

# An Overview of the ITIL® Maturity Model

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 AUDIENCE

This document describes the purpose, architecture, and key elements of the ITIL® maturity model. It is addressed to consultants, assessors, leaders, managers, and practitioners involved in or considering the use of the model.

The purpose of the document is to present and explain the ITIL maturity model and enable its application in practice.

The model is based on ITIL 4 and uses ITIL 4 terms and concepts. However, readers are not expected to be proficient in ITIL 4. Foundation-level knowledge of IT service management is sufficient for understanding the document and making decisions regarding the use of the model.

Assessors are expected to possess deeper knowledge of ITIL 4 practices. Eligibility criteria can be found in the Axelos Consulting Partner Programme Scheme Brochure.

## 1.2 PURPOSE

The ITIL maturity model is a tool that organizations can use to objectively and comprehensively assess their service management capabilities and the maturity of the organization's service value system (SVS).

The primary intended purpose of such assessments is to inform the organization's improvement planning by highlighting the areas that need improvement.

Other relevant purposes include:

- monitoring the progress of improvements to the organization's capabilities and maturity
- understanding how an organization's capabilities and maturity compare to those of other organizations (benchmarking)
- obtaining a formal confirmation of the organization's ability to act as an effective service provider (validation/certification).

The applicability of these purposes and the validity of the assessment results are subject to the assessment's scope, independence, and adherence to the recommended assessment process.

The assessment of the organization's service management capability is based on evidence of the fulfilment of defined criteria relating to the 34 ITIL management practices. The assessment of the organization's maturity is based on evidence of the fulfilment of criteria relating to the five key components of the organization's SVS.

### Key message

Although the ITIL maturity model is based on the architecture and concepts of ITIL 4, it is NOT designed to assess the extent or success of implementation of the ITIL guidance. Both practices and SVS components can be assessed in organizations that have been developing their service management capabilities and management systems using any relevant guidance and sources of good practice.

Appendix 1 provides an overview of the ITIL management practices; Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 describe ITIL guiding principles and the ITIL continual improvement model respectively.

**Key message**

Capability and maturity assessments are not the only types of assessments an organization might need. The ITIL maturity model is not designed to assess the:

- effectiveness of the organization's practices or SVS (whether they achieve the agreed objectives)
- efficiency of the organization's practices or SVS (whether they achieve the agreed objectives in an optimal and cost-effective way)
- compliance to any regulations or standards
- progress of any organizational initiatives, unless they aim to improve service management capabilities or the maturity of the organization's governance and management system.

These and other types of assessment may be relevant and valuable for an organization and should be considered along with the capability and maturity assessments, depending on the objectives and context of the organization.

### 1.3 ITIL MATURITY MODEL COMPONENTS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS

The ITIL maturity model includes the following components:

- the model overview (this document)
- the ITIL management practices' capability assessment criteria
- the SVS maturity criteria.

Supporting materials for the ITIL maturity model include the:

- assessment guide:
  - assessment process description
  - scoping guidance
- ACP scheme brochure:
  - requirements for the consulting organizations
  - requirements for the assessors
  - registration process
- validation/certification process (please refer to the Organization Maturity Level Certification guidance)
- sample exam materials.

### 1.4 ITIL MATURITY MODEL AND OTHER ITIL COMPONENTS

The ITIL maturity model is based on components of the ITIL 4 framework.

#### 1.4.1 ITIL management practices

ITIL 4 describes 34 management practices.

**Definition:** Management practice

A set of organizational resources designed for performing work or accomplishing an objective.

The model provides tools for assessing the management practices' capabilities (assessing whether or not they fulfil their purposes).

For each practice, a set of practice success factors (PSFs) is defined.

A PSF is more than a task or activity; it includes components from all four dimensions of service management (see section 1.4.2). The nature of the activities and resources of PSFs within a practice may differ, but together they ensure the effectiveness of the practice.

The practices are listed in Appendix 1, along with their purposes. Full practice guides are available online.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.4.2 The four dimensions of service management

To support a holistic approach to service management, ITIL defines four dimensions that collectively are critical for the effective and efficient co-creation of value for customers and other stakeholders in the form of products and services. The dimensions are:

- organizations and people
- information and technology
- partners and suppliers
- value streams and processes.

These four dimensions represent perspectives which are relevant to the whole SVS, including the entirety of the service value chain and all of the ITIL practices. The four dimensions are constrained or influenced by several external factors that are often beyond the control of the SVS.

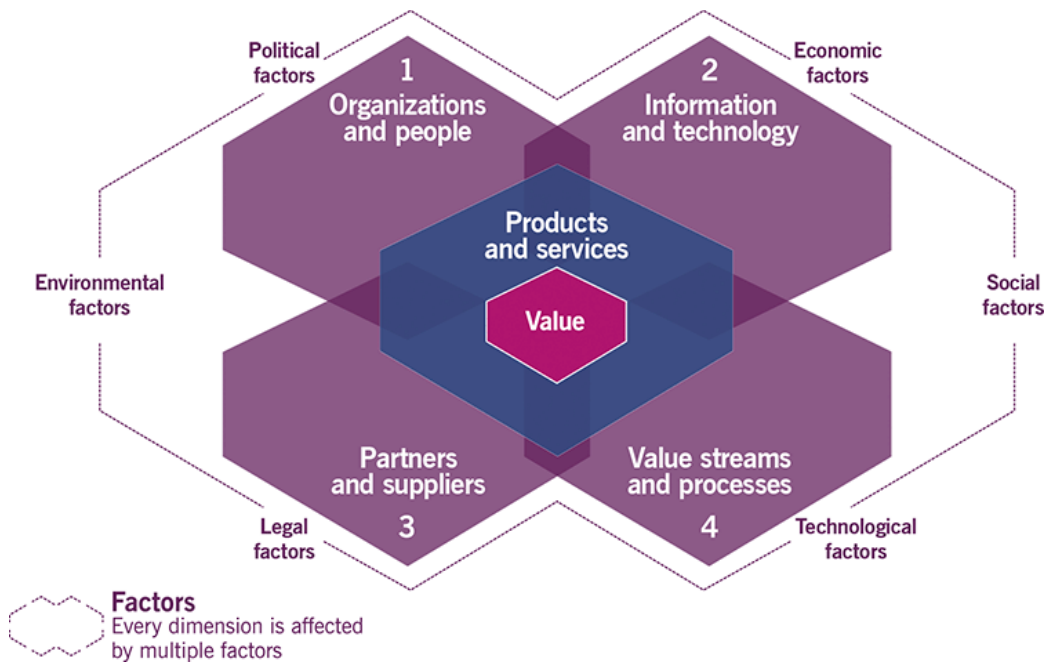


Figure 1.1 The four dimensions of service management

The capability criteria defined in the ITIL maturity model are mapped to each practice's PSFs and the four dimensions of service management. This allows the assessor to assess the practices holistically rather than focusing on one or two aspects, such as processes or technology.

## 1.4.3 SVS components

For service management to function properly, it needs to work as a system.

