



Divisions of General Practice

Information Management Maturity Framework
(IMMF)

**Toolkit – Inventory of existing issues
and improvements registers**



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Purpose

The purpose of the “Inventory of existing issues and improvements registers” tool is to assist Divisions to address the action task below.

| Action Tasks | Capacity Gap | IMMF Element |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|
| Implement an IM issues and improvements register for change management | Unaware to Reactive | Divisional Context |

1. This task should have been identified from the Information Management Maturity Framework (IMMF) gap analysis and toolkit specification.

This tool provides Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) with feedback from Divisions who have successfully implemented an issues and improvements register. Where information is available, a brief commentary on the scope and value of each system is also included. The listing is not exhaustive, just a sample of suitable issue registers.

The aim is to assist CEOs to make a well-informed choice amongst alternative systems and approaches to creating an issues and improvements register. Use of an issues register can minimise the duplication of effort, operational and financial costs and enable Divisions to benefit from lessons learned in other information management (IM) communities and by other Divisions who have implemented IM issues and improvements registers.

This tool should be read in conjunction with the IMMF Toolkit - “Guidelines for an IM issues and opportunities register” – which is oriented towards new processes to be adopted by a Division implementing an issues register and matters relating to change management.

Explanatory notes

The inventory of existing issues and improvements registers provides advice and contact details for CEOs who wish to better appreciate the operational impact implicit in implementing an IM issues and improvements register and also the range of technology solutions and their functionality in place within other Divisions.

The inventory is followed by a sample template showing basic information captured, stored and maintained in an issues and improvements register - closely following the format used in the Northern Territory Divisions.

The template is also consistent with a sample template for capturing and maintaining issues - described in the PRINCE2 Project Management Methodology. Details of the relevant publication appear in the last page of this tool – References and Contributors.

Common features and issue description fields in the existing issues and improvements registers identified are:

Issue Detail

- Date Style (Table)
- Issue details (Text)
- Issue Category (Table)
- Issue Priority (Table)
- Issue resolution stream (Table)



- Required resolution date (Text)
- Issue Status (Not started, In progress, Completed) (Table)
- Responsible person (Table)
- Date Closed (Text)

The tool lists known instances where Divisions have created IM Issues Registers and provides a brief commentary and contact details for each.

Instructional design

This tool consists of two Parts

2.

3. **Part 1 – Current inventory of Divisions using an IM issues and improvements register**

4. **Part 2 – Sample IM issues and improvements register template structure**

CEOs should review the examples of issues registers and template structures in relation to their own Division's requirements for an IM issues and improvement register. Once this takes place the Division is then in a more informed position to select the rules and conventions for use of their own register, to select a suitable classification schema and to decide on suitable technology platforms and applications that can implement the required functions of the Division IM issues and improvements register.

Summary of outcomes and resources

| Workstreams | Outcomes | Resources |
|--|--|--|
| New processes or procedures to be adopted | <p>Within a Division, an IM register is created, used and becomes an integral part of the periodic assessment of the project and day-to-day operations of the Division.</p> <p>Rules and conventions for using the register are in place and consistency across Divisions will allow for ongoing improvement in rules and procedures.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to investigate the qualities of superior issues classification schemas.</p> | This tool is self administered for the implementation of new processes and new technology. |
| Technology | A Divisional register is created using a suitable technology platform and application. | |



Part 1: Current inventory of Divisions using an IM issues and improvements register¹

Victorian IMIT Network: e-Health Issues Register⁺

Each of the issues listed below would have description of the Name & Description field followed by a running commentary of events occurring in each including the date of each entry, and frequently contact person and website details.

| Ref. | Date Added | Name & Description |
|------|------------|--|
| 1. | 00/00/0000 | Description of Event and comment on implications |
| 2. | | |

This kind of register is a very simple example of an organisation keeping in one place a record of events of significance in a project or program that may be the subject of a later enquiry e.g. if some element of an IT system rollout does not work properly.

This example illustrates the format of the register and the use of the register as a reference source as well as providing a narrative of activity in that topic area. While it is suitable for its purpose and has the advantage of being simple and quick to complete, more structure would be needed to more usefully record suggestions or potential improvements.

Note the difference between the format of this register and the PRINCE2 (in Part 2) sample template where the format is oriented towards the management of an issue in the context of a project – the allocation of responsibility and due dates for resolution of that issue by a specific person.

Northern Territory

In November 2007, General Practice and Primary Health Care Northern Territory² issued a paper for discussion and enhancement by the RHIMO (now eHealth Officer) network - outlining basic characteristics of an IM issues register, setting the context for its creation and operation and briefly outlining short term (e.g. spreadsheet) and long term (e.g. a centralised web-accessed database) technical solutions.

The discussion paper also described possible IM issues register contents, reporting, maintenance and access to the register.

