Infrastructure
and Projects
Authority

HM Treasury

GUIDE TO COMPLETING THE PROJECT/PROGRAMME OUTCOME PROFILE

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Contents

Introduction

1.1. What is the Project/Programme Outcome Profile?

The Project/Programme Outcome Profile (POP) is a method and a tool developed by the IPA to support government projects and programmes to develop stronger business cases in line with Green Book guidance by:

- ☐ Exploring how their project or programme will support the delivery of government's priority outcomes

- ☐ Using consistent metrics to document a project or programme's contribution to those priority outcomes

The POP is not a substitute for robust appraisal or evaluation. For detailed guidance on appraisal and evaluation, refer to the Green Book[1] and the Magenta Book[2]. For guidance on portfolio, programme, and project management, refer to the Government Functional Standard on project delivery[3].

1.2. Why should you use the Project/Programme Outcome Profile?

Completing the POP will support teams to understand the specific contribution of their particular intervention to the delivery of relevant priority outcomes. Whether the proposal is for a programme within a strategic portfolio or a project within a programme, its objectives need to be understood in terms of its individual contribution to the wider group of interventions of which it is part. This continuity of alignment and support is sometimes known as a 'golden thread'.

1.3. When should you use the Project/Programme Outcome Profile?

The POP should first be used when undertaking the Strategic Assessment at the outset of developing a project or programme business case[4]. It should be revisited alongside the 'case for change' when preparing each iteration of the business case to maintain a 'golden thread' of strategic alignment from government priority outcomes to project and programme objectives.

1.4. Who is responsible for completing the Project/Programme Outcome Profile?

The Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) is ultimately responsible for signing off the POP at each stage of the project or programme as part of the Business Case. It is recommended that the POP is completed by the individual(s) writing the Strategic Case in consultation with key team members and stakeholders. The POP should be used to inform 'Workshop 1 – Case for Change' and revisited during 'Workshop 2 – Identifying and assessing the options' as set out in HMT's business case guidance.

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[1] The Green Book: appraisal and evaluation in central government, HM Treasury, 2020
[2] The Magenta Book: Central Government guidance on evaluation, HM Treasury, 2020
[3] Government Functional Standard GovS 002: Project Delivery, IPA and Cabinet Office, 2019
[4] See 'Step 1' of the Guide to developing the Project Business Case or Guide to Developing the Programme Business Case, HM Treasury, 2018

1.5. What is involved in completing the Project/Programme Outcome Profile?

Completing the POP involves two main steps.

Step 1: identify the outputs or outcomes that the project or programme is seeking to achieve and determine how these align to government's strategic objectives, described in terms of priority outcomes[5] established as part of the Public Value Framework.

Step 2: develop or select up to three metrics and define the specific contribution that the project or programme will make to each.

Tip
As defined in the Green Book, projects deliver changes in outputs (changes in the level or quality of a public service), programmes deliver changes in outcomes (the consequences to society of a change in a public service), and portfolios deliver strategic objectives. The POP can be completed for any proposal, whether it is a programme, a standalone project, or a project within a programme.

1.6. How is the Project/Programme Outcome Profile structured?

The POP has four levels linking the individual project outputs or programme outcomes to department outcomes. Programmes do not need to complete the fourth level 'Project outputs', and likewise standalone projects do not need to complete the third level 'Programme outcomes'. Outcomes can be grouped using up to six themes: Economy, Society, Environment, Health, Security, and Global, however this is optional.

FIGURE 1: STRUCTURE OF THE PROJECT/PROGRAMME OUTCOME PROFILE

Levels	Themes					
	Economy	Society	Environment	Health	Security	Global
Department outcomes	For each level and theme, the Project/Programme Outcome Profile describes:					
Portfolio outcomes (optional)	■ The **outcomes** that the project or programme supports					
Programme outcomes	■ The **metrics** used to measure the outcomes					
Project outputs	■ The **contribution** of the project or programme					

1.7. How should projects and programmes respond to changes in government priorities?

The POP should reflect the government's priority outcomes at the time it is produced.

The IPA will update the POP tool to reflect future changes in the department outcomes and metrics. It is likely that the list of department outcomes and metrics will be updated at each Spending Review. Whenever project and programme teams review the POP, they should use the latest version of the POP tool.

Contacts and Feedback

The IPA would welcome comments on this tool and guidance which is currently in development. To provide feedback on the Project/Programme Outcome Profile, please contact POP@ipa.gov.uk.

