



Economic Regulation Authority

2025~~19~~ Audit and Review Guidelines

Electricity and Gas Licences

~~August 2022~~ July 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

At the ERA we value our cultural diversity and respect the traditional custodians of the land and waters on which we live and work.

We acknowledge their continuing connection to culture and community, their traditions and stories. We commit to listening, continuously improving our performance and building a brighter future together.

Economic Regulation Authority

Level 4, Albert Facey House

469 Wellington Street, Perth WA 6000

Telephone 08 6557 7900

Email info@erawa.com.au

Website www.erawa.com.au

This document can also be made available in alternative formats on request.

National Relay Service TTY: 13 36 77

© 2025 Economic Regulation Authority. All rights reserved. This material may be reproduced in whole or in part provided the source is acknowledged.

Contents

1.	Overview	1
1.1	Compliance with these guidelines	1
1.2	Mandatory auditing requirements	1
1.3	Audit principles	2
1.4	Regulation of audits and reviews	2
1.4.1	Legislative licence conditions	2
1.4.2	Other licence conditions	2
1.5	Purpose and scope	3
1.5.1	Audits.....	3
1.5.2	Reviews	3
1.6	Risk-based approach to audits and reviews	4
1.6.1	Risk assessment	4
1.6.2	Assurance engagements.....	4
1.6.3	Areas of special focus	6
1.7	Frequency of audits and reviews.....	6
1.7.1	Extending the audit or review period.....	6
1.7.2	Maintaining or reducing the audit or review period	7
1.7.3	Other factors the ERA considers when setting an audit or review period.....	7
1.8	The audit and review process	7
2.	Auditor selection	8
2.1	Auditor selection criteria	8
2.1.1	Expertise and experience.....	8
2.1.2	Quality of previous audits and reviews.....	9
2.1.3	Auditor independence	9
2.2	Documents required for auditor approval	12
2.2.1	Declaration of independence.....	12
3.	Audit or review plan	13
3.1	Background	13
3.2	Minimum contents	14
3.2.1	Audit or review objectives.....	14
3.2.2	Scope of work.....	14
3.2.3	Audit and review priority	16
3.2.4	Proposed audit procedures	20
3.2.5	Reporting format.....	22
3.3	Assistance provided by the ERA	23
4.	Conducting the audit or review	24
4.1	Assistance provided by the licensee	24
4.2	Fieldwork	24
4.2.1	Audits.....	25
4.3	Audit evidence	25
4.3.1	Specific requirements for assessing output compliance (audits only)	25
4.4	Professional scepticism	26
4.5	Communications between licensees and auditors	26
5.	Audit or review report	27

5.1	Minimum contents	27
5.1.1	Executive summary	27
5.1.2	Audit or review objectives.....	28
5.1.3	Scope of work.....	28
5.1.4	Deviations from the audit or review plan	29
5.1.5	Recommendations from previous audits or reviews	29
5.1.6	Performance summary	31
5.1.7	Auditor's observations	36
5.1.8	Recommendations	40
5.1.9	Approval of the report by the auditor	43
5.2	Disagreement on audit or review observations	43
5.3	Post-audit and post-review implementation plans.....	43
5.4	Reporting to the ERA	45
5.4.1	Confidential information.....	46
6.	ERA approval of the report	47
6.1	Approval	47
6.2	Repeat audit or review	47

List of appendices

Appendix 1 List of Tables	48
Appendix 2 Documents referred to in the guidelines	49
Appendix 3 Risk-based approach to audits and reviews	50
Appendix 4 Process flowchart for audits and reviews	54
Appendix 5 A guide to the asset management system effectiveness framework	55
Appendix 6 Audit and review process summary	62

1. Overview

The *Audit and Review Guidelines: Electricity and Gas Licences* inform electricity and gas licensees and external auditors about the Economic Regulation Authority's requirements for conducting performance audits (audits) and reviewing asset management system (reviews).

The guidelines describe the framework auditors¹ must use to assess the effectiveness of the measures taken by licensees to meet the conditions of their licence and manage their assets. The framework uses a risk-based approach to focus audits and reviews on high-priority areas. It also uses common rating scales to rate licensees' performance so the ERA can compare the performance of individual licensees and groups of licensees over time.

The ERA has published separate guidelines for water licensees due to the different legislative framework for their audits and reviews.^{2,3}

1.1 Compliance with these guidelines

Audits and reviews that commence on or after the date the ERA publishes these updated guidelines must follow these guidelines.⁴

1.2 Mandatory auditing requirements

To ensure consistency of reporting on audits and reviews, the guidelines include many mandatory requirements for auditors and licensees. For example, auditors must:

- Adopt a risk based approach to auditing using the risk evaluation model set out in AS ISO 31000:2018.
- Use the compliance rating scales, set out in Table 6Z, to assess compliance with licence conditions.
- Use the process and policy, and performance rating scales, set out in Tables 9 and 10, to assess the effectiveness of the asset management system.
- Ensure their audit and review plans comply with Chapter 3.
- Ensure their audit and review reports comply with Chapter 5.

Licensees must prepare post-audit and post-review implementation plans that comply with section 5.3 of this document.

The words 'must' and 'requires' in these guidelines are used to identify mandatory requirements.

¹ The *Electricity Industry Act 2004* and the *Energy Coordination Act 1994* require audits and reviews to be undertaken by an 'independent expert'. The guidelines use the term 'auditor' for the independent expert that undertakes the audit or review.

² [Audit and Review Guidelines: Water Licences](#).

³ The *Water Services Act 2012* requires the ERA to appoint the auditors undertaking audits and reviews of water licences.

⁴ The commencement date for an audit or review is the date the ERA receives the auditor nomination from the licensee.

1.3 Audit principles

The guidelines include several references to the principles outlined in the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board's *Australian Auditing Standards* and *Standards on Assurance Engagements* (audit principles). While these standards have been developed by the AASB for the accounting profession, the audit principles also apply to audits and reviews.

Auditors must apply the audit principles to their audits and review. The standards allow auditors to use their professional judgment when applying the audit principles to audits and reviews.

1.4 Regulation of audits and reviews

The *Electricity Industry Act 2004* (Electricity Act) and the *Energy Coordination Act 1994* (Gas Act) – described collectively in this document as the Industry Acts – set out conditions for audits and reviews. Electricity and gas licences also include conditions for audits and reviews.

1.4.1 Legislative licence conditions

Under the Industry Acts, it is a condition of every licence that the licensee provides the ERA with:⁵

- A performance audit conducted by an independent expert acceptable to the ERA not less than once in every 24-month period (or such longer period as the ERA allows).
- A report by an independent expert acceptable to the ERA as to the effectiveness of the asset management system not less than once in every 24-month period (or such longer period as the ERA allows).⁶

Regular audits by an independent expert (auditor) provide a level of assurance that the licensee is complying with the conditions of its licence.

Regular reviews by an auditor provide a level of assurance that the licensee is maintaining an effective asset management system.

The ERA must provide a report on each audit to the Minister within two months of receiving it from the licensee.⁷

1.4.2 Other licence conditions

Electricity and gas licences also include conditions for the conduct of audits and reviews.⁸

One of those conditions is that licensees must comply, and require their auditors to comply, with these guidelines.

~~The ERA may further choose an auditor to conduct an audit or review if:~~

⁵ Sections 13 and 14 of the Electricity Act and sections 11Y and 11ZA of the Gas Act.

⁶ Section 14 of the Electricity Act and section 11Y of the Gas Act do not apply to Electricity Retail Licences, Electricity Integrated Regional Licences that only authorise the licensee to sell electricity to customers, and Gas Trading Licences. Persons who hold one of these licences do not have to undertake a review.

⁷ Section 13(3) of the Electricity Act and section 11ZA(3) of the Gas Act. The Industry Acts do not require the ERA to provide review reports to the Minister, but it is the ERA's practice to provide the reports anyway.

⁸ The ERA publishes all [electricity](#) and [gas](#) licences on its website.

- ~~the licensee fails to nominate an auditor within one month of the date that the audit or review was due,~~
- ~~or~~
- ~~the ERA has not approved the auditor nominated by the licensee on two successive occasions.~~

1.5 Purpose and scope

Audits and reviews have a separate and distinct purpose and scope.

1.5.1 Audits

The purpose of an audit is to assess the effectiveness of measures taken by the licensee to meet the conditions of its licence (licence obligations).⁹

An audit should focus on the systems and processes used to ensure compliance with the standards, outputs and outcomes required by the licence.

The scope of the audit must consider:

- **Process compliance** – the effectiveness of systems and procedures in place throughout the audit period, including the adequacy of internal controls.
- **Outcome compliance** – the actual performance against standards prescribed in the licence throughout the audit period.
- **Output compliance** – the existence of the output from systems and procedures throughout the audit period (specifically, proper records which provide assurance that procedures are consistently followed and controls are maintained).
- **Integrity of reporting** – the completeness and accuracy of the compliance and performance reports provided to the ERA.
- **Compliance with any individual licence conditions** – the actual performance against the requirements imposed on the specific licensee by the ERA or specific matters raised by the ERA.

The audit report should identify areas of non-compliance and recommend corrective action as necessary.

1.5.2 Reviews

The purpose of a review is to assess the licensee's asset management system, which includes the asset management plan, and the staff and IT resources that support the plan.

An asset management plan sets out the measures the licensee will take to properly operate and maintain assets. The plan must detail the licensee's business strategies to ensure it maintains an effective asset management system over at least a five-year period.

⁹ This includes general licence conditions, individual licence conditions (conditions specific to the licensee), and legislative obligations called up by the licence (the [Electricity Compliance Reporting Manual](#) and [Gas Compliance Reporting Manual](#) list the legislative obligations called up by the licence).

The scope of the review must include an assessment of the adequacy and effectiveness of the asset management system by evaluating the following asset management processes:¹⁰

- asset planning
- asset creation/acquisition
- asset disposal
- [operational](#) environmental analysis
- asset operations
- asset maintenance
- asset management information system
- risk management
- contingency planning
- financial planning
- capital expenditure planning
- review of the asset management system.

In addition to evaluating each asset management process, auditors must evaluate and report against each of the effectiveness criteria in Table 23.¹¹

1.6 Risk-based approach to audits and reviews

1.6.1 Risk assessment

Auditors must apply a risk-based approach to planning and conducting audits and reviews.

Auditors must determine the audit or review priority for each licence obligation or asset management process by assessing the relevant risk factors and controls in place. Auditors should focus the audit or review on higher priorities, with less extensive coverage of medium and lower priorities.

To achieve consistency of risk assessment across the different utility sectors and licences, auditors must use the risk evaluation model described in Appendix 3.¹²

Section 3.2.3 includes more information about the method auditors must use for assessing risk and determining audit and review priorities.

1.6.2 Assurance engagements

Once the auditor has assessed the audit or review priority for each licence obligation or asset management process, the auditor must assess if the licensee has complied with its licence obligations or has an effective asset management system.

¹⁰ Appendix 5 provides more information about asset management processes.

¹¹ Auditors are not obliged to use Table 23 as the basis for their evaluation of the effectiveness criteria. For example, they may instead review the licensee's operations against ISO 55000 (Asset management — Overview, principles and terminology). However, auditors must always report their findings against the 12 asset management processes, and associated criteria, set out in Table 23.

¹² The risk evaluation model is based on AS ISO 31000:2018.

1.6.2.1 Audits

When assessing if a licensee has complied with its licence obligations, the auditor must apply a level of scrutiny that corresponds to a 'reasonable assurance engagement'. A reasonable assurance engagement is:

An assurance engagement in which the assurance practitioner reduces engagement risk to an acceptably low level in the circumstances of the engagement as the basis for the assurance practitioner's conclusion. The assurance practitioner's conclusion is expressed in a form that conveys the assurance practitioner's opinion on the outcome of the measurement or evaluation of the underlying subject matter against criteria.¹³

1.6.2.2 Reviews

The auditor may perform a review of the asset management system at the lower level of scrutiny of a 'limited assurance engagement'.¹⁴ A limited assurance engagement is:

An assurance engagement in which the assurance practitioner reduces engagement risk to a level that is acceptable in the circumstances of the engagement but where that risk is greater than for a reasonable assurance engagement as the basis for expressing a conclusion in a form that conveys whether, based on the procedures performed and evidence obtained, a matter(s) has come to the assurance practitioner's attention to cause the assurance practitioner to believe the subject matter information is materially misstated.¹⁵

Auditors should not perform a limited assurance engagement if:

- The review is the first review for the licensee.
- The previous review identified serious deficiencies.
- The licensee has made material changes to its asset management system since the previous review.

In these cases, auditors should perform a reasonable assurance engagement.

Auditors must indicate in the review plan whether they intend to perform a limited or reasonable assurance engagement.

¹³ Paragraph 12(a)(i)(a) of ASAE 3000.

¹⁴ Although auditors may perform a limited assurance engagement for reviews, they should review asset management processes and criteria that have been assigned a review priority of 1, 2 or 3 (refer to section 3.2.3) at a higher level of scrutiny. Auditors should describe in the observations section of the report the audit procedures they used to support their findings. Reviewing one or more processes or criteria at a higher level of scrutiny does not preclude auditors from providing a 'limited assurance conclusion' (that is, that based on the procedures performed and evidence obtained, no matters have come to the auditor's attention to cause the auditor to believe the review information is materially misstated).

¹⁵ The nature, timing, and extent of procedures performed in a limited assurance engagement is limited compared with that necessary in a reasonable assurance engagement but is planned to obtain a level of assurance that is, in the assurance practitioner's professional judgement, meaningful. To be meaningful, the level of assurance obtained by the assurance practitioner is likely to enhance the intended users' confidence about the subject matter information to a degree that is clearly more than inconsequential. Paragraph 12(a)(i)(b) of ASAE 3000.

1.6.3 Areas of special focus

The ERA may direct a licensee to require the auditor to assign a higher audit priority to specific licence obligations, asset management processes, effectiveness criteria, or the inspection of specific asset infrastructure (area of special focus).

The ERA will usually select an area of special focus in response to information obtained from a range of sources, including previous audits or reviews, annual compliance reports, media reports or referrals from other government agencies. An area of special focus may also examine the licensee's compliance with legislation that has been introduced or amended since the previous audit or review.

The ERA will try to provide the licensee with advance notice of areas of special focus. This may be by including the information in the ERA's letter reminding the licensee of the upcoming audit or review of its licence.¹⁶

The ERA may also meet with the licensee and the auditor to discuss the handling of any areas of special focus in the audit or review plan before the licensee submits the plan to the ERA for approval.

1.7 Frequency of audits and reviews

The ERA may extend, maintain or reduce the amount of time between audits and reviews. The minimum period between audits and reviews will not be less than 24 months.¹⁷

1.7.1 Extending the audit or review period

1.7.1.1 Audit or review outcomes

The ERA may extend the audit or review period for a licensee assessed as:

- having a strong compliance framework that is achieving a high level of compliance with the conditions of their licence,
- or
- having an effective asset management system with processes that meet the required levels of performance.

Extending an audit or review period allows the ERA to reduce the cost of regulation, while maintaining a suitable level of oversight of a licensee's performance.

1.7.1.2 Inactivity

Some licensees do not immediately commence activities authorised by the licence after it has been granted. In these circumstances, the licensee may request an extension to their first audit or review period.

The ERA will decide a request for an extension on a case-by-case basis.

¹⁶ This letter is normally sent ~~three~~ two months before the end of the audit or review period.

