

Reporting workflow blueprint

Illustrative example. Figures and observations are fictional.

Illustrative example

This document uses a fictional business, Example Broker, to demonstrate the scope and quality of a Data Operatives review. All people, systems, observations, timings, costs and projected results are illustrative assumptions. This is not a client case study.

The decision

How should Example Broker reduce the manual work involved in its monthly management report while keeping clear checks, approvals and a reliable record of changes?

Prepared by Data Operatives

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One reporting workflow. A decision brief and a phased implementation plan.

A real engagement replaces these assumptions with client evidence and an agreed scope.

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Recommendation and decision

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Recommended first step

Confirm what the existing broker system can export and whether its reporting features can meet the agreed requirements. Document reporting definitions and introduce one controlled input location immediately. Commission an integration only after the export and permissions checks succeed.

Illustrative business case

The example baseline is 60 staff-hours per monthly reporting cycle. The proposed process targets 18 staff-hours, releasing 42 hours per month or 504 hours per year. These are combined staff-hours, not elapsed days. A pilot must test the projection.

Investment decision

Indicative implementation allowance: £8,000–£12,000 excluding VAT, plus the £3,500 review. An assumed £1,800 annual running cost and 75% use of released capacity give an illustrative capacity-based payback of about 12–16 months. No cash saving is established.

Approval sought

Approve the first phase of requirements and export validation. Confirm the process owner and the source of each metric. Defer a full build commitment until the uncertainties on page 12 have answers.

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Scope and evidence

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Workflow boundary

Start: the reporting coordinator requests the monthly source exports. End: the operations director approves the versioned management pack and the coordinator stores the evidence. The workflow covers one agreed pack and its contributing files.

Included and excluded

Included: source files, preparation, manual rules, validation, review, approvals and storage. Excluded: replacing the broker management system, changing accounting policy, defining regulatory obligations, automated customer decisions and rewriting unrelated reports.

Evidence a real review would collect

E01: walkthrough of a recent completed cycle. E02: redacted input exports and final pack. E03: coordinator and preparer interviews. E04: approval emails and correction examples. E05: a short activity log. E06: vendor export and permission documentation.

Validation

For this sample, all evidence IDs refer to fictional examples. In client work, each ID links to a dated, permitted source. The process owner confirms the map and staff-hour assumptions before recommendations. Missing evidence stays visible as an open question.

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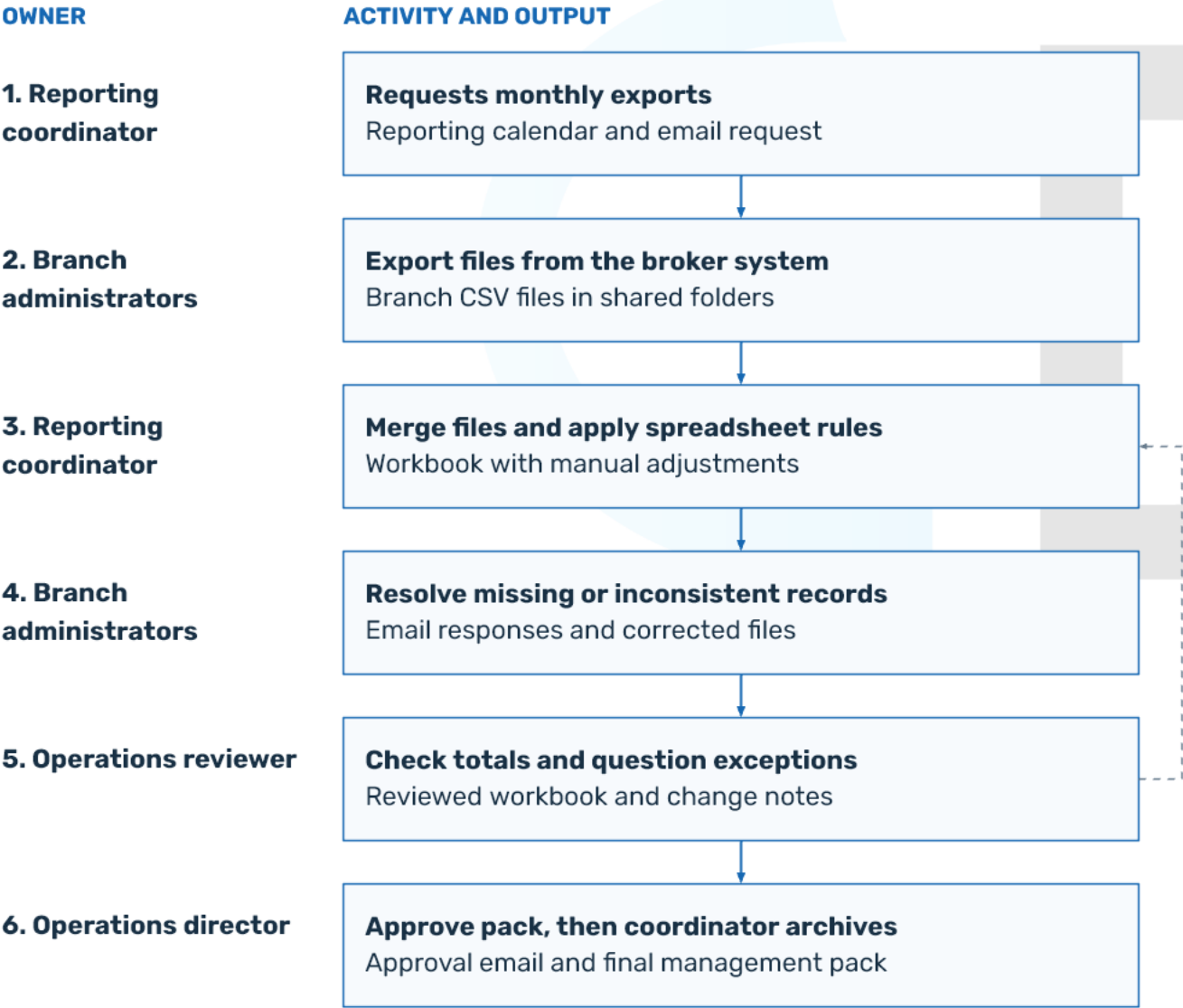


