Gate 0 Review: Guideline

Go / No-Go

October 2024

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Introduction

1.1   Overview of the gateway review process

The *NSW Gateway Policy* (TPG22-12) sets out guidance and minimum requirements for the delivery and monitoring of Gateway Reviews in NSW. Gateway Reviews are independent Reviews conducted at key points, or Gates, along the lifecycle of a project and are important for providing confidence to the NSW Government (through Cabinet) that projects are being delivered on time, to cost and in line with government objectives.

Figure 1. NSW Gateway Framework
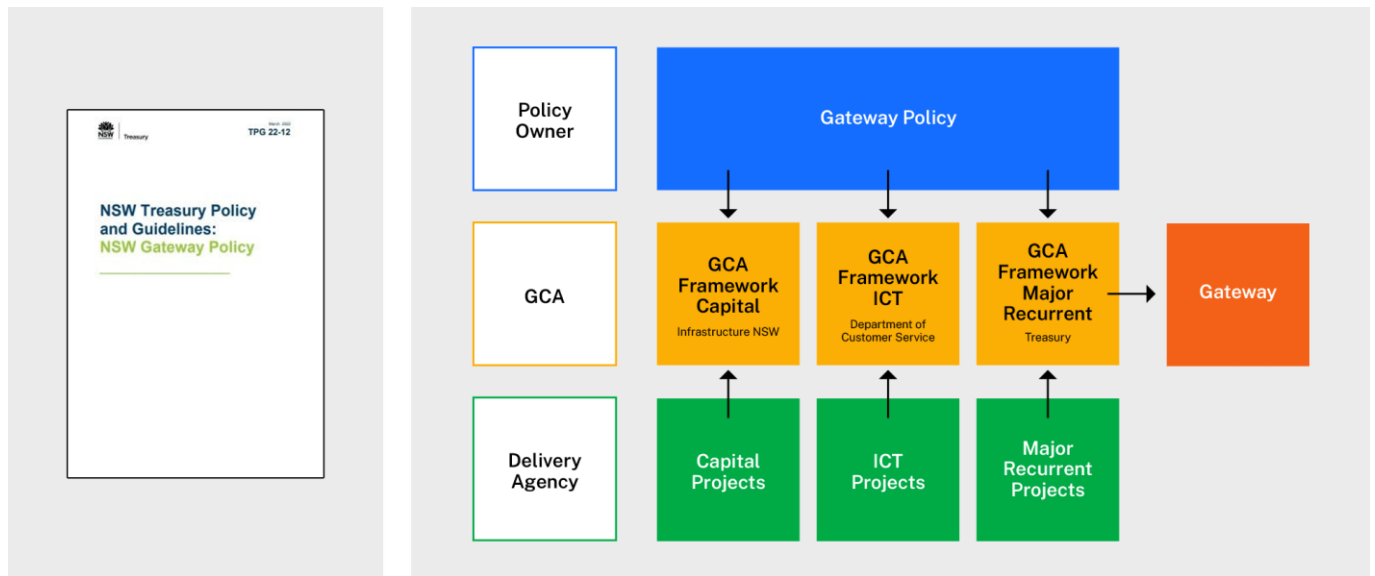
Figure 1 summarises the interaction between the NSW Gateway Policy, Gateway Coordination Agency (CGA Frameworks and delivery of Gateway reviews.

DCS NSW is the Gateway Coordination Agency (GCA) for the government's ICT capital projects and programs. As the GCA, Digital NSW within DCS NSW developed, implemented, and administers the Digital Assurance Framework (DAF). (See Fig1.) The roles and responsibilities of DCS NSW as well as Delivery Agencies, in relation to assurance processes are set out in the DAF. It is the responsibility of all Delivery Agencies to meet the requirements of the DAF.

Gateway Reviews is a key tool DCS NSW uses to complete a risk-based assurance approach for all large ICT projects and programs valued at or more than $5 million. The risk-based approach relies on an understanding of an agency's capability and capacity to develop and deliver capital projects and programs.

The outcome of each Gateway Review is a Review Report that includes commentary to inform the NSW Government. The Review Report also includes a series of recommendations aimed at assisting the Delivery Agency to develop and deliver their projects and programs successfully.

Gateway Reviews can consider an individual project or a program consisting of a number of projects (incl. sector specific and place-based). For the purposes of this guideline, the use of the term 'project' also covers the grouping of projects into a program.

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1.2 Project lifecycle and gateway reviews

The diagram below (See Fig 2.) outlines the typical Gates, along a project's lifecycle stages where Gateway Reviews can be conducted:

Figure 2.

1.3   About this Guideline

This guideline assists review teams and delivering agencies working on Gate 0: Go/No-Go of the Digital Assurance Framework (DAF) Gateway review process. This is a new Gateway Guideline and follows the same overall structure of the new DSIA single guideline design revised for Digital projects. It should be read alongside the 'Gate 0 Review Report' template which is available from https://www.digital.nsw.gov.au/policy/digital-assurance.
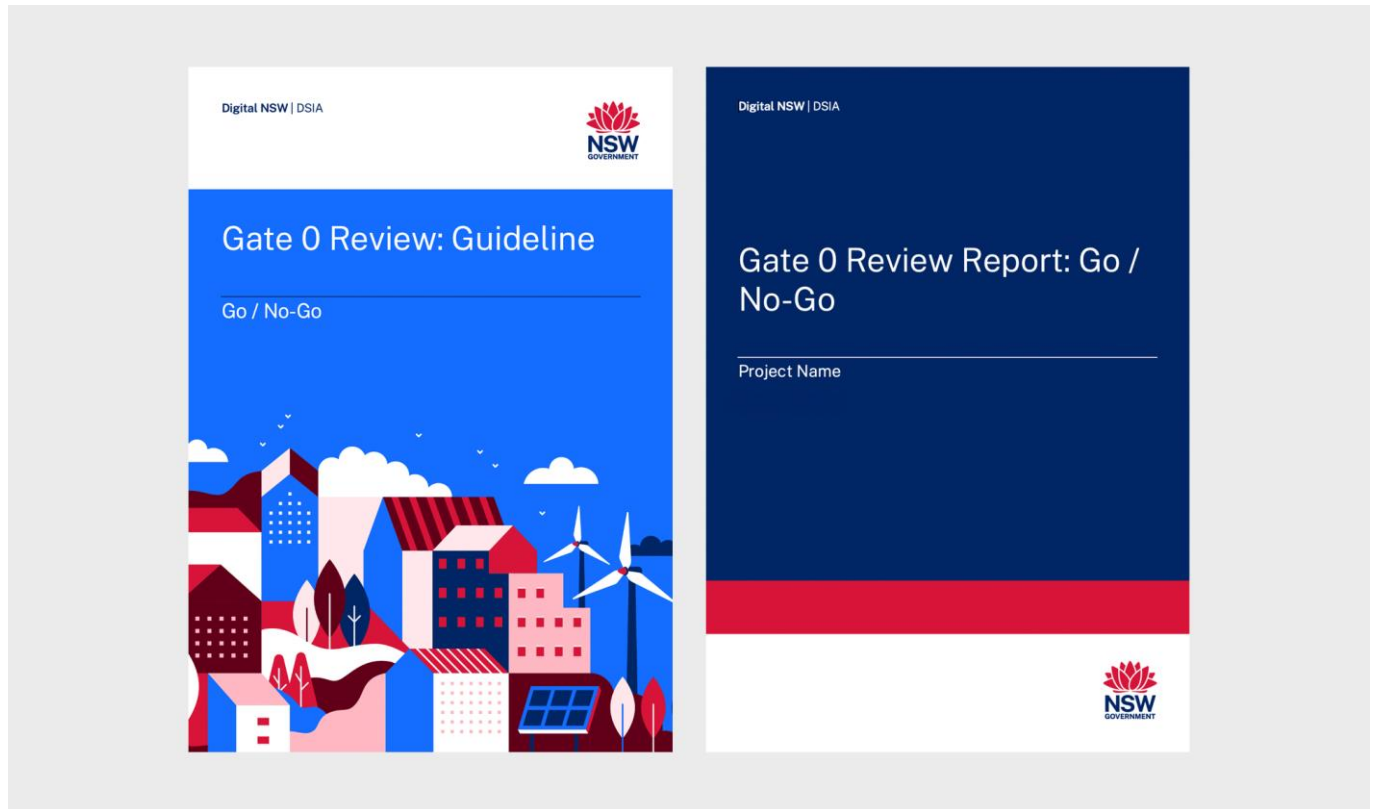
The Gateway Review process examines projects at key decision points (gates) and looks ahead to provide assurance that projects can progress to the next stage (or gate). This can also include health checks between gates.

Gateway reviews are independent peer reviews of a project's viability and development. Independent practitioners from outside the project examine the progress and likelihood of successful delivery at a certain point in each project – this provides a valuable new perspective on the project's issues, while challenging the robustness of plans and processes. The recent Digital Assurance Trends and Analysis report developed by Digital NSW has highlighted many of the benefits of applying the gateway review process. Looking back over the past 5 years the report has identified that project teams that engage early and regularly with the Gateway Assurance team, have had improved results and higher success rates than those that have had limited or no access to Gateway Assurance. The new Gateway assurance guidelines and approach emphasise close collaboration between Assurance, Sponsor and project team to help ensure maximum value is gained for the process.

1.4   How to use this Guideline

At Gate 0, Delivery Agencies need to demonstrate the level of priority, urgency and criticality of a project at its feasibility stage. This should be prior to work commencing on the Strategic Business Case and Final Detailed Business Case.

Gate 0 Reviews are mandatory for all projects with an estimated total cost exceeding $10 million, and/or those designated by the GCA's Digital Assurance and Risk Advisory Group (DARAG) as warrant closer early examination due to identified risk and or complexity from the Tiering process which is completed as part of the project registration.

The Gate 0 Review should occur at the initiation of the project and before the Agency has allocated funding and resources to developing the project and as soon as practicable after project registration in the NSW Digital Assurance Portal and assessment of the project's risk tier by DARAG.

It is expected that some level of basic feasibility and preliminary scoping has been completed to identify the key problems the project is intended to solve and how critical and urgent the project is to solving those problems. It is also understood that in registering the project, the Delivery Agency is proposing an IT asset solution. Although, the agency should also be able to demonstrate the basic rationale over a non-asset, operational or augmentation of an existing asset option.

Where deemed necessary by Digital NSW, a Gate 0 Review may be completed retrospectively even if the Agency has advanced further work or business case development for the project.

State Owned Corporations (SOCs) are not required to complete a Gate 0 Review, unless specifically determined by DARAG.

Gateway Review guidelines support a consistent, structured approach to Reviews. The guidelines define roles and responsibilities during reviews and assist Delivery Agencies and the Gate 0 Committee to properly prepare. DAF have remodelled their guideline and workbook into a single document for simplicity as part of the revision of the gateway assurance framework for Digital project/programs.

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1.5   Gateway reviews and agency assurance processes

The assurance process, including Gateway Reviews, informs the NSW Government (through Cabinet) on the development and delivery progress of capital IT projects. Recommendations and commentary emerging from Gateway Reviews also assist Delivery Agencies to improve IT projects and assets, with a focus on adding value through the expertise and experience of the members of the Gate 0 Committee.

A Gateway Review provides an independent snapshot of project status at a point in time. Gateway Reviews are **not an audit or replacement for a Delivery Agency's internal governance**.

Every NSW Government Agency should have its own governance structures and resources in place to undertake internal reviews and regularly track and report on its portfolio of projects.

1.6   Why do gateway reviews?

The NSW Government requires visibility across the government's capital IT program and assurance that expected services and benefits will be delivered on time, to budget and in line with government policy. The Government also expects project issues and risks to be transparent, with Delivery Agencies acting on and mitigating problems before there is an impact on the community and stakeholder outcomes.

