Government Function: Project Delivery

Continuous improvement assessment framework

Approved

This document supports the **Government Functional Standard for Project Delivery** which sets expectations for the direction and management of portfolios, programmes and projects in government departments and arm's length bodies.

The suite of functional standards, and associated guidance, can be found at **GOV.UK government functional standards**[1].

This assessment framework should be read in conjunction with the government functional standard [2]. The meaning of words is as defined in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, except where defined in the Glossary in Annex B.

Version 2 of this document replaces version 1.0 and has the same purpose, scope and intent. The main changes relate to general enhancements derived from the trial. Changes made reflect version 2.1 of the functional standard, which has led to the themes in this document being amended to mirror the headings in the standard.

For more information, please contact **standards@ipa.gov.uk**.

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Key to arrows

↑ Request direction, advice and decisions
Report progress, escalate issues and risks

↓ Provide direction, advice and decisions
Keep appraised of context and risk

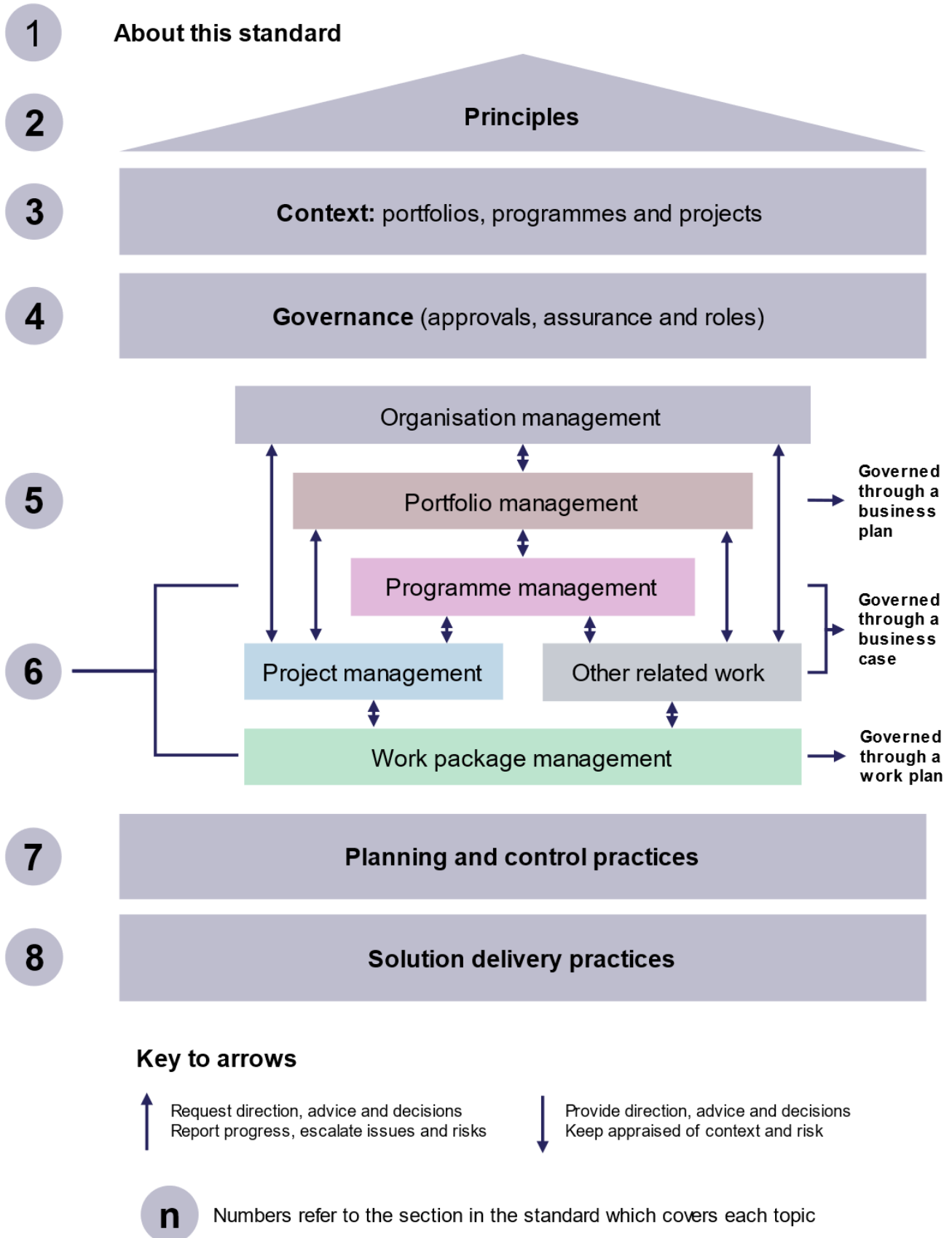**n** Numbers refer to the section in the standard which covers each topic

Figure 1 The structure and scope of functional standard GovS: 002 Project Delivery version 2.1

1   Purpose and scope of the assessment framework

1.1   Purpose of this continuous improvement assessment framework

This assessment framework is designed to help drive continuous improvement within and across government, by helping government organisations assess their adherence to, and practical application of the project delivery functional standard [2]. This assessment framework is consistent with assessment frameworks for other functions, so that senior leaders can take a coherent view of performance across all functions in their organisation.

This assessment framework draws on, but does not replace, the project delivery functional standard [2], which should be complied with and should be read in conjunction with that functional standard. This assessment framework is designed for people undertaking assessments of their organisations and for people taking organisational improvement actions as a result of the completed assessment.

This assessment framework is not intended to be used to assess individual programmes or projects.

1.2   Scope of this continuous improvement assessment framework

This assessment framework applies to how government organisations manage project delivery, as defined in GovS002, Project delivery [2]. It can be used as a tool for organisational performance improvement:

- in all departments and arm's length bodies
- whether for digital, infrastructure, transformation, service delivery, military capability, property, regulatory compliance or other purposes
- regardless of delivery methodologies or techniques used

The structure and scope of the functional standard is shown in Figure 1.

2   Using this assessment framework

2.1   How the framework relates to the functional standard

This continuous improvement assessment framework draws on its related functional standard and includes a set of statements indicating different levels of organisational capability against aspects of the standard, ranging from non-compliance or adopting ('developing'), through 'meeting the minimum' ('good'), to better and best, as shown in Figure 2.

The framework draws attention to how the requirements of the functional standard can be implemented in organisations of different maturities so that the organisation's leaders can plan improvement initiatives where needed. Not every organisation, or part of every organisation, needs to operate at the 'best' capability level. Good means that all mandatory elements, and the most important advisory elements, are met.
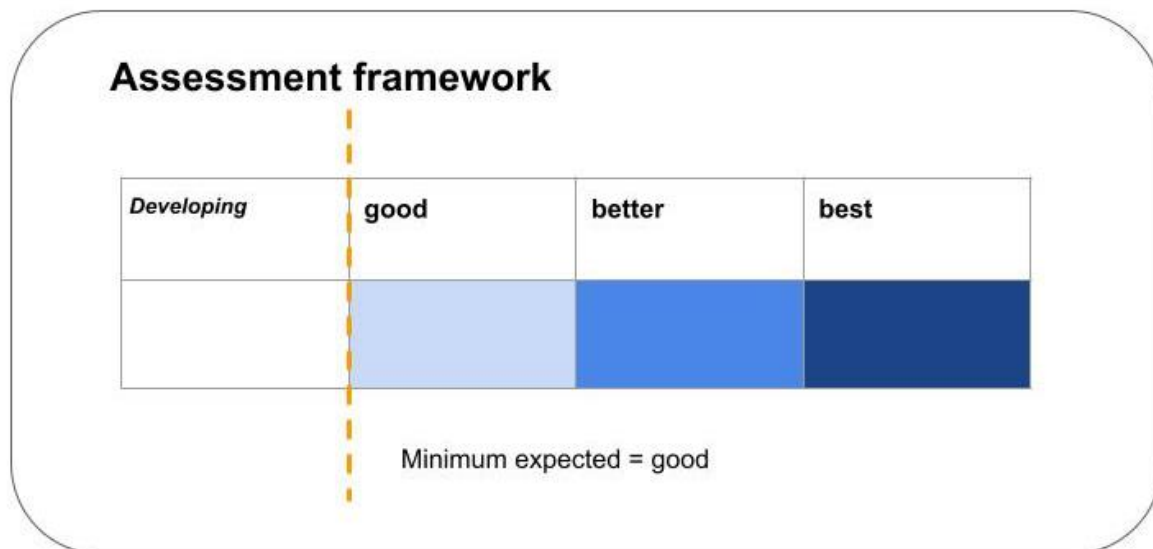
Figure 2 Good, better and best

