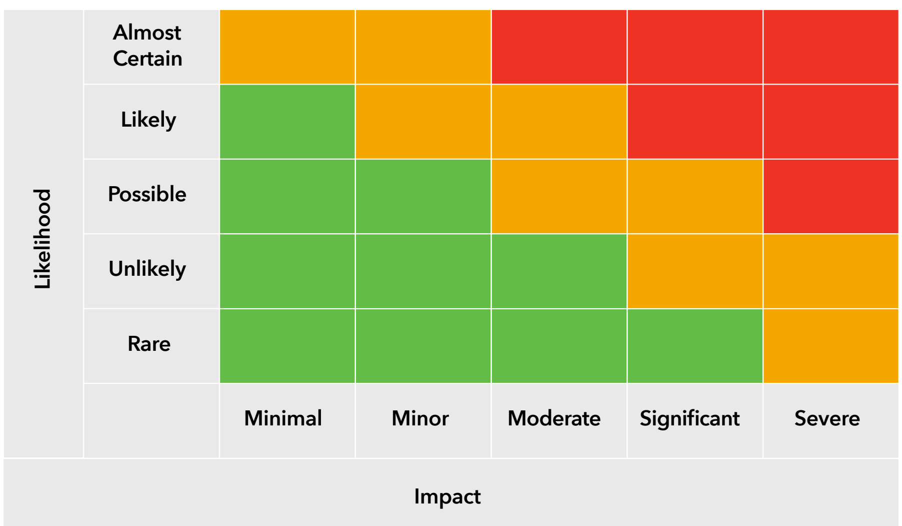


Step 1. Identify the risks: This takes place during the program and project planning phase and continues throughout the course of the reform program as new risks emerge. Program risks are identified by the RPMU and reform program head; project risks are identified by the project manager.

Step 2. Record the risks: A Risk Register must be maintained for each reform project and for reform-wide risks by the RPMU. An example of a risk register is provided at Appendix 1.

Step 3. Assess the risks: Project managers and the RPMU assess each identified risk in terms of its consequence and the likelihood of the risk occurring as shown in Figure 1.6. The explanation for the red, amber, and green ratings is given below.

Figure 1.6: Risk Management Table



Rating	Meaning of this rating
G	Indicates that this risk is well managed and/or is at a generally acceptable level or that it must be accepted (e.g., the cost of further treatment would be too high)
A	Indicates that further action is required to manage the risk to an acceptable level
R	Indicates a serious, unacceptable level of risk that requires immediate attention and escalation to the reform steering committee

Step 4. Assign ownership of the risks: A Risk Owner (the person who has the authority to manage a particular risk and is accountable for the risk) is appointed based on the "traffic light" risk rating (green, amber, or red) as follows:

Risk Rating	Risk Owner
Green	Project Manager
Amber	Reform Program Head
Red	Reform Steering Committee

When amber- and red-rated risks are identified at the project level, the project manager escalates them to the reform program head. The reform program head takes red-rated risks to the reform steering committee. The tax administration head is kept informed of all serious risks facing the reform program.

Step 5. Mitigate the risks: The Risk Owner decides how to mitigate (treat) the risk. The mitigation action is recorded in the Risk Register including a description of the action to be taken and identification of who has been given responsibility for executing the action.

Step 6. Monitor mitigation actions: The Risk Owners monitor the mitigating actions to ensure that the risks are properly dealt with.

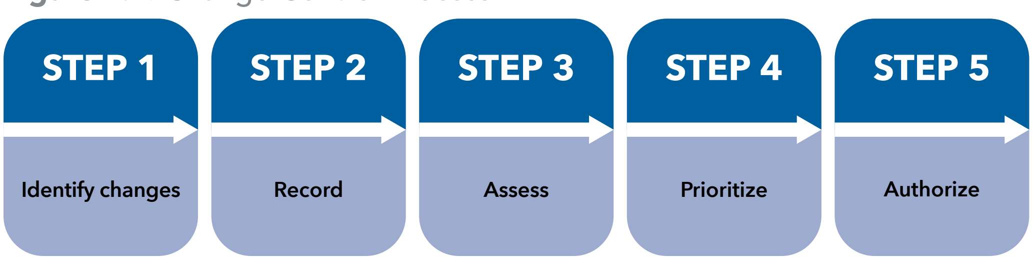
Managing Changes to Approved Plans

Despite the best efforts to plan all aspects of the reform projects, it is inevitable that changes will be needed to the plan that was developed due to a range of factors that were either not understood fully, missed, or unforeseen when the planning was developed. It is critical that any changes to a project are managed and assessed in the context of the overall reform program.

All material changes to a project's approved scope, budget, timeline, or quality standards must be approved by the reform program head or reform steering committee. This is achieved through a disciplined change control process that identifies, records, assesses, prioritizes, and authorizes changes.

The steps involved in this process are summarized in Figure 1.7 and explained further below.

Figure 1.7: Change Control Process



Step 1. Identify possible changes: Possible changes to reform projects must be identified by project staff and brought to the attention of the project manager at the earliest opportunity.

Step 2. Record changes: All proposed changes are documented and recorded in a Change Control Register. Appendix 2 sets out a change control submission template and change control register.

Step 3. Assess changes: The project manager assesses the impact of proposed changes on project time, cost, human resources, quality, scope, and expected benefits. Similarly, the RPMU assesses the impact of changes on the overall reform program and advises the reform program head and steering committee of any program wide impacts of implementing the proposed change.

Step 4. Prioritize changes: The project manager rates each proposed change as one of the following:

- **Essential**—being a "must have" change because the end product will not be achieved without it
- **Important**—because without the change, implementation will be suboptimal, however implementation could proceed with a workaround (an additional action or process)
- **Discretionary**—because the change is "nice to have" and not essential

Step 5. Authorize changes: If a change is assessed as having an impact on the project constraints (time, cost, scope, quality) as approved in the Project Initiation Document[5] (PID), the change request must be referred to the reform program head for consideration. If the change has a material effect on the business case underpinning the approved reform program, it must be escalated to the steering committee for decision.

Where approval is given to a change request, the decision is recorded in the Change Control Register and amendments are made to the reform and project plans.

