Effective records management — Part 3: Performance management for BS ISO 15489-1

Philip A. Jones

BSi

Business
Information

Whilst every care has been taken in developing and compiling this publication, BSI accepts no liability for any loss or damage caused, arising directly or indirectly in connection with reliance on its contents except to the extent that such liability may not be excluded in law.

Contents

Foreword

All businesses, whether private or public sector, rely on information and records to conduct their affairs in a systematic and legally compliant way. The strategic management of records and information is essential to this process and never more so than in an age of e-commerce and e-government. With a rapidly changing and developing business context there are considerable organizational benefits to adopting a consistent and standardized approach to the management of records and information.

In October 2001 the first international standard for the management of records was launched in Montreal, Canada. The two-part publication of Standard and Technical Report, implemented in the United Kingdom as BS ISO 15489-1:2001 and PD ISO/TR 15489-2:2001, was the culmination of three years' work by a group of international experts to synthesize best practice from around the world in the strategic management of records. This Standard and Technical Report are applicable to multinational companies and small enterprises alike and provide an essential tool for the management of records and information.

The Standard provides a framework within which the necessary management of records and information can take place. This publication is the third in a series of publications on records management supported by BSI and is intended to complement the Standard and Technical Report and help place them in context for the user. The publications expand on the framework that the Standard creates and provide both interpretation and illustration of good practice. Each volume has been written predominantly from the United Kingdom perspective by leading United Kingdom practitioners, who have first hand, practical experience of, and insight into, the issues facing United Kingdom organizations today.

I can wholeheartedly recommend this informative series to the reader, which provides insight into the application of both BS ISO 15489-1:2001 and PD ISO/TR 15489-2:2001.

The other books in this series are:

— BIP 0025-1:2002, *Effective records management — Part 1: A management guide to the value of BS ISO 15489-1*; and
— BIP 0025-2:2002, *Effective records management — Part 2: Practical implementation of BS ISO 15489-1*.

Further publications may be added in future.

Philip A Jones
Chairman IDT/2/17

1 Introduction

The timely publication of BS ISO 15489-1 and PD ISO/TR 15489-2 marked a watershed in the records management profession, presenting for the first time a comprehensive records management framework that could be used by professionals and non-professionals alike. The framework described by BS ISO 15489-1 was completely scalable and could be applied to any organization regardless of its size. Shortly after the publication of BS ISO 15489-1, the BIP 0025 series was launched:

- BIP 0025-1:2002, *Effective records management — Part 1: A management guide to the value of BS ISO 15489-1*, which addressed why the standard was an important tool for organizations; and

- BIP 0025-2:2002, *Effective records management — Part 2: Practical implementation of BS ISO 15489-1*, which focused on how to implement the framework as described by the standard.

This publication, which is Part 3 of the series, deals with ensuring that sustainability of the records management programme is maintained through monitoring and managing performance of the programme. It is through a clear understanding of how to manage performance that the records management programme (the product of employing BS ISO 15489-1) can be sustained.

This short guide on performance management within a records management programme is aimed at two main audiences.

1. Professional records management practitioners – who will need to monitor how well the corporate records management programme is running.
2. General managers – to help them understand how to integrate the performance management of the records management programme (as described by BS ISO 15489-1 and PD ISO/TR 15489-2) into the overall performance management framework of the organization.

This guide is intended to build on both BIP 0025-1 and BIP 0025-2. This guide will consider the post implementation review phase and explore the issues of measuring the performance of the programme and how to demonstrate the benefits to the organization.

2 What is performance measurement?

In a results-orientated world of modern economies, it is common in both the public and private sector for organizations to measure performance in both formal and informal ways. Some larger organizations have formal performance management frameworks and often have specialized units that oversee the function. It is far less common for measures relating to records management and records management programmes to be included.

Records management and the products of the records management programme have often been difficult to measure. This is particularly true when an organization has pockets of good practice in existence, but lacks the consistency afforded by a corporate programme. BS ISO 15489-1 advocates such a co-ordinated corporate approach to the management of information and records which, when properly implemented, will bring many organizational benefits. A programme that has been developed using the BS ISO 15489-1 framework creates a more structured environment in which to measure records management performance. The programme consists of policies, procedures, practices and the people who carry them out. All of these are quantifiable inputs that can be measured.

In the performance-orientated environment that exists within many organizations there is a tendency to measure everything that can be measured, a scenario that is becoming all too common. Measurement for the sake of measurement is a waste of resources. If performance measurement is to be a useful tool, it must be focused and provide data that will be useful in taking decisions about the area that is being measured. This is true regardless of the type of measurement being used, or if it is related to strategic or operational decisions.

Performance measurement is a systematic way of assessing the goals and targets of an organization (usually articulated in plans and policies) against its actual achievements. Performance measures are of little value per se unless they are viewed within the context of the organizational strategy and objectives. This is also true for the records management programme, which cannot exist in a vacuum and must be seen to contribute to the objectives of the organization if it is to be effective. Measuring performance in this context should be high on the agenda of anyone with responsibility for corporate records management.

Performance measurements as practised in both the private and public sectors can often be used as a means of communicating success to stakeholders. This is particularly common in annual performance statements that compare present performance to that of previous years, competitors or against the objectives of a strategic plan or project. Records management programmes can exist in a competitive internal market, although it is not enough to simply be performing well – there is an imperative to have demonstrable evidence that the programme adds value to the organization and ultimately becomes an integral part of the organizations value chain.

Measurements can be made at all levels within the organization, from strategic indicators (strategic goals) through to specific operational indicators (unit measurements). Performance management can be initiated on a corporate or unit specific level as determined by the requirements of the organization. In terms of the records management programme, this may relate to how the programme runs (its efficiency) or how the programme contributes to the organization's aims and objectives as a whole (its effectiveness).

Performance measures can be developed with the organization, or be a requirement of an external regulator or stakeholder e.g. central government departments set key performance indicators for local authorities.

Performance management needs to be a collaborative process and involve all organizational stakeholders – those who manage the programme (e.g. records managers), those who use the programme (e.g. the organization) and those who ultimately measure the performance (e.g. internal or external auditors).

