

Appendix A

Template - Minimum Content

1. Strategic fit: the strategic case

This aspect of the business case explains how the scope of the proposed project fits within the existing business and IT/estate strategies (where relevant) of the organisation; and the compelling case for change, in terms of the existing and future operational needs of the organisation.

Minimum content needed for this section: description of the business need and its contribution to the organisation's business strategy, objectives, why it is needed now, key benefits to be realised, key risks, critical success factors and how they will be measured; main stakeholders.

Questions you must address:

- How well does the proposed way of meeting the requirement support the organisation's objectives and current priorities?
- If it is a poor fit, can the scope be changed?
- Is the project needed at all?
- Have the stakeholders made a commitment to the project?

2. Options appraisal: the economic case

This aspect of the business case, in accordance with HM Treasury's Green Book, documents the wide range of options that have been considered within the broad scope identified in response to the organisation's existing and future business needs. It aims to arrive at the optimum balance of cost, benefit and risk.

Minimum content needed for this section: high level cost/benefit analysis of (ideally) at least three options for meeting the business need (where applicable); include analysis of 'soft' benefits that cannot be quantified in financial terms; identify preferred option and any trade-offs. Note that options appraisal must be carried out in detail before selecting a preferred option.

Questions you must address:

- Has a wide range of options been explored?
- Have innovative approaches been considered and/or collaboration with others?
- If not, why not?
- Has the optimum balance of cost, benefit and risk been identified? If not, what trade-offs need to be made e.g. foregoing some of the benefits in order to keep costs within budget; taking carefully considered risks to achieve more substantial benefits?

3. Commercial aspects: the financial case

Where there is an external procurement, this section outlines the potential commercial arrangement. Most of this information will be produced for the Outline Business Case.

Minimum content required for this section: proposed sourcing option, with rationale for its selection; key features of proposed commercial arrangements (e.g. contract terms, contract length, payment mechanisms and performance incentives); the procurement approach/strategy with supporting rationale.

Questions you must address:

- Can value for money be obtained from the proposed sources (e.g. partners, suppliers)?
- If not, can the project be made attractive to a wider market?

4. Affordability: the financial case

Assessment of affordability and available funding. Links proposed expenditure to available budget and existing commitments.

Minimum content for this section: statement of available funding and broad estimates of projected whole-life cost of project, including departmental costs (where applicable).

Questions you must address:

- Can the required budget be obtained to deliver the whole project?
- If not, can the scope be reduced or delivered over a longer period?
- Could funding be sought from other sources?

5 Achievability: the project management case

This section addresses the 'achievability' aspects of the project. Its primary purpose is to set out the project organisation and actions which will be undertaken to support the achievement of intended outcomes including procurement activity (where applicable) or detailed study with existing providers.

Minimum content for this section: high level plan for achieving the desired outcome, with key milestones and major dependencies (e.g. interface with other projects); key roles, with named individual as the project's owner; outline contingency plans e.g. addressing failure to deliver service on time; major risks identified and outline plan for addressing them; provider's plans for the same, as applicable, skills and experience required.

Questions you must address:

- Can this project be achieved with the organisation's current capability and capacity?
- If not, how can the required capability be acquired?
- Can the risks be managed – e.g. scale, complexity, uncertainty?
- Does the scope or timescale need to change?