



IEC Process Discipline Self-Assessment Tool Release Management Maturity (v.1.0)

I. Context

At the request of our members, the IEC has created a self-diagnostic tool to allow organizations to cost-effectively and objectively evaluate the maturity of their Release Management process. This tool employs a logical maturity progression framework and allows the identification of areas of strengths and weaknesses for each sub-process. The Release Management sub-processes and activities (the rows) are drawn from industry-standard best-practice process frameworks, while the process maturity levels (the columns) are based on traditional control and audit frameworks.

II. Instructions

This assessment should be completed by infrastructure staff familiar with the organization's existing Release Management processes, and how they are typically followed on a day-to-day basis. For each of the five Release Management sub-processes, defined on five separate worksheets, rate your organization's maturity level (0-5) based on the description that best defines current practice. The tool will then generate an aggregate maturity level for each of the sub-processes. Once you have completed rating the maturity of each process, view the results page for your organization's overall Release Management maturity level score and review the relative maturity level of individual subprocesses to identify areas of process strength and weakness.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or suggestions.

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[1. PLANNING & ASSESSMENT >>](#)

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<http://forms.executiveboard.com/content/IT-Release-Management-Self-Diagnostic>

Subprocess 1: Planning & Assessment

How does the organization procure resources as well as assess the potential impact of a Release?

Maturity Level	0. Not Performed	1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	2. Repeatable but Intuitive	3. Formal Process	4. Managed and Measurable	5. Continuously Improving	Maturity Level (0-5)
Definition	No processes defined or controls in place	A variety of ad-hoc and inconsistent processes are in place	A single unstructured or informal process is widely followed	Process formally defined but compliance not consistently enforced	Well developed and consistently followed process	Process continuously evaluated and optimized	
1a. Scope and Categorize	No assessment of Release scope or attempt to categorize is conducted	Various ad-hoc Release scoping and categorization processes exist across the organization	A consistent, though primarily informal set of processes is in place for Release scoping and categorization	Formal scoping process identifies which components and services will be impacted and determines Release category, though not consistently followed	Compliance with scoping and categorization process is measured and validated	Historical Release Management data used for evaluating ongoing improvement of the Release scoping and categorization process	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
1b. Prioritize and Schedule	Releases are processed mostly on a first-come-first-serve basis	Releases are subjectively prioritized and scheduled through a variety of ad-hoc mechanisms	Process for prioritizing and scheduling is informal but widely followed	Process is in place to prioritize Releases based on urgency, impact, and interdependencies and available resources are scheduled accordingly	Compliance with prioritization and scheduling process is verifiably followed	Scheduling and prioritization criteria are regularly reevaluated for business relevance	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
1c. Define Requirements	No process in place to identify dependencies and needed resources for Release deployment	Diverse set of infrastructure processes are in place to identify different categories of Release requirements	A single informal process exists to define Release requirements and is widely used	Formal Release requirements template and process is in place but is not always used	Use of requirements process and template is monitored to ensure all Releases have followed it	Release requirements process and template is routinely reviewed to ensure improved effectiveness	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
1d. Risk Assessment	No attempt is made to estimate potential risk due to Release	A variety of ad-hoc and inconsistent processes are in place to evaluate the potential risk of a Release	A single subjective risk assessment process is followed throughout the organization	Formal assessment of the potential IT and business risk of the Release is in place though not always followed	Compliance with Release risk assessment process is consistently tracked	Assessment criteria are frequently reviewed to ensure they effectively measure IT and business risk	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
1e. Procure Resources	Available resources are assigned purely on an as needed basis	Resources are allocated with a minimal amount of planning	An informal resource assignment plan is typically defined	A formal process is in place to assign needed resources throughout the Release lifecycle	Compliance with resource procurement process is monitored for compliance	Procurement process is evaluated to ensure ongoing improvement of resource allocation	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
Overall Planning and Assessment Maturity Level:							0.0

Subprocess 2: Release Build

How do organizations deliver and build a Release?

