



Third party risk management

Managing supplier risk



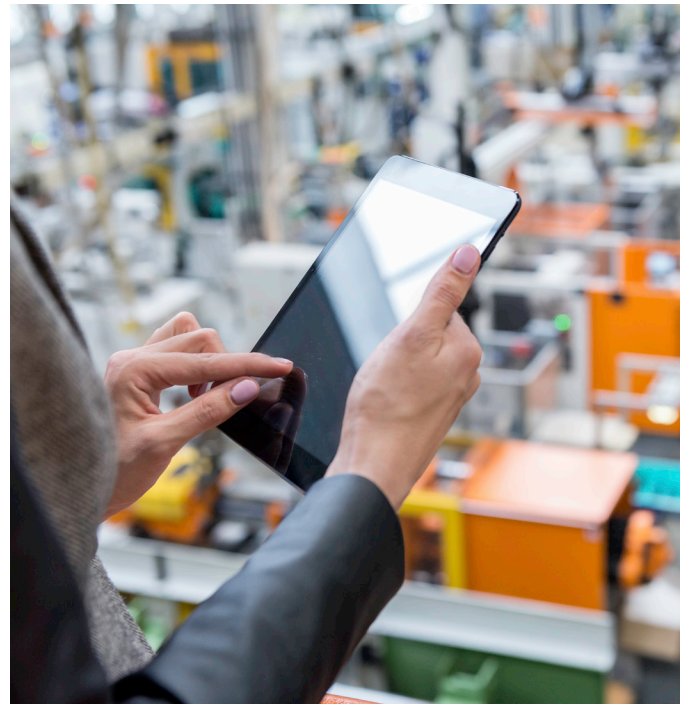
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Organisations are increasingly reliant on third party suppliers to deliver business-critical products and services to their clients and customers. They are also finding that failures by third parties can significantly impact their ability to operate effectively and tarnish their societal trust and reputation. Both can have significant downstream operational delivery, quality and cost implications, and potentially upstream growth impacts. While value and risk have been openly discussed as part of the procurement agenda, COVID-19 and the global pandemic have highlighted that more needs to be done given the connected supply chains in which we operate within globally. Organisations are beginning to address the concerns around these issues, but it is evident that they should develop a clear strategy for the selection, approval and management of third parties. As there are a myriad of stakeholders involved, from the business as well as the procurement and risk functions, developing and implementing this strategy can continue to be highly challenging.

Supplier risk, which has been a key emergent focus for organisations through the pandemic, is only one element of the end-to-end supplier lifecycle management, the other two being contract management and supplier relationship management. Candidly, without all three lenses, you or your organisation may not have a holistic view across your entire supply base, be they material, moderate or those found in the tail. The aggregation of your entire supplier ecosystem creates the goods or services you provide to your customer.



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Through KPMG member firms' extensive work with originations across the world, a number of key challenges have been identified that exist across third party and supplier risk management. These range from supplier concentration all the way through to ongoing management and governance and are explored below.

Supplier concentration risk:
Across sectors, there is an increase in supplier concentration, which raises dependency and competition concerns. With the move towards digital transformation and cloud implementation, this connected and concentration risk has accelerated and will continue to do so.



Third party governance:
Increased regulatory focus, and the financial and reputational impacts of getting it wrong, have required organisations to have better third party risk management processes in place, given that documentation and accountabilities invariably continue to be insufficient and unclear.



Supplier risk assessments:
Supplier risk assessments are often performed in silos and on a reactionary basis, with limited depth, lack of subject matter expert input, and can often result in the insights from the risk assessments not being used to inform sourcing strategies and future decision-making.



Third party supplier management:
Third party supplier management is talked about, but usually lacks sufficient capacity and capability to be an effective process due to a lack of engagement with subject matter experts to support effective supplier oversight.

