



Australian Government

Department of Finance and Deregulation



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Gateway Review Process – Overview for the Senior Responsible Official

Introduction

This brochure provides an overview and practical guidance for anyone involved in a Gateway Review (Gateway). It supports and should be read in conjunction with the primary Gateway publications found on the Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance) website at: www.finance.gov.au/gateway.

Gateway is not an audit, a detailed technical review or an inquiry. Gateway identifies and focuses on issues that are most important to a project, so that the project team's effort is directed to those aspects that will help make the project successful. It is designed to assist the sponsoring agency to achieve its project objectives and deliver projects on time and within budget. It involves conducting a series of brief, independent reviews at critical stages in the development and implementation of a project.

The Gateway review findings and recommendations are provided to the sponsoring agency's Senior Responsible Official (SRO) at the conclusion of the review. It is the responsibility of the sponsoring agency to determine what action should be taken to address recommendations.

Who is the Senior Responsible Official?

The term SRO is a generic title for the official within a sponsoring agency who is the single point of overall accountability for the successful realisation of a project's outcomes and objectives. Typically, the SRO would be an officer at the Senior Executive Service Band 2 or Band 3 level.

The SRO is the official in the sponsoring agency who has the authority to make decisions affecting the progress of the project. However, the SRO is not responsible for the day-to-day management of a project – this is the project manager's role. In most instances the project manager reports to the SRO.

The Role of the Senior Responsible Official in Gateway

The SRO is responsible for meeting the sponsoring agency's obligations in preparing for, participating in, and implementing the recommendations of a Gateway review.

The review report from each review represents the advice from the Gateway review team to the SRO who is then responsible for determining the response to the recommendations contained in the report. Proactive involvement of the SRO throughout a Gateway review helps to maximise the benefits for their project from participating in Gateway.

The SRO should encourage the stakeholders associated with the project to develop a productive relationship with the Gateway team. The SRO is responsible for ensuring the full cooperation and support of those involved in the project and that the confidentiality of Gateway is protected.

Preparing for a Review

While Gateway aims to minimise the disruption to a project, the SRO should plan for the time commitment necessary from themselves and their project team during the review, and ensure enough time is set aside to work with the review team.

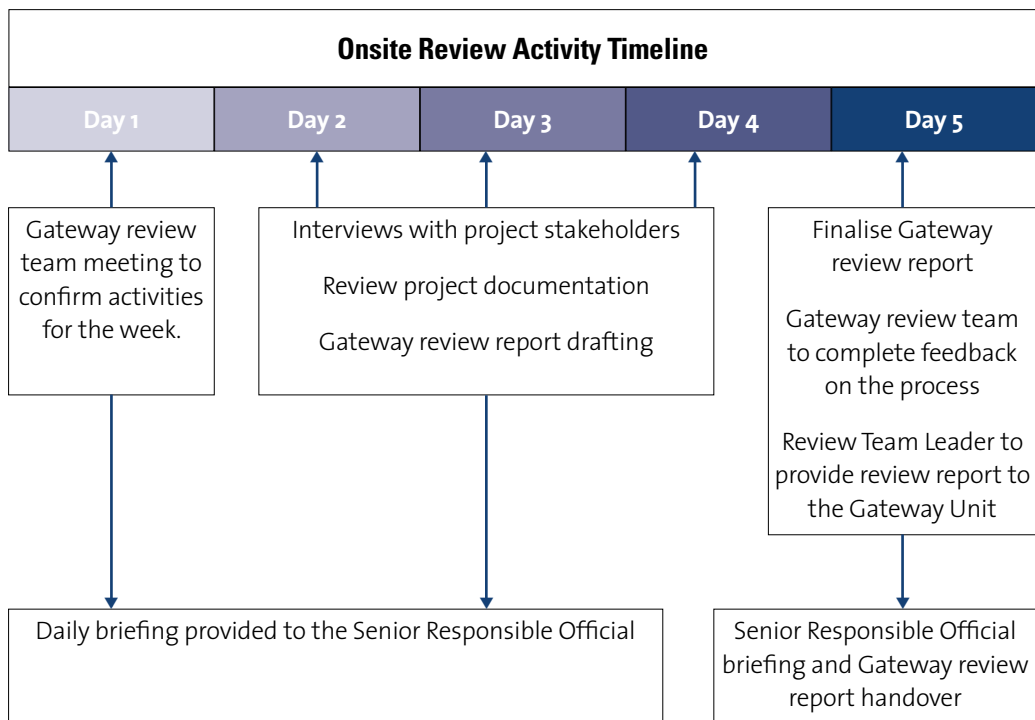
Reviews are scheduled at an assessment meeting between Finance’s Gateway Unit and the SRO. The Gateway methodology requires that new projects which are agreed to by the government are reviewed at specific points in a project’s life-cycle. Retrospective reviews are not a feature of Gateway; however combined or multiple reviews may be scheduled where: added assurance is needed; there are points of particular concern; a project’s life-cycle spreads over many years; or there are multiple rollouts or phases of delivery. This is determined in conjunction with the SRO.