¹⁷ Under the Industry Acts, the minimum amount of time between audits and reviews is 24 months (refer to section 1.4). For a new licence, the ERA calculates the audit or review period from the date the ERA granted the licence.

The ERA generally does not extend the first audit or review period beyond seven years, even if the licensee has not yet commenced any activities authorised by the licence.

The seven-year maximum aims to minimise the risk the licensee can no longer produce the historical records required by the auditor for the audit or review.¹⁸

1.7.2 Maintaining or reducing the audit or review period

The ERA may decide not to extend the audit or review period for a licensee it has assessed as:

- needing to materially improve the level of compliance with the conditions of their licence or
- operating an ineffective asset management system.

For these licensees, the audit or review period may be maintained at 24 months or reduced (if it was previously more than 24 months).

1.7.3 Other factors the ERA considers when setting an audit or review period

In addition to the criteria in sections 1.7.1 and 1.7.2, the ERA will consider other factors when deciding the next audit or review period, including the:

- Seriousness of the non-compliances and asset management system deficiencies, including the effect of the non-compliances on customers.
- Licensee's compliance history.
- Services provided by the licensee.
- Number and type of customers a licensee has.

1.8 The audit and review process

The following chapters discuss the stages of the audit and review process in detail.

Appendices 4 and 6 include a flowchart and process template of the audit and review process.

¹⁸ Many records only have to be kept for seven years (or less). For example, financial records only have to be kept for seven years after the transactions covered by the records are complete (s.286 of the *Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)*). Records of complaints made about marketing activities only have to be kept for two years (clause 2.10 of the *Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers (WA)*; clause ~~132.10~~ of the *Gas Marketing Code of Conduct 2022 (WA)*).

2. Auditor selection

Licensees are responsible for engaging an auditor to conduct the audit or review. The ERA must approve the licensee's nominated auditor before the audit or review begins.

Licensees should undertake a selection process to identify an auditor who is able to conduct the audit or review.¹⁹ When seeking the ERA's approval of their nominated auditor, licensees must provide a copy of the auditor's offer to perform the audit or review.²⁰

To receive approval, the auditor must have the required expertise and experience to conduct the audit or review to an acceptable standard. The ERA will also consider the independence of the auditor as it relates to the licensee.

If it considers an auditor to be unsuitable, the ERA may, using its discretion under the Industry Acts, decide not to approve the auditor.

Section 2.1 sets out the criteria the ERA will consider to determine the suitability of an auditor to conduct an audit or review.

2.1 Auditor selection criteria

2.1.1 Expertise and experience

2.1.1.1 Audits

To determine the suitability of an auditor to conduct an audit, the ERA will consider:

- The experience of the auditor in performance and compliance auditing. ~~It is desirable for the Nominated auditor~~ auditors must have experience in undertaking regulatory audits or non-financial assurance audits of utilities or other regulated businesses ~~within the previous three years.~~
- The audit skills and experience of the audit team. The ERA will consider:
 - Each audit team member's audit expertise and experience.
 - The lead auditor's (for example, partner, manager or similar) knowledge and experience of conducting regulatory audits or non-financial audits of utilities or other regulated businesses.

2.1.1.2 Reviews

To determine the suitability of an auditor to conduct an effectiveness review of the asset management system, the ERA will consider:

- The experience of the auditor in asset management practice. Nominated auditors must ~~It is desirable for the auditor to~~ have relevant asset management experience in utilities or other regulated businesses ~~within the previous three years.~~ Relevant experience might include

¹⁹ Licensees should ensure the auditor is familiar with the requirements in these guidelines, and able to complete the audit or review by the due date, when seeking quotes.

²⁰ Section 2.2 lists the documents and information the licensee must provide to the ERA when seeking approval of a proposed auditor. The licensee may, but does not have to, provide the financial and pricing component of the offer from the proposed auditor.

development of asset management systems, asset performance reviews, asset project management or strategic asset planning.

- The engineering and technical expertise of the review team, including:
 - Each review team member’s professional qualifications relevant to the licence(s).
 - Each review team member’s knowledge and experience of asset management practice in the utility sector relevant to the licence(s).
 - The lead auditor’s (for example, partner, manager, senior engineer or similar) knowledge of, and experience in, managing effectiveness reviews of asset management systems.

2.1.2 *Quality of previous audits and reviews*

The ERA will consider the quality of previous audits and reviews conducted by the nominated auditor.²¹

Prior to nominating an auditor for approval, licensees should ask prospective auditors whether the ERA has raised concerns about the quality of any previous audits or reviews they have undertaken.

2.1.3 *Auditor independence*

The ERA will consider the professional independence of the auditor as it relates to the licensee and any related entity, particularly where the auditor undertakes other professional work for the licensee or a related entity.²²

Auditor independence requires that the auditor and the licensee take suitable measures to avoid conflict of interest situations when performing an audit or review.

2.1.3.1 *Conflict of interest*

Under the *Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)* (Corporations Act) an auditor may have a conflict of interest at a particular time if:

because of circumstances that exist at that time:

- the auditor, or a professional member of the audit team, is not capable of exercising objective and impartial judgement in relation to the conduct of the [audit of the](#) audited body; or
- a reasonable person, with full knowledge of all relevant facts and circumstances, would conclude that the auditor, or a professional member of the audit team, is not capable of exercising objective and impartial judgement in relation to the conduct of the audit of the audited body.

[Section 324CD of the Corporations Act]

Section 324CD of the Corporations Act includes a comprehensive framework for identifying circumstances that may give rise to a conflict of interest.

The professional codes of conduct for audit and assurance practitioners are broadly consistent with the Corporations Act, but may be less prescriptive in their approach to resolving conflicts of interest. Auditors who are members of a professional accounting body should apply the code of

²¹ [Evidence of non-ERA -audits and reviews -is to be provided, if requested by the ERA.](#)

²² A related entity has the same meaning as in section 9 of the *Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)*.

ethics of that body to determine whether they meet the minimum standards for professional independence for an audit or review.

The following section outlines the factors the ERA requires all auditors, regardless of whether they are a member of a professional accounting body or not, to take into account to assess whether they meet the minimum standards for auditor independence.²³

2.1.3.2 *Threats to independence*

When nominating an auditor for the ERA's approval, a licensee and the auditor should be satisfied there are no conflicts of interest that may threaten the auditor's independence. Licensees and auditors should pay particular attention to independence threats due to:

- **Self-interest** – occurs when:
 - An auditor or a member of the audit or review team could benefit from a financial or non-financial interest in a licensee or the related entity.
 - or
 - The total fees from the licensee represent a large proportion of the fees of the auditor expressing the audit opinion.²⁴
- **Self-review** – occurs when:
 - The auditor or a member of the audit or review team has undertaken other non- audit work for the licensee that is being evaluated in relation to the audit or review.
 - A member of the audit or review team was previously an officer or director of the licensee.
 - or
 - A member of the audit or review team was previously an employee of the licensee who was in a position to exert direct influence over matters the auditor will examine during the audit or review.
- **Familiarity** – occurs when, due to a close family relationship with a licensee, its directors, officers or employees, an auditor or a member of the audit or review team is, or is perceived to be, too sympathetic to the licensee's interests.

Auditors should assess the risk of a self-review threat based on work:

- Undertaken by the auditor, or a member of the audit or review team, for the licensee within the ~~previous 24 months~~ audit or review period.
- The auditor is currently undertaking for the licensee. ~~or~~
- The auditor has submitted an offer, or intends to submit an offer, to undertake for the licensee within the next ~~6~~ 12 months.

Paragraphs ~~290.4~~ 120.6 to ~~290.34~~ 120.11 of APES 110 discuss these, and other, independence threats in more detail.

~~Auditors~~ All members of the audit team must consider and disclose to the ERA whether any other relevant relationships exist that may create a threat to the auditor's independence. Section

²³ The factors are drawn from the Corporations Act and Compiled APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants.

²⁴ Paragraph 7.3.124 of the Australian Accounting Bodies Independence Guide (~~February 2013~~ May 2020) discusses a scenario about this specific self-interest threat.

324CH of the Corporations Act discusses relationships that may pose an independence threat in more detail.

2.1.3.3 Auditor rotation

Consecutive audits or reviews conducted by the same auditor

There is a self-review or familiarity threat to auditor independence where the same auditor conducts consecutive audits or reviews of the same licensee. To mitigate against this risk, auditor rotation is common practice for statutory audits.²⁵

The number of consecutive audits or reviews that the same auditor may conduct is limited to two.

An auditor who has conducted two consecutive audits or reviews will be eligible to conduct another audit or review for the licensee once another auditor has conducted at least one audit or review.

Application of the auditor rotation policy to audits and reviews

The auditor rotation policy applies to persons who will play a substantial role in the audit or review. This includes:

- ~~I~~f a person is appointed as an individual auditor:
 - ~~T~~he person
 - ~~A~~a service company, or similar, employing the auditor providing the audit service.~~7~~
- ~~i~~f an audit company is appointed as the auditor, ~~the~~the:
 - ~~L~~the lead auditor; that is, the person who is primarily responsible to the audit company for the conduct of the audit or review.²⁶
 - ~~R~~the review auditor; that is, the person who is primarily responsible to the audit company for reviewing the performance of an audit or review.

For example, the same audit company may complete up to three ~~or more~~ consecutive audits or reviews if different lead and review auditors are appointed ~~at least for every~~ the third audit or review.

If the lead or review auditors have completed two previous audits or reviews for the licensee, they may not conduct a third audit or review even if they are now employed by a different audit company.

²⁵ The Corporations Act (section 324DA), and the professional codes of conduct for auditors and assurance practitioners set limits on the number of consecutive audits that can be undertaken by an auditor. The Corporations Act also prohibits an auditor from conducting financial audits of the same business for more than ~~five~~5 out of ~~seven~~7 successive years.

²⁶ The ERA will apply this test to a person, other than the person who approves the audit report, if it considers that the person will have a direct influence over the development of the opinion of the audit company about the audit or review.

2.2 Documents required for auditor approval

A licensee must submit the following to the ERA when seeking approval of a proposed auditor:²⁷

- A formal request (for instance, a letter or email) from the licensee requesting the ERA to approve the nominated auditor.
- A copy of the curriculum vitae for each audit or review team member demonstrating their skills and experience relevant to the audit or review.^{28, 29}
- For audit companies, a business profile, or similar, demonstrating their capability and capacity to undertake the audit or review.
- A document containing an approximate timeline for the audit or review, a high level work program and confirmation the audit or review report will be provided to the ERA by the due date.³⁰
- A statement confirming that the auditor will conduct the audit or review in accordance with the guidelines.
- A declaration of independence prepared by the auditor [that complies with section 2.2.1](#).

2.2.1 Declaration of independence

A declaration of independence must include a statement that the auditor, and each audit or review team member, is, and will remain, compliant with the independence criteria set out in these guidelines throughout the audit or review.

The auditor may determine the format of the declaration.

Some professional bodies have developed their own declaration templates. In that case, the auditor must ensure the declaration specifically refers to the requirements set out in these guidelines.

²⁷ This information is often contained in the offer from the proposed auditor.

²⁸ If, at any time, a new member is added to the audit or review team, the auditor must provide a copy of the new member's curriculum vitae to the ERA.

²⁹ [Curriculum vitae must include qualifications/affiliations.](#)

³⁰ Responsibility for the timely delivery of the audit or review report jointly rests with the auditor and the licensee. For licensees who have business operations over a number of facilities distributed across the State, the auditor nomination should acknowledge the need for the auditor to visit more than one facility during the audit or review engagement.

3. Audit or review plan

The auditor is responsible for developing the audit or review plan.

The audit or review plan may be submitted for approval to the ERA by the:

- ~~A the~~ auditor, with the licensee's consent. In this case, the auditor should also provide a copy of the audit or review plan to the licensee.

— or

- L the licensee.

The ERA will not accept or approve audit plans sent before the end of the audit period to ensure all events occurring during the audit period are covered in the plan.

3.1 Background

The Standard on Assurance Engagements ASAE 3000 states:

The assurance practitioner shall plan the assurance engagement so that it will be performed in an effective manner, including setting the scope, timing and direction of the engagement and determining the nature, timing and extent of planned procedures that are required to be carried out in order to achieve the objective of the assurance practitioner.³¹

ASAE 3000 provides a list of the main matters auditors should address in an engagement plan, including:³²

- The characteristics of the engagement defining its scope, including the terms of the engagement and the characteristics of the underlying subject matter and the criteria.
- The expected timing and the nature of the ~~auditor's~~ communications required.
- The results of the ~~auditor's engagement~~ acceptance activities of the audit and, where applicable, whether knowledge gained on other engagements performed by the lead assurance practitioner for the appropriate party(ies) is relevant.³³ ~~and, where applicable, whether knowledge gained on other engagements performed by the lead auditor is relevant.~~
- The ~~audit~~ engagement process.
- The assurance practitioner's understanding of the appropriate party(ies) ~~entity~~ and their ~~its~~ environment, including the risks that the subject matter information may be materially misstated.
- Identification of intended users and their information needs, and consideration of materiality and the components of assurance engagement risk.
- The extent to which the risk of fraud is relevant to the engagement.

³¹ Paragraph 40 of ASAE 3000.

³² Paragraph A86 of ASAE 3000.

³³ Paragraph 22 of ASAE 3000 sets out the criteria used to determine when the auditor might accept an audit engagement.

- [The nature, timing and extent of resources necessary to perform the engagement, such as P](#)ersonnel and expertise requirements, including the nature and extent of experts' involvement.
- The ~~effect~~[impact](#) of the internal audit function on the engagement.

The requirements for audit and review plans specified in this Chapter build upon the principles set out in ASAE 3000.³⁴

3.2 Minimum contents

The audit or review plan must include:

- The audit or review objectives.
- The auditor's scope of work.
- A table identifying the risk assessment and audit or review priority rating for each applicable licence obligation or asset management process.
- The auditor's proposed audit procedures.
- A statement confirming that the audit or review report will comply with the ERA's prescribed format.

3.2.1 Audit or review objectives

The audit or review plan must set out the objectives and purpose of the audit or review. The auditor must confirm that they will perform the audit or review consistent with the regulatory framework prescribed in the Industry Acts, the licence(s) and these guidelines.

3.2.2 Scope of work

The audit or review plan must ~~set out the scope of work, including~~[include](#):

- **Audit or review period** – The period covered by the audit or review and, if applicable, the previous audit or review.
- **Assurance engagement** – The type of assurance engagement the auditor will perform.
 - For audits, the plan must confirm the audit is a reasonable assurance engagement.
 - For reviews, the plan must state if the review is a limited assurance engagement or a reasonable assurance engagement.
- **Previous recommendations** – A review [and status update on](#)~~of~~ the recommendations from the previous audit or review, [including](#)~~and~~ the actions taken by the licensee to address the recommendations.³⁵ The outcome of the auditor's examination may affect the audit priority for one or more licence obligations.

The plan must include a statement confirming the auditor will consider the recommendations from the previous audit or review, if applicable.

³⁴ ASAE 3100 also discusses planning for compliance engagements.

³⁵ [The status update in the plan can be based solely on information provided by the licensee to the auditor. Validation of the information will occur during the audit/review.](#)

- **Compliance reports and compliance registers (audit plans only)** – A review of the compliance reports lodged by the licensee during the audit period.³⁶ The outcome of the auditor's examination may affect the audit priority for one or more licence obligations.³⁷

The plan must identify the compliance reports that have been reviewed by the auditor.