2.2   The structure of the continuous improvement assessment framework

The structure of the assessment framework is designed to give an indicative picture of how well an organisation is doing. It covers:

Theme: the overall topic being addressed

  Practice area: what is being assessed

    Criteria: the statements to be met

Themes: A theme is the overall topic being addressed in that section of the assessment framework. The context and more information about the themes addressed can be found in the functional standard.

Practice areas: Each theme comprises practice areas. Each practice area has an overall statement about what is expected. A practice area might relate to one or more clauses in the functional standard.

Assessment criteria: Each practice area is supported by a number of criteria. Criteria help to define what is happening in an organisation (observable in practice, backed up by evidence). Criteria denote 'good', 'better' or 'best' performance. Refer to the project delivery functional standard for context and detail. For example, the content of a 'governance and management framework' is described in the governance section of the standard.

2.3   Assessing an organisation

Before starting an assessment, the boundaries of the organisation being assessed need to be defined. A whole department or arm's length body can be covered, or the assessment can be limited to a defined part. Be careful when defining the boundaries in terms of a specific business area, the perceived remit of the associated management team might be too narrow for the assessment criteria to make sense. On the other hand, dividing a large organisation, where performance across the organisation varies, into its major groups can help pin-point where improvements are needed (see Figure 3).

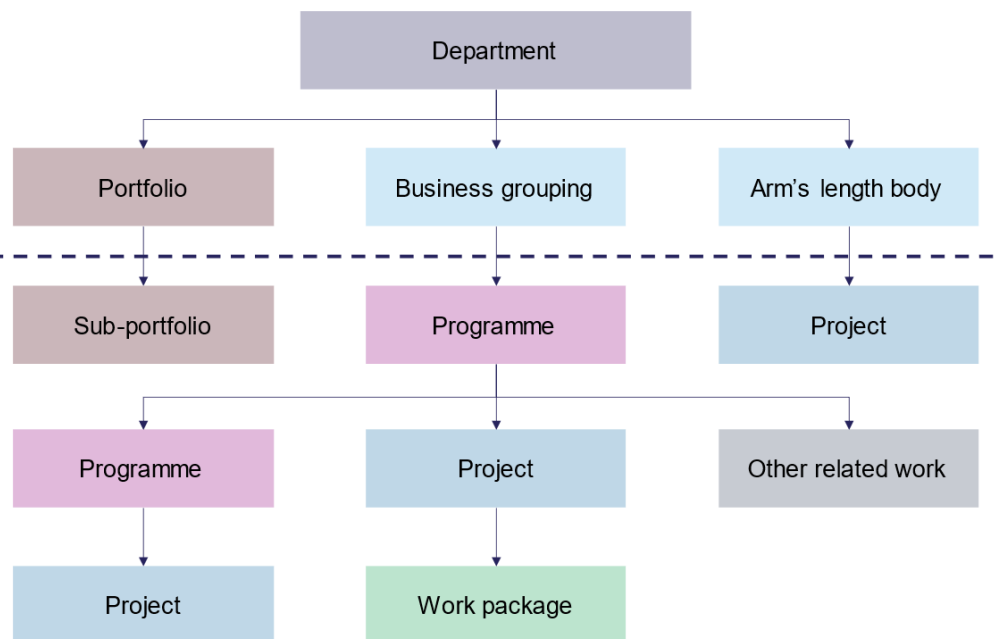**In scope of the assessment framework**

The assessment framework should only be used where there are clear organisational boundaries for the entire project delivery function.

For example, this could be an entire department, portfolio, business grouping or arm's length body.

Out of scope of the assessment framework

The assessment framework should not be used for organisational structures such as programmes, projects and work packages in isolation.

These structures could, however, be used for sampling purposes to inform an assessment.

Figure 3 Application of the assessment structure to organisational structures

Attitude is key. This assessment framework is a tool to support organisational improvement, and the assessment will add no value unless there is honesty in response to the criteria. The assessment should be concerned with identifying opportunities to improve the way the organisation operates.

In order to be 'good', 'better' or 'best', an organisation needs to meet all the criteria for that level across all the themes. By default, failure to meet at least 'good' in one or more practice areas means the organisation is 'developing'. Business leaders should set ambitions for their organisation based on business need, as set out in their strategies and/or plans. For some

organisations 'good' might be sufficient. For other organisations, their area of business might dictate that meeting 'best' is necessary.

An organisation needs to meet all the criteria of any lower level in order to comply with the higher level. For example, an organisation cannot be 'better' if it doesn't meet all the criteria for 'good'.

Most functional standards rely on other functional standards (as listed in clause 1.3 of every functional standard). This interdependency means that for an organisation to be operating effectively it needs to consider such dependencies carefully and their impact on the organisation's operations. For example, project delivery in the public sector often relies heavily on contractors undertaking a significant amount of work. Where this is the case, an organisation could not consider itself fully capable in project delivery without an appropriate level of capability in commercial work.

Further guidance on assessment frameworks can be found in the **Guide to continuous improvement against functional standards** [1].

2.4   Characteristics of good, better and best for project delivery

Good: each portfolio, programme and project has a defined way for managing its work in conformance with the project delivery functional standard. Portfolio management is recognised, and the organisation knows what work is included in its portfolio(s). Delivery and management approaches can differ among portfolios, programmes and projects. Lessons are learned and applied locally.

Note: 'good' includes the requirements ('shall' statements) from the functional standard and the most important advisory elements.

Better: the organisation has a defined and established way of authorising work to proceed and undertaking project delivery, which can be tailored to be appropriate and proportionate to the work being undertaken. Lessons are reviewed and recorded at the start and end of programmes, projects and other related work and their phases. Performance improvement is embedded in the organisation's practices through updates to its management framework, learning and development offerings and by communications. More advanced ways of undertaking some practices are evident. The organisation is capable of managing significant transformational change.

Best: the governance and direction of project delivery is fully integrated with the governance and direction of the organisation. Performance improvement is based on quantitative measures and evidence taken from across the organisation. The organisation is capable of managing strategic transformational change. Technology is used to make the undertaking of some practices more reliable, effective and efficient. Learning from experience and organisational improvement is continuous.

2.5   Using the output of an assessment

Completed assessments can be used to help identify and share good practices, address perceived weaknesses in the performance of the organisation and as input to continuous improvement activity.

The completed assessment framework is for internal government management, designed to facilitate frank and open discussion around performance. Completed assessments are not intended for publication.

2.6 The structure of this assessment framework

The table below sets out the structure of the assessment framework, listing the practice areas addressed in each theme.

