Project Management Fact Sheet:

Checklist for Major Business Initiatives

Version: 1.2, November 2008

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Tasmania
Explore the possibilities

How to progress an idea to an approved project

Have you ever wondered how projects actually get started? Often we are confronted with an assignment that involves progressing an idea, a piece of legislation or an announcement made by a Minister, into practical results. But what if you don't know where to start?

This Fact Sheet provides a starting point by outlining many areas that may need to be investigated to progress an idea into an approved project .i.e. project initiation, including:

- establishing links to Government and Agency strategies

- establishing a collective understanding of the initiative

- undertaking background research and analysis

- identifying related initiatives/projects;

- identifying funding sources

- identifying Information & Communications Technology (ICT) or Information Management (IM) considerations

- planning the implementation

The term 'initiative' has been used in the Fact Sheet to describe the idea, directive, announcement or whatever is to be progressed through the relevant process from approval to implementation.

This Fact Sheet should be read in conjunction with any related Agency guidelines, where they exist. Agency protocols should be adhered to at all times, particularly in relation to seeking input from within and outside of the Agency.

How does the initiative relate to existing strategic plans?

There are a number of key strategic plans to which all initiatives should contribute. These are at a whole-of-government and Agency level, including:

- The current Government's key strategies and initiatives. These are outlined annually in the Budget Papers available at www.treasury.tas.gov.au

- Your Agency's Corporate Plan, which is updated annually and should be available on your Agency's intranet

- The Strategic Plan for any relevant governing bodies or Boards e.g. the *Service* Tasmania Board

- Other key strategies or requirements e.g. nationally agreed strategies, National Competition Policy etc

Examine how the initiative contributes to these strategies. For example, identify the benefits to your Agency and/or its clients from undertaking or engaging in the initiative. Also, consider how the initiative would contribute to a Local Government Partnership Agreement with your Agency or a group of agencies. This can be explored by contacting the Local Government Partnership Agency Implementation Officer within your Agency.

How clearly understood is the initiative?

It is important that a common understanding is reached as to what the initiative involves. Check within your own work area to ensure the rationale and intention for the initiative is clear to you and/or your colleagues. Also, clarify that a formal decision has been made by the relevant individual/group to move forward with the initiative and confirm who will be taking responsibility for progressing the initiative through the approval stages.

It may be worthwhile confirming that you can outline the initiative using the project management SMART principles, i.e.:

- **S**tated - clear and specific about what, where, when, and how the situation will be changed

- **M**easurable - able to quantify the benefits (outcomes)

- **A**greed – a common understanding and agreement of the intended change

- **R**ealistic - able to obtain the level of change reflected in the objective and outcomes

- **T**imely – a stated time period in which the change will occur

Once you have a common understanding within your local work area, check that the wider group of people affected or involved in the initiative from within your Agency and beyond have the same collective understanding of the initiative. You may need to consider methodologies such as Value Management. Value Management is a structured, analytical process which seeks to satisfy 'customer' needs by ensuring that all necessary functions are provided at the lowest total cost, while maintaining the required levels of quality and performance - in other words, to maximise value. Additional information on Value Management is available from the Institute of Value Management (Australia) at http://ivma.org.au/.

What if more than one agency is potentially involved?

Confusion can often arise in government initiatives that involve more than one Agency. In these cases, it is worthwhile to identify a lead Agency. This model was and still is used by *Service* Tasmania. Not only is the model effective, it is also widely accepted by all Agencies.

Why re-invent the wheel?

There is nothing worse than not learning from your own mistakes or the mistakes of others. It is worth investigating if similar initiatives have been undertaken before, and what the results were. Perhaps there have been similar initiatives undertaken by your Agency, other Tasmanian Government Agencies, other levels of government or other jurisdictions. The results of these initiatives might help inform the way you progress yours.

What other initiatives are happening at the same time?

There may be a number of initiatives already under way that may impact on your initiative. It is worth checking to see what existing initiatives throughout government are being undertaken to avoid potential duplication, overlap or dependencies. IAPPU may be able to help you identify related initiatives/projects.

How to get the tick of approval?

There may be a number of approval 'hoops' at different levels that you need to jump through. The following is a description of the different levels of approval, not all may be relevant to your initiative.

Agency Level - you will need to familiarise yourself with and complete the internal Agency process for getting initiatives approved. This process is Agency specific and your line manager or your Agency's Corporate Services area should be able to direct you to the relevant internal processes.

Whole-of-Government Level - you will need to familiarise yourself with and complete the external Agency (Budget Committee) process for getting funding approved for an initiative if the funding required is not included in the Agency's annual budget. This will require the development of a Business Case – refer below *WHERE WILL THE MONEY COME FROM?* As part of the Business Case development, you will need to identify the long-term financial sustainability of the initiative. For example, identify the measurable benefits for undertaking the initiative and over what period of time the benefits will be achieved and any recurrent funding that will be required.

