

Working Material 2.13

Management Review: Turning Data into Decisions

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This sheet puts the working parts of subchapter 2.13 into editable form: the Verification Pact, the review questions, the common mistakes as a self-check and the Operative Synthesis as an action plan. The empty columns are for your property. The reasoning behind each row is in the book.

GUIDING QUESTION

A management review can cover every required topic faithfully, every single quarter, for three years — and still never once produce the one thing the clause actually requires: a decision.

Verification Pact: Market Claims Against the Standard

The first three columns are copied from the book. In the last one, note whether this claim circulates in your property — in a proposal, a brochure, a supplier's pitch or your own documents — and what you now hold instead.

What is claimed	Binding?	What actually holds	In our property
A management review that covers every required input topic satisfies clause 9.3, regardless of what it produces	No	The clause specifies required outputs, including decisions, as distinctly as it specifies required inputs; covering the inputs alone leaves the clause only partially satisfied	
Recording that an issue "remains a priority" constitutes a decision under clause 9.3	No	A decision determines something — an action, or an explicit, reasoned deferral; this property makes that visible by naming an owner and a target date — whereas a general statement of continued concern determines nothing	
Discussing the same issue repeatedly across multiple reviews demonstrates the organisation is taking it seriously	Not on its own	Repeated discussion without conversion into decision or explicit reasoned deferral demonstrates, if anything, that the review process itself lacks a mechanism forcing resolution	
A well-attended, thoroughly minuted review is, by those characteristics alone, evidence of a functioning management review process	No	Attendance and documentation quality concern process form; the clause's substantive requirement concerns whether genuine decisions result	
An issue repeatedly acknowledged but never resourced eventually resolves itself as leadership attention naturally increases	No, and often the reverse	The Prague case demonstrates the opposite pattern — repetition without decision produced complacency, not increasing urgency, until the underlying system failed on its own schedule regardless of how many times it had been discussed	

What is claimed	Binding?	What actually holds	In our property
Capital constraints justify indefinite deferral of a significant environmental aspect without a formal decision	No	Genuine resource constraint can justify a deliberate, reasoned decision to defer — explicitly recorded as such — but does not excuse the absence of any decision at all across an extended period, and a recorded deferral does not by itself discharge a compliance obligation	

A Checklist for the Next Management Review

Answer each question with Yes, Partly, No or N.A., and name the evidence: a record, a date, a person, a place someone can go and look. An answer without evidence is an opinion.

Question	Why it matters	Answer	Evidence
Is any item on today's agenda appearing for at least the second consecutive time?	This is the precise trigger point Prague's own process never recognised as significant		
For every recurring item, does the record show a decision, or only a restatement of continued concern?	The distinction this entire subchapter turns on		
Does our minutes format separate what was discussed from what was decided, explicitly?	A blended narrative summary makes the gap between the two easy to miss, exactly as at Prague		
Do we maintain a standing register of outstanding, undecided items, reviewed at the start of every meeting?	Without this, repetition passes unnoticed within routine agenda flow		
Is there an expedited path to decision for significant environmental capital needs, separate from standard annual planning?	Standard cycles, as at Prague, can allow a genuinely urgent item to compete indefinitely against routine priorities		

Common Mistakes — Self-Check

Tick every mistake you recognise in your own property today, and write next to it where you saw it. A ticked box is not a nonconformity; it is a place to look before an auditor or an incident does.

☐	Mistake (from the book)	Where we see it
☐	Treating thorough discussion and genuine acknowledgement as an acceptable substitute for an actual decision.	
☐	Recording review minutes as narrative summary without explicitly separating what was decided from what was merely discussed.	
☐	Allowing an issue to repeat across multiple review cycles without any mechanism forcing eventual resolution.	
☐	Assuming increased meeting frequency alone addresses a pattern of discussion without decision.	
☐	Failing to track outstanding, undecided items across meetings, allowing repetition to pass unnoticed within routine agenda flow.	
☐	Treating a well-attended, thoroughly documented meeting as sufficient evidence of a functioning review process, regardless of its actual output.	
☐	Leaving significant environmental capital needs subject only to standard annual planning cycles with no expedited path available.	

☐	Mistake (from the book)	Where we see it
☐	Failing to require explicit, reasoned deferral when a genuine decision to act is not yet possible, rather than leaving the outcome ambiguous.	
☐	Assuming an issue discussed repeatedly will naturally resolve itself as attention accumulates, rather than recognising that repetition without decision can produce complacency instead.	
☐	Reviewing management review process quality only by its input coverage, never by its output production.	