1.7   Gateway review process principles

Gate 0 Review Process Principles

- The Review Report structure is followed by the Gate 0 Committee in undertaking the Review
- All parties focus on value-adding to the project
- Review Report commentary and recommendations are succinct and focused on practical issues and outcomes
- A clear Go or No-Go recommendation is made to proceed with a Business Case

1.7.1   Digital Assurance

The Digital Assurance Framework (DAF) is an independent risk-based assurance process for the State's capital and recurrent digital projects. It identifies the level of confidence that can be provided to Cabinet and Cabinet sub-committees that the State's ICT and Digital projects are being effectively developed and delivered in accordance with the Government's objectives.

The framework's key features (Fig 3.) are categorised under the following headings:

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Agility
- Support

Figure 3. Key features of DAF
See Digital Assurance Framework for detailed description.
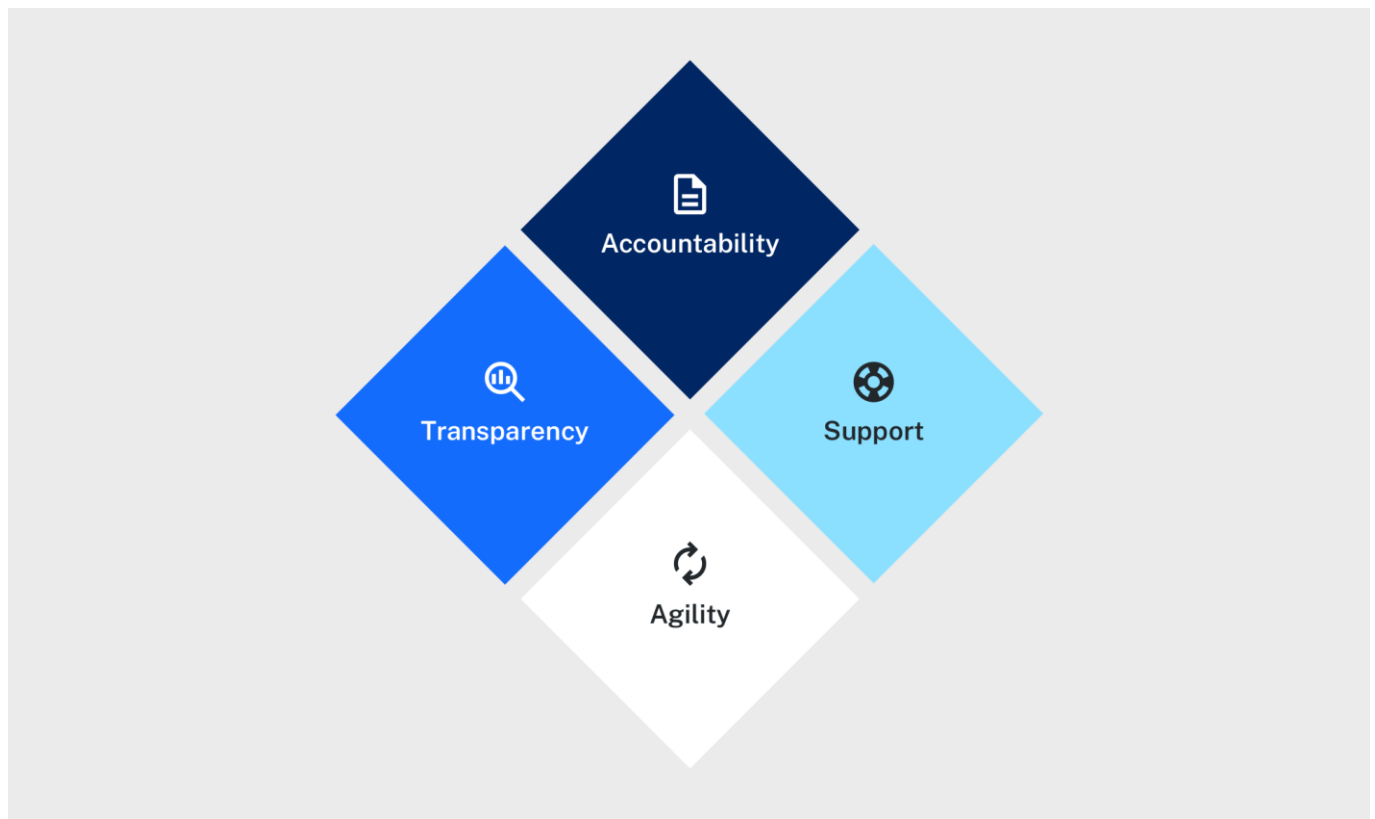
1.7.2　Gateway Review Process Principles

- The Gate 0 Committee is selected for their skillset and as far as practicable to match to the project's type, needs, stage, scale and complexity.

- The Review Report structure for a Gate 0 is brief and focussed to ensure there is a clear understanding of the viability of the planned project

- All parties focus on value-adding to the project.

- Review Report commentary and recommendations are focused on practical issues and outcomes.

1.8 Conducting a Gate 0 Gateway Review

Follow the steps and timeframes shown in the table below:

Step	Activity	
1	Delivery Agency registers the Project or Program in the NSW Assurance Portal.	**Project Initiation and Registration**
2	The GCA's Digital Assurance and Risk Advisory Group (DARAG) assigns the project a risk tier for the purposes of Investor Assurance.	
3	For eligible projects, the GCA Review Manager informs the Delivery Agency that the project is subject to a Gate 0 and provides the Project Justification template to facilitate the Gate 0 process. [Generally projects over $10 million]	
4	The Delivery Agency prepares the Project Justification template and documents related to the Gate 0 and submits them to the GCA Review Manager.	**Week 1**
5	The GCA Review Manager seeks any necessary clarification on the documents submitted, collates all applicable information and schedules the project for consideration on the agenda of the next appropriate Gate 0 Committee meeting.	**Week 2-4**
6	The Gate 0 Committee meets and undertakes the Review of the project with the information provided. The Committee prepares a Gate 0 Review Report, including the Go or No-Go recommendation.	**Week 5**
7	The GCA provides a copy of the draft Report to the Delivery Agency for fact checking and response to the recommendations made by the Gate 0 Committee.	**Week 6**
8	The Delivery Agency completes the responses to recommendations in the Gate 0 Report template and returns to the GCA Review Manager. Noting any appeals of a No-Go decision will need to be raised by the Delivery Agency's representative at an Assurance Governance Committee meeting. The report is provided the GCIDO for consideration and approval for submission to Cabinet.	**Week 7**
9	The GCA Review Manager ensures the Go/No-Go recommendation is included in the next appropriate Assurance Cabinet Submission for review by the Assurance Governance Committee.	**Post Review**
10	Close-out Plan issued to the Delivery agency and managed by the GCA.	
11	The GCA Review Manager informs the Delivery Agency of the Go/No-Go decision of Cabinet.	

1.9   Review ratings

Recommendations made by the Gate 0 Committee will receive a rating, indicating level of urgency for the project:

Rating	Criteria description
Critical (Do Now)	This item is critical and urgent, and action must be taken immediately. DCS will not clear this Gateway until this recommendation is actioned.
Essential (Do By)	The recommendation is important but not urgent – it should be actioned before further key decisions are taken. DCS will only clear this Gateway once it has approved a plan to respond to this recommendation.
Recommended	The recommendation is not critical or urgent, but the project may benefit from addressing it.

1.10   Gate 0 Delivery confidence level definitions

Following a Gate 0 Review, a short Review Report is produced using the Gate 0 Report template.

The Gate 0 Committee will assign an overall review rating in the Gate 0 Report:

Overall review rating Recommendation from the gate 0 committee as to whether the project has demonstrated sufficient priority, criticality and urgency to proceed.	
GO	Continue development work on the project and proceed to develop Strategic Business Case.
NO-GO	Agency to cease all work, and de-mobilise project. Agency may re-complete a Gate 0 at a future date.

2

Part A:
For Delivery Agencies and Gate 0 Committee

Background on NSW Gateway and the risk-based approach to project assurance

2.1   Overview of gateway review

Gateway Reviews are short, focused and independent expert Reviews into the progress and direction of a project at key points in its lifecycle.

Each of the seven Gates in the DAF occur at a point within a project phase, timed to inform government decision-making and project progression.

Bringing it all together, the relationship of the Gates to the project lifecycle stages and phases can be represented as:

Stage	Purpose	Scope	Health Checks
Portfolio review	Initiatives assessed using a value-based priority rating system to determine which initiatives should be developed.		
Strategy and Business Plan	Cluster or agency plan from which initiatives are formed.		
Planning			
You are here GATE 0 Go / No-Go	Determine if the project aligns with Government and Agency priorities and whether the identified service need has merit and warrants further consideration. Assesses if there are sufficient governance processes and resources available to support the development of a preliminary business case.	• Affordability (ETC) • Government Priority • Criticality of service need / urgency • Strategic risk and compliance mitigation • Alternative solution • Whole of government impact / reuse /SDA	NA
GATE 1 Strategic Alignment	Ensures the business needs for the initiative are clearly defined and aligned with Strategic imperatives, Investment Principles and Enterprise Architecture. Cyber, Privacy and AI implications are understood	• Policy and business context • Business case and stakeholders • Risk management • Readiness for next phase • Alignment to Government Enterprise Architecture • Assessment of Cyber, Privacy and AI compliance requirements	NA

Stage	Purpose	Scope	Health Checks
GATE 2 **Business Case**	Ensures that the business case is robust and there are plans to realise benefits and align with Strategic imperatives, Investment Principles and Enterprise Architecture. Demonstrated Alignment to Government Enterprise Architecture Funding model to operate is sustainable for whole of life Cyber, Privacy and AI implications are understood, and assurance addressed in the BC.	• Assessment of delivery approach • Business case and stakeholders • Risk management • Review of current phase • Readiness for next phase • Alignment to Government Enterprise Architecture • Assessment of Cyber, Privacy and AI compliance requirements	Potential for multiple or recurrent health checks and milestone reviews.
GATE 3 **Pre-execution**	Assesses the procurement and tendering approach, identifies problems early in the initiative and ensures plans for the delivery of the initiative are in place. Clear understanding that Vendor is capable of meeting the NSW AI Assessment framework and cyber security requirements – 3rd party assurance is now important to consider closely in these areas.	• Assessment of delivery approach • Business case and stakeholders • Risk management • Review of current phase • Readiness for next phase • Alignment to Government Enterprise Architecture • Approach maintains compliance with Assessment of Cyber, Privacy and AI compliance requirements	Potential for multiple or recurrent health checks and milestone reviews. Update status of risk profile for AI and Cyber may be needed.
		Delivery	
GATE 4 **Tender Evaluation**	Evaluates the solution and preferred option prior to committing funds, ensuring that the initiative will be delivered effectively and checks requirements against milestones. Consider Vendor compliance requirements under new AI guidelines.	• Assessment of the proposed solution • Business case and stakeholders • Risk management • Review of current phase • Readiness for next phase • Approach maintains compliance with Assessment of Cyber, Privacy and AI compliance requirements	Potential for multiple or recurrent health checks and milestone reviews. Test leading indicators of problems to catch risks and issues early. Ensure appropriate measures and checks are in place for ongoing assurance.

Stage	Purpose	Scope	Health Checks
GATE 5 Pre-commissioning	Assesses whether the organisation is ready to adopt the solution to achieve the planned benefits stated in the business case and implement the change management required. Clearly defined sustainability of funding to deliver the system into the future in BAU including AI Monitoring, Cyber and Privacy checks.	• Business case and stakeholders • Risk management • Review of current phase • Readiness for next phase • Cyber, privacy and AI compliance sign offs should be completed and the ongoing plan into operations clearly specified.	Potential for multiple or recurrent health checks and milestone reviews. Test leading indicators of problems to catch risks and issues early. Ensure appropriate measures and checks are in place for ongoing assurance.
GATE 6 Closure Review	Assesses whether the anticipated benefits are being delivered, lessons learned have been considered and plans for ongoing improvements in value, service enhancements and performance are in place.	• Review of Operating Phase including financial sustainability • Business Case and Benefits • Plans to improve Value for Money • Review of organisational • Review Organisational learning • Readiness for future • Risk Management over AI, Cyber, Privacy	Potential for multiple or recurrent health checks and milestone reviews.