Theme 1: Governance of project delivery

Practice area 1.1	Governance and management framework
Practice area 1.2	Assurance
Practice area 1.3	Decision making
Practice area 1.4	Roles and responsibilities

Theme 2: Leadership and capability

Practice area 2.1	Senior leadership
Practice area 2.2	Resource requirements and allocation
Practice area 2.3	Recruitment, development and accreditation

Theme 3: Portfolio management

Practice area 3.1	Portfolio management framework
Practice area 3.2	Portfolio strategy, definition and planning
Practice area 3.3	Directing and managing portfolio delivery

Theme 4: Programme and project management

Practice area 4.1	Programme and project management framework and life cycle
Practice area 4.2	Identifying and initiating the programme/project
Practice area 4.3	Directing and managing the programme/project
Practice area 4.4	Closing the programme/project

Theme 5: Planning and control

Practice area 5.1	Planning
Practice area 5.2	Benefits management
Practice area 5.3	Reporting
Practice area 5.4	Risk and issues management
Practice area 5.5	Change control and traceability
Practice area 5.6	Information management
Practice area 5.7	Stakeholder and communications management

Theme 6: Finance and commercial

Practice area 6.1	Finance
Practice area 6.2	Procurement and contract management

Theme 7: Solution delivery

Practice area 7.1	Requirements
Practice area 7.2	Solution design, development and integration
Practice area 7.3	Verification and validation
Practice area 7.4	Change, transition management and outcomes
Practice area 7.5	Learning from experience

3   Assessment framework

3.1   Theme 1 Governance of project delivery

The purpose of governance is to authorise, direct, empower and oversee management to ensure the objectives of the organisation are met within the defined constraints.

Note: this theme applies to project delivery generally, including portfolios, programmes, projects and other related work. Themes 3 to 8 include detailed criterion for the individual practices to be covered.

Practice area 1.1 Governance and management framework

Appropriate and proportionate governance and management of project delivery is defined, established and integrated with the organisation's overall governance framework.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) A governance and management framework is defined and established for each portfolio, programme and project which complies with government and departmental policies and directives and with the Project delivery functional standard [2] (see Note 1). b) Each portfolio's, programme's and project's governance and management framework includes the authority limits, decision making roles and rules, degree of autonomy, assurance needs, reporting structure and accountabilities. c) The governance and associated management frameworks (see practice areas 3.1 and 4.1) and controls are proportionate and appropriate to the work and the level of prevailing risk. d) The project delivery governance and management framework is referenced from the respective Accounting Officer System Statement.	e) The organisation has a defined, coherent, accessible and established project delivery governance and management framework which complies with the Project delivery functional standard [2] (see Note 1). f) Compliance with the organisation's defined governance framework is monitored, and preventative and corrective action taken if needed. g) The organisation uses a combination of tiering and categorisation to decide the appropriate and proportionate effort for management, and for the selection of key roles for each programme, project and other related work.	h) Tailoring guidelines and criteria are defined and established to enable managers to apply the organisation's project delivery governance and management frameworks appropriately and proportionately. i) The organisation uses defined metrics for monitoring compliance with significant aspects of the governance framework. j) The organisation's project delivery governance and management framework is reviewed at defined intervals to verify that it is operating effectively and reflects evolving good practice.

Note 1: whilst each programme or project in 'Good' needs its own governance and management framework, this can be tailored from an organisational project delivery governance and management framework, which is a feature of 'Better'.

Practice area 1.2 Assurance

The organisation has effective mechanisms in place to provide assurance that work is on track to deliver the required outcomes and benefits and is being managed in line with the defined governance and management frameworks.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) An organisational project delivery assurance strategy is defined and aligned to the organisation's integrated assurance strategy.	g) Assurance at each level is integrated with the higher-level assurance frameworks and has cross-functional representation.	k) Independent assurance reviews are undertaken at portfolio level.
b) A 'three lines of defence' model is defined and established for each programme and project, including bringing in independent assurance when appropriate.	h) The level of assurance applied is proportionate to the complexity, value and risk of the work.	l) The organisational project delivery assurance framework is designed and maintained to reflect the prevailing organisational risks.
c) Projects meeting the government's major project criteria are recorded and have an Integrated Assurance and Approvals Plan, validated by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority and HM Treasury.	i) Assurance is conducted with an emphasis on identifying early warning indicators. j) The costs and benefits of assurance activities are both understood and budgeted for at an organisational level.	m) Assurance reviews are coordinated across assurance providers to optimise their effectiveness while minimising disruption to delivery teams.
d) For government major projects, assurance reviews are undertaken by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority or as delegated by them.		n) Lessons learned from reviews are regularly evaluated to draw out wider lessons for the organisation.
e) Assurance reviews are planned and take place throughout the life cycle and in particular, prior to significant decisions and are carried out by people with relevant skills, experience and expertise.		o) The effectiveness of the assurance framework is reviewed annually to identify opportunities to improve assurance practices further.
f) Recommendations identified in assurance reviews are documented and acted upon in a timely fashion.		

Practice area 1.3 Decision making

Decisions are made after evaluating alternative options and the recommended choice of solution has been justified.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) Those authorised to make each significant decision, who should advise them and when the decision is required, are defined and established.	g) Methods and criteria are defined and established across the organisation for evaluating alternative options, ranking those options and selecting the preferred solution.	i) Scenario and sensitivity analyses are used to inform decision making.
b) Decision-making criteria and arrangements for escalation are defined and established.	h) Decisions are made within the context of the performance and risk profile of the current portfolio and proposed initiatives.	j) Assurance information is used at an organisational level to support senior decision making and improve the quality of decisions.
c) Decisions are escalated if outside a person's delegated authority.		k) Decisions are based on actual outcomes in a reference class of similar decisions to that being addressed.
d) Decisions are made taking account of benefits, and risks and an assessment of alternative options.		
e) The Accounting Officer has approved each government major project's business case prior to submission to HM Treasury for approval, supported by an Accounting Officer Assessment.		
f) There is an audit trail for significant decisions.		

Practice area 1.4 Roles and responsibilities

The organisation structure and roles are defined, are appropriate to the work being undertaken and are used to identify the individuals and cross-functional teams needed to achieve the objectives.

Note: Theme 2 covers skills and recruitment.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) Project delivery accountabilities and responsibilities are defined, in each portfolio's, programme's or project's governance and management framework.	d) The organisation has working practices to enable subject matter experts to provide advice and contribute outside their immediate business area.	f) The organisation has working practices to enable people to be assigned and managed on a temporary basis on multiple programmes and projects across the organisation.
b) Accountabilities and responsibilities are traceable across all levels of management.	e) Responsibilities are reviewed prior to starting a new phase of work (such as a new stage or tranche) to ensure they remain current.	
c) There is an organisation chart showing the reporting lines for each project delivery role, with names assigned to each active role.		

3.2   Theme 2 Leadership and capability

The purpose of leadership and capability is to have effective 'top-down' leadership who promote the development of their teams so that individuals can progress and resources are available when needed.

Practice area 2.1 Senior leadership		
Skilled, competent and experienced individuals actively lead and direct the work.		
Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) Senior leaders have experience appropriate to the work assigned to them and level of prevailing risk. b) The sponsoring body each senior responsible owner is accountable to, is named. c) The organisation's senior leaders devote sufficient time to carry out their project delivery accountabilities. d) There is an effective and documented handover when a senior leadership role changes. For a government major project IPA is notified and approves a change of senior responsible owner. e) Senior leaders act as role models for behaviours which promote inclusiveness, openness, team working and success (see Note 1).	f) There is a senior officer in the organisation accountable for the development and improvement of the organisation's project delivery governance and management frameworks. g) The organisation's senior leaders and sponsoring bodies take account of portfolio strategy, plans and performance when making decisions (see Note 1). h) Senior responsible owners act in the wider interests of the portfolio their programme or project is part of (see Note 1).	i) The organisation's senior leaders are assessed on their contribution to achieving outcomes and realising benefits (see Note 1). j) There is continuity of senior responsible owner throughout the programme or project, with succession planning to ensure necessary changes are managed smoothly. k) Surveys show satisfaction in the organisation's leadership in project delivery is in the upper quartile.

