

CASE STUDY · OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE

Building an operational resilience programme at a regulated wealth manager - and what it means for DIFC and ADGM firms

70%

REDUCTION IN
CRITICAL SYSTEM
DOWNTIME

99.9%+

SYSTEM UPTIME
MAINTAINED

11

UK LOCATIONS
COVERED BY THE
PROGRAMME

FCA

BOARD AUDIT
WORKPLAN
COMPLETED ON
SCHEDULE

THE CHALLENGE

When continuity plans describe infrastructure, not the business

Most regulated firms have IT continuity procedures. Fewer have a documented account of which services the business actually depends on, how long those services can be unavailable, and what the board has formally agreed to tolerate.

At Killik & Co, an FCA-regulated wealth manager operating across 11 UK locations, operational resilience became a board-level requirement driven by regulatory change and an honest audit of what the firm's continuity planning actually covered.

On paper, plans existed. In practice, they described infrastructure rather than the business services that clients and regulators cared about.

THE RESULT

From infrastructure continuity to business-level resilience

The firm completed its FCA board-overseen audit workplan on schedule, with a documented service map, defined impact tolerances, tested incident playbooks, and verified supplier continuity coverage. Critical system downtime was reduced by 70% through the infrastructure overhaul that ran alongside the programme.

The outcome was not a set of documents for audit purposes. It was a board that could answer the regulator's question with evidence: what are your important business services, and how do you know you can restore them within your stated tolerances?

THE PROGRAMME

Resilience is not a continuity plan in a folder - it is a board-owned, tested account of how the business will survive disruption

SERVICE MAPPING

Identified and documented the firm's important business services - the activities clients and regulators actually depend on - rather than mapping infrastructure alone.

IMPACT TOLERANCES

Defined how long each important business service could be unavailable before causing intolerable harm. Set as a board-level decision, not a technical assumption.

RECOVERY OBJECTIVES

Established RTO and RPO for each service. Closed the gap between what the board believed was achievable and what the infrastructure could actually deliver.

INCIDENT PLAYBOOKS

Built and tested response playbooks for plausible disruption scenarios: system failure, supplier outage, cyber incident, site loss. Reviewed annually.

SUPPLIER CONTINUITY

Reviewed contractual commitments and recovery capabilities of critical third-party suppliers. Identified where coverage was assumed but not verified.

BOARD GOVERNANCE

Structured the programme for ongoing oversight rather than a one-off exercise: regular board reporting on resilience posture, gap closure, and evidence for FCA audit scrutiny.

Each component was assigned an owner, reviewed on a fixed cadence, and updated to reflect changes in the firm's operating model - so the programme remained current rather than becoming a legacy document.

AI & RESILIENCE RISK

AI adoption introduces new operational resilience exposure: new important business services, new third-party dependencies, and failure modes that continuity plans do not yet account for. Firms that have not mapped their existing resilience requirements will not be able to assess what AI adds to that exposure. The service mapping and impact tolerance methodology that underpins a DFSA-ready resilience framework is the same foundation needed to govern AI operational risk at board level.

DIFC & ADGM-REGULATED FIRMS

DFSA- and FSRA-regulated firms in DIFC and ADGM face the same regulatory requirement: a documented, board-owned account of important business services and the ability to restore them within stated impact tolerances.

- Map important business services and define impact tolerances at board level.
- Build and test incident playbooks against plausible disruption scenarios.
- Align to DFSA and FSRA expectations and produce evidence suitable for regulatory scrutiny.

Engagements typically start with a resilience diagnostic: service mapping, impact tolerance review, and a board-ready view of current posture, gaps, and remediation priorities.