Gateway system applies Gates and related reviews, such as Health Checks, to projects and programs at key milestones throughout their lifecycle as shown in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. - Gateway Reviews throughout the Project Lifecycle (TPG22-12)
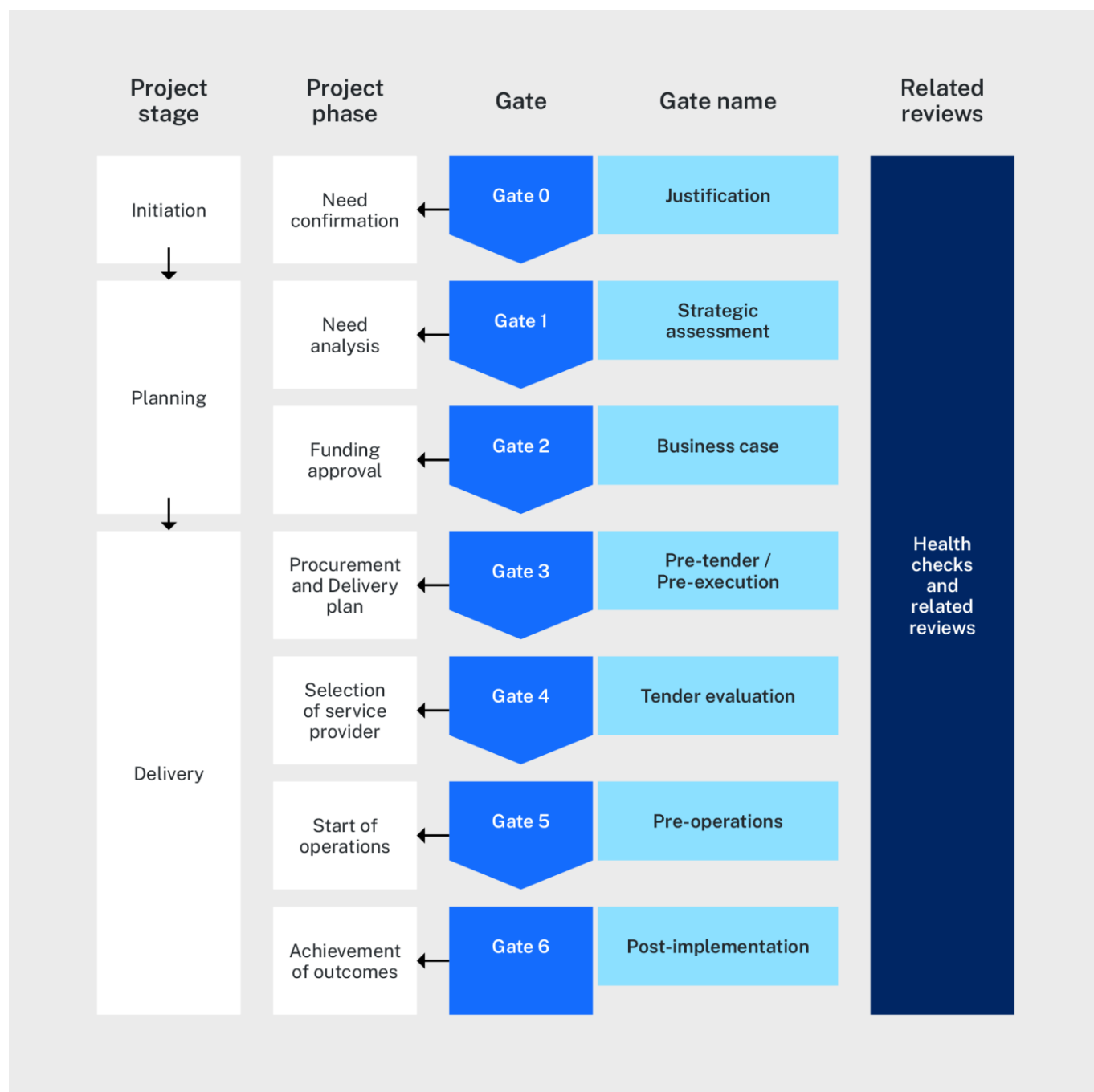
2.2   Gateway review process

The Gateway Review process integrates project development and delivery processes with informed decision-making. Each Gate has a clear purpose reflecting the increasing requirement for certainty as a project moves through its lifecycle.

The Gateway Review process also includes 'Health Checks' and 'Deep Dives', which are Reviews conducted at any point through the project lifecycle.

All Gates, Health Checks and Deep Dives include the involvement of an Independent Expert Reviewer, Review Team Lead and/or Review Team / Committee. These individuals are appointed by the GCA based on their independence from the project, experience and expertise.

2.3   Gate 0 – Project initiation

As project development is at an early stage in the project lifecycle, Gate 0 Go/No-Go Gateway Reviews have a relatively narrow focus compared to later Gateway Reviews and Health Checks. The Gate 0 Review is undertaken by the GCA's Gate 0 Committee shortly following the registration of the project. The Gate 0 Review focuses on how well the project fits with government priorities, the criticality of its service need and how well it is aligned to the Delivery Agency's IT Asset Management Plan or framework.

2.4   Gates 1 to 5 – Project development and delivery

Gateway Reviews (Gates 1 to 5) are independent expert Reviews conducted over a short period. The structure of each of these Reviews is similar and focused on high value areas that have greatest impact on successful project development and delivery.

Seven Key Focus Areas support a consistent structure in undertaking Gateway Reviews and preparing Review Reports. Review Report commentary and recommendations are intended to address the Key Focus Areas, the Terms of Reference and be constructive in raising issues essential to the project's success.

2.5   Health checks and deep dive reviews

Health Check Reviews are similar to the Gateway Reviews (Gates 1 to 5) and follow the same format to address and rate overall delivery confidence as well as each of the seven Key Focus Areas. The customisation of the Health Check is achieved using the appropriate Health Check Guideline and Terms of Reference.

For some projects, Health Checks are conducted at regular intervals (every six to nine months) during the Delivery stage of the project lifecycle. Health Checks during other lifecycle stages are generally only conducted upon request by Government, the GCA, NSW Treasury or the Delivery Agency.

Deep Dive Reviews have a limited Terms of Reference and do not cover the seven Key Focus Areas, instead they examine and report on a specific or detailed technical issue(s).

REGULAR PROJECT REPORTING

Regular project reports are submitted through the NSW Assurance Portal on either a monthly or quarterly basis, depending on the Project Tier, and focus on progress against time, cost and other risks.

PROJECT AND PROGRAM MONITORING

The GCA monitors projects and programs through regular reporting (including mitigation plans for projects at risk), close-out of the Gateway Review Report Recommendations and general day-to-day interactions with Delivery Agencies.

IMPROVING OUTCOMES

Digital NSW seeks to share lessons learnt and good practice across delivery agencies. A number of forums have been established to bring together practitioners to share their insight of the development, procurement and delivery of capital infrastructure projects and programs.

2.6 Gate 6 – Closure Review

The purpose of the Gate 6 Closure Review Report is to support the close-out of the delivery stage into operations and to assess the successful delivery of the purpose and benefits of the government's investment in the project. The Report is to be finalised four to eight months from the first operations commencement date.

Instead of the Review Team, the GCA appoints an independent expert Lead Reviewer to work with the responsible agencies to complete the Gate 6 Report. The Gate 6 Report follows a structured template. The most appropriate agency leads the preparation of the initial draft and then the review team finalises the draft content of the report, including the overall rating and recommendations. The Lead Reviewer then provides the Gate 6 Report to the GCA for review and finalisation.

2.7 Gateway review reports

The primary output of the Review is a high-quality written report which follows the appropriate GCA issued Report template. For Gate 0, the final draft of the Report template, the recommendations and recommended overall Review Rating are determined by the Gate 0 Committee.

The primary purpose of the Gate 0 Review Report is to recommend a Go or No-Go decision to the NSW Government. The Gate 0 Review Report, once finalised by the GCA, is provided to the NSW Cabinet. The Delivery Agency is expected to act on the recommendations documented in the Review Report. Close out of recommendations is undertaken by the GCA through the established assurance recommendation closeout process.

2.8 Report distribution

- Gate 0 Reports are Cabinet documents.
- Gate 0 Committee Members must not distribute copies of any versions of Review Reports directly to Delivery Agencies, project teams or any other party.
- On receipt of the Review Report for checking and response from the GCA Review Manager, the Delivery Agency may only distribute the Report for the purpose of responding to the GCA Review Manager.

- The Review Report must not be distributed outside of the Delivery Agency until the report is finalised, including agency responses to the Review Recommendations.
- Copies of final Review Reports (including agency responses to the Review Recommendations) are only distributed by the GCA in accordance with the protocols outlined in the DAF.
- The final Review Report must not be distributed to any other parties unless directed by the Delivery Agency Head or delegate of the GCA. No Report may be distributed outside the NSW Government by either the GCA or Delivery Agency Head, unless permission is explicitly granted by the Government Chief Information and Digital Officer (GCIDO) or the Delivery Agency Head.
- The Delivery Agency Head or delegate, responsible for developing and delivering the project, may distribute the final Review Report at their discretion, having regard to the confidential nature of the Report – but this does not include outside the NSW Government.

2.9   Clearance of gate

Following the conclusion of the Gateway Review and the finalisation of the Review Report, the Delivery Agency can request a 'Clearance of Gate' Certificate from the GCA. 'Clearance of Gate' will be determined by the GCA and granted by the NSW Cabinet.

The Certificate confirms the Gateway Review has been completed for a particular stage and that an appropriate Close-out Plan is in place to assist with project development or delivery. The Certificate is not a GCA endorsement of the project, only confirmation that development work on the project may continue.

To achieve a 'Clearance of Gate' the Delivery Agency must:

- Respond appropriately to the Review Recommendations (to the satisfaction of the GCA)
- Address all **CRITICAL** Review Recommendations (to the satisfaction of the GCA)

Delivery Agencies do not have to request a 'Clearance of Gate' Certificate, but its absence does not negate the mandatory requirement on an Delivery Agency to respond to and act upon the Review recommendations.

Obtaining the Gate 0 clearance letter is a critical step in securing approval to progress towards the development of a business case. This letter is essential for advancing the production of a business case and is an important milestone in the project development process.

2.10   What gateway reviews do not do

A Gateway Review is not an audit.

The Reviews are intended to be confidential and constructive, providing an expert assessment of a project's status.

Delivery Agencies should note that Gateway Reviews will not:

- Represent a government decision in relation to funding, planning, approvals or policy
- Quality check or provide direct detailed assessment of management plans and project team deliverables
- Provide a forum for stakeholders or other parties to inappropriately disrupt the direction or nature of a project
- Provide a detailed mark-up of management plans and specific project team deliverables.