If the licensee has a compliance (or breach) register, the auditor must determine whether the compliance reports are consistent with the register.³⁸

- **Site visits** – A list of the sites the auditor will visit during the audit or review. unless the ERA has approved a remote audit. An audit may be conducted remotely, provided the auditor can explain how remote working will be as effective as a site visit. The ERA will consider remote audits on a case-by-case basis.

An entirely remote approach is not permitted for asset management system reviews, as the auditor is required to examine a licensee's assets and asset management practices.³⁹

If the licensee's operations are located across different sites, the auditor must visit enough sites to obtain a representative sample of the licensee's business operations. For asset management reviews, ~~if~~ if the licensee operates in metropolitan and regional areas, the auditor must visit at least one regional operational site as well as a metropolitan operational site.⁴⁰ The auditor should, where possible, visit sites that are different to those visited during previous audits or reviews.

It is the auditor's, not the licensee's, responsibility to determine the sites the auditor will visit. There may be circumstances where the ERA will direct that a specific site is visited, for example, if the ERA has identified an area of special focus for the audit or review.

~~The auditor must visit the licensee's business operations to conduct the audit or review; performing audit procedures remotely is not allowed.~~

- **Personnel and documentation** – For each site, the personnels who will be interviewed and the documentation that will be examined.⁴¹

If one or more entities perform licence obligations or asset management processes on behalf of the licensee, the auditor must identify those obligations or processes in the audit or review plan. The auditor must specify in the plan any persons or documentation of the other entity they will interview or examine.⁴²

- **Work schedule** – The auditor's proposed work schedule, including:

³⁶ Licensees must provide the ERA with an annual compliance report detailing any contraventions of licence obligations for the financial year. The auditor may also need to review a compliance report that has been lodged after the audit period that covers part of the audit period.

³⁷ Refer to section 3.2.3.2.

³⁸ Licensees with an effective regulatory framework usually maintain a compliance (or breach) register that lists each licence obligation that the licensee failed to comply with during the audit period.

³⁹ Section 14(2) of the Electricity Act requires an asset management system set out measures that are to be taken by the licensee for the proper maintenance of assets used in the supply of electricity and in the operation of, and, where relevant, the construction of, any generating works, transmission system or distribution system. Section 11ZA(3) of the Gas Act requires an asset management system to set out the measures to be taken by the licensee for the proper maintenance of assets used in the supply of gas and in the operation and maintenance of, and, where relevant, the construction or alteration of, the distribution system.

⁴⁰ A licensee's head office is not considered an operational site unless significant operational and/or maintenance activities occur from the head office site.

⁴¹ If the ERA requires further information about these documents, it will contact the auditor directly.

⁴² This often occurs where the licensee is a special purpose vehicle whose sole function is to operate the assets covered by the licence on behalf of the asset owners, or where the licensee outsources some of its functions to a contractor.

- Details of the activities to be performed during the audit or review (including report preparation).
- The audit or review team members who will be undertaking the activities.
- The amount of time allocated to each activity.

3.2.3 ***Audit and review priority***

The audit or review plan must set out the audit or review priority for each licence obligation, asset management process and effectiveness criterion. [Licence obligations can be obtained from the applicable compliance reporting manual on the ERA website.](#)

[Where more than one version of a compliance reporting manual, act, regulation, code or licence applied during an audit period, obligations may have changed, been added or removed during the audit period. The audit plan is required to consider all the obligations that applied during the audit period, including obligations that changed or were removed and no longer apply. Compliance with an obligation needs to be determined only for the time it applied during the audit period, as summarised in Table 1.](#)

Table 1: [How to assess and report against multiple obligation requirements](#)

Obligation	Current	Old
Added	Assess and report on compliance against new obligation from the date the obligation commenced	N/A
Changed		Assess and report on compliance against the old obligation up to the date the obligation no longer applied
Removed	N/A	

Example

A licensee has an audit period of 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2023. During this audit period the *Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers* was amended on 20 February 2023, which changed some licence obligations, added new obligations and removed obsolete obligations. To reflect the code changes, a new electricity compliance reporting manual took effect from 20 February 2023.

Obligation added

One of the new code obligations was obligation 133A and it was added in the electricity compliance reporting manual. The auditor should only assess and report on compliance with obligation 133A from 20 February 2023 to 30 June 2023.

Obligation changed

The requirements of obligation 135 were changed in the new electricity compliance reporting manual. From 1 July 2020 to 19 February 2023, the auditor should assess and report on compliance with obligation 135 under the old compliance reporting manual. From 20 February 2023 to 30 June 2023, the auditor should assess and report on compliance with obligation 135 under the new compliance reporting manual.

Obligation removed

Obligation 134 was removed in the new electricity compliance reporting manual. The auditor should assess and report on compliance with obligation 134 from 1 July 2020 to 19 February 2023 under the old compliance reporting manual.

3.2.3.1 Method

As explained in section 1.6, auditors must apply a risk-based approach to planning and conducting an audit or review.

The ERA's risk evaluation model is based on AS ISO 31000:2018 (Risk Management – Guidelines). Appendix 3 describes the risk evaluation model in more detail.

Auditors must use the risk evaluation model to determine the audit or review priority for each licence obligation or asset management process. This, in turn, will determine the nature and extent of the audit procedures.⁴³

Auditors may use recent work of other independent experts to determine audit or review priorities.⁴⁴

3.2.3.2 Audit priority

As part of every audit, auditors must examine all the licence obligations that apply to the licensee.⁴⁵ If the ERA has advised the licensee, or the auditor, that a specific licence obligation

⁴³ Section 3.2.4 includes more information about audit procedures.

⁴⁴ Work undertaken within the last nine months of the audit or review period [or by other regulators or external financial auditors. Where an auditor relies on the work of other parties, the auditor should explicitly disclose this in the audit or review plan.](#)

⁴⁵ This includes general licence conditions, individual licence conditions (conditions specific to the licensee), and legislative obligations called up by the licence. The ERA's [Electricity Compliance Reporting Manual](#) and [Gas Compliance Reporting Manual](#) list the general licence conditions and the legislative obligations called up by the licence. Auditors should review the licensee's licence to determine if any individual licence conditions apply to the licensee.

should be included in the scope of the audit, the auditor must include this obligation in the audit plan.

Determining the audit priority

Auditors must assign an audit priority of 1 to 5 to each licence obligation.⁴⁶ Appendix 3 explains how to calculate an audit priority.

Sometimes the auditor may assign an audit priority that differs from the priority calculated ~~on the basis of~~ based on Appendix 3:

- **Assigning a higher audit priority** – If the ERA has identified one or more areas of special focus, auditors should assign an audit priority of 1, 2 or 3, as applicable, to the relevant licence obligations. This ensures the auditor will assess the effectiveness of controls for those obligations.

Auditors should also assign an audit priority of 1, 2 or 3 to licence obligations rated non-compliant in the previous audit that the licensee has not yet fully rectified.⁴⁷

When assigning an audit priority, auditors should take into consideration any contraventions disclosed in the licensee's compliance (or breach) register or annual compliance reports for the audit period.

- **Assigning a lower audit priority** – Auditors may reduce the audit priority for a licence obligation if the licensee has demonstrated a high level of compliance over previous consecutive audits.

If an auditor wishes to reduce one or more audit priorities, the auditor must explain this in the audit plan. The ERA will consider a proposal to reduce an audit priority on a case- by- case basis.

Every applicable licence obligation must be subject to some level of audit procedures for the entire audit period.⁴⁸

Licence obligations that are not applicable (N/A)

While developing an audit plan, the auditor may determine that one or more licence obligations do not apply to the licensee's business operations. Instead of assigning an audit priority to these licence obligations, the auditor must mark the obligations in the audit plan as 'N/A~~not applicable~~'. The auditor must also provide a brief explanation why these obligations will not be assessed.

Presentation of audit priority in the audit plan

The audit plan must include a table identifying the risk assessment and audit priority rating for each licence obligation. Table 24 provides an example of an audit priority ratings table.

⁴⁶ Auditors must not group licence obligations when determining audit priority. However, auditors may group similar licence obligations when determining audit procedures, or when making observations and recommendations. Licence obligations may be considered similar if they involve a part of a legislative instrument (for example, a clause or division of a code) or if they are managed by a business function or member of staff that is responsible for complying with the obligations.

⁴⁷ At the time the audit plan is being prepared.

⁴⁸ Licence obligations that were only applicable for part of the audit period only need to be audited for that period.

Table 24: Presenting audit priority ratings in an audit plan

Licence obligation reference no. (Refer to Electricity or Gas Compliance Reporting Manual)	Licence obligation (cl = clause, Sch = Schedule)	Consequence (1 = minor, 2 = moderate, 3 = major)	Likelihood (A = likely, B = probable, C = unlikely)	Inherent risk (low, medium, high)	Adequacy of existing controls (strong, medium moderate, weak)	Audit priority (Refer to Table 21)					
						1	2	3	4	5	N/A
1.	Electricity Industry Customer Transfer Code cl 2.2(1)(a)	1	C	low	strong					✓	
2.	Electricity Industry Customer Transfer Code cl 2.2(1)(b)	2	C	medium	strong				✓		

3.2.3.3 Review priority

As part of every review, auditors must assign a review priority to each of the 12 asset management processes and each of the effectiveness criteria for those processes.

Determining the review priority

Appendix 3 explains how to calculate the review priority for asset management processes and effectiveness criteria.⁴⁹

Sometimes the auditor may assign a review priority that differs from the priority calculated ~~on the basis of~~ based on Appendix 3:

- **Assigning a higher review priority** – If the ERA has identified one or more areas of special focus, auditors should assign a review priority of 1, 2 or 3, as applicable, to the relevant asset management process or effectiveness criterion.

Auditors should also assign a review priority of 1, 2 or 3 to asset management processes or effectiveness criteria rated deficient in the previous review that the licensee has not yet fully addressed.⁵⁰

- **Assigning a lower audit priority** – Auditors may reduce the review priority for an asset management process or effectiveness criterion if they were rated as effective over previous consecutive reviews.

If an auditor wishes to reduce one or more review priorities, the auditor must explain this in the review plan. The ERA will consider a proposal to reduce a review priority on a case-by-case basis.

Every applicable asset management process and effectiveness criterion must be subject to some level of audit procedures for the entire review period.

⁴⁹ Although Appendix 3 mainly focuses on audits, the processes described in Appendix 3 for determining audit priorities can be equally applied to determine review priorities for asset management processes and effectiveness criteria.

⁵⁰ At the time the review plan is being prepared.

Effectiveness criteria that are not applicable (N/A)

While developing the review plan, the auditor may determine that one or more effectiveness criteria do not apply to the licensee's asset management system. Instead of assigning a review priority to these criteria, the auditor must mark the criteria in the review plan as 'not applicable'. The auditor must also provide a brief explanation why these criteria will not be assessed.

Presentation of review priority in the review plan

The review plan must include a table identifying the risk assessment and review priority rating for each of the 12 asset management processes and ~~their~~ [the 58](#) associated effectiveness criteria. Table [32](#) provides an example of a review priority ratings table.

Table 32: Presenting review priority ratings in the review plan

Reference no. (Refer to Table 22)	Asset management process & effectiveness criteria	Consequence (1 = minor, 2 = moderate, 3 = major)	Likelihood (A = likely, B = probable, C = unlikely)	Inherent risk (low, medium, high)	Adequacy of existing controls (strong, moderate , weak)	Review priority (Refer to Table 21)					
						1	2	3	4	5	N/A
1	Asset planning	2	C	medium	strong				✗		
1.1	Asset management plan covers the processes in this table	2	C	medium	strong				✓		
1.2	Planning processes and objectives reflect the needs of all stakeholders and are integrated with business planning	1	C	low	strong					✓	
1.3	Service levels are defined in the asset management plan	1	C	low	strong					✓	

3.2.4 Proposed audit procedures

The audit or review plan must describe the procedures the auditor proposes to use to assess the licensee's compliance with each licence obligation or the effectiveness of each asset management process (audit procedures) for each audit or review priority rating.⁵¹

3.2.4.1 Overview

The ERA's risk evaluation model ensures the depth of procedures applied in an audit or review is commensurate with the risk. Higher risk areas of the licensee's operations require more extensive audit procedures.

Auditors should apply ASAE 3000, ASAE 3100, [ASAE 3500](#), ASA 500 (Audit Evidence) and ASA 530 (Audit Sampling) to determine the level and type of audit procedures for each licence

⁵¹ See Table 3 for examples of audit procedures for each priority rating.

condition or asset management process.⁵² Items with a priority rating of 1 or 2 should be examined more extensively than items with a lower priority rating, see Table 43 for examples.

3.2.4.2 *Sample procedures*

Paragraph A653 of ASA 500 states:

An effective test provides appropriate audit evidence to an extent that, taken with other audit evidence obtained or to be obtained, will be sufficient for the auditor's purposes. In selecting items for testing, the auditor is required by paragraph 7 to determine the relevance and reliability of information to be used as audit evidence; the other aspect of effectiveness (sufficiency) is an important consideration in selecting items to test. The means available to the auditor for selecting items for procedures are:

- (a) Selecting all items (100% examination);
- (b) Selecting specific items; and
- (c) Audit sampling.

Audit sampling may be particularly relevant for licence obligations that require the licensee to complete an action within a specified timeframe. Auditors may also use sampling when they have rated the strength of controls as weak.

The size of the selected sample should comply with ASA 530 (Audit Sampling):

The level of sampling risk that the auditor is willing to accept affects the sample size required. The lower the risk the auditor is willing to accept, the greater the sample size will need to be.⁵³

[...]

The sample size can be determined by the application of a statistically-based formula or through the exercise of professional judgement.⁵⁴

The ERA recommends that auditors apply a minimum test sample size of 10% of the population, up to a maximum number of 20. Auditors need to disclose test sample sizes in the audit or review report.

Auditors may choose to test larger samples based on their own risk assessments or if initial test results indicate further sampling is warranted.

While specific details of the proposed sample procedures do not have to be provided in the audit or review plan, the auditor should collect 'sufficient appropriate evidence commensurate with the audit or review priority of the licence obligation or effectiveness criterion.'⁵⁵

3.2.4.3 *Summary of audit procedures*

The audit or review plan must include a tabular summary of the type of audit procedures the auditor will apply for each audit or review priority level. Table 43 provides an example.

⁵² As discussed in section 3.2.3, auditors must determine an audit or review priority for each licence obligation or asset management process. The audit procedures should be commensurate with the assigned audit or review priority.

⁵³ Paragraph A10 of ASA 530.

⁵⁴ Paragraph A11 of ASA 530.

⁵⁵ ~~Clause~~ Paragraph 12(i) of ASAE 3000.

Table 34: Examples of possible audit procedures for each audit or review priority

Audit or review priority (refer Appendix 3)		Examples of possible audit procedures
1	High priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview supervisory and operational personnel. Inspect relevant documents. Obtain evidence policies, procedures and controls are in place and working effectively ⁵⁶ Examine compliance reports and breach register. Obtain confirmations from third parties if applicable. Examine reports and correspondence with other regulators (e.g. Building and Energy). Closely inspect applicable asset infrastructure. Examine asset management system effectiveness criteria. Sample, at a high level, output and timeliness procedures. Recalculate a sample of relevant performance indicators.
2		
3	Moderate priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview supervisory and operational personnel. Inspect relevant documents. Obtain evidence policies, procedures and controls are in place and controls are working effectively. ⁵⁷ Examine compliance reports and breach register. Physically examine applicable asset infrastructure. Examine asset management system effectiveness criteria. Sample output and timeliness procedures. Walkthrough the process to calculate relevant performance indicators.
4		
5	Low priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview supervisory or operational personnel. Undertake a desktop review of relevant documents. Undertake a desktop review of policies, procedures and controls in place. View compliance reports and breach register. Visit applicable asset infrastructure. Undertake a desktop review of asset management system effectiveness criteria. Sample, at a low level, output and timeliness procedures.