It is important to understand at this stage the difference between 'performance measurement' and 'performance management'. Performance measurement is essentially an assessment of efficiency and effectiveness of a given set of resources against a stated or expected outcome. Performance management is about using this information to bring out benefits to the organization through understanding this information and applying change where needed.

3 Why measure performance?

3.1 Introduction

In general in the UK, measuring performance has not been a priority for many records managers, nor has measuring records management performance been a particular issue for organizations or their auditors. A search of central and local government policies and plans turns up little evidence of such activity, and the recent proliferation of public sector performance measurement initiatives is indicative of this. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)[1] records only one metric directly relating to records management in their statistics for archive services, which measures 'the quantity of semi-current records retained by the organization'. From publications of results, it is unclear if a large or small quantity is a desired result, or even what the significance of such a measure might be.

It is possible that the UK record management community may see little benefit in performance management as an activity. No professional associations in this field publish specific guidance on performance management, and there is no evidence at the time of writing of any professional groups embarked on specific benchmarking activities for records management. Another possibility is that without structured programmes to implement records management practice, it has been very difficult to accomplish any meaningful performance measurement.

There are many benefits that performance measurement can bring to the records management profession and this section highlights some of these benefits.

3.2 Assessing success

Measuring performance can demonstrate that particular initiatives or programmes being run within an organization are delivering the required or agreed results either for the organization or customers of the organization. This kind of information is critical to the organization in terms of its future planning requirements. By evaluating the programmes that are contributing to its success the organization can allocate resources on a more informed basis. Obviously the reverse is true where programmes are underperforming. All programmes in an organization need to attract support and

---

[1] Archive Service Statistics published annually by CIPFA – www.cipfastats.net.

funding from senior managers. This is particularly true of any records management initiative. Simply performing a good service is not in itself enough to justify continued support – it is important that success can be measured, evaluated and ultimately communicated.

Records management programmes are inevitably going to compete for resources with other corporate programmes, whether in the private sector or public sector. Demonstrable success is an important factor in promoting records management practice within the organization. Success is, however, a relative concept and the criteria with which it is measured are all important. The contribution of the records management programme towards the success of the organization should be understood within the higher echelons of the organization. This is in addition to meeting internal targets set by the organization. The goals of the programme must be aligned to those of the organization to secure the resources for continuing and enhancing the programme.

3.3   Communicating success

Good performance measures can be clear and transparent means by which success can be communicated both within the organization (e.g. through teams and employees) and outside the organization (e.g. through stakeholders, regulators and politicians). Records managers 'sell' the necessity for a records management programme in many ways e.g. financial savings, improved productivity, greater transparency. A positive way to reinforce this message is by a demonstrable set of performance statistics, which can validate these claimed benefits of records management to the organization.

This performance information can be communicated in a number of ways:

- through regular update reports to senior managers;

- annual statements or reports;

- through auditors reports;

- on an internet/intranet site;

- service/customer newsletters.

Whatever the method of communication that this is achieved through, it is an important activity in developing and maintaining a successful records management programme. Implementing BS ISO 15489-1 within an organization is a major project and often can involve the implementers in a change management process. In any change management initiative communication is paramount to ensure the success of the initiative.

3.4   Financial considerations

The various divisions within an organization are often competing for finite resources to pursue their respective objectives. Performance measurement is one way in which decisions can be made about allocating financial support to programmes. Good records management practice is an investment for the organization although it could easily be viewed as an overhead. The need to demonstrate the tangible returns on this investment is crucial if the programme is going to continue attracting funding and support.

To implement BS ISO 15489-1 will require an investment by the organization both in personnel time and financial commitment. Many public organizations will need to move from distributed to corporate records management programmes if they are to comply with the requirements of s46 (code of practice) under Freedom of Information Act 2000. This again will require investment even if BS ISO 15489-1 is not employed. There are many benefits to implementing a records management programme following the methodology presented in BS ISO 15489-1. Ultimately there are likely to be financial savings, but there is first a need to invest to save, as small localized costs that are dispersed throughout the organization become larger centralized costs.

This identified central cost, albeit smaller than the unidentified aggregated costs of the piecemeal approach, will still appear as a new overhead on any balance sheet. The cost of the decentralised approach is likely to have been lost in general management costs. Organizations need to know that any commitment of funds is to the benefit of the organization and offers value. Good performance management results are one element in helping to assure those who hold the corporate purse strings that money is well spent.

3.5 Improvement

Performance measurement is also about continuous improvement allowing incremental modifications and improvements to be made based on actual outputs and expected outputs. It is also important in determining resource utilization in terms of human, facilities and equipment inputs. Records management literature consistently makes the case for the benefits of employing 'good practice' records management. BS ISO 15489-1 identifies the benefits[2] of this approach, however any programme that fails to measure and use measurement for continual improvement is likely to have a finite lifespan. Organizations are dynamic entities responding to markets, legislation and customer needs, and it is therefore imperative that records programmes evolve within these changes and continue to adapt and improve to meet organizational requirements.

Improvement can also come as a result of specific projects focusing on addressing identified problems or urgent requirements. This may be as a result of process re-engineering, either driven by the BS ISO 15489 series methodology or another source. This improvement can be incremental or dramatic depending on the nature of the project.

---

[2] See BS ISO 15489-1:2001, clause **4**.

4 Records management as an integrated business strategy

To view any records management programme in isolation from the organization is to a greater extent to 'miss the point'. The purpose of the records management programme is to ensure that the organization gets the greatest value out of the way it manages and organizes its records. In other words, the records management programme makes a direct contribution to the objectives and plans of the organization.

Performance management within records management programmes (efficiency) is important to ensure that the programme is running in the optimum way, but this alone is not enough without considering how the records management programme contributes to the performance of the organization as a whole (effectiveness). An efficient and effective records management programme will bring benefits to the organization and is far more likely to attract investment from the organization.

