

BiSL[®] Self-assessment

Diagnosis for Business Information Management

BISL 2ND REVISED EDITION



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1 Introduction

1.1 Goal

Self-assessment is the independent, systematic reviewing of a way or working and its output. Filling in the BiSL self-assessment will provide you with insight into the degree to which Business Information Management and related processes and activities are implemented within your organization.

An important goal of this self-assessment is not only to provide insight into the degree to which certain processes are implemented, but in particular also to provide insight into the limitations for the organization and the related consequences for the (continuity and quality) of the services. The results can be used to initiate targeted actions for improvement.

1.2 Structure

This workbook comprises five chapters.

The first three chapters contain a manual and instructions. They describe the self-assessment's starting points, design and approach. In addition, there is a short explanation of the BiSL model and its processes. This knowledge is needed to be able to fill in the self-assessment well.

Chapter four is the self-assessment itself. This chapter consists of the questionnaires to be filled in, specified per process.

The last chapter contains the instruments for analysis of the results of the self-assessment and for the initiation of focused improvement actions.

This BiSL Self-assessment is also available as an interactive e-book. With this enhanced e-pdf it is possible to save your work (assessment) on your computer (laptop). To do this, you need Acrobat Reader version X or higher.

1.3 Prerequisite knowledge

No in-depth knowledge about the BiSL model is required to be able to fill in the self-assessment. Some knowledge of the (meaning) of the terminology used will be advantageous and will lead to filling in the questionnaires more consciously.

Further information/referenced literature:

- www.aslbisfoundation.org
- R. van der Pols, R. Donatz and F. van Outvorst, *BiSL, A Framework for Business Information Management – 2nd revised edition*, Van Haren Publishing, 2012, ISBN 978 90 8753 877 4
- R. van der Pols and Y. Backer, *BiSL, A Pocket Guide – 2nd revised edition*, Van Haren Publishing, 2012, ISBN 978 90 8753 711 1

This BiSL self-assessment is based on the publication *ASL Zelfevaluatie [Dutch]* (Deurloo, Van der Pols and Sieders, Van Haren Publishing, 2004, ISBN 978 90 4400 696 4). The design and structure show strong similarities. The content has of course been modified to reflect the specific issues within Business Information Management.

2 Development phases

2.1 Process clusters

The self-assessment is based on the clusters of the BiSL model. The various process clusters are described briefly below. More information can be found in the literature listed in paragraph 1.3.

The process clusters that the self-assessment addresses are (see fig. 2.1):

1. **Use management:**
This cluster contains the processes that ensure optimal and continuous support and execution of the information provisioning. These processes address support of the users in their use of the information provisioning while performing their tasks in the business process, operational management of the IT supplier, and monitoring and housekeeping of the operational data.
2. **Functionality management:**
The processes in this cluster focus on achieving the required changes to the information provisioning. The goal is to realize the changes within the given bounds and requirements.
3. **Connecting processes (operational):**
These processes align use management and functionality management. The goal of the connecting processes is to chart which changes to the information provisioning have to be achieved and to actually achieve the changes.
4. **Managing processes:**
The managing processes ensure that the operational process clusters are managed as a whole. The managing processes monitor agreed activities in terms of costs and benefits, needs, planning/estimation, contracts and service levels.
5. **I-organization strategy:**
This cluster is about the design and implementation of the organization of the information provisioning. Multiple parties have managing, decision-making or influential roles concerning the information provisioning. Control, structuring and ways of working have to mutually adjusted. This also applies to the relationships with the managing parties outside the BiSL domain, such as suppliers, chain partners and the user organization.
6. **Information strategy:**
It is very important that the information provisioning is aligned with the future requirements and that structural shortcomings in the current situation be solved. This requires a substantive strategy for the information provisioning for the years to come. This cluster describes the processes that guarantee continual optimal alignment with the business processes.
7. **Information coordination:**
A process is also needed to align content (cluster 5) and organization (cluster 6), mutually adjusting the various decisions in various areas by various actors.