Table 43 is for illustrative purposes only. Auditors may apply their own policies for audit procedures when they prepare an audit or review plan.

Auditors who apply their own policies must include sufficient information about these policies in the audit or review plan to indicate the scope of procedures the auditor will apply for each audit or review priority rating.

3.2.5 Reporting format

The audit or review plan must include a statement confirming the audit or review report prepared by the auditor will comply with the format prescribed in Chapter 5 of the guidelines.

⁵⁶ A controls assessment is mandatory for audit priorities 1, 2 and 3, or if the auditor identifies non-compliance with a licence obligation.

⁵⁷ This is mandatory for audit priority 3, and optional for audit priority 4.

3.3 Assistance provided by the ERA

The licensee's previous audit or review report is available from the ERA [website](#).

At the licensee's or auditor's request, the ERA may meet the auditor to discuss any specific concerns about the preparation of the audit or review plan.

4. Conducting the audit or review

This section outlines the general principles the auditor and licensee must follow to ensure the audit or review is conducted in a thorough and timely manner.

4.1 Assistance provided by the licensee

Licensees must facilitate the audit or review process by providing to the auditor, as needed and in a timely manner:

- Access to the facilities and business premises identified in the audit or review plan.
- Access to materials and information sources that the auditor needs to conduct the audit or review, including data, reports, records and any other relevant information.
- Access to the relevant person(s) in each of the licensee's business units that are being audited.
- An introduction to persons, other than employees of the licensee, who are relevant to the audit or review.

4.2 Fieldwork

During the audit or review, auditors must undertake one or more visits to the licensee's facilities to access information, make enquiries and interview relevant personnel.⁵⁸ If one or more functions are performed by another entity on behalf of the licensee, the auditor should make reasonable enquiries of the other entity.⁵⁹

Auditors should assess the licensee's:

- **Control environment** – the licensee's management philosophy and operating style, organisational structure, assignment of authority and responsibilities, the use of internal audit, the use of information technology and the skills and experience of the relevant staff members.
- **Information system** – the suitability of the licensee's information systems to record the information needed to comply with the licence, accuracy of data, security of data and documentation describing the information system.
- **Control procedures** – the presence of systems and procedures to monitor compliance with the licence or the effectiveness of the licensee's asset management system, and to detect or prevent instances of non-compliance or under-performance.
- **Compliance attitude** – the action taken by the licensee in response to any previous audit or review recommendations, and an assessment of the licensee's attitude towards compliance.
- **Outcome compliance** – the actual performance against standards prescribed in the licence throughout the audit or review period.

⁵⁸ The audit plan must identify the sites the auditor will visit. Refer to section 3.2.2.

⁵⁹ For example, the licensee's parent company or a contractor.

4.2.1 Audits

Auditors only have to assess a licensee's controls (control environment and control procedures) for.⁶⁰

- **Audit priority of 1, 2 or 3** – licence obligations with an assigned audit priority of 1, 2 or 3. If the auditor raises an audit priority after the planning stage from 4 or 5 to 1, 2 or 3, the auditor must also assess the licensee's controls.
- **Non-compliant** – licence obligations that the auditor has rated non-compliant.⁶¹

If a licensee's controls have changed during the audit period, the auditor must examine both the former and current controls. If the auditor identifies inadequacies with the controls, the auditor must disclose them in the observations section of the report. Although the auditor must review both controls, the auditor only has to rate the controls currently in place.

4.3 Audit evidence

ASAE 3100 provides guidance on the quantity and quality of audit evidence auditors should obtain when conducting an audit or review.⁶²

Compliance engagements require the application of assurance skills and techniques to gather sufficient appropriate evidence as part of an iterative, systematic assurance engagement process. [...]

When compliance requirements apply throughout the specified period, the assurance practitioner may consider the nature and frequency of the compliance activities undertaken, and modify the nature, timing and extent of evaluation and/or testing to be undertaken on compliance activities. [...]

Auditors should use their professional judgement to determine what constitutes sufficient audit evidence for each audit or review they perform.⁶³

Auditors must develop a comprehensive set of working papers throughout the audit or review. The working papers should be detailed enough to provide sufficient evidence to support the auditor's observations and recommendations included in the audit or review report. The ERA may request access to the auditor's working papers.

4.3.1 Specific requirements for assessing output compliance (audits only)

Some licence obligations require licensees to develop processes to ensure that they complete activities within prescribed timeframes. Examples include responding to customer complaints, connecting and re-connecting customers on time and providing annual compliance and performance reports to the ERA.

⁶⁰ This involves the auditor performing a controls assessment and providing a controls rating.

⁶¹ Assigned a compliance rating of 2, 3 or 4.

⁶² Paragraphs A37 and A38 of [ASAE 3100](#).

⁶³ Refer to section 3.2.4 for more information about audit procedures.

Auditors must perform suitable audit procedures to determine whether a licensee has complied with these licence obligations in a timely manner. The audit priority assigned to the licence obligation will guide the nature and extent of the audit procedures.⁶⁴

4.4 Professional scepticism

Auditors must adopt an attitude of professional scepticism throughout the audit or review. ASAE 3000 defines professional scepticism as:⁶⁵

An attitude that includes being alert to, for example:

- Evidence that is inconsistent with other evidence obtained.
- Information that calls into question the reliability of documents and responses to enquiries to be used as evidence.
- Circumstances that suggest the need for procedures in addition to those required by relevant ASAEs.
- Conditions that may indicate likely misstatement

4.5 Communications between licensees and auditors

If the auditor or licensee encounters problems during the audit or review, they should take reasonable steps to discuss it with the other party to reach a resolution. Examples of problems that may occur are:

- inadequate performance or inappropriate conduct by the auditor
- licensee refusal to provide requested information
- licensee not providing access to sites.

If both parties cannot resolve the matter, licensees or auditors should contact the ERA as soon as possible to request assistance.

⁶⁴ The nature and extent of audit procedures will also depend on the licensee's control environment. If a licensee has a strong control environment with a high level of visibility of the required compliance outcomes, then the auditor may be able to rely on the data provided by the licensee to assess compliance. If the licensee has a weak control environment, the auditor should perform more detailed audit procedures, including audit sampling or re-performing processes, to assess the level of compliance.

⁶⁵ Paragraph A76 of ASAE 3000~~11(a)~~.

5. Audit or review report

Auditors must provide a comprehensive report to the licensee and the ERA clearly expressing their opinion on the findings of the audit or review.⁶⁶

ASAE 3000 provides a useful reference framework for the structure and content of assurance reports.⁶⁷ ASAE 3100 provides further guidance for the reporting of compliance assurance engagements.⁶⁸

5.1 Minimum contents

The audit or review report must include:

- an executive summary
- the audit or review objectives
- the auditor's scope of work
- deviations from the audit or review plan
- a list of the recommendations from the previous audit or review
- a table summarising the licensee's performance
- the auditor's observations
- the auditor's recommendations
- a statement from the auditor approving the content of the report.

Auditors may also include any additional information they deem relevant to the audit or review outcomes.

5.1.1 *Executive summary*

The audit or review report must include an executive summary.

5.1.1.1 *Audits*

The executive summary of the audit report must include:

- A statement confirming the audit has been conducted to assess the licensee's compliance with the conditions of its licence.
- A brief description of the type of licence(s) held by the licensee, the business that holds the licence(s), and any substantial changes to either since the previous audit.
- A summary of the actions taken by the licensee in response to the recommendations in the previous audit report.⁶⁹
- A summary of the findings and recommendations arising from the current audit.
- The opinion of the auditor on the control environment operated by the licensee.

⁶⁶ [Draft reports must be submitted in MS Word format; however, the final report should be submitted in both MS Word and PDF format.](#)

⁶⁷ [Refer to](#) paragraphs 79 [to](#) 81 of ASAE 3000.

⁶⁸ [Paragraphs 55 to 58 of ASAE 3100.](#) [ASAE 3100 also](#) requires auditors to ~~also~~ comply with ASAE 3000.

⁶⁹ The assessment will be a summary of the information included in Table 4 (section 5.1.5).

- An overall assessment of compliance with the licence, including the non-compliances found by the audit and the integrity of the licensee's reporting to the ERA and other statutory organisations.
- Any other information the auditor considers relevant.

5.1.1.2 *Reviews*

The executive summary of the review report must include:

- A statement confirming the review has been conducted to assess the effectiveness of the licensee's asset management system.
- A brief description of the assets reviewed and any substantial changes to those assets since the previous review.
- A brief description of the business that holds the assets, and any substantial changes to the business since the previous review.
- A summary of the actions taken by the licensee in response to the recommendations in the previous review report.⁷⁰
- A summary of the findings and recommendations arising from the current review.⁷¹
- An overall assessment of the effectiveness of the licensee's asset management system.
- Any other information the auditor considers relevant to the review.

5.1.2 *Audit or review objectives*

The audit or review report must set out the objectives and purpose of the audit or review. It must also describe the methodology used by the auditor to conduct the review.

5.1.3 *Scope of work*

The audit or review report must set out the scope of work, including:

- **Audit or review period** – The period covered by the audit or review and, if applicable, the previous audit or review.
- **Type of assurance engagement** – The report must confirm the type of assurance engagement the auditor has performed.
 - For audits, the report must confirm the audit is a reasonable assurance engagement.
 - For reviews, the report must state if the review is a limited assurance engagement or a reasonable assurance engagement.
- **Compliance reports (audit ~~plans~~ reports only)** – The compliance reports that have been reviewed by the auditor.
- **Site visits** – A list of the sites visited by the auditor during the audit or review.

⁷⁰ The assessment will be a summary of the information included in Table 5 (section 5.1.5).

⁷¹ The information must be presented in a tabular format (asset management process, matter and recommendation).

- **Personnel and documentation** – Details of the:
 - Licensee's ~~representatives~~ personnel who participated in the audit or review. ~~.(staff roles/titles are sufficient, names can be withheld).~~⁷²
 - Documents and other information sources examined by the auditor during the course of the audit or review.
- **Work schedule** – The auditor's work schedule, including:
 - Details of the activities performed during the audit or review.
 - Details of the audit or review team members and hours utilised by each member.
 - The period over which the audit or review has been performed.
- **Other** – Any other information the auditor considers relevant to the audit or review scope of work.

5.1.4 *Deviations from the audit or review plan*

The audit or review report must describe any deviations from the audit or review plan.

For example, if the auditor has revised the audit priority for one or more licence obligations, the auditor must identify this in the report.⁷³ Auditors must include a brief explanation for the revision.

~~Auditors must also identify any licence obligations or effectiveness criteria that were assessed after the approval of the audit plan by the ERA, as 'not applicable'.⁷⁴~~ Licence obligations or effectiveness criteria that have been assessed as ~~'not applicable'~~ 'N/A' in the audit plan should not be included in the ~~performance summary or~~ observations section of the report unless the auditor, during the course of the audit or review, determines that the obligation is applicable to the licensee.⁷⁵

5.1.5 *Recommendations from previous audits or reviews*

The audit or review report must include the recommendations from the previous audit or review that were resolved during the current audit or review period, or are unresolved at the end of the current audit or review period.

The recommendations must be based on those in the previous audit or review report and set out in the format specified in Table 4-5 or 5-6, as applicable.⁷⁶ Where the licensee has not addressed a previous audit or review recommendation, the auditor must make a new recommendation(s) covering the outstanding matters.

⁷² If the auditor has interviewed personnel of another entity (for example, a parent company or contractor), the auditor must also provide details of those persons.

⁷³ If the auditor raises an audit priority to either a 1, 2 or 3, the auditor must rate the adequacy of controls. Refer to section 4.2.

⁷⁴ ~~Auditors must include a brief explanation for their assessment.~~

⁷⁵ ~~In the audit or review plan or during the course of the audit or review~~ Section 3.2.3 provides guidance on rating licence obligations and asset management effectiveness criteria 'N/A'.

⁷⁶ The auditor must allocate a new recommendation number to the unresolved recommendation. For example, in Table 4-5 (Part B) the number allocated to the original recommendation was 03/2016. A new recommendation number has been allocated for the current audit: 05/2018. For more information, refer to Section 5.1.8.

Table 45: Status of recommendations ~~addressing non-compliances~~ from the previous audit

A. Resolved during current audit period				
Recommendation reference (no./year)	Non-compliance / Control improvement deficiency (Rating / Licence obligation reference number and licence obligation ⁷⁷ / Details of non-compliance or inadequacy of controls)	Auditor's recommendation	Date resolved	Further action required (Yes/No/Not Applicable) Details of further action required (including current recommendation reference, if applicable)
02/20 22 46	C2 (3) Electricity Industry Customer Transfer Code - Clause 3.1(1)(a) The licensee has not published its request for standing data form.	The licensee should publish its request for standing data form.	20/3/ 23 47	No
B. Unresolved at end of current audit period				
Recommendation reference (no./year)	Non-compliance / Controls improvement deficiency (Rating / Licence obligation reference number and licence obligation ⁷⁸ / Details of non-compliance or inadequacy of controls)	Auditor's recommendation	Further action required (Yes/No/Not Applicable) Details of further action required (including current recommendation reference, if applicable)	
03/20 22 46	B2 (189) Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers - Clause 5.3. A review of the incident register identified that the licensee had experienced a system defect within its IVR process. It is understood that the system error did not enable customer credit card payments to be correctly processed so that funds could be withdrawn in accordance with the authorisation.	The licensee continues to investigate and rectify the cause of the system error to ensure the system is accurately complying with the customer's instructions during the IVR process.	Yes Licensee has eliminated most errors but some remain. Licensee has only partially addressed the recommendation. Refer to Recommendation 05/20 25 48.	

⁷⁷ The reference number allocated to the licence obligation in the Electricity or Gas Compliance Reporting Manual.

⁷⁸ As above ~~ibid~~.

Table 56: Status of recommendations ~~addressing asset system deficiencies~~ from the previous review

A. Resolved during current review period				
Recommendation reference (no./year)	Process and policy deficiency / Performance deficiency (Rating / Reference number, Asset management process & effectiveness criterion / Details of deficiency)	Auditor's recommendation	Date resolved	Further action required (Yes/No/Not Applicable) Details of further action required (including current recommendation reference, if applicable)
02/20 22 ¹⁶	A3 (5.3) Asset Operations – <i>assets are documented in the asset register.</i> The condition assessment of transmission assets is not undertaken on a regular basis.	Update the transmission assets structural condition on a regular basis.	20/3/ 23 ¹⁷	No
B. Unresolved at end of current review period				
Recommendation reference (no./year)	Process and policy deficiency / Performance deficiency (Rating / Reference number, Asset management process & effectiveness criterion / Details of deficiency)	Auditor's recommendation	Further action required (Yes/No/Not Applicable) Details of further action required (including current recommendation reference, if applicable)	
03/20 22 ¹⁶	A4 (9.1) Contingency Planning – <i>Contingency plans are documented, understood and tested to confirm their operability and to cover higher risks.</i> The contingency plan for loss of gas supply to the generation plant had not been tested for four years.	Test the contingency plan for loss of gas supply to the generation plant on a regular basis and at least every two years.	Yes - complete the actions addressing the recommendation. Refer to recommendation 05/20 25 ¹⁸ .	

