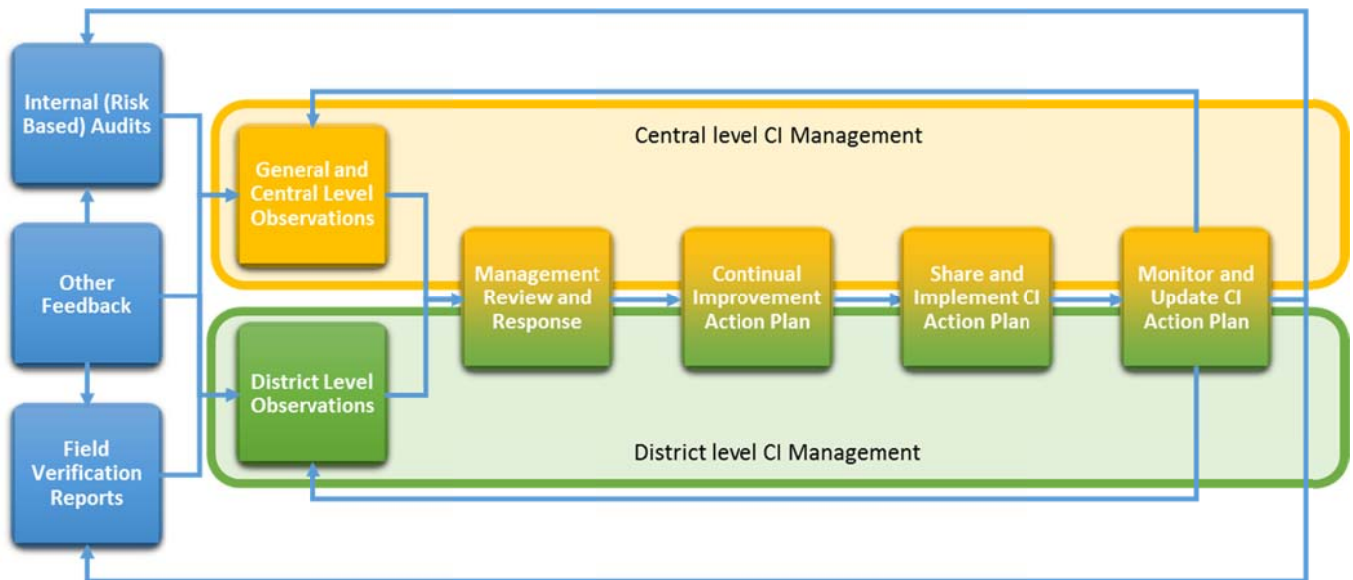# Briefing Paper 039 – Continual Improvement

1. INTRODUCTION

This briefing paper summarises the mechanism for managing the continual improvement (CI) process on RAP3. The overall process for CI Management is summarised in the diagram below, which is explained further in the remainder of this paper.

2. CI INFORMATION SOURCES

There are many sources of information that can be used to identify opportunities for improvement. This includes two formal mechanisms – Internal Audit and Field Verification Reporting – which are defined in more detail in the Performance Management and Verification (PMV) Manual, and a range of less formal mechanisms.

Internal Audits (Risk Based)

RAP3 has a team of full time and part time internal auditors that carry out planned audits in accordance with an annual audit schedule. Occasionally they may also carry out unplanned audits in response to incidents or requests from team members. From implementation year 2 (IY2) the internal audits follow a Risk Based Audit (RBA) approach, focusing on specific themes that the Strategic Management Team consider pose a potential (internal) risk to programme delivery.

The audit reports clearly identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to implementation in terms of adequacy of the management systems to control risks and compliance with the system requirements. From IY2, internal audit reports are publicly available and posted on the website.

Field Verification Reports

The field verification process is essentially a lower level audit process that is used to provide detailed feedback on field level activities that cannot practically be reached by the internal audit team during their short audit visits. There are two levels or tiers of field verification

1. Verification by staff responsible for district oversight (DC, DTL, EO / SEDO[1]) to verify physical progress, quantities and quality of works (including safeguard provisions) against reports submitted by our implementing partners (Consultants or Delivery Partners).

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[1] District Coordinator (DC) who visits every 6 weeks and District Team Leader (DTL), Engineering Officer (EO) or Social and Economic Development Officer (SEDO) who are all based in the district.

2. Verification by Technical specialist staff from TMO to verify if minimum technical standards are being met and technical procedures are being complied with.

The level one audits are carried out as part of routine monitoring and oversight visits and cover the full geographical and technical spread of RAP interventions. Level two audits have lesser reach, focusing on the most critical, complex or difficult technical works or technical areas of concern.

Other Feedback

Sources of feedback include, among others:

- general field visit reports,
- email and written correspondence,
- meetings and general discussions,
- external reports including those from MEL, DFID
- programme related studies
- issues raised through RAP3 Hotline and 'bikaashko baato' radio programme
- press articles

Such feedback comes to and through all members of the RAP3 team and it is up to the individuals to identify important issues and forward these to the relevant management structure as appropriate. The management structure is summarised below.

Field staff → District Team Leader → District Coordinator → PMV Team Leader → Senior Management Team
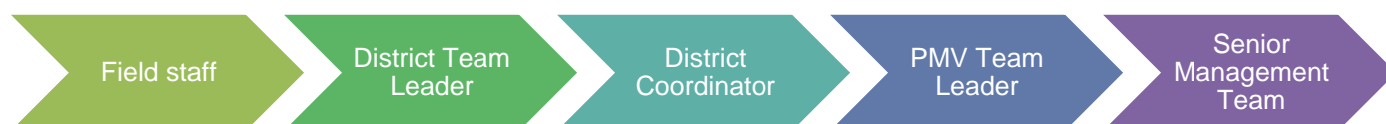
3. CENTRAL AND DISTRICT OBSERVATIONS

The feedback is distilled into a list of key observations that can be divided into those that are of a general nature or that relate to the effectiveness of central level management (referred to as Central Level Observations) and those that are specific to individual districts or that relate to the effectiveness of district level management (District Level Observations). The overall management process is the same in both cases, but managed by different team members.

- Central level observations are identified and managed by the Strategic Management Team (the Programme Manager and Deputy Programme Managers).
- District level observations are identified and managed by the District Management Team (District Team Leader, EO / SEDO and District Coordinator).

4. CI MANAGEMENT

Management Review and Response: The relevant management teams then hold a formal meeting in which they review the observations and respond to them. In some cases no further action may be required other than to clarify a situation. In many cases, the response will include a plan to take some form of action – correcting, preventing, improving, enhancing, innovating.

Continual Improvement (CI) Action Plan: The actions identified in the response are then entered into the central or district CI Action Plan, which defines the actions to be taken, by whom, by when, and when and how their completion will be verified. From IY2 the CI Action Plans are publicly available and posted on the website.

Share and implement CI Action Plan: The relevant management teams then explain the plan to other team members and implementing partners and issue instructions to implement the CI Action Plan as appropriate.

Monitor and update CI Action Plan: On a regular basis and as part of the routine monitoring and management meetings, review and update progress on the implementation of the CI Action Plan, including details of verification of completed activities as defined in the plan. Updated versions should be submitted to the PMV Team. Timing of submission of updates is dependent on the timeframe for actions in the plan and their actual completion.

Updated CI Action Plans are then used to inform and identify the need for formal follow up through the internal audit and field verification mechanisms.