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[5] Spending Review 2020: Provisional priority outcomes and metrics, HM Treasury, 2020

Detailed guidance on using the Project/Programme Outcome Profile tool

Step 1: Aligning outcomes to government priorities

The purpose of this step is to specify the objectives of the project or programme in terms of outcomes and identify the strategic objectives that those outcomes contribute to.

This step is recommended for all business cases.

Action 1: Identify project outputs or programme outcomes

The project's outputs or programme's outcomes can include:

☐   Up to five or six core or targeted outputs or outcomes that provide the rationale for undertaking the project or programme – these should be described in the project or programme's spending objectives

☐   Additional outputs or outcomes that are the likely consequences or benefits of the project or programme, but are not part of its core justification or rationale

Using the tool

1. Go to the worksheet titled "Step 1" and use the relevant column titled "Project outputs" or "Programme outcomes" to list the project's outputs or programme's outcomes

2. Use the column titled "Type" to specify whether each output or outcome is a core outcome (i.e. a spending objective) or an additional outcome

3. **For projects within a programme**: after you have listed the project outputs, use the column titled "Programme outcomes" to specify the relevant programme outcome for each

Tip
It is important not to confuse outputs with outcomes. Outputs are the changes in the level or quality of a public service. For example, more successful cardiovascular operations carried out. Outcomes are the consequences to society of a change in a public service. For example, changes in cardiovascular surgery which lead to improved life expectancy of the population.

Tip
In line with the Procurement Policy Note 06/20, all central government organisations should use the Social Value model to identify additional social benefits that can be achieved in the delivery of its contracts. The identified opportunities and associated metrics should be reflected in the 'Project outputs' or 'Programme outcomes' level of the POP.

Action 2: Map project outputs and programme outcomes to department outcomes

For each project output or programme outcome, identify which department outcome it will make the most significant contribution to.

In some cases, it may be helpful to include portfolio outcomes to link project outputs or programme outcomes to department outcomes. Portfolio outcomes describe the government's strategic objectives. Portfolio outcomes may represent the objectives for a non-departmental public body, a geographic region, or a sector.

Using the tool

1. Ensure the correct sponsoring department is selected on the worksheet titled "Cover sheet" and go to the worksheet titled "Step 1"

2. *Optional*: Use the column titled "Portfolio outcomes" to specify a relevant portfolio outcome

3. Use the columns titled "Department outcomes" to map each project output or programme outcome to the most relevant departmental outcomes – this could include one outcome from the sponsoring department and/or one outcome from another department (if there is no relevant outcome, leave this column blank)

Tip
If a project or programme outcomes appears to make significant contributions to multiple department outcomes, then consider whether the outcome can be described in a more granular or specific way.

Action 3: Group outcomes using themes

For each project output or programme outcome, identify the most relevant theme.

The suggested themes are: Economy, Society, Environment, Health, Security, and Global. It is not necessary to include all of the themes. Two or three themes are likely to be sufficient for most projects and programmes.

Using the tool

1. In the worksheet titled "Step 1", use the column titled "Theme" to select the most relevant theme for each project output or programme outcome, Select "Other" option if none of the six themes are relevant. If you do not wish to use the themes you can leave this column blank.

2. Use the worksheet titled "Profile 1" to create a visual representation of the information stored in "Step 1", An example of "Profile 1" can be found in the IPA's Project Routemap Requirements Module[6].

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[6] 'Project Routemap – Setting up projects for success'

Step 2: Selecting metrics and defining the contribution

The purpose of this step is to specify metrics and to define the specific contribution that the project or programme will make to the delivery of each outcome identified in Step 1.

Identifying appropriate metrics and quantifying the impact of a project or programme requires analytical capability and specialist knowledge. Make sure that the right team members are involved when completing Step 2.

It is recommended that projects and programmes begin Step 2 as part of the first iteration of the business case (i.e. the Strategic Outline Case or equivalent) but recognised they may not be able to fully complete Step 2 until a subsequent iteration (i.e. the Full Business Case or equivalent).

Action 4: Select outcome metrics

Identify between one and three metrics that will be used to estimate and measure the delivery of each outcome.

