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[A FIELD GUIDE FOR HR LEADERS]

HOW TO SET UP PROPER HR GOVERNANCE

Eight disciplines, in order, that turn a people function running on memory into one that can be measured, defended and audited.

IGNIFY : HR
Publisher

Includes a 40-question self-assessment. Page 13.

[THE CASE]

EVERY FUNCTION IS GOVERNED. EXCEPT HR.

Finance is audited every year. Engineering will not merge a line of code without review. The sales pipeline is inspected weekly, stage by stage, in a system everyone trusts.

Now ask what equivalent discipline governs the HR function, the function that writes the rules everyone else follows, and the room goes quiet.

This is not hypocrisy. Nobody planned it. HR is simply the last major function that nobody built a system for. Finance got the general ledger. Sales got the CRM. Engineering got version control and code review. HR got a shared drive.

The cost is not untidiness. Untidiness is survivable. The cost is credibility.

Open your P&L and find the largest line. For most organisations it is people. Then watch what happens when the board reviews it. Finance defends the second-largest cost with an audited system of record. HR defends the largest one with anecdotes and last year's engagement score.

That asymmetry, repeated every quarter, is how a function ends up receiving strategy instead of shaping it. Functions that can evidence how they run get trusted with more. Functions that cannot get managed by proxy: cut here, freeze there, outsource the rest.

THE QUIET TEST

Ask your team these six questions today. Time how long each answer takes.

1. What is the complete list of processes HR owns here?
2. Who is accountable for offboarding? One name.
3. Which version of the remote-work policy is in force, and who approved it?
4. Where does HR spend most of its hours, and where does the business say the value is?
5. Which HR risks have we formally accepted, and who accepted them?
6. How mature is this function, and how do you know?

If any answer takes longer than five minutes, that is not a knowledge problem. It is a governance problem.

"We have always managed" is not a rebuttal. It is how functions end up being run by other functions.

[DEFINITION]

GOVERNANCE IS NOT A MINDSET. IT IS A BUILD.

The profession talks about governance the way it talks about culture: a journey, a maturity mindset, a transformation. That framing is comfortable precisely because journeys cannot fail. They are simply ongoing.

Reject it. Governance is a system with parts. Each part is buildable, each part is testable, and each part belongs in a deliberate order. Finance did not become governed by adopting a governance mindset. It implemented a ledger.

THE QUESTION	UNGOVERNED	GOVERNED
What does HR actually do here?	Depends whom you ask	One process taxonomy that everything anchors to
How well does it perform?	Opinions, meeting by meeting	Assessed with evidence, across every stakeholder group
Who owns this process?	The person who left in March	Named accountability, with gaps flagged
Which policy version applies?	Whatever the drive says	Versioned, approved, fully auditable
What risk are we carrying?	Known informally, recorded nowhere	Scored, owned, reviewed on a cadence
Is any of it actually true?	Nobody checks	Independently audited against evidence
How mature is the function?	A confident guess	One measured index, trended over time

THE CLOCK IS ALREADY RUNNING

Until recently, an ungoverned people function was merely embarrassing. Four developments have made it expensive. None of them asks HR to be more strategic. All four ask the same question in different words: can you evidence how your people function actually operates?

01 **AI in employment decisions.** The EU AI Act classes employment uses of AI as high-risk: recruitment, candidate selection, task allocation, performance monitoring, promotion and termination. Regulation (EU) 2026/1744, in force 27 July 2026, deferred those obligations from 2 August 2026 to **2 December 2027**. The prohibited-practice regime, the AI-literacy duty and the Article 50 transparency duties are already enforceable. What the deadline asks for is technical documentation, human oversight, worker notice and logging. Every one of those is a governance artefact, not a software feature.

02 **Pay transparency.** Member states were required to transpose the EU Pay Transparency Directive by 7 June 2026. It requires pay-setting and progression criteria that are objective and gender-neutral, which in practice means a documented job architecture. Reporting begins in June 2027 for employers with 150 or more staff, and in 2031 for those with 100 or more. An unexplained gap of 5% or more within a worker category triggers a joint pay assessment with employee representatives.

03 **Data protection.** HR and payroll records are named examples of processing that must appear in an Article 30 record of processing activities. It is typically the first document a supervisory authority asks for. The small-employer exemption falls away where processing is not occasional or involves special-category data, which describes almost every HR function.