The Northern Territory Divisions have implemented an IM issues register using a spreadsheet with the features described in that discussion paper. The format is shown below.

| Issue # | Issue details | Date opened | Opened by | Issue category | Issue priority | Issue resolution stream | Required resolution date | Issue status | Responsible person | Date closed | Related documents |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| Unique ID for each Issue | Brief description of issue | Date opened | Name of person raising issue | Can use own schema | e.g. High Medium Low | Process or unit in Division that will resolve issue | Date issue needs to be resolved | Can use own | Person responsible to resolve issue | Date closed | Cross reference to related documents |

¹ As at June 2008

² Robyn Murphy, eHealth Development Officer – see References and Assistance Toolkit – Inventory of existing issues and improvements registers



Tasmania

Tasmanian Divisions have adapted the Tasmanian Government Project Issues Register Template and Guide³ for use as an IM issues register. This template was originally prepared for use by Tasmanian Government agencies to improve their project management. An example of the template is shown below:

| Issue No. | Description | Raised By | Date | Responsible Officer | Priority | Actions & Progress | Status | Date Resolved | Cross Refs. |
|-----------|--|---------------|-------------|---------------------|----------|--|--------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Lack of agency representation on project working group | Working Group | 1 July 2007 | Jane | High | Letter of invite to agencies not represented | Open | | Risk 3.3 |

Tasmanian Divisions were also working to implement task management and software that could be used for managing issues. While there are many such systems in existence, the open source system *OneOrZero Task Management and Helpdesk System* is being adopted in that State. This system provides a range of features to track and manage tasks including helpdesks, application development, job tracking or issues management. More details can be found at the OneOrZero website (www.oneorzero.com).

Other Divisions

Discussions with several Divisions including Brisbane South Division of General Practice and Central Sydney GP Network indicated the use of simple spreadsheets to record details such as those shown in the table below:

| Issue | Description | Status | Officer Responsible | Review Date |
|-------|-------------|--------|---------------------|-------------|
| | | | | |

Most Divisions have some kind of issues register as it is required for Accreditation though practices and formats do vary.

Further examples of registers used by Divisions will be added in later editions of this tool.

Australian General Practice Network

The AGPN uses an issues register that has been adapted from the Prince2 project management methodology. The sample template in Part 2 of this tool is shown below.

Using Examples of Issues and Improvements Registers

CEOs should review the examples of issues registers and template structures in relation to their own Division's requirements for an IM issues and improvement register. Once this takes place the Division is then in a more informed position to:

1. Select the rules and conventions for use of their own register.

CEOs should use the IMMF Tool - "Guidelines for an IM issues and opportunities register" to help them with this task. The paper produced by the Northern Territory State Based Organisation also is extremely useful.

2. Select a suitable classification schema.

CEOs should use existing classification schemes where possible. Most classifications are relatively simple e.g. Issue Status could be "Open" or "Closed". IM Issue Type is one classification that may need to be developed by a Division e.g. potential values could be "Data Quality", "Reporting", "Clinical Data" etc.

³ Tasmanian Government Dept, of Premier and Cabinet, PM025 Project Issues Register Template & Guide Toolkit – Inventory of existing issues and improvements registers



3. Decide on suitable technology platforms and applications

For most register requirements a simple spreadsheet should suffice. However, many software applications can support this function. The OneOrZero Task Management and Helpdesk System is an open source example and the Division Information System (DIS) also has this capability. The advantage of using one of these systems increases if that system is already being used for task tracking or project management as it means data may not have to be re-entered.



5. Part 2: Sample template structure

<Name> Division's Information Management Issues and Opportunities Register as at <Date>

| Issue No | Description | Raised by | Date | Responsible Officer | Priority | Actions and Progress Notes | Status | Date Resolved | Cross Reference |
|----------|-------------|-----------|------|---------------------|----------|----------------------------|--------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | | | | |

This example comes from: http://www.adgp.com.au/client_images/54601.pdf

The authors wish to acknowledge the contribution of Robyn Murphy, e-Health Development Officer,
General Practice and Primary Health Care, Northern Territory

Notes:

1. Other register format examples include additional columns – e.g. Target or Expected Resolution Date, expected action and actual action taken.
2. Identification of an issue might be more elaborate than a simple number – for example also identifying the Division or Project to which the issue relates. This is useful when issues are considered by the broader community of interested parties in different Divisions or by external stakeholders.
3. This format is also consistent with the PRINCE2 project methodology sample issues register⁴.
4. The template is commonly created as a spreadsheet – simplifies sorting and searching data, or a Word document, for small registers; large registers containing hundreds or thousands of issues may be more appropriately based on specialised databases and linked to records management systems.

⁴ Colin Bentley, *PRINCE 2 – a practical handbook 2nd ed.*, 2005, Elsevier, pp64-66, 339, 374.



References and further reading

Statement of requirements for an IMMF Issues Register

Discussion Paper

Modified 13/11/07

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Project Issues Template

Tasmanian Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, PM025 Project Issues Register Template & Guide, October 2006.

www.egovernment.tas.gov.au/themes/project_management

Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) Network Resource Library

The AGPN Network Resource Library is an extensive clearing house of information serving GPs and the Divisions. It may not be considered to be a simple IM issues register; however its many websites and sub-sites provide a vast array of information relevant to Division CEOs and other stakeholders in IM issues management. Access to much of the material requires a logon ID and password – CEO login can be obtained from webmaster@agpn.com.au

Website: www.agpn.com.au

Open Source Software

OneOrZero Task Management and Helpdesk System (open source application)

www.oneorzero.com

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