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Current process map

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Exception handling

Exception loop: missing data or unexplained totals return from step 5 to steps 3–4. The coordinator repeats checks after corrections.

Illustrative sequence. Each numbered step has a corresponding data, time or control entry in the following pages.

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Data and ownership register

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ID / information	Source and owner	Use and proposed control
D01 / Branch exports	Broker system. Branch administrators.	Monthly performance inputs. Record export date, period and branch.
D02 / Metric definitions	Workbook and staff knowledge. Operations owner.	Business rules. Create a versioned definition register approved by the owner.
D03 / Adjustments	Coordinator workbook.	Corrections. Capture reason, value, author and reviewer.
D04 / Exception responses	Email. Relevant branch owner.	Resolve mismatches. Track owner, due date and closure evidence.
D05 / Final pack	Reporting folder. Operations director.	Management use. Version, approval and restricted editing.
D06 / Historical packs	Shared storage. Reporting coordinator.	Comparison and recovery. Agree retention and restore process.

A real register also records field names, identifiers, permitted access, data sensitivity, volume, export/API constraints and retention. The client confirms applicable requirements. Begin with redacted samples.

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Staff-time baseline and projection

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Activity per monthly cycle	Current hours	Future hours
Collect source exports	8	2
Merge and clean files	14	3
Apply reporting rules	12	3
Chase missing data	8	2
Check totals and exceptions	10	4
Prepare management pack	5	2
Review and approve	3	2
Total staff-hours / month	60	18
Total staff-hours / year (×12)	720	216
Potential hours released / year		504

Method and uncertainty

All timings are illustrative. Count each person's active time once. Record waiting time separately. Avoid counting corrections twice. For client work, compare a walkthrough with an activity log and a second cycle. Future effort is a model until a pilot confirms it.

The future total has a planning range of 14–24 hours per cycle. The base case uses 18 hours. It retains human review, exception handling and approval.

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Operational weaknesses

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Finding	Illustrative consequence	Control and owner
R01 / Repeated copying	A column shift or omitted row changes the pack.	Validate file schema and row counts. Coordinator owns input checks.
R02 / Undocumented rules	A colleague cannot explain or repeat an adjustment.	Versioned rule register and test examples. Operations owner approves definitions.
R03 / Unclear source version	Teams work from different exports.	One source location, unique batch ID and period lock. Coordinator owns release.
R04 / Informal corrections	Reviewers cannot trace why a figure changed.	Adjustment log with original value, reason and review. Reviewer owns approval.

These are operational control findings, not a regulatory compliance opinion. A real review records observed evidence, likelihood and impact reasoning, current controls and residual exposure. The client confirms regulatory interpretations.