Resolving Issues

Despite best planning efforts to identify and address potential risks, unexpected problems or issues always emerge during the life cycle of a reform project. In this sense, "issues" can be defined as unanticipated events or conditions that have already happened and are currently having a negative impact on project objectives. Examples of issues include:

- Differences of opinion about product design and implementation strategies
- Unexpected changes in the environment
- Unintended consequences arising from incorrect planning assumptions
- Problems with suppliers as a result of differences in interpretation of requirements specified in supplier contracts

When these issues surface, the project manager—and reform program head and steering committee, where necessary—need to be ready to deal with them as they happen. If left unresolved, they can result in unnecessary conflict, delays, costs, and even failure to deliver expected products and outcomes.

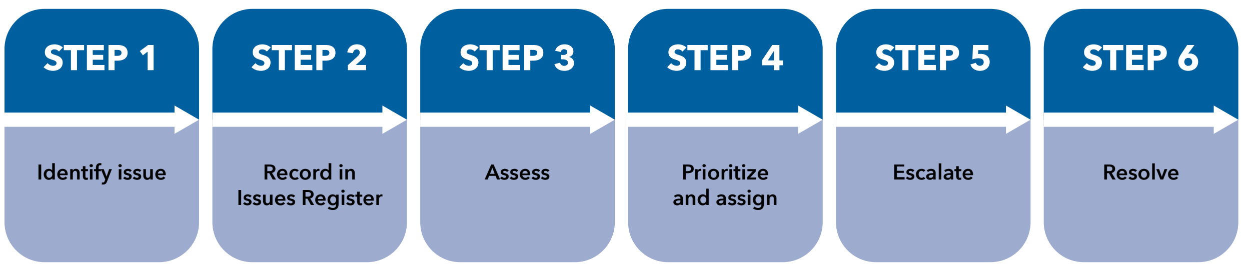
[5] The PID sets out the project objectives, scope, deliverables, benefits, budget, change control process, risks, approach, quality assurance requirements, stakeholder engagement, dependencies, and human resources. The level of detail in a PID will vary depending on the size of the project.

Issue management is a planned process for dealing with the unexpected, whatever it may be. It ensures that issues of a material nature are:

1. Identified and brought to the attention of the project manager, reform program head, and steering committee early
2. Documented and recorded in a register
3. Assessed in terms of impact and possible solutions
4. Prioritized and assigned to the person responsible for developing resolution options.
5. Escalated to the appropriate decision maker without delay
6. Resolved quickly

The process for managing issues is set out in Figure 1.8.

Figure 1.8: Issue Management Process



An **Issues Register** can be created manually using a spreadsheet or purchased from a variety of software suppliers; free templates can also be downloaded. Typically, the following information is recorded to provide an audit trail of how the issue is managed from identification through to resolution:

- **Issue type**—including technical, business process design, and resources
- **Date identified**, and by whom
- **Description**—providing details of what has happened, its potential impact, and options to resolve it
- **Priority**—including ratings of: **High** (where impact has potential to stop the project), **Medium** (where impact is noticeable but will not stop the project), and **Low** (where the impact does not affect activities on the critical path)
- **Responsibility**—identifying the person responsible for getting the issue resolved
- **Target resolution date**
- **Status**—recording the stage reached in the resolution process (e.g., identified, assessed, escalated, and resolved)
- **Final decision**—describing what was decided to resolve the issue

An example of an issue resolution template and an issue register is provided in Appendix 3.

CHAPTER 2.

Resourcing the Reform Program

This chapter provides guidance on the resourcing challenges for reform programs covering budget management, resourcing tensions, the role of the executive leadership team (ELT), separating operational and reform management, and integrating staff back into operational roles.

During the development of the reform program, a high-level cost estimate is prepared. As part of the detailed costing process for each project within the reform program, a review of these estimates is undertaken during the development of the PID (as part of the formal project approval steps). This chapter explains the challenges that tax administrations face resourcing the reform program with a focus on two key areas:

- Reform budget management
- Resourcing tensions

Reform Budget Management

This section examines budget management challenges relating to:

1. The differences between the high-level and more detailed program/project estimates (Figure 2.1)
2. The differences between the planned and approved program/project costs and actual running costs (Figure 2.4)

Differences between the High-level and More Detailed Estimates

Figure 2.1: Differences between the High-level and the Detailed Estimates

High-Level Estimates		Detailed Estimates
Estimated during the reform program development process	versus	Developed after the program approval through the detailed project planning development step

The high-level costing of a reform program is calculated by aggregating all the estimated costs associated with the program. The typical cost categories are set out in Figure 2.2 along with examples of the cost types for each category.

Figure 2.2: Types of Reform Program Costs

Cost Category	Examples of Types of Cost
Direct project costs	• Salaries for project managers and staff • Hardware and software • External contractor costs
Indirect project costs	• Costs for program monitoring and reporting (reform program management unit) • Accommodation and equipment • Travel • Program assurance and reviews
Contingency	• Projects rarely go to plan so make an allowance to cover change, risk, or uncertainty in cost estimation • Generally, a percentage (5–10%) of total direct and indirect costs

The approved reform program budget is developed based on high-level costing estimates set out in the business case. Once this is approved, the reform program is allocated an approved budget. The funding for this budget typically comes from the following sources:

- A specific government allocation from central reserves based on the business case submitted by the revenue agency
- A donor agency loan or grant to the government following negotiations between the government and the donor agency
- An investment decision by the tax administration to allocate funding to the reform program

Irrespective of the funding source, prudent management of these funds by the tax administration is critical. It is vital that there is accountability to government—and, where applicable, donors—for the expenditure of taxpayers' or donors' funds for the investment.

Once the reform program has been approved and the projects that support the program are formally developed and endorsed, more detailed costings are finalized. This more detailed costing process may reveal that some initial assumptions may have resulted in underestimating or overestimating the overall cost. Broadly, three scenarios will face the tax administration once the detailed costing has been completed, which are set out in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: Cost Consideration Scenarios

Scenarios	Considerations by Reform Steering Committee
Detailed costing is less than estimates	• The program can proceed. • If allocated funds are materially above the estimates, then adjusting the budget should be considered.
Detailed costing equals estimates	• The program can proceed.
Detailed costing is greater than the estimates	• Action is required before the program can proceed • Review the scope and identify any projects, or elements of projects, which can be reduced or canceled without impacting on the reform goals and objectives or the business case for reform. • Where this is not possible, seek additional funding from the same or different source.