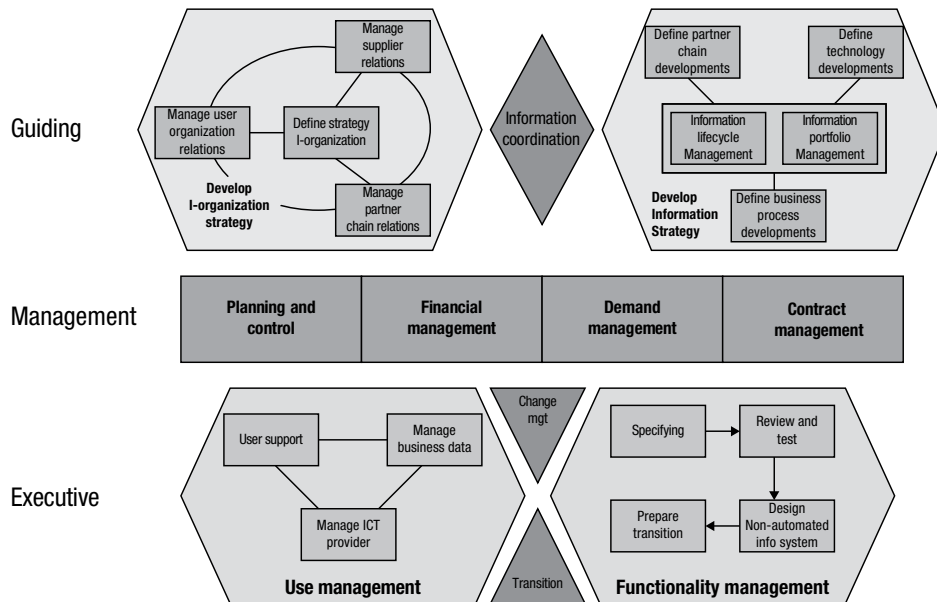


Figure 2.1 The BiSL process model

2.2 Development phases

This self-assessment is based on various development phases. Each phase recognizes characteristics in terms of activities, results and control of the process. A set of questions is used to determine the current development phase of a process and the organization. Five development phases (maturity levels) are recognized. These development phases are based on CMM(I) and INK¹.

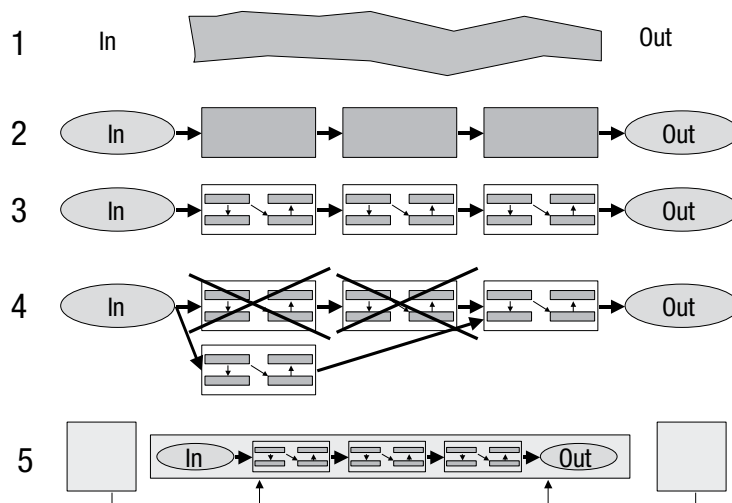


Figure 2.2 Maturity levels

¹INK pays a great deal of attention to the place in the environment and the integration with this environment. This is not so prominent within CMM(I). Experts will therefore recognize that the levels, as defined above, are derived from both INK and CMM(I). The first four levels are derived from CMM(I). These provide insight into how the processes and the system are defined. CMM(I) levels 3 and 4 have been combined. CMM(I) offers more practical guidance for these levels than INK. Level 5 is based on INK: the reason being that the importance of environment and chains is becoming a critical success factor.