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Controls and residual work

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Finding	Proposed control	What still needs a person
R05 / Email chasing	Exception queue with named owners and due dates.	Branch owner investigates source data and supplies evidence.
R06 / Informal approval	Versioned sign-off tied to the exact report.	Operations director considers the meaning and suitability of the report.
R07 / Key-person dependency	Documented process and a tested backup operator.	A second colleague demonstrates a complete cycle.
R08 / Failed import or outage	Failure alert, preserved prior version and recovery instructions.	Coordinator investigates failures and authorises reruns.

Control acceptance

Test a missing column, duplicate row, invalid period, changed rule, unauthorised user and failed import. The process should stop or flag the issue clearly. A rejected batch must not quietly become a final report.

Agree response owners and realistic support arrangements before launch. Automation reduces selected failure opportunities but introduces configuration, access and operational dependencies.

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Options considered

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Option	When it fits	Trade-off
A / Improve the current workbook	A small number of reliable exports and stable report definitions.	Low change effort. Some preparation and checking remain manual.
B / Configure existing software	The broker platform already supports the metrics, exports and access needed.	Potentially simplest ongoing operation. Vendor features and licences need checking.
C / Build a focused integration	Required checks and report structure cross several permitted sources.	More flexibility and traceability. Introduces maintenance and hosting costs.
D / Replace the core system	The core system itself cannot meet wider business needs.	Outside this review. Much larger migration and business change.

Recommendation

Validate option B first. Apply the basic ownership and version controls from A. Use C only for the specific gaps that remain, with a bounded first release. Keep D outside the current decision.

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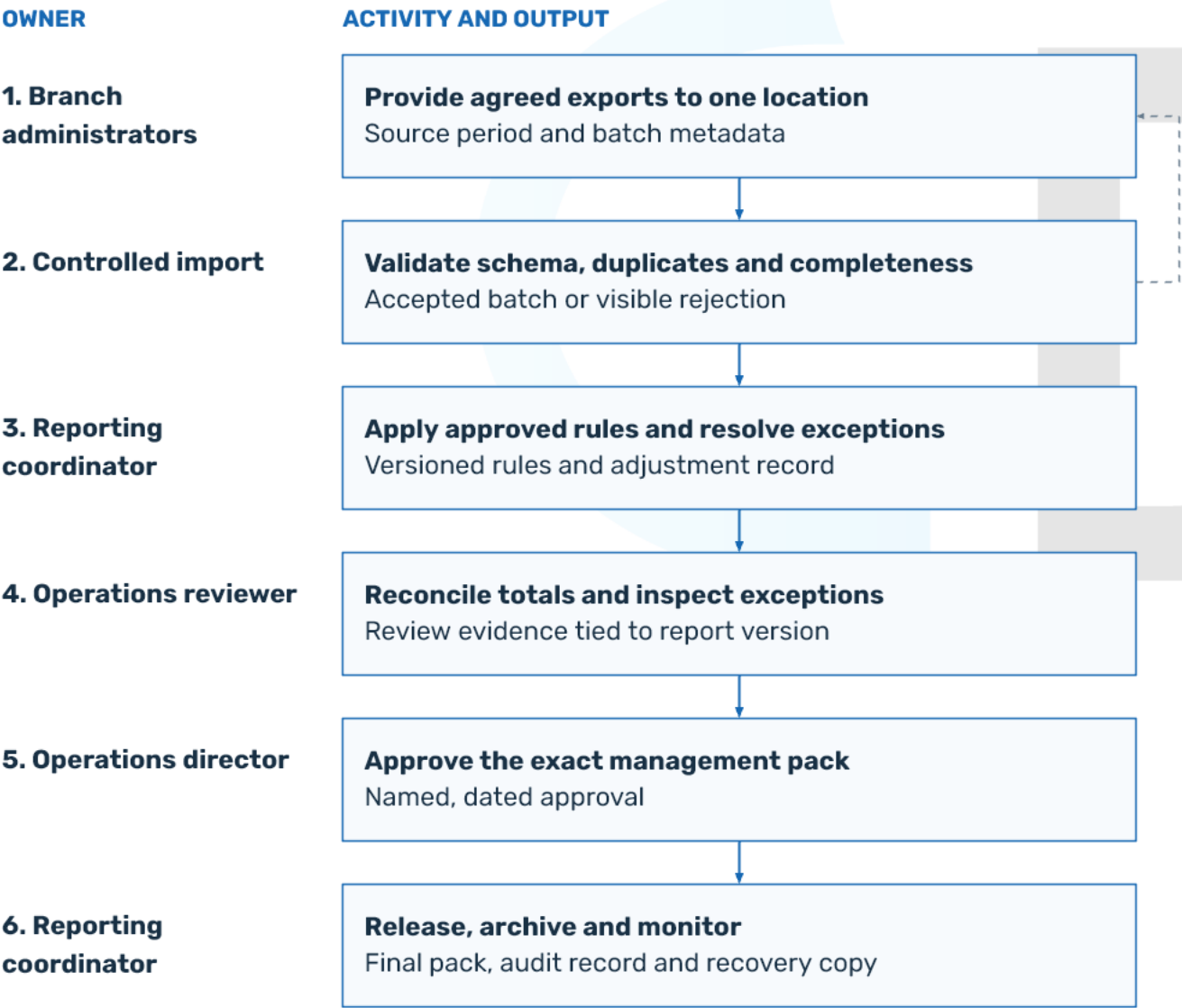


