BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT: SAFEGUARDING MOHA'S RESILIENCE IN FACING SECURITY THREAT

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ABSTRACT

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is a holistic approach to safeguarding the interests of its key stakeholders, reputation, brand and value-creating activities especially in facing any security threat. The importance of BCM should never be underestimated. With the increasing number of threats and risks faced by organisations today, it is imperative that they put in more focused efforts in preparing effective BCM plans to ensure that their business operations will continue without much disruption in the event of a crisis or a disaster because their reputation and survival as an entity depends on it. On this note, this article presents the Ministry of Home Affairs' (MOHA) observation of sound business continuity practices adopted and implemented by key institutions to mitigate the risks and impact which can lead to security threats. The objective of this paper is also to share with all institutions the good practices which MOHA has observed to date. The article emphasises on creating awareness in MOHA staff and management on the BCM programme and not taking on any security issues or any classified information on MOHA's core business. Agencies under MOHA are encouraged to adopt and adapt the good practices where appropriate; taking into account the nature and complexity of their operations to enhance their preparedness for such risks.

Keywords: *Business Continuity Management (BCM), Business Continuity (BC), Safety and Security, Awareness Programme*

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1.   INTRODUCTION OF BCM

With the increasing number of natural disasters, terrorism events, and unrest around the globe, the importance of business continuity planning and disaster recovery planning in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) is becoming more apparent. The recent onslaught of these events has highlighted the importance of system availability and forced top management of many organisations to think seriously about contingency planning. While business continuity issues do not always occur on a daily basis, it is important to prepare for the day when a disaster does strike.

Business Continuity Management (BCM) or *Pengurusan Kesinambungan Perkhidmatan (PKP)* is a holistic approach to safeguarding the interests of its key stakeholders, reputation, brand and value-creating activities.[4] By implementing BCM, any organisation will indicate sound corporate governance and good business leadership. BCM is an on-going process that needs regular management's attention and support because, in any growing organisation, the potential of a disaster can change from time to time. Emergency management, supply chain management, disaster recovery, crisis management, risk management and occupational health and safety are a few areas which BCM covers. Business Continuity (BC), the capability to provide continuous key services to customers and business partners, is no longer an option for management but a necessity.

The Business Continuity Institute (BCI - ISO 22301: 2012) defines BCM as:

> "Business continuity management is a holistic management process that is used to ensure that operations continue and that products and services are delivered at predefined levels, that brands and value-creating activities are protected, and that the reputations and interests of key stakeholders are safeguarded whenever disruptive incidents occur."

This means that they look at the impact of a disruption on all functions, taking a holistic approach rather than leaving individual business units to formulate their own plans.

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[4] The Business Continuity Institute (BCI - ISO 22301: 2012)

There is an increased awareness among businesses of the importance of Business Continuity Management (BCM) following a series of events and unpredictable disasters which occurred worldwide recently. Most companies or organisations today are aware of the risks that can affect them, particularly in terms of operations. BCM is a long-term management process that identifies potential impacts that threaten an organisation and provides a framework for developing resilience and ability to respond more effectively. It can partially protect the interests of key stakeholders as well as reputation, brand and value creating activities. Krell (2006) stated it is important for companies to have a BCM, especially for those involved in critical industries such as financial services, airlines and utilities.

Knowing that there were standards being developed in other countries and at the international level, the committee responsible for developing MS 1970 decided to produce a document which will guide the reader in developing and implementing a business continuity management framework. This document provides the reader with clear method and recommended steps. It also provides the reader with the minimum expected outcomes for each process. This document is not a requirement or specification type standards hence is not intended to be used for certification in business continuity management. MS 1970, Business Continuity Management Framework, has been developed to provide recommendations for organisations to design, develop, implement and maintain business continuity management plans. This standard is not meant to be prescriptive. It however recommends best practices of business continuity planning. This standard was intended for use by organisations of all types and sizes be it private, government or commercial.[5]

Besides committing towards modernising and enhancing its service delivery mechanisms, the public sector's stated aim targets zero downtime in service delivery. The public sector in Malaysia, especially front-line agencies, has already embarked on the implementation of BCM in accordance with the instructions of the Malaysia Administrative Modernisation and Planning Unit (MAMPU). In order to minimise the impact of disruption and to ensure continuity in the service delivery, MAMPU has issued a Director General circular dated 22 January 2010 requesting each government agency to implement BCM to improve the quality and continuity in the delivery of government services.