The ITIL SVS describes how all the components and activities of the organization work together as a system to enable value creation. Each organization's SVS has interfaces with other organizations,

<sup>1</sup>[www.axelos.com/professional-development-member/my-axelos-dashboard/my-axelos-content-hub?c=itil4practices](http://www.axelos.com/professional-development-member/my-axelos-dashboard/my-axelos-content-hub?c=itil4practices) [My ITIL subscription required]

forming an ecosystem that can in turn facilitate value creation for those organizations, their customers, and other stakeholders.

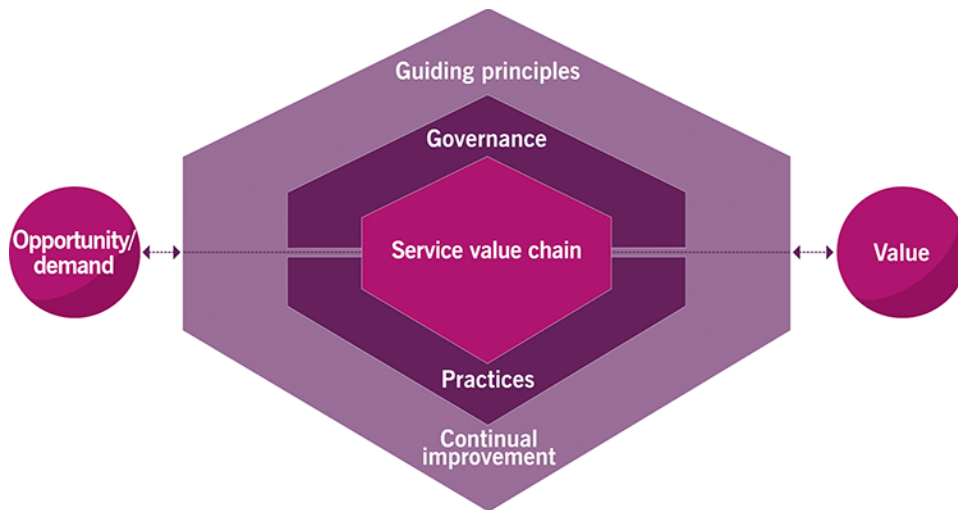


Figure 1.2 The ITIL service value system

The key inputs to the SVS are opportunity and demand. Opportunities represent chances to add value for stakeholders or otherwise improve the organization. Demand is the need or desire for products and services among internal and external consumers. The outcome of the SVS is value: the perceived benefits, usefulness, and importance of something. The ITIL SVS can enable the creation of many different types of value for a wide group of stakeholders.

The ITIL SVS includes the following components:

- **Guiding principles** Recommendations that can guide an organization in all circumstances, regardless of changes in its goals, strategies, type of work, or management structure.
- **Governance** The means by which an organization is directed and controlled.
- **Service value chain** A set of interconnected activities that an organization performs to deliver a valuable product or service to its consumers and to facilitate value realization.
- **Practices** Sets of organizational resources designed for performing work or accomplishing an objective.
- **Continual improvement** A recurring organizational activity performed at all levels to ensure that an organization's performance continually meets stakeholders' expectations. ITIL 4 supports continual improvement with the ITIL continual improvement model.

The purpose of the SVS is to ensure that the organization continually co-creates value with all stakeholders through the use and management of products and services.

The ITIL maturity model defines criteria to assess the organization's SVS maturity based on all key components of the SVS, combined with the capability level demonstrated by the management practices in scope of the assessment.

Note: even if an organization has not formally adopted the terminology and models of ITIL 4, the scope of maturity assessment remains the same. To work effectively, an organization's governance and management system needs to develop and maintain the five components listed above. It is assumed that only when all five components demonstrate certain levels of maturity, the organization and its stakeholders can be reasonably assured of the organization's ability to achieve its goals.

## 2 ITIL maturity model overview

The ITIL maturity model provides tools for assessing the management practices' capability and the maturity of the organization's SVS. The following rules apply:

- The scope of a maturity assessment includes five SVS components (see Sections 2.3.2 – 2.3.6).
- The maturity of the 'practice' component of the SVS is defined based on the capability assessment of the practices in scope.
- The continual improvement practice is included in every maturity assessment. Other practices in scope are defined when the assessment is planned, depending on its objectives.
- To ensure a valid and representative assessment of the practices as a part of the organization's SVS, it is recommended to include at least seven practices in the scope of a maturity assessment. Generally, maturity assessments are more representative and applicable to the organization as a whole when more practices are in scope.
- Organizations can perform capability assessments using any number of individual practices without assessing the SVS components; for example, to support the improvement of the selected practices.

### 2.1 ASSESSING CAPABILITY

#### 2.1.1 Capability levels

The following scale of the capability levels applies to every management practice:

- **Level 1** The practice is not well organized; it is performed as initial/intuitive. It may occasionally or partially achieve its purpose through an incomplete set of activities.
- **Level 2** The practice systematically achieves its purpose through a basic set of activities supported by specialized resources.
- **Level 3** The practice is well defined and achieves its purpose in an organized way, using dedicated resources and relying on inputs from other practices that are integrated into a service management system.
- **Level 4** The practice achieves its purpose in a highly organized way, and its performance is continually measured and assessed in the context of the service management system.
- **Level 5** The practice is continually improving organizational capabilities associated with its purpose.

Each capability level is based on the previous ones; they need to be achieved before the current level can be assessed.

#### 2.1.2 Capability criteria

For each practice, a number of capability criteria are defined for each capability level, from level 2 to level 5. For example, criteria mapped to capability level 2 describe the functional capabilities supporting the achievement of the practice's purpose; criteria mapped to level 5 describe the capabilities supporting the practice's contribution to the continual improvement of the organization.

The capability criteria developed for each practice are designed to ensure that capability assessment comprehensively covers the practice's ability to achieve its purpose. To achieve this, the criteria are based on the practice's PSFs: for each PSF, an average of 5-6 criteria are defined. By definition, the fulfilment of the practice's PSF ensures the fulfilment of the practice's purpose. In turn, fulfilment of the PSF can be confirmed by meeting all criteria defined for the PSF.