An organization will have plans and objectives, policies and procedures and work practices at the strategic, tactical and operational level (as illustrated in Figure 1). The records management programme will be developed at the tactical level but needs to link with the strategic plans and work practices at the operational level. The success of this interaction can be measured.
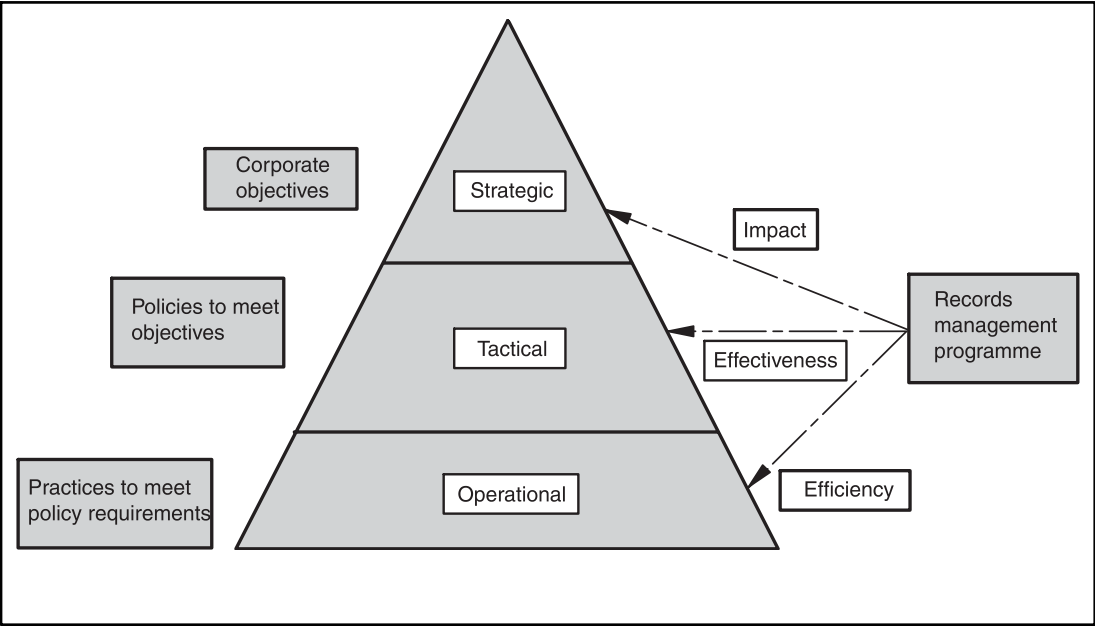
Figure 1. The strategic, tactical and operational levels within an organization

5 Efficiency vs. effectiveness

5.1 What is the difference?

In understanding how records management programmes perform, it is essential to distinguish between the two concepts of efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency is about doing things the right way, whilst effectiveness is about doing the right things. For example a car could be working at 100 per cent efficiency in terms of its speed, but have 0 per cent effectiveness as far as passengers are concerned if it is travelling in the wrong direction. It does not necessarily follow that one will lead to the other e.g. a programme can be efficient but ineffective and make little difference to the organization, and conversely a programme could have a degree of effectiveness, but that effectiveness is hampered by a lack of efficiency.

5.2 Measuring efficiency

Efficiency can be viewed as a measure of productivity (output) against comparisons of resources employed (input). Efficiency in itself is not a measure of success and should not be seen as such. In isolation from other forms of measure, the reverse can be true in certain circumstances i.e. the efficiency can be a contributory factor in the decline of an ineffective initiative. The resources in this case are not simply limited to financial resources, although in practice many measures of efficiency are related to monetary input. The results need to be measured against a predefined model that may be comparable to activities within or outside an organization (benchmarking), best practice standards or specified criteria that are considered reasonable. The units of measurement for efficiency are often time and money. To a certain extent this is very much an operational perspective and is arguably a narrow measurement of overall performance.

> Efficiency in a records management programme may look at the efficiency of a record centre measured in terms of cost of running, how quickly a record can be retrieved or the quality of the service such as low percentage of user complaints.

5.3   Measuring effectiveness

Effectiveness can be viewed as a measure of the degree to which predefined objectives have been achieved. These objectives can be internal organizational requirements or external legal, regulatory or stakeholder requirements. Effectiveness is not necessarily a measure of success if the objectives are misinformed. These objectives may be set by the initiators of the records management programme, or may be required by the recipients of an external authority such as a regulator or ombudsman. If the objectives of the programme are unclear then evaluating the effectiveness will be difficult. This is much more a tactical perspective based on achieving objectives set elsewhere.

> Effectiveness in a records management programme may be to look at staff satisfaction in locating information since the inception of the records management programme compared with what existed previously.

5.4   Measuring impact

Measuring impact can be expressed as reviewing how the whole organization is influenced by a project or initiative such as the records management programme. Impact can measure both the positive and negative consequences for the organization. These consequences can be expected or unexpected, and can be measured in terms of the internal or external environment. It is important when evaluating impact to be able to compare the practices in existence prior to the commencement of the initiative. BS ISO 15489-1 advocates the use of the DIRS[3] (DIRKS)[4] methodology to analyse the records management requirements of the organization, which includes a preliminary investigation[5] that could provide valuable evidence on the status quo. Impact measures are related to the overall strategic direction of the organization and can demonstrate the benefits of supporting certain initiatives such as the records management programme. These are, however, much more difficult to identify and corroborate as subjective elements are often required in analysing data.

> Impact of a records management programme may be to look at increased profitability of the organization based on staff dealing with a greater number of customer enquiries related to quicker retrieval of customer information brought about by the programme.

---

[3] Design and implementation of a record system (DIRS) is described in BS ISO 15489-1:2001, **8.4**.

[4] DIRKS is the methodology developed by National Archives of Australia which DIRS is based upon.

[5] See PD ISO/TR 15489-2:2001, **3.2.2**.

6 Developing performance measures

6.1 General

Before developing performance measures it is important to see the process as part of the overall business planning process (see Figure 1). The link between the long-term goals (the business vision), the short- to medium-term goals (business plan objectives) and the milestones to achieving them all, shape the performance management system. The performance measures that are chosen will be the vehicle for communicating success or failure. Any set of performance measures needs to be carefully selected to ensure that they are in fact measuring the route to achieving business objectives and ultimately the business vision.

A minimum number of meaningful performance measures are far more preferable than a plethora of measures that do not relate to organizational/programme goals. Many organizations use the SMART (Specific-Measurable-Attainable-Realistic-Timely) rule when developing their performance measures.