The RPMU will establish the applicable scenario and inform the reform program head and the reform steering committee. The reform steering committee will take actions as detailed in Figure 2.3.

Note that in these assessments the estimate amount is the estimate before the contingency allowance. The original contingency provision can be used to offset a need to seek further allocated funds.

However, **a contingency should still be maintained throughout the life of the reform program** in case there are further costs that emerge during the implementation of the reform program. The level of the contingency (expressed as a percentage of total cost) may be reduced as the more detailed costing will have reduced some level of risk or uncertainty.

Differences in Planned and Actual Costs for the Program

Figure 2.4: Differences in Planned and Actual Costs for the Program

Planned Program Expenditure		Actual Program Expenditure
The final approved expenditure authorized for the reform program, broken down by time period and project	**versus**	Actual expenditure reported to the reform program management unit

Reform programs are expensive and can consume resources at a fast rate. The resource consumption (sometimes referred to as the "burn" rate) is calculated by tracking the actual program/project costs (people and other costs) for a specified period (weekly, fortnightly, monthly) against the planned expenditure. If the burn rate is:

- *Less than expected*, it indicates the program/project is underspending (either the cost has been overestimated or insufficient resources have been engaged as planned that could impact delivery)
- *Greater than expected*, it indicates the program/project is overspending (either the cost has been underestimated or more resources than planned have been engaged and utilized that could impact on overall program/project cost)

Note that monitoring the “burn” rate is a critical part of the reform program governance and management. Failure to monitor the “burn” rate can result in a shortfall of funds available to finish the project and program schedule.

Delays in one project can have a “knock-on” effect on all dependent projects. What starts as a cost overrun with one project (leading to a schedule delay) can lead to a much higher cost when the cost impacts of other projects are calculated.

EXAMPLE: Consider a scenario where a reform program comprises 8 key projects. One of the projects (project 1) has overspent and is behind schedule, but the project overspend is detected too late. In this scenario, projects 4 and 7 have a dependency on project 1 and the delays incurred by project 1 results in additional costs in delivering projects 4 and 7. Further, there is an additional project (6) which has a dependency on project 4. This results in additional time and cost needed for projects 4, 6 and 7. What started as a cost overrun for project 1 has grown to cost increases for other projects (4, 6, and 7). Figure 2.5 sets out the scenario and cost impacts.

Figure 2.5: Cost Overrun Scenario

Project 1	Projects 4 and 7	Project 6
• Overspending • Behind schedule • Delivery of key products delayed	• Projects 4 and 7 have a dependency on products delivered by Project 1. • The schedule needs to be extended requiring additional $$$ to cover the extra timeframe.	• Delays in Project 4 adds time to deliver Projects 6. • The schedule needs to be extended requiring additional $$$ to cover the extra timeframe.
Cost impact calculated as $A1.	Cost impact calculated as $B4+ $B7.	Cost impact calculated as $C6.

In this example, the **additional cost to the reform program** for the overexpenditure in Project 1 is not the value of $A1, but the total cost of the sum of **($A1 + $B4 + $B7 + $C6).**

Resourcing Tensions

Balancing Operational and Reform Priorities

Tax administrations face a competing demand during periods of reform to effectively deliver current revenue goals and service standards and to build the future tax administration. Therefore, it is vital to ensure that responsibilities for, and executive governance of, both the operational and reform dimensions of the tax administration are in place.

Operational activities are managed and delivered through the "business as usual" management arrangements—the existing management structure. **Reform activities** are led by the reform program head who has the responsibility to deliver the reform initiatives—with a new organizational structure established for the reform program time frame. Tax administrations will face a range of competing demands on the time, focus, and resources of the agency across both aspects of management. Tensions will arise:

- Between delivering the medium- and long-term changes
- Keeping day-to-day operations on track to deliver the revenue goals
- Demonstrating both reform and revenue successes to government and other stakeholders through short-term improvements while medium- to longer-term developments are underway

Figure 2.6 shows the interplay between the competing tensions that tax administrations face during periods of reforms.

Figure 2.6: Tensions Between Operations and Reforms

Deliver today's business	Keep day-to-day operations on track; deliver revenue, service, and enforcement goals.
Build tomorrow's tax administration	Plan and deliver the medium- to long-term changes.
Incremental improvements	Deliver the short-term incremental improvements while the longer-term developments are underway.

Managing operations alongside reform activity will at times be complicated. During the period that the reforms are being developed and implemented:

- Operations must continue.
- Services to taxpayers must not decline.
- Revenues must be protected through enforcement and other responses.

If any of these aspects are disrupted, vital political commitment and support for reform will be put at risk.

Determining the Level of Investment in Nonreform or Continuous Improvement System Changes

It is important that nonreform system changes or continuous improvement changes are excluded from the reform program. However, this approach can lead to tension between the reform and operational streams of the tax administration—how much or what type of nonreform change will be possible while reform is underway. The tax administrations (in particular, the ELT) need to be clear about the cost, benefits, priority, and sequencing of these types of nonreform initiatives.

Generally, during periods of reform, tax administrations will put these types of investment "on hold." However, there can be legitimate reasons for undertaking critical improvements outside the reform program. In addition, operational areas may be requesting short-term improvements ahead of the reforms. When nonreform change initiatives are proposed, the ELT will need to assess the risk to the reform program if the administration agrees to develop and implement the nonreform change initiatives. Sometimes the change will be mandated by law, but others may require a thorough risk assessment.

Figure 2.7 details a framework for assessing whether to invest in nonreform system changes during periods of reform.

Figure 2.7: Assessment of Nonreform System Changes

Assessment of System Change or Continuous Improvement Initiative During Reform	
Initiative	Describe the information technology system change or continuous improvement initiative that is proposed
Priority ranking	• **High**—mandatory (e.g., legislative requirement) • **Medium**—critical for interim enhancements to progress modernization prior to reform delivery • **Low**—may be required but tax administration could survive using existing system until the reform program is delivered
Information technology or business unit capacity to deliver	Can the initiative be delivered with existing resources and/or resource supplementation that can be funded?
Business value of implementation	Details of the benefit of the initiative in terms of revenue collection, increased compliance, improved taxpayer service, reduced manual effort, or strengthened management.
What is the risk to the reform program if the initiative is implemented?	Assessment of the risk to the reform program if the tax administration proceeds with the initiative (e.g. the number of information technology or business unit staff diverted from reform to deliver; or low impact as it does not divert staff from reform activities).

