

Getting the Right Core Team for Delivery

Delivering a NCRA requires a core team of people with the right range of skills, experience, qualifications and connections. While there is no ‘one right’ answer, the information contained within this one-page should help you judge whether you are on track.

A team size of 5-10 people is normal. Any smaller and there will be too much to do; it takes a lot of energy and commitment to get around all the various CII stakeholders. Any larger and the team starts getting a bit too hard to manage and keep everyone focused, especially as they are sure to have other day job requirements.

Cyber is a broad topic, with many areas where expertise is required e.g. cyber education, cyber defence, incident management, cyber systems development, vulnerability assessment, cyber audits, etc. Having people in your team who have worked in two or more cyber areas is a distinct advantage. Hopefully they have some cyber qualifications and certifications too e.g. ISO27000, SANS, CEH, Cloud competencies, ICT degrees, etc. And if they know about existing national cyber policies, cyber frameworks, and ongoing cyber capability building activities, so much the better.

The organisations that own CII are diverse and belong to many sectors e.g. telecoms, banking, energy, government, defence, transport, health, etc. It is advisable to have people in your team who are familiar with the cultures, processes, tools, and systems that are used in these sectors. We have found that people who have a role as a sector regulator or industry champion can be useful to have on board. And they are likely to be friends with technical and managerial people in senior and middle management roles.

Much of the work in a NCRA is about ensuring that high quality and relevant data is obtained. You will want people in your team who engage with those responsible for CII; who understand the intricacies of the CII systems; who like to help others understand the NCRA process; who want the best possible outcomes from the NCRA process; and who have the energy to see the job through.

Communicating is central to great results, building strong relations and engaging constructively. There will be quite a few briefings that need to happen during the workshops and in 1-2-1 sessions with the CII organisation representatives. It can sometimes take two or three attempts, using different words and pictures, to explain what some of the cyber aspects mean and why relevant.

Data analysis is central to the NCRA. The questionnaire responses are fed into one data analysis spreadsheet. You need at least one person (but ideally two people) in your team who really can do spreadsheets (preferably Excel). They will need to understand (or learn how to understand) the formulae, know how to manipulate the data, and be able to update and extract graphs & charts.

You need someone senior who can help you through any ‘difficult days’ e.g. when, for all your efforts, a few companies just won’t respond, or provide poor quality responses. Ideally, this will be your director or minister. And while not a day-to-day member of the team, they have the gravitas and connections to reach and persuade CEOs and organisational leaders to engage more fully.

And finally, as a team leader you need to be on top of this activity. You need to encourage and keep everyone together. You need to set high standards and ensure they are attained. You need to be organised and track the completion of the questionnaires. You need to assimilate information to create the report, and confidently present the NCRA findings to the CII organisation representatives.