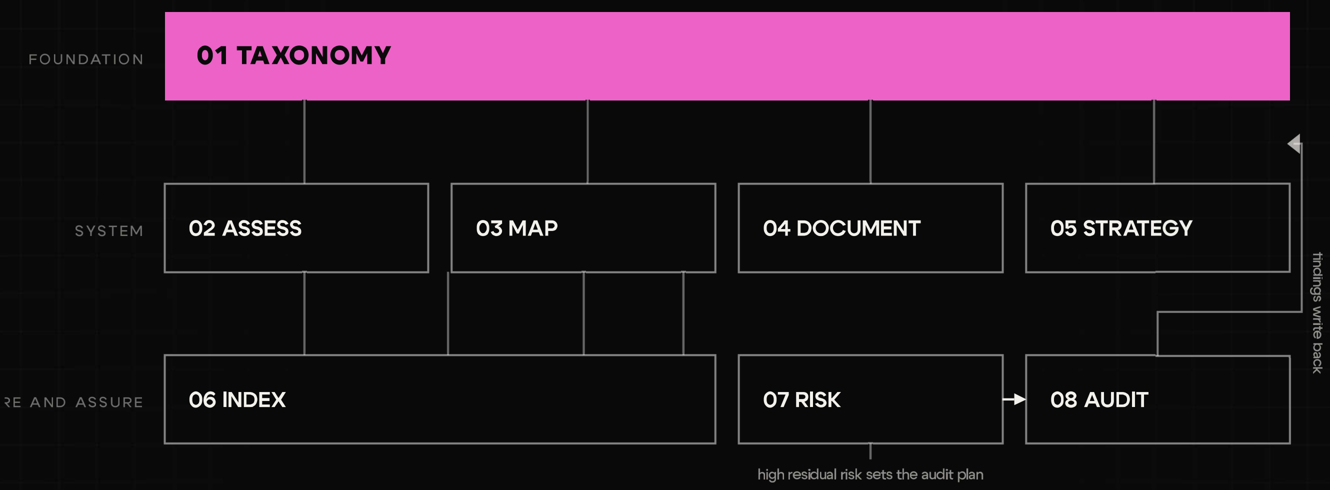
04 **Human capital reporting.** ISO 30414:2025 moved human capital reporting from voluntary guidance to a framework of requirements and recommendations, with 69 metrics across 11 areas. Separately, the EU Omnibus package narrowed CSRD scope to entities above 1,000 employees and 450 million euro turnover, roughly 5,000 companies rather than 50,000, and cut ESRS datapoints by about 61%. Narrower, not gone. Own-workforce disclosure still lands on HR.

Sources for every figure on this page are listed on page 16.

[THE BUILD]

EIGHT DISCIPLINES, IN THIS ORDER.

Order matters more than speed. Each discipline produces value on its own, and each one makes the next one cheaper to build. Skip the first and everything after it fragments: assessments measure things nobody can compare, maps document processes nobody can find, policies cover a footprint nobody has defined.



#	DISCIPLINE	WHAT YOU BUILD	WHAT IT REPLACES
01	**Taxonomy**	One shared process vocabulary, three levels deep	Five teams with five names for onboarding
02	**Assessment**	Evidence-based effectiveness data from every stakeholder group	Opinion wars in meetings
03	**Process mapping**	Governed maps with one accountable owner each	Knowledge that resigns when people do
04	**Policy**	A versioned, approved, anchored document estate	Policy sprawl across shared drives
05	**Strategy**	A people strategy under live quarterly review	A slide deck from the offsite
06	**Measurement**	One composite maturity index with documented weights	"How mature is HR?" answered with a feeling
07	**Risk**	A scored register with owners, controls and cadence	Risk carried informally and recorded nowhere
08	**Assurance**	An independent audit cycle over your own artefacts	Hoping the documentation is true

> Disciplines 01 to 06 build the system and produce the number. 07 and 08 protect and verify it. You do not have to build them as one programme, and you should not try. Start where the pain is loudest and work outward. The single rule that cannot bend is that 01 comes first.

[DISCIPLINE 01]

01

NAME WHAT HR DOES. ONCE.

You cannot govern what you cannot name. Ask five teams what onboarding covers and you will get five boundaries, five owners and five opinions about where it ends. Every measurement you take after that is measuring something different in each corner of the organisation.