- **Specific**: clear and focused to avoid misconception.
- **Measurable**: can be quantified and compared to other data. Statistical analysis should be possible.
- **Attainable**: achievable, reasonable, and acceptable in particular performance context.
- **Realistic**: fits into the organization's culture and is cost-effective within resources available.
- **Timely**: achievable within the time frame.

No singular set of generic measures will be effective for all organizations, and may not even be effective for organizations in similar environments. The final mix of measures will be a product of operational, legislative and cultural context.

One starting point can be to address some fundamental questions (see Annex A) on the

nature of the business which the records management programme supports. This may have been undertaken in Step A of the DIRS methodology, as outlined in BIP 0025-2. A records management programme developed for a pharmaceutical company will be different from one developed to support a central government department. The programme is an integral part of the business and needs to contribute to the success of the business and will be informed by the requirements of the business. This in turn will influence how performance measurement is employed.

6.2 Deciding what to measure

There are a number of levels of performance measurement ranging from strategic high-level measures to more specific operational or programme-level measures. The important detail to remember is to measure what activity matters, and not to measure simply because an activity can be measured. In terms of efficiency, we need meaningful measures that will indicate what is really happening so that we can decide to either let an activity continue or intervene to take corrective action. In terms of effectiveness, we need measures to understand if the programme is delivering what the organization needs. In terms of impact, measurements need to ascertain if the programme is supporting the organizational strategy.

This publication suggests some measures in Annex B. The measures there can be employed directly or used as a guide to developing more meaningful measures in an organizations particular business context.

6.3 Types of measure

6.3.1 Input measures

These are related to the resources (financial, personnel, property or materials) employed to produce outputs. This is a useful way of measuring cost-effectiveness, and also to look at the overall balance of resources for a programme. A records management programme will use a number of resources as inputs:

- people (see PD ISO/TR 15489-2:2001, **2.3.2**);

- capital investment, whether this is in plant (record centres) or IT infrastructures/software;

- budget, such as staffing costs and premises costs.

6.3.2 Output measures

These are the units of deliverable services or tangibles produced, and could be measured, for example, as customers served or widgets manufactured. Output measures relate to what has been completed, but cannot indicate whether this was efficient or even desirable. You may serve a thousand customers a week but if 50 per cent are not satisfied with the service the figure is meaningless.

Output measures generally deal with quantities or volume of output, costs of output (total or unit), timeliness of the output meeting, organizational or customer

requirements and quality of output i.e. fitness for intended purpose.

A records management programme may have a number of outputs:

- a completed records management policy (BS ISO 15489-1:2001, **6.2**);
- a schedule of delegated responsibilities (BS ISO 15489-1:2001, **6.3**);
- the production of any retention schedules (BS ISO 15489-1:2001, **9.2**);
- the implementation of a classification system (BS ISO 15489-1:2001, **9.5.2**);
- the records retrieved from record centres;
- the number of electronic records captured in to Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS).

6.3.3 Outcome measures

This is a measurement of the impact that a programme has, or in other words something that has consequences for the organization. These measures can be short term or long term. Measuring the achievement of outcomes is not always easy, and can be challenging.

An example of outcome measures in a record management programme
(see BS ISO 15489-1:2001, clause **4**) is measuring if the organization meets legislative and regulatory requirements through employing records management practice, and what the consequences of this may be. For example:

- less litigation for organizations, leading to greater market, customer or investor confidence;
- favourable response from regulator for improvement in standards leading to improved image and perception of organization.

7 Implementing performance measures

7.1 Planning the process

It is vitally important that consideration is given to how the performance measurement will be conducted. The three areas of measuring efficiency, measuring effectiveness and measuring impact (identified in **5.2**, **5.3** and **5.4** respectively) are the broad categories within which the measures will fall.

It is important at this stage in deciding that there is a clear understanding behind the way performance is being measured. If it is being measured to determine how well the records management programme is operating, then it is likely that measures concerned with efficiency and effectiveness will be employed. If the rationale behind the performance measurement is to promote or enhance the status of the records management programme, then it would be more germane to employ measures relating to the overall impact of the programme. These impact measures would hopefully correlate with the aims and objectives of the organization as a whole.

In terms of efficiency there are a number of things that can be measured within the overall records management programme, including cost efficiency and time. Examples are given in Annex B. These measures not only indicate how efficiently the programme is running, but can be used as the source data for benchmark requirements. Benchmarking may be employed when considering if the records management operation should be outsourced or if there is a desire to understand the performance relative to another organization.

Effectiveness can also be measure in a number of ways. Step C[6] of the DIRS project methodology for implementing a records management programme identifies the requirements for records management. These requirements can be used as the basis of comparison for the outcome of the completed programme. It measures the required outcome against the actual outcome.

In a similar way impact can be measured by considering the data collected during Step A (preliminary investigation) of the DIRS project methodology, which seeks to

---

[6] See PD ISO/TR 15489-2:2001, **3.2.4**.

identify the goals and objectives of the organization through plans and strategies. Measures can be devised to ascertain if the programme has contributed to these aims and objectives.

7.2 Metrics

Metrics or measures are only useful if certain characteristics and limitations are built in to the measures.

- Can an objective means of measuring the metric be employed?

- Are the expected end results articulated?

- Does the metric reflect stakeholder or corporate requirements or compliance issues where appropriate? (Results of PD ISO/TR 15489-2 methodology Step A will provide much of this information).

- Does the metric focus on the effectiveness, efficiency or impact of the programme/ system/component being measured?

- Are there a small number of relevant and focused measures rather than a plethora of everything that can be measured?

- Can statistical analysis be applied to the metric for aggregation or wider perspectives, trends etc.?

- Is the metric widely used within the organization or industry?

- Are the metrics challenging but realistic?

- Does a benchmark of poor, satisfactory and excellent performance exist?

- Has the metric been communicated and accepted by all stakeholders involved?

Annex B of this publication looks at possible metrics that could be employed or adapted as part of a performance measurement programme for implementing BS ISO 15489-1. However, the list is not exhaustive and it may be more appropriate to develop specific local measures to suit an individual business context. A starting point for this is to look at other organizational performance metrics and consider how they may be translated into a records management context.

7.3 Collecting data

There are a number of ways in which data can be collected. The data that is needed is dependent on the indictors that have been selected, as well as the availability of data (this is not the same as measuring what can be measured).