Prior to Gateway the SRO needs to:

- be available for an assessment meeting with the Gateway Unit to discuss review preparations and to specify the skill requirements and security clearance needed for the Gateway review team members;
- brief the review team at the planning meeting on key aspects of the project;
- ensure the logistical requirements associated with the planning meeting and the on-site review activity are arranged by the project team;
- ensure meetings with stakeholders, as requested by the review team, are scheduled by the project team in time for the onsite review activity; and
- ensure requested documents are located and made available to the review team prior to and during the review as required.

A typical timeline for an on-site review activity is shown in Figure 1. This may change depending on the characteristics of the project and the availability of key project participants; but the onsite review activity should not exceed five working days.

Figure 1: Typical Timeline for the Onsite Review Activity



During the Review

During the on-site review activity the SRO must ensure that the review team has full and timely access to requested stakeholders and documentation.

This means that the Gateway review team:

- is provided with documentation requested at the planning meeting prior to the review;
- is provided with documentation requested during the review within one business day of the request; and
- does not have to justify its reasons for requesting access to documents and stakeholders.

The SRO needs to be available to attend a briefing by the review team on each day of the on-site review activity. This ensures the SRO is made aware of any emerging findings and that there are 'no surprises' in the final review report. During these briefings, the SRO may seek any clarification required from the review team, or correct any factual errors, particularly in the content of the draft report.

The SRO should be mindful that it is essential to the success of Gateway that the review team maintains its independence. The review team may examine any issues and documentation it feels is relevant to the Gate being reviewed and the point in time of the project. Reviewers are not restricted by the suggested topics, questions or documents set out in the guidance publications; these are not intended to provide an exhaustive list of all issues to be covered during a review, but to provide guidance on the sort of issues that could be looked at.

The review report will:

- follow an evidence-based approach derived from stakeholder interviews and project management documentation
- provide recommendations that are evidence-based, constructive and action oriented, and can contribute to the governance, assurance and overall success of the project, and
- provide an overall assessment of delivery confidence for the project at the Gate being assessed.

Post-Review

The final review report is provided to the SRO at the conclusion of the review. The report represents the advice from the review team to the SRO. The responsibility for deciding on appropriate action in response to the recommendations in a Gateway report remains entirely with the SRO and the sponsoring agency.

Gateway does not change the accountability of agencies for their projects in any way. The SRO is encouraged to ensure the project board, chief executive officer and where appropriate, their minister, are properly informed of the progress of the project, including the outcomes of any Gateway review.

It is left to the SRO to determine who has access to the review report, and to ensure that any requests made under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* are handled appropriately by the sponsoring agency.

At the conclusion of each Gateway review, the review team leader also provides a copy of the Gateway report to the Gateway Unit. This is intended to facilitate an early understanding of issues arising from reviews and to enable timely compilation and dissemination of non-attributable Lessons Learned Reports.

A copy of the review report is also provided to the next review team prior to the planning meeting as part of the pre-reading documentation for any subsequent review.