Operative Synthesis — Action Plan

The three horizons and their actions are copied from the book. Owner and due date are yours to fill: an action without both is a wish.

Horizon	Action from the book	Owner	Due date
Act on immediately	Review the minutes from the property's last several management reviews and identify any item appearing more than once without a corresponding recorded decision — a named action, owner, and timeline, or an explicit, reasoned deferral. Any such item is an unresolved risk regardless of how many times it has been discussed.		
Plan for	Restructure review minutes to separate discussion from decision explicitly; introduce a rule requiring mandatory decision after a defined number of repetitions; and establish an outstanding-decisions register carried forward and displayed at the start of every review.		
Monitor going forward	Track the average number of review cycles between an issue's first appearance and its eventual decision, treating a lengthening pattern as an early warning that the review process itself has begun substituting acknowledgement for genuine decision-making. Closing A management review that faithfully covers every required topic and never produces a decision on its most significant recurring issue has satisfied the letter of clause 9.3's input requirements while failing its actual purpose entirely. The Prague case shows how completely twelve consecutive quarters of genuine, well-documented discussion can amount to nothing more than an expensive, entirely avoidable delay — proof that a review's real value lies not in what it discusses, but in what it decides. This subchapter belongs beside 2.12's Seoul case as a final instance of the same underlying thread running through this chapter's second half: data existing, and even data correctly presented and genuinely discussed, is not the same as data converting into action. Seoul's dashboard could not reveal a decline its own design was never built to show. Prague's review revealed its decline faithfully, twelve times, and still produced nothing — the two failures sitting at opposite ends of the same gap between information and genuine organisational response. This chapter has now examined operational control, monitoring, and the review process meant to convert monitoring into decisions. What remains is the moment even the best-designed review, operating exactly as intended, still identifies something that has gone wrong — and whether the organisation's response addresses the specific failure or the deeper cause behind it, the subject this volume turns to in its closing subchapters. A management review can cover every required topic faithfully, every single quarter, for three years — and still never once produce the one thing the clause actually requires: a decision.		

Horizon	Action from the book	Owner	Due date
	<p>Concept Card 2.13 Card 2.13 — Management Review: Turning Data into Decisions Setting: Prague, Czech Republic A historic boardroom in a large hotel in Prague's Old Town, on a grey morning in early winter. Dark panelling, bound volumes of earlier minutes on a side table, and tall windows onto snow-dusted red roofs, Gothic spires and a green dome. The quarterly management review sits around a polished oval table with agendas, glasses and a carafe. At the head the general manager, about sixty, silver-haired, dark grey suit and burgundy tie, sits with hands folded, listening. On the left the chief engineer, about fifty, with glasses, a navy jumper over a checked shirt, rests a hand on a thin report showing a photograph of a boiler and speaks towards the head of the table. On the right the finance director, blonde hair in a low bun and a black blazer, writes on her agenda. In the foreground the minute-taker, seen from behind, types on a laptop. The card shows the twelfth discussion of the same boiler. The Prague hotel's quarterly review is well run: every input clause 9.3 lists is on the agenda, decision-makers attend, and minutes go out promptly. For three years the ageing central heating boiler has been discussed at real length at every meeting, its efficiency falling, its emissions drifting out of line with tightening standards and its fuel costs rising. Each time the minutes record that it remains a priority for future capital planning; no budget, owner, deadline or reasoned deferral ever follows. In a severe cold spell the combustion chamber cracks, emissions exceed normal limits, and the authority opens an inquiry. The plaques at the top give the event: Twelve meetings, one sentence, and Still a priority for the future. The lower pair names the lesson. A review ends in a decision: management review must produce decisions on improvement and on resources, not only discussion and acknowledgement. Act, defer with reason, or escalate: each significant item leaves the meeting with a named action, owner and date, or a recorded and reasoned deferral, or it is taken to the level that can fund it. The card does not portray the general manager or the team as indifferent; each quarter a more urgent item genuinely competed for the time a proposal needed. Nor does it claim that ISO 14001 prescribes the action-owner-date format or the three-way choice; those are the property's own tools. The standard requires that the review end in decisions, and twelve acknowledgements are not one.</p>		

WHAT THIS SHEET IS NOT

ISO 14001 does not prescribe this form. No clause asks for this worksheet, its columns or a register of market claims; the standard sets requirements and leaves the means to the organisation. This sheet is a working aid drawn from the book: use it, change it or set it aside. Where it touches a requirement, the text of ISO 14001:2026 is the authority, not this page — and nothing on it replaces your own reading of that text.

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