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[5] Department of Standard Malaysia

Hashim (2010) stated, based on a 2010 survey by MAMPU carried out on 48 agencies, only 23% has started developing its Business Continuity Plan (BCP), while 52% of them stated that planning to do so are still in the works. Interestingly, 45% opted for external consultant assistance, leaving only 55% doing it using internal resources. Hashim also stated that to achieve the mentioned target in the previous section, the Government via MAMPU has drafted an implementation framework to assist its agencies. Agencies can either choose to establish its own BCP or acquire consultation from industry experts.

Business continuity management (BCM) will indeed help to prevent operational interruptions, crises and disasters happening and will help organisations quickly return to a state of 'business as usual' should any of these events occur. Once it has been prepared the business continuity plans (BCP) must be tested and exercised to ensure that it will perform as anticipated. Findings made by Nurul Aisyah, Nor Laila Emma Nuraihan and Mior Ibrahim (2015) showed that organisation, people, process, and technology are significantly correlated with BCM failure in the Malaysian Public Sector. Thus, BCM implementation should involve all levels of the organisation and cover all related critical business process.

2.   OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

This article presents the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) observation of sound business continuity practices adopted and implemented by key institutions to mitigate the risks and impact which lead to security threats. The objective of this paper is also to share with all institutions the good practices which MOHA has observed to date. In addition, it will increase the awareness among the MOHA staff on the importance of BCM in their workplace. Agencies and mini MOHA are encouraged to adopt and adapt the good practices when appropriate, taking into account the nature and complexity of their operations and to enhance their preparedness for such risks.

The article is an exploratory socio research and the methodology is primarily qualitative. In socio research, data collection relies on primary and secondary data (Anwarul, 2007). Primary data refers to legislation, guideline and standard operating procedure available in Malaysia. Secondary sources are based on publications such as articles, journals, books, student theses, and official documents. The approach adopted will be an exploratory analysis - adopting and modifying documents and reference. The article emphasizes on creating awareness in MOHA staff and management on the BCM programme and not taking on any security issues or any classified information on MOHA's core business.

3. MOHA RESILIENCE IN FACING SECURITY RISK

With the increasing number of natural disasters, terrorism events, and unrests around the globe, the importance of business continuity planning and disaster recovery planning in MOHA is becoming more apparent. MOHA continues to emphasise the importance for security aspect to have in place robust business continuity frameworks and well-tested business continuity plans (BCP) to ensure the continuation of critical operations in the event of major operational disruptions. MOHA expects institutions to continually enhance their ability to respond swiftly to emergency situations.

Successful businesses expect the unexpected and plan for it. Disruptions to MOHA business can result in data risk, revenue loss and failure to deliver services as normal or in extreme cases, failure to deliver at all.

Critical services and associated security enforcement activities need to remain available in order to assure the safety, security and economic well-being of Malaysian, and the effective functioning of the government. A key risk for entities is that they will be unable to remain security machineries operationalize in the event of a crisis and/or disruption to business. In particular, Chandler (2008) stated BCM should focus primarily on preventing incidents from occurring, and diminishing their impact on business activity once they occur, security measures can play a crucial part in both cases.

An effective business continuity plan requires a number of security considerations. The example of monitoring the security measures includes the robustness of the security systems, which will include CCTV, access control systems, intruder alarms, physical security as well as IT security. This security peripheral in MOHA must work within the specified requirements, to be observed as of threats are likely to occur. Doors and windows, for example, should be to a proper security rating, which can prevent unwanted entry or spread of fire. Also, it can prevent unwanted visitors and can inspect and report suspicious packages.

Another risk which is even greater to happen in MOHA Headquarters is civil disorder. There were a few incidents at the front gate of MOHA building such as assembly, mock assembly and group gathering which are likely to create civil disorder incidents. These served as a harsh reminder to MOHA that civil disorder and rioting policy and procedures should now be included in all business continuity plans. They must include having lockdown procedures in place, defining roles and responsibilities when such events occur.