Data collection can be undertaken in-house or through employing third parties. Whichever method is used it is vital that a comprehensive, consistent and verifiable regime is employed. Accuracy is imperative, as is need for consistency. Much of this can be achieved by setting clear objectives and methods for those involved in the data collection, and ensuring that this is adequately communicated. If employees are unfamiliar with this area of work, ensure that they are both trained and aware of their role in the overall process.

Consideration must be given to ensuring that the collected data is accurate and timely. Collected data needs to be verifiable and recent enough to relate to what is currently happening.

7.4   Benchmarking

Benchmarking is the approach of measuring outputs and processes against pre-defined standards and 'best in class' competitors. It is possible to benchmark an organization's records management programme against BS ISO 15489-1 (see the prescriptions in Annex B for lists of potential benchmarks), and it is equally possible to benchmark the programme against another organization in the same sector or with similar outputs. It is not uncommon in many industries for 'benchmark clubs' to be established that allow organizations in that sector to collectively assess best practice. However, there is currently little evidence of this being available in the UK in terms of records management benchmarks.

Some organizations have taken the concept of benchmarking outside their own sector e.g. an airline company concerned with turn-around time (the time between an aeroplane landing and being ready to take off again) choose to benchmark with a professional motor racing pit crew in terms of principles applied to necessitate the change of a set of tyres in under 10 seconds. However, it is not recommended for practitioners that are new to the concept and practice of benchmarking to begin outside their sector.

Important considerations in benchmarking include the following.

- *Selecting the right partner* is important. It is usual when embarking on benchmarking activity to find an organization within the same sector, although this is not always necessary, but perhaps easier for all to understand. It is useful to investigate with the partner organization or organizations (if part of a benchmarking club) the rationale for the co-operation, the methods to be employed and the ground rules of sharing and using each other's data, which can often be articulated in a contract.

- *Selecting the appropriate benchmarks*. Theoretically, a process or activity could be benchmarked but it is often more productive to focus on a smaller number of critical benchmarks rather than trying to cope with a huge amount of data from numerous measures.

- *What to measure to produce the benchmark?* There are four principal categories of metrics that can be measured: cost, productivity, process efficiency and process time.

- *Collecting and analysing data?* This part of the process should be planned and carried out within an agreed timeframe. There needs to be validation for accuracy. It should be remembered that it is not the metric itself that is of value, but the factors behind these metrics that influence the results.

- *Feeding results into improvement plans?* Consideration should be given to how the results will be fed into improvement plans. It is the factors that influence best performance that are incorporated into improvement plans as actions and targets.

7.5   Cost of performance measures

This is a consideration that can be easily overlooked at the outset of a performance measurement initiative. However, the cost of the exercise is a factor that has to be a consideration in any decisions. The cost of collecting, analysing and presenting performance data has to be balanced against the usefulness of the exercise.

8 Using the results

8.1 General

Having created the metrics that will be used for the collected and analysed data, it is important that the results are used in the most effective way to improve the records management programme.

Responsibilities for interpreting and presenting data need to be clear, as does the identity of the recipients of the report. It may be records management personnel, the senior management team or a senior manager in the organization. It is important wherever results are reported that the recipients will be aware of the nature of the performance management agenda, and that they will be presented with the results.

8.2 Presentation

Any presentation of results should be appropriate for the context and level of those attending the presentation (Table 1 illustrates this point). If, for example, the performance measures relate to improvement of efficiency within the records management section, then the results can be related to very specific issues with which the recipients will be familiar. Likewise, if the results relate to impact and are presented to a senior management team, then it is likely that less 'granular' and more aggregated or trend-based information is needed.

Table 1. Different contexts for the presentation of results at various management levels

Management level	Interests	Type of measure
Senior Managers, Directors	Strategy, stakeholder obligation, use of resources	Impact/outcome
Business Unit Managers	Effectiveness, quality, service level	Effective/outcome
Records Management staff	Efficiency, delivering service	Efficiency/inputs
All staff	Support in delivering their own services	Efficiency/outputs

8.3   Variances

Where variances or deviations from the expected occur, it is important to be able to identify the necessary responsive options for action. This may involve re-engineering processes, revising the targets or changing the inputs.

8.4   Continuous improvement

Figure 2 is a diagrammatic representation of the idea of continuous improvement that is based on an iterative process where each stage is informed by the preceding stage. This simple but effective approach can be found in a number of ISO standards, including the BS EN ISO 9000 and BS EN ISO 14000 series. The first stage is to establish the processes and objectives necessary to deliver results with stakeholder requirements and resources (this roughly equates to Step A of the DIRS project methodology, (see PD ISO/TR 15489-2:2001, **3.2.2**)). The second stage is to implement the processes. The third stage is to monitor and measure processes against policy, objectives and requirements, and the final stage is to take actions to improve performance. The whole process then commences again becoming a continuous loop.
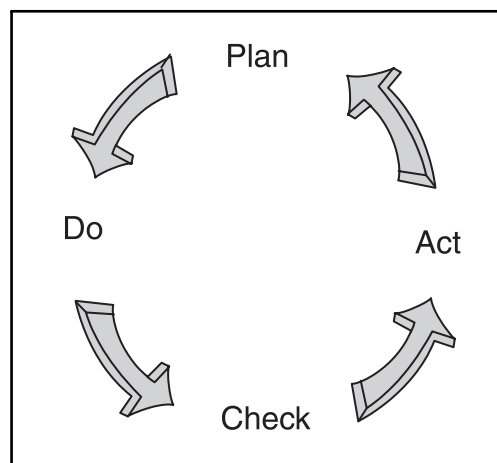
Figure 2. The 'Plan-Do-Check-Act'cycle

Performance improvement should not be viewed as simply applying agreed changes and admiring the improvements, but rather as a continuous incremental process. Quality or performance gains are likely to be high in the first cycles, with incremental improvement becoming of a lesser magnitude as time goes on. This would be the case if organizations were static, but in reality they rarely exist within static environments, either internally or externally, and it is the dynamic nature of these environments that requires a continuous improvement approach.

9 Quality regimes

9.1 General

By understanding performance within an organization, it is possible to use this information to improve performance by achieving a level that matches or exceeds the organization, customer or other stakeholder requirements. There are many quality models that exist to support managers in achieving this.