Competing for Key Resources

Another resourcing tension is the competition for skilled resources. Generally, the key staff with specialist knowledge of the tax administration will be in demand by both the reform and operational areas. This resourcing tension occurs in two ways:

- **Within the reform program:** Projects will need to draw on a small number of key people such as subject matter experts during the design, build, or configuration and test phases of system development.
- **Across operations and reform:** Managing the day-to-day operations may require the same key experts for both operations and reform.

Some good practices for addressing the tension that may arise from competition for key resources follow:

- Maintain a resource register of the key individuals and their skill sets within the RPMU.
- Understand the time periods that projects will have a demand for the key skills; this will help form a picture of potential conflicts.
- Move the key staff from project to project with clearly indicated "roll in" and "roll out" dates.
- Be flexible—there will be occasions when these key staff need to be released from the reform program to operational areas; flexibility is a key success factor in managing this demand.
- Agree at the executive level how to defuse the tension before it develops; this will allow for a more rational resolution of the conflict.
- Leverage data held by the RPMU such as priorities, project progress reporting, or project interdependencies to assist in managing this aspect of reform.
- Develop or identify additional people with in-demand skills or acquiring external short-term staff to bridge any expected gaps. This can be achieved by working with the "in demand" staff to identify and coach other staff members that they see as having skills in the specific areas in demand.

Role of the Executive Leadership Team

The ELT has several key roles during the implementation of the reform program. These include routinely assuring the reform program is on track to deliver agreed benefits and outcomes, keeping the minister informed of reform program progress and engaging staff and stakeholders in the ongoing reform agenda.

The ELT is also responsible for resolving tensions and making the hard decisions required to balance reform and operational delivery. It will be necessary from time to time for the ELT to assess the relative priorities between delivering the day-to-day operations and delivering the reforms.

The tax administration head needs to build a team that can understand both operational priorities and the importance of reform and provide leadership to deliver both. The two streams of operations and reform will be governed and managed separately under the stewardship of the tax administration head. Figure 2.8 explains the management and governance arrangements for both the reform and operational streams of tax administrations.

Figure 2.8: Reform and Operational Management and Governance Arrangements

Tax Administration Head		
Governing body	Reform Steering Committee	Executive Leadership Team
Secretariat/reporting and monitoring	Reform program management unit	Planning and monitoring unit
Key management layer	• Reform program head • Reform project managers	• Executive functional lead • Functional managers
	Reform stream	Operational stream

In some tax administrations, due to the size of the agency, the reform steering committee and the ELT will be the same group. Where this is the case, the ELT should meet separately with a specific focus on either reform leadership or operational leadership (with separate meeting agendas).

In other tax administrations, there will be some common membership. A good practice is to ensure there is cross-divisional management in place irrespective of whether the focus is operational or reform management.

Separating Reform Management from Operational Management

The level of management overhead can sometimes appear daunting to tax administrations. As a result, the temptation is to assign reform responsibilities to managers who are also responsible for operational activities and to govern and manage reform as part of the existing operational governance and management process. Wherever this has been the case, the reform challenge has taken a “back seat” to the operational demands. This is because the “here and now” pressure to collect revenue, process filed tax declarations, and maintain service and enforcement levels will always seem more critical than investment in the future.

Once clear roles and responsibilities between “running the business” and “changing the business” have been established, it is important that the two groups do not become separate entities and lose sight of the interconnected relationship. Chapter 3 of this guide has a specific focus on change management and how the two streams of activities remain connected.

Note that once the reforms are delivered, the reforms become “business as usual.”

Integrating Tax Administration Staff Back into Operational Roles Post the Reform Program

During the reform program, it will be necessary to integrate existing tax administration staff into roles within the reform program. Positions will need to be created for this work for the duration of the role. This creates two further challenges for tax administrations in relation to reform program resourcing:

1. **Arrangements that are put in place to cover the staff member's operational role**: This can entail temporary or permanent filling of the position and the approach will depend on the length of time the staff member is needed for reform activities and the tax administration human resource policy in this area.
2. **Placing the tax administration staff back into the day-to-day operational roles:** This will depend on the human resource policy that is in place (like the point above). Generally, staff will either return to their normal position (if this still exists) or they are placed in an appropriate job within the tax administration.

Staff who have worked in the delivery of the reforms may have developed new skills that should be utilized. Placing these staff in new roles may be more appropriate than placing them back into their previous roles.

CHAPTER 3.

Change Management

This chapter explains the concept of change management; the three elements of change management (leadership, business readiness, and communication and consultation); developing and delivering a change management strategy; preparing people for the changes; and key features of the change management process.

Change management refers to processes and actions that need to be in place to ensure that the staff, community, and key stakeholders are aware of, and prepared for, the changes that will be delivered by the reforms.

Tax administration reform is about fundamental changes to the tax administration and to the administration of tax laws. Therefore, a concerted effort is needed to inform and educate key groups about the changes and how they will be affected by those changes. This information and education must be supported with detailed plans to reflect the changed way the tax administration will operate. In this respect, it is another set of projects that support the reform program. These are sometimes referred to as enabling projects.

What Is Change Management?

The focus of change management is to help everyone impacted by the reforms to adapt to the changes rather than risk alienating them with unexplained shifts. It is about the processes, activities, and sustained commitment of leadership to prepare staff, businesses/citizens, and stakeholders for the changes that will be delivered through the implementation of the reform program.

The changes that the reform delivers are first articulated in the goals and objectives of the reform program. In some cases, a roadmap is developed to summarize the changes and the planned timing for the changes. Once the reform program is approved, change management work needs to be initiated.