WHAT YOU BUILD

A single written vocabulary for the work HR owns, three levels deep.

- **Groups.** The broad domains, roughly eight to twelve of them. Talent acquisition, reward, employee relations, learning, and so on.
- **Families.** Clusters of related work inside a group. This is the level most assessment and reporting happens at.
- **Processes.** The unit of work that one person can be accountable for, that can be mapped, documented, and audited. This is the level everything else attaches to.

Then do the two things that most functions skip. **Scope out** the families that do not apply to you, and record why. **Scope in** the processes that are unique to your business, rather than keeping them in a separate list that quietly becomes the real one.

Publish the vocabulary. Give it a version. Make it the only permitted way to name an HR process in any document, report or system from that day forward.

THE TEST

> **You are done when** any HR process can be named in exactly one way that every team, document and report agrees on, and when you can state as a percentage how much of your HR footprint is in scope and under governance.

WHERE THIS GOES WRONG

Choosing a tool before choosing a vocabulary. Adopting an off-the-shelf taxonomy and never scoping it, so half of it describes work you do not do and none of it describes the work that makes you unusual. Letting the taxonomy live in a spreadsheet that four people can edit.

> This is the only discipline with no shortcut and no partial credit. Everything downstream inherits its quality. A week spent here saves a quarter later, and skipping it does not save the week, it just moves the cost somewhere less visible.

[DISCIPLINE 02]

02

ASK. DO NOT ASSUME.

Here is a question most HR leaders cannot answer. Does your CEO's view of HR match HR's view of itself? Not whether you get along. On the same processes, on the same scales, do the numbers agree? At most organisations that gap has never been measured, and it silently runs every budget conversation you have.

WHAT YOU BUILD

A structured assessment, repeated on a fixed cycle, across four stakeholder groups:

1. The HR leader
2. The HR team
3. The CEO or executive sponsor
4. The employees HR actually serves

For each process family, score on the same scales for every group. At minimum: **importance** (how much this matters here), **current practice** (how well it is actually done), **capacity** (whether there are enough hands), **satisfaction**, and **time allocation** (where the hours really go).

Two design decisions decide whether this works or fails.

Privacy is structural, not polite. Individual responses are never shown to anyone, including you. Report aggregates only, and suppress any cut below a minimum response count. Five is a sensible floor. This is the only reason a CEO or a frustrated employee answers honestly.

Importance and practice are scored separately. Scored together you get a satisfaction number. Scored apart you get a gap, and gaps are actionable. Plot them: high importance with low practice is a critical gap and gets funded first. High with high is a strength to protect. Low with high is over-served, and that is where your reallocation budget is hiding.

THE TEST

> **You are done when** the question "how well does HR perform" is answered with a dataset and a date rather than an adjective, and when at least one budget, headcount or priority decision has visibly changed because of it.

WHERE THIS GOES WRONG

Running an engagement survey and calling it an assessment. Running it before the taxonomy exists, so responses cannot be compared or rolled up. Surveying only the HR team, which measures self-perception and nothing else. Collecting the data and never showing anyone the gap.

[DISCIPLINE 03]

03

GET PROCESSES OUT OF HEADS.

Every process that lives only in someone's memory is one resignation letter away from not existing. Tribal knowledge is not an operating model. It is a liability with a notice period.

WHAT YOU BUILD

For every in-scope process: a map, a named accountable owner, a version, a recorded approval, and a review date.

The map itself should be a swimlane, not prose. Lanes are roles, not people, so the map survives a reorganisation. Steps are verbs. Decisions are diamonds. Hand-offs between lanes are where failure lives, so draw them explicitly.

Two details separate a governed map from wall decoration.

RACI with gap detection. Every process needs exactly one Accountable. Zero is a gap. Two is a dispute that has not happened yet. Run this as a standing report over the whole estate, not as a hope. The value is not the matrix, it is the list of processes that fail the check.

A review cycle with teeth. A map without a review date decays back into the tribal knowledge it was built to replace, only now with the added authority of looking official. Set a cadence per process, and track the overdue count as a metric in its own right.

THE TEST

> **You are done when** you can pick three processes at random and each one has a current map, exactly one accountable owner, and a review date that has not passed.

WHERE THIS GOES WRONG

Trying to map everything at once, which produces sixty half-finished maps and no governance. Mapping the easy processes first because they are easy. Naming individuals in lanes instead of roles. Treating the map as a deliverable rather than a living record.