Maturity Level	0. Not Performed	1. Initial/Ad-hoc	2. Repeatable but Intuitive	3. Formal Process	4. Managed and Measurable	5. Continuously Improving	Maturity level (0-5)
<i>Definition</i>	<i>No processes defined or controls in place</i>	<i>A variety of ad-hoc and inconsistent processes are in place</i>	<i>A single unstructured or informal process is widely followed</i>	<i>Process formally defined but compliance not consistently enforced</i>	<i>Well developed and consistently followed process</i>	<i>Process continuously evaluated and optimized</i>	
2a. Select Deployment Release Mechanism	Organization does not rely on automated Release mechanisms	Ad-hoc Release mechanisms are defined and built on an individual basis	An informal process is in place to define and build the Release mechanism	A set of formal processes is in place to define and build the mechanism for deploying each Release	Organization follows a well-defined process to define and build Release deployment mechanism	The process for selecting and building the Release deployment mechanism is reviewed to ensure continuous success	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
2b. Build Release	There is no process that specifies how the Release should be built	A variety of ad-hoc and inconsistent processes are in place to build the Release	Informal Release building guidelines and documents exist and are typically used	A formal process is in place detailing each aspect of how the Release should be built	Release building process is monitored and strictly enforced	Release building process is routinely scrutinized for efficiency, cost-effectiveness and speed of deployment	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
2c. Define Backout plan	There is no process that specifies how the Release should be built	Release reversibility considerations are addressed in an ad-hoc and inconsistent manner	An informal or unstructured process is typically followed to define Release backout options	A formal policy for the creation and testing of Release backout plans is in place across the organization though not always followed	Compliance with Release contingency planning requirements is enforced	Backout plan requirements are regularly evaluated and updated	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
Overall Build Maturity Level:							0.0

Release Management Maturity Self-Diagnostic

Subprocess 3: Testing & Acceptance

How does the organization ensure the proper requirements are in place for testing Releases and backout plans?

Maturity Level	0. Not Performed	1. Initial/Ad-hoc	2. Repeatable but Intuitive	3. Formal Process	4. Managed and Measurable	5. Continuously Improving	Maturity level (0-5)
<i>Definition</i>	<i>No processes defined or controls in place</i>	<i>A variety of ad-hoc and inconsistent processes are in place</i>	<i>A single unstructured or informal process is widely followed</i>	<i>Process formally defined but compliance not consistently enforced</i>	<i>Well developed and consistently followed process</i>	<i>Process continuously evaluated and optimized</i>	
3a. Define Testing Plan	Testing plans are rarely created and testing is not a priority of Release Management	There are no consistent criteria or guidelines for creating testing plans	A reasonably consistent but informal process is in place for creating Release testing plans	A formal process is in place to define appropriate testing plans	Compliance with required testing plans is monitored and enforced	Testing plan requirements for Releases are frequently reviewed to ensure appropriate test coverage is in place	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
3b. Assemble Testing/Pilot Environment	Release Management does not require Releases to be tested	A variety of ad-hoc testing environments are used for testing Releases	Informal process for building a relevant testing environment is used throughout the organization	A formal, dedicated testing environment is in place that adequately represents the production environment	Compliance with testing environment requirements is enforced	Testing environment and requirements are regularly examined to ensure consistency with the production environment	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
3c. Test Release Mechanism and Backout Plan	Backout plans and Release deployment mechanisms are seldom considered	Organization relies on ad-hoc testing of backout plans and Release deployment mechanisms	Informal testing of back-out plans and Release mechanism is frequently followed	Formal testing requirements for back-out plans and Release mechanisms are defined, though compliance is not consistently monitored	Compliance with requirements for backout plans and Release mechanism is consistently enforced across the organization	Testing guidelines for backout plans and Release deployment mechanisms are routinely evaluated and updated for effectiveness	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
3d. Test Release Functionality, Performance and Integration	Releases are implemented with little or no functionality, performance or integration testing	No consistent testing methodology or explicit requirements exist	Informal or poorly documented testing process applied to most Releases	Formal requirements are in place to test Release functionality, performance, and integration	Organization monitors and enforces compliance with all Release testing requirements	All Release testing processes and requirements are routinely reviewed and updated	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
3e. Evaluate Test Results	No tests are conducted, or no effort is made to interpret the result of Release tests beyond basic functionality	Test results are considered on an ad-hoc basis and evaluated based on subjective criteria	A single informal process to evaluate test results is in place across the organization	A formal set of guidelines is in place to direct the interpretation of Release tests and drive objective deployment decisions	Testing evaluation processes and Release decisions are consistently followed across the organization	Evaluation criteria are frequently revisited to ensure test results are evaluated properly and drives objective Release decisions	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
Overall Testing & Acceptance Maturity Level:							0.0

Subprocess 4: Release Preparation

What measures does the organization take to ensure the production environment is prepared for the rollout of the Release?