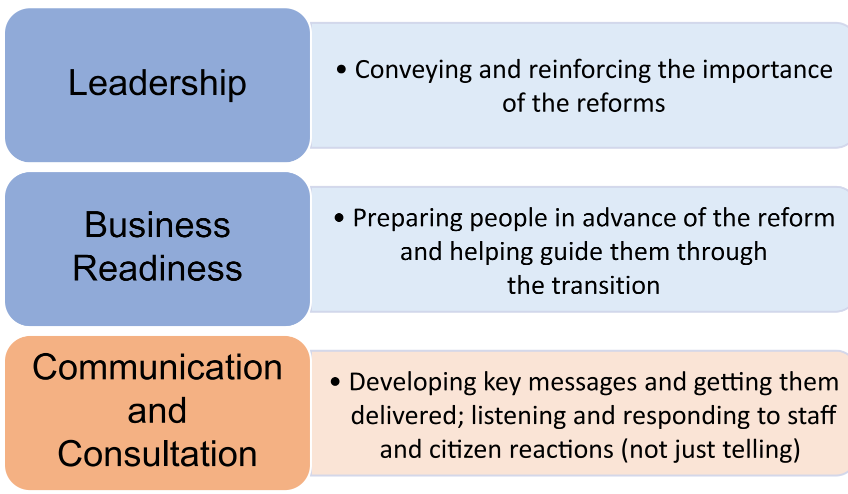
The key target groups for change management are:

- **Staff:** The people within the tax administration who will be impacted, directly or indirectly, by the changes to business processes and/or the introduction of new work types. In some cases, the current work done by some staff may not be required beyond the reform implementation; in other cases, the skills needed for work will change where there are changes, or the way work is done will be different. In addition, the reforms may target a change to the work culture of the tax administration (e.g., from an audit-focused approach to a compliance risk management culture).
- **Businesses/Citizens:** This includes any businesses or citizens who will be impacted by the reforms. New legislation can change the obligations of taxpayers; new systems can change forms or methods of interacting with the tax administration.
- **Stakeholders:** These include other government agencies, the ministry to which the revenue agency reports, or the government. Taxation and collection of revenue is politically sensitive, and, therefore, maintaining strong and positive relationships with these groups is critical during reform programs.

Elements of Change Management

Too often, change management is seen through a communication lens. This is understandable as communication is one of the vital aspects of change management. However, change management is more than just communication. It comprises three key elements that are set out in Box 3.1 and explained below.

BOX 3.1: Key Elements of Change Management



Effective change management must have all three elements to be successful—leadership, business readiness, and communication and consultation.

Leadership

Over the life of the reform program, there will be challenges in delivering both day-to-day operations and reform. Visible advocacy, commitment to the reforms, and determination by the tax administration leaders (especially the tax administration head and the executive leadership team) are critical to maintaining the momentum of reform. Leadership steered the fledgling reform concepts into a proposal and gained the funding and approval for the reforms. That same leadership is needed to sustain the reform objectives through the development and implementation phase of the reform program.

Business Readiness

Business readiness is about ensuring that the targeted participants:

- Are prepared for the changes before they are implemented
- Are supported during the implementation
- Receive ongoing assistance for a period following the implementation

This dimension of change management involves detailed project plans and needs to be managed through the same project management disciplines that are in place for other projects within the reform program.

Examples of business readiness activities include:

- Documenting new processes and procedures
- Developing training material and conducting training programs
- Providing "go live" support to staff and the community through help desk services

It is important to monitor and evaluate business readiness activities (through surveys and assessments by third parties) to ensure they are effective.

Communication and Consultation

Change management is about preparing participants who will be impacted by the changes by:

- Providing information and explanations about why the changes are being made
- Tailoring the reform rationale to the various audiences within the tax system
- Consulting with participants to seek feedback on the proposed changes

Seeking and responding to feedback from staff, citizens, and stakeholders is a vital part of the change management process. Listening to the feedback gathered through the consultation process helps to target and frame the key messages in the communications.

Successful change management needs to have a clear process for developing, approving, and releasing communications.

> Change management communication must be targeted and consistent with the overall reform program objectives.

Change Management: Strategy

Change management needs to be addressed at two levels:

- **Strategy:** This needs to be developed to guide the overall reform program change management approach (this section).
- **Delivery:** This includes detailed change management projects that are required to support the overall reform program (following section).

Overview of the Change Management Strategy

The change management strategy sets out, at a high level, the tax administration's approach to leadership, business readiness, and communication and consulting.

Developing the change management strategy should start when the reform program is being developed and approved and should span all stages of the reform program. The goals, objectives, and benefits outlined in the business case and the reform program should inform the change management strategy.

A roadmap that sets out the reform program in a high-level diagrammatic summary of goals, objectives, and the timeline for changes is a valuable reference for engaging with stakeholders and marketing the reform journey. Figure 3.1 sets out the key elements for a reform roadmap.[6]

Figure 3.1: Key Elements of a Reform Roadmap

The change management strategy must have the following dimensions:

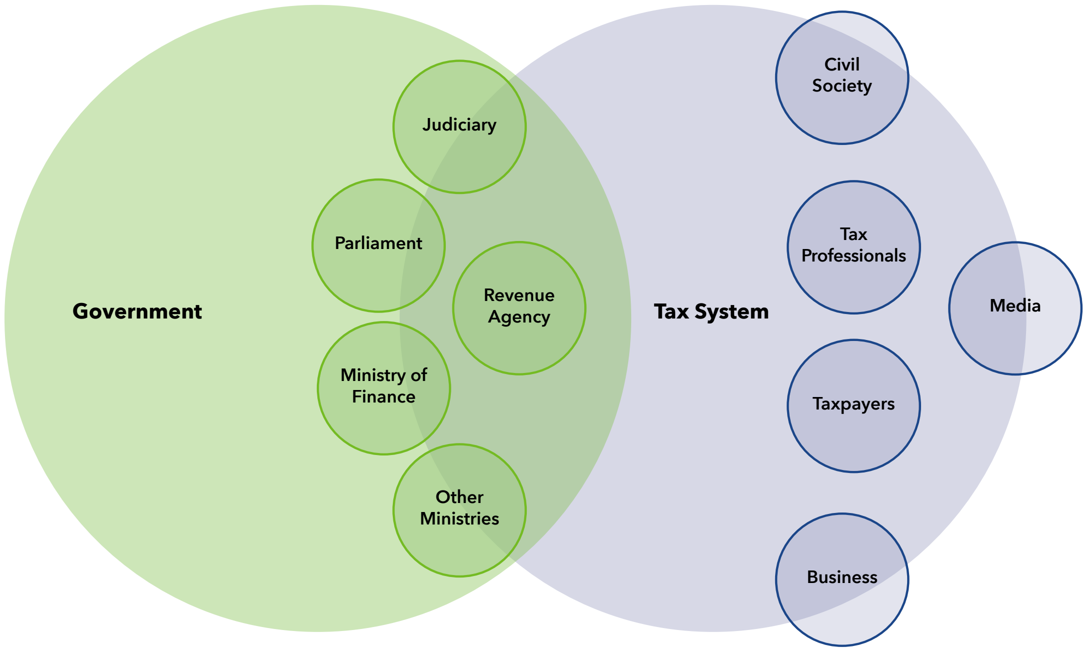
Stakeholder Management

Strong **stakeholder management** will help the tax administration gain support for the reforms and eliminate blockages along the way. It is important to identify all stakeholders for the reform program and assess their level of interest and power to influence the success of the program.