> The order to map in, when you cannot do everything: first the processes that touch pay, then the ones that touch exit, then the ones that touch personal data, then everything else. That order is not about volume. It is about what a mistake costs.

[DISCIPLINE 04]

04

PUT THE DOCUMENT ESTATE UNDER VERSION CONTROL.

No serious engineering team runs on files named final_v2_ACTUAL.docx. HR policy still does. Documents are scattered across drives, versions are unknown, approvals are untracked, and nobody can say which processes are covered and which are exposed.

WHAT YOU BUILD

A hierarchy with six levels, where each level has a different job and the difference is enforced:

LEVEL	ANSWERS	TYPICAL COUNT
Policy	What we commit to, and why	Few
Standard	The non-negotiable rules	Few
Procedure	How the work is done, step by step	Many
Guideline	Recommended practice where judgement applies	Some
Work instruction	Task-level detail for one role	Many
Form	The artefact the process produces	Many

Every document carries five attributes without exception: an **owner**, a **version**, a **recorded approver with a date**, a **review date**, and an **anchor** to a process in the taxonomy from discipline 01.

The anchor is the part that turns a document library into a governance instrument. Because every document points at a process, you can invert the view and ask which processes have no documentation at all. That coverage report is the sharpest tool in this discipline. Most functions discover their holes sit exactly where their risk is highest, and they discover it during a dispute rather than during a review.

Retain superseded versions. Never overwrite. The question "what did the policy say in March, when this happened" has to be answerable.

THE TEST

> **You are done when**, for any policy in the estate, one click answers which version is in force, who approved it, on what date, and which process it governs.

WHERE THIS GOES WRONG

Uploading everything you have and calling it coverage. Coverage is not volume: a drive with four hundred unanchored documents is not covered, it is hoarded. Letting procedures masquerade as policies. Approving by email and recording it nowhere.

[DISCIPLINE 05]

05

GOVERN THE STRATEGY. DO NOT PRESENT IT.

If your people strategy cannot survive being looked at quarterly, it is not a strategy. It is a souvenir from an offsite. It was built over two days, presented once, applauded, and never governed again.

WHAT YOU BUILD

A strategy on one page, built in a fixed sequence so it cannot skip the hard parts:

1. **Vision.** What the function is for. One paragraph, not a wall.
2. **Business priorities.** What the organisation is trying to do. Taken from the business plan, not invented by HR.
3. **Strategic dimensions.** Three to five, no more. Five is already generous.
4. **Objectives.** What changes, per dimension.
5. **Pillars.** The themes the objectives group under.
6. **Initiatives.** The work that delivers them, each with an owner and a date.
7. **Key results.** The measures. Each has a baseline, a target, a date and one owner.

Then the part that turns a document into governance: **immutable versions on a fixed cadence.** At the end of each quarter, freeze the current version and start a new one. Record the review, including who attended and what they decided.

A strategy you can silently edit is a strategy nobody can be held to. When the board asks what changed since last quarter, the diff has to exist as a fact, not as a memory.

Every objective should trace back to something from discipline 02. If you cannot say which assessment finding an objective answers, you are guessing expensively.

THE TEST

> **You are done when** you can put last quarter's version and this quarter's side by side, and explain every difference between them.

WHERE THIS GOES WRONG

Objectives with no key results. Key results with no owner or no baseline, which makes progress unfalsifiable. Twelve strategic dimensions, which is a wish list wearing a strategy's clothes. A review cadence that was agreed but never put in a calendar.

[DISCIPLINE 06]

06

ROLL IT UP INTO ONE NUMBER YOU CAN DEFEND.

"How mature is our HR function?" is answered today with a feeling, a comparison to a competitor nobody has data on, or a slide with four green ticks. Everything in disciplines 01 to 05 exists to make a better answer possible.

WHAT YOU BUILD

A composite index over four pillars, each fed by artefacts you now have. Weights below are a defensible default, not a law. What matters is that you set them deliberately, publish them, and do not move them to flatter a quarter.