For project outputs and programme outcomes (and any portfolio outcomes), you should identify metrics that are specific to your project or programme. For department outcomes, you should either specify a custom metric or select an appropriate metric from the list that was published at Spending Review 2020 (SR20).[7]
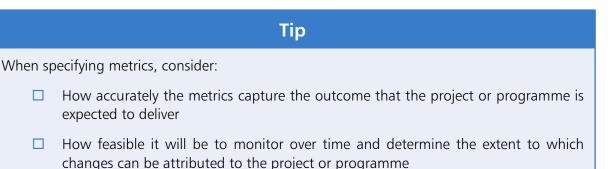
Using the tool

1. Go to the worksheet titled "Step 2". The worksheet will automatically populate with the outcomes identified in Step 1.

2. For each project output and programme and portfolio outcome, use the columns titled "Metric 1", "Metric 2", and "Metric 3" to specify between one and three suitable metrics

3. For each department outcome, use the columns titled "Metric 1", "Metric 2", and "Metric 3" to select between one and three metrics from the drop-down lists.

4. *Optional*: For each department outcome, use the column titled "Custom Metric" to include a metric that is not included in the drop-down lists.

Warning
Ensure Step 1 is complete before beginning Step 2. Making changes to the worksheet titled "Step 1 Aligning outcomes" after selecting metrics in the worksheet titled "Step 2 Selecting metrics" could result in the wrong outcomes being linked to the wrong metrics.

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[7] Spending Review 2020: Provisional priority outcomes and metrics, HM Treasury, 2020

<table>
<tr><td align="center">Tip</td></tr>
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When specifying metrics, consider:

☐ How accurately the metrics capture the outcome that the project or programme is expected to deliver

☐ How feasible it will be to monitor over time and determine the extent to which changes can be attributed to the project or programme

Action 5: Define contribution

When is the describing the contribution, consider:

☐ What expected size of the change in the metric due to the project or programme, compared to its baseline or trend values?

☐ Where will the change be measured, who will be affected by the change, and when will it occur?

The contribution should be quantified unless it is not proportional to do so. When it is disproportionate to quantify some impacts or when there is insufficient evidence to produce reliable estimates, the contribution should be described in qualitative terms.

The contributions described in the POP should be consistent with the benefits appraisal in the business case and be supported by appropriate objective evidence in line with HM Treasury Green Book and Better Business Cases guidance.

Using the tool

1. In the worksheet titled worksheet titled "Step 2", use the corresponding column titled "Contribution of project or programme" to describe the contribution of the project or programme to each outcome using each metric

2. Use the worksheet titled "Profile 2" to create a visual representation of the information stored in "Step 1" and "Step 2"

3. Important: Use the "Limitations" row in "Profile 2" to set out any limitations of the metrics you have chosen and any uncertainty surrounding the project or programme's estimated contribution

4. *Optional*: Use the worksheet titled "Profile 3" to create a summary of the information stored in "Step 1" and "Step 2"

Glossary

Benefit refers to a measurable improvement resulting from an outcome perceived as an advantage by one or more stakeholders.

Objective refers to the aims of an organisation, project, or programme, typically expressed in terms of desired outputs and outcomes.

Outcome refers to the consequences to society of a change in a public service. For example, changes in cardiovascular surgery which lead to improved life expectancy of the population.

Outcome delivery plan (ODP) refers to the reformed planning and performance framework for UK government departments, where departments will set out how they will deliver their priority outcomes.

Output refers to the change in the level or quality of a public service. For example, more successful cardiovascular operations carried out.

Portfolio is a collection of programmes and/or projects that may be used to structure and manage investments at an organisational or functional level to optimise strategic benefits and/or operational efficiency.

Programme is an interrelated series of planned measures (Sub-Programmes, Projects) and related events and coordinated activities in pursuit of an organisation's long-term objectives.

Project is a temporary organisation that is needed to produce a specific predefined output or result at a pre-specified time using predetermined resources.

Priority outcome refers to outcomes for UK government departments that capture the government's long-term policy objectives, from reducing crime to improving education standards across the country[8].

Public value framework (PVF) refers to a practical tool for maximising the value delivered by public spending and improving outcomes for citizens, which can be used across government to identify ways to strengthen the process of turning inputs into outcomes[9].

Social Value model should be used by all central government organisations to take account of the additional social benefits that can be achieved in the delivery of its contracts[10].

Spending objectives are the "core" or "targeted" outcomes for the scheme, which reflect the rationale for the intervention.

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[8] Spending Review 2020: Provisional priority outcomes and metrics, HM Treasury, 2020
[9] Public Value Framework: with supplementary guidance, HM Treasury, 2019
[10] Guide to using the Social Value Model, Government Commercial Function, 2020