2.11 Roles within a gateway review applicable to Gate 0

The typical roles within a Gate 0 Review are outlined below:

Role	Description
Assurance Governance Committee	The Assurance Governance Committee is a committee of NSW Government Secretaries chaired by the Chief Executive of Infrastructure NSW. This Committee reviews and endorses the GCA's regular assurance submissions. This includes the Go/No-Go recommendations to Cabinet by the GCA.
Gateway Coordination Agency (GCA)	The agency identified in the NSW Gateway Policy as responsible for the Gateway Review processes, procedures, advice and reporting for either infrastructure, recurrent or ICT projects. The Gateway Coordination Agency (GCA) administers the Gateway Review process for the nominated asset type (capital infrastructure, ICT or recurrent). The Head of Investor Assurance within the GCA ensures systems, processes and resources are in place to facilitate successful Gateway Review processes and outcomes. The GCA is responsible for providing reports, briefings and commentary to the NSW Cabinet on the outcomes of Gateway Reviews.
GCA Review Manager	For Gate 0, the senior GCA representative responsible for the Gate 0 process. The GCA Review Manager chairs the Gate 0 Committee and is responsible for liaising with the Delivery Agency through the Gate 0 process and in finalising the Gate 0 Report. The GCA Review Manager has Cabinet level reporting responsibilities for project assurance.
Gate 0 Committee	The Gate 0 Committee is a committee of the GCA responsible for reviewing eligible projects and programs registered with the GCA and undertaking the Gate 0 Review. The membership and activity of the Gate 0 Committee is governed by the Gate 0 Committee. Terms of Reference. The Gate 0 Committee jointly prepares a Gate 0 Report for the GCA.
Delivery Agency	The Delivery Agency that is primarily responsible for the project or program at the various stages of the project's lifecycle. This agency is required to adhere to the Digital Assurance Framework (DAF). Can also be referred to as the Sponsor Agency.
Delivery Agency Head	The Secretary or CEO of the Delivery Agency responsible for the project.
Senior Responsible Officer (SRO)	The Delivery Agency's nominated senior executive with strategic responsibility and the single point of overall accountability for a project. The SRO receives the Review Report from the GCA for action, is debriefed by the Lead Reviewer and the GCA Review Manager following the Review. The SRO may also be referred to as the Project Sponsor. SROs are not to contact the Gate 0 Committee outside the protocols set by the GCA, including following the Review.
Delivery Agency's Project Director	The Project Director takes an active part in the Gateway Review and assists in responding to the GCA Review Manager and Lead Reviewer's requests. The Project Director must ensure they and their team do not initiate contact with the Lead Reviewer outside the protocols of the Review. There is no 'informal' communication permitted.
Stakeholder	Organisations, groups or individuals, either internal or external to government, that are impacted by the project and may be interviewed at the discretion of the Lead Reviewer.
Independent Expert Reviewer	An individual with the appropriate expertise and experience appointed by the GCA to the Gate 0 Committee. The Independent Expert acts as an advisor to the Gate 0 Committee.

2.12 Assessing risk in Digital Assurance

Each gate in the Gateway Review process requires the review team to assess a project's level of risk. Before the Gateway Process starts, each project is allocated a risk tier to quantify the level of assurance required. The risk tier – a rating between 1 and 5, with 1 being the largest and most complex – is determined through a self-assessment of risks and complexities which is then compared against estimated costs. The risk tier ensures there will be sufficient assurance to larger projects and less regulation for smaller projects.

Tier classification and assessment

Risk score	ETC ($m)					
	200+	>100-200	>50-100	>20-50	10-20	5-10<
4.0 – 5.0	Tier 1	Tier 1	Tier 1	Tier 1	Tier 1	Tier 2
3.0 – 3.9	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 3
2.5 – 2.9	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
2.3 – 2.4	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5
2.1 – 2.2	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5
0.0 – 2.0	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 3	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5

The DAF Gateway Review process provides for a series of focused, independent expert reviews, held at key decision points in a project's lifecycle (as depicted in Table below Figure 5. – Application of Gateway Reviews and Health Checks under the DAF). The Gateway Reviews are appraisals of ICT and Digital projects/program, that highlight risks and issues, which if not addressed may threaten successful delivery.

Gate 0 review is to evaluate the strategic alignment, feasibility, and governance of a project or program at its initial stage. It ensures that the project is set up for success by assessing whether it meets key strategic objectives, has a solid business case, appropriate governance structures, and addresses high-level risks. This review provides an early "Go/No-Go" decision, helping agencies determine whether to proceed, refine, or halt the project before significant resources are committed.

Refer to Fig 5. for Digital Assurance Framework 2024 – Section 3.3 for detail.

Shaded boxes are mandatory. Blue boxes are Gateway requirements.	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5
	External review (by GCIDO), agency decision to proceed				
Planning Phases — Gate 0	Gateway review + GCIDO endorsement	Gateway review + GCIDO endorsement	Gateway review	Project sponsor-commissioned review	
Gate 1	Gateway review + GCIDO endorsement	Gateway review + GCIDO endorsement	Gateway review	Project sponsor-commissioned review	Optional
Gate 2	Gateway review + GCIDO endorsement	Gateway review	Project sponsor-commissioned review	Project sponsor-commissioned review	Optional
Delivery Phases — Gate 3	Gateway review + GCIDO endorsement	Gateway review + GCIDO endorsement	Project Sponsor-commissioned review	Optional	Optional
Gate 4	Gateway review	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional
Gate 5 — Tailored at Gate 2	Gateway review	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional
Gate 6	Gateway review	Gateway review	Project sponsor-commissioned review	Optional	Optional
Health Checks / Deep Dives / Rapid Assurance Review	External review	External review		Optional	Optional

2.13 Developing the report

A review report is the key output of each gate. Each report must follow the report template and be written in a concise way that a third party could understand. Commentary should be included for each section, to support recommendations by the Review Team. Where possible, examples should be provided especially for items that require further work and action. A Gate 0 report is preformatted, and the core is only expected to be to pages with clear comment on whether the project should proceed to business case i.e. (Go /No Go). The report is expected to be completed by the Gate 0 assessment committee and is therefore a short form document that can support all stakeholders including NSW Treasury consider the proposal against all other digital project submissions.

Reports will remain in Microsoft Word and named as per the following file naming protocol:

Project Name – Gateway Review Name – (DRAFT / FINAL) Report Ver 1-1

The review team leader emails all reports to the ICT Assurance Director.

2.14 Applicable NSW Policy

The Gateway Review process aligns with current NSW Government policy and strategies. Delivery Agencies should ensure projects meet the latest NSW Government policy and guidelines. Examples of these policies and guidelines include the current versions of:

- NSW Gateway Policy (TPG22-12)
- NSW Government Sector Finance Act 2018
- NSW Government Capability Framework
- NSW Government Cost Control Framework (CCF)
- NSW Treasury Guidelines for Capital Business Cases (TPP08-5)
- NSW Government Business Case Guidelines (TPG24-29)
- Asset Management Policy for the NSW Public Sector (TPP19-07)
- NSW Government Guide to Cost Benefit Analysis (TPG23-08)
- NSW Government Program Evaluation Guidelines (TPG22-22)
- NSW Government Benefits Realisation Management Framework (2018)
- NSW Public Private Partnership Policy and Guidelines (TPG22-21)
- NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework (April 2022)
- NSW Procurement Board Directions Enforceable Procurement Divisions
- Australian Government Assurance Reviews and Risk Assessment (Department of Finance)
- Digital Assurance Framework (Department of Customer Service)
- First Nations Investment Framework (TPG24-28)
- Carbon emissions in the Investment Framework (TPG24-34)

2.15 Gateway Review Framework

Gate 0 – Go / No Go	
Purpose	Determine if the project aligns with Government and Agency priorities and whether the identified service need has merit and warrants further consideration. Assesses if there are sufficient governance processes and resources available to support the development of a preliminary business case.
Review Scope	• Affordability (ETC) • Government Priority • Criticality of service need / urgency • Strategic risk and compliance mitigation • Alternative solution • Whole of government impact / reuse /SDA

7 Focus Areas Emphasis	Reviews will assess the focus areas through various lenses including:			
	Risk Management	Change and End Users	Benefits Management	Scope Management
	• Early identification of key risks, including risk for potential solutions/options and strategic risk • Outline risk management plans.	• Stakeholder identification and end user input to service needs.	• High level benefits identified and agreed • Benefits strategy, plan and register	• Alignment with Government Policy and Priorities • Requirements and scope are clear • Alignment to business needs • Options analysis

Given the early stage of the project – assessment of the 7 focus areas will be limited and are considered for broader reference only by the review committee at this time.

Gate 1 – Strategic Alignment	
Purpose	Ensures the business needs for the initiative are clearly defined & aligned with strategic Imperatives, Investment Principles & Enterprise Architecture. Confirmation of Alignment to Government Enterprise Architecture.
Review Scope	• Policy and business context • Business case and stakeholders • Risk management • Readiness for next phase • Alignment to Government Enterprise Architecture • Assessment of Cyber, Privacy and AI compliance requirements

7 Focus Areas Emphasis	Reviews will assess the focus areas through various lenses including:			
	Risk Management	**Change and End Users**	**Benefits Management**	**Scope Management**
	• Early identification of key risks, including risk for potential solutions/options and strategic risk • Outline risk management plans. • Early Assessment of IA impact per NSW Assessment Guidelines • Cyber Security risk Profile documented and included in project scope	• Stakeholder identification and end user input to service needs.	• High level benefits identified and agreed • Benefits strategy, plan and register	• Requirements and scope are clear • Alignment to business needs • Options analysis

Gate 2 – Business Case	
Purpose	Ensures that the business case is robust & there are outline plans to realise benefits & align with Strategic Imperatives, Investment Principles & Enterprise Architecture. Confirmation of Alignment to Government Enterprise Architecture Funding model to operate is sustainable for whole of life Cyber, Privacy and AI implications are understood, and assurance addressed in the BC.
Review Scope	• Assessment of delivery approach • Business case and stakeholders • Risk management • Review of current phase • Readiness for next phase • Alignment to Government Enterprise Architecture • Assessment of Cyber, Privacy and AI compliance requirements

Health checks / Deep dives				
7 Focus Areas Emphasis	Reviews will assess the focus areas through various lenses including:			
	Risk Management	**Change and End Users**	**Benefits Management**	**Scope Management**
	• Early identification of key risks, including risk for potential solutions/options and strategic risk • Updated risk management plans • Early Assessment of IA impact per NSW Assessment Guidelines • Cyber Security risk Profile documented and included in project scope	• Assessment of the change impact to all stakeholders	• Benefits aligned to business case and agreed • Governance and plans for realising and delivering benefits • Updated Benefits management plan	• Feasibility and options analysis to meet organisations needs and address government strategy

Gate 3 – Pre-execution	
Purpose	Assesses the procurement and tendering approach, identifies problems early in the project and ensure plans for the delivery of the project are in place.
Review Scope	• Assessment of delivery approach • Business case and stakeholders • Risk management • Review of current phase • Readiness for next phase • Alignment to Government Enterprise Architecture • Approach maintains compliance with Assessment of Cyber, Privacy and AI compliance requirements

Health checks / Deep dives				
7 Focus Areas Emphasis	Reviews will assess the focus areas through various lenses including:			
	Risk Management	**Change and End Users**	**Benefits Management**	**Scope Management**
	• Assessment of key risks • Key procurement and supplier risk • Stakeholder risks • Updated risk management plans • AI, Cyber and Privacy considerations have been costed into the delivery approach correctly	• External (market) engagement and analysis	• Benefits aligned to business case and agreed • Governance and plans for realising and delivering benefits • Deviations to agreed and planned benefits	• Updated project scope including business change • Delivery plan defined and agreed

Gate 4 – Tender evaluation	
Purpose	Evaluates the solution & the preferred option prior to committing funds, ensuring that the project will be delivered effectively and checks requirements against milestones.
Review Scope	• Assessment of the proposed solution • Business case and stakeholders • Risk management • Review of current phase • Readiness for next phase • Alignment to Government Enterprise Architecture • Approach maintains compliance with Assessment of Cyber, Privacy and AI compliance requirements

Health checks / Deep dives

7 Focus Areas Emphasis	Reviews will assess the focus areas through various lenses including:			
	Risk Management	**Change and End Users**	**Benefits Management**	**Scope Management**
	• Assessment of key risks • Key procurement and supplier risk • Updated risk management plans • Stakeholder & change risks • AI, Cyber and Privacy considerations have been costed into the delivery approach correctly	• Change preparation and planning	• Updated benefits strategy, realisation plan and register • Deviations to agreed and planned benefits • Benefits aligned to business case and agreed	• Assessment of options to ensure they are still within scope

Gate 5 – Pre-commissioning	
Purpose	Assesses whether the organisation is ready to adopt the solution to achieve the planned benefits stated in the business case and implement the change management required. Clearly defined sustainability of funding to deliver the system into the future in BAU including AI Monitoring, Cyber and Privacy checks
Review Scope	• Business case and stakeholders • Risk management • Review of current phase • Readiness for next phase • Cyber, privacy and AI compliance sign offs should be completed and the ongoing plan into operations clearly specified.