Maturity Level	0. Not Performed	1. Initial/Ad-hoc	2. Repeatable but Intuitive	3. Formal Process	4. Managed and Measurable	5. Continuously Improving	
<i>Definition</i>	No processes defined or controls in place	A variety of ad-hoc and inconsistent processes are in place	A single unstructured or informal process is widely followed	Process formally defined but compliance not consistently enforced	Well developed and consistently followed process	Process continuously evaluated and optimized	Maturity level (0-5)
4a. Update Configuration Environment	Release Management is not integrated with other infrastructure processes	A variety of inconsistent processes exist to update configuration lists and databases based on the specific Release	A single, informal process is in place to update Release details in all configuration and any other release databases or lists	Formal update process is defined to update Release information on configuration and related databases (e.g., CMDB, DSL) but is not strictly enforced	Process compliance is strictly monitored to ensure Release details are updated in the CMDB and other related databases	The process to update Release information is frequently assessed to ensure ongoing relevance and integrity of data repositories	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
4b. Communicate and Coordinate Release Rollout:	No effort or mechanism is in place to communicate upcoming Releases	Releases are communicated on an individual or ad-hoc basis	A single, informal mechanism is in place for communicating pending Releases	A formal process is in place that specifies what, when and how to communicate and coordinate upcoming Releases with the rest of the organization	The organization can verify that all Releases are communicated to the organization as per standard guidelines	Release process and guidelines are reviewed regularly to ensure target audiences are receiving the appropriate information	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
4c. Train Support and Admin Staff	The organization does not consider the training requirement implications of new Releases	Training requirements from new Releases are occasionally evaluated on an ad-hoc basis	Informal training sessions are held to train staff on new environment	A formal process is in place to identify the training needed for the new environment	The organization consistently ensures that staff are given all needed training to prepare them for new environment	Criteria for the identification of staff training requirements and training effectiveness are monitored and regularly reviewed	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
4d. Prepare Production Environment	No consideration is given to assessing the needed preparation for the production environment	Evaluation of needed preparation for the production environment is defined by common sense on a case-by-case basis	An informal checklist or other simple mechanism is commonly used to assess needed preparation requirements	A formal process is in place to identify the specific preparation required for the production environment before each Release deployment	The organization monitors compliance with preparation "due-diligence" process and its effective implementation	The Release preparation "due-diligence" process is regularly reviewed to ensure its ongoing effectiveness	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
4e. Release Rollout	No formal process for Release rollout exists	Release rollout processes are informally defined and exhibit substantial variation across the organization	A single informal Release rollout process is usually followed throughout the organization	Formal Release rollout checklists and deadlines are defined and usually followed	Compliance with Release rollout requirements is monitored	Release rollout process is regularly evaluated to enhance its effectiveness	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
Overall Release Preparation Maturity Level:							0.0

Subprocess 5: Review and Analysis

How is the current Release management process assessed for effectiveness and process improvement?

<i>Maturity Level</i>	<i>0. Not Performed</i>	<i>1. Initial/Ad-hoc</i>	<i>2. Repeatable but Intuitive</i>	<i>3. Formal Process</i>	<i>4. Managed and Measurable</i>	<i>5. Continuously Improving</i>	
<i>Definition</i>	<i>No processes defined or controls in place</i>	<i>A variety of ad-hoc and inconsistent processes are in place</i>	<i>A single unstructured or informal process is widely followed</i>	<i>Process formally defined but compliance not consistently enforced</i>	<i>Well developed and consistently followed process</i>	<i>Process continuously evaluated and optimized</i>	Maturity level (0-5)
5a. Impact review	No post-implementation review of Release impact	Ad-hoc, post-implementation review of Release impact exhibits substantial variation across the organization	Rudimentary post-implementation impact review process is in place but not applied consistently	Formal impact review process is in place to support post-implementation assessment	Compliance with appropriate impact review process is monitored and enforced	Post-implementation review process is regularly evaluated and updated	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
5b. Metrics and Management Reporting	No Release management metrics are collected	Release management metrics are collected in an ad-hoc fashion and reports created as needed	Basic metrics are frequently gathered and informal management reports created	Targeted Release management metrics are routinely collected and reports created targeting IT and business audience	Formal metric collection and management reporting process is consistently monitored	Metrics and management reporting process is assessed regularly to ensure relevance	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
5c. Process Review	No after-the-fact review of Release process	Occasional lesson learned incorporated into Release process	Informal brainstorming meetings used to identify opportunity for Release process improvement	Formal end-to-end evaluation of Release processes used to pinpoint opportunities for improvement	Performance of Release process is monitored and implementation of process improvements is enforced	Success of process review mechanisms is evaluated and opportunities for better incorporating lessons learned are continuously identified	0
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0. Not Performed	<input type="radio"/> 1. Initial/ Ad-hoc	<input type="radio"/> 2. Repeatable but Intuitive	<input type="radio"/> 3. Formal Process	<input type="radio"/> 4. Managed and Measurable	<input type="radio"/> 5. Continuously Improving	
Overall Review and Analysis Maturity Level:							0.0

Release Management Maturity Self-Diagnostic

Mapping Release Management Performance

*Overall Release Management Process
Maturity Computation*

0.0	1. Planning & Assessment
0.0	2. Build
0.0	3. Testing & Acceptance
0.0	4. Release Preparation
0.0	5. Review and Analysis
0.0	Overall Release Management Score

Multi-Component Process Maturity Plot