Note 1: Evidence for these criteria can be gained through conversations with a sample of senior leaders to gain their perspectives.

Practice area 2.2 Resource requirements and allocation

The capability and capacity of the resources required to undertake current and forecast work are understood and managed to be available when needed so that appropriate resources are available and deployed at the right time.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) Skills and competencies for project delivery roles are defined.	f) Capacity and capability plans are defined and used to obtain and develop resources based on the needs of the portfolio and its medium to long term plans.	i) Resources are allocated taking into account the organisation's risk appetite.
b) An outline view of resource needs for proposed and current work is available and maintained.		j) Teams have access to the necessary temporary resources from internal and external sources.
c) Possible shortfalls in resources are identified and actions are taken to address them.	g) Resources are deployed across the organisation, regardless of the individual's business area or cost centre.	k) If undertaken, staff surveys show satisfaction in workload is in the upper quartile.
d) Work is undertaken in multidisciplinary teams and is assigned to people who have the required capability, capacity, tools and facilities to undertake the work.	h) Individuals can directly identify and access the necessary specialist expertise to support their assignment, for example through a support office or functional centre of expertise.	
e) Managers can request and secure the necessary specialist expertise, including (but not limited to) policy, technical, security, analytical and health and safety expertise.		

Practice area 2.3 Recruitment, development and accreditation

Individuals and teams are skilled and experienced to undertake their assigned roles efficiently and effectively and have the opportunity to develop skills and experience needed to undertake future roles.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) Senior responsible owners of government major projects are enrolled on, graduated or exempted from MPLA training (see Note 1). b) Resources are acquired or developed to meet the planned needs of the organisation's portfolio(s). c) A defined skills and competency framework is used to select or recruit the individuals assigned to the roles required in each programme and project. d) End dates of work assignments are known, and individuals are given time and support to find and transition to other assignments. e) The organisation provides access to appropriate induction and project delivery training for staff.	f) Senior responsible owners of organisationally defined major projects are enrolled on, graduated or exempted from MPLA training (see Note 1). g) People requirements for undertaking the portfolio's work are integrated with the organisation's strategic workforce plan. h) The organisation promotes training and development capability which supports the use of the organisation's project delivery governance and management framework and is monitored and updated when needed. i) People undertaking project delivery roles are included in the organisation's capability and talent management planning. j) Succession plans are in place for key roles.	k) People working on project delivery are expected to be appropriately accredited, and/or have the opportunity to develop skills and experience to gain accreditation, as part of a strategic approach to organisational capability-building and talent management for project delivery. l) People are recruited into teams with the aim of creating a team with balanced skills and working styles, with clear expectations on behaviour and who are valued. m) Staff surveys show satisfaction in learning and development provision for project delivery is in the upper quartile.

Note 1: MPLA = Major Projects Leadership Academy.

3.3   Theme 3 Portfolio management

The purpose of portfolio management is to deliver government policy and organisational objectives by selecting, prioritising, balancing and controlling the organisation's workload within its capability, resource availability and capacity to change constraints.

Note: themes 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 also apply to portfolios.

Practice area 3.1 Portfolio management framework

The portfolio has a defined and structured management framework, which takes account of the scope and types of work likely to be included its remit, and the organisation's risk tolerance.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
a) Senior officers are assigned to undertake the portfolio director, portfolio manager roles. b) Each portfolio has a defined and established portfolio management framework that is integral to the organisation's governance framework, which includes governance, management benefits, change and outcomes, control and quality aspects. c) The portfolio management framework is appropriate and proportionate to the portfolio's objectives, context, types of work undertaken and risk. d) A definitive register of proposed, current and completed programmes, projects and other related work within each portfolio is maintained and includes the structure of the portfolio and the names of the senior responsible owner and others with accountability for delivery.	e) The organisation has a centralised portfolio management framework which is defined, established and actively managed and which includes guidelines for how each portfolio manager may tailor it. f) Defined and verifiable criteria are established for the tiering, categorisation, balancing, prioritisation and selection of work for inclusion in each portfolio. g) The organisation has a defined process for revising and approving portfolio plans, when required, including the addition, revision and termination of work. h) The organisation's portfolio management framework has a named owner with the responsibility for maintaining consistency and making improvements.	i) The portfolio management framework is integrated with the organisation's governance and management systems (see Note 1). j) The organisation has defined metrics used for measuring significant aspects of each portfolio's performance and for improving the delivery of overall outcomes and benefits. k) Management frameworks for common types of 'other related work' are defined and established.

Note 1: an organisation's management systems include policy development; strategy; financial and business planning; capability and capacity management; risk and performance management; communications.

Practice area 3.2 Portfolio strategy, definition and planning

The portfolio has a defined and structured management framework, which takes account of the scope The portfolio's strategy and plan are defined and align with government policy and the organisation's strategy. The portfolio is balanced to reflect government and organisational needs, priorities and risks.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) Each portfolio's objectives are defined in terms of outcomes and benefits to be realised. b) Each portfolio has a baselined high level, multi-year strategy supported by delivery and financial plans. c) Potential programmes and projects are individually evaluated, categorised and prioritised for strategic fit, value for money, deliverability and risk. d) Potential programmes and projects are prioritised against existing the portfolio's exiting work and are timed to satisfy interdependencies and overall resource and funding constraints.	e) Each portfolio, comprising potential and existing programmes and projects, is planned and sequenced to be balanced and is within the organisation's overall risk appetite. f) Each portfolio has portfolio level mitigation plan(s) to be used in the event of delivery failure of work which is critical to government policy or achieving the organisation's objectives. g) Each portfolio's composition is reviewed at pre-arranged points in the year to confirm the portfolio continues to reflect policy and strategic priorities. Changes to the portfolio's plan are considered, including adding new work and terminating unnecessary work.	h) Portfolio strategies and plans are fully integrated with the organisation's policy, strategy and business plans. i) Programmes, projects and other related work in the portfolio's plan are traceable to elements of the organisation's target operating model. j) Contingency for significant cost and schedule over-runs is held at organisational level and devolved or allocated to each portfolio, where appropriate. k) Each portfolio plan includes pre-evaluated projects that can be initiated at short notice, in response to financial and delivery capacity opportunities. l) The organisation's portfolios include all work where resources are shared across the portfolios.

Practice area 3.3 Directing and managing portfolio delivery

The portfolio is driven using management information. The current status of the portfolio and its programmes, projects and other related work is known, risks are managed, and interventions made when needed. Work is initiated in a controlled way.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) The portfolio, in aggregate, and for its programmes and projects is regularly assessed for strategic fit, value for money, deliverability and risk.	f) New work is only formally initiated after being assessed individually for strategic fit, priority, affordability and deliverability, and for their impact on the overall balance and achievability of the portfolio.	j) The portfolio's benefits and outcomes are tracked in terms of their contribution to the organisation's overall objectives.
b) Programmes and projects are only authorised after an assessment of their risk potential has been validated by the portfolio director (or equivalent).	g) Performance metrics and trends are analysed, and insight used, to address shortfalls and improve delivery at organisational, portfolio, programme and project levels.	k) Portfolio delivery progress monitoring and reporting for the portfolio is fully integrated and embedded within the organisation's business monitoring and control systems.
c) Portfolio-level risks, issues and dependencies are identified and routinely tracked, managed and reported to key stakeholders.	h) The portfolio management team owns and actively manages portfolio level risks, issues and strategically important dependencies, and provides an escalation point for those that cannot be managed at programme and project levels.	l) The organisation's leadership provides strategic direction, sets priorities and responds to escalated risks and issues in order to drive effective portfolio delivery.
d) The forecast and actual achievement of outcomes and realisation of benefits are monitored against each portfolio's baselined delivery plan; reporting demands on programme and project teams are appropriate and proportionate.	i) The portfolio management team keeps senior organisational stakeholders informed and engaged over portfolio delivery progress, consulting them when prioritisation decisions or significant interventions are required to keep delivery on track within the prescribed constraints.	m) Organisation-wide metrics and data analysis tools are used to monitor progress and identify poorly performing portfolios; corrective action is taken when needed.
e) The portfolio management team provides support and constructive challenge to programme and project teams, and when necessary, intervenes at senior level to improve delivery performance.		

