Project Roles and Responsibilities

The success of any project requires that those involved in the project have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. While no list or roles can be exhaustive this document provides a model framework to work with endorsed by the Information Division Executive.

Depending on the size and complexity of the project these roles may be merged or applied to more than one person.

It is worth noting upfront that there are 4 key roles in a Project Steering Group:

- Sponsor

- Senior User

- Senior Supplier

- Service Owner

Depending on the size and complexity of the project more than one role can be held by one person, or several people could hold the same role. Specific responsibilities cannot be delegated but those noted as assurance responsibilities can be.

Combined with the structure of the Steering Group this provides both input and decision rights balancing the projects needs with ongoing operations.

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1   Project Steering Group

A project Steering Group is the key body within the governance structure that is responsible for the business issues associated with the project, which are essential to ensuring the delivery of the project outputs and the attainment of project outcomes. The committee directs attention at the strategic level.

The 4 key roles in the Steering Group are Sponsor, Senior User, Senior Supplier and Service Owner. These roles are detailed in subsequent sections. The Project Manager attends Steering Group meetings.

Specific Responsibilities

- Approves all major plans and authorises any deviation from agreed plans.
- Manages organisational risk
- Approving and monitoring project budget and subsequent changes
- Authority that signs off the completion of each stage as well as authorises the start of the next stage.
- Ensures that required resources are committed and arbitrates on any conflicts within the project or negotiates a solution to any problems between the project and external bodies.

At the beginning of the project:

- Approving the start of the project via acceptance of the project brief.
- Agreement with the project manager on that person's responsibilities and objectives
- Confirmation with Portfolio Committee project success sliders and tolerances
- Identification of stakeholders
- Specification of external constraints on the project, such as quality assurance
- Approval of an accurate and satisfactory Project Plan
- Delegation of any project assurance roles
- Commitment of project resources required.

As the project progresses:

- Provision of overall guidance and direction to the project, ensuring it remains within any specified constraints
- Review of each completed stage and approval of progress to the next
- Review and approval of stage plans
- Monitor and actively assist with project issues and risks to ensure organisational benefit is delivered from the project
- Approval of changes
- Compliance with Portfolio management directives
- Budget variation

At the end of the project

- Assurance that all products have been delivered satisfactorily
- Assurance that all acceptance criteria have been met
- Approval of the project review report
- Decisions on the recommendations for follow-on actions and the passage of these to the appropriate authorities

The Steering Group is ultimately responsible for assurance that the project remains on course, to deliver the desired outcome of the required quality to meet the identified benefits. According to the size, complexity and risk of the project, the Steering Group may decide to delegate some of this project assurance responsibility.

2   Project Sponsor

The Project Sponsor has ultimate accountability and responsibility for the project and is a member of the Steering Group, usually the Chair. The sponsor's role is to ensure that the project is focused throughout its life cycle on achieving its objectives and delivering a product that will achieve the projected benefits.

Specific Responsibilities

- Chair the Steering Group
- Oversee the development of the project brief and business case
- Provides overview and direction for the project
- Setting tolerances for the project
- Confirming the relationship between output and outcome
- Contribute to identification and resolution
- The sponsor has final responsibility for ensuring the project reporting reflects the state of a project
- Monitor and control the progress of the project at a strategic level
- Support the project manager in facilitating the project .

Assurance Responsibilities

- Ensure that any proposed changes of scope, cost or timescale are checked against their possible effects on the Business Case
- Validation of the project benefits against external events against project progress
- Keeping the project in line with organisational strategies
- Monitoring organisational risks.

The Sponsor is the key decision maker with advice and commitments from others.

3   Service Owner

This role is to ensure that project outputs can be reasonably supported in a sustained manner to support realisation of project outcomes.

Specific Responsibilities

- Has ongoing accountability for project outcomes deriving from project outputs.
- Accountability for on-going provision of services the project will deliver
- Operational Acceptance
- Monitoring user needs and expectations.

4 Senior User

The Senior User is responsible for the specification of the needs of all those who will use the final product(s), for user liaison with the project team and for monitoring that the solution will meet those needs with the constraints of the project.

The role represents the interests of all those who will use the final product(s) of the project, those for whom the product will achieve an objective or those who will use the product to deliver benefits. This role may require more than one person to cover all the user interests. For the sake of effectiveness the role should not be split between too many people.