The implementation of a comprehensive BCM framework is vital to MOHA that places importance on ensuring that the business will continue to operate in the event of a crisis or a disaster. Based on the MOHA's recovery strategy plan and depending on the amount of budget and resources that MOHA can afford to allocate, they can ensure that at least their critical business functions that has been pre- defined by the management team will be able to continue operations as usual, even though it might not be at 100% capacity as per normal. This will enable the organisations to minimise disruptions to their business operations that could cost them huge losses in not only monetary terms, but also in other aspects such as losing potential business opportunities and clients' trust as well as affecting their image and reputation.

Strengthen public service delivery system is a priority for the Government. Curristine, Lonti & Joumard (2007) stated that the public sector has always focused on meeting the expectations and needs of the people and customers in obtaining the services provided by various government agencies. MOHA as an agency responsible for homeland security and safety, the ministry continues to monitor the level of the service delivery system, particularly with regards to home affairs and as a Public Sector in general. Public administration that is efficient, fast, efficient, integrity ethical and customer oriented is a priority. The demands and expectations of stakeholders towards MOHA is high. MOHA also proactively introduces approaches and methods of delivery of services in response to changing economic, social and security environment at national and international levels.

Accordingly in 2013, MOHA had agreed to implement Business Continuity Management in the ministry. BCM in MOHA is subjected to review systematically which are integrated into the preparation of the annual plan of the ministry as well as to ensure its update is carried out periodically on all aspects of the tasks and activities of the ministry. The objective of the Service Continuity Management Plan (BCP) MOHA is to: (a) Ensure the function or critical services, facilities and information infrastructure is restored quickly in the event of disruption or disaster and to continue service delivery system MOHA; (b) Optimising the use of energy and other resources during the disturbance; (c) Minimising the impact of disruption of service delivery to customers of MOHA; (d) Increasing the resilience of infrastructure ministry to reduce the period of interruption; (d) Minimise the impact of operations and the financial consequences of various disorders; (e) Being an example to the agency / branch under administration / supervision of the ministry in Business Continuity Management and to ensure the availability of the service provided; and (f) Providing MOHA towards fulfilling

stakeholders and customers from the public sector and the public.

BCM in MOHA refers to the plan or planning of service continuity management, covering all sources, processes, roles and responsibilities of all parties involved are required before, during and after a disruption to service delivery. This BCM should be documented, tested and reviewed periodically at least once a year or when there are changes in the environment in the ministry. This plan will provide the ministry with guidelines to minimise the impact of unexpected disruption or emergency.

4.   BCM CYCLE IN MOHA

BCM in MOHA involves all aspects of recovery plan cycle. The response phase involves establishing a plan coordinator or their delegate presence at the incident site. This individual performs an incident assessment to measure the impact and extent of damage and disruption to services and business operations and provides a timely report to the crisis management team and disaster recovery plan coordinators. The resumption phase includes the establishment of a control centre to oversee the resumption of operations and mobilisation of the support teams involved in the resumption process. In addition, the resumption phase involves the notification to employees, vendors, and other internal and external individuals and organisations that a disaster event has occurred.

The recovery phase involves the implementation of the procedures needed to facilitate and support the recovery of critical business operations and the coordination with the crisis management team, disaster recovery plan coordinators, and with employees, vendors, and other internal and external stakeholders and organisations. The final phase is the restoration phase. Schwab et al., (1998) mentioned that this phase contains the procedures necessary to facilitate the relocation and migration of business operations to the new or repaired facility. Each of the four phases involves exercising documented plans and procedures and the teams involved in executing those plans. The teams associated with the plan represent functions of a department or support functions developed to respond, resume, recover, or restore operations or facilities of an organisation and its affected systems (Schwab, Topping, Eadie, Deyle & Smith, 1998).