5.1.6 Performance summary

Auditors must assess a licensee's performance by assigning a rating to each licence obligation, asset management process and effectiveness criteria.⁷⁹ The audit or review report must include a table listing the auditor's ratings (performance summary table).

The following sections describe:

- the framework auditors must use to rate a licensee's performance⁸⁰
- the format auditors must use for their performance summary table.

⁷⁹ Licence obligations or effectiveness criteria that have been assessed as 'not applicable' (either during or after the planning stage), should not be rated or included in the performance summary.

⁸⁰ The rating frameworks for audits and reviews are different as the purpose and scope of audit and reviews are different. Refer to section 1.5.

5.1.6.1 Audits

When assessing a licensee's audit performance, auditors must rate the licensee's compliance with the conditions of its licence (compliance rating). If an auditor is unable to rate a licensee's compliance because the licensee did not perform the activity during the audit period, the auditor must assess the obligation 'Not Rated' (N/R) and explain why in the observations section of the report.

Auditors must also provide a rating for the licensee's control procedures and control environment (controls rating) for licence obligations with an audit priority of 1, 2 or 3, or that have been assessed to be non-compliant in the audit.^{81,82} If an auditor has not rated the controls for a licence obligation, the auditor must assess the obligation 'Not Performed' (N/P).⁸³

Table 6-7 sets out the ratings scales auditors must use to rate each licence obligation

Table 6-7: Compliance and controls rating scales (audits)

Controls rating		Compliance rating	
Rating	Description	Rating	Description
A	Adequate controls – no improvement needed	1	Compliant
B	Generally adequate controls – improvement needed	2	Non-compliant – minor effect on customers or third parties
C	Inadequate controls – significant improvement required	3	Non-compliant – moderate effect on customers or third parties
D	No controls evident	4	Non-compliant – major effect on customers or third parties
N/P	Not performed – A controls rating was not required	N/R	Not rated – No activity took place during the audit period or insufficient evidence to rate compliance

To assess the effect on customers or third parties, auditors should consider factors such as the number of persons affected, the severity of the breach (the degree to which it affects customers and third parties), and whether the breach was systematic or a one-off occurrence.

Table format

~~Auditors must present their ratings in a format consistent with Table 7.~~

~~Table 7: Performance summary table for audits~~

⁸¹ Section 4.2 (Fieldwork) explains the terms 'control procedures' and 'control environment'. Control procedures are 'the presence of systems and procedures to monitor compliance with the licence, and to detect or prevent instances of non-compliance'. Control environment is the 'licensee's management philosophy and operating style, organisational structure, assignment of authority and responsibilities, the use of internal audit, the use of information technology and the skills and experience of key staff members'.

⁸² ~~Refer to section 4.2.~~

⁸³ [Therefore, if an audit priority is 4 or 5, a controls rating is not required and the obligation is rated N/P.](#)

Licence obligation reference no. (Refer to the Electricity or Gas Compliance Reporting Manual)	Licence obligation	Audit priority (rated 1 (highest) to 5 (lowest))	Controls-rating (Refer to the 4-point rating scale in Table 6 for details)					Compliance-rating (Refer to the 4-point rating scale in Table 6 for details)				
A B C D N/P 1 2 3 4 N/R												
1	Electricity Industry Customer Transfer Code Cl. 2.2(1)(a)	2		✓						✓		
2	Electricity Industry Customer Transfer Code Cl. 2.2(1)(b)	5					✓	✓				

Auditors must rate any licence obligations that the licensee has contravened during the audit period as non-compliant. This includes situations where the auditor samples a number of transactions to determine a licensee's compliance with a particular licence obligation and identifies a small number (including single occurrences) of non-compliance.

Auditors should only rate a licence obligation non-compliant if there is supporting evidence. If there is no supporting evidence, the auditor should assess the adequacy of the controls for the obligation and rate compliance as N/R.⁸⁴ If the controls are assessed to be deficient (rated C or D), the auditor should make a recommendation to address the deficiency.

A contravention of a licence obligation may result in consequential contraventions of other licence obligations. If this is the case, the auditor should explain this in the observations section of the audit report.⁸⁵

If the contravention only occurred for part of the audit period and the matter was resolved before the end of the audit period, the auditor should rate the licence obligation as non-compliant. If the auditor is satisfied that the licensee has addressed the cause(s) of the non-compliance, the auditor may decide not to make a recommendation. The audit report must disclose how the cause(s) of the non-compliance was resolved.

The auditor must provide information in the observations section of the audit report to support the ratings in the table.

Compliance and controls ratings summary table

The audit report must include a table listing the number of licence obligations that were given each combination of compliance and controls ratings. The table allows licensees and the ERA to confirm the auditor has rated all relevant licence obligations and provides a simple summary of the licensee's compliance during the audit period.

⁸⁴ For example, the licensee asserts that it has complied with the obligation but is unable to provide supporting proof of compliance (often because of poor record keeping).

⁸⁵ Refer to section 5.1.7.

Auditors must ensure the table is consistent with the ratings in the ~~audit summary table and~~ observations section of the audit report.^{86,87}

The table must follow the format of Table 8.

Table 8: Compliance and controls ratings summary table

		Compliance rating					
		1	2	3	4	N/R	Total
Controls rating	A	9	-	-	-	-	9
	B	2	3	-	-	-	5
	C	-	-	-	-	-	0
	D	-	-	-	-	-	0
	N/P	-	-	-	-	29	29
	Total	11	3	0	0	29	43

5.1.6.2 Reviews

When assessing the effectiveness of the licensee's asset management system, auditors must rate both the adequacy of the licensee's processes and policies (process and policy rating) and the licensee's performance (performance rating) for each asset management process and effectiveness criterion.⁸⁸

Table 9 sets out the rating scales auditors must use to rate the adequacy of a licensee's processes and policies.

Table 10 sets out the rating scales auditors must use to rate the licensee's performance.

⁸⁶ ~~Table 7.~~

⁸⁷ ~~Refer to section 5.1.7.~~

⁸⁸ Appendix 5 identifies for each asset management process the outcome(s) if the licensee is performing the process effectively, and the criteria the auditor must use to determine the effectiveness of each process (effectiveness criteria).

Table 9: Process and policy rating scale (reviews)

Rating	Description	Criteria
A	Adequately defined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes and policies are documented. Processes and policies adequately document the required performance of the assets. Processes and policies are subject to regular reviews, and updated where necessary. The asset management information system(s) are adequate in relation to the assets being managed.
B	Requires some improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes and policies require improvement. Processes and policies do not adequately document the required performance of the assets. Reviews of processes and policies are not conducted regularly enough. The asset management information system(s) requires minor improvements (taking into consideration the assets being managed).
C	Requires substantial improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes and policies are incomplete or require substantial improvement. Processes and policies do not document the required performance of the assets. Processes and policies are considerably out of date. The asset management information system(s) requires substantial improvements (taking into consideration the assets being managed).
D	Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes and policies are not documented. The asset management information system(s) is not fit for purpose (taking into consideration the assets being managed).

Table 10: Performance rating scale (reviews)

Rating	Description	Criteria
1	Performing effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The performance of the process meets or exceeds the required levels of performance. Process effectiveness is regularly assessed, and corrective action taken where necessary.
2	Improvement required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The performance of the process requires some improvement to meet the required level. Process effectiveness reviews are not performed regularly enough. Recommended process improvements are not implemented.
3	Corrective action required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The performance of the process requires substantial improvement to meet the required level. Process effectiveness reviews are performed irregularly, or not at all. Recommended process improvements are not implemented
4	Serious action required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process is not performed, or the performance is so poor the process is considered to be ineffective.

Table format

Auditors must set out their ratings in a format consistent with Table 11.

Table 11: Performance summary table for reviews

Asset management process & effectiveness criteria (Refer to Table 23)	Process and policy rating	Performance rating
1. Asset planning	B	2
1.1 Asset management plan covers processes in this table	B	1
1.2 Planning processes and objectives reflect the needs of all stakeholders and are integrated with business planning	A	1
1.3 Service levels are defined in the asset management plan	C	2
1.4 Non-asset options (e.g. demand management) are considered	C	2
1.5 Lifecycle costs of owning and operating assets are assessed	B	3
1.6 Funding options are evaluated	B	3

Auditors must provide information in the observations section of the review report to support their ratings in the table.⁸⁹

5.1.7 Auditor's observations

The audit or review report must include a section that explains for each licence obligation, asset management process or effectiveness criterion the basis for the auditor's ratings and recommendations.⁹⁰

Auditors must provide sufficient information to support their ratings and recommendations, including:

- key findings of the audit or review fieldwork
- sources of information used to assess compliance or effectiveness
- audit procedures performed to assess compliance or effectiveness⁹¹
- assessments of policies and procedures performed during the audit or review
- interviews conducted with licensee staff or external parties
- the assessment of compliance or effectiveness over the audit or review period.

The ERA may require the auditor to undertake further audit procedures (including an increased level of sampling) if it considers that the audit procedures performed are inadequate. For example, this may occur when the original audit procedures did not examine the licensee's compliance with a particular licence obligation(s) or the effectiveness of a particular asset

⁸⁹ Refer to section 5.1.7.

⁹⁰ Licence obligations or effectiveness criteria that have been assessed as 'not applicable' (either during or after the planning stage), should not be rated or included in the observations section.

⁹¹ Refer to section 3.2.4.

management process, to a level commensurate with the audit or review priority in the audit or review plan.⁹²

Auditors must present their observations and recommendations in a tabular format. The table must include the:

- ~~R~~the reference number.⁹³
- ~~R~~the regulatory obligation or asset management process effectiveness criterion.^{94, 95}
- ~~A~~the audit or review priority.
- ~~O~~the auditor's observations, ~~and~~ recommendations and details of any sample testing performed, such as the sample size, and non-compliances found.
- ~~A~~the applicable ratings.⁹⁶

Auditors must base the overall effectiveness rating for each asset management process on the combination of the ratings for each effectiveness criterion in that process.

Tables 12 and 13 are examples of tables presenting the auditor's observations and recommendations.

Table 12: Audit observations and recommendations

Reference no. ⁹⁷	Licence reference & Summary of licence obligation	Audit priority	Observations & Recommendations	Controls rating	Compliance rating
Energy Coordination Act 1994					
1	A licensee must pay the applicable fees in accordance with the Regulations (Energy Coordination (Licensing Fees) Regulations, clause 4 & 5)	4	Through discussion with the compliance officer and examination of annual invoices and remittances, we determined that one invoice was not paid on time. Recommendation 01/2019: The licensee should amend its accounts payable	B	2

⁹² Licensees may include a contingency for this during contract negotiations with auditors.

⁹³ For audits, the reference number is the number assigned to each licence obligation in the Electricity or Gas Compliance Reporting Manual. If individual licence obligations apply to the licensee, these should also be included in the table. The auditor has discretion over the numbering of individual licence obligations.

For reviews, the reference number is the number assigned to the asset management process or effectiveness criterion in Table 22³.

⁹⁴ Refer to 'obligations under' and 'description' set out in the tables in sections 8 to 17 of the [Electricity Compliance Reporting Manual](#) and sections 8 to 15 of the [Gas Compliance Reporting Manual](#).

⁹⁵ ~~Or effectiveness criterion.~~

⁹⁶ For audits, the controls rating and the compliance rating. For reviews, the process and policy rating and the performance rating.

⁹⁷ The reference number is the number assigned to each licence obligation in the Electricity or Gas Compliance Reporting Manual. If individual licence obligations apply to the licensee, these should also be included in the table.

Reference no. ⁹⁷	Licence reference & Summary of licence obligation	Audit priority	Observations & Recommendations	Controls rating	Compliance rating
2	A licensee must, subject to the regulations, not supply gas to a customer other than under a standard form or non-standard contract. Energy Coordination Act, section 11WG(1)	4	Through discussion with the compliance officer and examination of the licensee's customer account set up procedures, we determined that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the licensee supplies gas to small use residential customers under a standard form contract the licensee supplies gas to small use business customers under a non-standard contract. 	NP	1

Table 13: Review observations and recommendations

Reference no ⁹⁸	Asset management process or effectiveness criterion	Review priority	Observations & Recommendations	Process and policy rating	Performance rating
1	Asset planning Asset planning focuses on meeting customer needs in the most effective and efficient manner (delivering the right service at the right price)			B	2

⁹⁸ The reference number is the number assigned to the asset management process or effectiveness criterion in Table 23.

Reference no ⁹⁸	Asset management process or effectiveness criterion	Review priority	Observations & Recommendations	Process and policy rating	Performance rating
1.1	Asset management plan covers the processes in this table.	4	<p>Through discussion with the office manager and inspection of the Asset Management Plan (AMP), we determined that the AMP provides some direction on the licensee's asset management framework and practices, including an overview of the major elements of the reticulated gas assets within the gas distribution system.</p> <p>The AMP could be expanded and restructured to accommodate the following elements of an effective AMP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifecycle stages, from acquisition to disposal • Description of the network's core/tier 1 assets and extended network assets • Legislative and other compliance obligations • Contingency arrangements • Service levels (specific to network assets) • Arrangements for review and update of the AMP. <p>Recommendation 01/2019: Expand and restructure the AMP to accommodate the items raised in the findings above. The AMP should reference the licensee's systems, processes and procedures in place to manage each of the 12 key components of the asset management lifecycle.</p>	B	2

5.1.8 Recommendations

The audit or review report must include recommendations on the actions the licensee should take to address:⁹⁹

• ~~(audit)~~ **Audit:**

- **Ccompliance rating** – Licence obligations that were rated ~~non-compliant~~ 2, 3 or 4.⁴⁰⁰
- **C~~(audit)~~controls rating** – Licence obligations that were rated C or D.

• ~~(review)~~ **Review**

- **Pperformance rating** – Asset management processes or effectiveness criteria that were rated 3 or 4.
- **P~~(review)~~process and policy rating** – Asset management processes or effectiveness criteria that were rated C or D.

Auditors who wish to make recommendations for licence obligations, asset management processes or effectiveness criteria that received a rating other than those in the list above should provide those recommendations directly to the licensee. They should not be included in the audit or review report.

Auditors must present their recommendations in the tabular format shown in Table 14 (audits) or Table 15 (reviews).

Table 14: Recommendations to address current non-compliances and control deficiencies

A. Resolved during current audit period			
Licence obligation reference no.¹⁰¹ / Recommendation reference from previous audit (if applicable)	Non-compliance / Controls improvement (Rating / Licence obligation / Details of non-compliance or inadequacy of controls)	Date resolved & action taken by the licensee	Auditor's comments
19 (01/20 22 ⁴⁶)	C3 Electricity Industry Customer Transfer Code - Clause 3.9(4) Licensee did not keep the customers verifiable consent for at least two years.	20/3/ 25 ⁴⁹ – The licensee has implemented a system change ensuring verifiable consents are kept for at least 2 years.	No further action required.

⁹⁹ If the licensee has taken appropriate actions to address a non-compliance or ineffective asset management criteria and the auditor has no further recommendations to make, then no recommendation is required. However, the auditor must make a statement to this effect in the relevant observations and recommendations table.