This list of quality models is by no means exhaustive, but it is representative of the major quality/performance models currently in use. One common strand associated with each example, and dealt with by each model in its own way, is the role of information and evidence in implementing these models. The records management programme itself can contribute to the success of these models by ensuring timely and accurate evidence of performance, as well as benefiting from the application of the models to improving the quality in the programme.

9.2 BS EN ISO 9000 suite of standards[7]

The following eight quality management principles have been identified that can be used by top management in order to lead the organization towards improved performance.

- **Customer focus** – organizations depend on their customers and therefore should understand customer needs and strive to exceed customer expectations.

- **Leadership** – leaders establish unity of purpose and direction of the organization.

- **Involvement of people** – people at all levels are the essence of an organization and their full involvement enables their abilities to be used for the organization's benefit.

- **Process approach** – a desired result is achieved more efficiently when activities and related resources are managed as a process.

- **System approach to management** – identifying, understanding and managing interrelated processes as a system contributes to the organization's effectiveness and efficiency in achieving its objectives.

---

[7] See BS EN ISO 9000:2000, *Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary*.

- Continual improvement – continual improvement of the organization's overall performance should be a permanent objective of the organization.

- Factual approach to decision making – effective decisions are based on the analysis of data and information.

- Mutually beneficial supplier relationships – an organization and its suppliers are interdependent and a mutually beneficial relationship enhances the ability of both to create value.

9.3   EFQM Excellence Model[8]

The EFQM Excellence Model is a non-prescriptive framework based on nine criteria – five are enablers and four are results (see Table 2). The enablers are about what an organization does and the results are a product of how these enablers are managed.

Table 2. The criteria used as a basis for the EFQM Excellence Model

Enablers	Results
Leadership	Customer results
Policy and strategy	People results
People	Society results
Partnerships and resources	Key performance results
Processes	

9.4   Six Sigma™[9]

Six Sigma™ is a methodology based on removing defects and the cause of those defects from business processes and activities. The model is based on establishing management commitment, information gathering, assessment of training, developing monitoring systems, business processes problems identified and improved.

9.5   Balanced Scorecard

The Balanced Scorecard is based on the perspectives of finance, customers, internal business processes and learning and growth. It is the balance between these areas that contribute to success. This method builds on the concept of 'Total Quality Management and Continuous Improvement'.

---

[8] EFQM is a registered trademark of European Foundation for Quality Management.

[9] Six Sigma™ is a registered trademark of Motorola, Inc.

10 Conclusion

Performance measurement and performance management are essential practices in ensuring that projects and programmes meet targets and produce expected results. Performance can be measured in many ways and can relate to efficiency, effectiveness and impact. A good performance measurement regime will have a healthy balance between these types of measures. The measures and indicators that are selected need to be appropriate and relevant, and resistance to just measuring only what can be measured is paramount. The indicators selected should be employed to allow senior managers a clear understanding of the benefits of the records management programme. Also the link between these results and the objectives of the organization must be demonstrable to justify continued resources for the records management programme.

Annex A
Preliminary questions

1. What is the nature of our business?	
2. What is the business trying to achieve?	
3. What targets have been set by/for the business?	
4. What results are likely to attract more funding?	
5. Is the business likely to change?	
6. Who are we competing against (both internal and external) ?	
7. Who are our customers?	
8. What do our customers want?	
9. Who will judge success or failure?	
10. What criteria do they apply?	

Annex B
Metrics for measuring performance

Annex B deals with the metrics for measuring the performance in a BS ISO 15489-1 records programme. The various measures are laid out as prescriptions that can be applied to each clause of BS ISO 15489-1. These prescriptions could be applied to any records management programme. Not all measures will be applicable to all programmes – it is up to the user to decide which and what measures are appropriate.

This list of prescriptions is only a guide and should not be considered to be an exhaustive list – it is a representative sample of the type and variety of performance measures that might be applied. Some measures will be more applicable within some industries than others. What is important is that the chosen measures relate to the context of the individual records management programme.

The sets of measures are called prescriptions because they are examples of measures that could be assigned or prescribed. The tables in this Annex identify what the measure is and which clause it relates to in BS ISO 15489-1. A brief description of the measure is also included, as is a suggestion of the source data for the measure. The measure is expressed in terms of a metric where possible, and guidance notes are included where applicable.

Some of the prescriptions describe areas that will not be in the control of the records manager. It is important to remember that in these instances the performance, and any performance improvement, needs to be an organizational responsibility.

The prescriptions refer to the use of surveys in a number of recommendations. It is beyond the scope of this publication to address the many pitfalls of using surveys. However, it is important to view any results by considering how other external factors may have influenced answers and the possibility of misinterpretation of questions. Surveys can be validated through sample investigation to verify particular answers.

Table B.1. Prescription A – Records management policy

No.	Type of measure	Description of measure	Objective of measure	Source	Metric	Note
A1	Output	Existence of policy. BS ISO 15489-1, **6.1**	To ascertain if policy exists	Questionnaire	Y/N	There may be several policies that exist in relation to BS ISO 15489-1, **6.1**
A2	Outcome	Quantity of senior managers aware of policy. BS ISO 15489-1, **6.3**	To ascertain how well the policy has been communicated	Questionnaire	Percentage of senior managers aware of policy	Aim to increase/decrease percentages each year. Ensure definition of senior manager is consistent for each measure
A3	Outcome	Integration with policy development in organization. BS ISO 15489-1, **6.2**	To ascertain how well the policy has been communicated	Desk based research	Percentage of organization policies that cite records management policy	
A4	Outcome	Recognition of value of records management practice. BS ISO 15489-1, **6.3**	To ascertain how well the policy has been communicated	Research – desk based research	Percentage of corporate projects/programmes that appraise compliance with records management policy	
A5	Output	Staff awareness of policy/programme. BS ISO 15489-1, **6.3**	To ascertain if knowledge of the policy has filtered down to front line staff	Questionnaire/ interview	Percentage of staff aware of policy	Use results to justify communication strategy