MOHA critical functions can be defined as a function or activity to which priority should be given to recovery in the event of disruption or disaster to minimise the impact or effect and to protect the ministry and legislative requirements. Activities and this information cannot be disturbed so that could impact the ability of the

ministry to reach the minimum objective of continuity of service. Ali (2015) in the illustration stated below shows an incident and a process of establishing a secure and resilient business environment capability in MOHA (Ali, 2014).
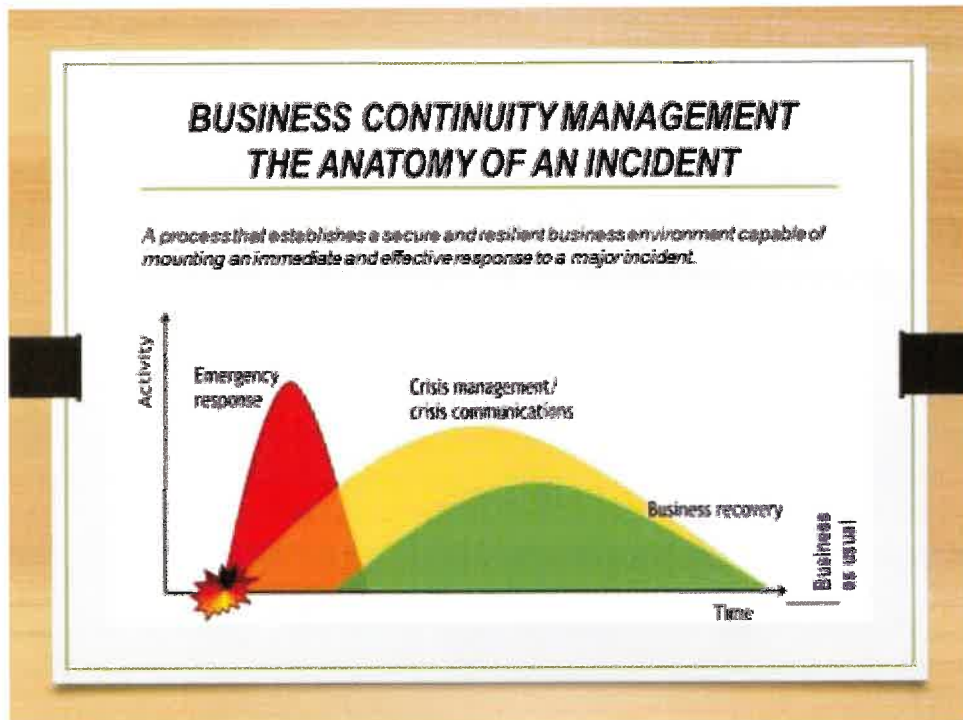

Illustration 1. Incident and a process of establishing a secure and resilient business environment capability in MOHA.

The definition of incident in the context of the MOHA is the disruption or disaster which led to the failure of service delivery (as a result) of the ministry:

a)   The disaster involving the ministry's premises (such as floods or fires in buildings, landslides, and epidemics);

b)   The planned outage or accidental (fire, terrorism, sabotage, theft, vandalism and demonstrations);

c)   Disruptions to services and utilities (electricity, water, gas, communications and public transport); and

d)   Interference due to cyber-attacks (intrusion, virus, Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS), failure of ICT systems including applications, network and hardware).

According to the International Standard (Rubin 1991), specific plans should be established, for the smooth implementation of the BCP in the ministry.

(i)   Emergency Response Plan is a systematic plan to ensure immediate action in controlling anxiety in the ministry to be carried out strategically and more effective. An Emergency Response Plan (ERP) contains policies and procedures to follow before, during and after an emergency. The ERP integrates emergency preparedness activities into one document. It is the focal point for school planning and preparedness procedures (Rubin, 1991).

The ERP is written in support of emergency management and is built upon the National Response Framework as scalable, flexible and adaptable coordinating structures to align key roles and responsibility. This plan and contents within shall apply to all agencies, staff, and students, and others participating in protection, prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery efforts. Furthermore, tasked organisations supporting ERP procedures shall maintain their own procedures and actively participate in the training, exercise, and maintenance are needed to support this plan.

(ii) Crisis Communications Plan provides policies and procedures to coordinate information to the public, family members and relatives of ministry personnel about their situation in the event of disruption. This plan describes what needs to be disclosed, who should give information, if necessary notified and templates that are used to give the alert when the situation disruption / disaster.

A well thought-out crisis communication strategy is a key element in crisis management. Crisis communication generally refers to the management and exchange of information within an organisation and between the organisation and external parties such as the media, authorities and the general public during a crisis. Without a comprehensive crisis communication strategy, an institution may not be able to communicate with its stakeholders effectively and appropriately.

