

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The HR Practice Maturity Framework

Five levels from firefighting to agentic. Score your HR operations honestly, find your level, and take the three moves that unlock the next one.

— The five levels

1

Reactive

HR lives in spreadsheets and inboxes. Records conflict, payroll is a monthly scramble, and most energy goes into firefighting.

2

Structured

Processes exist and are written down. Payroll runs on time, files are organized — but everything still depends on manual effort and a few heroic people.

3

Digitized

One HR system is the source of truth. Self-service handles the basics; approvals flow digitally; compliance has an owner and a calendar.

4

Data-driven

Decisions cite dashboards: attrition, time-to-hire, review completion. Pay bands are defensible. Talent reviews and succession happen on schedule.

5

Agentic

AI agents complete the busywork — payroll prep, helpdesk, leave — with humans approving what matters. HR's time goes to judgment, culture and strategy.

Most mid-market African organizations sit between **Level 2 and 3**. The jump to Level 3 delivers the biggest immediate relief; Levels 4–5 deliver the competitive edge.

The maturity matrix

Dimension	L1 · Reactive	L3 · Digitized	L5 · Agentic
Core HR records	Spreadsheets, conflicting copies	One system of record + self-service	Agents keep data clean and flag anomalies
Payroll	Manual gross-to-net, frequent errors	Automated engine, statutory built in	Agent-prepared runs, human-approved
Hiring	CVs in inboxes	ATS pipeline, digital onboarding	AI screening, matching and scheduling
Learning	Ad-hoc training	LMS with paths and tracking	Personalized paths from skills-gap analysis
Performance	Annual reviews, if any	Regular cycles, visible goals	Continuous signals, flight-risk alerts
Compliance	Deadlines by memory	Owned calendar, filed evidence	Auto-computed, auto-scheduled, audit-ready

Score yourself

Rate each dimension 1–5 honestly (where does it sit *most months*, not on your best month), then total:

Dimension	Your score (1–5)
Core HR records	
Payroll	
Hiring & onboarding	
Learning	
Performance & talent	
Compliance	
Total (6–30)	

6–11: Level 1–2 — stabilize first. **12–19:** Level 2–3 — digitize now. **20–25:** Level 3–4 — instrument decisions. **26–30:** Level 4–5 — automate the busywork.

— Your next three moves, by level

If you scored Level 1–2 → aim at 3

- Consolidate every employee record into one system of truth — and retire the spreadsheets
- Automate gross-to-net with statutory rules built in, not hand-maintained
- Switch on employee self-service for payslips, leave and personal details

If you scored Level 3 → aim at 4

- Stand up one dashboard: attrition, time-to-hire, review completion, payroll accuracy
- Publish pay bands and career paths — fairness is retention infrastructure
- Run quarterly talent reviews with a 9-box and a succession plan for key roles

If you scored Level 4 → aim at 5

- Deploy your first agent on the helpdesk queue (read-only) and measure resolution
- Expand agents to leave and payroll preparation with human approval gates
- Write your guardrail policy: permissions, audit trail, kill switch, named owners

Prefer a guided version? Take the free online HR Practice Maturity Assessment at survey.zohopublic.com/zs/ntDHGf — or bring this scorecard to a demo and we'll map your route with you.

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