Table B.2. Prescription B – Responsibilities

No.	Type of measure	Description of measure	Objective of measure	Source	Metric	Note
B1	Outcome	Identifying schemes of delegation that include responsibilities for records as a discrete element. BS ISO 15489-1, **6.3**	To ensure responsibilities for records are allocated	Survey/job descriptions	Percentage of managers with responsibilities clearly identified	Could be used for benchmarking
B2	Outcome	Evaluating staff appraisal process for evidence of assigned responsibilities for records. BS ISO 15489-1, **6.3**	To identify responsibilities of all staff in relation to records	Desk based research – appraisal forms	Y/N. If more than one scheme, use number that complies	Could be used as evidence to include record responsibilities in appraisal process, job descriptions, performance statements etc.
B3	Outcome	Evaluating managers' knowledge of responsibilities. BS ISO 15489-1, **6.3**	To identify levels of awareness of managers in respect of records responsibilities	Questionnaire/ survey	Percentage of managers aware of responsibility	Can form basis of target for improvement

Table B.3. Prescription C – Legal and regulatory requirements

No.	Type of measure	Description of measure	Objective of measure	Source	Metric	Note
C1	Output	Proof of legal and regulatory requirements being considered. BS ISO 15489-1, clause **5**, list item (a)	To ascertain if a robust investigation of legal and regulatory requirements has been completed	1. DIRS Step A analysis 2. Interviews or consultation with: • legal staff • service managers • audit staff	1. Does document/database/ register of requirements exist? 2. Is it regularly reviewed? 3. Is it accessible to all concerned parties? 4. Does a process of validation exist for all concerned parties? 5. Does it link directly to the development of retention schedules?	
C2	Output	Proof of risk based analysis. BS ISO 15489-1, **7.1**, list item (f)	To ascertain if a robust investigation of risk has been completed	1. DIRS Step A analysis 2. Interviews or consultation with: • legal staff • service managers • audit staff	1. Is risk recorded in corporate or other risk register? 2. Is it regularly reviewed? 3. Is it accessible to all concerned parties? 4. Does a process of validation exist for all concerned parties? 5. Does it link directly to the development of retention schedules?	

Table B.4. Prescription D – Characteristics of records (metadata)

No.	Type of measure	Description of measure	Objective of measure	Source	Metric	Note
D1	Output	To ensure required records characteristics as described in BS ISO 15489-1, **7.2** are met through capture of appropriate metadata as validation of these characteristics	To determine if appropriate metadata is captured to ensure records have necessary characteristics	DIRS Step C/ Desk based research	Confirmation of corporate guidelines for the creation and capture of metadata in relation to record systems	Much of this information can be gathered as part of the DIRS process – see BIP 0025-2 and PD ISO/TR 15489-2
D2	Output	As in D1	To determine if the guidelines are widely disseminated	Questionnaire/ DIRS Step D	Percentage of managers, system designers or application managers aware of standard	As in D1
D3	Output	As in D1	To determine if method for metadata requirements exist	DIRS Step D	Percentage of managers, system designers or application managers aware of/use guidelines for metadata	As in D1
D4	Output	As in D1	Frequency with which method is employed for new systems	DIRS Step D	Percentage of new systems employing method and establishing metadata requirements	As in D1
D5	Output	As in D1	To determine extent to which all records are linked to their associated metadata	DIRS Step D	Percentage of records/systems linking records and metadata	As in D1
D6	Output	As in D1	To determine if record systems allow either automatic or user entered metadata to be linked with records at point of creation	DIRS Step D	Percentage of existing/new systems with facility to allow metadata to be entered at point of creation of record	As in D1

Table B.5. Prescription E – Records management systems

No.	Type of measure	Description of measure	Objective of measure	Source	Metric	Note
E1	Output	To test reliability of systems. BS ISO 15489-1, **8.2.1**	1. To ascertain if all records within the scope of business activity are captured 2. To ascertain if organization of system reflects business processes of creator 3. User satisfaction with system 4. Robustness against interference 5. Technical reliability	1. DIRS Step C – process maps 2. DIRS Step C – process maps 3. Questionnaire/ interview 4. DIRS Step D/ system test 5. System log	1. Percentage of business records routinely captured 2. Percentage of business classification scheme integrated in record systems 3. Percentage of users satisfied the system allows records to be associated with correct business processes 4. Is metadata available to determine changes to system? 5. Is operational log of system maintained?	1. Expected result would be 100 per cent 2. Expected result would be 100 per cent 3. This can be a subjective measure
E2	Output	To test integrity. BS ISO 15489-1, **8.2.2**	1. To ensure only appropriate records are destroyed 2. To ensure appropriate access controls in place 3. To ensure appropriate access controls in place	1. DIRS Step D 2. DIRS Step D/ system test 3. DIRS Step D	1. Are retention authorities an integral part of system? 2. Do rules and procedures for user verification exist? 3. Does the organization have an information security/ password policy?[a]	

[a] BS ISO/IEC 17799:2000 addresses this issue.

No.	Type of measure	Description of measure	Objective of measure	Source	Metric	Note
E3	Output	To test compliance of system. BS ISO 15489-1, **8.2.3**	1. To ascertain if system remains compliant with operational, statutory and other business needs	1. DIRS Step A	1. Are records management requirements regularly reviewed against functionality of system? 2. Does the organization have a current functional specification of records management requirements? 3. Are units of the organization required to employ the functional specification in developing records management systems?	2. UK National Archives have developed a comprehensive functional specification available on their website[b]
E4	Output	To test if system is comprehensive. BS ISO 15489-1, **8.2.4**	1. To ascertain if system covers all records management needs of business	1. DIRS Step B/C 2. DIRS Step D	1. Comparison of records management requirements against system 2. Percentage of records captured by system	
E5	Output	To test if system is systematic. BS ISO 15489-1, **8.2.5**	To ascertain if systematic approach is taken	1. DIRS Step D	1. Existence of documented formal methodologies for record systems 2. Percentage of staff aware of formal methodologies	

[b] See http//www.pro.gov.uk.