Health checks / Deep dives

7 Focus Areas Emphasis	Reviews will assess the focus areas through various lenses including:			
	Risk Management	**Change and End Users**	**Benefits Management**	**Scope Management**
	• Assessment of key risks • Key delivery and implementation risks • Updated risk management plans • Stakeholder & change management risks • AI Cyber and Privacy Compliance Signoff	• Change, training and transition support	• Achievability of planned benefits • Updated benefits strategy, realisation plan and register • Handover and measurement of benefits	• Confirmation project scope still meets business needs and acceptance criteria

Gate 6 – Closure Review	
Purpose	Assesses whether the anticipated benefits are being delivered, lessons learned have been considered and plans for ongoing improvements in value, service enhancements and performance are in place.
Review Scope	• Review of Operating Phase • Ongoing Sustainability and financial viability • Business Case and Benefits • Plans to improve Value for Money • Review Organisational learning. • Readiness for future • Risk Management over Al, Cyber, Privacy into BAU

Health checks / Deep dives				
7 Focus Areas Emphasis	Reviews will assess the focus areas through various lenses including:			
	Risk Management	**Change and End Users**	**Benefits Management**	**Scope Management**
	• Ongoing plans for risk management • Business continuity & operations risks • Ongoing cyber & information security risk • Updated risk management plans to include AI in BAU • Ongoing change management & stakeholder management risks	• Continuous improvement • End user support	• Assessment and measurement of the realisation of planned benefits • Planned future benefits • Measurement of benefits against the business case	• Scope for improved value for money • Future needs and scope

3

Part B:
For Delivery Agencies

Initiating and preparing for a Gate 0 Review

3.1   Key Gateways: Gate 0 – 2

Gate 0 – 2 are key Gateways as they serve to ensure investor assurance through a structured evaluation of a project's feasibility and potential for success. These are critical checkpoints where investor concerns about feasibility (Gate 0), planning (Gate 1), and potential returns (Gate 2) are addressed, ensuring that only the most promising projects move forward. This systematic evaluation builds investor confidence and helps mitigate risks associated with new projects. Refer to Fig 6. Overall Digital Assurance Framework – Introducing Gate 0 and Pre-Gateway Review.

Figure 6.
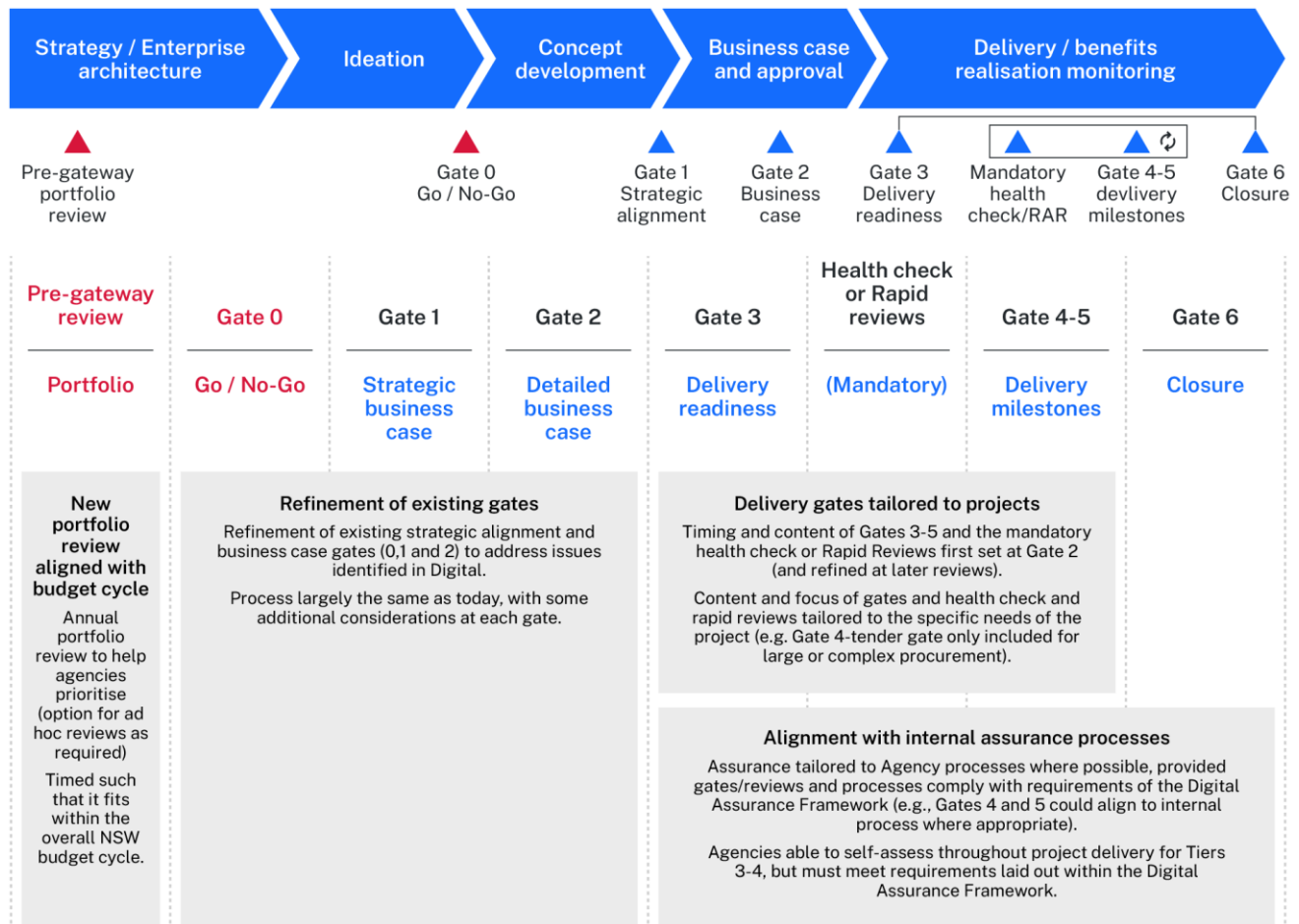
1. **Gate 0: Justification**

Purpose: To consider the alignment of the project with Government and agency priorities, the merit of the identified service need, and the governance and resources available to develop a Strategic Business Case.

2. **Gate 1: Strategic Assessment**

Purpose: To assess whether the project is aligned with the Government's and the agency's strategic plans and demonstrates that the service need should be addressed, proposing the best value means of servicing that need.

3. **Gate 2: Business Case**

Purpose: To evaluate the evidence that the proposed project is ready for funding, aligned with relevant policy, or other types of approval associated with the funding of the project. [e.g. DRF funding rules vs NPP]

Gate 0: Go/No-Go, includes a pre-Gateway Self-assessment tool for project teams and Agencies to use to prequalify into Gate 0 Assessment, a Pre-Gateway Self-assessment tool, is self-administered and will be automated with ETC threshold >$10 million. Once prequalified, project team completes 2-page Gate 0 justification report, and this will be reviewed by independent Gate 0 committee. The outcome of the Gate will be a clear direction of Go/No Go decision to proceed into Gate 1: Strategic Business Case stage / Gate 2: Business case stage from Government. Projects may also receive directions on funding pathways available and will be advised by the Gate 0 committee on how to improve the future business case focus. Clearance of Gate 0 with a 'Go' designation only provides approval to continue to business case – it does not provide approval for funding.

Gate 1 is the ideation phase, Strategic Business case Gate. Gate 1 ensures the business needs for the initiative are clearly defined & aligned with strategic Imperatives, Investment Principles & Enterprise Architecture. Confirmation of Alignment to Government Enterprise Architecture. After a Gate 1 has been successfully completed and all material issues cleared. In most cases the Gate 2 is an important prerequisite for the approval and release of funding for the project. This is a strong investment control to help the Agency set up for success and ensure the government is well informed about the full cost and risk profile of the project as well as the key benefits that will be gained should the project go forward.

Gate 2 moves into the concept development phase, the Business Case Gate. The Gate 2 Gateway Review will assess whether the business case is robust and there are plans to realise benefits and align with Strategic imperatives, Investment Principles and Enterprise Architecture. Key areas of validation are:

- Demonstrated Alignment to Government Enterprise Architecture
- Funding model to operate is sustainable for whole of life
- Cyber, Privacy and AI implications are understood, and assurance addressed in the BC.
- The Gate 2 Review focuses on the detailed business case and the readiness of the project team to move to the next stage. The review leverages Treasury TPP18-06 to considers whether the business case is robust and meets the key criteria of set out in the TPP18-06. See guides on the NSW Treasury web site for further guidance

Note: Gate 3- 5 Gateway Review maybe subject to revision of business case.

Figure 7. Business Case Guidelines Overview (NSW Government Treasury)
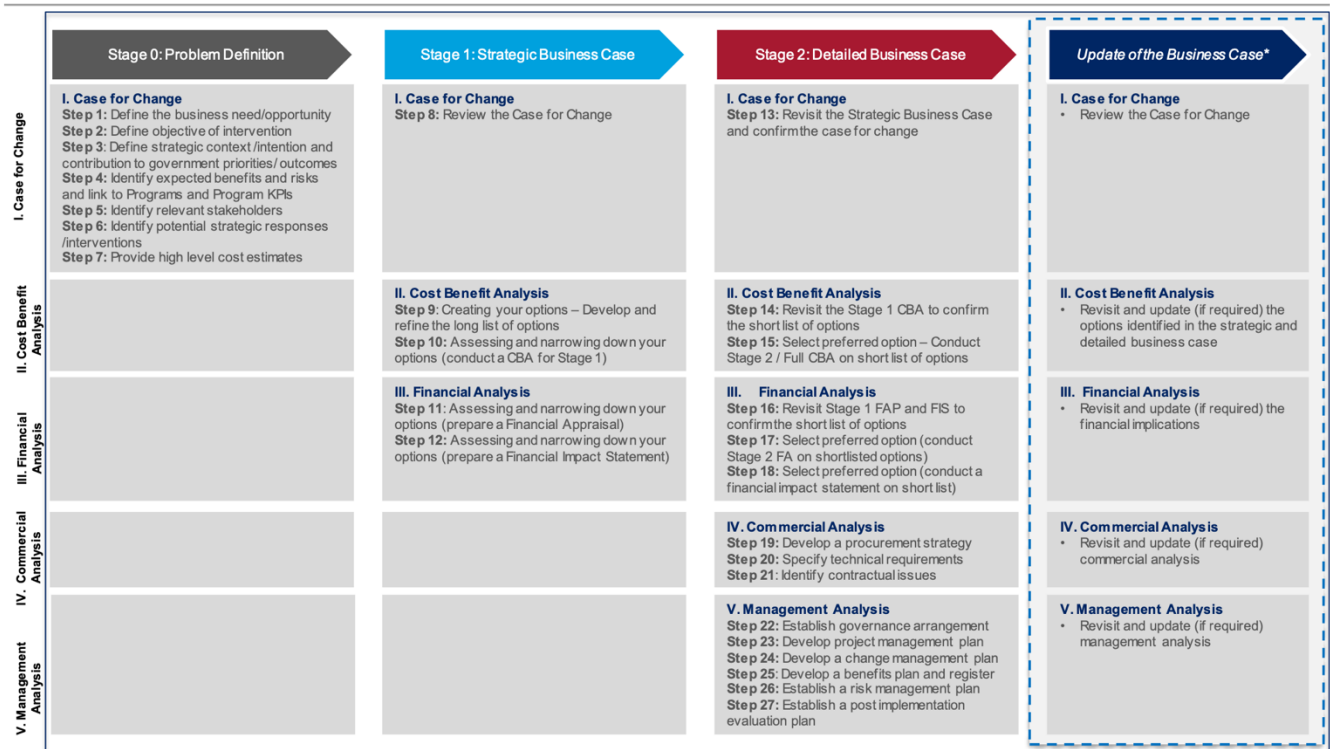
3.2   Initiating a Gate 0 Review

Delivery Agencies will register their digital projects with Digital NSW early in the project lifecycle for projects exceeding $5 million or those designated by the Digital Assurance and Risk Advisory Group (DARAG). [Note only project over $10 million are required to undergo a Gate 0 unless DARAG consider other risk factors that could warrant the assessment.]

