



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of the **Premier and Cabinet**
Office of **Digital Government**

Digital Services Policy Framework

Website Project Governance Process:

For agency website projects seeking exemption from alignment or compliance with approved strategies, policies or standards

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Introduction

The WA Government ICT Strategy *Digital WA*, establishes the strategic direction for agencies to deliver a more consistent online presence, and more and better digital services WA.gov.au, the whole-of-government Digital Services Portal.

The whole-of-government ServiceWA (Digital) 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 a one government website user experience (UX) design, 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. Cabinet approved the recommendations 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.

Scope

Directors General (DG) ICT Council approval is required for any agency website project that seeks to exempt itself from aligning with the ServiceWA (Digital) whole-of-government strategic direction or compliance with relevant policies and standards provided to support the outcomes of the state digital strategy. This exemption is required either:

- a. **before** the commencement of any in-scope agency website project (i.e. any project that the agency *believes* cannot, should not or will not to align with the strategy and/or comply with policies and standards); or
- b. **as soon as possible during** any in-scope agency website project (i.e. any project that the agency *identifies after commencement* cannot, should not or will not align with the strategy and/or comply with policies and standards).

In scope categories

Exemption is required for website projects that fall within one of the following categories:

- Website projects with a total cost of \$100,000¹ or more that **DO NOT ALIGN** with the ServiceWA (Digital) whole-of-government strategic direction.
- Website projects less than \$100,000 that **DO NOT COMPLY** with all the relevant policies and standards provided to support the outcomes of the state digital strategy.

¹ Total cost, or total project cost, includes all salaries and non-salaries costs such as staff, contractors, services, software, etc.

Projects that meet one of the following criteria are likely to be considered **not aligned** with the whole-of-government ServiceWA (Digital) Program approach, or compliant with policies and standards supporting the state digital strategy, 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 architectural designs approved within ServiceWA (Digital); or
- Any project that *could* utilise common platforms, contracts or arrangements once they are in place, but is *not* using them.

Out of scope categories

Exemption is **not** required for projects that align with the whole-of-government ServiceWA (Digital) Program approach and comply with policies and standards supporting the state digital strategy, or fall within one of the following 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 Corporation" or "Public Financial Corporation" (a.k.a. Government Trading Enterprise), or as "Agencies outside the State's Public Sector", in Budget Paper 3²;
- Any project being undertaken as part of a Government advertising campaign³;
- Any project primarily related to international marketing of Western Australia, or the specific services of an agency directed primarily towards an international audience; or
- Any project relating primarily to the use of Social Media, for example Facebook, YouTube, or Instagram.

Alignment criteria

Projects that meet the following criteria are likely to be considered **aligned** with the whole-of-government ServiceWA (Digital) Program approach, and **compliant** with policies and standards supporting the state digital strategy:

- Moving to a common platform or arrangement, within or across agencies, that conforms with the architectural (business, technical, etc.) design approved within ServiceWA (Digital);
- 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);
- Applying the one government website UX design to existing websites;
- Connecting, or preparing to connect, new or existing digital services to a whole-of-government website or platform delivered through ServiceWA (Digital); or
- The application of policies and standards related to the state digital strategy.

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.

Mandated website changes

Agencies requiring new websites as a result of a Machinery of Government (MOG) change or a Ministerial directive should, in the first instance:

- deliver only the basic requirements (minimum viable product) for a single website for the newly amalgamated agency 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 full website on the ServiceWA (Digital) platform as soon as that is feasible.

Exemption process

To request exemption from the whole-of-government ServiceWA (Digital) Program approach or compliance with one or more elements of the policies and standards supporting the state digital strategy, agencies are required to submit a website project proposal that has been approved by their DG/CEO (or as otherwise delegated) into the Website Project Governance Process for assessment.

The submission and assessment of exemption requests should be undertaken with the ongoing and iterative nature of the ServiceWA (Digital) Program in mind. Common platforms, common contracts, user experience standards and digital services standards will be progressively identified and implemented, and may have changed since a previous proposal.

It is up to each agency to determine if they believe that a particular project approach, method or technology they are considering that does *not* align or comply as required has sufficient business justification (eg. significantly lower cost, greater community outcomes, required integration with existing systems, etc.) to warrant submitting a proposal for assessment.

For example, 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 based on those grounds.