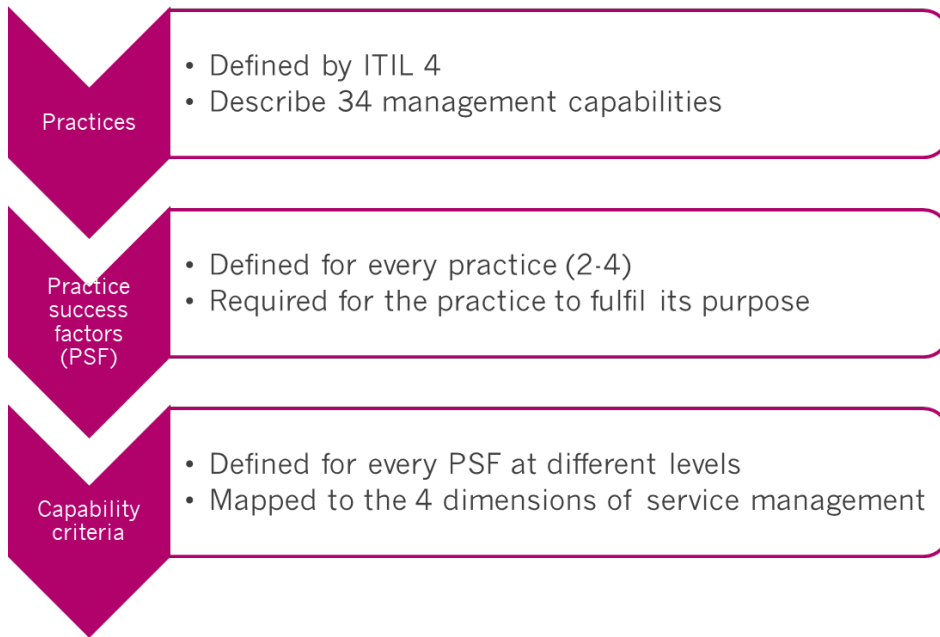


Figure 2.1 Design of the capability criteria

Each criterion is mapped to one of the four dimensions of service management and to the supported capability level. The higher the capability level, the more comprehensive realization of the practice is expected. For example, criteria related to the practice automation are typically defined at levels 3 and higher because effective automation is only possible if the practice is well defined and organized.

The described approach to defining the capability criteria results in every practice having up to 30 criteria based on the practice PSF's and mapped to the four dimensions of service management. The number of criteria at each level differs: the four dimensions are comprehensively covered starting from level 3, so this level typically has more criteria than others.

### 2.1.3 Identifying capability level

The overall capability level of the practice is defined by the highest level for which *all* capability criteria are met. For example, if all criteria mapped to level 3 are met, and only some of the criteria mapped to levels 4 and/or 5 are met, then the overall capability level of the practice is assessed as 3.

PSF	Criteria	Dimension	Capability level
<b>Practice name</b>			
PSF1	PSF1 name		
PSF1	Criterion	Value streams and processes	2
PSF1	Criterion	Value streams and processes	2
PSF1	Criterion	Information and technology	3
PSF2	PSF2 name		
PSF2	Criterion	Information and technology	3
PSF2	Criterion	Value streams and processes	3
PSF2	Criterion	Partners and suppliers	4
PSF2	PSF3 name		
...			

If all criteria up to a certain level are met, the capability level is achieved  
} 3  
 Capability level achieved

Figure 2.2 Identifying capability level

On average, 5-6 capability criteria are defined for each PSF. No criteria are mapped to capability level 1. The overall practice's capability level is assessed as 2 if all level 2 criteria are met; if more

than half of them are met, the overall capability level is assessed as 1; if fewer than half of the level 2 criteria are met, the overall capability level is not assigned.<sup>2</sup>

### 2.1.4 Evidence of meeting the capability criteria

A practice's ability to meet each of the capability criteria should be demonstrated by evidence collected during the assessment. The evidence should be relevant, verifiable, and objective. Typically, evidence is presented in the form of documents, records, and interview/survey statements collected by the assessor.

The assessor's guide includes indicative checklists of the most common documents and records associated with the capability criteria. As the most generic suggestion, the lists of inputs and outputs provided in section 3.2 of each ITIL management practice guide can be used. (Note that these lists are mapped to the processes defined for the practice, not to the PSFs or the capability criteria.)

## 2.2 EXAMPLES OF THE PRACTICE CAPABILITY CRITERIA

### 2.2.1 Service request management

The purpose of the service request management practice is to support the agreed quality of a service by handling all predefined, user-initiated service requests in an effective and user-friendly manner.

Table 2.1 outlines examples of capability criteria for the service request management practice.

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<sup>2</sup> When an overall capability level is not assigned, it is reflected in diagrams and calculations as zero.

**Table 2.1 Examples of capability criteria for the service request management practice**

PSF	Capability criterion	Dimension	Capability level
Ensuring that the service request fulfilment procedures for all services are optimized	Service request fulfilment procedures are defined and agreed for the key user-facing services	Value streams and processes	2
	Responsibilities for request fulfilment are clearly defined	Value streams and processes	3
	Service request fulfilment procedures are aligned with relevant standards and approaches adopted by the organization	Value streams and processes	4
	The effectiveness of the service request fulfilment procedures is monitored and evaluated	Value streams and processes	4
	Service request fulfilment procedures are regularly reviewed and continually improved	Value streams and processes	5
Ensuring that all service requests are fulfilled according to the agreed procedures and to user satisfaction	Service requests are usually fulfilled within agreed service levels	Value streams and processes	2
	User satisfaction with fulfilment of service requests is measured and reported	Value streams and processes	2
	The competencies required to fulfil and manage service requests are identified, and qualified human resources are available	Organizations and people	3
	Communication and other technology solutions to fulfil and manage service requests are identified and implemented	Information and technology	3
	Third-party services required to fulfil and manage service requests are identified and available	Partners and suppliers	3
	The effectiveness, efficiency, and user satisfaction with request fulfilment are measured and assessed in the context of the value streams	Value streams and processes	4
	Request fulfilment is regularly reviewed and continually improved	Value streams and processes	5

### 2.2.2 Strategy management

The purpose of the strategy management practice is to formulate the goals of the organization and adopt the courses of action and allocation of resources necessary for achieving those goals. Strategy management establishes the organization's direction, focuses effort, defines or clarifies the organization's priorities, and provides consistency or guidance in response to the environment.

Table 2.2 outlines examples of capability criteria for the strategy management practice.

**Table 2.2 Examples of capability criteria for the strategy management practice**

PSF	Capability criterion	Dimension	Capability level
Ensuring that the organization's strategies are effective and sustainable, and meet the stakeholders' evolving needs	Organization's strategies meet stakeholders' requirements	Value streams and processes	2
	Strategies are explored at distinct intervals and kept up to date	Value streams and processes	2
	Strategies are created with multiple stakeholders engaged from relevant parts of the organization	Value streams and processes	2
	Third-party dependencies and relationships are included in the organization's strategies	Partners and suppliers	3
	The organizational culture is accounted for and supported by the organization's strategies	Organizations and people	3
	The competencies required to create and manage strategies are identified, and qualified human resources are available	Organizations and people	3
	The role and application of digital technology are included in the organization's strategies	Information and technology	3
	The organization's strategies are interconnected and consistently support the organization's vision and mission	Value streams and processes	4
	The organization's strategic information is tracked and managed in an integrated information system	Information and technology	4
	The organization's strategies and approach to strategy management are regularly reviewed and continually improved	Value streams and processes	5
Ensuring that the agreed strategies and models are communicated across the organization and embedded into the organizations' practices and value streams	Strategies and plans are communicated across the organization and available to relevant stakeholders	Value streams and processes	2
	Members of the organization know and support the relevant strategies	Organizations and people	2
	Plans and initiatives across the organization are aligned with the agreed strategies	Value streams and processes	3
	The progress of the strategies' realization is monitored and reported to relevant stakeholders	Value streams and processes	3
	The adoption and execution of the strategies are effectively supported by relevant practices	Value streams and processes	3
	Relevant third parties are aware of and involved in the realization of the organization's strategies	Partners and suppliers	3
	Progress of the strategies' realization is monitored and reported using an	Information and technology	4

PSF	Capability criterion	Dimension	Capability level
	integrated information system		
	The adoption and realization of the organization's strategies are continually reviewed and improved	Value streams and processes	5

## 2.3 ASSESSING MATURITY

The SVS's maturity is calculated based on the results of SVS component assessments. The overall maturity level of the SVS is defined as the lowest level achieved by an individual component. For example, if the governance component's maturity is assessed as level 2 and all the other components demonstrated higher levels of maturity, the overall SVS maturity is at level 2.