⁴⁰⁰ ~~A licence obligation with a compliance rating of 2, 3 or 4.~~

¹⁰¹ Refer to the Electricity or Gas Compliance Reporting Manual.

B. Unresolved at end of current audit period			
Recommendation reference (no./year)	Non-compliance / Controls improvement (Rating / Licence obligation reference number & licence obligation / Details of non-compliance or inadequacy of controls)	Auditor's recommendation	Action taken by the licensee by end of audit period
02/20 25 ¹⁹	B4 ^{B2} (188) Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers - Clause 5.2(2). While management has implemented a system that confirms customer details before the credit card payment is processed, the protocol should be regularly updated to allow for credit card changes.	The protocol should be regularly updated to allow for credit card changes. This should be automated if possible.	The project to address this issue has been approved, but will not be implemented until 31/12/2020.
03/20 25 ¹⁹	B2 (155 & 295) Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers – Clauses 4.5(1) and 10.11(2) The licensee amended its bills and replaced the official National Interpreter Symbol with an alternative (non-official) interpreter symbol.	The licensee's billing template should be updated to include the correct National Interpreter Symbol.	Billing template has been updated.

Table 15: Recommendations to address current asset management system deficiencies

A. Resolved during current review period			
Reference ¹⁰² / Recommendation reference from previous review (if applicable)	Process and policy deficiency / Performance deficiency (Rating / Asset management process & effectiveness criterion / Details of deficiency)	Date resolved & action taken by the licensee	Auditor's comments
7.3 (03/20 23 ¹⁷)	A3 Asset Management Information System – Security access controls appear adequate, such as passwords. For 6 months during the review period, the password system for the Asset Management Information System could be easily by-passed by any staff member.	20/3/ 25 ¹⁹ – The licensee has implemented a system change ensuring the integrity of password security of the IT system. Only relevant staff with unique passwords can now access the Asset Management Information System.	No further action required.
B. Unresolved at end of current review period			
Recommendation reference (no./year)	Process and policy deficiency / Performance deficiency (Rating / Reference number, Asset management process & effectiveness criterion / Details of deficiency)	Auditor's recommendation	Action taken by the licensee by end of review period
01/20 25 ¹⁹	A3 (6.3) Asset Maintenance – Maintenance plans (emergency, corrective and preventative) are documented and completed on	Focus on completing the outstanding preventative maintenance plans.	Reasons for the delay have been addressed. An extra maintenance staff member was employed during review

¹⁰² Refer to Table 2~~23~~³ for the effectiveness criterion number.

A. Resolved during current review period			
	<p><i>schedule</i></p> <p>Preventative maintenance plans for some generation plant are not completed on schedule with some plans around 8 months late.</p>	Examine and address the reasons for the delay.	period to focus on the preventative maintenance plans that are still outstanding at the end of the review period.
02/20 ²⁵⁴⁹	<p>C2 (1.8) Asset Planning – <i>Likelihood and consequences of asset failure are predicted.</i></p> <p>Likelihood and consequence of asset failure should be predicted in the asset management plan for infrastructure assets. While the assets have been assessed, the asset management plan does not require regular updates to be undertaken.</p>	Amend the asset management plan to include a procedure for ongoing review of likelihood and consequence of failure of key assets	The recommendation has not been addressed.
03/20 ²⁵⁴⁹	<p>A2B3 (6.5) Asset maintenance – <i>Risk management is applied to prioritise maintenance tasks.</i></p> <p>(8.1) Risk management – <i>Risk management policies and procedures exist and are applied to minimise internal and external risks</i></p> <p>The licensee has not retained clear evidence of some of its risk management activities to demonstrate that its risk management philosophies and approach are consistently applied.</p>	<p>The licensee should establish a clear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeframe for completing its program of populating risk assessments within its asset management software. • Approach and timeframe for assessing risks, implementing treatment plans and monitoring status on a more frequent basis than the annual review of the AMP. 	The recommendation has not yet been addressed.

Auditors must use the numbering convention described in Tables 14 and 15 to reference recommendations.¹⁰³

Recommendations from the previous audit or review that were not resolved at the end of the previous audit or review period must be included in Table 14 or 15, as follows.¹⁰⁴

- If the recommendation was resolved before the end of the current audit or review period, the recommendation must be included in Part A of Table 14 or 15 under the existing recommendation number.
- If all, or part, of the recommendation remained outstanding at the end of the current audit or review period, the recommendation must be included in Part B of Table 14 or 15 and allocated a new recommendation number.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Auditors may prefix the recommendation number with an A (for audits) or R (for reviews).

¹⁰⁴ Part B of Tables [54](#) and [65](#).

¹⁰⁵ Auditors must include the new recommendation number in Table [54](#) or [65](#) to facilitate cross-referencing. See Part B of Tables [54](#) and [65](#) for an example.

Recommendations must be 'stand-alone'; the reader should be able to understand the findings that led to the recommendation without having to refer to other parts of the audit or review report.

Auditors should avoid repetition of recommendations where possible. If a recommendation covers many licence obligations or effectiveness criteria, the auditor should include it once in the observations section of the report and reference it in the observations for the other licence obligations or effectiveness criteria. The recommendations section of the report should have a single entry for the recommendation that includes each licence obligation or effectiveness criterion that it applies to.

Auditors must make recommendations that identify specific and measurable actions that the licensee should take and, if applicable, the outcomes that the actions are expected to achieve.¹⁰⁶

5.1.9 *Approval of the report by the auditor*

Auditors must confirm their approval of the audit or review report by:

- Stating the audit or review report is an accurate presentation of their findings and opinions.
- Attaching the signature of a person authorised to make the above statement on behalf of the auditor.
- Including the date the above signature was attached to the report
- Including the address and contact details for the auditor.

Alternatively, auditors may provide this information in a cover letter attached to the report.

5.2 **Disagreement ~~between the auditor and the licensee~~ on audit or review observations**

If the auditor and licensee cannot agree on the audit or review observations or the auditor's recommendations, they should take all reasonable steps to resolve the matter. If the auditor and licensee cannot reach a resolution, [the auditor or licensee can contact the ERA to discuss and resolve the points of disagreement. If a resolution still cannot be reached](#), the auditor must detail the points of disagreement in the audit or review report, including:

- the auditor's original observation and recommendation
- the licensee's response to the auditor's observation and recommendation
- if applicable, the amendment to the audit or review report requested by the licensee.

5.3 **Post-audit and post-review implementation plans**

The licensee must submit a post-audit or post-review implementation plan, ~~as appropriate, with the audit or review report~~. The post-audit or post-review implementation plan must be a separate document; it should not be incorporated into the report.

The licensee, not the auditor, must develop the post-audit or post-review implementation plan.

¹⁰⁶ For example, the auditor should avoid phrases such as 'the licensee should investigate [...]' or 'the licensee may consider [...]'.

The post-audit or post-review implementation plan must identify for each recommendation made by the auditor:¹⁰⁷

- The action(s) the licensee proposes to take to address the auditor's recommendation to prevent non-compliance and/or address control deficiencies must directly address the issues raised by the auditor.¹⁰⁸

Actions must be:

- specific
- measurable
- achievable
- realistic within the context of the organisation
- time bound.
- The position(s) or business function(s) in the licensee's organisation responsible for undertaking the proposed action(s).
- The date the licensee will complete the proposed action(s).

The information must be presented in a tabular format shown in – Table 16. ~~is an example of a post-audit implementation plan.~~

Table 16: Example of a post-audit implementation plan

Recommendation reference (no./year)	Non-compliance / Controls improvement <u>deficiency</u> (Rating / Licence obligation reference number & licence obligation / Details of non-compliance or inadequacy of controls)	Auditor's recommendation	Action proposed to be taken by the licensee	Responsible person(s)	Target completion date
01/20 25 ⁴⁹	C2 (136 & 137) Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers – Clause 2.4 It was noted that the billing agents are provided with letters of instructions by the licensee on customer requirements and obligations. It may be more effective to summarise requirements in a compliance guide and check compliance regularly. There were findings through the audit (e.g. due date for payment on bills) that showed that compliance is not yet achieved and better enforcement is required.	A concise compliance guide/flowchart or procedure should be implemented to assist the licensee and billing agents in fulfilling their obligations.	Draft flowchart has been designed. Rollout the new process to the billing agents.	Regulatory Manager	30/06/202 6 ⁶

¹⁰⁷ Refer to section 5.1.8.

¹⁰⁸ Proposed actions must directly address an issue, such as implementing a policy or procedure, providing training or implementing a control. An action to 'consider' or 'investigate' an issue without any other action does not directly address a recommendation.

Recommendation reference (no./year)	Non-compliance / Controls improvement deficiency (Rating / Licence obligation reference number & licence obligation / Details of non-compliance or inadequacy of controls)	Auditor's recommendation	Action proposed to be taken by the licensee	Responsible person(s)	Target completion date
02/2025 ¹⁹	C1 (188) Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers – Clause 5.2(2) While management has implemented a system that confirms customer details before the credit card payment is processed, the protocol should be regularly updated to allow for credit card changes.	The protocol should be regularly updated to allow for credit card changes. This should be automated if possible.	Automate the process for updating credit card changes.	Credit Manager IT Manager	31/12/2026 ⁶

The table can be adapted to apply to post-review implementation plans.

The ERA will seek updates from licensees on the progress of actions proposed in post-audit or post-review implementation plans. Updates must specify for each recommendation:

- the recommendation status (not started, ongoing, completed)
- what actions have been taken to date
- what actions the licensee will take to resolve outstanding recommendations.

Changes to the position or business function responsible for undertaking the action and/or a change to the completion date for the action must be clearly noted in the update. The ERA will grant an extension of completion date if the licensee is seen to be making reasonable progress.

If a licensee is unable to implement any action in their post-audit or post-review implementation plan, an alternative action must be proposed that addresses the recommendation. The reason for not implementing the original action and the alternative action must be clearly noted in the update.

5.4 Reporting to the ERA

Licensees should forward a draft audit or review report to the ERA for comment before submitting the final report for approval.

~~The final~~ Draft versions of the report must be provided in ~~both~~ Microsoft Word ~~Word~~. The final report must be provided in Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat PDF format.¹⁰⁹ The final PDF version of the report must have the electronic signature of the auditor.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ The ERA will only use the Word version of the report to extract information to prepare internal ERA documents: ~~as well as a PDF version of the report for publication on the ERA website. The ERA~~ the word version will not circulate ~~the Word version~~ outside the ERA. ~~The PDF version of the report will be used for publication on the ERA website and for provision to the Minister.~~

¹¹⁰ The ERA will redact the signature before publication of the report on the ERA website.

~~The ERA prefers to receive the r~~Reports ~~should be sent~~ by email to licensing@erawa.com.au,
~~but will also accept documents stored on a USB or CD-ROM.~~

5.4.1 Confidential information

When submitting the audit or review report to the ERA, licensees must identify any information they consider to be confidential or commercially sensitive. The ERA will consider a request from a licensee to redact this type of information prior to the ERA publishing the audit or review report on its website.

Licensees must not make a blanket claim of confidentiality or commercial sensitivity. If a licensee makes a request to redact this type of information, it must identify the exact information it is requesting the ERA to redact, provide specific reasons why the information should be redacted and, if necessary, provide sufficient evidence or supporting material to substantiate its request.

The ERA is unlikely to redact information that is already in the public domain, or on the basis that the information is commercially sensitive because it identifies potentially poor performance by the licensee. If the ERA considers a request is excessive or not substantiated, it will try to reach a negotiated outcome with the licensee as to what is redacted.

6. ERA approval of the report

The ERA will commence the approval process when it has received the final audit or review report and the post-audit or post-review implementation plan.

The ERA may approve the audit or review report, or require the licensee to repeat the audit or review.

6.1 Approval

If the ERA approves the audit or review report, it will:

- Notify the licensee accordingly.¹¹¹
- Publish the report and, if applicable, the post-audit or post-review implementation plan on the ERA website.

For audit reports, the ERA must also provide a copy of the report to the Minister for Energy.¹¹² The ERA will publish the report on its website after it has been provided to the Minister.

For review reports, there is no legislative requirement for the ERA to provide the report to the Minister, but the ERA's policy is to provide a copy of the report to the Minister.¹¹³

6.2 Repeat audit or review

The ERA may require the licensee to repeat the audit or review if:

- The auditor has not followed the approved audit or review plan, subject to reasonable variation as described in section 5.1.4.
- The audit or review team changed during the course of the audit or review in a way that unacceptably compromised the conduct of the audit or review.
- The auditor has withheld information from the audit or review report.~~or~~
- The audit or review report does not comply with the mandatory components of these guidelines, or the report is of an unacceptable quality.

The ERA will give the licensee an opportunity to resolve any concerns with the audit or review before requiring the licensee to repeat the audit or review.

An audit or review may be repeated by the same auditor or by another auditor ~~chosen by the~~ ERA.

¹¹¹ It is the licensee's responsibility to inform the auditor that the ERA has approved the report.

¹¹² Section 13(3) of the Electricity Act and section 11ZA(3) of the Gas Act provide that the ERA must give a report to the Minister on the audit within two months after its receipt of the audit.

¹¹³ The ERA will delay publishing the report on its website until the report has been provided to the Minister.

Appendix 1 List of Tables

Table 1:	How to assess and report against multiple obligation requirements	16
Table 2:	Presenting audit priority ratings in an audit plan	18
Table 3:	Presenting review priority ratings in the review plan	19
Table 4:	Examples of possible audit procedures for each audit or review priority	21
Table 5:	Status of recommendations from the previous audit	29
Table 6:	Status of recommendations from the previous review	30
Table 7:	Compliance and controls rating scales (audits)	31
Table 8:	Compliance and controls ratings summary table	32
Table 9:	Process and policy rating scale (reviews)	33
Table 10:	Performance rating scale (reviews)	33
Table 11:	Performance summary table for reviews	34
Table 12:	Audit observations and recommendations	35
Table 13:	Review observations and recommendations	36
Table 14:	Recommendations to address current non-compliances and control deficiencies	37
Table 15:	Recommendations to address current asset system deficiencies	38
Table 16:	Example of a post-audit implementation plan	41
Table 17:	Likelihood ratings	48
Table 18:	Inherent risk rating	48
Table 19:	Description of inherent risk ratings	49
Table 20:	Preliminary adequacy ratings for existing controls	49
Table 21:	Assessment of audit priority	50
Table 22:	Asset life cycle	52
Table 23:	Asset management processes and effectiveness criteria	54
Table 24:	Audit and review process	59

Appendix 2 Documents referred to in the guidelines

Auditing Standard ASA 315	Identifying and Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatement through Understanding the Entity and Its Environment http://www.auasb.gov.au/admin/file/content102/c3/ASA_315_Compiled_2015.pdf auasb.gov.au
Auditing Standard ASA 500	Audit Evidence http://www.auasb.gov.au/admin/file/content102/c3/ASA_500_Compiled_2017.pdf auasb.gov.au
Auditing Standard ASA 530	Audit Sampling http://www.auasb.gov.au/admin/file/content102/c3/ASA_530_27-10-09.pdf auasb.gov.au
APES 110 (Compiled) ¹⁴⁴	Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (2010) https://www.apesb.org.au/uploads/home/02112018000152-APES_110-Restructured_Code_Nov_2018.pdf Compiled APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards) (June 2023) (apesb.org.au)
AS ISO 31000:2018	Risk management – Guidelines
AS ISO 55000:2024	Asset management - Vocabulary, overview and principles
AS ISO 55001:2024	Asset management - Asset management system - Requirements
AS ISO 55002:2019	Asset management - Management systems - Guidelines for the application of ISO 55001
Standard on Assurance Engagements ASAE 3000	Assurance Engagements Other than Audits or Reviews of Historical Financial Information http://www.auasb.gov.au/admin/file/content102/c3/ASAE_3000_revised_2017.pdf ASAE 3000 12-22.pdf (auasb.gov.au)
Standard on Assurance Engagements ASAE 3100	Compliance Engagements http://www.auasb.gov.au/admin/file/content102/c3/ASAE_3100_Compliance_Engagements.pdf ASAE 3100 12-22.pdf (auasb.gov.au)
Standard on Assurance Engagements ASAE 3500	Performance Engagements ASAE 3500 10-17.pdf (auasb.gov.au)

¹⁴⁴ ~~APES 110 (2010) will be replaced with AEPS 110 (2018) from 1 January 2020. The new Code of Ethics is available on the Accounting Professional & Ethical Standards Board website.~~

Appendix 3 Risk-based approach to audits and reviews

The first stage of an audit or review is to conduct a preliminary assessment of the risk the licensee has not complied with one or more licence obligations or has not managed its assets effectively (preliminary risk assessment). The purpose of the assessment is to identify higher risk areas and focus the audit or review accordingly.