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

Assessment criteria

The DG ICT Council will base their decision on the agency's business justification to not align to the whole-of-government ServiceWA (Digital) program approach or comply with policies and standards supporting the state digital strategy, as well as the viability of the alternative approach proposed. The approval will include consideration of:

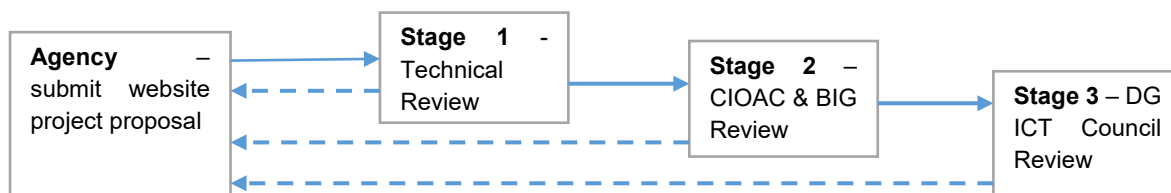
- Cost Benefit analysis of the proposed alternative approach;
- Transition considerations for any later move to an aligned or compliant state; and
- Project governance controls sufficient to provide confidence in the desired outcome.

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 and justified. The Strategic ICT Governance meeting schedules are available on WA.gov.au (note that the schedule is subject to change; check the website for updates).

To submit a website project proposal to the Website Project Governance Process, email the proposal to dgov-strategy@dpc.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 Digital Government 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 any potentially unnecessary and throwaway investment, and with consideration of the total cost of ownership for ongoing maintenance and transition to the ServiceWA platform(s) 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 continue with the original proposal, 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 and Technology Advisory Committee (BATAAC) for stage 2 review.

- **Stage Two:** The BATAAC 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 alignment with the whole-of-government common platform approach and/or the urgency to not wait until the common ServiceWA platforms are available, or from compliance with policies and standards supporting the state digital strategy.

The BATAAC may provide feedback on your submission if the proposal is not supported. Following such feedback, your agency may choose to either continue with the original

proposal, withdraw the proposal and resubmit a revised proposal to the Website Project Governance Process, or withdraw the proposal completely.

The BATAAC 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 BATAAC's and the TRG's recommendations. Informed by the TRG's assessment of the technical feasibility of the project, and the BATAAC'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 is justified.

Your agency will be advised of the outcome in writing through the Office of Digital Government within five working days following a 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 Office of Digital Government, telephone 61 8 6552 5000 or by email: dgov-strategy@dpc.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 [Office of Digital Government 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 proposed project approach, as well as the technical viability of the proposed project.

Proposed project approach *(for all proposals)*

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 *(for proposals where technology is not aligned with ServiceWA (Digital) common platforms approach, or not compliant with relevant policies and standards)*

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.

Marketing and Communication *(for proposals where website or user experience design is not compliant with relevant policies and standards)*

The Office of Digital Government will consult with the Government Communications Unit (DPC) on website projects involving the development or application of individual agency branding or design that do not comply with the one government website UX design.

- Why does the agency, unit, program etc. desire a different brand?
- Has co-badging been considered, and if rejected, why?
- What is the cost to design and produce any proposed branding, including additional marketing materials or campaigns to promote the new brand?
Have attempts been made to harmonise or align the proposed brand or user experience with the approved whole-of-government standard?

Stage 2: Business and Technology Advisory Committee Review

The Business and Technology Advisory Committee assessment of the website exemption proposal focuses on the business justification of the proposed approach.

Business 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? *(if applicable)*
 - 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?
- What is the value to the community of a separate brand or user experience? *(if applicable)*
 - How is the service or information to be covered by the proposed branding or user experience different from every other government service or information?

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 BATAAC 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(s) 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

<For **all** projects, provide information on the proposed 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>

<For website projects **less than \$100,000** that do not apply the one government website UX design or other relevant policy or standard, provide information to attest how it will improve or reduce confusion and complexity for the customer and provide a consistent user experience when accessing WA Government websites.>

Technology environment

<For projects whose proposed technology does **not align** with ServiceWA (Digital) program, or does **not comply** with relevant policies or standards, 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

<For projects that **do not align or comply**, 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 ServiceWA (Digital) program approach / compliance with policies and standards which support the state digital strategy>*, on the basis of the justification presented in this submission.

Signature

Agency Director General / CEO⁴

Date

Name

Title

⁴ Or delegated officer