3.4   Theme 4 Programme and project management

The purpose of programme and project management is to manage the implementation of government policy and the organisation's business strategies in order to achieve outcomes and benefits of strategic or operational importance.

Note: themes 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 also apply to programmes and projects.

Practice area 4.1 Programme and project management framework and life cycle

There is a defined and structured management framework, including life cycle, which encompasses the scope and types of work likely to be needed including the management and delivery methods to be used.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
a) A senior responsible owner and project manager is assigned to, and active on each programme or project.	g) The organisation has a defined, accessible and established programme and project governance and management framework, and a set of life cycles aligned to the functional standard.	k) Tailoring guidelines and criteria are defined and established to enable managers to apply the organisation's programme and project management framework appropriately and proportionately.
b) Each senior responsible owner has an appointment letter; for a government major project this is countersigned by the CEO of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority and published on gov.uk.	h) The programme and project governance and management framework and each of its parts, has an owner with responsibility for maintaining consistency and for process improvements.	l) The organisation has defined and established metrics for assessing performance on significant aspects of the programme and project management framework and uses the metrics as part of evidence for the organisation's annual control statement (or equivalent in arm's length bodies).
c) Each programme and project has an established management framework, defining how a programme or project is to be directed and managed.	i) Each programme and project is directed and managed using a defined approach, tailored from the organisation's programme and project management framework.	
d) Each programme or project's management framework has been communicated to the appropriate stakeholders and team members.	j) The use of the organisation's defined programme and project management framework is monitored, and preventative and corrective action taken if needed.	
e) Each project has defined life cycle stages, each of which is preceded by a defined decision point or gate, to determine whether next stage should be authorised to start. Major projects comply with the government project delivery framework.		
f) Working methods are selected to suit the needs of the required deliverables and the capabilities of the team.		

Practice area 4.2 Identifying and initiating the programme/project

The programme/project has a mandate prior to being authorised to start. The vision and objectives are agreed, and the programme/project is set up, defined and planned.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) The senior responsible owner confirms a real policy or business need exists, the opportunities available to address them have been explored.	h) The project delivery governance and management framework includes approaches for managing significant societal or business change, where appropriate.	l) Policy makers seek advice from experienced project delivery professionals and subject matter experts, on achievability and risk prior to the start of a programme/project.
b) The vision, objectives, desired outcomes and criteria for success have been agreed.	i) The organisation's standard life cycles are mapped to the government's five stage reference life cycle.	
c) Prior to being authorised, the aims and justification for the programme/project are documented in a brief, or equivalent.	j) The tolerances for each project manager and work package manager's authorities are defined.	
d) The programme's or project's objectives are traceable to the respective portfolio's objectives.	k) Tools are deployed to enable management information to be accessible to the programme/project team.	
e) An assessment of the potential risk is undertaken for each programme or project and used to enable the choice of an appropriate and proportionate governance and management framework.		
f) Initial justification for the programme/project and the high-level plan is documented in a strategic outline case, programme business case or equivalent.		
g) Each project's life cycles (whether stand-alone or within a programme) is mapped to the government's five stage reference life cycle.		

Practice area 4.3 Directing and managing the programme/project

Progress against the plan is tracked and corrective and preventative action is being taken when needed.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) Each programme or project's business case is validated, and an assessment of the potential risks undertaken prior to each gate or significant decision.	g) The risk tolerance for the programme or project has been defined and is used to prompt escalation to senior management.	i) Delivery is regularly analysed to optimise delivery of outcomes within the programme/project manager's risk tolerance.
b) An approved programme or project plan is in place, and progress is tracked against it, with corrective action being taken when needed.	h) Outcomes and impacts are tracked to ensure continuous alignment to the programme/project's objectives.	j) Metrics and data analysis tools are used to help identify poor performance.
c) Government major projects are reported through the Government Major Projects Portfolio.		k) Information repositories, planning and financial tools are inter-operable and enable managers to view near-live information.
d) Work packages are defined and are formally initiated, managed and closed.		
e) The current status of each programme/project is known, and corrective and preventative action is taken if there are deviations from the plan.		
f) Outputs and outcomes are delivered using the methods defined in the management framework.		

Practice area 4.4 Closing the programme/project

Closure activities are carried out, with resources and facilities released or reassigned and on-going activities handed over to named, accountable individuals.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) Each completed or terminated programme/project is closed in a controlled way, with outstanding actions, defects, issues and risks handed over, cost accounts closed, and records archived, resources released and stakeholders in formed. b) Closure reviews for each programme or project take place and include an assessment of performance, the extent to which objectives were met, an estimate of the projected return on investment and lessons learned. c) Where appropriate, arrangements are in place for tracking post-closure outcomes and benefits realisations.	d) Staff appraisals are conducted, and competency levels are updated if needed. e) Case studies and good practice examples are identified and communicated. f) Those owning benefits after programme/project closure are identified and accept the responsibility. g) Terms of reference for one or more post-closure review(s) of the programme or project's outcomes and benefits are agreed.	h) Proactive support for reassignment is in place for people nearing the end of their current roles. i) Actual costs and schedule are compared with planned costs and schedule and used to improved estimating techniques. j) Issues are analysed and used to improve estimating techniques.

3.5   Theme 5 Planning and control

The purpose of planning and control is to ensure work is planned and monitored and that corrective and preventative actions are taken to ensure delivery follows the baselined plan and achieve the defined objectives.

Note: this theme applies to project delivery generally, including portfolios, programmes, projects and other related work.

Practice area 5.1 Planning

The plan for the portfolio demonstrates that the required outputs and outcomes can be delivered at an acceptable level of risk

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) Plans reflect the delivery methods to be used, resource constraints and associated risks (see Note 1). b) Plans are baselined before work starts. c) Baselined plans are built on estimates which have been verified by subject matter experts. d) Cost and benefits estimates are within the confidence limits defined for the respective business case. e) Plans show the hierarchy within the portfolio, with each component of the plan having a named person accountable for it. f) The schedule includes sufficient lead, consultation and response time for undertaking assurance reviews and making significant decisions. g) There is two-way traceability between the work packages within the plan and the elements of the solution. h) Dependencies among programmes, projects and other related work are identified and visible in the plans.	i) Plans are integrated such that significant milestones, dependencies and buffers are visible at programme and portfolio levels and schedule, costs, resources and other constraints are aligned and consistent. j) Critical and near-critical paths are evident and visible in the schedule plans. k) Plans take into account organisational and supply chain constraints. l) Time, cost and benefits estimates are shown as probabilistic ranges, which narrow through as work progresses and uncertainty decreases. m) Estimates are justifiable through evidence, consensus or experience from previous work.	n) The organisation has defined planning protocols to enable plans from the organisation's programmes, projects and other related work to be integrated and summarised. o) Probabilistic simulation modelling (such as Monte Carlo) is used to develop robust plans, where appropriate. p) Scenario planning is used to identify specific sets of uncertainties of what might happen in the future for the organisation and therefore inform options and decisions. q) Reference class forecasting or other forms of benchmarking or analysis are used to predict costs, schedule and benefits, where previous experience exists.