Schwab et al., (1998) always mentions that the disaster Recovery Plan refers to a plan that set of resources, actions, responsibilities and data required to manage the process of recovery after a disruption to ICT services. This plan is designed for sections / parts of the ministry involved in the execution of critical functions can be disrupted, restore process and resume service within the prescribed period (Schwab, Topping, Eadie, Deyle & Smith, 1998).

(iii) A Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) is a documented process or set of procedures to recover and protect a business IT infrastructure in the event of a disaster.[Such a plan, ordinarily documented in written form, specifies procedures an organisation is to follow in the event of a disaster. It is a comprehensive statement of consistent actions to be taken before, during and after a disaster. The disaster could be natural, environmental or man-made. Man-made disasters could be intentional (for example, an act of a terrorist) or unintentional and accidental, such as the breakage of a man-made dam.

This Disaster Recovery Plan is designed to ensure the continuation of vital business processes in the event that a disaster occurs. This plan will provide an effective solution that can be used to recover all vital business processes within the required time frame using vital records that are stored off-site. This Plan is just one of several plans that will provide procedures to handle emergency situations. These plans can be utilised individually but are designed to support one another.

Business continuity planning is a critical function that involves many different personnel and departments over multiple phases. As with many business continuity programmes, an interactive process is most effective in developing a refined set of procedure and plan. This strategy allows an institution to recognise benefits from their investment, placing them to take advantage of knowledge gained and lessons learned through the development, testing, and maintenance of a business continuity programme. The business continuity program should include participation from all levels of an organisation, including the board of directors, senior management, business and technology managers, and staff. While many incorrectly believe contingency planning is a technology-only responsibility or problem, without business owners involvement in the business continuity programme, the effectiveness of plans are weakened and the recovery time during an event can be greatly extended or halted altogether.

5. IMPORTANCE OF BCM AWARENESS PROGRAMME

MOHA has to undertake various BCM campaigns to raise awareness and promote better understanding of the importance of BCM. As the subject matter expert in homeland security, MOHA haves to ensure its capability in facing current challenges with the commitment towards a proper BCP in all its premises and

resources. This is in line with its objective of ensuring the continuous maintenance and preservation of national security and public order through strict enforcement of the laws and efficient implementation of policies for programmes that are based on the core services of the MOHA.

According to the Business Continuity Institute (2014) Awareness programme, it is an important element of any ongoing, proactive approach to business continuity planning and implementation, disaster preparedness and recovery, as well as crisis management. On a fundamental level, the purpose of an awareness programme is to raise the level of awareness of an employee's role before, during and after an event. It is important to emphasise preparation, mitigation and personal safety. By making employees more aware and involving them, you are making employees "lifeguards" of business functions and company assets, as well as their own assets (Business Continuity Institute, 2014). But that's not all. An awareness programme can also be used to establish a baseline of your organisation's awareness against which to measure the effectiveness of awareness efforts and to garner ongoing management support. We all know that unless we have ongoing management support and commitment, all our best efforts seem to fade away with time.

In both the initial implementation and the ongoing programme, BCM involves undertaking a range of activities, and these activities are undertaken by people. If the BCM process is to be successful, these activities need to be undertaken by people who have the right level of knowledge and skills. A common cause of failure to implement BCM successfully is a lack of people with the right level of knowledge and skills, and the purpose of planning and delivering a business continuity training and awareness campaign is to avoid that pitfall. The aim therefore, is ensure that everyone has the business continuity knowledge and skills required to undertake their role in the process.

In terms of identifying the business continuity knowledge and skills required, people can be divided into two broad groups: All staff – who should have an awareness of the BCM programme and their role in It: Individuals with specific roles within the BCM programme – who should have the appropriate competence in the skills needed to undertake their assigned tasks.