Specific Responsibilities

- Ensure the desired outcome of the project is specified
- Make sure the progress towards the outcome required by the users remains consistent from the user perspective
- Promote and maintain focus on the desired project outcome
- Ensure that any user resources required for the project are made available
- Resolve user requirements and priority conflicts
- Prioritize and contribute user opinions on Project Steering Group decisions on whether to implement recommendations on proposed changes
- Brief and advise user management on all matters concerning the project.
- User liaison is functioning effectively.

Assurance Responsibilities

- Specification of the user's needs is accurate, complete and unambiguous
- Development of the solution at all stages is monitored to ensure that it will meet the user's needs and is progressing towards that target
- Impact of potential changes is evaluated from the user point of view
- Risks to the users are constantly monitored
- Quality checking of the product at all stages has the appropriate user representation
- Quality control procedures are used correctly to ensure products meet user requirements
- User liaison is functioning effectively.

5 Senior Supplier/ System Owner

Represents the interests of those designing, developing, facilitating, procuring, and implementing. Where an external Vendor is engaged there are two separate roles. A Senior Supplier representing the vendor and a System Owner who will operate and maintain the project products. The System Owner is accountable for the quality of products delivered by the supplier(s). The Senior Supplier role must have the authority to commit or acquire supplier resources required.

If necessary, more than one person may be required to represent the suppliers.

Specific Responsibilities

- Agree objectives for supplier activities
- Made sure that progress towards the outcome remains consistent from the supplier perspective
- Promote and maintain focus on the desired project outcome from the point of view of supplier management
- Ensure that the supplier resources required for the project are made available
- Approve Product Descriptions for supplier products
- Contribute supplier opinions on Project Steering Group decisions on whether to implement recommendations on proposed changes
- Resolve supplier requirements and priority conflicts
- Arbitrate on, and ensure resolution of, any supplier priority or resource conflicts
- Brief non-technical management on supplier aspects of the project.
- Specialist integrity of the project.

Assurance Responsibilities

- Advise on the selection of development strategy, design and methods
- Ensure that any supplier and operating standards defined for the project are met and used to good effect
- Monitor potential changes and their impact on the correctness, completeness and integrity of products against their Product Description from a supplier perspective
- Monitor any risks in the production aspects of the project
- Ensure quality control procedures are used correctly, so that products adhere to requirements.

6 Project Manager

The Project Manager has the authority to run the project on a day-to-day basis on behalf of the Steering Group within the constraints laid down by the Steering Group.

Specific Responsibilities

- Day to day coordination of project activity
- Stakeholder Management
- Convene Steering Group meetings
- Manages staff, finances and other resources assigned to the project
- Monitoring of project risk and success sliders
- Monitor interdependencies with other projects
- Presentation of project reports, issues and risks to the Steering Groups
- Project reporting reflects the nature of the report
- Project staff are informed
- Vendor Management
- Quality Assurance
- Manage the risks, including the development of contingency plans
- Liaise with related projects to ensure that work is neither overlooked nor duplicated
- Take responsibility for overall progress and use of resources and initiate corrective action where necessary.

7   Team Lead

The team leader's prime responsibility is to ensure production of those products defined by the project manager within agreed tolerances and quality. The team leader reports to and takes direction from the project manager. Depending on project complexity no team leader may be required, or alternatively several may be appropriate.

Specific Responsibilities

- Prepare plans for the team's work and agree with the project manager
- Manage the team
- Direct, motivate and monitor the team's work
- Take responsibility for the progress of the team's work and use of team resources and initiate corrective action where necessary within the constraints laid down by the project manager
- Advise the project manager of any deviations from plan, recommend corrective action and help prepare any appropriate exception reports.
- Ensure the evaluation of project issues that arise within the team's work and recommend action to the project manager
- Liaise with any project assurance roles
- Ensure that quality controls of the team's work are planned and performed correctly
- Maintain or ensure the maintenance of team files
- Identify and advise the project manager of any risks associated with a work package
- Manage specific risks as directed by the project manager

8   Reference Groups

Group that provide forums to achieve input, comment and consensus among groups of stakeholders.

Specific Responsibilities

- Provide advice on the project relevant to area of expertise
- Look for collaborative solutions
- Disseminate and gather information to their areas.

NB: Where there are a number of closely linked projects a project program manager may be necessary to provide coordination between the projects. The role would provide overall responsibility for the delivery of the project program and monitor scope dependencies and overlaps between projects.

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