

Facilitated Workshop Guide

✓ **Ensure everyone attends:** Ensuring everyone attends a risk workshop reduces the effort of those involved. Unnecessary duplication of effort is reduced and all involved get the opportunity to interact and form the risk statement collectively. If it is impossible for all to be present (e.g. due to time differences) the facilitator must ensure that documentation is of sufficient quality to ensure all parties can understand the proceedings and should attempt to ensure there are linkages across workshops (e.g. core personnel present at workshops).

✓ **Everyone knows who is present:** Ensuring all participants know who is present creates a greater level of understanding in the group and should create greater levels of confidence in expressing opinions on risks.

✓ **Ensure everyone contributes:** It is important that everyone contributes, however insisting on a contribution (e.g. going around the group one by one) may make some individuals feel uncomfortable and thus they may try to avoid a workshop. Instead a skilled facilitator should be aware of who is and is not contributing and use (targeted) questioning to illicit a response. If individuals still do not contribute then the facilitator may decide to follow up with another technique.

✓ **Everyone fully expresses their view:** Everyone involved in the workshop should be able to freely express their views, without consequences, in regards to items raised. However, the facilitator should be mindful that individuals do not dominate the debate and that too much time isn't spent 'bike shedding' (i.e. spending a lot of time discussing low-value activities that people feel comfortable with, which results in serious and complex items not being addressed).

✓ **Capture Cause – Event – Consequence:** While the expectations of an initial workshop should not be to form a full risk statement, ensuring participants express the risk as a set of root causes, an event and a set of consequences will ensure more considered and higher-quality risks are derived for very little delay in process.

! Use an external facilitator: An external facilitator may give a fresh perspective on the risks and may have a wealth of experience in risk facilitation (depending on their background). However, if the facilitator lacks the necessary knowledge of the area/industry to the extent that it will impede the success of the workshop then a facilitator with more knowledge of the area (and less of facilitation) may do a better job.

x Document everything as a risk: It is important to capture everything that is raised at a risk workshop. However, a skilled facilitator should perform a triage activity to arrive at an appropriate set of risks taking into account items that are not risks, existing risks being

managed and resources available. This should then follow the organisation's approach to buy off the list to an 'approved' state.

x Blank sheet approach: Whilst a completely blank sheet approach may seem a good idea, in practice it can be wasteful as the group repeats risks that are already present and being managed. A better approach is to provide the group an overview of the scope of their work and the risks already being managed that may have an impact on their activity. In addition any corporately used risk checklists can support the workshop.

x Don't consider risk treatment: While the primary activity of the workshop may be to recognise risk if treatments (whether existing or potential) are known, these should be documented along with the risk to support downstream activity.

x Set a target number of risks: Whilst it might seem helpful to have a target in mind, in practice risk identification should not stop as a process: risks will continually be identified as a project progresses. Setting a number may also be somewhat arbitrary if the risk identification process has not considered the full risk universe and when the process moves to risk assessment the $n+1$ risk is as large as the n 'th risk.