



GOVERNANCE
INSTITUTE®

LEADING THE IT GOVERNANCE COMMUNITY

COBIT®

4.1

THE NEWEST EVOLUTION OF
CONTROL OBJECTIVES FOR
INFORMATION AND RELATED
TECHNOLOGY, THE WORLD'S
LEADING IT CONTROL AND
GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

www.isaca.org/cobit

COBIT® 4.1

Successful organizations understand the benefits of information technology (IT) and use this knowledge to drive their shareholders' value. They recognize the critical dependence of many business processes on IT, the importance of delivering the value promised by IT, the need to comply with increasing regulatory compliance demands and the benefits of managing risk effectively. To aid organizations in successfully linking business and IT goals to meet today's business challenges, the IT Governance Institute® (ITGI™) has published incremental update 4.1 of *Control Objectives for Information and related Technology* (COBIT®).

COBIT is an IT governance framework and supporting tool set that allows managers to bridge the gap between control requirements, technical issues and business risks. COBIT enables clear policy development and good practice for IT control throughout organizations. COBIT was first published by ITGI in April 1996. ITGI's latest update—COBIT® 4.1—emphasizes regulatory compliance, helps organizations to increase the value attained from IT, highlights links between business and IT goals, and simplifies implementation of the COBIT framework. COBIT 4.1 is a fine-tuning of the COBIT framework and can be used to enhance work already done based upon earlier versions of COBIT. When major activities are planned for IT governance initiatives, or when an overhaul of the enterprise control framework is anticipated, it is recommended to start fresh with COBIT 4.1. COBIT 4.1 presents activities in a more streamlined and practical manner so continuous improvement in IT governance is easier than ever to achieve.

Supporting IT Governance

COBIT supports IT governance by providing a framework to ensure that:

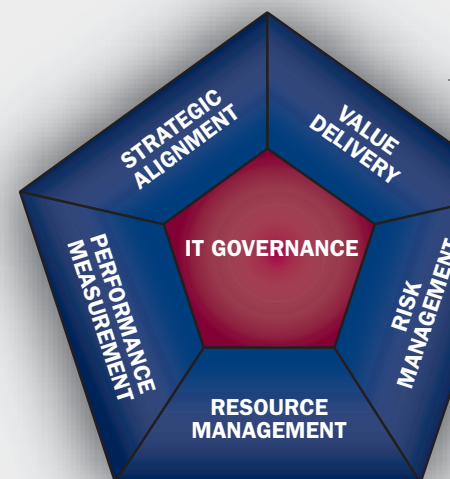
- IT is aligned with the business
- IT enables the business and maximizes benefits
- IT resources are used responsibly
- IT risks are managed appropriately

Benefits of Implementing COBIT

Implementing COBIT allows for:

- Better alignment based upon a business focus
- An understandable view of IT for management
- Clear ownership and responsibilities
- General acceptability with third parties and regulators
- Shared understanding among all stakeholders based on a common language
- Fulfillment of the COSO requirements for the IT control environment

COBIT has become the integrator for IT best practices and the umbrella framework for IT governance because it is harmonized with other standards and continuously kept up to date. The process structure of COBIT, in conjunction with its high-level, business-oriented approach, provides an end-to-end view of IT that aids organizations in getting the most value possible from their IT investments.



Overview of COBIT 4.1

COBIT® 4.0 was released in November 2005 and marked the first major update of the COBIT core content since the release of COBIT 3rd Edition® in 2000. An incremental update to COBIT 4.0, COBIT 4.1 includes streamlined control objectives and application controls, improved process controls and an enhanced explanation of performance measurement.

Like previous releases of COBIT, COBIT 4.1 leverages the experience of numerous international experts. The COBIT control framework links IT initiatives to the business requirements, organizes IT activities into a generally accepted process model, identifies the major IT resources to be leveraged and defines the management control objectives to be considered. COBIT 4.1 represents a consensus of experts from around the world who continually work together to maintain the relevancy, benefit and timeliness of COBIT.

