



Is your RBI programme still fit for purpose?

Six warning signs that a legacy risk-based inspection programme has stopped managing risk — and what a fit-for-purpose programme looks like on an ageing asset.

Risk Based Inspection made a simple promise: point the inspection effort where the risk actually is. But on many mature assets the programme has quietly inverted. The plan that RBI produced years ago now runs the show — engineers execute it because the schedule says so, the backlog grows, and the risk picture the plan was built on belongs to an asset that no longer exists. On a late-life asset, with limited resource and a real end date, that is not risk-based inspection. It is ritual.

01 The plan runs the engineers — not the other way round

Inspections are executed because the programme says so, and the findings go into a folder. If clean results never retire scope and bad results never accelerate it, the feedback loop that makes RBI *risk-based* is broken: what you have is a static PM schedule wearing an RBI badge.

02 The same scopes repeat, interval after interval

Circuits inspected clean five times in a row are inspected a sixth time, at the same interval, with the same technique — while known-degrading systems wait their turn in the queue. A living programme moves effort from the former to the latter. A legacy one treats every interval as fixed.

03 The risk assessments are years out of date

Process conditions have moved — souring, rising water cut, changed chemistry, new operating envelopes — but the risk rankings were assessed against the conditions of a decade ago. A growing RBA refresh backlog is the clearest single symptom that the programme has detached from the asset.

04 The backlog grows while the resource shrinks

The plan was sized for a technician crew you no longer have. When the planned workload mathematically exceeds the achievable execution rate, the backlog is not a performance problem to be managed — it is a design problem in the programme, and safety-critical scope is what ends up waiting.

05 Low-value inspections crowd out high-risk ones

“We have always inspected it” is not a risk argument. Without a standing mechanism to challenge and retire scope, low-value inspections accumulate and consume the resource that the genuinely vulnerable equipment needs.

06 Remaining life plays no part in the plan

An asset heading for cessation of production is still being inspected as if it will run forever. Equipment that will retire with margin to spare keeps absorbing budget, while the systems that must survive to the end date get no additional attention. On a low-remaining-life asset, the CoP date should be the single strongest input to the programme — and in most legacy programmes it is absent.

If three or more of these sound familiar, your RBI programme is consuming inspection budget without buying the risk reduction it was designed for — and on an ageing asset, that gap widens every year.



WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE ON AN AGEING ASSET

Five properties of a fit-for-purpose programme

■ Living risk assessments

Every inspection result — clean or not — updates the risk ranking. Refresh campaigns are planned work, not backlog.

■ Scope that earns its place

Each line of the programme carries a current risk justification. Anything that cannot justify itself is retired, and the resource is redeployed.

■ A schedule matched to real resource

The programme is sized against the crew and access you actually have, so the plan is executable and the backlog trend points down.

■ Remaining life steering priorities

The CoP or life-extension date drives what must be inspected, what can be monitored, and what can safely be left alone.

■ Data doing the heavy lifting

Decades of inspection history analysed — with AI-assisted tools where they help — to find the vulnerable systems a manual review would miss.

WE HAVE DONE THIS BEFORE

Recent results from late-life assets

26% efficiency gain across three annual inspection programmes on a producing FPSO, after a 50% cut in offshore technicians — worth ~\$550k.

48 high-criticality hydrocarbon systems risk-refreshed in 15 months, clearing a 12-month RBA backlog and smoothing the schedule for the resource available.

6 mo whole-asset remaining-life assessment steering a late-life FPSO's inspection investment towards cessation of production.

Talk to us about your programme. The first conversation is free and confidential — and if your RBI programme is genuinely fine, we will tell you so.

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