Website Project Governance Process
Agency Website Project Exemption Approval

Introduction

The WA Government ICT Strategy, Digital WA, establishes the strategic direction for agencies to deliver more and better digital services through a whole-of-government Digital Services Portal and a more consistent online presence. The initiative to deliver this portal has commenced, named ServiceWA (Digital). This program, previously referred to "myWA", has completed Stage 1, which delivered the high-level architecture and Alpha prototype at alpha.wa.gov.au. The program has now commenced Stage 2, to deliver the foundations of a common platform environment for websites, digital identity and digital service integration.

ServiceWA (Digital) will begin consolidation and standardisation of websites across the public sector, and will become the primary channel through which the public can securely search and access government digital services, regardless of which agency provides those services.

The ServiceWA (Digital) business case was approved by Cabinet in October 2016 under the name myWA. One of the approved recommendations was that '*any government agency project to create or upgrade a website (excluding government trading enterprise websites, government campaign websites and international marketing websites) with a total budget of $100,000 or more must be approved by the Directors General ICT Council.*' The intention of this requirement is to avoid unnecessary website investments outside of a whole-of-government approach, reduce expenditure on individual agency branding and marketing, and to minimise the cost and impact of transitioning to common ServiceWA (Digital) platforms. At its June 2017 meeting, the DG ICT Council endorsed this approval on an exemption basis.

Requirement

DG ICT Council approval is required for any agency website project with a total budget of $100,000 or more that seeks to exempt itself from aligning with the ServiceWA (Digital) whole-of-government strategic direction.

This exemption is required before the commencement of any agency website projects, including upgrade or enhancement projects, that meet the below "in scope" criteria but **do not** align with the whole-of-government common digital services platform approach. That is, where the intended project is not aligned with the ServiceWA (Digital) approach and direction, as outlined in "Alignment Criteria" below.

In scope Criteria:

- Any project planned by any "General Government[1]" public sector agency that includes the creation, upgrade or modification of a website or websites that has a total budget or estimated cost over its full project life (excluding ongoing operating costs) of $100,000 or more, *that does not fall into one of the following Out of Scope categories.*

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[1] As defined annually in Note 8: Composition of Sectors, Notes to the Financial Projections, Appendix 1: Detailed Financial Projections, Economic and Fiscal Outlook, Budget Paper No. 3, Western Australian Government Annual State Budget. For more information, visit www.ourstatebudget.wa.gov.au.

Out of Scope Categories:

- Any work involved in the day-to-day regular and ongoing operational support and maintenance of a website, including the addition and modification of content;
- Any project being undertaken by any organisation listed as a "Public Non-Financial Corporations" or "Public Financial Corporations" (a.k.a. Government Trading Enterprise), or as "Agencies outside the State's Public Sector", in Budget Paper 3[2];
- Any project being undertaken as part of a Government advertising campaign[3];
- Any project primarily related to international marketing of Western Australia, or the services of an agency directed towards an international audience;
- Any project relating primarily to the use of Social Media, for example Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

Alignment Criteria:

Projects that meet the following criteria are likely to be considered **aligned** with the whole-of-government digital services platform approach.

- A project involving moving to a common platform or arrangement, within or across agencies, that conforms with the architectural (business, technical, etc.) design approved within ServiceWA (Digital);
- A project involving modifying internal processes, technologies or systems to prepare for or enable moving to a common platform or arrangement that conforms with the architectural designs approved within ServiceWA (Digital);
- A project that involves applying whole-of-government user experience standards approved through ServiceWA (Digital) to existing websites;
- A project involving connecting, or preparing to connect, new or existing digital services to a whole-of-government website or platform delivered through ServiceWA (Digital).

Projects that fall within one of the following categories are **not** likely to be considered aligned with the whole-of-government digital services platform approach, and therefore would need to seek exemption:

- Any project involving the development or application of individual agency branding or user experience standards;
- Any project involving introducing new or additional website platforms or technologies that do not conform with the architectural designs approved within ServiceWA (Digital);
- Any project that could utilise common platforms, contracts or arrangements once they are in place, but is not using them due to being implemented before they are in place.

Exemption Request:

To request exemption from the whole-of-government digital services platform approach, agencies are required to submit a website project proposal, that has been approved by their DG/CEO (or as otherwise delegated), to the Website Project Governance Process for

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[2] As defined annually in Note 8: Composition of Sectors, Notes to the Financial Projections, Appendix 1: Detailed Financial Projections, Economic and Fiscal Outlook, Budget Paper No. 3, Western Australian Government Annual State Budget. For more information, visit www.ourstatebudget.wa.gov.au.

[3] Refers to marketing campaigns aligned to Government of the day programs. Examples include: Get the Bigger Picture, Are you Bushfire Ready, Enjoy the Ride.

assessment. The website project proposal guidance and submission template is provided in Appendix A.

The submission and assessment of exemption requests should be undertaken with the ongoing and iterative nature of the ServiceWA (Digital) initiative in mind. Common platforms, common contracts and whole-of-government user experience standards will be progressively identified and implemented during 2017-18 and beyond. The decision as to whether or not an agency can or should wait until a particular common arrangement is in place, or must instead undertake their own project earlier, is a business decision for the agency and should form a core element of any exemption request justification.