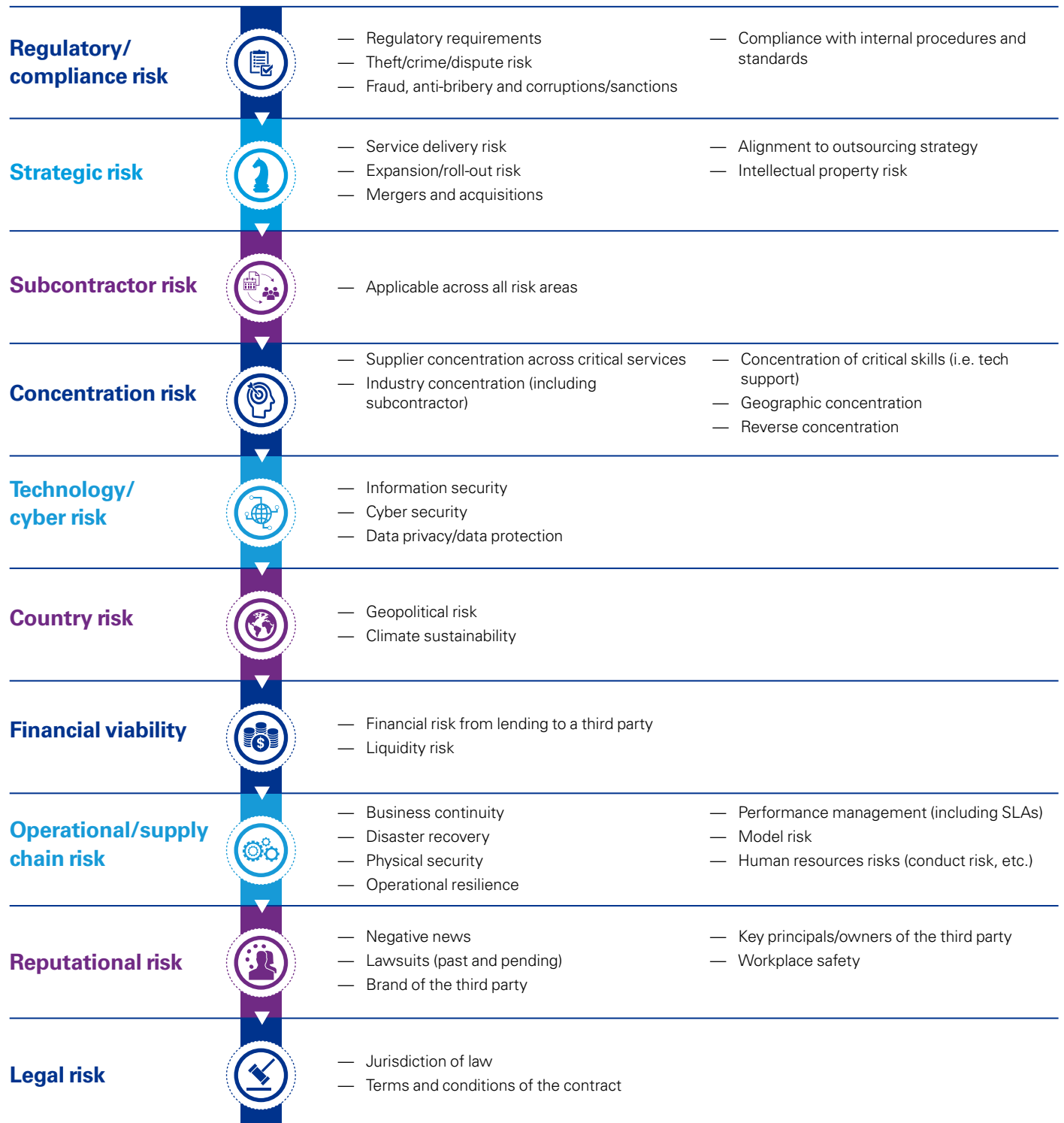


COVID-19 impacts:
COVID-19 has not only amplified the impact of third party and supply chain disruption but has also challenged the ability of global organisations to plan and execute key third party risk management components, such as onsite assessments. Some specific examples from a COVID-19 perspective include:

- business continuity and resiliency risk
- IT and cyber risk
- key person risk
- inadequate service provider monitoring, and
- fourth-party risks.



So, let's explore this further by looking at each critical element that creates the overall supplier risk picture. What are the real risks to the organisation? Well, in short there are several categories or domains, which are typically either not addressed or else spread across the organisation from an accountability perspective. Some may reside within the procurement function, while others may sit within risk management teams, the wider business or at times have no home at all and slip between the cracks. Below are several domains that need to be considered within your organisation as part of your end-to-end supplier lifecycle review.



Source: Third Party Risk Management Outlook 2020, KPMG International

You may be familiar with many of the above domains and some may be new, but the question some may be asking is how exactly do they all fit in? Sadly, all too often we see the risk assessments or understanding of the risk profile being performed too late in the strategic sourcing process. Quite often, this activity is being conducted post-award, which can make it difficult to get the supplier to cooperate. Equally, when conducted post-award, what happens if you suddenly find out that your newly appointed vendor is in fact unsuitable, having several red flags that that will impact your operations, reputation or trust agenda? Of course, this assumes you ask the question. These assessments should be integrated early in the category planning and sourcing process, coupled with continuous monitoring (to be discussed later) to enhance effectiveness.