Based on this analysis of stakeholder groups, more detailed plans should be developed for how the tax administration engages with stakeholders to achieve the program outcomes. Figure 3.2 shows the potential range of internal and external stakeholders that typically have an interest in tax administration reform.

[6] Refer to step 6 in Part 2, Chapter 3, and Appendix 4 in the Reform Management Fundamentals reference guide.

Figure 3.2: Potential Range of Stakeholders in a Tax System



Communication and Consultation Strategy

A communications strategy should be developed as part of the overall change management strategy. In Part 2 of this chapter, the importance of communication and consultation was explained. This strategy outlines aspects such as:

- The preferred communication channels for internal and external parties and the extent to which stakeholders will be involved in developing communication products
- The role of the RPMU and the tax administration communications group for reform communications
- The authorization process for communications
- Program- versus project-level communication responsibilities
- Crisis management triggers and communication approaches
- Evaluation process

The **consultation** component sets out the processes to seek feedback from key parties impacted by the reforms to ensure a successful implementation. Seeking out and understanding the likely issues that might develop will allow the tax administration to be better informed and better target change management actions.

Where new systems and interaction channels are to be delivered by the reform program, testing the ease of use with both staff and taxpayers as part of the design stage will help with the eventual implementation of the changes.

Change Management: Delivery

Once the change management strategy is established, it needs to be implemented, generally through several supporting projects that are included in the overall reform program.

Like all other projects within the reform program, the supporting (or enabling) projects that make up change management need the same discipline and rigor in terms of development and implementation. Each element of the change management process requires a detailed project plan. Figure 3.3 sets out the possible focus areas for implementing change management and provides some examples of the activities that are required.

Figure 3.3: Focus Areas for Change Management Delivery

Change Management Focus	Examples of Activities
Organizational and structural issues	• Creation of new units and organizational structures • Determination of number, skill, and classification profile of staff • Development of new job descriptions and role statements • Securing accommodation and equipment (desks, chairs, computers)
Staff recruitment and allocation	• Assessment of what changes are to be made to the existing recruitment process • Approvals and authority to recruit • Scheduling the recruitment in time for new staff commencement
Workforce plan	• Development of the workforce plan to ensure that proposed workplace changes are implemented • Identification of any changes to work location • Development of processes for redeployment of staff surplus to current requirements
Training	• Development of a new training curriculum • An understanding of the different training requirements for new staff versus existing staff • Development and trial of training course material for the curriculum • Delivery and logistics of the training
Operational changes	• Design of new work processes • Development of supporting work procedures
Transitional management	• Consideration of how work will be managed as the tax administration moves from the old ways of working to the new ways of working • Consideration of whether the transition will be phased or "big bang" • Assessment of how any residual workloads in the old system will be finalized
Test case scenarios	• Development of test case scenarios for new systems to be developed based on system design • Arrangement for staff to be trained in new processes and procedures and participate in testing phase

Preparing Key Participants for the Changes

The staff, community, and other identified stakeholders must be aware of the changes well ahead of the implementation. Once the reality of the changes materializes and they transition from the old to new ways of working or interacting, further support will be required.

Understanding and communicating change both internally and externally is a critical success factor in reform. The change story (what, why, when, how, who) needs to be developed and communicated several times to staff so that they have awareness of the proposed changes, the likely time frame for implementation, and its impact on their current work. Similar messages need to be communicated to taxpayers.

Change can be emotional. Setting out the case for change is more effective when it can be discussed rationally. Trying to have a rational discussion in an emotionally charged environment, such as during the implementation of changes, is futile. Instead, building and sharing the case for change long before the changes are implemented is far more effective. Figure 3.4 shows the relationship between the reform roadmap and the key change management actions.

Figure 3.4: Key Change Management Actions over the Reform Life Cycle

Current revenue agency → **Transitional state** → **Reformed revenue agency**

The Starting Point: Pre-reform	Transition: Reform Program	The End State: Post-reform
• Determine what needs to change–development of the reform program.	• Manage and deliver the reform program.	• Manage the revenue agency under the reformed state.
• Ensure there is strong support for the reforms. • Articulate and communicate the need for change. • Manage and understand the doubts and concerns.	• Communicate often. • Dispel rumors. • Empower action. • Involve people in the process. • Establish "go live" support processes and procedures.	• Anchor changes into the culture of the revenue agency. • Develop ways to sustain the change. • Provide training and support. • Celebrate success.

Consultation–informing, listening, and responding → **Communicating**–tailoring messages to audiences

Key Features of the Change Management Process

The key features of the change management process are described in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5: Key Features of the Change Management Process

Leadership	• Provide a strong statement of direction and the reforms accompanied by a persuasive argument for the reform.
	• Layer communication:
	  ◦ For management levels, it should be informative and an instruction.
	  ◦ For operative levels, it should be delivered as an aspirational statement.