The five development phases are described as follows:
(0. Absent)

1. **Initial:** the organization does not have a stable environment in which Business Information Management processes are executed. There are however some attempts and sometimes activities are executed in order to acquire insight and knowledge. The results and the outcomes of the activities are usually unpredictable.
2. **Repeatable:** the organization executes activities repetitively. Previous experience and ways of working are used for the execution of activities. Signs of a standard way of working are appearing.
3. **Defined/managed:** the activities and processes are defined and documented. The processes have been well thought through. The processes have also been designed and implemented to provide quantitative and qualitative indicators that the organization can use for control and adjustment.
4. **Optimizing:** the organization is characterized by continual process improvement. Mechanisms and processes have been developed to enable ongoing and controlled improvements to the process.
5. **Chain:** the focus of the organization during the design and implementation, the improvement, and the mutual adjustment of processes all focus on increasing the added value within the process chain in which they participate.

2.3 Importance of the phases

The recognition of development phases (maturity levels) creates the impression that it is 'good' to aim for a high or higher level. This, however, is not always the case. After all, the design and implementation, the organization of, and execution of processes and process control cost time and money.

It is important to aim for the level that suits the particular organization. A point of constant consideration is that energy is needed to prevent degradation to a lower level and that it extra energy is always needed to grow to a higher level. Another point is that levels can't be skipped.

3 Approach

The approach in this self-assessment comprises the following steps:

1. Filling in the questionnaires.
2. Summarizing the results per cluster.
3. Summarizing and analyzing the overall results.
4. Defining the improvement actions.

3.1 Filling in the questionnaires

Fill in the questionnaires (chapter 4). Simply tick the question if it is 'true'. If you tick a question, it's assumed that you can explain why the question is valid for the organization (you should be able to explain your answer).

The workbook is not suited for extensive argumentation. The argumentation and substantiation can be recorded in a separate document.

Follow these steps:

- Look at the *level* at which the questions are ticked: the score is the highest level at which **all** questions are ticked;
- Note for each process no more than three strong points and three weak points;
- Indicate why a higher level wasn't possible (we call this the bottleneck) and what would have to be achieved to realize this higher level;
- Assess the importance of solving the bottleneck. The importance is a number between 1 and 5, as described in the following table.

Importance	Description
1	Unimportant
2	Moderately important
3	Important
4	Very important
5	Business critical

3.2 Summarizing the results per cluster

Under the table with the results of the processes there is a table with the summary per cluster. Summarize the results per cluster in this table. Follow these steps:

- Determine the final score: this is the lowest score of all scores of the processes in a cluster.
- Determine the bottleneck for the cluster: the most important bottleneck that the person doing the self-assessment experiences in this cluster.
- Assess the importance of solving the bottleneck.

3.3 Summarizing and analyzing the overall results

Fill in overall overview

- Fill in the total scores per cluster in the rosette (paragraph 5.1). The rosette provides you with an overview of the degree of maturity of the various process clusters and in particular also the process clusters with a 'low' score.

Determine ambition level and measure to be tasks

- The next step is the recognition of your desired ambition level. This step is however not as simple as seems at first glance. Judgment will have to be made whether extra measures are actually desired. In addition, improvements in certain clusters will be more important than those in other clusters, leading to possible differences in ambitions per cluster.
- Determine which activities are needed in order to take the next step.
- Validate these activities:
 - Explore whether the activities will achieve the desired results/ambition level.
 - Determine the feasibility of the activities as a whole (can the organization tackle this?).
 - Adjust the ambition level where appropriate/necessary.

3.4 Allocation of responsibilities and actors

A frequently encountered point with respect to quality systems is that much thought goes into improvement initiatives and that organizations are very ambitious in identifying and initiating improvements. Another observation is that day-to-day operational activities take precedence and that little time remains to actually translate the improvement initiatives into the desired result.

Recognition of how much time, capacity and also attention is available is therefore an important topic when determining desired improvement goals and improvement activities, because lowering ambitions can be a way to achieving the desired goals.

In this step we allocate actions to people, determine timelines, and estimate the required capacity and management attention. This can also lead to adjustment of ambition levels and activities.