PILLAR	WEIGHT	SIGNALS	FED BY
Process and governance	30%	Process coverage, RACI integrity, documentation currency	01, 03
Policy governance	25%	Hierarchy coverage, policy currency, mandatory completeness	04
Strategy execution	25%	Strategy exists and is live, key-result attainment, initiative progress, review adherence	05
Perception and effectiveness	20%	Capability scores, importance-to-practice gap, stakeholder satisfaction	02, aggregates only

Score the index 0 to 100 and band it into four levels. Use these bands, weighted toward the middle so that the middle two levels are wide enough to show real movement:

LEVEL	BAND	WHAT IT MEANS
1 · Reactive	0 to 20	Ad hoc. No formalised processes. HR run from memory.
2 · Operational	21 to 55	Basic processes exist. Reporting is descriptive. Evidence is patchy.
3 · Strategic	56 to 85	Data-driven. Evidence available on request. A genuine partner.
4 · Transformative	86 to 100	Governed, measured, independently verified, and driving change.

The rule that keeps the index honest: if a signal cannot be evidenced from an artefact, it does not belong in the index. No self-ratings. No "leadership assessment". Coverage, currency, attainment and aggregate perception only.

THE TEST

> **You are done when** the number moves only because something real changed, and you can name what changed within a minute of being asked.

WHERE THIS GOES WRONG

Building the index out of opinions, which produces a number that always improves. Changing the weights when the number disappoints. Reporting the composite without the pillar breakdown, which hides exactly the information a board needs.

> The number is not the point. The traceability is. A board will forgive a 47. It will not forgive a 47 you cannot explain.

[DISCIPLINE 07]

07

REGISTER WHAT HR CARRIES.

HR carries real risk: compliance, data privacy, people, operational, technology and AI, and strategic. Most of it is known informally and recorded nowhere. Ask which risks the function has formally accepted, by whom and on what date, and there is usually no answer at all.

WHAT YOU BUILD

A written register, anchored to the same taxonomy as everything else, so risk attaches to a process rather than floating in a category.

Per risk: a **category**, a named **owner**, an **inherent score** (likelihood times impact on a 5 by 5 scale), the **controls** that reduce it, a **residual score**, a **review cadence**, and a **status**: open, mitigating, accepted, or closed.

Alongside it, a **controls library** that is reusable across risks. Each control has a type (preventive, detective or corrective), an owner, an effectiveness rating, and evidence that it was tested. An untested control is an assumption with a job title.

And the piece almost everyone omits: **formal acceptance.** "We have decided to live with this" is a legitimate, often correct answer. Undocumented, it is negligence. Record the decision, the rationale, the accepter and the date.

THE TEST

> **You are done when**, for your top five residual risks, you can name the owner, the controls, the date of the last review, and whether the control has actually been tested.

WHERE THIS GOES WRONG

Scoring the register once and never reviewing it, which is the most common failure by a wide margin. Cadence is the control. Also: registering only compliance risk, because it is the easiest to think about, and leaving the people and operational risk that actually bites you unrecorded.

> AI is now a risk category in HR, not a technology topic. Employment uses of AI sit in the high-risk class under the EU AI Act, and the obligations attached to them (documentation, human oversight, worker notice, logging) are register work with a compliance date, whatever your jurisdiction eventually sets it as.

[DISCIPLINE 08]

08

VERIFY THAT GOVERNED PRACTICE IS REAL PRACTICE.

Documentation and behaviour drift apart. They always do. Without an independent check, you find out about the drift from an external auditor, a tribunal, or an incident, which is the most expensive possible order in which to learn it.

WHAT YOU BUILD

An internal audit cycle over your own artefacts. ISO 19011, the international guidance for auditing management systems, sets seven principles that transfer to HR without modification: **integrity, fair presentation, due professional care, confidentiality, independence, an evidence-based approach, and a risk-based approach.**

In practice that means:

- **Plan by risk.** The processes carrying the highest residual risk from discipline 07 set the audit plan. Not the ones that are easiest to audit.
- **Build the checklist from your own artefacts.** Generate it from the process map and the policies attached to it, not from a generic template. A template audits somebody else's function.
- **Enforce independence.** The person leading the audit must not own the map, approve the document, or own the risk in scope. If your function is too small for that, borrow an auditor from finance or quality. Independence is not optional and it is not a formality.
- **Record verdicts against evidence.** Four are enough: conforms, does not conform, not verifiable, not applicable. "Not verifiable" is a real and useful verdict. Do not let it be rounded up to conforms.
- **Classify findings.** Major nonconformity, minor nonconformity, observation, opportunity for improvement.
- **Close the loop.** Every major finding gets an agreed corrective action with an owner and a due date, written back into the map, the policy or the risk it came from. A finding that does not change an artefact did not happen.
- **Issue reports that cannot be quietly edited.** Once issued, frozen.