The maturity of the following two components of the SVS is assessed based on the results of the capability assessment: Practices and Continual improvement. See sections 2.3.5 and 2.3.6 for details.

### 2.3.1 Maturity levels

When assessing the maturity level of each of the SVS components, assessors judge the sufficiency of the evidence supporting each level. Details of the evidence sufficiency and justification of the maturity level conclusion must be included in the assessment report provided to the customer. The following maturity levels are defined for the SVS:

- **Level 1, Initial** Work is completed, but the purpose and objectives of the SVS in scope are not always achieved.
- **Level 2, Managed** Planning and performance measurement take place, and the purpose and objectives of the SVS in scope are repeatedly achieved, although not in a standardized way.
- **Level 3, Defined** Organization-wide standards provide guidance across the SVS.
- **Level 4, Quantitative** The SVS is data driven, with quantitative performance evaluation.
- **Level 5, Optimizing** The SVS is optimized and focused on continual improvement.

Each maturity level is based on the previous ones; they need to be achieved before the current level can be assessed. This applies to all descriptions of the maturity levels in Sections 2.3.2 – 2.3.6.

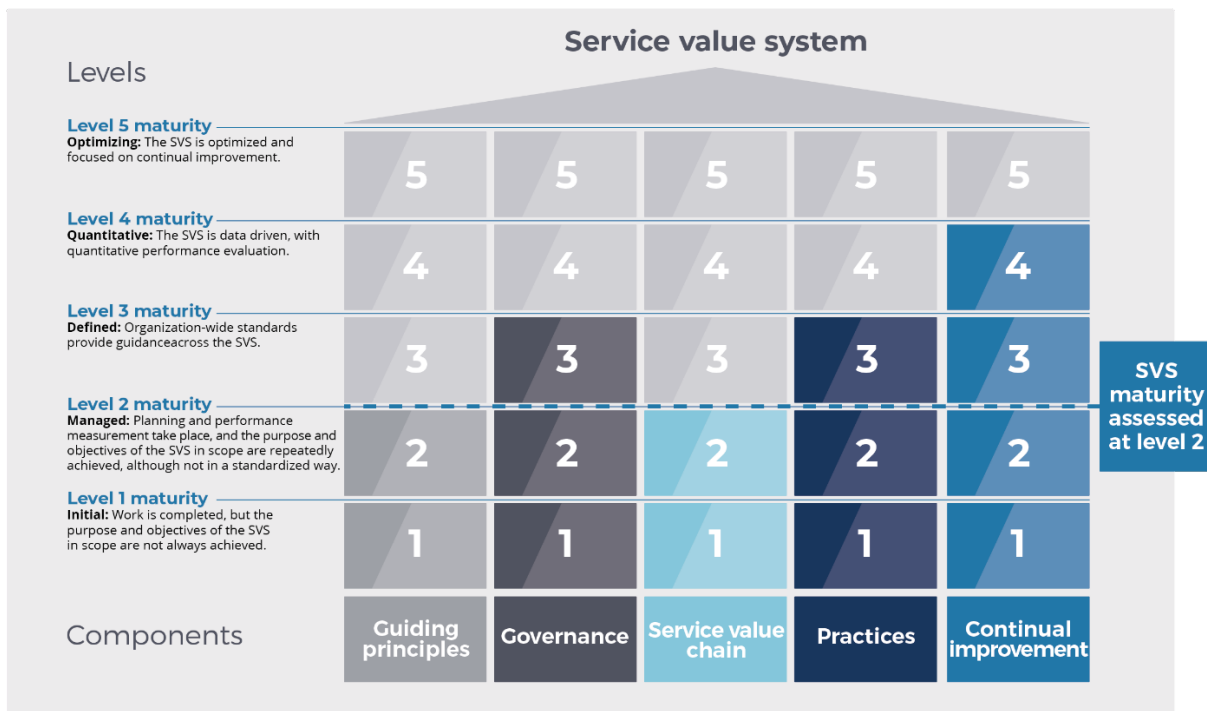


Figure 2.3 The SVS components and maturity levels assessed

These generic criteria are applied to the five components of the organization’s SVS in scope:

- guiding principles
- governance
- service value chain
- practices
- continual improvement.

Brief descriptions of the SVS components are provided in the following sections, together with the definitions of the maturity levels adjusted to reflect the specifics of each component.

## 2.3.2 Guiding principles

### 2.3.2.1 Overview

#### Definition: Guiding principle

A recommendation that guides an organization in all circumstances, regardless of changes in its goals, strategies, type of work, or management structure. A guiding principle is universal and enduring.

The seven ITIL guidance principles are listed and described in Appendix 2. Further information can be found in *ITIL Foundation: ITIL® 4 Edition*<sup>3</sup>, Section 4.3.

The ITIL guiding principles embody the core messages of ITIL and of service management in general, supporting successful actions and good decisions of all types and at all levels. They can be used to guide organizations in their work as they adopt a service management approach and adapt ITIL guidance to their own specific needs and circumstances. The guiding principles encourage and support organizations in continual improvement at all levels.

However, another set of guiding principles can be adopted by the organization. The maturity assessment is not focused on the adoption of the seven ITIL guiding principles; rather, it helps to understand the role and maturity of shared values and principles across the organization.

### 2.3.2.2 Maturity assessment of the guiding principles

The following levels are defined for the maturity assessment of the guiding principles:

- **Level 1** Key people<sup>4</sup> have different views on values and guiding principles, which might conflict.
- **Level 2** Common values and guiding principles are shared by key people and articulated in a similar way; however, they are communicated mostly informally, by word of mouth.
- **Level 3** Common values and guiding principles are documented and officially declared; most people are aware of them and agree with them.
- **Level 4** Common values and guiding principles are integrated into the organization's activities and decision-making at formal and informal levels; they are communicated and promoted across the organization. Adherence to the values and guiding principles is systematically monitored and evaluated.
- **Level 5** Common values and guiding principles are consistently applied across the organization, but also are continually and systematically reviewed and may be challenged or confirmed.

## 2.3.3 Governance

### 2.3.3.1 Overview

Every organization is directed by a governing body: a person or group of people who are accountable at the highest level for the performance and compliance of the organization. All sizes and types of organization perform governance activities; the governing body may be a board of directors or executive managers who take on a separate governance role when they are performing governance activities. The governing body is accountable for the organization's compliance with policies and any external regulations.