4 The self-assessment

4.1 Use management

Process Level	End user support	Operational supplier management	Business data management
0-absent			
1-initial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There are multiple points of contact for reporting functional calls (incidents, disruptions, questions, complaints etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> The user usually know where to find them (>70%). <input type="checkbox"/> Functional call are usually recorded (>70%). <input type="checkbox"/> There are (implicit) expectations about how functional calls are dealt with. <input type="checkbox"/> (Sometimes) there is communication with the user organization (memos, announcements, newsletters, feedback etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> (Refresher) training for users is (occasionally) provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There are (implicit) expectations in the user organization about the availability of the services. This applies to the availability of the applications, the infrastructure and the accessibility of the service desk. <input type="checkbox"/> There is some insight into the requirements for control and monitoring of the activities that ensure optimal deployment of IT resources. <input type="checkbox"/> Measures have been tasks (ad hoc) to ensure prevention of fraud, theft and improper use of systems. <input type="checkbox"/> There are (implicit) agreements about how to deal with calamities. <input type="checkbox"/> There are (implicit) agreements about assigning work to the (external) IT suppliers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There is high-level knowledge about which business data belong to which information system, and the meaning of the data. <input type="checkbox"/> There is some insight into the correctness and actuality of the business data in the information systems. <input type="checkbox"/> There is some insight into the control data/parameters per information system (e.g. VAT percentages, insurance policy parameters). <input type="checkbox"/> Control data/parameters are modified ad hoc. <input type="checkbox"/> It is (more or less) clear where ad hoc data queries (e.g. overviews, reports) can be obtained. <input type="checkbox"/> Information models are present for some information systems (with a representation of the data structure).
2-repeatable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Most people in the organization know who to contact for functional calls. There is - more or less - just one point of contact. <input type="checkbox"/> This point of contact deals with the registration and processing of almost all functional calls (>90%). <input type="checkbox"/> There are (more or less) firm agreements about the processing of functional calls. <input type="checkbox"/> Functional calls are registered (>90%). <input type="checkbox"/> There are agreements for granting and processing of authorizations. <input type="checkbox"/> Regular user meetings are organized for a number of information systems. <input type="checkbox"/> (Extra) training and/or instruction is provided on a regular basis. <input type="checkbox"/> There is regular communication with the user organization (announcements, newsletters, feedback etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There are agreements about availability of information systems with the user organization and the IT suppliers. <input type="checkbox"/> The performance of the IT suppliers is regularly monitored, and if there is sufficient capacity. <input type="checkbox"/> There are agreements about how to deal with calamities. These agreements have been made in collaboration with the users and the IT suppliers. <input type="checkbox"/> More or less structured measures have been taken to prevent fraud, theft and improper use of information systems. <input type="checkbox"/> There are more or less firm agreements about assigning work to the IT suppliers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> For most information systems there is knowledge about which business data belong to which information system, and the meaning of the data. <input type="checkbox"/> The quality of business data in the critical information systems is monitored. <input type="checkbox"/> There are agreements about management of the business data for the critical information systems. These are complied with. <input type="checkbox"/> It is (more or less) clear which control data/parameters there are per information system (e.g. VAT percentages, insurance policy parameters). <input type="checkbox"/> Control data/parameters are generally (reasonably) managed. <input type="checkbox"/> It is clear where ad hoc data queries (e.g. overviews, reports) can be obtained. The process of ad hoc data queries is reasonably under control.

