
Risk-Informed Operational Choices: Scenarios, Triggers and Controls Course

5 – 16 April 2027
Cape town





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Programme Summary

Risk-informed operational choices are the subject of this ten-day training course for senior operations, risk and function leaders, ending in a decision protocol for one critical operation. Operating decisions are often taken on instinct, with risk evidence arriving late or in a form that cannot be used. The programme moves from principles, through diagnosis of decision weaknesses, to design of scenarios, triggers and controls, then to application on live operating cases. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this risk-informed operational choices programme for leaders who must act under uncertainty.

The Business Case

When a plant manager, a service director or a logistics head must decide whether to continue, hold or stop, the quality of that call depends on how risk was framed beforehand. Agreed thresholds and clear decision rights shorten debate, reduce reversals and leave a record that can be reviewed after an event.

- Unplanned Disruption: Falls as early warning triggers prompt action before an exposure matures.
- Decision Speed: Rises as escalation routes and delegated limits remove avoidable delay.
- Control Cost: Becomes better targeted as effort follows exposure rather than habit.

Principles and Evidence Base

- ISO 31000 risk management principles, framework and process: They structure the language of appetite, tolerance and treatment used in Sessions 1 and 8.
- ISO/TS 31010 risk assessment techniques: They guide the choice of analysis method in Sessions 4 to 6.
- Decision analysis under uncertainty: Decision trees and sensitivity testing shape the option comparison in Session 6.
- Behavioural decision research: Bias and pressure effects frame the exercises in Session 2.

Intended Participants

- Operations leaders who approve continue, hold or stop calls for plants, services or networks.
- Risk and assurance leads who advise operating management on exposure and controls.
- Function heads who own business continuity, safety or supply decisions.
- Senior managers who sit on committees that review operating incidents and escalations.

The programme serves energy, manufacturing, healthcare, logistics and public service organisations, and suits mixed groups.



Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to evaluate how risk evidence is used in an existing operating decision.
2. Participants will be able to construct scenarios that test an operation against plausible disruptions.
3. Participants will be able to diagnose the biases and information gaps that distort operating calls.
4. Participants will be able to prioritise options by weighing exposure, cost of control and continuity.
5. Participants will be able to justify trigger thresholds and escalation routes for go, hold and stop calls.
6. Participants will be able to design a decision protocol that records and reviews risk-informed calls.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Risk-Informed Operational Choices Principles

How does risk evidence enter an operating decision, and where does it fail?

- ISO 31000 Principles and Process Map
- Decision Rights and Accountability Matrix
- Risk Appetite and Tolerance Statement Structure
- Uncertainty Types and Evidence Grading Scale
- Operating Decision Taxonomy

Day 2: Bias, Pressure and Judgement Under Uncertainty

Why do capable leaders misjudge risk when time is short?

- Cognitive Bias Catalogue for Operating Calls
- Overconfidence Calibration Exercise
- Pre-Mortem Method
- Time Pressure and Fatigue Effects Review
- Dissent and Challenge Protocols

Day 3: Diagnosing Decision Weaknesses in Current Operations

Where do current operating decisions ignore or misuse risk information?

- Decision Log Sampling Method
- Near-Miss and Incident Pattern Review
- Risk Register Usability Audit
- Escalation Delay Timeline Analysis
- Information Flow Gap Map

Day 4: Hazard and Risk Analysis Techniques for Operating Decisions

Which analysis technique suits which operating question?



- ISO/TS 31010 Technique Selection Guide
- Bow-Tie Diagram Construction
- Failure Mode and Effects Tabulation
- Fault Tree Logic Walkthrough
- Likelihood and Consequence Scale Calibration

Day 5: Scenario Building and Stress Testing

How are plausible disruptions turned into usable decision scenarios?

- Scenario Narrative Template
- Disruption Driver Matrix
- Operating Stress Test Design
- Cascading Failure Mapping
- Residual Exposure Comparison Table

Day 6: Quantifying Exposure and Weighing Options

How are risk, cost and continuity compared when options conflict?

- Expected Loss Estimation Sheet
- Decision Tree Construction
- Cost of Control Versus Exposure Comparison
- Sensitivity Analysis Walkthrough
- Option Ranking Matrix

Day 7: Designing Triggers and Thresholds

What signal should move an operation from continue to hold or stop?

- Key Risk Indicator Selection Criteria
- Trigger Threshold Setting Method
- Early Warning Dashboard Layout
- Leading and Lagging Indicator Balance
- Go, Hold and Stop Rule Cards

Day 8: Designing Controls and Contingency Responses

Which controls and fallback plans keep a decision defensible?

- Control Hierarchy Selection Model
- Control Effectiveness Test Plan
- Contingency Playbook Structure
- Delegated Authority Limits Table
- Control Ownership Assignment Sheet



Day 9: Governing Decisions: Escalation, Records and Learning

How are operating decisions recorded, escalated and reviewed?

- Escalation Ladder Design
- Decision Record Template
- Board and Committee Reporting Pack
- After-Action Review Method
- Risk Culture Pulse Questions

Day 10: Applying the Protocol to One Critical Operation

Is the decision protocol ready for use by an operating team?

- Applying the Session 4 Techniques to the Chosen Operation
- Testing the Session 5 Scenarios in a Decision Simulation
- Calibrating the Session 7 Triggers on Historical Cases
- Reviewing the Session 8 Controls with Operating Peers
- Completing the Operational Decision Protocol

Methodology

The programme uses a structured exercise method built on anonymised operating cases, incident summaries and decision logs from several sectors. Participants analyse real decision records in small groups, build scenarios and thresholds, and defend their choices to a challenge panel. Discussion centres on what evidence a leader needs at the moment of decision rather than on theory alone.

- Suggested activity: Running a pre-mortem on a planned operating change.
- Suggested activity: Drafting go, hold and stop rule cards for a shared case.
- Suggested activity: Rehearsing an escalation call under a fixed time limit.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes an operational decision protocol for one critical operation. It holds a statement of appetite and tolerance, a set of scenarios, key risk indicators with trigger thresholds, a control and contingency table, an escalation ladder and a decision record template. The protocol is used to brief operating teams, speed up calls under pressure and support later review.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is risk-informed operational choices training suitable for leaders without a risk background?

Yes. Risk-informed operational choices training starts from the decisions leaders already take and assumes operating responsibility, not specialist risk knowledge or statistics.

Which standards do risk-informed operational choices rest on?

Risk-informed operational choices rest on ISO 31000 for principles and process, ISO/TS 31010 for analysis techniques, decision analysis under uncertainty and behavioural decision research.

How is the protocol from risk-informed operational choices used at work?

You use the operational decision protocol to brief teams, set triggers and escalation routes, record calls consistently and review them after an event.

How do risk-informed operational choices differ from a programme on enterprise risk management?

Risk-informed operational choices centre on live operating calls and their triggers, while enterprise risk management centres on portfolio-level risk strategy and reporting.