Organizational governance is the system by which an organization is directed and controlled.

<sup>3</sup> [www.axelos.com/store/book/itil-foundation-itil-4-edition](http://www.axelos.com/store/book/itil-foundation-itil-4-edition)

<sup>4</sup> Here and below, when 'key people' or 'most people' are referred to, this means 'people operating within the scope of assessment'.

Governance is realized through the following activities:

- **Evaluate** The evaluation of the organization and its strategy, portfolios, and relationships with other parties. The governing body evaluates the organization on a regular basis as stakeholders' needs and external circumstances evolve.
- **Direct** The governing body assigns responsibility for, and directs the preparation and implementation of, organizational strategy and policies. Strategies set the direction and prioritization for organizational activity, future investment, and so on. Policies establish the requirements for behaviour across the organization and, where relevant, suppliers, partners, and other stakeholders.
- **Monitor** The governing body monitors the performance of the organization and its practices, products, and services to ensure that performance is in accordance with policies and direction.

Organizational governance evaluates, directs, and monitors the organization's activities, including service management activities.

### 2.3.3.2 Maturity assessment of governance

The following levels are defined for the maturity assessment of governance:

- **Level 1** Executive leaders evaluate, direct, and monitor the organization's work on an ad-hoc basis. Governance activities are mostly reactive.
- **Level 2** Executive leaders repeatedly define, update, and communicate organizational directives and ensure that resources are sufficient, competences are developed, and people are held accountable for adhering to organizational directives.
- **Level 3** Governance activities ensure that measures supporting objectives are implemented and analysed. Practice capabilities are aligned with objectives.
- **Level 4** Governance decisions are data driven. Outcomes of the decisions are systematically measured and evaluated for effectiveness. Deviations from the agreed approach are identified and effectively addressed.
- **Level 5** Governance activities are systematically reviewed and evolve to support the organization's vision and stakeholders' requirements.

## 2.3.4 Service value chain

### 2.3.4.1 Overview

The central element of the SVS is the service value chain, an operating model that outlines the key activities required to respond to demand and facilitate value realization through the creation and management of products and services. The ITIL service value chain is described in *ITIL Foundation: ITIL® 4 Edition*, section 4.5. The value chain activities represent the steps an organization takes in the creation of value. The activities are interconnected, with each activity receiving and providing triggers for further action.

To carry out a certain task or respond to a particular situation, organizations create service value streams. These are specific combinations of activities and practices, and each one is designed for a particular scenario.

The maturity assessment of the organization's service value chain component is not focused on the specific value chain model provided in ITIL. Rather, it aims to assess the maturity of the organization's service value streams, including how they are identified, managed, and improved.

### 2.3.4.2 Maturity assessment of the service value chain

The following levels are defined for the maturity assessment of the service value chain:





### 2.3.5.2 Maturity assessment

In the context of the maturity assessment, the following rules apply:

- **Level 1** All primary practices within the scope of assessment achieve capability level 1.
- **Level 2** All primary practices within the scope of assessment achieve capability level 2.
- **Level 3** All primary practices within the scope of assessment achieve capability level 3. All supporting practices within the scope of assessment achieve capability level 1.
- **Level 4** All primary practices within the scope of assessment achieve capability level 4. All supporting practices within the scope of assessment achieve capability level 2.
- **Level 5** All primary practices within the scope of assessment achieve capability level 5. All supporting practices within the scope of assessment achieve capability level 3.

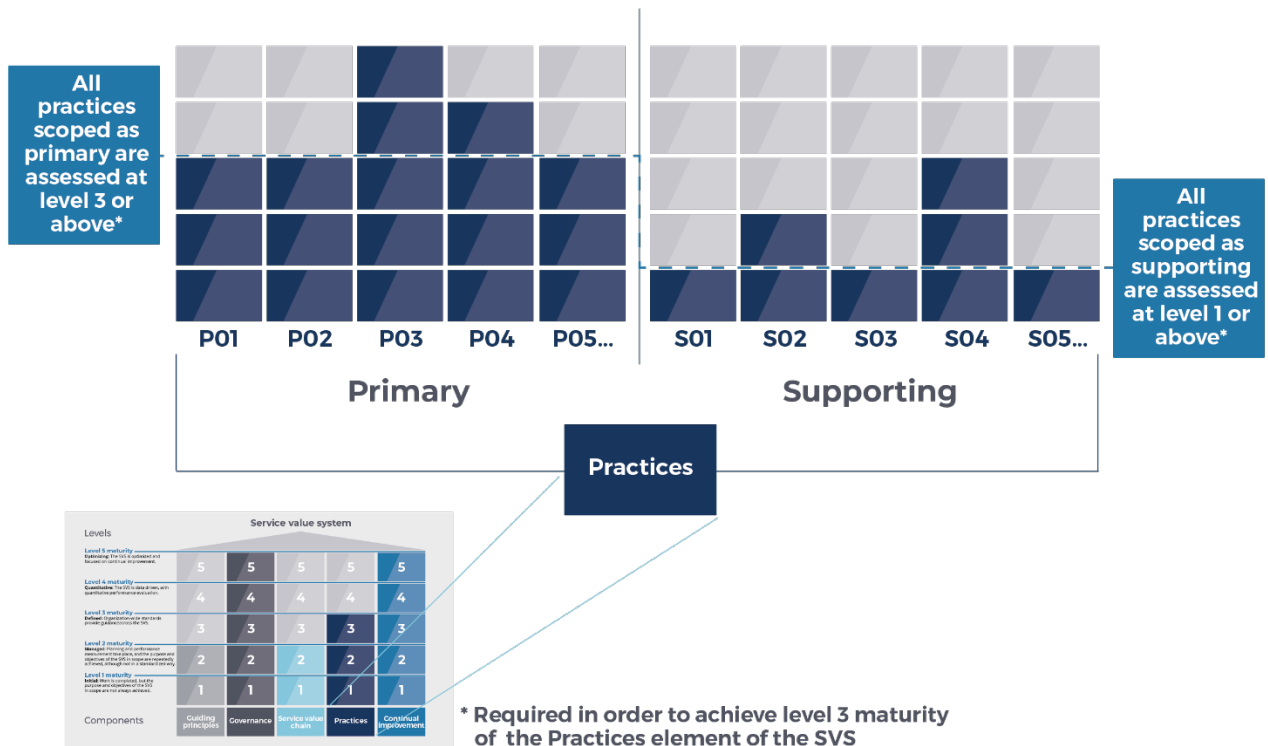


Figure 2.5 Primary/supporting practice capability levels and Practices maturity

Table 2.3 summarizes the rules of assessment of the maturity level of the practice component of the SVS.