Process Level	End user support	Operational supplier management	Business data management
3-defined/ managed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There is a formal point of contact (e.g. helpdesk) for functional calls. The functional calls are submitted at the point of contact. <input type="checkbox"/> There is insight into number, type and processing criteria of functional calls. <input type="checkbox"/> Functional calls are prioritized. <input type="checkbox"/> There are clear agreements about granting authorizations; these are documented and reported. <input type="checkbox"/> There are effective agreements with the incident management processes within Application Management and IT Infrastructure Management, that Business Information Management has the leading role. <input type="checkbox"/> These agreements are monitored. <input type="checkbox"/> There are structural user meetings for the most important information systems. <input type="checkbox"/> There are plans for user (re)training. These are also followed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There are clear agreements with the user organization and the IT suppliers about availability and reliability. <input type="checkbox"/> There is insight into events in the user organization, and this insight is used when establishing the required capacity. <input type="checkbox"/> There is a Disaster recovery plan that has been written in collaboration with the user organization and that has been checked with the IT suppliers (Application Management and IT Infrastructure Management). <input type="checkbox"/> Structured measures with the user organization and the IT suppliers have been taken to prevent fraud, theft and improper use of systems (with formal agreements). <input type="checkbox"/> There are clear, documented agreements over assigning work to IT suppliers. It is clear who may assign work and make operational agreements, and this is adhered to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> For all information systems there is knowledge about which business data belong to which information system, and the meaning of the data. <input type="checkbox"/> The quality of the business data in the information systems is monitored using predefined specific quality criteria. This is reported regularly. <input type="checkbox"/> Unused business data is always cleansed. <input type="checkbox"/> There are formalized procedures and agreements about business data management. These are adhered to. <input type="checkbox"/> It is clear which control data/parameters there are per information system (e.g. VAT percentages, insurance policy parameters). <input type="checkbox"/> There are formalized procedures and agreements for management of control data/parameters. These are adhered to. <input type="checkbox"/> Ad hoc data queries are always documented and tested. The quality of the data queries is in alignment with the quality of the data in the information systems. There is up-to-date administration and the actuality of the requests is monitored continuously. <input type="checkbox"/> There is an unambiguous formal responsibility for management and maintenance of the (business) information model.
4-optimizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Functional calls are the input for the Managing processes and result in measures for quality improvement. <input type="checkbox"/> The process 'end user support' is reviewed and improved on a regular basis. <input type="checkbox"/> Training results are used and lead to measures for quality improvement. <input type="checkbox"/> Communication with users is reviewed and improved periodically (announcements, newsletters etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Proactive measures, based on developments, have been taken to guarantee availability. There is timely consultation with the user organization and IT suppliers. <input type="checkbox"/> The required capacity is determined periodically. <input type="checkbox"/> The Disaster recovery plan is tested periodically and adjusted as needed, taking into consideration any developments and changes in the business process, the user organization and with the IT suppliers. <input type="checkbox"/> For every change in the information provisioning, the consequences for availability, capacity and the disaster recovery plan are reviewed. <input type="checkbox"/> Measures that have been taken to prevent fraud, theft and improper use of systems, are reviewed in a regular basis, with adjustment as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> For every change in the information systems or business data model, the consequences for the information model of the information system and/or the corporate information model are determined structurally. <input type="checkbox"/> Quality criteria for (the management of) business data are reviewed periodically and adjusted as needed. <input type="checkbox"/> There is integral management of business data and control data/parameters (together with other information systems). <input type="checkbox"/> There is a logical relationship between changes in business policy and management of business data and control data. <input type="checkbox"/> The (business) information model is reviewed periodically using the given quality requirements.
5-chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Activities for end user support including communication with users are executed across the whole chain/in collaboration with the chain partners. <input type="checkbox"/> There is one joint process for end user support across the chain. Functional support for the use of information systems is executed across the whole chain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of information systems is measured and monitored across the whole chain, and measures across the whole chain are taken as needed. <input type="checkbox"/> Capacity is measured and monitored across the whole chain, and measures across the whole chain are taken as needed. <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster recovery plans are made in collaboration with the various parties in the chain and tested across the whole chain. <input type="checkbox"/> Measures to prevent fraud, theft and improper use of information systems are taken, reviewed and adjusted as needed across the whole chain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Management of business data and control data/parameters takes place across the whole chain. There are clear agreements with the chain partners about the execution of the process Business information management. <input type="checkbox"/> Information-exchange between organizations is possible based on jointly agreed data definitions (there is an information model for the whole chain). <input type="checkbox"/> Ad hoc data queries can be based on datasets within multiple organizations in the chain.

4.2 Summary use management processes

Process Level	End user support	Operational supplier management	Business data management
Strong points	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
Weak points	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
Bottleneck			
Importance			

Summary cluster

	Use management
Final score	
Bottleneck	
Importance	