Assessment

DG ICT Council will base their decision on the agency's justification of the business urgency to not align to the whole-of-government common platform approach and the viability of the alternative approach. The approval will include consideration of:

- Cost Benefit Analysis
- Transition considerations
- Project governance controls

Mandated Website Changes

Agencies requiring new websites as a result of a Machinery of Government (MOG) change or a Ministerial directive should:

- deliver only the basic requirements (minimum viable product) in the short term using existing technologies and platforms; and
- focus on identifying the business needs and planning the website architecture for the new organisation with the intention to implement the new website on the ServiceWA platform when it becomes available.

Refer to Appendix A for guidance on assessment criteria and a template for the submission.

Website Project Governance Process

A website project proposal can be submitted at any time. However, it should be noted that proposals will normally be considered by the Strategic ICT Governance groups at their quarterly meetings unless otherwise arranged. The meeting schedule, including proposal submission closing dates are provided in Appendix B (noting that the schedule is subject to change; check the GCIO website for updates).

To submit a website project proposal to the Website Project Governance Process, email the proposal to strategy@gcio.wa.gov.au.

Once submitted, the website project proposals will undergo a multi-stage assessment process:
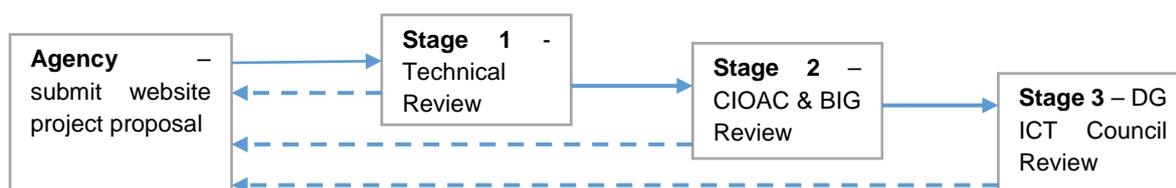
The solid arrows show the flow process for website project proposals in the Strategic ICT Governance process. The dotted lines depict feedback / response to the agency from the review

- **Stage One**: Agencies can discuss their proposed website projects with the Office of the GCIO before formally submitting their exemption proposal to the Website Project Governance Process. Once submitted, the website project exemption proposal will undergo a technical review by the Technical Review Group (TRG) consisting of suitably experienced individuals from a range of agencies. The TRG will review the **technical** and **project management** elements of the exemption proposal, assessing proposed platform and technology choices, the proposed approach with consideration of potential unnecessary and throwaway investment, and with consideration of the total cost of ownership for ongoing maintenance and transition to the ServiceWA platform in the future.

  The TRG may provide feedback on your submission if your proposal is not supported. Following such feedback, your agency may choose to either withdraw the proposal and resubmit a revised proposal to the Website Project Governance Process, or withdraw the proposal completely.

  The TRG will forward all assessed proposals together with a recommendation report to the Business Impact Group (BIG)/CIO Advisory Committee (CIOAC) for stage 2 review.

- **Stage Two**: The BIG/CIOAC will review all submitted website project exemption proposals together with the TRG's recommendations. This stage of review will assess the **business justification** for exemption from the whole-of-government common platform approach, and/or the urgency to not wait until the common ServiceWA platforms are available.

  The CIOAC and BIG may provide feedback on your submission if the proposal is not supported. Following such feedback, your agency may choose to either, withdraw the proposal and resubmit a revised proposal to the Strategic ICT Governance process, or withdraw the proposal completely.

  The BIG/CIOAC will forward all assessed proposals, together with a recommendation report, to the DG ICT Council for their consideration in making the final decision.

- **Stage Three**: The DG ICT Council will assess the website project exemption proposal with consideration of both the BIG/CIOAC's and the TRG's recommendations. Informed by the TRG's assessment of the technical feasibility of the project, and the BIG/CIOAC's assessment of the business justification of the project, the DG ICT Council will assess the **cost benefit analysis** of the project, together with its **risk** profile, to determine if an exemption approval is justified.

  Your agency will be advised of the outcome in writing through the Office of the GCIO within five working days following decision from the DG ICT Council.

Process Support

Queries relating to the website project proposal or the Website Project Governance Process should be directed to the GCIO, telephone (08) 6551 3900 or by email: strategy@gcio.wa.gov.au.

If assistance with proposal preparation is required, agencies should consider engaging with other agencies across the WA public sector, to leverage existing knowledge and expertise. A number of collaboration tools are in place to assist agencies in this context, including the CIO Collaboration Portal (available from the GCIO website) and ICT forums.

Appendix A

Website Project Exemption Proposal Guidance and Template

The following website project proposal guidance has been provided to assist with website project proposal preparation.

Stage 1: Technical Review

The Technical Review process assesses the technical viability of the proposed project, as well as the proposed project approach.

Proposed project approach

In outlining the proposed project approach, the submission could take into account (but not limited to) the following considerations:

- The proposed project governance methodology and control environment
- Use of prototyping and proof of concepts
- Are agile design and user-centred processes applied to enable flexibility and iteration to processes to allow response to feedback, continuous improvement and adaption to change, versus a 'big bang' approach?
- What options were considered to minimise the project investment cost?