Planning	• Identify the likely groups to be impacted. • Provide a clear description of what is happening and when it is likely to impact the audience; this must be tailored to specific audiences, especially if some areas are threatened with issues such as redundancy or with a significant change in role (e.g. assessment officers being changed into "desk auditors").
Governance	• Describe how the change is being managed and that things will happen in an orderly fashion—confidence in the outcome is critical to the acceptance of the change.
Information	• Provide clear, consistent, and regular information about what is happening. • Actively counter rumors
Explanation	• Explain why the reform is necessary and why the change is good for the tax administration and the audience. • Ensure staff **understand** why their world is being changed.
Certainty	• Tell staff what will happen to them. • Build staff confidence through adequate information and training for the new environment.
Value	• Reinforce that the base knowledge that staff have about taxpayers and the overall tax system will not be altered by the reform program. • Remind staff of their worth to the tax administration.
Opportunity	• Raise awareness of staff of the additional opportunities the reforms present for them in terms of better jobs, careers, and skills.
Settling-in period	• Ensure staff are given time to become proficient with the new processes, procedures, systems, and law.
Be prepared	• Ensure the tax administration has the capability to respond quickly to any issues arising especially with the reform development and/or implementation. • Remember unresolved issues cause loss of confidence in the reform program.

CHAPTER 4.

Post-implementation Evaluation of the Reform Program

This chapter explains the purpose and importance of the post-implementation evaluation of a tax administration reform program including determining its scope and timing.

Purpose and Importance of the Post-implementation Evaluation

The post-implementation evaluation forms part of the overall reform program management process and is undertaken at both the individual project and the overall reform program level. Delivering a project or completing the program does not mean that the tax administration has delivered the intended benefits.

The purpose of the post-implementation evaluation is to:

- Evaluate whether the reform objectives were met.
- Determine how effectively the project (or program) was run.
- Assess the areas that worked well and that could be improved to inform future project or program delivery.

The post-implementation evaluation ensures both transparency and accountability by the tax administration to the broader government and its citizens. It assesses whether the individual project or overall program delivered what it set out to do as well as the effectiveness of the expenditure of public funds.

During the three-to-five-year life of the reform program, post-implementation evaluations will be needed as each project is completed. As each project closes, tax administrations need to understand what worked well and what could be improved to ensure the success and health of other projects and thus the program.

The post-implementation evaluation should be a constructive, objective evaluation of what was achieved against what was planned to be achieved. This is often done by engaging an independent party to undertake the evaluation—either someone within the tax administration who was not involved directly in the reform activities or an external party (either from another government agency or a consultancy) who can dispassionately analyze what was achieved against the benchmarks that have been documented.

Note: The post-implementation evaluation should be based on facts and documented material and should avoid opinions on the approach, mindsets that oppose reforms, or hearsay.

What Should Be Evaluated?

When evaluating a project or the overall program, the steps/areas that should be covered are the same. The only difference between evaluating a project or the program is the scope of the evaluation. Post-implementation evaluations of projects focus on the individual project, whereas the post-implementation evaluation of the reform program will focus on the collective delivery of all projects that have constituted the reform program.

Figure 4.1 lists the areas of focus for a post-implementation reform program/project evaluation and provides points to consider as part of each area of focus. This list brings together good practice in post-implementation evaluations.

Figure 4.1: Post-implementation Reform Program/Project Evaluation Focus Areas

Evaluation Focus	Points to be Considered
Project deliverables	• Did the project deliver the agreed scope and objectives, within the approved timeline and within the approved budget? • How effective and useful was the risk management process—were all risks identified and did the mitigations prove effective? • How effective was the tax administration"s change management processes in getting stakeholders ready for the reforms (new products, services, and ways of working)?
Resources	• Were the correct resources allocated to the project? Were there enough resources? Were the resource levels correct? • How accurate were the estimated costs?
Level of documentation	• Have appropriate documents for systems, processes, and procedures been developed and made available? • Was there sufficient documented guidance for projects and other parties involved in the reform program? • Was all the documentation of value, particularly the Project Initiation Document (PID)?
Usability of the new system and processes	• Have the staff of the tax administration been trained and supported in how to use the new system and execute the new business processes? • Can citizens easily access and use the new e-services and are the e-service take-up rates as expected (where delivered)? • Are the reporting systems fit for purpose?
Effectiveness of the work done and benefits realized	• What was the quality of the deliverable? How much rework was required to deliver the project? • Were the objectives of the project achieved (generally evaluated on a scale of 1–5 with 1 being "not met" and 5 being "completely met")?
What lessons have been learned	• What worked well and should be done again? • What can be improved? • What should be avoided?

Timing of the Post-implementation Evaluation

The timing of a post-implementation will depend on whether the focus is a project or the overall reform program.

Reform Projects

Ideally, the evaluation should be conducted while the project is still fresh in people's minds—generally as close to the end of the project as possible. A key factor in determining the timing is that project team members and the project manager will have new assignments (either other projects or placement back to operational roles) and implementation partners will have come to the end of their contractual terms. It is important that these participants are involved in the evaluation.

The post-implementation evaluation should be conducted over a short time frame—it should be focused and not drawn out.

While the project may be over and the project has delivered what it set out to do, it may be too early to assess the effectiveness of what was delivered. For example, in the case of the implementation of a new information technology system, the new system will be in use; however, it may take some weeks or even months before a full evaluation of whether the intended outcomes associated with the system can be assessed.

Given this can be the case, the evaluation should be conducted over two phases.

- **First phase:**
  - Is conducted at the conclusion of the project
  - Evaluates the aspects of project management (time, scope, cost, and quality)
  - Documents the results along with lessons learned
- **Second phase:**
  - Focuses on the effectiveness of the project in terms of meeting the reform goals and objectives related to the project; the timing for this should allow for sufficient time to have passed to objectively assess whether this was achieved

Reform Program

The reform program cannot be evaluated fully until the conclusion of the program. Given that the program can run for several years, it can be beneficial if interim evaluation points were scheduled. This would depend on the breakdown of the reform objectives and the timing of the delivery of those objectives.

Program evaluations cover the same content as a project evaluation; however, the focus is on the entire reform program rather than an individual project. The same challenges for the timing of project evaluations exist for program evaluations. In particular, the expected program benefits realization and achievement of the outcomes will generally not be realized for some years. Nevertheless, undertaking a program evaluation at the conclusion of the program provides the revenue agency with a good understanding of the efficiency and effectiveness of the reform program.

Who Should Be Involved in the Post-implementation Evaluation?

There are a range of participants who need to be involved in the post-implementation evaluation. These participants can vary depending on whether the evaluation relates to a project within the program or the overall program itself. Figure 4.2 shows the range of possible participants and indicates whether they would participate in a project or program evaluation.

