Implementation Guide 2010

Standard 2010 – Planning

The chief audit executive must establish a risk-based plan to determine the priorities of the internal audit activity, consistent with the organization's goals.

Interpretation:

To develop the risk-based plan, the chief audit executive consults with senior management and the board and obtains an understanding of the organization's strategies, key business objectives, associated risks, and risk management processes. The chief audit executive must review and adjust the plan, as necessary, in response to changes in the organization's business, risks, operations, programs, systems, and controls.

Revised *Standards,* Effective 1 January 2017

Getting Started

The internal audit plan is intended to ensure that internal audit coverage adequately examines areas with the greatest exposure to the key risks that could affect the organization's ability to achieve its objectives. This standard directs the chief audit executive (CAE) to start preparing the internal audit plan by consulting with senior management and the board to understand the organization's strategies, business objectives, risks, and risk management processes. Thus, the CAE considers the maturity of the organization's risk management processes, including

whether the organization uses a formal risk management framework to assess, document, and manage risk. Less mature organizations may use less formal means of risk management.

The CAE's preparation usually involves reviewing the results of any risk assessments that management may have performed. The CAE may employ tools such as interviews, surveys, meetings, and workshops to gather additional input about the risks from management at various levels throughout the organization, as well as from the board and other stakeholders.

Considerations for Implementation

This review of the organization's approach to risk management may help the CAE decide how to organize or update the audit universe, which consists of all risk areas that could be subject to audit, resulting in a list of possible audit engagements that could be performed. The audit universe includes projects and initiatives related to the organization's strategic plan, and it may be organized by business units, product or service lines, processes, programs, systems, or controls.

Linking critical risks to specific objectives and business processes helps the CAE organize the audit universe and prioritize the risks. The CAE uses a risk-factor approach to consider both internal and external risks. Internal risks may affect key products and services, personnel, and systems. Relevant risk factors related to internal risks include the degree of change in risk since the area was last audited, the quality of controls, and others. External risks may be related to competition, suppliers, or other industry issues. Relevant risk factors for external risks may include pending regulatory or legal changes and other political and economic factors.

To ensure that the audit universe covers all of the organization's key risks (to the extent possible), the internal audit activity typically independently reviews and corroborates the key risks that were identified by senior management. According to Standard 2010.A1, the internal audit plan must be based on a documented risk assessment, undertaken at least annually, that considers the input of senior management and the board. As noted in Glossary, risks are measured in terms of impact and likelihood.

When developing the internal audit plan, the CAE also considers any requests made by the board and/or senior management and the internal audit activity's ability to rely on the work of other internal and external assurance providers (as per Standard 2050).

Once the aforementioned information has been gathered and reviewed, the CAE develops an internal audit plan that usually includes:

- A list of proposed audit engagements (and specification regarding whether the engagements are assurance or consulting in nature).
- Rationale for selecting each proposed engagement (e.g., risk rating, time since last audit, change in management, etc.).
- Objectives and scope of each proposed engagement.
- A list of initiatives or projects that result from the internal audit strategy but may not be directly related to an audit engagement.

Although audit plans typically are prepared annually, they may be developed according to another cycle. For example, the internal audit activity may maintain a rolling 12-month audit plan and reevaluate projects on a quarterly basis. Or, the internal audit activity may develop a multi-year audit plan and assess the plan annually.

The CAE discusses the internal audit plan with the board, senior management, and other stakeholders to create alignment among the priorities of various stakeholders. The CAE also acknowledges risk areas that are not addressed in the plan. For example, this discussion may be an opportunity for the CAE to review the roles and responsibilities of the board and senior management related to risk management and the standards related to maintaining the internal audit activity's independence and objectivity (Standard 1100 through Standard 1130.C2). The CAE reflects on any feedback received from stakeholders before finalizing the plan.

The internal audit plan is flexible enough to allow the CAE to review and adjust it as necessary in response to changes in the organization's business, risks, operations, programs, systems, and controls. Significant changes must be communicated to the board and senior management for review and approval, in accordance with Standard 2020.

Considerations for Demonstrating Conformance

Evidence of conformance with Standard 2010 exists in the documented internal audit plan, as well as the risk assessment upon which the plan is based. Supporting evidence also may exist in the minutes of meetings where the CAE discussed the audit universe and risk assessment with the board and senior management. In addition, memos to file could be used to document similar conversations with individual members of management at various levels throughout the organization.

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Implementation Guidance, as part of The IIA's International Professional Practices Framework® (IPPF®), provides recommended (non-mandatory) guidance for the internal audit profession. It is designed to assist both internal auditors and internal audit activities to enhance their ability to achieve conformance with the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing* (*Standards*).

Implementation Guides assist internal auditors in applying the *Standards*. They collectively address internal audit's approach, methodologies, and consideration, but do not detail processes or procedures.

For other authoritative guidance materials provided by The IIA, please visit our website at www.globaliia.org/standards-guidance or www.theiia.org/guidance.

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