Essential components of a risk register

A risk register helps to document every risk, understand the probability of occurrence, identify its impact, allocate the responsibility and identify the mitigation steps. It could have the following columns which need to be populated for every risk that is identified.

1. **Category - Internal/External:** Internal risks are those that exist within the organisation. They can be thought of as risks that can be identified and managed by the organisation. External risks are those that the organisation cannot control. Risks associated with natural calamities, political actions, and economic changes are some examples of external risks.
2. **Sub-category:** This further classifies a risk as relating to compliance, statutory, legal, commercial, political, economic, financial, management, operational, service delivery, workplace health and safety, human resources, stakeholders (for instance, clients, suppliers, government, donors etc), IT, security, reputation and more.
3. **Risk description:** A brief summary of the risk, including the causes and the source.
4. **Impact description:** What will happen if the risk is not mitigated or eliminated.
5. **Impact level:** The impact that the risk will have on the organisation's goals should be quantified. For instance, '1' for low impact, '2' for medium, and '3' for high impact.
6. **Probability level:** The probability of the occurrence of a risk can be selected as '1' for low probability, '2' for medium and '3' for high probability.
7. **Priority level: -** This is the product of impact & probability level. These can be colour coded as 'red', 'amber' & 'green" for ease of prioritisation.
8. **Mitigation notes:** What can be done to lower or eliminate the impact or probability of a risk? What will be the steps that will be followed to mitigate a risk? Who will be consulted for risk mitigation? Is any external help required for risk mitigation?
9. **Quantification of risk:** The approximate monetary value of a risk (the amount an organisation might stand to lose) should be ascertained.
10. **Department:** Which department is this risk associated with? If the risk is related to multiple departments then the primary department should be mentioned here.
11. **Owner:** Identify who owns the risk, and will be responsible and accountable to mitigate the risk. If the risk is associated with multiple departments then the name of a team member from the primary department should be mentioned.