DSA Peer Review Group Meeting Summary

Attendees

Jenny Brooker, Chair (DSIT)	Allan Jamieson (OS)
John Olatunji (DSIT)	Matthew Webber (Defra)
Firoze Salim (DSIT)	Megan Clokey (DCMS)
Idris Malji (DSIT)	Suzanne Fry (DSIT)
Ben Salisbury (IPA)	Rob Lee (HMRC)
Aaron Curry (DWP)	Ayres, Beth (TPR)
Michael Whittaker (DVLA)	Laura Hill (DESNZ)
Shona Nicol (Scot Gov)	Andrew Newman (The ODI)
Gavin Ajomale-Evans (DVLA)	Kev Lock(HMRC)
Szymon WALKOWIAK (DBT)	Myles Richardson (CO)
Hannah Mackenzie (UKHSA)	Malachi Rangecroft (MoJ)
Rhiannon Caunt (Wales Gov)	Emanuel Silva (DSIT)
Graham McKenna (DWP)	Jonathan Smith- (HMT)
James Freeland (DSIT)	Sophie Davis (DESNZ)
Andrew Sutton (ONS)	Neil Cholerton (HO)
	Hakem Abdullah (DVSA)

Record of discussions

1	**Welcome and Introductions** Firoze Salim, FS (DSIT)
	FS opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees and thanking them for their time. He acknowledged the importance of the session and the two agenda items around project data and data management. FS explained that he was covering for JB, who was delayed due to another meeting.FS encouraged active participation and input from all members to ensure a productive session.
2	**Project Data Standard** Ben Salisbury, BS (IPA)
	Notes: ● BS provided an overview of the progress made since his last presentation to the group, reflecting on developments since his initial introduction of the Project Data Standard at the end of the previous year. ● BS introduced the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) and highlighted its upcoming transition to the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA). BS explained that alongside existing assurance mechanisms, NISTA will have an enhanced role in supporting major projects, including validating business cases prior to HMT funding approval. ● BS emphasised the importance of project data in decision-making, control, and assurance processes within government projects. BS noted that inconsistent and poor-quality project data remains a challenge, reducing the effectiveness of oversight and project delivery. ● He referred to a March 2024 report on Data Analytics and AI in Government Project Delivery, which identified key problem areas in project data consistency, accessibility, and quality. The report proposed various actions to tackle these issues, with the Project Data Standard forming a key part of the response. ● The new standard is designed to address these concerns by creating a single codified framework for project data management. This framework will ensure that project data is structured, comparable, and accessible across government, allowing for better oversight and performance monitoring. ● BS explained that while the introduction of a standard is essential, achieving success will require cultural and behavioural changes in project teams. Ensuring that the standard is actively adopted and consistently applied across different projects will be key to its success. ● To inform the development of the standard, the IPA has conducted an extensive literature review in collaboration with the University of Manchester. This review

examined existing functional standards, ISO standards, and best practices used across government.
- In addition, the IPA ran surveys and engagement workshops with project delivery professionals across government, gathering insights on the data attributes and fields that should be included in the standard.
- The feedback received helped shape the second version of the standard, which now includes defined data attributes, standardised field formats, and ownership guidelines. The IPA is working to refine the implementation and adoption plan, ensuring a smooth rollout of the standard across government.
- BS noted that industry engagement would play a crucial role in the adoption of the standard. The IPA is preparing to engage with private sector supply chain partners to explore opportunities for broader adoption beyond government projects.
- The implementation phase will include pilot testing with selected projects to evaluate the standard's effectiveness before full-scale adoption. The IPA is also considering how existing government reporting platforms, such as GRIP (Government Integrated Reporting Platform), can be leveraged to support data validation and quality assurance.

Questions and Answers:

- AJ (OS) asked about ensuring the standard remains effective despite varying levels of Data Quality awareness among users. BS clarified that the standard aims to integrate Data Quality control mechanisms.
- GAE (DVLA) enquired about the scope of the standard, particularly if it applies only to infrastructure projects. BS explained that it covers all government projects requiring Treasury Approval but does not include subject-specific project data (e.g defence-specific project data).
- JS (HMT) asked whether portfolio management toolsets had been considered in the development of the standard. BS confirmed that research had been conducted and suggested further collaboration to align with existing data standards in financial, HR, and commercial systems.

Actions:

- BS to share the latest version of the Project Data Standard with PRG members for review and comments.
- PRG members to provide feedback and offer support for data modelling efforts.
- Further discussions to be arranged between BS and interested PRG members on aligning the standard with existing data structures.

3	**Data Management and Data Quality** Suzanne Fry, SF (DSIT)
	Notes:

- SF provided an update on ongoing work related to data management and quality across government departments.
- SF highlighted that inconsistencies in data management approaches across different departments remain a challenge.
- SF emphasised that better data governance and quality assurance frameworks are needed to support improved decision-making and interoperability between departments.
- SF spoke about the importance of ensuring that data is managed in a structured and consistent way, allowing government organisations to derive greater value from shared data.
- SF introduced the Data Quality guidance materials that have been developed to assist departments in improving their Data Management processes. These materials include:
    - An implementation guide for adopting best practices in Data Management.
    - A prioritisation framework to help identify key areas for improving Data Quality.
    - A Data Quality assessment tool to help departments evaluate and monitor the quality of their data.
- SF noted that a deep dive review will be conducted to assess current data management practices within departments, gathering insights on common challenges and best practices.
- SF explained that part of the work involves looking at the Data Ownership Model, ensuring there is clarity on roles and responsibilities within organisations.
- SF also mentioned that engagement with stakeholders would be key in refining and implementing the guidance materials effectively.
- Next steps include seeking feedback from PRG members, piloting the guidance materials, and refining them based on real-world implementation challenges.

Questions and Answers:

- DD asked whether the deep dive exercise would be a formal commission. SF clarified that it would initially be an informal approach, leveraging existing data collections and departmental insights.
- GAE asked whether the study focused only on ESDA participants. SF confirmed that, at least initially, the work would focus on shared data assets within government to enhance cross-departmental consistency.
- MR queried when challenges around the interaction between Information Asset and Data Ownership would be addressed in the Data Ownership Model. FS confirmed that a revised version of the ownership model is being drafted and would be presented in an upcoming ESDA / Data Ownership working group session.

Actions:

- SF to circulate Data Quality guidance materials for review before publication.
- PRG members to review and provide feedback on data quality materials.

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	● SF to engage with departments for the data management deep dive.
	All Actions
	BS to share the latest version of the Project Data Standard and collect feedback. SF to distribute data quality guidance for review and feedback. FS to schedule a working group meeting on Data Ownership modes. PRG members to provide input on Project Data Standard and Data Management Deep Dive initiatives.
4	**AOB and Close** Jenny Brooker, JB, Chair (DSIT)
	JB thanked all participants for their valuable contributions and engagement throughout the discussions. JB emphasised the importance of continued collaboration across departments to improve data management practices and ensure the successful implementation of the Project Data Standard. JB acknowledged the key takeaways from the meeting, including the need for a structured approach to data quality improvements and ongoing stakeholder engagement. JB encouraged members to review the materials shared and provide feedback to help refine the proposed frameworks. JB closed the meeting by reaffirming the commitment to strengthening cross-government data governance and the importance of groups such as PRG and thanked everyone for their time and participation.