Commonwealth Government Level - you will need to be familiar with and complete the Commonwealth Government process or application for getting funding approved for an initiative.

All of these approval bodies will need to be assured that the decision making structures and processes for the initiative have been identified, that accountability throughout the initiative has been identified, and that the timelines and milestones for progressing the initiative are clear.

At the whole-of-government and Commonwealth level, the Agency will need to demonstrate that the initiative is seen as a priority.

If the initiative is a major Tasmanian Government initiative the various levels of approval are important as they ensure the appropriate level of priority is accorded to the initiative.

Where will the money come from?

There are a variety of sources from which funds for an initiative can be sought. However, it is important the relevant financial experts are involved in identifying the most appropriate source for your initiative.

The first place to begin these discussions is your Agency's Finance Manager. If funding required is not included in the Agency's annual budget, you will need to have discussions with your Agency's Budget Analyst based on advice from your Agency. The Budget Analyst can assist you by explaining the Budget Committee process, including the need to develop a Business Case, and identify alternatives for funding. If this is a major Tasmanian Government initiative, it is important that your Budget Analyst views the initiative as a priority and fully understands the rationale and benefits for pursuing it. Remember, you will need to convince others of the importance of your initiative, because there will be other initiatives competing for the same limited funds.

If full or partial funding is being obtained from the Commonwealth, there will be a specific process to complete in order to receive funding for the initiative.

What about information technology?

If there is a major Information & Communications Technology (ICT) or Information Management (IM) component to the initiative, there are a number of standards, guidelines, policies and approval processes at different levels that you need to consider.

Agency Level - you will need to familiarise yourself with your Agency's ICT Strategy and to discuss the initiative with your Agency's IT Section/Branch and any areas responsible for ICT policy.

Whole-of-Government Level - you will need to familiarise yourself with the range of government policies, standards and guidelines related to ICT/IM. These are available on www.egovernment.tas.gov.au.

You will also need to establish if there are any whole-of-government implications, considerations or opportunities for the initiative. In particular, you need to be aware of the role of the Inter Agency Steering Committee (IASC). The IASC supports the efficient use of government resources and reducing duplication in activities relating to eGovernment, particularly where whole of government projects and issues are involved and encompassing policy principles where necessary. The IASC consists of a Deputy Secretary from every Agency who meet monthly. IAPPU provide the secretariat support for the IASC and can be contacted to provide you with the name of your Agency's IASC member.

There is also an emerging resource of examples of Better Practice within the Tasmanian Government. IAPPU provides a mechanism to enable Agencies to capture, share and subsequently implement 'good ideas' i.e. innovations or 'lessons learnt' about what works and what does not in Government business activities. Additional information about these examples is available on this website.

Planning the implementation?

Once approval for an initiative has occurred, the implementation should be undertaken using a project approach. The Tasmanian Government has developed a project management methodology, the use of which is highly recommended for major Tasmanian Government initiatives.

The *Tasmanian Government Project Management Guidelines* describe the project management methodology. The Guidelines have been developed with the assistance of both practising experienced and novice Tasmanian State Service Project Managers and are designed to reflect the requirements of most Agencies. However, they will need to be adapted to the precise organisational situation. The Guidelines are supported by a number of other resources and tools, such as Templates and Fact Sheets. All of these are available on this website.

You can obtain project management advice or assistance in relation to the application of the Tasmanian Government's project management methodology by contacting IAPPU. Contact details are also available on this website.

Depending on the initiative you are about to implement and the target outcomes for the initiative, you may need to complete a baseline costing study and/or undertake an analysis of the current business processes that will be changed as a result of the initiative.

How to put it together

For convenience, the contents of this Fact Sheet have been summarised into a checklist, which is included in the following pages. It should be noted that progressing an idea through to an approved project takes time and usually the process goes through a number of stages. You may wish to approach your Line Manager to obtain access to a suitably experienced person within your Agency to act as a mentor through the process.

As well as this website, there are other sources of information referred to in this Fact Sheet, including those are listed below:

- Department of Treasury and Finance
  www.treasury.tas.gov.au
  www.purchasing.tas.gov.au

- *Institute of Value Management (Australia)*
  http://ivma.org.au/

Where to get additional help

- Refer to the *Tasmanian Government Project Management Guidelines*

- Further information and resources are available from
  www.egovernment.tas.gov.au

Acknowledgements

This Fact Sheet contains elements of the *Tasmanian Government Project Management Guidelines* prepared by the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

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MAJOR TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE CHECKLIST

ESTABLISH STRATEGIC LINKS

☐ What contribution will the initiative make to achieving the goals in your Agency's Corporate Plan? Is the initiative a priority for the Agency?