The Delivery Agency **should not** have invested significant resources in developing a solution and **should not** have commenced work on a strategic business case.

Each Delivery Agency follows its own internal project initiation process. The project initiation process must include registration on the NSW Assurance Portal for all capital IT projects valued at more than $10 million. Delivery Agencies must register their project at initiation, prior to the start of project development. This stage is when the agency:

- Can define the problem to be solved, or service need, and provide supporting evidence
- The problem or proposal has progressed through the Delivery Agency's own strategic service planning and asset management planning process and governance
- Some level of basic feasibility and preliminary scoping has been done.

If a Delivery Agency registers a project following commencement of project development work, the GCA may require the project to proceed through a Gate 0 Review retrospectively. This may result in a 'No-Go' recommendation to Government that the project does not proceed, and all development work and resourcing immediately ceases.

Entry Criteria

Prior to the Gate 0 the project must be registered in the ICT portal – DSIA, this is a prerequisite for initiating a Gate 0 review. The project must have undergone risk tiering by DSIA this is also a prerequisite for a Gate 0.

Engagement set up – 6 Weeks Prior to Review week

1. 6 weeks prior to the Gateway commencement date, the Delivery Agency checks readiness of the project for the Gate 0 Review and contacts the Gateway Coordination Agency (GCA).

2. (Note the DCS Assurance team will also monitor the likely timeframe through the regular assurance catch ups each month.)

3. GCA Review Manager (Digital Assurance) and Delivery Agency confirm the Review Dates. Date the Gate 0 Committee will be sitting to complete the review. (Dates must consider key stakeholder availability including the Sponsor.)

4. GCA Review Manager appoints an independent Reviewer Team to sit on the Gate 0 Committee, these members will vary based on the type of projects being evaluated at each meeting to the review. **Detailed Engagement Planning and TOR preparation.**

5. GCA Review Manager conducts a briefing with the Delivery Agency to gain a common understanding of the project's status, identify any supporting documentation required and provide guidance on how to complete the Gate 0 readiness checklist template.

6. The Delivery Agency completes the Gate 0 readiness checklist template with input from key Agency stakeholders. A draft Terms of Reference (ToR) is also completed at this time by the GCA Review Manager (Digital Assurance), this is shared with the Agency to refine. (The project sponsor to agree/sign off)

7. The Delivery Agency provide the Gate 0 Review Committee with the readiness checklist and provide supporting documentation to the allocated secure shared drive location. This much be available at least 14 days prior to the scheduled committee meeting.

Preplanning With Independent Review Committee team members

8. GCA Review Manager meets with the Gate 0 Committee Review Team to jointly review the Terms of Reference for the Gate 0 and if additional documentation is considered then the request can be made for this as well the key interviewees.

Planning formal Kick off – prior to Gate 0 review Committee meeting

9. This starts with the kick-off meeting where the sponsor and delegates outline the project to be assessed, and any key background needed to provide context.

    — High level run through of the Gateway process, roles and responsibilities

    — Documentation requirements are confirmed, and interview are scheduled and confirmed

    — Confirmation of data package required by the Gate 0 Review Committee and lead times required to allow Committee member to review prior to the meeting.

Review Committee Meeting

10. The Review Committee commences, and the scheduled interviews are undertaken by the Committee – the Project team representatives will be interviewed to assist with the Committees' deliberations. These interviews will be scheduled as part of the planning process so that all project teams are read a prepared to brief the committee on any questions that may be asked.

Entry criteria

   a. TOR Approved,

   b. All documentation is loaded and available to the team,

   c. All interviews are scheduled and confirmed, MS Teams Channel for Review teams set up and

   d. The Review team complete the interviews and maintain feedback to the sponsor daily or as deemed appropriate.

Reporting

11. The draft findings are prepared using the Gate 0 reporting Template. Noting the Scope items need to all be addressed including core areas of focus.

   — The draft report is shared with Digital Assurance for initial QA

   — Sponsors debrief is undertaken to outline the findings – this is a confidential meeting directly with sponsor.

   — Report circulated to the Agency for fact check post Sponsor Debrief.

   — Post Review survey sent out to Delivery Agency, Reviewer Team and GCA Review Manager.

   — Go/No Go reporting provided to the GCIDO for consideration

12. Close-out Plan issued and managed by DCS ICT Assurance

Post Review - Within 4 weeks of report issue

13. Post Review Activities

   — Record Critical and Essential issues for ongoing assurance follow up – note the Agency will need to provide adequate evidence of item closure.

   — Critical rated items need to be closed before the clearance letter can be issued.

   — This clearance can impact approval of funding

   — Charge back to be completed and reviewer invoice payment completed

3.3 Gate 0 Gateway Review and documents

The Delivery Agency is responsible for initiating a Gateway Review at the appropriate time. Delivery Agencies should seek authorisation from the Delivery Agency's governance structure and the Gateway Review should be led by the Delivery Agency's SRO.

It is intended that Delivery Agencies **use existing project documentation, assistance from the delivery team and asset operator** and not create or customise documents for the Review.

3.3.1 Mandatory documents

The mandatory documents required from the Delivery agency to conduct the Gate 0 Gateway Review are:

- Registration Record of the project from the Reporting and Assurance Portal
- Completed Gate 0 Project Justification template (included in the Gate 0 suite of documents) or equivalent Delivery Agency document

At Gate 0, Delivery Agencies are encouraged to use their existing documentation and presentations, and not prepare new documentation. If an agency cannot produce a mandatory document, they should consult their GCA Cluster Partner on alternative documents to support the Gateway Review.

3.3.2 Optional Documents

Delivery agencies may choose to provide limited additional project information including:

- Executive/Board level presentation on the project
- Feasibility studies
- Extracts from agency (Secretary/Chief Executive) approved plans and strategies
- Agency specific project initiation documentation.

3.3.3 Preplanning Planning Session Step 8

The preplanning session is set up by the GCA in coordination with the Delivery Agency and Reviewer Team, to gain an overview of the project and provide guidance on how to complete the Gate 0 preparation checklist.

The documentation pack required by the Gate 0 review committee to be prepared for discussion and timing needs to be agreed upon.

3.3.4 Review Activities Steps 9 & 10

The Delivery Agency prepares the draft check list and shares this with the GCA Review Manager (Digital Assurance) this is discussed and reviewed, and any further information is then requested to be loaded into the secure SharePoint site. As part of pre planning the independent review team may ask for additional information if it exists.

Interview week commences and the scheduled interviews are undertaken by the Gateways reviewers.

Entry criteria

    a. TOR Approved,

    b. All documentation is loaded and available to the team,

    c. All interviews are scheduled and confirmed, MS Teams Channel for Review teams set up and tested. Gate 0 committee meeting scheduled date agreed.

3.3.5 Draft and final review report Steps 11 &12

The Gate 0 Committee will draft the report and submit a Final Draft Report to the GCA for review. The GCA reviews the Final Draft Report and seeks responses to the recommendations from the Delivery Agency, along with any clarifications from the Delivery Agency or Lead Reviewer. The Report is then finalised in accordance with the Digital Assurance Framework (DAF).

The Gate 0 Report only becomes final once the GCA has reviewed and approved the Report. The GCA will send a copy of the final Report to the SRO and it will be included in Assurance Cabinet reporting as required. Recommendations from the Review are transferred to the GCA's IT Asset Management Assurance team to be actioned or closed-out as appropriate.

4

Part C:
For the Reviewer / Gate 0 Review Committee

Conducting the Review

4.1 Gate 0 Approach

The Gate 0 Review is conducted as soon as possible following registration of the project or program on the Digital NSW Assurance Portal and assessment of the project's tier by the GCA's Digital Assurance and Risk Advisory Group (DARAG).

The Gate 0 Review is conducted by a Gate 0 Committee appointed by the GCA. The Gate 0 Committee membership is as per the Committee's Terms of Reference and the Committee is chaired by the GCA Review Manager responsible for Gate 0. An Independent Expert Reviewer, appointed by the GCA, attends all Gate 0 Committee meetings.

The outcome of the Gate 0 Review is a clear Go or No-Go recommendation. The Committee will also provide a short, structured report in the GCA template that makes any relevant recommendations for improvement opportunities in the development of the project.

4.2 Gate 0 Review

The Gate 0 Review team, referred to as the Gate 0 Committee, conducts interviews with the Delivery Agency and stakeholders (as required) to complete the final draft of the Gate 0 Report, writes recommendations and determines the final overall rating for the Report.

The Gateway 0 Review includes:

- testing strategic alignment, urgency, and potential alternatives assumptions
- quantitative data with qualitative assessments to provide a comprehensive evaluation.
- Feedback and Recommendations: Agencies have the opportunity to provide feedback on the Gate 0 Review outcomes before the final recommendation is presented to the Expenditure Review Committee (ERC). The Gate 0 Committee, consisting of representatives from Digital NSW, Treasury, Cabinet Office, and independent experts, reviews project submissions and makes recommendations.
- Quarterly Review Cycle: The Gate 0 Review process operates on a quarterly cycle, ensuring timely reviews and feedback loops. This allows projects to be refined or redirected early in their development phase.
- Governance and Oversight: The Gate 0 Committee's recommendations are passed to the Government Chief Information and Digital Officer (GCIDO) for submission to the NSW Cabinet.

4.3 Gateway Review reviewer team

The Gate 0 Committee, consisting of representatives from Digital NSW, Treasury, Cabinet Office, and independent experts, will work collaboratively with the Delivery Agency to review project submissions. The Committee is responsible for producing a high-quality, well-written Gate 0 Report using the appropriate template."

The Lead Reviewer and any member of a Review Team must be independent of the project. Reviewers must immediately inform the GCA of any potential or current conflict of interest that arises prior to or during the Review. The Reviewer's participation in the Review may preclude them, and their organisation, from participating in the project in any other capacity. For all Tier 1 projects, members must be high profile industry experts and independent of the NSW Government.

4.4 Review principles and behaviours

The Gate 0 Committee is expected to add real value to the project and IT asset by:

- Being helpful and constructive in conducting the Review and developing the Review Report.

- Providing a specific Go or No-Go recommendation to the GCA.

- Being independent, with the Review Report's recommendations not directed or influenced by external parties.

- Adhering to any Terms of Reference provided by the GCA.

- Providing a Review Report that clearly highlights substantive issues, their causes and consequences.

- Providing specific and actionable recommendations that will guide and enhance project development

- Gateway Reviews are not adversarial or a detailed assessment of management plans and project team deliverables. Poor or disrespectful behaviour will not be tolerated by the GCA.

4.5   Part C: Review communication protocols

Topic	Details
Report Confidentiality	• Review Reports are primarily for the consideration and noting of the NSW Cabinet to assist them in making key decisions about the project or to take action as required. • All Review Reports are marked "OFFICIAL: Sensitive - NSW Cabinet" and are submitted to Cabinet. • All participants must keep all information, including documentation, confidential at all times. • Gate 0 Committee Members must not directly contact the Delivery agency or stakeholders without the permission of the GCA Review Manager.
Report Distribution	• The Gate 0 Committee members must not distribute copies of any versions of Review Reports directly to agencies, project teams or any other party. • There is no 'informal' element to a Gateway Review or the Review Report, and action will be taken if a Review Report is distributed without permission of the GCA. • Gate 0 Committee may not keep any copies of any version of the Review Report, or supporting documents, following submission to the GCA.
Report Format	• All versions of reports issued by the Gate 0 Committee to the GCA are to be in MS WORD format. • The final Review Report issued to the Delivery Agency SRO is to be watermarked as 'FINAL' and issued in PDF.
Report Transmittal	• The GCA is required to keep a record of all parties, noting the Review Report version, and to whom the reports are issued. • Gate 0 Committee members should minimise the use of hard copies of Delivery Agency documents and must not keep documents in any form following the Review.
APPEAL OF NO-GO DECISION	• Any appeal of a Gate 0 Committee decision is to be raised by the Delivery Agency's representative at the appropriate Assurance Governance Committee meeting prior to a recommendation proceeding to Cabinet for decision.

