

Which MPA Assurance Review?

A guide to choosing which MPA Assurance Reviews to include in the Integrated Assurance and Approvals Plan for your Major Project
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Any enquiries regarding this document should be sent to us at:
MPA-Info@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk

This document is also available from our website at:
<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/major-projects-authority-resources>

More information about the Major Projects Authority is available from our website at:
<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/major-projects-authority>

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Introduction

This document is designed to assist project teams when they are developing **Integrated Assurance and Approvals Plans (IAAPs)** for the projects¹ that receive assurance from the **Major Projects Authority (MPA)**. It supplements the MPA's *Guide to planning Integrated Assurance and Approvals*, which can be downloaded from the Cabinet Office website:

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/major-projects-authority-assurance-toolkit>

The following pages outline the assurance review options available from the MPA for inclusion in an IAAP.

This guidance does not cover the range of **Consequential Assurance** tools that may be used by the MPA to provide further assurance, investigation or support to Major Projects that are in difficulty. As such consequential assurance is always tailored to address the specific issues and requirements of the project concerned it cannot be included in an IAAP.

Major Projects

A **Major Project** is defined as a central government funded project or programme that requires HM Treasury approval during its life, as set out in Delegated Authority letters, or is otherwise of special interest to the Government.

If your project does not fit this description, this guidance will not be relevant to you, as the MPA does not provide assurance to projects outside the **Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP)**.

All Major Projects fitting this description should be registered with the MPA for inclusion in the GMPP.

Further advice and information

Your organisation's Programme and Project Management (PPM) Centre of Excellence, Support Unit, or Portfolio Management Office (or equivalent) will be able to advise you on local IAAP requirements and on how to arrange an assurance review from the MPA. They will also be able to put you in touch with the relevant Project Specialist in the MPA - this person supports your (parent) department on its implementation of integrated assurance and approvals for Major Projects and on GMPP reporting.

Other enquiries can be sent to MPA-Info@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk

More detailed guidance on the different types of assurance review available from the MPA can be downloaded from the assurance toolkit page on the Cabinet Office website:

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/major-projects-authority-assurance-toolkit>

¹ For simplicity, the word 'project' refers to both projects and programmes throughout this document.

MPA Assurance Review Options

Planned assurance reviews for inclusion in Integrated Assurance and Approvals Plans (IAAPs)				
Review characteristics	Starting Gate	OGC Gateway™ - Gate 0	OGC Gateway™ - Gates 1-5	Project Assessment Review (PAR)
Who commissions the review?	Senior Policy Owner (SPO) OR Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) if already appointed	Senior Responsible Owner (SRO)	Senior Responsible Owner (SRO)	Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) OR Chair of the Treasury's Major Projects Review Group (MPRG), if the project has been identified for MPRG scrutiny.
When should the review happen in the project lifecycle?	Early stage in the policy or business change development cycle before delivery is underway, and often before the SRO is appointed. Ideally before completion of the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC). It is also repeatable.	A repeatable review that is scheduled within a programme's IAAP at relevant points in its lifecycle, e.g. to inform HM Treasury approvals and at key stages in the procurement process. Gate 0 is specifically designed for the assurance of programmes, and is not applicable to projects.	A series of reviews that are scheduled within the project's IAAP at five generic progression points in the lifecycle of the project. Each of the five reviews is repeatable.	A PAR can be included in the IAAP (following discussion with the MPA) in place of one or all of Gates 0 - 5, if bespoke terms of reference are required. OR If the project is scrutinised by the Treasury's Major Projects Review Group, a PAR will be conducted to inform the MPRG Panel meeting, at any chosen point in the project lifecycle.