The campaign can then be designed by:

a. Identifying the most appropriate approach to bridge the gaps
    ✓ Awareness

✓ Education (understanding)
✓ Training (skills)
✓ Mentoring (skills – practical)
✓ Identifying the audience

b. Choosing the most appropriate means for each audience
   ✓ Designing or selecting the events, materials, and messages. Examples of these approaches include:-
      o Awareness (Via Posters, Videos, Quizzes, Business continuity Intranet site and Visits to recovery sites)
      o Education (Through Documents, Presentations and Reports
      o Training which includes Business continuity courses (in-house or public), E-learning and Exercises
      o Mentoring by use an expert to show staff how to undertake a business continuity task

The successful implementation of the BCP in the work culture of an organisation depends on the understanding, willingness, integration and alignment activities on a daily basis and strategic priorities of the organisation with service organisations in the ministry. Enculturation programme continues to be implemented to create awareness to members of the Ministry on the importance of maintaining the level delivery and good maintenance culture to avoid any disorders that can affect the organisation's services. BCM needs to be applied in the work culture and serves as a core value of Public sector agencies to ensure that programmes developed by BMC effect of; the confidence of stakeholders, members and clients of the agency's and its ability to handle any disruptions of the agency upgraded; increase endurance levels with the agency and consider the impact / effect of BCM in decisions made at all levels; and to see the impact and probability of occurrence of interference is minimised.

Martinet (2006) mentioned that service continuity management simulation exercises usually will reveal the strength and weaknesses in organisations and in the relationship between agencies (Karen, 2006). The ability of organisers to evaluate and learn from it is very important. In fact, simulation exercises should be followed up with training specifically to cover the loopholes identified during training simulation. Sometimes, the review should also be conducted not only to legislation, systems, procedures, roles and responsibilities of the organisation itself but also on the desire to ensure preparedness is achieved.

6.   WAY FORWARD AND DEDUCTION

The importance of BCM should never be underestimated. With the increasing number of threats and risks faced by organisations today, it is imperative that they put in more focused efforts in preparing effective BCM plans to ensure that their business operations will continue without much disruption in the event of a crisis or a disaster because their reputation and survival as an entity depends on it. Thus, it is hoped that by highlighting the issues regarding the importance of BCM and recommending a number of strategic steps that can be taken to raise BCM awareness in the country in this paper, it will help to contribute for further development to be made in the field by the relevant authorities.

Success factors in promoting BCM depend on the support, commitment and a clear direction and continuous Top Management of the Ministry; commitment and skills of managers and operating personnel tasked with implementing the BCP, trained and adequate; an adequate budget to manage and maintain BCM implementation and support the ongoing implementation of awareness programmes; appropriate use of the latest technology in implementing BCM; and record management system that is integrated and efficient.

Having an effective BCM framework would significantly safeguard the ability of organisations to resume normal operation as soon as possible after undergoing a crisis or disaster situation; in some cases, having one is even critical for the survival of an organisation. Currently, our country has a long way to go towards making BCM an integral part of the culture of any organisation. In order to move towards remedying this situation, more intensive effort is needed to increase the awareness of the public regarding BCM as well as its benefits and methods.

Training and development is already part and parcel of an employee's career path, so it would only be too easy to incorporate some BCM training and make that compulsory for everyone. Establishment such as the Business Continuity Institute offers training with certification for those who are concerned with the effectiveness of an organisation's BCM implementation (or lack thereof) and serious to make improvements on the organisation's BCM planning and implementation. An organisation that is aware of the significance of having an active BCM framework for the continuation of its services in the event of a crisis or disaster will take the necessary action and improve its BCM plan. The implementation of BCM should be planned progressively and all employees must be made aware of the direction of the organisation.

While these kind of employee training programmes which can be conducted in the short run, a long term option to increase knowledge on BCM in MOHA. This would lead to the existence of more certified BCM professionals in the country who would be able to impart their knowledge in the field to increase the level of BCM awareness not only in MOHA, but also to other stakeholder, business partners, suppliers and customers. The availability of information on BCM in educational institutions also means that it would be easy to gain certified knowledge of what BCM is all about, and the increased knowledge would eventually lead to better public awareness of BCM and aid in its implementation.

MOHA as the leading ministry in preserving, maintaining and enhancing security and public order as well as to increase the effectiveness of the enforcement of internal security should be able to develop a national BCM standard that fits the mould of the operation of public and private organisations in this country. Having a standard would ease the process of BCM implementation for any organisation as there will be a set of best practices and guidelines to follow, which hopefully would also improve the level of effectiveness of the BCM framework.

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