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| Project/Tranche/Programme name | *Delete as appropriate* | | |
| Date: |  | | |
| Author: |  | | |
| Document reference: |  | Version: |  |

## Revision History

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| Date | Summary of changes | Version |
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**Approvals**

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| Name | Version | Date | Approval context | Signature |
|  |  |  | *E.g. whether approval is outline or full; whether it is part of the identification or definition phase; whether it is a revision related to an exception plan, etc.* | *The signature of the person giving approval, usually the sponsor. If approval is not being given by the sponsor, the approval context should explain why.* |
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**Distribution**

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| Distributed to: | Version | Date | Signature |
|  |  |  | *The signature of the person responsible for distribution* |
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## Background

*This initial section will explain the context of the project or programme. Any assumptions made in preparing the business case will be documented here along with constraints and dependencies on other projects or programmes. Any impact that this work will have on other projects or programmes should also be noted.*

*In the outline version of the business case that forms part of the project or programme brief this section will not be necessary as it is covered by the corresponding section in the brief. Once the brief has been authorised the full business case is developed in defining a project or programme, the background information can then be transferred to this document and updated throughout the project or programme.*

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| Context | The original or updated mandate would provide useful context, as would information about the setting and environment of the work. |
| Assumptions | Most delivery plans are dependent on assumptions and these must be clearly listed, e.g. assumptions about:   * regulatory approval; * completion of a company acquisition; * award of a client contract; * etc. |
| Constraints | Anything that could constrain the work should be listed here, such as:   * noise restrictions; * limited access to a physical site or working system; * the impact of time zones on teams; * etc. |
| Dependencies | Dependencies are where there are connections between projects or programmes that affect the achievement of objectives:  The following may be listed (for example):   * outputs of this work that are inputs to other projects or programmes; * outputs of other projects or programmes that are inputs to this one. |

## Summary

*All aspects of project or programme delivery will be summarised at a sufficient level to enable the justification for the work to be understood.*

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| Scope *Summary of objectives, in terms of outputs, outcomes and benefits as appropriate.* | What this section needs to describe may range from a single output on a non-complex project to multiple outputs, outcomes and benefits on a complex programme.  It will start with a high level statement of the scope and go on to summarise (as appropriate):   * all principle outputs; * all principle outcomes; * all major benefits; * all major dis-benefits; * an explanation of the relationships between the above, e.g. an influence diagram; * anything excluded from scope. |
| Schedule *High level schedule with start and finish dates for major sections of work such as phases, tranches, stages or projects within a programme.* | It would be very easy for this section to be over complicated. The key thing to remember is that sufficient detail is required to enable a decision to be made about authorisation – any more is superfluous.  Milestone plans and high level Gantt Charts are a good way of summarising a schedule.  In the identification phase of the life cycle the schedule is likely to be based on parametric or comparative estimating techniques.  In the definition phase the information shown here will be a true summary of more detailed information.  There should be clarity on:   * overall estimated timescale; * how the schedule has been calculated; * the level of confidence in the schedule and reserves included. |
| Finance *Funding arrangements and a summary cash flow.* | Normally this section only has to deal with costs but on larger projects and some programmes there may be potential for interim benefits to generate income.  The following should be clear:   * the current cost estimate for the work; * the level of confidence in the schedule and reserves included; * how the funding will be provided; * the timing of the funds; * any potential for self-funding. |
| Risk *Major risks and the overall risk profile.* | Both overall levels of risk and major risk events should be summarised. It is useful to relate the overall level of risk to the risk context of the host organisation.  This section should clarify:   * the overall degree of risk to scope, schedule and cost estimates; * major risk events; * proposed mitigation of major risk events. |
| Resource *Sources of resource, contract arrangements, summary volumes.* | This section is a primary factor in judging the achievability of the project or programme. It must be clear how the work will be resourced.  Typical information will describe:   * results of make or buy analyses; * potential and confirmed external suppliers; * potential and confirmed internal suppliers; * proposed payment methods and forms of contract management.   Identification of key resources based on a sensitivity analysis would also be useful. |
| Change *Breadth and depth of change required.* | All programmes include an element of change management as do some projects. Projects that only deliver outputs, or are part of a programme, could omit this section.  Information provided should cover:   * the nature of the change; * who will be affected; * external factors that will affect successful change. |
| Stakeholders *Key supporters and opponents.* | Only the most influential stakeholders will be listed here with some indication of their interest and influence. This could comprise a simple stakeholder map with reference to more detailed stakeholder management information.  This section should describe:   * the most influential supportive stakeholders ; * the most influential and antagonistic stakeholders; * extracts from the communication plan to illustrate how these stakeholders will be engaged. |

## Justification

*This is the key section. It weighs the benefits of the work against the investment needed to achieve them. In this context the terms benefits and investment can be broadly interpreted.*

*The simplest justification will be purely financial. If the benefits have a certain cash value and the investment cost is less, then the work can be justified.*

*However, justification is often not that simple. A project or programme will have to balance the ‘investment’ in terms of risk taken; it may need to consider ecological ‘costs’; intangible benefits may need complex valuations; it may simply be that the ‘do nothing’ option has unacceptable consequences.*

*The do nothing and rejected options are an important part of the outline business case during the process of identifying a project or programme. They are less important once definition is underway and can certainly be omitted as the business case is updated during the delivery phase.*

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| Recommended justification *Explanations of why the recommended option is the best course of action.* | This is the central element of the business case. It must confirm that the project or programme is achievable, and demonstrate how it is beneficial and viable.  The information contained here will be derived from an investment appraisal. Typically it will demonstrate that the benefits of the work are valued more highly than the costs. Depending upon the complexity of the work it could contain information on:   * valuations of tangible benefits; * payback period; * net present value; * internal rate of return; * estimated value of non-tangible benefits. |
| Do nothing option *The consequences of staying with the status quo.* | This section explains what would happen if the project or programme did not take place.  In some cases it would simply mean that some output or benefit was not achieved, i.e. an opportunity for a positive outcome was missed.  However, it could be that the work deals with an impending negative outcome such as failure to meet changing customer demands.  Another possibility is that the work is necessary just to stay in business, e.g. operational changes required to keep trading after a change in legislation. |
| Rejected options *A summary of options that were considered but rejected.* | This section describes the options that were rejected in favour of the recommended option.  The level of detail included here depends on the target audience and the format of the recommended option.  For example, it may be sufficient just to list the options rejected with reference to the availability of the detailed analyses.  Alternatively, it may be beneficial to quote headline figures of, for example cost benefit analyses, to clearly demonstrate why the recommended option was chosen. |