**Table 2.3 Summary of the rules of assessment of the maturity level of the practice component of the SVS**

Practice	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
All primary practices within the scope	Capability level 1 or higher	Capability level 2 or higher	Capability level 3 or higher	Capability level 4 or higher	Capability level 5
All supporting practices within the scope	-	-	Capability level 1 or higher	Capability level 2 or higher	Capability level 3 or higher

## 2.3.6 Continual improvement

### 2.3.6.1 Overview

Continual improvement takes place in all areas of the organization and at all management levels, from strategic to operational. To maximize the effectiveness of services, each person who contributes to the provision of a service should always be looking for opportunities to improve.

ITIL suggests a continual improvement model, which is described in Appendix 3. More information can be found in *ITIL Foundation: ITIL® 4 Edition*, section 4.6 and in the continual improvement practice guide<sup>5</sup>.

The maturity assessment is not focused on the adoption of a particular improvement model. Rather, it helps to understand the role and maturity of continual improvement across the organization.

### 2.3.6.2 Maturity assessment

It is mandatory to include the continual improvement practice in scope of every comprehensive and high-level maturity assessment. To satisfy this requirement, the following rules can be applied to assess the maturity of continual improvement:

- **Level 1** The continual improvement practice is at level 1 or higher. Performance data is occasionally collected, some improvements are implemented.
- **Level 2** The continual improvement practice is at level 2 or higher. Some areas of management are repeatedly evaluated and improved; these activities are reactive and largely undocumented
- **Level 3** The continual improvement practice is at level 3 or higher. Performance objectives are documented and mapped to the business objectives. A common process for measurement and improvement is formally adopted.
- **Level 4** The continual improvement practice is at level 4 or higher and applied to all or most aspects of the SVS. Organizational improvements are measured quantitatively, improvement dynamics are monitored and analysed, and improvements are implemented proactively.
- **Level 5** The continual improvement practice is at level 5. Performance objectives are dynamically aligned with the business strategy. The continual improvement approach evolves to support the organization's vision and objectives.

## 2.4 SCOPING MATURITY ASSESSMENT

The ITIL Maturity model is designed to provide organizations with a tool for an objective and comprehensive assessment of their service management capabilities and the maturity of the organization's SVS. The primary intended purpose of such assessments is to inform the organization's improvement planning by highlighting the areas that need improvement.

However, too often maturity assessments remain isolated exercises with no or little influence on organizational improvements. That is primarily because of a lack of tailoring of the assessment scope to the organizational context.

In theory all the ITIL practices are equal, but that does not mean that organizations should pursue the highest capability level of each ITIL practice. Organizational goals and objectives, available resources and limitations, and current priorities make some practices irrelevant or negligible and some practices more important than others.

There are many ways to scope maturity assessments so that they reflect the organizational context and objectives; organizations should adopt an approach which meets their requirements and is

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<sup>5</sup>[www.axelos.com/professional-development-member/my-axelos-dashboard/my-axelos-content-hub-items/itil-4-practices/continual-improvement-itil-4-practice](https://www.axelos.com/professional-development-member/my-axelos-dashboard/my-axelos-content-hub-items/itil-4-practices/continual-improvement-itil-4-practice) [My ITIL subscription required]

applicable in their context. However to support the process of scoping maturity assessments, Axelos provides an objectives cascade tool that can drive constructive discussion around such scoping.

## 2.4.1 Objectives cascade

Objective-driven scoping is based on the predefined set of generic objectives an organization might pursue. We suggest a list of 12 objectives in Section 2.4.1.1.

The objectives are grouped into four areas of strategic focus, which are listed in Section 2.4.1.2. Strategic focus areas are closely related to each other and typically require the same or overlapping sets of capabilities. They can be used as a starting point of scoping an assessment.

Each objective is mapped to a set of primary and supporting practices. Primary practices are directly involved and necessary to achieve the objectives of the SVS in the scope of assessment. Supporting practices are needed for the primary practices to effectively achieve their objectives and to function at the higher capability levels (see Section 2.3.5.2). The primary and supporting practices for each objective are listed in Section 2.4.1.3.

To use the objectives cascade for scoping an assessment, an organization first needs to map their goals and objectives to the areas of strategic focus and the objectives provided by the model (see Sections 2.4.1.1 and 2.4.1.2) and then use Table 2.4 to identify the set(s) of practices that should be included in the scope of assessment.

Although it is expected that there would be no change in the scope identified this way, the final decision is always on the organization's/consultant's side. For example, if certain functions and practices are outsourced, it is acceptable that in a particular organization they might be excluded from the scope of assessment. In this case, justification for changing the scope should be provided.

Assessment reports must include a description and justification of the assessment scope.

### 2.4.1.1 Objectives

The following is a list of organizational objectives:

- realized benefits from IT investments and the service portfolio
- delivery of IT services in line with business needs
- managed relationship and stakeholder satisfaction
- minimized operational losses
- managed risk, security, and compliance
- managed architecture and standardization
- ability to turn business requirements into operational solutions/high-velocity IT
- programmes and projects delivered on time, on budget, and meeting requirements and quality standards
- scalable infrastructure, applications, and processes
- managed resources, costs, and budgets
- continually improved products, services, and capabilities
- competent, knowledgeable, and motivated staff.

### 2.4.1.2 Areas of strategic focus

The objectives are grouped into areas of strategic focus, which also can serve as a starting point for assessment scoping. Strategic focus areas are closely related to each other and typically require the same or overlapping sets of capabilities. An organization might not have a clearly defined list of its objectives, but it usually can explain its current priorities in terms of strategic focus.

A strategic focus area is a set of interconnected capabilities supported by one or more of the organizational objectives.

Some strategic focus areas are:

- business alignment and integration/effectiveness
- organizational resilience
- organizational agility
- operational excellence/efficiency/efficient use of IT resources.

### 2.4.1.3 Practices

Table 2.4 maps the strategic focus areas, objectives, and practices.

**Table 2.4 A mapping of the strategic focus areas, objectives, and practices**

Strategic focus area	Objective	Primary and supporting practices
Business alignment and integration	Realized benefits from IT investments and the service portfolio	<p>Primary practices: Strategy management, architecture management, business analysis, portfolio management</p> <p>Supporting practices: Project management, knowledge management, service financial management, IT asset management, risk management, organizational change management, measurement and reporting</p>
	Delivery of IT services in line with business needs	<p>Primary practices: Service design, service level management, service catalogue management, continual improvement</p> <p>Supporting practices: Availability management, capacity and performance management, change enablement, release management, monitoring and event management, service validation and testing, measurement and reporting</p>
	Managed relationship and stakeholder satisfaction	<p>Primary practices: Relationship management, workforce and talent management, service desk, continual improvement, change enablement, service request management</p> <p>Supporting practices: Incident management, problem management, deployment management, organizational change management</p>
Organizational resilience	Minimized operational losses	<p>Primary practices: Incident management, change enablement, problem management, service validation and testing</p> <p>Supporting practices: Service configuration management, IT asset management, risk management, infrastructure and platform management, monitoring and event management, service desk, , measurement and reporting</p>
	Managed risk, security, and compliance	<p>Primary practices: Information security management, availability management, service continuity management, capacity and performance management</p> <p>Supporting: Risk management, knowledge management, project management, supplier management, monitoring and event management, service validation and testing, measurement and reporting</p>
	Managed architecture and standardization	<p>Primary practices: Architecture management, service design, project management, business analysis</p> <p>Supporting practices: Knowledge management, organizational change management, infrastructure and platform management, release management, deployment management, change enablement</p>
Organizational agility	Ability to turn business requirements into operational solutions/high-	<p>Primary practices: Strategy management, business analysis, software development and management, release management, deployment management,</p>