THE TEST

> **You are done when** you could hand an external auditor your last internal audit report and the evidence behind it, today, without preparing anything first.

WHERE THIS GOES WRONG

Auditing for comfort. If the last three audits found nothing, either the function is exceptional or the audit is theatre, and the base rate strongly favours theatre. Also: letting the process owner audit their own process, which produces a document with the shape of assurance and none of the substance.

[SELF-ASSESSMENT]

SCORE YOUR OWN FUNCTION.

Forty statements, eight sections, one score. Ten minutes if you are honest and forty if you are not.

Score each statement: **0** if it is not true, **1** if it is partly true or in progress, **2** if it is true and you can show the evidence.

> Score 2 only if you could produce the artefact in under five minutes, on your own, without asking anyone. If you would have to ask someone where it is, the honest score is 1.

SECTION 01 · TAXONOMY

Total ___ / 10

01	HR has one written list of the processes it owns, and every team uses it.	0	1	2
02	The list has at least three levels of granularity: domain, family, process.	0	1	2
03	Processes that do not apply to us have been explicitly scoped out, with a recorded reason.	0	1	2
04	Processes unique to our business have been added into the standard list, not kept alongside it.	0	1	2
05	I can state, as a percentage, how much of our HR footprint is in scope and governed.	0	1	2

SECTION 02 · ASSESSMENT

Total ___ / 10

06	HR effectiveness has been assessed in the last twelve months using a structured instrument.	0	1	2
07	The assessment covered at least the HR team, the executive sponsor, and the employees HR serves.	0	1	2
08	Importance and current practice were scored separately, so gaps are visible rather than averaged away.	0	1	2
09	Individual responses are protected and only aggregates are reported.	0	1	2
10	The results visibly changed at least one budget, headcount or priority decision.	0	1	2

SECTION 03 · PROCESS MAPPING

Total ___ / 10

11	Every in-scope process has a documented map, not just a written description.	0	1	2
12	Every map names exactly one accountable owner.	0	1	2
13	A standing report exists that lists processes with missing or duplicated accountability.	0	1	2
14	Every map carries a version number and a recorded approval.	0	1	2
15	Every map has a review date, and fewer than one in ten are overdue.	0	1	2

SECTION 04 · POLICY

Total ___ / 10

16	Our HR documents are classified by type: policy, standard, procedure, guideline, work instruction, form.	0	1	2
17	Every document is anchored to a specific process in the taxonomy.	0	1	2
18	Every document has an owner, a version, and a recorded approver with a date.	0	1	2
19	We can produce a coverage view showing which processes have no documentation.	0	1	2
20	Superseded versions are retained and retrievable rather than overwritten.	0	1	2

SECTION 05 · STRATEGY

Total ____ / 10

21	A written people strategy exists that names objectives, initiatives and key results.	0	1	2
22	Every key result has a measure, a baseline, a target, a date and one owner.	0	1	2
23	The strategy is reviewed on a fixed cadence, and the last review happened on schedule.	0	1	2
24	Previous versions are preserved, so quarter-on-quarter changes can be shown.	0	1	2
25	At least one objective traces directly back to an assessment finding.	0	1	2

SECTION 06 · MEASUREMENT

Total ____ / 10

26	A single composite measure of HR maturity exists.	0	1	2
27	Its inputs are artefacts (coverage, currency, attainment) rather than opinions.	0	1	2
28	The weighting of its components is documented and was set deliberately.	0	1	2
29	It has been calculated at least twice, so a trend exists.	0	1	2
30	The board or executive team has seen it.	0	1	2

SECTION 07 · RISK

Total ____ / 10

31	A written HR risk register exists covering compliance, data privacy, people, operational, technology and AI, and strategic risk.	0	1	2
32	Each risk has an owner, an inherent score and a residual score.	0	1	2
33	Controls are documented, typed, and rated for effectiveness with evidence that they were tested.	0	1	2
34	Risks we have chosen to accept are recorded as accepted, with who accepted them and when.	0	1	2
35	Every risk has a review cadence, and the top five were reviewed in the last quarter.	0	1	2