If we keep extending the discussion further, let's assume we've conducted the risk assessment. Now we need to do the all-important activity of making sure the supplier is complying with their obligations to mitigate the risks that have been identified — for example, given the global COVID-19 pandemic, many organisations had to enact their business continuity plans. Let's now consider that even though this was agreed to as part of the sourcing and negotiation phase, but was never established or monitored, where does that leave your organisation? In addition, if it has been established, but never tested, is it adequate?

The key point here is to make sure the assessment and resulting outcomes are effective. If you undertake this as a box-ticking exercise, you can expect to be either be wrong or lucky, and gambling on risk with so much to lose from an operational, reputation and trust perspective may be a poorly considered approach.

What's next?

— **Third Party Risk Management (TPRM) is a strategic priority:**

Many businesses are dependent on third parties to deliver critical products and services to their clients and customers. At the same time, growing regulatory pressure — particularly in relation to privacy breaches and the loss of customer data, or to operational resilience — is putting third party relationships under additional scrutiny.

— **Organisations are inconsistent in their approach:** Businesses work with a wide variety of third parties worldwide, and each third party manages a subset of risks on the business's behalf. For good reason, businesses should understand each third party's ability to manage risks in line with expectations before deciding whether to engage that third party. Many organisations are not prepared for the complexity that comes with assessing multiple risks in a cohesive manner across business lines and regions. Holistic risk identification and assessment upfront in the onboarding process, as well as during the lifecycle of the contract, is crucial for organisations to have line of sight into the risk profile of their entire third party portfolio.

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— **A risk-based approach is the number one ‘get right’ for TPRM programs:** Managing third party risk in today’s business environment is far from straightforward, and the scope of the program, along with the amount of coordination involved, causes some to feel overwhelmed. The situation is not helped by limitations in organisational resources and budget. Many businesses do not have the required capabilities in-house to manage all the third party risks they face. In our view, organisations can achieve both efficiency and effectiveness by taking a risk-based approach to assessing and monitoring third party products and services that present the highest risk to the organisation.

— **Data and technology are improving TPRM teams’ performance:** Across industries and regions, respondents indicated that the sheer volume of third-party assessment activities has increased in recent years. At first, TPRM programs simply increased their headcount to complete a greater number of risk assessments. Today, organisations have the potential to innovate their approach in three areas:

- greater automation of the TPRM process internal workflow
- leveraging shared utility providers for due diligence questionnaires and responses, and
- moving away from point-in-time risk assessments to continuous controls monitoring.

At present (on a global level), only about a quarter of businesses are using technologies to improve either the workflow automation or monitoring of third parties.

— **It’s time to sustainably scale the program:** Organisations are integrating, streamlining and maturing their TPRM/Supply Risk programs to better understand where they are at risk of goods and service disruptions resulting from third party non-performance. Further, organisations are expanding risk identification,

assessment, and management to material and lower level suppliers. Many organisations have room for improvement across their entire operating model, inclusive of service delivery model, process, people, governance, data and technology. With that in mind, our analysis has helped us refine the steps that organisations should take to upgrade their TPRM programs. Many organisations are approaching the journey differently, however given the sensitivities, a “crawl,” “walk,” “run” approach is what most are favoring. The key point to raise here is that putting your head in the sand and thinking the problem will resolve itself can be flawed — it doesn’t matter where you start, but you should start.

So, the big question is where does that leave us? Our global research and local views confirm that organisations across all sectors and geographies are rightfully considering TPRM, inclusive of supplier management, to be a strategic priority. We see businesses being led by procurement and risk taking a proactive approach to TPRM/supplier risk, exploring how they can refine and expand their existing processes, and then streamline through technology enablement and innovation as part of their end-to-end supplier lifecycle programs.

That said, KPMG’s view also makes clear that, for many organisations, specifically those early on in the journey, including those that have not been regulated, TPRM and supplier risk remain a work in progress. As organisations adjust to global events and economic uncertainty, they may also find that their historical third party assessment information and control environment analysis needs to be updated to account for new risks and challenges. As a matter of urgency, organisations should improve the business resilience across critical customer/client services by accurately understanding the role third parties play in delivering these services and adjusting policies, controls and mitigation plans accordingly.

Unlock the potential in procurement

The majority of organisations and functions are aware that the future can require different and flexible operating models to keep pace with the changing landscape. Technology disruptors should naturally drive the automation of low-value tasks, moving the workforce to higher value activities such as category innovation. However, even these higher-value activities will likely require a high degree of cross-skilling to allow the workforce to flex based on current priorities. In other words, having category managers managing one category in an endless loop is expected to become rare.



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