The participants in the evaluation should be representative of the delivery team, end users, program management support, operational executives, and the reform program head. For the program evaluations, the executive leadership team and tax administration head will also need to be involved.

Figure 4.2: Participants in Post-implementation Evaluations

Participant Group	Program Evaluation	Project Evaluation
Tax administration head	✓	✗
Executive leadership team	✓	✗
Reform program head	✓	✓
Reform program management unit	✓	✓
Key operational executives	✓	✓
Operational managers	✗	✓
Project manager	✓	✓
Key project members	✗	✓
Tax administration end users (representatives)	✓	✓
Citizen or taxpayer representative	✓	✓
Evaluation team	✓	✓

A post-implementation evaluation group will need to be established with a person appointed to lead a small team (depending on the size of the evaluation). The reform program management unit will provide the documentation from the existing records maintained by the unit.

For post-implementation evaluations of projects, the evaluation report will be submitted to the reform program head. For the program evaluation, the report will be submitted to the tax administration head via the reform program head. In addition to the tax administration head, the minister responsible for the tax administration may need to receive the evaluation report.

CHAPTER 5.

Summary

Reform management is a challenging dimension of tax administration. In fact, it is challenging for any organization—changing organizations is hard work and requires leadership, commitment, and discipline. In public agencies, such as tax administrations, it also requires the support of the minister and government.

Successful reform program implementation requires:

- **Effective program management methods and tools**
  - **Evaluation and selection of the right process, method, and tools to support program and project management.** These range from simple spreadsheets to more complex software packages for project and program management.
  - **Making sure the RPMU undertakes key roles**. The unit must make sure there is consistent application of the agreed project management methodology; maintain a view of program progress; manage risks; control changes to scope, budget, timelines, and quality; and maintain an issue register.
  - **Clarity about the different roles performed by the RPMU versus the project delivery staff.** The reform program management unit is the guardian of the reform program overall and the custodian of its approved methods and processes. Each project team must deliver project outcomes within the approved project scope, budget, and time frame using the approved methodologies.
- **Resource management**
  - **Focusing on the financial management of the reform program.** Reform programs can be expensive, so make sure variations between estimated and detailed costings as well as planned versus actual expenditure are identified and actioned.
  - **Identification and resolution of resourcing tensions**—noting the common areas of tension:
    - Balancing operational and reform priorities
    - Resolving the level of investment in nonreform change initiatives during reform programs
    - Competition for key resources
  - **Safeguarding of reform success through a separate dedicated management and governance framework for the reform program.** Avoid the trap of attempting to deliver reform programs through the existing tax administration operational governance and management arrangements.
- **Change Management**
  - **Making sure staff, community, and stakeholders are prepared for, and supported** during the changes that will be implemented by the reform program.

  - **Focus on all three elements of change management:**
    - Leadership
    - Business readiness
    - Communication and consultation
  - **Development of a reform roadmap to provide a high-level view of the reform program** and help prepare key participants for the changes.
- **Post-implementation evaluation of the reform program**
  - **Conducting post-implementation evaluations at both the project and program level** to:
    - Evaluate whether the benefits and outcomes of the reform program (or an individual project) have been achieved
    - Assess how effectively the benefits and outcomes were delivered
    - Identify lessons learned for future reforms programs or projects
  - **Ensuring the post-implementation evaluation is an objective review of the reform process.** It should be conducted by an independent team who objectively assess the outcomes against the documented reform goals and objectives.
  - **Completing a post-implementation evaluation at the end of the project or reform program** while it is fresh in the minds of those involved noting that in some cases, a second phase for the post-implementation evaluation is necessary.

It is also important to remember that:

- **Reform is tricky and requires disciplined management**:
  - You cannot cut corners or tackle reform without all the elements set out in this reference guide.
  - It is harder than managing your day-to-day operations.
- **Successful reforms** require the sustained support, commitment, and leadership by the head of the tax administration, executive leadership team and political masters.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Example of a Risk Register

Risk Identification Number	**Description of Risk** Include Any Identified "Triggers"	**Impact on Project** Identify Consequences	Assessment of **Likelihood**	Assessment of **Seriousness**	**Grade** (Combined Likelihood and Seriousness)	**Mitigation Actions** (Preventive or Contingency)	**Responsibility** for Mitigation Action(s)
N	*A "newspaper headline" style statement. Also identify relevant triggers that may cause the risk to be realized.*	*Describe the nature of the risk and the impact on the project if the risk is not mitigated or managed.*				*Specify planned mitigation strategies:* • *Preventive (implement immediately)* • *Contingency (implement if/when risk occurs)*	*Specify who is responsible for undertaking each mitigation action(s).*
N+1							
N+2							

Appendix 2. Change Control Submission Template and Change Control Register

Change Control Submission Template

Change Control Submission	*<insert date>*
Project manager	<Insert name of project manager>
Project title/reference number	*<Insert project title and if available the project reference number>*
Description of the request	
Brief statement of the change requested	
Reason for the change	
State the reason for the change	
Impact analysis	
Project	*Outline key impacts on projects; highlight impacts on cost, schedule, or quality of deliverable*
Reform Program	*Identify any reform program impacts—particularly where impacts to dependent projects and overall program schedule or cost*

Change Control Register

Date	**Project**	**Change Request**	**Priority**	**Decision**
Date change was formally requested	*Project title and project reference number if it exists.*	*Description of the request (copy and paste from the change control submission form).*	*Essential important discretionary (as per submission)*	*Approved/not approved* *Record decision maker or decision body and date of decision*

Appendix 3. Program/Project Plan Issue Resolution Template and Issue Register

Project/Program Issue Resolution Template <issue number>

Issue
Detail the issue that requires resolution.
Options
Detail that options that could resolve the issue as described. *Ideally no less than two options and no more than four.*
Recommendation
Provide a statement as to the recommended option with reasons detailing why it is the preferred option.

Program/Project Issue Register

Issue Reference Number	Issue Type	Date Identified/ by Whom	Issue Description	Priority	Responsibility	Target Date to Resolve	Status	Final Decision
	Technical/ business process design/ resources	MM/DD/ YY /(person who identified)	Providing details of what has happened, its potential impact and options to resolve	High Medium Low	Person responsible for getting issue resolved	MM/DD/YY	Identified Assessed Escalated Finalized	Describe what

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