Auditors must document their initial risk assessment in the audit or review plan. During the fieldwork phase of the audit or review, the initial risk assessment should be reviewed and, if needed, amended to reflect the audit or review findings.

The ERA's approach to assessing risk in audits and reviews is in Diagram 1. The approach is based on AS ISO 31000:2018 (Risk Management – Guidelines).

Diagram 1 – Risk management approach



The following section explains the main elements of a preliminary risk assessment for audits and reviews.

Establish the context

At the start of an audit or review, auditors should establish the relevant context of the licensee, including:

- the business objectives of the licensee
- organisational culture, structure, roles and accountabilities
- the relevant legal and regulatory environment that applies to the particular industry
- industry codes
- the licence conditions
- the ERA's regulatory functions and objectives
- for reviews, current asset management practices.

Identify the risks

For audits, auditors must identify the risks that may affect the licensee's compliance with its licence obligations. Auditors must identify risks for each licence obligation.

For reviews, auditors must identify the risks that may affect the effectiveness of the licensee's asset management processes.

Auditors should identify risks based on their knowledge of the licensee's business and the relevant regulatory framework.¹¹⁵ For illustrative purposes, the remainder of this appendix focuses on audits, but the processes for calculating audit priorities can be equally applied to determining review priorities for asset management processes.

Analyse the risks

Auditors must analyse compliance risks using the following two-stage process:

1. Identify the consequences and likelihood of the inherent risks to give an overall inherent risk rating.
2. Identify and assess the strength of the existing internal controls mitigating the inherent risks.

These steps are explained in more detail below.

1. Identify the consequences and likelihood of the inherent risks to give an overall inherent risk rating

An 'inherent risk' is the risk of an event occurring if there were no controls in place.

To calculate the 'inherent risk' for a licence obligation, auditors must first identify the consequences of the risk occurring. Auditors should use the classifications (major, moderate and minor) for licence obligations included in the ERA's Electricity and Gas Compliance Reporting Manuals to determine the consequences of the risk occurring.^{116,117,118}

Next, auditors must determine the likelihood of the risk occurring by using the 3-point rating scale described in Table 17.

Table 17: Likelihood ratings

	Level	Criteria
A	Likely	Non-compliance is expected to occur at least once or twice a year.
B	Probable	Non-compliance is expected to occur once every three years.
C	Unlikely	Non-compliance is expected to occur once every 10 years or longer.

Auditors must combine the consequence rating and likelihood rating to arrive at an overall inherent risk rating using the 3-point rating scale described in Table 18.

Table 18: Inherent risk rating

	Consequence		
Likelihood	1. Minor	2. Moderate	3. Major
A. Likely	Medium	High	High
B. Probable	Low	Medium	High
C. Unlikely	Low	Medium	High

¹¹⁵ Auditors should develop their knowledge of the licensee's business in consultation with the licensee.

¹¹⁶ [Major](#) - Type 1

¹¹⁷ [Moderate](#) - Type 2

¹¹⁸ [Minor](#) - Not reportable (NR)

Table 19 describes the three inherent risk ratings: low, medium and high.

Table 19: Description of inherent risk ratings

Level	Description
High	Likely to cause major damage, disruption or breach of licence obligations
Medium	Unlikely to cause major damage but may threaten the efficiency and effectiveness of service
Low	Unlikely to occur and consequences are relatively minor

2. Identify and assess the strength of the existing internal controls mitigating the inherent risks

Once the auditor has identified and classified the inherent risks, they must assess the strength of the existing internal controls mitigating each inherent risk.

Licensees that have implemented effective controls to mitigate inherent risks should have fewer non-compliances than licensees who do not have effective controls. Auditors must examine the [components of the licensee's system of following internal control to assess the licensee's ability to manage its risks by evaluating the:](#)¹¹⁹ ~~components to assess the licensee's ability to manage its risks:~~

- **Control environment** – corporate culture, corporate governance, organisation structure, assignment of authority and responsibility, documentation of policies and procedures, human resource practices, records management.
- **Licensee's risk assessment process**
- **Information systems** – including management and regulatory reporting and the business processes relevant to the licence conditions.
- **Control activities** – authorisation, segregation of duties, physical controls and security, IT controls.
- **Monitoring of controls** – management review, internal audit, other audits, veracity of management information.

The adequacy of controls must be assessed by using the 3-point rating scale described in Table 20.

Table 20: Preliminary adequacy ratings for existing controls

Level	Description
Strong	Controls mitigate the identified risks to a suitable level
Moderate	Controls only cover material risks; improvement required
Weak	Controls are weak or non-existent and do little to mitigate the risks

Auditors usually make a preliminary assessment of controls during the planning stage of the audit. Auditors should revise the risk assessment during the audit as they gather evidence on the effectiveness of the controls in place and present the updated assessment in the audit report.

Evaluate the risks

The next stage in the audit planning process is for the auditor to determine an audit priority for each of the licence obligation. The determination is based on the combined rating for inherent risk and control adequacy.

¹¹⁹ ~~Auditing and Assurance Standard~~ [Paragraphs 14 to 24 of](#) ASA 315 ~~June 2011, Auditing and Assurance Standards Board.~~

Auditors must determine the audit priority by using the 5-level audit priority scale described in Table 21.

Table 21: Assessment of audit priority

		Preliminary Adequacy of existing controls		
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
Inherent risk <u>rating</u>	High	Audit priority 1	Audit priority 2	
	Medium	Audit priority 3	Audit priority 4	
	Low	Audit priority 5		

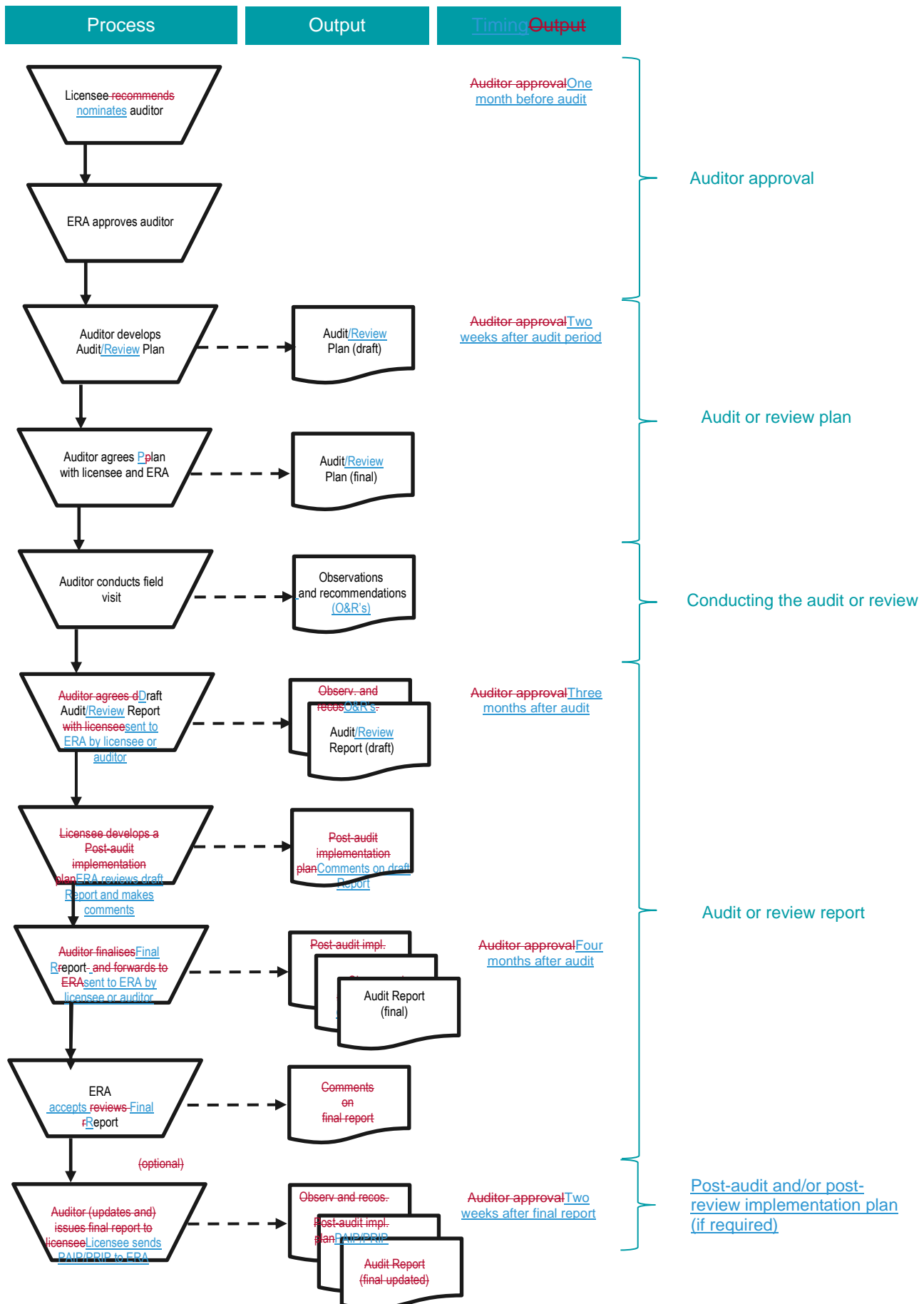
The audit priority determines the audit objectives and the nature and extent of the audit procedures required.

Refer to section 3.2.4 for a discussion on the relationship between the audit priority and the audit procedures required to assess compliance.

Treat the risks

If the auditor identifies risks that are not adequately mitigated by the internal control environment, the auditor must include recommendations in the audit report to strengthen the controls to address those risks.

Appendix 4 Process flowchart for audits and reviews



Appendix 5 A guide to the asset management system effectiveness framework

An asset management system comprises the processes and plans needed to ensure the physical assets continue to provide a specified level of service in a cost-effective manner throughout their useful life.¹²⁰

Assets should only exist to support service delivery objectives. When a service is in the planning stage it is necessary to identify the assets needed to meet a specified level of service. The extended life of assets involved in the delivery of electricity and gas services requires decisions about asset acquisition to take account of the full operating costs over the asset's design life, so it is essential to understand the life-cycle of the assets used to deliver services.

Asset life-cycle

Table 22 describes the four phases of the asset life-cycle that provide a structure to incorporate the entity's asset requirements into its broader strategic and corporate planning documentation.¹²¹

The life-cycle of an asset or group of assets has four distinct phases: planning, acquisition, operation and disposal.

Table 22: Asset life cycle

Activity	Supporting documentation
Planning	The need for the asset is identified and the requirement for a new asset is planned for and justified. Key elements include: asset planning strategy, planning for uncertainty, business cases, risk management, cost/benefit analysis, accounting treatment and consideration of non-asset alternatives.
Acquisition	The asset is purchased, constructed, or otherwise created. Key elements include: acquisition process, risk evaluation and procurement method.
Operation	The asset is used for its intended purpose. This stage may be marked by periodic refurbishment or major repair, requiring the asset to be taken out of service for periods of time. Key elements include: monitoring, maintenance, information management, asset valuation, utilisation and functionality.
Disposal	This is initiated when the economic life of the asset has expired, when there is no longer a need for the service provided by the asset or the asset in the provision of the service has been disposed of. Key elements include: retirement, replacement, renewal and redeployment.

Leadership and accountability are relevant to all stages of the asset management life-cycle. The key elements of leadership and accountability include governance, ~~attestation~~verification, performance management, achievement of defined outcomes and continuous improvement. Typically, those responsible for planning and acquisition decisions in an organisation differ from those responsible for operation and disposal of the assets. Problems may arise due to this fragmentation of management responsibilities for assets over their life-cycle. For this reason, licensees need to ensure that leadership and accountability for the activities associated with

¹²⁰ Section 0.2 of AS ISO 55002:2019 outlines the elements of an asset management system.

¹²¹ Asset Management Accountability Framework, February 2016 (Victorian State Government)

each stage of the asset life-cycle have been assigned within the organisation, and that there is effective monitoring of asset management performance.¹²²

Asset management processes

The main processes in the asset management life-cycle are:

1. asset planning (including development and maintenance of an asset management plan)¹²³
2. asset creation and acquisition
3. asset disposal
4. operational environmental analysis (all external factors affecting the system)
5. asset operations
6. asset maintenance
7. asset management information system
8. risk management
9. contingency planning
10. financial planning
11. capital expenditure planning
12. review of the asset management system.

Table 23 examines each of these asset management processes in more detail and sets out the desirable outcomes, effectiveness criteria and a suggested approach to reviewing them. The suggested review approach is an example only and auditors should adapt the approach to each review.

¹²² [Asset Management Accountability Framework, February 2016 \(Victorian State Government\)](#) ~~As above.~~

¹²³ [AS ISO 55000:2024 defines an asset management plan as 'documented information that specifies the activities, resources, costs and timescales required for an individual asset, or a grouping of assets, to achieve an organization's asset management objectives'.](#)

Table 23: Asset management processes and effectiveness criteria

Process	Outcome	Effectiveness criteria	Example of review approach
1. Asset planning Asset planning strategies focuses on meeting customer needs in the most effective and efficient manner (delivering the right service at the right price).	Asset planning is integrated into operational or business plans, providing a framework for existing and new assets to be effectively utilised and their service optimised.	1.1 Asset management plan covers the processes in this table ¹²⁴ 1.2 Planning processes and objectives reflect the needs of all stakeholders and are integrated with business planning ¹²⁵ 1.3 Service levels are defined in the asset management plan 1.4 Non-asset options (e.g. demand management) are considered 1.5 Lifecycle costs of owning and operating assets are assessed 1.6 Funding options are evaluated 1.7 Costs are justified and cost drivers identified 1.8 Likelihood and consequences of asset failure are predicted 1.9 Asset management plan is regularly reviewed and updated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the adequacy of the asset planning process Assess the adequacy of the asset management plan Assess whether the asset management plan is up-to-date and implemented in practice Assess whether the asset management plan clearly assigns responsibilities and whether these have been applied in practice
2. Asset creation and acquisition Asset creation/acquisition is the provision or improvement of assets.	The asset acquisition framework is economic, efficient and cost-effective; it reduces demand for new assets, lowers service costs and improves service delivery.	2.1 Full project evaluations are undertaken for new assets, including comparative assessment of non-asset options 2.2 Evaluations include all life-cycle costs 2.3 Projects reflect sound engineering and business decisions 2.4 Commissioning tests are documented and completed 2.5 Ongoing legal / environmental / safety obligations of the asset owner are assigned and understood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the adequacy of policies and procedures covering the creation and acquisition of assets Select a sample of asset creations/ acquisitions over the review period and confirm adequate procedures have been followed and actual costs are as predicted

¹²⁴ Section 6.2.2.2 of AS ISO 55002:2019 provides guidance on developing and reviewing asset management plans.