Note 1: a plan covers forecasts of benefits (if applicable), schedule, cost and resources, with associated assumptions, constraints, critical paths, dependencies and risk.

Practice area 5.2 Benefits management

Overall benefits are sufficient to meet the organisation's objectives and are owned, defined and their realisation forecast, managed and tracked, such that the advantages (benefits) outweigh the disadvantages (disbenefits).

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) Each programme and project has a defined approach for assessing and valuing financial benefits, aligned to HM Treasury and Cabinet Office requirements. b) Each benefit has success criteria defined and an owner named. c) Benefits are traceable to the desired outcomes and to the outputs to be delivered. d) Responsibility for benefits realisation after programme or project closure has been assigned.	e) Organisationally defined techniques are established to identify, analyse, manage and review benefits. f) Each benefit is tracked using a defined metric. g) Success criteria for benefits are reported on at defined intervals.	h) Key benefits metrics are defined and established at organisational level. i) Simulation and optimisation techniques are used to determine the appropriate mix of benefits and timings. j) Benefits plans are routinely challenged, and improvements made where appropriate. k) Benefits owners, post programme/project closure, monitor benefits realisation.

Practice area 5.3 Reporting

Systems are in place to confidently assess and report on progress of the work for the portfolio and its programmes, projects, other related work and work packages.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) Delivery performance is monitored and reported on a regular basis against the baselined plan, including estimates of time and cost forecasts to complete, and latest benefits forecasts. b) The quality of the solution requirements, solution design and 'as built' solution is monitored and reported on a regular basis using defined quality criteria and metrics. c) Reports include delivery metrics, and highlight prevailing risks, current issues and outstanding change requests. d) The accounting officer receives regular updates on the status of the organisation's critical programmes and projects. e) The performance of each government major project is reported by its senior responsible owner to the Infrastructure and Projects Authority quarterly. f) There is a list of regular reports to be produced, stating for each report who produces it, who receives it, its content and when it is sent.	g) Senior leaders are provided with portfolio performance information and in particular the likely initiation timing of potential new programmes and projects. h) Organisationally defined formats are used as the basis for regularly produced reports. i) On-going reports highlight the likely position of programmes, projects and other related work at closure, and the confidence in achieving this.	j) Standard performance metrics and success criteria are used across the organisation for work of similar types. k) Performance metrics are focussed on the objectives and managed using statistical, quantitative and predictive techniques to understand shortfalls, and to identify areas for improvement. l) Organisational and portfolio level reports on progress against the baselined plan, quality, risk and affordability are reviewed regularly by the organisation's senior leadership. m) Earned value management is used, where appropriate. n) Live reporting information is available to recipients 'on demand'.

Practice area 5.4 Risk and issues management

Risks and issues are being managed at the appropriate level (portfolio, programme, project, other related work and work package) and action is being taken to mitigate the threats whilst exploiting opportunities.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) The risk and issues management approach includes a defined probability/impact matrix. b) Risks are identified, owners assigned and mitigating actions taken (including contingency plans and funds), where appropriate, which are monitored to completion. c) Significant assumptions are recorded and treated as risks. d) Issues, whether unexpected or as a result of a risk materialising, are reported as soon as practical after they have been recognised. e) Issues are assigned to a named person for resolution, with progress towards resolution being regularly reported. f) Risks and issues are routinely escalated, when needed.	g) Senior managers own and oversee risk management across the organisation. h) The organisation's risk appetite is defined, and risk and issue tolerances are set and used to prompt escalation to senior management. i) Residual risks are routinely identified as part of risk treatment. j) Opportunities are routinely tracked and managed as part of managing risk. k) Business continuity measures are in place in the event of the loss of critical resources, capabilities and facilities.	l) The organisation's risk appetite is understood and the balance of risk and benefit across the portfolio is continually reviewed and managed. m) Risks are managed with respect to target, net and gross risks, velocity and proximity. n) Where practicable, risks assessments are quantified and enable cost and schedule probabilistic analysis. o) Different risk matrices are applied to risk registers in order to analyse them from different perspectives of managers of a work package, project, programme, portfolio and the organisation. p) Risk control measures are monitored for effectiveness and changed, when needed.

Practice area 5.5 Change control

Changes to the baselined plans and to elements of the baselined solution are identified, assessed and, if approved, if approved, the baseline(s) and associated documentation are updated.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) Changes to a baselined plan and the solution and its elements, are undertaken in a controlled way.	f) The solution and each constituent element have a requirements and a design baseline.	j) The configuration management system provides near instant two-way traceability among requirements, design elements, work packages, contracts and elements of the plan.
b) Change requests are tracked from submission to resolution.	g) A configuration management system is established which enable sets of related deliverables to be tracked.	
c) Authority limits for who may approve changes are defined.		
d) The potential impact of change requests is assessed in relation to how their implementation might impact the outcomes, objectives and business case.	h) The configuration of the solution is baselined prior to each formal verification and validation event.	
e) Baselines, the business case and associated documentation are checked and, if necessary, updated following approval of change requests.	i) The integrity of the baselines is maintained and verified through configuration audits.	

Practice area 5.6 Information management

Information is categorised, maintained, securely stored and available to those who need it.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) Information management needs are defined in terms of the data and information to be managed, retained and its security rating.	f) The organisation has a defined and established management framework for the management of information related to project delivery.	j) Versions of documentation are held in a centralised document management repository, which can be securely accessed from any approved location.
b) There is a defined process for the receipt and distribution of information which is sourced from outside the organisation and for information to be released to external parties.	g) Each programme and project has an information repository managed in accordance with the organisation's defined approach.	k) Workflow is used to facilitate the review, distribution and storage of key information and documentation.
c) There is a defined process for the review and approval of information which is generated from within the organisation.	h) Consistent protocols and structures are used to support aggregation of information across the organisation (see Note 1).	l) Information systems can aggregate and present information from lower-level work (see Note 2).
d) Information is held securely, security marked and is accessible to those who need it.	i) Each current document or information set is marked with a unique reference, security rating, status, version, owner and date.	m) Information repositories, such as for planning, configuration management and management information, are interoperable, do not unnecessarily duplicate data and are available on demand.
e) Information which is no longer needed is marked accordingly and retained or destroyed in accordance with statutory and the organisation's requirements.		

Note 1: an example is that the finance, resourcing and project scheduling tools use the same protocols and work breakdown structures for the organisation's portfolios, programmes, projects and other related work. This enables separate sources of information to be used together, aggregated and merged.

Note 2: Enterprise resource planning tools are often used to fulfil this criterion as well as many information and reporting needs.

Practice area 5.7 Stakeholder and communications management

Stakeholders are engaged and considered when planning for and implementing business or societal change.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
a) Stakeholders (individuals and groups) have been identified and their views considered in assessing actual and proposed changes, and the likely impact on objectives.	e) The organisation has defined techniques to analyse and engage stakeholders and undertake communications.	h) Stakeholders with significant influence across multiple programmes and projects have an assigned lead stakeholder engagement manager.
b) Stakeholder engagement and communication plans are developed to at least address risks and issues relating to stakeholders.	f) Stakeholders are categorised and managed in relation to their importance in achieving the defined objectives.	i) Quantitative and trending information is used to assess stakeholder attitudes and the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement and is used to determine plans for engagement and communications.
c) The purpose, audience and key messages for each communication are defined.	g) Engagement approaches and communications are adapted based on stakeholders' feedback.	
d) Communications channels and media are suited to the audience to be addressed and the messages to be delivered.		