4.6   Gateway review report

The primary output of a Gateway Review is a high-quality written report that is candid and clear, absent of errors and without contradiction and inconsistencies.

The primary purpose of the Review Report is to inform the NSW Cabinet of project status and issues, with recommendations so appropriate action can be taken.

The Review Team should utilise the appropriate Review Report template incorporating the Gateway Review Ratings and the Review Recommendations Table.

The Gate 0 Report should be succinct and follow the template provided – this report will only be two pages however supporting comments and guidance may be made as an appendix or attachment to the report.

4.7 Coverage of Gate 0 review objectives

Gate 0 Go/No-Go Gateway Reviews are designed to be appropriate to the earliest development stage of a project. Projects at Gate 0 are not expected to have detailed documentation, scoping, options analysis or economic appraisal.

Projects are expected to have some level of feasibility assessment and preliminary justification for why an infrastructure asset intervention is required.

The Gate 0 Committee is to assess the Go/No-Go decision through the lens of four focus areas and some additional areas for consideration.

Three areas (Items 1., 2., 3.) are scored by the Gate 0 Committee, and this scoring is a key consideration in arriving at a Go/No-Go recommendation. The Committee will score the three Focus Questions by assigning a score between 0 and 2. No weighting is to be applied. A total score of 3 or above would suggest to the Committee a 'Go' Overall Review Rating, however, the Committee may consider other information in reaching the final Go/No-Go recommendation to the GCA.

4.7.1 Guide to Focus Areas Response:

	Focus questions	Guide
1	**GOVERNMENT PRIORITY** How has the NSW Government identified the project as a strategic priority?	• The scope and timeframe of any election commitments and who made the commitment • Extent of criticality to any endorsed government priority, strategy or policy • Dependency of other approved projects or priorities on this project • Criticality to maintaining statutory compliance • If the project is to replace an asset at the end of its useful life, demonstration that the asset's function is still needed by the government • Prioritisation against other similar projects
2	**URGENCY / CRITICALITY** How critical is the service need / problem or how urgently does the community need it? Note: Criticality should consider public safety, agency statutory / regulatory requirements, service performance objectives. Urgency should consider the short, medium and long-term deficiencies/impact on the community.	• Clear objectives and scope • Demonstrated urgency including any dependencies (eg stated government priority, public safety, capacity constraints, service gaps, commercial requirement, statutory obligation) • Evidence to support claimed urgency • For broad-based issues (eg impact of cybersecurity and privacy) demonstration that this project is relatively urgent compared to other actions that need to be taken • Expected timeframes for each stage of the project and how these align to the drivers of the urgency

	Focus questions	Guide
3	**STRATEGIC IT ASSET MANAGEMENT / STRATEGIC RISKS** How does the project / proposal align with the agency's strategic IT asset management plan, IT asset management plan or equivalents?	• An extract from agency Enterprise Risks that demonstrates the need for the project • Clear evidence that the need has arisen from a systematic planning process and is not merely listed • Evidence of the process by which the agency has demonstrated a requirement to do the project to deliver on the agency's strategic objectives • Demonstration of the prioritisation process which shows that this project will provide better value for money than other projects which are aligned to the agency's strategic objectives

The below 3 areas (Items 4., 5., 6.) are not scored but should be considered by the Gate 0 Committee in the deliberations of the Go/No-Go recommendation and any other recommendations the Committee wishes to make. The Gate 0 Committee may wish to provide commentary addressing these areas as part of the Gate 0 Report.

	Focus questions	Guide
4	**ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION** How has the project considered non-IT asset options or augmentation of existing asset in determining the scope of the project?	Agency has given due consideration appropriate to the feasibility stage of the project to: • non-IT asset solutions (e.g. utilisation of existing assets, demand management, operational response, major asset upgrade/maintenance or policy options) • integration / augmentation of existing assets or investment programs • alternative digital and technology approaches – re-use • The Committee should note a non-asset and/or 'do nothing' option is examined in detail through the Strategic Business Case.
5	**AFFORDABILITY** The agency is to provide guidance as to the estimated range of cost for the next stages of the project (including project development to Strategic Business Case). Agency may comment on any identified/intended funding source.	• Overall ETC range • Estimates of the Strategic Business Case and Final Business Case costs • Any identified/intended funding sources for both FBC and project delivery.
6	**WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT IMPACT / REUSE /SDA** Are there any planning issues or dependencies (inter-agency, inter-jurisdiction, inter-project, etc.) impacting development and delivery?	• How might the project's success depend on other existing or planned projects and inter-agency cooperation? • Is this project a 'critical enabler' for another project? • Will the project be leveraging an existing State Digital Asset? • Will the project result in the development of a state digital asset that is intended to be reused by others?

4.7.2   Scoring the Key Focus Questions:

Focus questions	Criteria	Score
GOVERNMENT PRIORITY How has the NSW Government identified the project as a strategic priority?	**HIGH** Project / proposal is clearly articulated as a NSW Government priority within a Cabinet-endorsed strategy, policy, (election) commitment or decision.	2
	MEDIUM Project / proposal is not listed but directly aligns with a NSW Government priority as identified in a Cabinet endorsed strategy, policy, (election) commitment or decision.	1
	LOW Project / proposal has no, or limited alignment with a NSW Government Cabinet-endorsed strategy, policy, (election) commitment or decision.	0
URGENCY / CRITICALITY How critical is the service need / problem or how urgently does the community need it? Note: Criticality should consider public safety, agency statutory / regulatory requirements, service performance objectives. Urgency should consider the short, medium and long-term deficiencies/impact on the community.	**HIGH** Project addresses a critical government and clear government service need or action to address the need must occur in the short term (0-2 years from present).	2
	MEDIUM Project addresses a critical and clear government service need or action to address the need must occur in the medium term (3-5 years from present).	1
	LOW Project / proposal addresses a government service need that may not be critical or action to address the need can occur in the longer term (over 5 years from present).	0
STRATEGIC IT ASSET MANAGEMENT / STRATEGIC RISKS How does the project / proposal align with the agency's strategic IT asset management plan, IT asset management plan or equivalents?	**HIGH** The need for the project / program is directly evidenced in the agency's approved IT asset management plans.	2
	MEDIUM The need for the project / program is aligned to a strategic objective included in the agency's approved IT asset management plans.	1
	LOW The need for the project /program is not evident in the agency's approved IT asset management plans.	0

5

Part D:
Gate 0 Purpose and
Report Process

5.1 Gate 0 Review Purpose and Process

Purpose
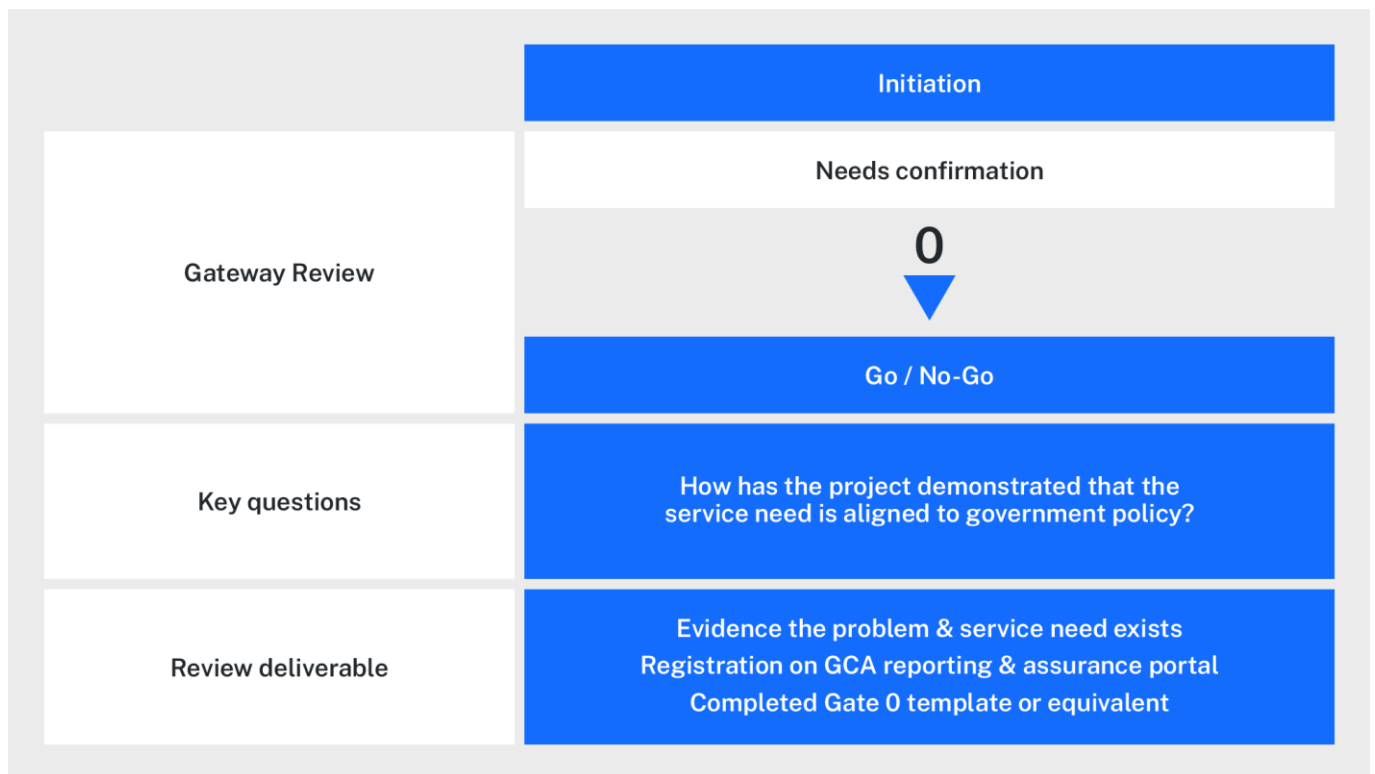
The Gate 0 Go/No-Go Gateway Review considers how well the project aligns to a NSW Government priority, its criticality, urgency and whether the problem or service need has been appropriately defined. The Review informs the GCA's recommendation to the NSW Government as to whether to allocate resources to progress the project through further stages of development.

Process

Prior to the Gate 0 Review, Delivery Agencies will have registered the project through the Digital NSW early in the project lifecycle.

Unless otherwise determined by DARAG, Gate 0 Reviews are required for all projects exceeding $10 million or those designated by the Digital Assurance and Risk Advisory Group (DARAG). Projects being undertaken by State Owned Corporations (SOCs) are not included unless specifically determined by DARAG.

Before commencing a Gate 0 review, the Delivery Agency should have met the requirements of internal project initiation, planning and prioritisation. The Delivery Agency should be able to articulate the problem and service need (supported by its asset management plans and frameworks) and show alignment to a NSW Government strategic priority and decision. The Delivery Agency should be able to provide the basic justification as to why non-asset, operational or augmentation of an existing asset options are not favoured.

The Gate 0 Committee uses the information provided by the Delivery Agency to conduct the Gate 0 Review. A Gate 0 Go/No-Go Gateway Review Report, including recommendations, is provided to the GCA. The report is then provided to the Government Chief Information and Digital Officer (GCIDO) for submission to the NSW Cabinet. The GCA will then provide the Report to the Delivery Agency to address any recommendations made.

Figure 6. Overall Digital Assurance Framework – Introducing Gate 0 and Pre-Gateway Review

Pre-gateway review	Gate 0	Gate 1	Gate 2	Gate 3	Health check or Rapid reviews	Gate 4-5	Gate 6
Portfolio	Go / No-Go	Strategic business case	Detailed business case	Delivery readiness	(Mandatory)	Delivery milestones	Closure

New portfolio review aligned with budget cycle

Annual portfolio review to help agencies prioritise (option for ad hoc reviews as required)

Timed such that it fits within the overall NSW budget cycle.

