

Improvement Service Design Authority

DA 5.2 Programme Assurance Terms of Reference



Customer:	Improvement Service
Customer SRO	Colin Mair, CEO
Customer Programme Director:	Alison Jaap ; Head of Partnerships and Joint Ventures

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Name	Organisation	Role/Responsibility
Colin Mair	Improvement Service	Project Sponsor
Alison Jaap	Improvement Service	Project Director

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Name	Signature	Date
Alison Jaap	Electronic Signature - <i>Alison Jaap</i>	18/01/2007

Contents

1	Introduction.....	4
1.1	Document Context.....	4
1.2	Purpose of this document	4
2	Goals	5
3	Accountability	5
4	Key Responsibilities	6
5	Scope	8
6	Methods.....	8

1 Introduction

1.1 *Document Context*

This document is the Programme Assurance Terms of Reference for the National Shared Services Programme.

The document describes the assurance arrangements undertaken by the Design Authority (DA) and the responsibilities of the national projects to support assurance. The detailed programme assurance arrangements are defined in D5.0 Programme Assurance Arrangements.

1.2 *Purpose of this document*

The document is structured to provide clarity on the programme assurance arrangements for national projects. It aims to answer the following key questions:

- What is the scope of the programme assurance?
- Who is involved in the programme assurance and what are their roles and responsibilities?
- What are the assurance arrangements?
- How will the assurance arrangements be implemented?
- How will it impact the project?
- Where do I find out more about the assurance arrangements?

2 Goals

The National Shared Services Board (NSSB) are supporting a number of projects to deliver efficiency gains within local government through the delivery of shared services. To ensure the success of the projects from a national perspective the NSSB requires the Design Authority (DA) to provide programme assurance. The primary goals of programme assurance are to:

- ensure that national projects are aligned to the national shared service strategy;
- ensure that projects are progressing in line with plans and will deliver the expected outcomes;
- ensure that national standards are applied and where possible national or regional infrastructure are re-used; and
- support the sharing of best practice / knowledge across the Scottish local government community;

3 Accountability

The NSSB are accountable for:

- commissioning projects within the National Shared Service Programme;
- maintaining a balanced portfolio of projects that deliver a comprehensive geographic and service coverage;
- controlling release of funds to projects at suitable intervals;
- ensuring that benefits are monitored throughout the life of the project; and
- ensuring that projects receive the required support from the DA;

The national projects are accountable for:

- delivering outcomes that benefit the wider local government community;
- contributing knowledge and best practice to the IS Knowledgebase;

4 Key Responsibilities

The NSSB is responsible for the following key activities:

- Provide strategic direction for the development of shared services and shared capacity in local government.
- Provide recommendations to the Efficiency and Reform Fund for funding of projects within local government that will improve efficiency and create shared services and capacity.
- Provide strategic management oversight, decision making and monitoring of the overall performance of projects agreed through the NSSB to ensure:
 - Projects deliver against their agreed plan and business case
 - Projects maximise the use of existing national infrastructure
 - Projects represent an efficient and effective use of resources across the wider local government community
 - Links are made between individual projects and any relevant programmes of work across the wider public sector
 - Knowledge is shared between projects and projects benefit the wider local government community.
- Promote the development and delivery of efficiencies in local government through shared services and shared capacity.
- Ensure effective stakeholder engagement and communication.

The national projects are responsible for the following key activities:

- Provide managerial responsibility for the delivery of projects/programme as defined within their business case.
- Maintain a strategic overview of their project/ programme, including the scope, quality and risks.
- Ensure alignment with the national shared services strategy.
- Set the overall programme parameters and ensure delivery on time and on budget.
- Set targets and monitor progress and performance.
- Make executive decisions and/or endorse decisions as appropriate.
- Ensure effective engagement of users and stakeholders.
- Support collaborative working and knowledge sharing across the NSSB work programme.

The Design Authority is responsible for the following key activities:

- providing the NSSB with a commentary on new proposals and funding requests;
- assisting projects throughout the lifecycle to align with the national strategy, architecture, share knowledge and understand best practice;
- maintain a register of projects;
- to provide regular project updates to the NSSB and highlight any concerns;
- to track benefits across the national projects through a central register;

- to undertake architectural / design reviews at key points within a project to ensure alignment to national objectives and standards;
- to ensure that the implementation plans for national projects are aligned to the national strategy and that national or regional procurement is considered where appropriate;
- to ensure that the national project acceptance criteria accommodate the requirements of the NSS Board.
- to ensure that the deliverables meet the DA acceptance criteria and that the organisation is in a fit state to proceed; and
- to ensure that the national perspective is included in future plans and to identify lessons that could be applied to other national projects.

5 Scope

The DA will provide programme assurance throughout the life cycle of the national projects. The DA will report progress to the NSSB, provide them with commentary on proposals, support projects in aligning to the national objectives and track benefits centrally.

6 Methods

The detailed programme assurance methods are defined within D5.0 Programme Assurance Arrangements. The approach and methods have been based on industry best practice, for example PRINCE2, OGC Gateway Reviews and COBIT.

The programme assurance lifecycle defines a number of key decision points at which a more formal interaction occurs with the projects, DA and NSSB. These are:

- *Commissioning a project* – the process of a project joining the national programme;
- *Project review* – initially undertaken after project mobilisation to ensure the project is in a good state, also undertaken at subsequent points as required;
- *Architecture Review* – to ensure that design is robust and is aligned to national requirements;
- *Funding Review* – where additional funding is required the NSSB must be sure the business case is robust;
- *Readiness for Service Review* – to ensure that the deliverables are robust, ensure that pre-rollout tasks are complete and strategic plans are in place;
- *Migration / Implementation Review* – identifies lessons learned from the implementation and proposes recommendations for future national projects; and
- *Benefit Review* – ensures that a project delivers the benefits and value for money identified in the business case.

The Programme Assurance Arrangements discusses the key questions that need answering at these decision points. There is a mapping between the decision points and the OGC gates. Where a project must undertake Gateway Reviews the DA would not impose additional reviews.

The Programme Assurance Arrangements also describe the detailed activities that support the assurance arrangements, setting out the rationale for each activity, the inputs and outputs for the activity and roles and responsibilities.