Strategic focus area	Objective	Primary and supporting practices
	velocity IT	<p>continual improvement, service validation and testing</p> <p>Supporting practices: Change enablement, project management, architecture management, infrastructure development and management</p>
	Programmes and projects delivered on time, on budget, and meeting requirements and quality standards	<p>Primary practices: Project management, change enablement, organizational change management, continual improvement</p> <p>Supporting practices: Service financial management, risk management, IT asset management, service configuration management, measurement and reporting</p>
	Scalable infrastructure, applications, and processes	<p>Primary practices: Architecture management, software development and management, infrastructure and platform management, continual improvement</p> <p>Supporting practices: IT asset management, service configuration management, project management, service level management, supplier management</p>
Operational excellence	Managed resources, costs, and budgets	<p>Primary practices: Service financial management, workforce and talent management, IT asset management</p> <p>Supporting practices: Service configuration management, capacity and performance management, strategy management, measurement and reporting</p>
	Continually improved products, services, and capabilities	<p>Primary practices: Continual improvement, service level management, service design, business analysis</p> <p>Supporting practices: Risk management, architecture management, project management, change enablement, organizational change management</p>
	Competent, knowledgeable, and motivated staff	<p>Primary practices: Workforce and talent management, knowledge management, organizational change management</p> <p>Supporting practices: Strategy management, continual improvement, project management, supplier management</p>

### 3 Selecting an assessment approach

The ITIL maturity model can be used to perform the following types of assessment:

- comprehensive assessment (customized scope)
- high-level maturity assessment of the SVS
- selected practices’ capability assessment.

These approaches are summarized in Table 3.1. Assessment stakeholders should be aware of and account for the limitations and applicability of each type when initiating an assessment and using the assessment’s results.

**Table 3.1 The three types of assessment**

	Comprehensive assessment (customized scope)	High-level maturity assessment	Selected practices’ capability assessment
Approach	Assessing the capabilities of seven or more practices (selected using the goals cascade or another scoping method) including continual improvement AND maturity of the SVS	Assessing ONLY the maturity of the SVS  Practices’ capabilities are not assessed, or fewer than seven practices including continual improvement are contained in the scope	Assessing ONLY the capability of one or more selected practices  The maturity of the SVS is not assessed
Applicability	Comprehensive improvement programmes	Improvement of the generic governance and management approach	Improvements of the selected practices
Scope (practices)	Custom	Not applicable	Custom
Depth of assessment, and associated costs	High	Low	From low to high, depending on number of practices in scope
Validation (see section 4)	A maturity certificate may be issued, including details of the practices’ capability levels.	A maturity assessment statement of result may be issued, including details of the practices’ capability levels.	A capability assessment statement of result may be issued for each practice in the scope of assessment
Maturity benchmarking (see section 4)	Possible, subject to the scope alignment	Not applicable	Not applicable
Capability benchmarking (see section 4)	Possible for individual practices in scope	Possible for individual practices in scope	Possible for individual practices in scope



## 4 Validation and benchmarking

### 4.1 VALIDATION

Three types of conclusion documents can be issued depending on the chosen assessment approach:

- **Maturity level certificate** Issued by Axelos for comprehensive assessments including seven or more practices. The number and list of the practices is explicitly stated on the certificate. A supporting capability assessment report is provided by the Axelos Consulting Partner (ACP).
- **Maturity statement of result** Issued for maturity assessments excluding the practices' capabilities assessment or including fewer than seven practices. A supporting capability assessment report is provided by the Axelos Consulting Partner (ACP).
- **Capability statement of result** Issued for each practice assessed. Issued after a capability assessment or in addition to a maturity certificate or statement of result. In the latter case, a reference to the maturity certificate or statement of result is included.

Certificates are valid for a 3-year period and subject to annual surveillance to either maintain or change the maturity level. Scoping recommendations and rules of re-assessment are provided in the assessor's guide.

### 4.2 BENCHMARKING

After collecting sufficient assessment data, Axelos will publish capability and maturity benchmarking reports. They will be based on anonymized data from the assessments. These reports can be used by ACPs and other organizations to plan the development and improvement of the capabilities and maturity.

The reports should provide information about achieved capability levels for all practices assessed during the period and maturity levels achieved by the organizations based on comprehensive or partial assessments.

## Appendix 1. ITIL management practices

Management practice	The purpose of the management practice
<b>General management practices</b>	
Architecture management	To provide an understanding of all the different elements that make up an organization and how those elements interrelate, enabling the organization to effectively achieve its current and future objectives. It provides the principles, standards, and tools that enable an organization to manage complex change in a structured and agile way.
Continual improvement	To align the organization's practices and services with changing business needs through the ongoing improvement of products, services, and practices, or any element involved in the management of products and services.
Information security management	To protect the information needed by the organization to conduct its business. This includes understanding and managing risks to the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information, as well as other aspects of information security, such as authentication (ensuring someone is who they claim to be) and non-repudiation (ensuring that someone can't deny that they took an action).
Knowledge management	To maintain and improve the effective, efficient, and convenient use of information and knowledge across the organization.
Measurement and reporting	To support good decision-making and continual improvement by decreasing the levels of uncertainty. This is achieved through the collection of relevant data on various managed objects and the valid assessment of this data in an appropriate context. Managed objects include, but are not limited to, products and services, practices and value chain activities, teams and individuals, suppliers and partners, and the organization as a whole.
Organizational change management	To ensure that changes in an organization are smoothly and successfully implemented, and that lasting benefits are achieved by managing the human aspects of the changes.
Portfolio management	To ensure that the organization has the right mix of programmes, projects, products, and services to execute the organization's strategy within its funding and resource constraints.
Project management	To ensure that all projects in the organization are successfully delivered. This is achieved by planning, delegating, monitoring, and maintaining control of all aspects of a project, and keeping the motivation of the people involved.
Relationship management	To establish and nurture the links between the organization and its stakeholders at strategic and tactical levels. It includes the identification, analysis, monitoring, and continual improvement of relationships with and between stakeholders.
Risk management	To ensure that the organization understands and effectively handles risks.
Service financial management	To support the organization's strategies and plans for service management by ensuring that the organization's financial resources and investments are being used effectively.
Strategy management	To formulate the goals of the organization and adopt the courses of action and allocation of resources necessary for achieving those goals. Strategy management establishes the organization's direction, focuses effort, defines or clarifies the organization's priorities, and provides consistency or guidance in response to the environment.
Supplier management	To ensure that the organization's suppliers and their performances are managed appropriately to support the seamless provision of quality products and services. This includes creating closer, more