An enhanced notification process is in place so that, if a project is experiencing problems, early remedial intervention can occur. This involves the Finance Secretary writing to the relevant agency chief executive to advise that the Gateway review team has raised concerns. This advice asks the agency to consider appropriate escalation action, including advising the relevant minister, the Secretaries of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and Finance, and further investigating the findings through separate in-depth inquiry or review. Enhanced notification applies throughout the project life-cycle and is triggered by incidences of red or sequential amber ratings.

Cooperation and Confidentiality

Independence

To maintain the independence of the review team, the sponsoring agency or SRO cannot limit the way the review is conducted, what issues are covered or excluded from the review, or whom the team interviews. They also cannot limit the team's access to any relevant documentation or alter the recommendations which appear in the final report.

In addition, the sponsoring agency or SRO should not request that the review team take on additional work relating to the project on behalf of the sponsoring agency while undertaking the review. This includes asking the review team to address areas outside the scope of the review or making presentations about the review findings after the on-site review activity is complete.

Confidentiality

Gateway's success is dependent on its commitment to confidentiality through all aspects of the review process. For this reason the review team will meet project personnel and other stakeholders individually unless the review team considers an alternative arrangement to be preferable. Meetings are held in-confidence with no scribes or transcripts. There is no attribution of individual comments in a Gateway report. The only permanent record of the review process and discussions is the final review report. All project information is left with the sponsoring agency and the review team's personal notes are destroyed on the final day of the review.

Cooperation

The philosophy underpinning Gateway is one of collaboration. It is very difficult for a review team to add value to a project unless it is given full cooperation as defined by the principles outlined in this brochure and the Guidance and Handbook documents— independence, full access and confidentiality.

The decision as to whether full cooperation is being provided by a sponsoring agency rests with the review team and in particular the review team leader. If full cooperation is not provided

during a Gateway review, the review team can avail itself of a number of redress options including: mentioning the matter in the final report; making recommendations which recognise the limitations to access; or suspending and/or cancelling the review. The decision to cancel or suspend a review can be taken at any time.

If the review team feels it is receiving insufficient cooperation from the sponsoring agency to be able to continue with or complete a review it will consult with the Gateway Unit. Following this consultation, should the review team decide to discontinue the review, it will advise the SRO and the Gateway Unit. The Gateway Unit then advises the Secretary of the Department of Finance and Deregulation of its decision.

In accordance with accepted Gateway methodology, the costs incurred due to not proceeding with a review on this basis, or as a result of the cancellation of a review by the sponsoring agency, may be recovered from the sponsoring agency. These costs include, but are not limited to, travel and accommodation costs and consultancy fees incurred by the review team.

If, however, it becomes evident to the SRO that the project is not at a point when it is suitable to undertake the relevant Gate review, they must discuss with the Gateway Unit whether the review is to proceed as planned. If it is decided that the review is to be postponed, and the Gateway Unit determines that reasonable notice has been given, then the review arrangements may be rescheduled without cost to the sponsoring agency.

Summary of Agency Responsibilities in a Gateway Review

To help make Gateway successful, the sponsoring agency is required to provide:

- pre-reading materials to the review team
- a strategic presentation on the project including budget, timetable and key deliverables
- a schedule of confirmed appointments with stakeholders
- a list of project documentation, and
- suitable meeting room facilities including a laptop, printer and storage for secure documents.

Further details of the agency's responsibilities are provided to the sponsoring agency prior to a review.

The Gateway Unit

The SRO is encouraged to contact the Gateway Unit at any point to seek advice or discuss any queries or concerns. In the event of any methodological issues arising in relation to a review, these should be raised with the unit at the earliest opportunity.

Acknowledgement

The information used is based on material from the *Successful Delivery Toolkit*; UK Office of Government Commerce (OGC) 2007. The *Successful Delivery Toolkit* is a Crown Copyright Value Added Document, is owned and developed by the OGC and subject of Crown Copyright protection. It is reproduced under licence with kind permission of the OGC. OGC Gateway is a trade mark of the Office of Government Commerce.

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Enquiries regarding the Gateway Review Process should be directed to:

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