

*Control Objectives for Information and related Technology (COBIT®)* provides good practices across a domain and process framework and presents activities in a manageable and logical structure. COBIT's good practices represent the consensus of experts. They are strongly focused more on control, less on execution. These practices will help optimize IT-enabled investments, ensure service delivery and provide a measure against which to judge when things do go wrong.

For IT to be successful in delivering against business requirements, management should put an internal control system or framework in place. The COBIT control framework contributes to these needs by:

- ❖ Making a link to the business requirements
- ❖ Organizing IT activities into an accepted process model
- ❖ Identifying the major IT resources to be leveraged
- ❖ Defining the management control objectives to be considered

The business orientation of COBIT consists of linking business goals to IT goals, providing metrics and maturity models to measure their achievement, and identifying the associated responsibilities of business and IT process owners.

The process focus of COBIT is illustrated by a process model that subdivides IT into four domains and 34 processes in line with the responsibility areas of the plan, build, run and monitor, providing an end-to-end view of IT. Enterprise architecture concepts help identify the resources essential for process success, i.e., applications, information, infrastructure, and people.

In summary, to provide the information that an organization needs to achieve its objectives, IT resources need to be managed by a set of naturally grouped processes.

But how does an organization get IT under control such that it delivers the information the business needs? How does it manage the risks and secure the IT resources on which it is so dependent? How does the organization ensure that IT achieves its objectives and supports the business?

First, management needs control objectives that define the ultimate goal of implementing policies, plans and procedures, and organizational structures designed to provide reasonable assurance that:

- ❖ Business goals are achieved
- ❖ Undesired events are prevented or detected and corrected

Second, in today's complex environments, management is continuously searching for concise and timely information to make difficult decisions on value, risk and control quickly and successfully. What should be measured, and how? Organizations need an objective measure of where they are and where improvement is required, and they need to implement a management toolkit to monitor this improvement.

The COBIT framework provides a reference process model and common language for everyone in an organization to view and manage IT activities. Incorporating an operational model and a common language for all parts of the business involved in IT is one of the most important and initial steps toward good governance. It also provides a framework for measuring and monitoring IT performance, communicating with service providers and integrating best management practices. A process model encourages process ownership, enabling responsibilities and accountability to be defined.

To govern IT effectively, it is important to appreciate the activities and risks within IT that need to be managed. They are usually ordered into the responsibility domains of the plan, build, run and monitor. Within the COBIT framework, these domains, are called:

- ❖ [Plan and Organize](#) – Provides direction to solution delivery and service delivery
- ❖ [Acquire and Implement](#) – Provides the solutions and passes them to be turned into services
- ❖ [Deliver and Support](#) – Receives the solutions and makes them usable for end users
- ❖ [Monitor and Evaluate](#) – Monitors all processes to ensure that the direction provided is followed

## References

- ❖ COBIT 4.1