¹²⁵ Section 4.2 of AS ISO 55002:2019 provides guidance on understanding the needs and expectations of stakeholders.

Process	Outcome	Effectiveness criteria	Example of review approach
3. Asset disposal Asset disposal is the consideration of alternatives for the disposal of surplus, obsolete, under-performing or unserviceable assets.	The asset management framework minimises holdings of surplus and underperforming assets and lowers service costs. The cost-benefits of disposal options are evaluated.	3.1 Under-utilised and under-performing assets are identified as part of a regular systematic review process 3.2 The reasons for under-utilisation or poor performance are critically examined and corrective action or disposal undertaken 3.3 Disposal alternatives are evaluated 3.4 There is a replacement strategy for assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the adequacy of policies and procedures covering the identification of under-performing assets, disposal of assets and replacement strategy Determine whether a regular review of the performance of assets is undertaken Select a sample of disposals over the review period and confirm adequate procedures have been followed
4. Environmental analysis Operating environment Environmental analysis examines the asset management system environment and assesses all external factors affecting the asset management system ¹²⁶	The asset management system regularly assesses external opportunities and threats and identifies corrective action to maintain performance requirements.	4.1 Opportunities and threats in the asset management system environment are assessed 4.2 Performance standards (availability of service, capacity, continuity, emergency response, etc.) are measured and achieved 4.3 Compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements 4.4 Service standard (customer service levels etc) are measured and achieved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review achievement of performance and service standards over the review period Investigate any statutory or regulatory breaches and assess corrective action taken Review the adequacy of reporting and monitoring tools
5. Asset operations Asset operations is the day-to-day running of assets (where the asset is used for its intended purpose).	The asset operation plans adequately document the processes and knowledge of staff in the operation of assets so service levels can be consistently achieved.	5.1 Operational policies and procedures are documented and linked to service levels required 5.2 Risk management is applied to prioritise operations tasks 5.3 Assets are documented in an asset register including asset type, location, material, plans of components, and an assessment of assets' physical/structural condition 5.4 Accounting data is documented for assets 5.5 Operational costs are measured and monitored 5.6 Staff resources are adequate and staff receive training commensurate with their responsibilities ¹²⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the adequacy of policies and procedures covering operations functions Assess the adequacy of staff resourcing and training Confirm the policies and procedures have been followed during the review period by examining the asset register, observing operational procedures, analysing costs, etc. Assess the significance of exceptions identified and whether adequate corrective action has been taken

¹²⁶ Section 4.1.2 of AS ISO 55002:2019 provides examples of an organisation's external context.

¹²⁷ Section 7.2 of AS ISO 55002:2019 outlines the requirements to ensure and maintain staff competency.

Process	Outcome	Effectiveness criteria	Example of review approach
6. Asset maintenance Asset maintenance is the upkeep of assets.	The asset maintenance plans cover the scheduling and resourcing of the maintenance tasks so work can be done on time and on cost.	6.1 Maintenance policies and procedures are documented and linked to service levels required 6.2 Regular inspections are undertaken of asset performance and condition 6.3 Maintenance plans (emergency, corrective and preventative) are documented and completed on schedule 6.4 Failures are analysed and operational/maintenance plans adjusted where necessary 6.5 Risk management is applied to prioritise maintenance tasks 6.6 Maintenance costs are measured and monitored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the adequacy of policies and procedures covering maintenance functions Confirm the policies and procedures have been followed during the review period by examining maintenance schedules, analysing costs, etc. Assess the significance of exceptions identified and whether adequate corrective action has been taken
7. Asset management information system An asset management information system is a combination of processes, data and software supporting the asset management functions. ¹²⁸	The asset management information system provides authorised, complete and accurate information for the day-to-day running of the asset management system. The focus of the review is the accuracy of performance information used by the licensee to monitor and report on service standards.	7.1 Adequate system documentation for users and IT operators 7.2 Input controls include suitable verification and validation of data entered into the system 7.3 Security access controls appear adequate, such as passwords 7.4 Physical security access controls appear adequate 7.5 Data backup procedures appear adequate and backups are tested 7.6 Computations for licensee performance reporting are accurate 7.7 Management reports appear adequate for the licensee to monitor licence obligations 7.8 Adequate measures to protect asset management data from unauthorised access or theft by persons outside the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the adequacy of policies and procedures covering the general control and security of the computer systems used to provide management information on compliance with service standards / licence obligations Confirm management reports on service standards / licence obligations are reviewed and substantial exceptions to service standards / licence obligations are promptly followed up and implemented

¹²⁸ [Section 7.5 of AS ISO 55002:2019 provides general guidance on the information requirements for asset management systems.](#)

Process	Outcome	Effectiveness criteria	Example of review approach
8. Risk management Risk management involves the identification of risks and their management within an acceptable level of risk. ¹²⁹	The risk management framework effectively manages the risk that the licensee does not maintain effective service standards	8.1 Risk management policies and procedures exist and are applied to minimise internal and external risks 8.2 Risks are documented in a risk register and treatment plans are implemented and monitored 8.3 Probability and consequences of asset failure are regularly assessed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess whether the risks that most affect the management and performance of the assets have been identified Assess the adequacy of policies and procedures covering risk management Assess whether the risk management policies and procedures have been applied in practice Assess the adequacy of staff understanding and training on risk management
9. Contingency planning Contingency plans document the steps to deal with the unexpected failure of an asset.	Contingency plans have been developed and tested to minimise any major disruptions to service standards.	9.1 Contingency plans are documented, understood and tested to confirm their operability and to cover higher risks ¹³⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether contingency plans have been developed and are current Determine whether contingency plans have been tested. If so, review the results to confirm any improvements identified have been implemented.
10. Financial planning Financial brings together the financial elements of the service delivery to ensure its financial viability over the long term. ¹³¹	The financial plan is reliable and provides for the long- term financial viability of the services.	10.1 The financial plan states the financial objectives and identifies strategies and actions to achieve those 10.2 The financial plan identifies the source of funds for capital expenditure and recurrent costs 10.3 The financial plan provides projections of operating statements (profit and loss) and statement of financial position (balance sheets) 10.4 The financial plan provides firm predictions on income for the next five years and reasonable predictions beyond this period 10.5 The financial plan provides for the operations and maintenance, administration and capital expenditure requirements of the services 10.6 Large variances in actual/budget income and expenses are identified and corrective action taken where necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain a copy of the financial planning, budgeting and reporting process and assess its effectiveness Obtain a copy of the current financial plan (including budget/actual) and assess whether the process is followed

¹²⁹ Section 6.1.2 and Annex E of AS ISO 55002:2019 provide guidance on risk management in the context of asset management.

¹³⁰ Section 6.2.2.2 of AS ISO 55002:2019 states that 'contingency plans and resilience actions should be established in order to mitigate or control the impact in the event an adverse event occurs'.

¹³¹ Annex F of AS ISO 55002:2019 provides information on the relationship between financial and non-financial functions in asset management.

Process	Outcome	Effectiveness criteria	Example of review approach
11. Capital expenditure planning The capital expenditure plan provides a schedule of new works, rehabilitation and replacement works, together with estimated annual expenditure for these works over the next five or more years. Since capital investments tend to be large and lumpy, projections would normally be expected to cover at least 10 years, preferably longer. Projections over the next five years would usually be based on firm estimates. ¹³²	The capital expenditure plan provides reliable forward estimates of capital expenditure and asset disposal income. Reasons for the decisions and for the evaluation of alternatives and options are documented.	11.1 There is a capital expenditure plan covering works to be undertaken, actions proposed, responsibilities and dates 11.2 The capital expenditure plan provides reasons for capital expenditure and timing of expenditure 11.3 The capital expenditure plan is consistent with the asset life and condition identified in the asset management plan 11.4 There is an adequate process to ensure the capital expenditure plan is regularly updated and implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the capital expenditure planning process and assess its effectiveness Obtain a copy of the capital expenditure plan for the current year and assess whether the process is being followed
12. Review of AMS The asset management system is regularly reviewed and updated.	The asset management system is regularly reviewed and updated.	12.1 A review process is in place to ensure the asset management plan and the asset management system described in it remain current ¹³³ 12.2 Independent reviews (e.g. internal audit) are performed of the asset management system ¹³⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine when the asset management plan was last updated and assess whether any substantial changes have occurred Determine whether any independent reviews have been performed. If so, review the results and action taken Consider the need to update the asset management plan based on the results of this review Determine when the asset management system was last reviewed.

¹³² Annex F of AS ISO 55002:2019 provides information on the relationship between financial and non-financial functions in asset management.

¹³³ Section 9.1.3 of AS ISO 55002:2019 provides guidance on evaluating the performance of an organization's asset management process.

¹³⁴ Section 9.2 of AS ISO 55002:2019 provides guidance on internal audits of asset management systems.

Appendix 6 Audit and review process summary

Table 24 summarises the audit and review processes to be undertaken by the licensee, the auditor and the ERA. Refer to the relevant sections of the guidelines for more information.

Table 24: Audit and review process

Process no.	Summary of process / task	Who is responsible?	When should this be done?	Section in guidelines	Summary of documents to be lodged with ERA
A	Prior to audit or review process commencing				
1	Send audit or review reminder letter to the licensee.	ERA (this service is provided on a voluntary basis)	Approximately six months before the final audit or review report is due to be provided to the ERA.	N/A	N/A
2	If required, advise licensees of areas of special focus in the audit or review.	ERA	The audit or review reminder letter (see 1 above) may detail areas of special focus.	1.6.3	N/A
3	Initiate engagement of an auditor to undertake the audit or review.	Licensee	At the discretion of the licensee. Normally commences when the licensee receives the audit or review reminder letter from the ERA.	2	N/A
B	Auditor nomination				
4	Select a preferred auditor.	Licensee	At the discretion of the licensee. Normally at least three months before the final audit or review report is due to be provided to the ERA.	2	N/A
5	Nominate the preferred auditor to the ERA for approval.	Licensee	At the discretion of the licensee. Normally at least three months before the final audit or review report is due to be provided to the ERA.	2	<input type="checkbox"/> Formal request to approve auditor <input type="checkbox"/> For audit companies, a business profile <input type="checkbox"/> CV's for each audit or review team member <input type="checkbox"/> Work program & timeline <input type="checkbox"/> Statement that the auditor will comply with the guidelines. <input type="checkbox"/> Declaration of auditor independence

Process no.	Summary of process / task	Who is responsible?	When should this be done?	Section in guidelines	Summary of documents to be lodged with ERA
6	Review the auditor nomination documents for completeness and adequacy. If required, provide feedback to the licensee.	ERA	Upon receipt.	N/A	N/A
7	If required, provided amended auditor nomination documents to the ERA.	Licensee	As soon as possible.	2	Refer to item 5.
8	Communicate the decision to approve or reject the nominated auditor to the licensee in writing. If the licensee must nominate another auditor refer to item 5.	ERA	Normally within 10 business days of receipt of the auditor nomination.	2	N/A
C	Audit and review plan				
9	Prepare the draft audit and/or review plan.	Auditor	Normally one to two months before the final audit or review report is due to be provided to the ERA.	3	<p>Draft audit or review plan must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Consideration of ASAE 3000 and ASAE 3100 requirements for assurance engagement plans <input type="checkbox"/> Audit or review purpose statement <input type="checkbox"/> Licensee personnel assisting audit or review <input type="checkbox"/> Audit or review team members <input type="checkbox"/> Audit work activities and time allocated for each <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmation that review of previous recommendations will be undertaken and list of previous recommendations <input type="checkbox"/> List of documents to be reviewed <input type="checkbox"/> Details of facilities to be visited <input type="checkbox"/> Summary of possible audit and review procedures per audit or review priority <input type="checkbox"/> Statement that the audit or review report will comply with the guidelines

Process no.	Summary of process / task	Who is responsible?	When should this be done?	Section in guidelines	Summary of documents to be lodged with ERA
					<input type="checkbox"/> Table(s) providing audit or review priority ratings for licence obligations and asset management processes <input type="checkbox"/> Details of any deviation from normal audit or review priority ratings (for example, the licence obligation is not applicable, or the ERA has requested a higher priority be undertaken) <input type="checkbox"/> For audits, acknowledgement that the auditor will examine the licensee's compliance reports.
10	Provide the draft audit or review plan to the ERA.	Licensee (or auditor, if consent given by licensee)	At the discretion of the licensee. Normally one to two months before the final audit or review report is due to be provided to the ERA.	3	See item 9.
11	Review the draft audit or review plan and provide feedback to the licensee or auditor.	ERA	Normally within 10 business days of receipt of audit or review plan.	N/A	N/A
12	If required, provide amended draft audit or review plan to the ERA.	Licensee	As soon as possible.	3	See item 9.
13	Communicate the decision to approve or reject the audit or review plan to the licensee in writing.	ERA	Normally within 10 business days of receipt of auditor nomination. As soon as possible.	N/A	N/A
D	Audit and review report				
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake audit or review Prepare draft audit or review report Provide draft audit or review report to licensee. 	Auditor	As soon as possible.	4 & 5	Draft audit /review report must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Consideration of ASAE 3000 requirements for structure and content of audit or review reports. <input type="checkbox"/> Executive Summary <input type="checkbox"/> Scope of audit or review <input type="checkbox"/> Review of previous audit and/or review recommendations

Process no.	Summary of process / task	Who is responsible?	When should this be done?	Section in guidelines	Summary of documents to be lodged with ERA
					<input type="checkbox"/> Performance Summary including tabular audit and review ratings <input type="checkbox"/> Observations <input type="checkbox"/> Issues and recommendations <input type="checkbox"/> Signed auditor's statement
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review draft report Provide the draft audit or review report and post-audit or post-review implementation plan to the ERA. 	Licensee	By due date.	5	<input type="checkbox"/> Draft audit or review report (see item 14) Post-audit or post-review implementation plan
16	Review draft audit or review report and provide feedback to the licensee or auditor.	ERA	Normally within 10 business days of receipt of audit or review report.	N/A	N/A
17	If required, provide amended draft audit or review report to the ERA.	Licensee	As soon as possible.	5	See item 14.
18	Review amended draft report and if acceptable request licensee to finalise report.	ERA	As soon as possible.	N/A	N/A
19	Provide final PDF and Word versions of report to the ERA. If required provide post-audit or post-review implementation plan (PAIP/PRIP) to the ERA	Licensee	As soon as possible. Within two weeks of final report approval.	5	See item 14 Post-audit or post-review implementation plan
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the audit or review report Provide a written response to the licensee Forward report to the Minister for Energy Publish report and PAIP/PRIP on the ERA website. 	ERA	Within two months of receipt of final audit or review report.	6	N/A

