
Government Agency Management Training Course: Operating Model, Governance and Good Practice

27 December 2026 – 7 January 2027
Zoom





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Programme Summary

Government agency management is the subject of this two-week training course for heads of agencies, deputy directors and senior officials responsible for agency performance, ending in an agency improvement plan for one agency. Agencies are asked to deliver more with tighter budgets while mandates, structures and reporting lines have grown by layers. The programme moves from mandate and strategy to governance, operating model, people, resources, performance and benchmarking, then tests good practice against the agency's own context. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on government agency management for mixed-organisation cohorts.

The Business Case

An agency succeeds when its mandate, structure, people and money point the same way. Leaders who can describe their operating model, read comparative indicators and borrow good practice with care avoid repeated reorganisations, reduce duplication with other bodies and explain results to oversight bodies in terms those bodies accept. The programme equips agency leaders to make those judgements.

- Service Delivery Performance: Improves as targets, structures and resources are aligned to the mandate.
- Administrative Cost: Falls as duplicated functions and unclear decision rights are removed.
- Accountability Findings: Reduce as roles, reporting and internal controls are set out and tested.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Principles of Public Administration: Its areas of strategic framework, accountability, public service and human resources, service delivery and public financial management structure Sessions 2 to 6 and Session 9.
- ISO 37000:2021 Governance of organizations: Its guidance on purpose, oversight and accountability frames the governance work in Session 3.
- Government at a Glance indicators from the OECD: Their comparative measures of public administration guide the benchmarking in Sessions 7 and 8.

Intended Participants

- Agency heads who answer to a minister, board or oversight body for results.
- Deputy directors who run daily operations and must align units behind one plan.
- Senior officials who lead reform, restructuring or merger of public bodies.
- Planning and performance leaders who set targets and report progress.
- Corporate service leaders who manage people, budgets and systems for an agency.



Typical sectors include regulatory bodies, social services, infrastructure authorities and revenue or licensing agencies.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to diagnose the gap between an agency's mandate and its current activities.
2. Participants will be able to construct a governance and accountability map for an agency.
3. Participants will be able to evaluate alternative operating model options against stated criteria.
4. Participants will be able to prioritise capability and resource investments within a fixed budget.
5. Participants will be able to justify a performance framework with indicators and benchmark comparisons.
6. Participants will be able to assess a good practice for transfer to a different agency context.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Mandate and Role of the Government Agency

What is the agency for, and what falls outside its mandate?

- Mandate and Legal Basis Review Sheet
- Agency Function Inventory
- Stakeholder and Oversight Map
- Public Value Statement Canvas
- Mandate Gap Diagnostic

Day 2: Strategy and Priorities for Agency Management

How are limited resources focused on the results that matter most?

- Strategic Framework Checklist from the Principles of Public Administration
- Outcome and Output Logic Chain
- Priority Scoring Matrix
- Risk and Dependency Register
- Strategy Cascade Chart

Day 3: Governance and Accountability

Who decides what, and who answers to whom?

- ISO 37000 Governance Principles Review
- Decision Rights Chart
- Reporting Line and Delegation Map
- Internal Control Self-Assessment
- Oversight Briefing Template



Day 4: Structure and Operating Model

Which structure and operating model fit the mandate?

- Operating Model Canvas
- Organisation Design Options Table
- Shared Services Screening Grid
- Span and Layers Analysis
- Interface Agreement with Other Bodies

Day 5: People and Capability

Which skills and roles does the agency need to deliver its plan?

- Workforce Profile Analysis
- Competency Gap Matrix
- Succession Cover Chart
- Leadership Pipeline Map
- Capability Investment Ranking

Day 6: Resources and Financial Management

How are budgets linked to priorities and held to account?

- Programme Budget Structure
- Cost-to-Output Linkage Table
- Budget Variance Review
- Procurement Planning Calendar
- Savings Option Screening Sheet

Day 7: Performance Management and Indicators

How is agency performance measured and used to steer?

- Indicator Selection Worksheet
- Balanced Scorecard for an Agency
- Target-Setting Rules
- Performance Dashboard Layout
- Quarterly Review Agenda

Day 8: Benchmarking and Comparative Evidence

How does the agency compare with similar public bodies, and what explains the gaps?



- Government at a Glance Indicator Set
- Peer Group Selection Rules
- Gap Explanation Template
- Data Quality Check
- Benchmark Findings Brief

Day 9: Service Delivery and Adopting Good Practice

When does a good practice from elsewhere work in this agency, and how is it adapted?

- Good Practice Fit Test
- Context Difference Checklist
- Pilot Design Sheet
- Change Readiness Heat Map
- Adoption Tracking Log

Day 10: Applying the Tools to One Agency

Do the tools hold together when applied to one agency?

- Applying the Session 1 Gap Diagnostic to the Chosen Agency
- Testing the Session 3 Decision Rights Chart on Live Decisions
- Checking the Session 4 Options Table Against the Budget in Session 6
- Running the Session 9 Fit Test on Selected Practices
- Completing the Agency Improvement Plan

Methodology

The programme uses a case analysis method built on anonymised agency mandates, organisation charts, budgets, indicator sets and short written cases from regulatory bodies, social services and infrastructure authorities. Participants work in small groups on one chosen agency, defend their design choices to peers from other organisations, and receive facilitator feedback on each work product.

- Suggested activity: Mapping decision rights for three recurring decisions and exposing overlaps.
- Suggested activity: Comparing two operating model options against agreed criteria and recommending one.
- Suggested activity: Testing whether a service practice from another public body would transfer to the group's agency.



Capstone Output

Each participant completes an agency improvement plan for one agency. It holds a mandate and priorities summary, a governance and accountability map, an operating model recommendation, a capability and budget plan, a performance framework and a short list of tested good practices. The plan is used at work to brief a minister or board, guide a restructuring and agree measures with oversight bodies.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is this government agency management training suitable for officials who have not led a whole agency?

Yes. The programme assumes experience of managing a unit or function in a public body, not agency-wide leadership, and builds from mandate to operating model.

Which models does government agency management training rest on?

It rests on the Principles of Public Administration, ISO 37000:2021 governance guidance and the comparative indicators in Government at a Glance.

How is the agency improvement plan from government agency management training used at work?

You use it to brief a minister or board, guide restructuring decisions and agree performance measures with oversight bodies.

How does government agency management differ from a programme on public sector strategy and reform?

It centres on the mandate, governance, structure and performance of a single agency, while public sector strategy and reform centres on national direction and system-wide change.