Planned assurance options for inclusion in Integrated Assurance and Approvals Plans (IAAPs)				
Review characteristics	Starting Gate	OGC Gateway™ - Gate 0	OGC Gateway™ - Gates 1-5	Project Assessment Review (PAR)
Characteristics of the project to be reviewed	<p>A major policy initiative or business change that is likely to be delivered through the vehicle of a Major Project.</p> <p>Can also be used at enterprise portfolio level, to review the overall change agenda.</p>	<p>A programme that fulfils the criteria for a Major Project, even though some or all of its component projects may not individually be considered 'major'.</p>	<p>A Major Project that is being delivered using a standard methodology, with clear approval and progression points.</p>	<p>A Major Project to which Gates 0 to 5 cannot appropriately be applied and therefore the assurance review requires bespoke terms of reference and an Issues Workshop.</p> <p>NB. Always speak to your MPA Project Specialist if you think your project requires a PAR.</p>
Primary purpose/s of the review	<p>Explore five mandatory areas, plus additional exploration as relevant to the individual initiative.</p> <p>Provide assurance to the department on deliverability of the policy or business change, with a focus on whether any emerging options/solutions will deliver the required outcomes.</p> <p>Avoid reputational risk of undeliverable commitments being made to the public.</p>	<p>Assessment of Delivery Confidence</p> <p>Provide findings and recommendations to the SRO</p> <p>Provide an assurance report to inform investment board and/or HM Treasury approval point.</p>	<p>Assessment of Delivery Confidence</p> <p>Provide findings and recommendations to the SRO</p> <p>Provide an assurance report to inform investment board and/or HM Treasury approval point.</p>	<p>Provide a broad strategic analysis across a number of complex issues and/or cross-government dependencies.</p> <p>Provide findings and recommendations to the SRO.</p> <p>Provide an assurance report to inform investment board and/or HM Treasury approval point.</p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p>Inform an MPRG Panel meeting discussion.</p>

Planned assurance options for inclusion in Integrated Assurance and Approvals Plans (IAAPs)

Review characteristics	Starting Gate	OGC Gateway™ - Gate 0	OGC Gateway™ - Gates 1-5	Project Assessment Review (PAR)
How is the review arranged?	<p>A Risk Potential Assessment (RPA) form is submitted to the MPA.</p> <p>An assessment meeting is held between the MPA Project Specialist and the SPO/SRO to clarify the assurance requirements before a Review Team can be booked.</p> <p>The Review Team hold a planning meeting with the SPO/SRO to agree Terms of Reference for the review and to arrange logistics including outline interview schedule.</p> <p>Key documents are provided to the Review Team as pre-reading.</p> <p>The review will normally take place 6 to 8 weeks after the assessment meeting.</p>	<p>A Risk Potential Assessment (RPA) form is submitted to the MPA.</p> <p>An assessment meeting is held between the MPA Project Specialist and the SRO to clarify the assurance requirements before a Review Team can be booked.</p> <p>The Review Team hold a planning meeting with the SRO to agree Terms of Reference for the review and to arrange logistics including outline interview schedule.</p> <p>Key documents are provided to the Review Team as pre-reading.</p> <p>The review will normally take place 10 to 12 weeks after the assessment meeting.</p>	<p>A Risk Potential Assessment (RPA) form is submitted to the MPA.</p> <p>An assessment meeting is held between the MPA Project Specialist and the SRO to clarify the assurance requirements before a Review Team can be booked.</p> <p>The Review Team hold a planning meeting with the SRO to agree Terms of Reference for the review and to arrange logistics including outline interview schedule.</p> <p>Key documents are provided to the Review Team as pre-reading.</p> <p>The review will normally take place 10 to 12 weeks after the assessment meeting.</p>	<p>A Risk Potential Assessment (RPA) form is submitted to the MPA.</p> <p>An assessment meeting is held between the MPA Project Specialist and the SRO to clarify the assurance requirements before a Review Team can be booked.</p> <p>The Review Team hold a planning meeting with the SRO to agree Terms of Reference for the review and to arrange logistics including outline interview schedule.</p> <p>Key documents are provided to the Review Team as pre-reading.</p> <p>The review will normally take place 10 to 12 weeks after the assessment meeting.</p>

Planned assurance options for inclusion in Integrated Assurance and Approvals Plans (IAAPs)