SECTION 08 · ASSURANCE

Total ____ / 10

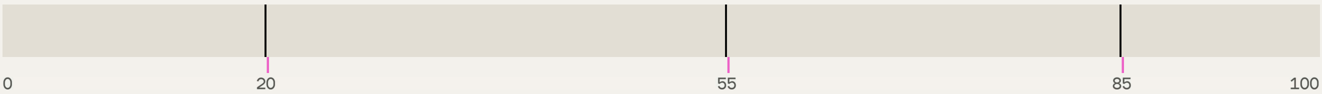
36	HR processes are subject to an internal audit or independent review cycle.	0	1	2
37	Audit scope is chosen by risk, not by convenience.	0	1	2
38	Whoever leads the audit is independent of the artefacts in scope.	0	1	2
39	Findings are classified by severity and linked to specific evidence.	0	1	2
40	Every major finding has an agreed corrective action with an owner and a due date.	0	1	2

TOTAL	____ / 80	**× 1.25 =**	____ index / 100	**YOUR LEVEL**	____	**DATE**	____

[WHAT IT MEANS]

READ THE SECTIONS, NOT JUST THE TOTAL.

A function scoring 8 out of 10 on strategy and 2 out of 10 on process mapping does not have a strategy problem. It has a foundation problem wearing a strategy costume. The total tells you where you stand. The section scores tell you what to do on Monday.



INDEX	LEVEL	WHAT IT MEANS	WHAT TO DO NEXT
0 to 20	**1 · Reactive**	Ad hoc. Nothing formalised. The function runs on memory and goodwill.	Build discipline 01 and do nothing else until it is finished.
21 to 55	**2 · Operational**	Processes exist, reporting is descriptive, evidence is patchy. Most functions sit here.	The gap is almost always sections 03, 04 and 06. Map, document, then measure.
56 to 85	**3 · Strategic**	Data-driven. Evidence is available on request. HR shapes decisions rather than receiving them.	The gap is almost always 07 and 08. Register the risk, then verify the record.
86 to 100	**4 · Transformative**	Governed, measured and independently verified.	The work is now cadence, not construction. Protect the review rhythm.

THE FIRST 90 DAYS

Whatever your score, this is the sequence. It is deliberately unambitious, because governance programmes fail from over-scoping far more often than from under-scoping.

DAYS 1 TO 15

Write the taxonomy.

Three levels. Scope in and scope out on the record. Publish it with a version number.

DAYS 16 TO 30

Assign accountability.

One named owner per in-scope process. Nothing else. Just names, and the list of processes that do not have one.

DAYS 31 TO 45

Run the assessment.

Four stakeholder groups, importance and practice scored separately, aggregates only.

DAYS 46 TO 60

Map and document the top ten.

Chosen by risk, not by ease. Pay first, exit second, personal data third.

DAYS 61 TO 75

Register the top ten risks.

Owner, inherent score, controls, residual score, review date. Record anything you are formally accepting.

DAYS 76 TO 90

Compute the index once.

Publish it internally with the weights and the pillar breakdown. This is your baseline, and a mediocre honest baseline is worth more than a flattering estimate.

> You will not be finished in 90 days. You will be measurable in 90 days, which is the part that unlocks everything else. A function that can be measured can be defended, funded, and improved on purpose rather than by luck.

The question "how mature is our HR function, and how do you know?" is on its way to your boardroom. The only variable is whether you build the answer before or after it is asked.

[REFERENCES]

EVERY FIGURE IN THIS GUIDE, SOURCED.

This guide contains no invented statistics. Every external figure and regulatory reference in it, on pages 3, 11 and 12, traces to a source below. Regulatory positions were correct at the date of publication and move quickly. Verify before you rely on them.

1. EU AI Act, high-risk employment systems. Regulation (EU) 2026/1744 (the Digital Omnibus on AI), published in the Official Journal 24 July 2026, in force 27 July 2026. Annex III obligations deferred from 2 August 2026 to 2 December 2027. White & Case, "EU AI Omnibus enters into force, amending the AI Act". https://www.whitecase.com/insight-alert/eu-ai-omnibus-enters-force-amending-ai-act

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IGNIFY : HR

IGNIFY:HR builds IGNIFY PPL_OPS, a governance platform for the HR function. This guide is deliberately vendor-neutral. Every discipline in it can be built with the tools you already own, and plenty of good functions have done exactly that.

If you would rather not build it yourself, that is a conversation worth having.

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