COBIT 4.1 consists of four sections:

- The executive overview
- The framework
- The core content (control objectives, management guidelines and maturity models)
- Appendices (mappings and cross-references, additional maturity model information, reference material, a project description and a glossary)

The core content is divided according to the 34 IT processes. Each process is covered in four sections of approximately one page each, combining to give a complete picture of how to control, manage and measure the process. The four sections for each process, in order, are:

1. The high-level control objective for the process, which includes:
 - A process description summarizing the process objectives
 - A high-level control objective represented in a waterfall summarizing process goals, metrics and practices
 - The mapping of the process to the process domains, information criteria, IT resources and IT governance focus areas
2. The detailed control objectives for the process
3. Management guidelines: the process inputs and outputs, a RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and/or Informed) chart, goals and metrics
4. The maturity model for the process

Another way of viewing the process performance content is as follows:

- Process inputs are what the process owner needs from others.
- The process description describes what the process owner needs to do.
- The process outputs are what the process owner needs to deliver.
- The goals and metrics show how the process should be measured.
- The RACI chart defines what needs to be delegated and to whom.
- The maturity model shows how the process can be improved.

How Is COBIT 4.1 Different From COBIT 3rd Edition?

COBIT 4.1 is an enhancement of COBIT 3rd Edition and in no way invalidates any implementation or execution activities based on COBIT 3rd Edition. The introduction of COBIT 4.1 provides the opportunity to further improve IT governance and control arrangements, where appropriate. Mappings to support this transition are included in a COBIT 4.1 appendix, and release 3.2 of COBIT Online® (a web-based database reflecting the most current COBIT material) will remain available, in a frozen state, to support transition activity. Future COBIT update activity will take place electronically and on an ongoing basis via new releases (post-3.2) of COBIT Online. Occasional print copies will be released when the update activity warrants.

For More Information

Visit www.isaca.org/cobit for more information or to download COBIT 4.1 for no charge from the web site. COBIT 4.1 can also be purchased at www.isaca.org/bookstore, along with other valuable COBIT products. Interested in regular updates about COBIT and news about how other organizations are using it? Download COBIT 4.1 today and also be placed on our distribution list to receive a complimentary subscription to *COBIT Focus*, the newsletter dedicated to the COBIT user community.

IT Governance Focus Areas

- **Strategic alignment** focuses on ensuring the linkage of business and IT plans, on defining, maintaining and validating the IT value proposition, and on aligning IT operations with enterprise operations.
- **Value delivery** is about executing the value proposition throughout the delivery cycle, ensuring that IT delivers the promised benefits against the strategy, concentrating on optimizing costs and proving the intrinsic value of IT.
- **Resource management** is about the optimal investment in, and the proper management of, critical IT resources: processes, people, applications, infrastructure and information. Key issues relate to the optimization of knowledge and infrastructure.
- **Risk management** requires risk awareness by senior corporate officers, a clear understanding of the enterprise's appetite for risk, transparency about the significant risks to the enterprise, and embedding of risk management responsibilities into the organization.
- **Performance measurement** tracks and monitors strategy implementation, project completion, resource usage, process performance and service delivery, using, for example, balanced scorecards that translate strategy into action to achieve goals measurable beyond conventional accounting.



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COBIT 4.1 is an incremental update to COBIT 4.0. It includes streamlined control objectives and application controls, improved process controls and an enhanced explanation of performance measurement. ITGI publications that support the effective use of the COBIT framework include the *IT Governance Implementation Guide*, the *IT Assurance Guide* and *COBIT Control Practices* (available separately or in bundles of related volumes). For more information about COBIT 4.1 and related publications, please visit www.isaca.org/cobit.

“ Companies need a strong governance model in place to align IT investments with business requirements. The business process within IT at Unisys has improved as a result of using COBIT for ongoing Sarbanes-Oxley compliance and other IT governance related projects. ”

—John Carrow
Chief Information Officer and Vice President,
Information Technology
Unisys



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