Management practice	The purpose of the management practice
	collaborative relationships with key suppliers to uncover and realize new value and reduce the risk of failure.
Workforce and talent management	To ensure that the organization has the right people with the appropriate skills and knowledge and in the correct roles to support its business objectives. The practice covers a broad set of activities focused on successfully engaging with the organization's employees and people resources, including planning, recruitment, onboarding, learning and development, performance measurement, and succession planning.
Service management practices	
Availability management	To ensure that services deliver agreed levels of availability to meet the needs of customers and users.
Business analysis	To analyse a business or some element of it, define its associated needs, and recommend solutions to address these needs and/or solve a business problem, which must facilitate value creation for stakeholders. Business analysis enables an organization to communicate its needs in a meaningful way, express the rationale for change, and design and describe solutions that enable value creation in alignment with the organization's objectives.
Capacity and performance management	To ensure that services achieve agreed and expected performance, satisfying current and future demand in a cost-effective way
Change enablement	To maximize the number of successful service and product changes by ensuring that risks have been properly assessed, authorizing changes to proceed, and managing the change schedule.
Incident management	To minimize the negative impact of incidents by restoring normal service operation as quickly as possible.
IT asset management	To plan and manage the full lifecycle of all IT assets, to help the organization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● maximize value</li> <li>● control costs</li> <li>● manage risks</li> <li>● support decision-making about purchase, re-use, retirement, and disposal of assets</li> <li>● meet regulatory and contractual requirements.</li> </ul>
Monitoring and event management	To systematically observe services and service components, and record and report selected changes of state identified as events. This practice identifies and prioritizes infrastructure, services, business processes, and information security events; it also establishes the appropriate response to those events, and conditions that indicate potential faults or incidents.
Problem management	To reduce the likelihood and impact of incidents by identifying actual and potential causes of incidents, and managing workarounds and known errors.
Release management	To make new and changed services and features available for use.
Service catalogue management	To provide a single source of consistent information on all services and service offerings, and to ensure that it is available to the relevant audience.
Service configuration management	To ensure that accurate and reliable information about the configuration of services, and the CIs that support them, is available when and where it is needed. This includes information on how CIs are configured and the relationships between them.

Management practice	The purpose of the management practice
Service continuity management	To ensure that the availability and performance of a service are maintained at sufficient levels in case of a disaster. The practice provides a framework for building organizational resilience with the capability of producing an effective response that safeguards the interests of key stakeholders and the organization's reputation, brand, and value-creating activities.
Service design	To design products and services that are fit for purpose, fit for use, and that can be delivered by the organization and its ecosystem. This includes planning and organizing people, partners and suppliers, information, communication, technology, and practices for new or changed products and services, and the interaction between the organization and its customers.
Service desk	To capture demand for incident resolution and service requests. It should also be the entry point and single point of contact for the service provider with all of its users.
Service level management	To set clear business-based targets for service levels, and to ensure that delivery of services is properly assessed, monitored, and managed against these targets.
Service request management	To support the agreed quality of a service by handling all pre-defined, user-initiated service requests in an effective and user-friendly manner.
Service validation and testing	To ensure that new or changed products and services meet defined requirements.
Technical management practices	
Deployment management	To move new or changed hardware, software, documentation, processes, or any other component to live environments. It may also be involved in deploying components to other environments for testing or staging.
Infrastructure and platform management	To oversee the infrastructure and platforms used by an organization. This practice enables the monitoring of technology solutions available to the organization, including the technology of external service providers.
Software development and management	To ensure that applications meet internal and external stakeholder needs, in terms of functionality, reliability, maintainability, compliance, and auditability.

## Appendix 2. The ITIL guiding principles

Guiding principles	Descriptions
Start where you are	<p>Do not start from scratch and build something new without considering what is already available to be leveraged. There is likely to be a great deal in the current <i>services</i>, <i>processes</i>, <i>programmes</i>, <i>projects</i>, and people that can be used to create the desired <i>outcome</i>.</p> <p>The current state should be investigated and observed directly to make sure it is fully understood.</p>
Progress iteratively with feedback	<p>Do not attempt to do everything at once. Even huge initiatives must be accomplished iteratively. By organizing work into smaller, manageable sections that can be executed and completed in a timely manner, it is easier to maintain a sharper focus on each effort.</p> <p>Using feedback before, throughout, and after each iteration will ensure that actions are focused and appropriate, even if circumstances change.</p>
Collaborate and promote visibility	<p>Working together across boundaries produces results that have greater buy-in, more relevance to objectives, and increased likelihood of long-term success.</p> <p>Achieving objectives requires information, understanding, and trust. Work and consequences should be made visible, hidden agendas avoided, and information shared to the greatest degree possible.</p>
Think and work holistically	<p>No service, or element used to provide a <i>service</i>, stands alone. The outcomes achieved by the <i>service provider</i> and service consumer will suffer unless the <i>organization</i> works on the service as a whole, not just on its parts.</p> <p>Results are delivered to internal and <i>external customers</i> through the effective and efficient management and dynamic integration of information, technology, organization, people, <i>practices</i>, partners, and agreements, which should all be coordinated to provide a defined <i>value</i>.</p>
Keep it simple and practical	<p>If a process, service, action, or <i>metric</i> fails to provide value or produce a useful <i>outcome</i>, eliminate it. In a process or <i>procedure</i>, use the minimum number of steps necessary to accomplish the objective(s). Always use outcome-based thinking to produce practical solutions that deliver results.</p>
Optimize and automate	<p><i>Resources</i> of all types, particularly HR, should be used to their best effect. Eliminate anything that is truly wasteful and use technology to achieve whatever it is capable of. Human intervention should only happen where it really contributes value.</p>
Think and work holistically	<p>No service, or element used to provide a <i>service</i>, stands alone. The outcomes achieved by the <i>service provider</i> and service consumer will suffer unless the <i>organization</i> works on the service as a whole, not just on its parts.</p> <p>Results are delivered to internal and <i>external customers</i> through the effective and efficient management and dynamic integration of information, technology, organization, people, <i>practices</i>, partners, and agreements, which should all be coordinated to provide a defined <i>value</i>.</p>

## Appendix 3. ITIL continual improvement model

The continual improvement model applies to the SVS in its entirety, as well as to all of the organization’s products, services, service components, and relationships. To support continual improvement at all levels, the ITIL SVS includes:

- the ITIL continual improvement model, which provides organizations with a structured approach to implementing improvements
- the improve service value chain activity, which embeds continual improvement into the value chain
- the continual improvement practice, which supports organizations in their day-to-day improvement efforts.

The ITIL continual improvement model can be used as a high-level guide to support improvement initiatives. Use of the model increases the likelihood that ITSM initiatives will be successful, puts a strong focus on customer value, and ensures that improvement efforts can be linked back to the organization’s vision. The model supports an iterative approach to improvement, dividing work into manageable pieces with separate goals that can be achieved incrementally.



Figure A3.1 The ITIL continual improvement model



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