Table B.6. Prescription F – Records management processes and controls

No.	Type of measure	Description of measure	Objective of measure	Source	Metric	Note
F1	Output	Determining how long to retain records. BS ISO 15489-1, **9.2**	To ascertain if records are being retained for appropriate periods	DIRS Step A/B	1. Percentage of record keeping systems linked to organizational retention schedules 2. Percentage of records actioned within six months of trigger date 3. Percentage of business records linked to retention schedule	
F2	Output	Records capture. BS ISO 15489-1, **9.3**	To ascertain if appropriate records are being captured into record systems	DIRS Step A/B/C	1. Percentage of business units with identified record keeping requirements 2. Percentage of identified records captured into systems 3. Percentage of business units who have undertaken risk assessment of failure to capture records	1. Identified as part of process analysis in DIRS Step C 2. Identified as part of process analysis in DIRS Step C 3. Identified as part of process analysis in DIRS Step C
F3	Output	Records classification. BS ISO 15489-1, **9.5**	To ascertain if appropriate arrangements for classification are applied	DIRS Step C/D	Percentage of business units with classification schemes	
F4	Output	Records classification. BS ISO 15489-1, **9.5**	To ascertain if appropriate arrangements for classification are applied	DIRS Step D	Percentage of business units with classification schemes linked to corporate classification scheme	

No.	Type of measure	Description of measure	Objective of measure	Source	Metric	Note
F5	Output	Records classification. BS ISO 15489-1, **9.5**	To ascertain if appropriate arrangements for classification are applied	DIRS Step D	Percentage of classification schemes based on functional analysis	
F6	Outcome	Records classification. BS ISO 15489-1, **9.5**	To ascertain if appropriate arrangements for classification are applied	DIRS Step D	Percentage of user satisfaction with classification scheme	
F7	Output	Records classification. BS ISO 15489-1, **9.5**	To ascertain if appropriate arrangements for classification are applied	DIRS Step D	Percentage of classification schemes reviewed within 12 months of development	
F8	Outcome	Storage. BS ISO 15489-1, **9.6** (physical)	To ascertain if appropriate storage arrangements are in existence for physical records	DIRS Step D	Percentage of business unit managers aware of minimum requirements for storage of records	It is assumed that an organizational standard exists
F9		Storage. BS ISO 15489-1, **9.6** (logical)	To ascertain if appropriate storage arrangements for are in existence for logical records	DIRS Step D	Percentage of user satisfaction with accessibility, usability, reliability of logical records	It would also be possible to benchmark on these issues with other systems
F10	Input	Storage. BS ISO 15489-1, **9.6** (physical)	Cost efficiency of storage	Record centre balance sheet/ contract costs	Unit cost of retrieving document	
F11	Input	Storage. BS ISO 15489-1, **9.6** (physical)	Cost efficiency of storage	Record centre balance sheet/ contract costs	Cost of storing m^3 of records	Can be used to benchmark

Annex B Metrics for measuring performance

No.	Type of measure	Description of measure	Objective of measure	Source	Metric	Note
F12	Output	Access. BS ISO 15489-1, **9.7**	To ascertain if appropriate access rules are in existence for records	Survey/ Desk based research	1. Percentage of security breaches on high, medium, and low level systems 2. Percentage of staff allocated a security/access level 3. Percentage of systems incorporating organizational access rule 4. Percentage of records mapped to access rules	It is assumed that policies exist on access requirements and restrictions
F13	Output	Tracking. BS ISO 15489-1, **9.8**	To ascertain if appropriate record tracking facilities are in existence	DIRS Step D/ Desk based research	1. Percentage of systems that allow record tracking to occur 2. Percentage of staff trained to use tracking system	
F14	Output	Disposition. BS ISO 15489-1, **9.9**	To measure performance in relation to record disposition	Desk based research	1. Percentage of expired records destroyed/transferred in any year 2. Unit cost of destruction 3. Time from expiry to space available in record centre/ server	1. Expired records are those identified by a retention schedule as having reached their disposition date 2. This can be used to benchmark

Table B.7. Prescription G – Training

No.	Type of measure	Description of measure	Objective of measure	Source	Metric	Note
G1	Input	Measure of identifiable expertise within records management section	To identify the level of professionally qualified records managers as a reflection of investment by the organization	1. Personnel development review or appraisal 2. Training plan 3. IIP process	Percentage of records management staff with professional or equivalent qualifications	This can be a subjective measure. Will need consistent criteria over time
G2	Input	Measure of all staff with records responsibilities who have undergone training	To identify if the underpinning knowledge to sustain a records management programme has been adequately disseminated	Personnel development review or appraisal	Percentage of staff identified with record responsibilities who have received training	
G3	Input	Measure of competence level of records management staff	To identify if the appropriate levels of competence exist within the organization	Personnel development review or appraisal	Percentage of records management staff identified at appropriate level of competence for responsibilities	Dependent on existence of organizational scheme of competencies or use of external competency scheme[a]

^a For example, the UK National Archives scheme of competency.

Bibliography

Standards publications

BS ISO 15489-1:2001, *Information and documentation — Records management — Part 1: General.*

PD ISO/TR 15489-2:2001, *Information and documentation — Records management — Part 2: Guidelines.*

BS EN ISO 9000 (all parts), *Quality management systems.*

BS EN ISO 14001:1996, *Environmental management systems — Specification with guidance for use.*

About the author

Philip A. Jones

Philip A. Jones is currently Head of Information Resources for Staffordshire County Council where he is responsible for corporate management of records and developing policy in relation to information legislation such as Freedom of Information and Data Protection.

Philip has over twenty years experience as a records and information management professional working extensively in the UK public sector and also as a private consultant.

Philip has been involved with record and document standards for over ten years and is a co-editor of ISO 15489, *Information and documentation — Records management*. He is currently Chairman of the BSI Archives and Records Management Committee (IDT 2/17) and working on a BSI publication about performance management within record management programmes.

In November 2000 he was appointed the first ever UK Visiting Professor of Records Management by the University of Northumbria where he teaches on both undergraduate and postgraduate courses both on campus and through the internet. He has written numerous articles and papers on the subject of records and information management and more lately knowledge management. He has lectured in the UK, USA, Italy, Sweden, Australia and Japan on a wide variety of information related topics.

Amongst his other professional activities he serves as a Director of the government appointed Information Sector National Training Organisation and has served as Director and then Chairman of the Records Management Society (GB). He is currently President of the International Records Management Council. Philip was voted UK Records Manager of the Year 2000.