Refinement of existing gates

Refinement of existing strategic alignment and business case gates (0,1 and 2) to address issues identified in Digital.

Process largely the same as today, with some additional considerations at each gate.

Delivery gates tailored to projects

Timing and content of Gates 3-5 and the mandatory health check or Rapid Reviews first set at Gate 2 (and refined at later reviews).

Content and focus of gates and health check and rapid reviews tailored to the specific needs of the project (e.g. Gate 4-tender gate only included for large or complex procurement).

Alignment with internal assurance processes

Assurance tailored to Agency processes where possible, provided gates/reviews and processes comply with requirements of the Digital Assurance Framework (e.g., Gates 4 and 5 could align to internal process where appropriate).

Agencies able to self-assess throughout project delivery for Tiers 3-4, but must meet requirements laid out within the Digital Assurance Framework.

Problem or service need identified and proven	Project initiated, named and basic scope identified	Project registered on the NSW Assurance Portal	Gate 0 Review information template submitted to the GCA	Gate 0 Go / No-Go Gateway Review, GCA recommendation and cabinet decision	Proceed to options analysis and further gateway reviews as required by the project's risk tier

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Glossary

Term	Definition
Accountable Agency	The agency accountable for the project at its current stage (may be more than one). In the instance where it is more than one, the GCA will assign the lead Accountable Agency responsibilities.
Assurance Reviews	Refers to Gateway Reviews, Health Checks and other reviews conducted under the Gateway policy.
Benefit Owner	The agency or role responsible for the realisation of the benefit.
Cabinet	Refers to the full Cabinet of the NSW Government and any relevant standing sub-committees of Cabinet.
Capital Project	A project primarily comprised of one or more of the following elements: • Design Documentation • Application Software • Platform Licences • Operational technology
Close-Out Plan	Document outlining actions, responsibilities, accountabilities and timeframes that respond to recommendations identified in Gateway, and Health Check and Deep Dive Final Review Reports.
Decision-Making	The Gateway, Health Check and Deep Dive Reviews inform decision-making by government. Government in this context refers to all parts of government including Delivery Agencies.
Deep Dive Reviews	Deep Dives Reviews are similar to a Health Check but focus on a particular technical issue informed by the Terms of Reference rather than the seven Key Focus Areas considered at a Health Check. These Reviews are generally undertaken in response to issues being raised by key stakeholders to the project or at the direction of the relevant Government Minister.
Delivery Agency	The Government agency (also the Accountable Agency) tasked with developing and/or delivering a project at its stages in its lifecycle applicable under the Digital Assurance Framework (DAF) and the NSW Gateway Policy.
Digital Restart Fund (DRF)	The purpose of the Digital Restart Fund (DRF) is to accelerate whole of government digital transformation. It has been designed to enable iterative, multi-disciplinary approaches to digital/ICT planning, development and service provision and complements existing investment approaches in IDIA. https://www.digital.nsw.gov.au/funding/digital-restart-fund
Digital Assurance Risk Advisory Group (DARAG)	Made up of Chief Information/Digital Officers from every cluster and representatives from the ICT and Digital Assurance Branch from DCS. Responsible for supporting the operation of the DAF by providing advice to the Government Chief Information and Digital Officer (GCIDO) and the IDLG and for monitoring projects by taking a Whole of Government perspective.
Estimated To Complete (ETC)	The financial performance index and project management measure that shows you the remaining cost you expect to pay in order to complete a project.
Expert Reviewer Panel	Panel comprising independent highly qualified Expert Reviewers established to cover all aspects of Gateway Review needs.

Term	Definition
Gate	Particular decision point(s) in a project/program's lifecycle when a Gateway Review may be undertaken.
Gateway Coordination Agency (GCA)	The agency responsible for the design and administration of an approved, risk-based model for the assessment of projects/programs, the coordination of the Gateway Reviews and the reporting of performance of the Gateway Review Process, under the NSW Gateway Policy.
Gateway Policy	The NSW Gateway Policy sets out the key points along the project lifecycle important for providing confidence to the NSW Government that projects are being delivered to time, cost and in-line with government objectives.
Gateway Review	A Review of a project/program by an independent team of experienced practitioners at a specific key decision point (Gate) in the project's lifecycle. A Gateway Review is a short, focused, independent expert appraisal of the project that highlights risks and issues, which if not addressed may threaten successful delivery. It provides a view of the current progress of a project and assurance that it can proceed successfully to the next stage if any critical recommendations are addressed.
Health Check	Independent Reviews carried out by a team of experienced practitioners seeking to identify issues in a project/program which may arise between Gateway Reviews.
Key Focus Areas	A specific area of investigation that factors in Gateway Review deliberations.
NSW Assurance Portal	Online portal administered by the GCA for the management of DAF functions.
Program	A temporary, flexible organisation created to coordinate, direct and oversee the implementation of a set of related projects and activities in order to deliver outcomes and benefits related to the organisation's strategic objectives. A program could be longer term and have a life that span more than 1 year. Projects that form part of a program may be grouped together for a variety of reasons including spatial co-location, the similar nature of the projects or projects collectively achieving an outcome. Programs provide an umbrella under which these projects can be coordinated. The component parts of a program are usually individual projects or smaller groups of projects (sub-programs). In some cases, these individual projects or sub-programs may have a different Project Tier to the overall program.
Project	A temporary organisation, usually existing for a shorter duration than a program, which will deliver one or more outputs in accordance with an agreed business case. Projects are typically delivered in a defined time period on a defined site. Projects have a clear start and finish. A particular project may or may not be part of a program. Where a project is delivered in multiple stages and potentially across varying time periods it is considered a 'complex project'. Refer to the definition for 'complex project'.
Project Team	The Delivery Agency's assigned group with responsibility for managing the project through the Gateway Review.

Term	Definition
Project Tier	Tier-based classification of project profile and risk potential based on the project's estimated total cost and qualitative risk profile criteria (level of government priority, interface complexity, sourcing complexity, agency capability, technical complexity, change complexity and cyber security). The Project Tier classification is comprised of five Project Tiers, where Tier 1 encompasses projects deemed as being the highest risk and profile (Tier 1 – High Profile/High Risk projects), and Tier 5 with the lowest risk profile.
Review Team	A team of expert independent practitioners, sourced from the Expert Reviewer Panel engaged by the GCA to undertake a Gateway Review 1 to 5, Health Check or Deep Dive Review. *In the case of Gate 0 – a review committee performs the function of the review team.*
Review Team Leader (RTL)	For Gates 1 to 6, Health Checks and Deep Dives the RTL is appointed by the GCA Review Manager and leads the independent Review Team for the Review. The RTL acts as Chair for the project briefing and interview days and has primary responsibility for delivering a high quality, consolidated Review Report using the appropriate template.
	The RTL acts as the point of contact between the Review Team and the GCA Review Manager. If agreed by the GCA Review Manager, the RTL may act as the liaison between the Review Team and the delivery agency's SRO and/or Project Director. The RTL provides the Review debrief to the GCA and the delivery agency's SRO on behalf of the Review Team.
Review Team Member	For Gates 1 to 6, Health Checks and Deep Dives provides the benefit of their independent and specialist expertise and advice in the Review of the project, focusing on issues appropriate to the project's lifecycle stage and the level of development and delivery confidence. Each Review Team member participates in the project briefing and interviews, and contributes to the Review Report and recommendations.
Senior Responsible Officer (SRO)	The delivery agency executive with strategic responsibility and the single point of overall accountability for a project.

Acronyms

Abbreviation	Definition
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIO	Chief Information Officer
DARAG	Digital Assurance Risk Advisory Group
IDIA	ICT Digital Investment and Assurance (IDIA) Unit
IDLG	ICT And Digital Leadership Group
DCS	Department of Customer Service
DPC	Department of Premier and Cabinet
DRF	Digital Restart Fund

Abbreviation	Definition
ERC	Cabinet Standing Committee on Expenditure Review
ETC	Estimated Total Cost
FBC	Final Business Case
GCA	Gateway Coordination Agency
GCIDO	Government Chief Information and Digital Officer
HPHR	High Profile/High Risk
DAF	Digital Assurance Framework
ICT	Information and Communications Technology

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Additional guidelines material for Review Teams

7.1 Focus Areas

The review team should be mindful of the seven focus areas. The seven focus areas are a set of themes common across the project lifecycle that the NSW Government has determined as requiring assessment. They are referred to in the key review scope areas and are used in the review report. Whilst Gate 0 is not likely to be able to assess any of the 7 focus areas in any depth, these should be considered in a broader sense when the committee reviews the justification submission.

Focus Area	Description
	Affordability and value for money A clear case for change and consideration of technology and market options to show evidence that the proposed changes will be delivered to the highest quality within an acceptable time and at a competitive and affordable price. There must be sufficient financial, physical and human resource to deliver the project and expenditure of these resources must provide value for money over the project's life.
	Risk Management Risk to scope, cost, procurement, time and quality should be identified and managed, as should risks inherent to the nature of new or changing technology, such as data privacy and cyber security risks, use of AI, reputational risks and risks to continuity or quality of business services. Risk management plans must be developed.
	Governance Consideration of project governance (roles and responsibilities to deliver the project, resource allocation, time management and process management) and alignment with business-as-usual agency activities and broader NSW Government and stakeholder governance.
	Stakeholder Management Consideration of the stakeholders that may contribute to or be affected by new ICT environments and capabilities, including end-users, government staff, citizens, business service managers and executive owners, technology providers, and both government and external vendors and service providers.
	Change Management Consideration of how the change will affect stakeholders, expected acceptance or resistance and actions required to move to new ways of working.
	Service Delivery Consideration of the effect of new technology capabilities on business service delivery, such as more efficient business services; maintaining or improving service delivery, such as better access to government services; quality improvements; or enabling new services.
	Sustainability Considerations of benefits realisation planning and tracking; service transition planning and implementation; whether vendor management offices will be required; continuous improvement capabilities and solution road maps; and how data will be archived or retained to meet current and future legislative requirements and data migration requirements.
The Gateway Review Framework provides more details of the Gateway Review process.	

Review teams should:

- Engage and meet with a Project Sponsor from the delivery agency prior to the review; and

- Where possible, engage early with the relevant agency's project management office (PMO) to understand the project's background and to adequately plan for interviews and required documentation.

7.2 Affordability and Risk

Each numbered item below is an area to be probed.

Given the early stage of the project – assessment of the 7 focus areas will be limited and are considered for broader reference only by the review committee at this time.

7.2.1 Strategic Risks

	Evidence expected	Status/Ref
	• An extract from agency Enterprise Risks that demonstrates the need for the project	
	• Clear evidence that the need has arisen from a systematic planning process and is not merely listed	
	• Evidence of the process by which the agency has demonstrated a requirement to do the project to deliver on the agency's strategic objectives	
	• Demonstration of the prioritisation process which shows that this project will provide better value for money than other projects which are aligned to the agency's strategic objectives	
	• Evidence of risk management: Early identification of key risks, including risk for potential solutions/options and strategic risk, outline risk management plans, AI Cyber profile	

7.2.2 Urgency and Criticality & Government Priority

	Evidence expected	Status/Ref
	• Change and end user: Stakeholder identification and end user input to service needs.	
	• Benefits Management: High level benefits identified and agreed, Benefits strategy, plan and register	
	• Scope Management: Alignment with Government Policy and Priorities Requirements and scope are clear, Alignment to business needs, Options analysis	

7.3   Gate 0 Review: Typical project documentation

The review team should expect to receive evidence as noted below.

The mandatory document required for the Gate 0 review include:

1. Completed Gate 0 justification template

2. Registration and Tiering documentation

Recommended documentation:

Note: where possible reuse of existing internal presentations is encouraged to avoid duplication of effort

1. Executive presentations provided by the sponsor

2. Agency specific project imitation documentation

3. Supporting strategy documents and asset plans

4. Feasibility studies

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