Technology environment

In outlining the proposed technology environment, the submission should identify what, if any, platform or technology choices have been made. If a technology choice has not yet been made, outline the proposed approach to selecting technology platforms.

If a technology platform has already been selected, outline the rationale for the decision. In doing so submission could take into account (but not limited to) the following considerations:

- What technology options were considered?
- What consideration was made for potential dependencies or integrations into a different technology platform (e.g. ServiceWA)?
- How were the risks and constraints associated with the selected technology managed?
  - Eg. Are open standards being adopted to better support transition between platform technologies when required?
  - Could a different solution architecture achieve the same outcomes and be more cost effective?
- What options have been considered to minimise the future impact of transitioning to another platform (e.g. ServiceWA platform)
  - Have approaches to minimise upfront spend or to ease the transition to another platform been identified? (e.g.: As-a-service vs. license contracts)
  - Have solution architecture principles been adopted that will minimise potential impacts, such as loose coupling, and implementing discrete services functionality as micro services?
- What is the Total Cost of Ownership for the proposed solution? Include cost tables in order to provide a breakdown of the cost categories.

Stage 2: Business Impact Group/CIO Advisory Committee Review

The BIG/CIO Advisory Committee assessment of the website exemption proposal focuses on the business urgency of the proposed approach.

Business urgency justification

- Outline the business benefits to be achieved from the proposed approach, including Return of Investment and/or intangible benefits.
- How are the benefits derived?
- What is the urgency of delivering the website now versus delaying it until the ServiceWA platform is available?
  - Can the information and/or services be delivered through existing systems, websites or through a different medium in the short term?
  - What opportunities have been explored for collaboration with other agencies with similar interests to deliver a more complete view of the information and/or services available for a particular topic area?

Stage 3: Director General ICT Council assessment

The DG ICT Council will make a decision on the submission based on the cost/benefit of the proposed website project, taking into account the recommendations from the BIG/CIOAC and TRG assessments.

Cost/Benefit justification

- What is the Cost Benefits Analysis of the proposed approach?
  - Website project justification should take into consideration costs associated with the total cost of ownership, including creation (incorporating design and branding cost) and implementation costs (including marketing cost), ongoing maintenance costs, operating costs and cost to transition to the ServiceWA platform in the future (including potential throwaway investment of the proposed interim solution).
- Can the cost of the proposed project be minimised?
  - Could a different solution architecture achieve the same outcomes and be more cost effective?
  - Will delaying the project cost more in the future? Demonstrate with evidence from project cost calculations.
- What is the risk management approach?
  - What is the level of executive oversight of risk assessment and resulting mitigation strategies?

An agency website project exemption proposal template is provided on the following page.

Website Project Governance Process

Agency Website Project Exemption Proposal

Website Project: *<insert initiative title here>*

Submitted by: *<insert agency name here>*

Prepared by: *<insert name of contact person and contact details here>*

Estimated cost: *<insert $ here>*

Project description:

<Provide a brief explanation of what the website project is and what business outcome is being delivered>

Instruction: Provide succinct statements describing the proposal in the context of the following criteria.

Proposed project approach

<Provide information to attest the project approach considering items such as:

- *project governance methodology and control environment*
- *validating through prototyping and proof of concepts*
- *minimising upfront cost*
- *big bang versus iterative approach*
- *risk management approach>*

Technology environment

<Provide information to attest to the proposed technology approach considering items such as:

- *approach to platform selection*
- *solution architecture approach (e.g. open standards, loose coupling, micro services)*
- *solution cost breakdown*
- *implications to future transition to whole-of-government common platform*
- *consideration of technology options>*

Business justification

<Provide information to attest to the proposed business justification considering items such as:

- *Business need and urgency*
- *Cost benefit analysis extracted from Business Case>*

TO the Directors General ICT Council:

Exemption approval is sought to proceed independently of the strategic whole-of-government common digital services platform approach, on the basis of the justification presented in this submission.

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Signature

Agency Director General / CEO[4]

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Name

_____

Date

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Title

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[4] Or delegated officer

Appendix B

Directors General ICT Council and Business Impact Group/CIO Advisory Committee 2017 meeting schedule

Closing date for Digital Initiative proposal	Papers circulated to BIG/CIO	BIG & CIO AC meeting	Papers circulated to DG ICT Council	DG ICT Council meeting
4 May 2017	15 May 2017	**23 May 2017**	31 May 2017	**13 June 2017**
25 July 2017	3 Aug 2017	**15 Aug 2017**	22 Aug 2017	**4 Sept 2017**
26 Oct 2017	6 Nov 2017	**14 Nov 2017**	22 Nov 2017	**5 Dec 2017**

Agencies will need to submit their digital initiative proposals by the closing dates identified in the table above to be considered by the ICT Governance groups at their quarterly meetings.

All proposals have to go through the technical review process, including resubmissions (where applicable) as a result of feedback from the Technical Review Group and/or the Business Impact Group/CIO Advisory Committee.