☐ To which of the current Government's key strategies and initiatives does the initiative contribute? These are outlined annually in the Budget Papers available at www.treasury.tas.gov.au.

☐ What are the benefits to your Agency and/or its clients from undertaking or engaging in the initiative?

☐ Does the initiative contribute to a Local Government Partnership Agreement with your Agency or a group of agencies? Contact your Agency Local Government Partnership Agreement Implementation Officer.

ESTABLISH A COLLECTIVE UNDERSTANDING

☐ Is the rationale for the initiative clear to you?

☐ Has a decision been made to move forward with the idea? Who is taking responsibility for progressing the idea at the development stage? Is there a clear mandate from the wider group and have they clarified their collaborative understanding of the idea?

☐ If no decision has been made to move forward with the idea, what process still needs to be undertaken to gain formal agreement to move forward with the idea?

☐ Who are the key stakeholders? Do you know their views about the issues being addressed? Is the list of stakeholders complete? Has any key group been left out inadvertently or deliberately?

☐ Have you got the key stakeholders together to develop a common vision for the initiative? Have you considered using methodologies such as Value Management?   Additional information on Value Management is available from the Institute of Value Management (Australia) at http://ivma.org.au/

☐ If the initiative involves a number of agencies, has a lead agency been clearly identified?

UNDERTAKE RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

☐ Has this or a similar initiatives been undertaken before? If so, what were the outcomes?

☐ Have you identified similar projects elsewhere that might help inform your initiative and collected information from any of these? These may be other Tasmanian Government agency projects, other levels of government or other jurisdictions.

IDENTIFY RELATED INITATIVES/PROJECTS

☐ Has a quick audit of existing initiatives throughout government been undertaken to check for potential duplication or overlap? If there is duplication or overlap, do you need a strategy for addressing this?

COMPLETE APPROVAL PROCESS

☐ Have you familiarised yourself with and completed the internal Agency process for getting initiatives approved?

☐ If required, have you familiarised yourself with and completed any whole-of-government or Commonwealth Government processes for getting initiatives approved?

☐ If required, have you familiarised yourself with and completed the external Agency (Budget Committee) process for getting funding for an initiative approved?

☐ Do you need to develop a Business Case? Templates are available in the Project Management documentation on this website.

☐ Have you identified the long-term financial sustainability of the initiative? For example, what are the measurable benefits for undertaking the initiative, over what period of time will the benefits be achieved and what re-current funding will be required?

☐ Have the decision making structures and processes been identified and agreed? Has accountability throughout the initiative been identified and agreed?

☐ Are the timelines and milestones for progressing the initiative clear and agreed?

☐ Has the Agency clearly identified the initiative as one of its priorities?

IDENTIFY FUNDING SOURCES

☐ What potential funding sources are there and how will these be pursued?

☐ Have you initiated budget discussions with your Agency's Finance Manager? Have you identified your Agency's Budget Analyst and discussed with the analyst the budget considerations and alternatives for funding?

☐ Have you studied the Guide for Government Buyers and made yourself familiar with the rules that govern government purchasing and the responsibilities of the government buyer, regardless of the value of the purchase? Visit www.purchasing.tas.gov.au

ICT OR IM CONSIDERATIONS

☐ Is the initiative consistent with your Agency's ICT Strategy? Have you discussed the initiative with your Agency's IT Section/Branch?

☐ If required, have you familiarised yourself with and completed the processes for getting whole-of-government ICT initiatives approved?

☐ Have you established any whole-of-government implications, considerations or opportunities for the initiative?

☐ Have you considered utilising a Business and ICT Consultancy Service?

☐ Have you examined the whole-of-government ICT and IM standards, guidelines and policies relevant to the initiative, including:

Guidelines for the Administration of Crown Copyright

Information Technology-Related Intellectual Property Policy Principles

Integrated Land Information

Name and Address Standards

Privacy

Records Management

National Minimum Data Set requirements (where they exist)

Tasmanian Government Information Security Framework

Tasmanian Evidence of Identify Framework – EOI Standards

Tasmanian Proof of Age Card – Application Form

Tasmanian Government Web Publishing Standards

☐ Additional information about these policies is available on this website

Have you reviewed the emerging examples of Better Practice within the Tasmanian Government?

PLANNING THE IMPLEMENTATION

☐ Has an analysis of the current business processes been considered?

☐ Has a baseline costing study been considered?

☐ Have you studied the *Tasmanian Government's Project Management Guidelines?* Visit on this website?

☐ Have you considered obtaining project management advice or assistance in relation to the application of the Tasmanian Government's project management methodology? Contact details are available at on this website.

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