3.6   Theme 6 Finance and commercial

The purpose of finance and commercial management is to ensure the government's policies are complied with and that project delivery managers are provided with the information needed to undertake their roles.

Note: this theme applies to project delivery generally, including portfolios, programmes, projects and other related work. Finance and commercial are covered in more detail in their respective assessment frameworks.

Practice area 6.1 Finance

Financial considerations are taken account of in terms of adequacy and security of funding and financial information is available to those who need it to carry out their accountabilities.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
a) A defined approach and criteria, compliant with HM Treasury requirements is used for investment decisions. b) The funding source for each programme and project is known. c) Financial delegations are defined and formally assigned. d) Costs of programmes and project are reported at least monthly.	e) Investment criteria are tailored to the different types and categories of programmes, projects and other related work. f) Forecast costs for significant programmes, projects and other related work are presented as ranges, commensurate with risk.	g) Significant risks to work in a portfolio are spread, with contingency held at organisational or portfolio level, as appropriate. h) Information from past programme/project performance is used to drive improvements in investment appraisal methods for work which is commonly undertaken. i) Current financial information on portfolios and its programmes, projects and other related work is available when needed.

Practice area 6.2 Procurement and contract management

Products and services can be procured, and their delivery managed, to meet the needs of the required work whilst representing value for money.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) Contracts are designed to take into account the type and method of delivery and reliability of the supply chain.	f) A management framework for procurement and managing supplier performance is defined and established across the organisation.	i) Relationships with strategic suppliers are developed and maintained to deliver performance and value for money improvements.
b) The scope of contracts includes the necessary documentation and tools required for the operation of the service or product.	g) Reviews of significant contracts are conducted, with specialist commercial support, to verify the contract remains fit for purpose and value for money.	j) Supplier performance management techniques are used, such as earned value management, or other key performance indicators, are applied.
c) Suppliers are selected against pre-defined criteria.	h) Strategic suppliers are identified and considered in consultation with commercial specialists.	
d) Each contract has an assigned contract manager with appropriate skill and experience.		
e) Supplier performance and quality is monitored, and products or service delivery verified against the contractual requirements.		

3.7   Theme 7 Solution delivery

The purpose of managing solution delivery is to ensure an appropriate and sustainable solution is developed which enables the transition and embedding of the required changes to achieve the stated objectives.

Note: this theme applies to project delivery generally, including portfolios, programmes, projects and other related work.

Practice area 7.1 User needs and requirements

The requirements and users' needs are understood and are monitored to determine whether the proposed solution(s) can fulfil them. Opportunities are sought to improve the outcome and deliver better value for money.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
a) Stakeholder and user needs, expectations, constraints, and interfaces are collected and translated into prioritised requirements, in consultation with those providing the requirements.	e) Requirements for the phases of the solution/system/product life cycle and the respective operating environments are created.	i) Requirements are fully traceable through configuration management.
b) Once agreed, requirements are baselined and used for validating the achievement of objectives.	f) Operational concepts and scenarios are developed with operational stakeholders to verify completeness and suitability with respect to the requirements.	j) Requirements are analysed to ensure they are needed, balanced and sufficient to meet the defined needs.
c) Baselined requirements are updated using formal change control.	g) Requirements, once analysed and refined, are allocated to the elements of the solution.	k) The organisation holds standard specifications for commonly needed requirements.
d) Requirements which have not been, or cannot be, fulfilled are logged and action taken.	h) Requirements for interfaces between elements of the solution are defined.	

Practice area 7.2 Solution design, development and integration

Solutions are chosen, designed and implemented to address the requirements, including the products, product components needed to achieve the desired outcomes and integrate with the operational, working or living environment.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) Each senior responsible owner has verified, that their proposed solution(s) fulfils the stated need, supports the agreed target operating model and represents value for money.	f) Organisational level solution design, development and integration methods and processes are defined and established for frequently needed types of solution and elements of the solution.	j) Each portfolio has defined and established architectural constraints to promote efficiency and reuse of solution components.
b) The solution is defined in terms of its component parts which are traceable to a requirement.	g) Solution and elements of solutions are selected from alternative options using value management (or equivalent) techniques.	k) Innovation is incorporated into design methods and processes.
c) The delivery methods are defined and established and are appropriate to the nature of the outputs required.	h) Interfaces between the elements of the solution are specified and the integration approach defined taking into account the phasing of integration, verification and validation, risk and complexity.	l) The chosen solution is optimised using value engineering (or equivalent) techniques.
d) The method for verifying progress and achievement of elements of the solution have been defined and are used to monitor overall programme, project and work package performance.	i) Integration of the solution's elements is defined and verified as each integration activity is completed.	m) Metrics are defined and used to measure the progress of the design of the solution and its elements and inform performance improvement.
e) Once agreed the solution design and its components are baselined and used for verifying compliance.		n) Metrics are defined and used to measure the progress in the completion of the solution and its elements and inform performance improvement.
		o) Metrics are defined and used to measure the progress in the integration of the solution's elements and inform performance improvement.

Practice area 7.3 Verification and validation

The output and its component parts are verified as being built to the required standard and the solution validated to confirm that it is likely to fulfil its intended purpose in its operational, working or living environment.

Good	Better	Best
Criteria denoting good performance	Criteria denoting better performance	Criteria denoting best performance
a) Quality is managed to ensure the objectives can be achieved and that the outcomes and enabling outputs are traceable to, and likely to meet the requirements.	g) Organisational verification and validation methods and processes are defined and established for frequently needed types of deliverables and solution.	i) Metrics are defined and used to measure the quality and suitability of solution and its elements and to inform performance improvement.
b) Criteria and methods for validating the solution against requirements are agreed and defined before work begins on delivering the solution.	h) Stakeholders required for validation are identified and briefed on their role.	j) Out of phase defects are identified, the root cause identified, and corrective action taken.
c) Solutions and outcomes are validated by stakeholders who are briefed on their role.		
d) Deliverables requiring verification are identified and criteria and methods for their verification defined.		
e) Verification is undertaken and recorded, to ensure deliverables comply with the specification. Defects are managed to a resolution.		
f) Plans include for risk contingency for rework resulting from failed verification and validation.		

Practice area 7.4 Change, transition management and outcomes

Stakeholders' needs are considered when planning for and embedding the required business or societal changes as defined in the target operating model.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) The required changes in the organisation or in society' are addressed and planned from the start of the programme or project and throughout the life cycle.	g) Organisationally defined techniques are used to understand the impact of, and manage the changes needed to transition to a future operating state.	j) Actions are taken to maximise improvements in the existing and new business operations as new solutions come into use.
b) The current state model has been documented in consultation with key stakeholders and subject matter experts.	h) Outcomes are monitored and, achievement verified against the defined criteria.	k) If undertaken, staff surveys show satisfaction in the organisation's ability to manage change is in the upper quartile.
c) The target operating model has been defined and approved by the senior responsible owner after consultation with key stakeholders and subject matter experts.	i) The organisation uses advanced techniques for managing significant transformational change.	l) The organisation has in-house specialists for managing strategic transformational change.
d) The operating manual, as-built records, configuration and other documentation required to be handed over at transition to operations is defined in advance.		
e) The transition of capabilities to operations is planned in advance and business readiness is assessed before changes are implemented.		
f) The achievement of outcomes is defined in terms of criteria that can be verified, including those defined in terms of public value.		

Practice area 7.5 Learning from experience

Experience and lessons from undertaking similar work are harnessed and lessons from undertaking current work plan are used to improve future delivery performance.