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Proposed process map

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Exception handling

Exception path: rejected inputs return to the branch owner. No publish step can bypass reconciliation and approval. Failed runs preserve the previous approved pack.

The proposed system supports the people who own the process. It does not define regulatory policy or make customer eligibility decisions.

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Implementation requirements

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Requirement	Acceptance evidence
REQ01 / Repeatable import	The same valid source batch produces the same outputs. A duplicate batch cannot duplicate totals.
REQ02 / Visible validation	A missing required field stops the batch and identifies the file and issue.
REQ03 / Reconciliation	Control totals match source totals or the reviewer records an authorised explanation.
REQ04 / Traceable rules	Each output records the rule version. Approved sample calculations reproduce expected results.
REQ05 / Access and approval	Only authorised users edit rules or approve. Approval identifies the report version.
REQ06 / Recovery and handover	A backup operator completes a cycle and demonstrates the agreed recovery procedure.
REQ07 / Measured benefit	One historical replay and one live monthly cycle record staff-hours, exceptions and completion time.

The implementation brief names inputs, outputs, owners, constraints and acceptance tests. Suppliers still need technical validation before a binding quotation. Full technical design and production development are separate work.

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Costs, assumptions and uncertainty

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Planning allowances

Review: £3,500. Indicative implementation: £8,000–£12,000. Illustrative running cost: £1,800 per year. Figures exclude VAT. The implementation range is a sample planning allowance, not a supplier quote or a commitment by Data Operatives.

Base-case calculation

42 hours released each month $\times$ 12 $\times$ £35 agreed loaded hourly cost = £17,640 annual capacity value. Assume only 75% becomes useful capacity: £13,230. Deduct £1,800 running cost: £11,430 net annual capacity value.

Interpretation

Including review and implementation, £11,500–£15,500 divided by £11,430 $\times$ 12 gives about 12–16 months of steady-state capacity payback, excluding ramp-up. This is not cash payback. Cash savings need evidence such as lower overtime or avoided external spend.

Conditions before a build quote

Confirm vendor export/API rights, source structure, record volumes, reporting definitions, access, hosting and support arrangements. If these assumptions change, re-scope before committing. Confirm whether the team can use released time productively.

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Twelve-month roadmap

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Period	Action and decision gate
Weeks 1–2	Approve definitions and ownership. Check existing software capability and export access. Decide whether configuration is sufficient.
Weeks 3–6	If approved, implement the smallest import and validation path. Test historic samples and deliberate failure cases.
Weeks 7–10	Replay one historical cycle, then run one live monthly cycle alongside the current process. Reconcile outputs, record staff-hours and resolve defects.
Weeks 11–12	Agree acceptance, train the backup operator and complete handover. Keep a documented rollback route.
Months 4–6	Review achieved benefit and support demand. Expand only where the first release works and further value is evidenced.
Months 7–12	Reassess remaining reports and vendor capabilities. Reprioritise with the client before any further spend.

The first 90 days are a planning sequence subject to approval, access and supplier availability. Later phases are conditional. This roadmap does not commit the client to twelve months of development.

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Decision, handover and next step

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Client confirmation

Process owner confirms the workflow boundary and map. Finance or the budget owner confirms the hourly-cost assumption and interpretation of benefits. The compliance contact confirms any regulated reporting requirements. The operations director decides which option to pursue.

Portable handover pack

Editable process maps, data/ownership register, staff-hour worksheet, findings/control register, future requirements, acceptance checks, assumptions and open questions, cost ranges and phased roadmap. Include permitted evidence links and document versions.

A separate implementation decision

Request a bounded proposal for the approved first phase from Data Operatives or another provider. Compare the included work, assumptions, acceptance criteria, ongoing costs and ownership arrangements.

What a real review must replace

Replace every fictional observation and estimate with client-approved evidence. Record unresolved questions visibly. Confirm the review findings even when the best decision is to improve existing tools or defer a build.

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