Review characteristics	Starting Gate	OGC Gateway™ - Gate 0	OGC Gateway™ - Gates 1-5	Project Assessment Review (PAR)
Standard review team ² (excluding assessment and planning meetings)	2 or 3 reviewers x 3 days	2 or 3 reviewers x 3 days	2 or 3 reviewers x 3 days	3 reviewers x 5 days This review team should include a departmental representative who is independent of the project team and able to provide understanding of wider departmental context, culture and strategic direction.
Format of the review	<p>A series of confidential and non-attributable interviews with policy team members and stakeholders.</p> <p>Daily progress meetings with the SPO/SRO.</p> <p>A draft report submitted at the end of the on-site review period and agreed within a week of completion.</p>	<p>A series of confidential and non-attributable interviews with project team members, stakeholders and suppliers.</p> <p>Daily progress meetings with the SRO.</p> <p>A draft report submitted at the end of the on-site review period and agreed within a week of completion.</p>	<p>A series of confidential and non-attributable interviews with project team members, stakeholders and suppliers.</p> <p>Daily progress meetings with the SRO.</p> <p>A draft report submitted at the end of the on-site review period and agreed within a week of completion.</p>	<p>A 2 to 3 hour risks and issues workshop with the whole project team, to explore these in depth. Usually on the first morning of the on-site review period but can alternatively be conflated with the planning meeting.</p> <p>A series of confidential and non-attributable interviews with project team members, stakeholders and suppliers.</p> <p>Daily progress meetings with the SRO.</p> <p>A draft report submitted at the end of the on-site review period and agreed within a week of completion.</p>

² These can be adjusted at MPA discretion, but are the standards used by the MPA for resource planning purposes, unless agreed otherwise by the relevant Project Specialist.

Planned assurance options for inclusion in Integrated Assurance and Approvals Plans (IAAPs)

Review characteristics	Starting Gate	OGC Gateway™ - Gate 0	OGC Gateway™ - Gates 1-5	Project Assessment Review (PAR)
Who receives the review report?	SPO /SRO if there is one MPA HM Treasury Spending Team Wider circulation within the department by the SPO/SRO. The report may be shared by the MPA, after discussion with the SRO, with other relevant interested parties at the centre, such as Infrastructure UK, Government ICT and/or the Government Procurement Service.	SRO MPA HM Treasury Spending Team Wider circulation within the department by the SRO. The report may be shared by the MPA, after discussion with the SRO, with other relevant interested parties at the centre, such as Infrastructure UK, Government ICT and/or the Government Procurement Service.	SRO MPA HM Treasury Spending Team Wider circulation within the department by the SRO. The report may be shared by the MPA, after discussion with the SRO, with other relevant interested parties at the centre, such as Infrastructure UK, Government ICT and/or the Government Procurement Service.	SRO MPA MPRG Panel (if relevant) HM Treasury Spending Team Wider circulation within the department by the SRO. The report may be shared by the MPA, after discussion with the SRO, with other relevant interested parties at the centre, such as Infrastructure UK, Government ICT and/or the Government Procurement Service.
Format of the review report	Standard format covering the five mandatory topics, with some flexibility for tailoring and inclusion of additional areas of exploration.	Standard format	Standard format	Template that allows a lot of flexibility for tailoring to reflect the bespoke Terms of Reference. Includes a standard format for reports that are informing an MPRG Panel.

Planned assurance options for inclusion in Integrated Assurance and Approvals Plans (IAAPs)

Review characteristics	Starting Gate	OGC Gateway™ - Gate 0	OGC Gateway™ - Gates 1-5	Project Assessment Review (PAR)
How is the report used?	<p>Informs departmental discussions about viability of the potential project.</p> <p>SPO/SRO uses report findings and recommendations to design and develop a project.</p> <p>HM Treasury Spending Team will expect to see the report at the next approval point.</p>	<p>SRO actions findings and recommendations</p> <p>HM Treasury Spending Team will expect to see the report at the next approval point.</p> <p>A poor Delivery Confidence rating may as a consequence trigger further investigation, support and/or intervention from the MPA</p>	<p>SRO actions findings and recommendations</p> <p>HM Treasury Spending Team will expect to see the report at the next approval point.</p> <p>A poor Delivery Confidence rating may as a consequence trigger further investigation, support and/or intervention from the MPA</p>	<p>SRO actions findings and recommendations</p> <p>HM Treasury Spending Team will expect to see the report at the next approval point.</p> <p>If the project is subject to MPRG Panel scrutiny, the report will inform MPRG Panel meeting discussions and lines of questioning.</p> <p>A poor Delivery Confidence rating may as a consequence trigger further investigation, support and/or intervention from the MPA</p>