Good Criteria denoting good performance	**Better** Criteria denoting better performance	**Best** Criteria denoting best performance
a) Teams are encouraged to share experiences, seek insights and look for improvement opportunities. b) Lessons are captured, shared and used to promote future performance improvement when each phase of a programme or project is closed. c) Improvement initiatives are selected for implementation based on their contribution to meeting quality and business objectives. d) Lessons are available locally to those who need to see them.	e) Peer reviews of plans and solutions are used to introduce learning from previous work. f) Lessons are captured on a continuous basis, not just when a phase of a work closes. g) The organisation's project delivery governance and management frameworks are improved based on lessons and internal feedback and experience. h) Case studies and good practice examples are used to demonstrate and communicate good practice. i) Time and activities are built into schedules to enable the team to reflect and act on performance improvement.	j) The organisation's project delivery governance and management frameworks are continuously improved based on externally established practice. k) Statistical techniques are used to identify improvement opportunities, which are acted on, where appropriate. l) Improvement initiatives and outcomes are monitored to verify they are contributing to improved performance. m) Performance metrics are used to inform business improvement priorities.

A.   References

All references are correct at the time of publication, users should check for updated versions.

ID	Description
1	Cabinet Office, **Government functional standards and associated guidance** (Collection)
	Note: this collection includes the common glossary for functional standards and guidance on conducting continuous improvement assessments.
2	HM Government, *GovS002: Project delivery: Portfolio, programme and project management*, Version 2 (2021)

B. Glossary

This glossary is derived from the functional standards common glossary [1], and in particular GovS 002, Project delivery [2].

Term	Definition
accountable (person)	Someone who is accountable is required and expected to justify actions or decisions to a person or body with greater authority, from whom the accountability has been formally assigned. Note: accountabilities can be tiered such that there is a hierarchy of accountabilities, with a higher-level having overall accountability over lower-level accountabilities. Note: an accountable person usually has associated formally delegated authority for their actions and decisions, such as through delegation letters.
baseline	A measurement, calculation, or location used as a basis for comparison. Note: in a project delivery context, baselines typically apply to plans and to sets of data relating to the solution. Examples include schedule baseline, cost baseline, requirements baseline, design baseline.
benefit (project delivery)	In the context of project delivery, benefit is the measurable value or other positive impact resulting from an outcome perceived as an advantage by one or more stakeholders, and which contributes towards one or more objective(s).
corrective action	Action to resolve a threat to achieving the stated objectives. Note: see also preventative action.
defect	An identified error within an approved deliverable. Note: an 'out of phase defect' is an error in a deliverable which was not discovered in the project phase or process step within which it originated. For example, a design error should be identified during the Define stage. If it was discovered later, say in the 'Deliver stage, it is an 'out of phase defect".
defined (way of working)	In the context of standards, 'defined' denotes a documented way of working which people are expected to use. This can apply to any aspect of a governance or management framework for example processes, codes of practice, methods, templates, tools and guides.
disbenefit (project delivery)	In the context of project delivery, disbenefit is the measurable value or other impact resulting from an outcome perceived as a disadvantage by one or more stakeholders, and which partially or fully negates the achievement of one or more objective(s).
established (way of working)	In the context of standards, 'established' denotes a way of working that is implemented and used throughout the organisation. This can apply to any aspect of a governance or management framework for example processes, codes of practice, methods, templates, tools and guides.

Term	Definition
functional standard	Functional standards are government standards designed to provide a coherent, effective and mutually understood way of doing business across organisational boundaries, and a stable basis for assurance, risk management and capability improvement.
governance	Governance defines relationships and the distribution of rights and responsibilities among those who work with and in the organisation. It determines the rules and procedures through which the organisation's objectives are set and provides the means of attaining those objectives and monitoring performance. Importantly, it defines where accountability lies throughout the organisation.
governance and management framework	A governance and management framework sets out the authority limits, decision making roles and rules, degrees of autonomy, assurance needs, reporting structure, accountabilities and roles, and the appropriate management practices and associated documentation needed to meet this standard.
life cycle	The life cycle provides a phased structure for governing the work and underpinning the delivery plan, from start to finish. Life cycles can be applied to a portfolio, service, product, system, programme or project.
local	In the context of continuous improvement assessment frameworks: local to a business unit or team within the organisation. Typically used to describe locally defined methods and processes.
major project (government)	A central government funded programme or project that requires HM Treasury approval during its life, as set out in Delegated Authority letters, or is otherwise of special interest to the government. A government major project is listed in the Government Major Project Portfolio (GMPP).
major project (organisational)	A programme or project that is of strategic importance to an organisation, based on criteria defined in the organisation's governance and management framework. An organisational major project is listed in its organisational portfolio.
other related work (project delivery)	In the context of project delivery, other related work comprises work within a portfolio or programme which is not managed as a project. Note: examples of other related work are support services (such as finance and HR), ongoing improvement initiatives not run as projects, service delivery and business as usual operations.
preventative action	Action to eliminate the cause of a potential nonconformity or other potential undesirable situation.
project delivery	Collectively, portfolio, programme and project management are referred to in government as "project delivery".

Term	Definition
responsible (person)	Someone who is responsible has some control over or care for an action, or the obligation to do something as part of a wider job role. Note: a responsible person is responsible to an accountable person, or themselves if they are the accountable person.
risk appetite	The amount of risk the organisation, or subset of it, is willing to accept.
risk tolerance	The threshold levels of risk exposure that, with appropriate approvals, can be exceeded, but which when exceeded will trigger some form of response. Note: for example, a triggered response could be reporting the situation to senior management for action.
senior responsible owner	The individual accountable to the sponsoring body for a programme or project meeting its objectives, delivering the required outcomes and realising the required benefits. Note 1: the senior responsible owner owns the business case and is accountable for governance. Note 2: the sponsoring body could be a group or individual. Note 3: the senior responsible owner of a government major project is ultimately accountable to Parliament.
solution	The services, products and infrastructure, including people, products, services, information, processes, and natural and societal elements, which are intended to fulfil the requirements for an aspect of government policy or the organisation's objectives.
sponsoring group	The driving force behind a programme, which provides the investment decision and top-level endorsement for the rationale and objectives of the programme.
stage (project delivery)	In the context of project delivery, a stage is a subdivision of a project life cycle.
tailoring	Altering or adapting defined methods and processes to suit particular circumstances. Note: tailoring is often needed to ensure governance and management is appropriate and proportionate.
tailoring guidelines	Guidelines that enable defined methods and processes to be adapted for their use in particular circumstances.
target operating model	A model of the future organisation, its working practices and processes, the information it requires and the technology that supports its operations. Note: often called a blueprint.
tolerance (plan)	The permissible deviation above and below a plan's target for time and cost without escalating the deviation to the next level of management. There can also be tolerance levels for quality, scope, benefit and risk. Tolerance is applied at organisation, portfolio, programme, project, stage and team levels.

Term	Definition
tranche (project delivery)	In the context of project delivery, a tranche is a subdivision of a programme designed to enable an incremental approach to delivery of outputs, outcomes and benefits.
validation	An activity that ensures a solution (or part of) meets the needs of the business. Validation ensures that business requirements are met even though these might have changed since the original design.
value management	Underlying concept applied within existing management systems and approaches based on value and function-oriented thinking, behaviour and methods, particularly dedicated to motivating people, developing skills, and promoting synergies and innovation, with the aim of maximising the overall performance of the organisation.
verification	An activity that ensures that a solution (or part of) is complete, accurate, reliable and matches its design specification.
work	In the context of this assessment framework, 'work' is used to denote a programme, project, other related work or work package.