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Introduction
Introduction

The Australian Government invests at least $5 billion\(^1\) a year in information and communication technology (ICT). While ICT-enabled advances are improving service delivery and reducing costs, the government needs to achieve better value for money from its ICT investments. This is not just an issue for Australia. Globally the failure rate, cost and time overruns for ICT-related programs and projects\(^1\) is too high.\(^2\) All OECD governments are examining ways to enhance their performance in this area.

The Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO) in the Department of Finance and Administration (Finance) has developed this ICT Investment Framework to guide more targeted and efficient ICT investment by Australian Government agencies. It is a major component of the 2006 e-Government Strategy Responsive Government: A New Service Agenda, under the strategic priority of ‘Achieving value for money’.

Objective

The ICT Investment Framework aims to improve the Australian Government’s return on investment in ICT by enhancing strategic planning, management and evaluation of ICT-enabled business change programs and projects. The framework also aims to better align ICT investment with agencies’ business and policy objectives and the overarching whole-of-government agenda.

About the framework

The ICT Investment Framework will create and improve access to a series of products agencies can use to better plan and manage their investments. It is based on the whole-of-government ICT investment principles (Appendix A), which acknowledge that:

- agencies are responsible for the effective use of their own resources,
- investments in new business capability involving ICT should be justified by, and measured against, costs and benefits.

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1 When the framework refers to ‘ICT-enabled projects’ or ‘project management’, readers should interpret these terms to cover the range of investment, implementation and maintenance activities that support business change and business drivers at the portfolio, program and project management levels.

2 The Standish Group (Standish Group International 2003, Chaos Chronicles Version 3, 2003) reported:
   (a) For projects of greater than US$10m, only 2% were on time and on budget, 58% were over time and/or budget, and 40% failed (p.217).
   (b) 66% of projects of all sizes either experienced time and cost overruns or failed (p.217).
   (c) Of projects which were over time and/or over budget:
      (a) 27% had a cost overrun of greater than half of the original cost estimate (p.215).
      (b) 9% more than doubled the original cost estimate (p.215).
      (c) 41% had time overruns of greater than half of the original project timeframe (p.216).
      (d) 15% more than doubled the original timeframe (p.216).
   (d) In 41% of projects of all sizes, less than three quarters of the original features and functions were delivered in the final product. 19% of projects delivered less than half the original features and functions. (p.216)
As such, the framework includes the ICT Business Case Guide and Tools (due for release in August 2006). Agencies are encouraged to use the ICT Business Case Guide and Tools for 2007–08 Budget proposals with a significant ICT component. AGIMO will provide training in the use of the ICT Business Case Guide and Tools from September 2006 onwards. Since the 2005–06 Budget cycle, AGIMO has reviewed ICT-related business cases in support of Finance’s Budget Group. AGIMO will continue to have this role.

The remainder of the framework consists of a suite of related resources, such as standards, guidance, processes and better practice tools, which agencies may choose to use to more effectively plan and manage their ICT investments.

The framework has been developed in consultation with agencies and with guidance from the whole-of-government Chief Information Officer’s Forum (CIOF) and Committee (CIOC), and Secretaries’ Committee on ICT (SCICT). Agencies are strongly encouraged to participate in the further development of projects under the framework. Information on the framework and the status of each project will be available online at www.agimo.gov.au from August 2006.
Overview of framework projects

The ICT Investment Framework is broken down into four streams with several projects under each stream as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Overview of ICT Investment Framework

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<td>Strategic ICT investment planning—good practice guidance, sample plans.</td>
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RELATED PROCESSES

Australian Government Budget Processes
Internal Agency Governance Processes and Resources
Monitoring and evaluation roles of PM&C’s Cabinet Implementation Unit (CIU) and the ANAO
ICT Skills Development Taskforce
Whole-of-government procurement approaches
Whole-of-government architecture, interoperability, and service delivery frameworks
Standards and guidance being developed by Standards Australia, the CPA, CIU, ANAO and others
The framework’s projects provide agencies with a selection of better practice tools to enhance their ICT investment performance. In this way, the framework complements existing government processes that support agency business planning and program/project implementation (for example, existing Finance Budget Estimates Memoranda).

**Status of framework deliverables**

Work is progressing on the framework, with the following deliverables already achieved:

- whole-of-government ICT investment principles (Appendix A)
- ICT Business Case Guide and Tools (due for re-release in August 2006)
- ICT Business Case Review Guide (due for re-release in August 2006)
- AGIMO reviews of ICT-related business cases
- Performance Indicator Catalogue (at www.agimo.gov.au)
- website links to strategic planning guidance and templates
- website links to self assessment tools/models to measure project management maturity
- website links to terms of reference for Portfolio/Program Project Management Offices
- website links to guidance on phasing and breaking down large projects into modular units
- review of methodologies for ICT expenditure statistics
- analysis of ICT contract expenditure (available from CIOC extranet)

Other projects are progressing, with releases planned over the next 12 months (see timetable at Appendix B).

**Benefits of the framework**

**Adding value across government**

Applying the framework across government will deliver benefits to all stakeholders, including:

- greater certainty that agencies are developing strategic and robust ICT-enabled projects
- stronger alignment of ICT-enabled projects to agency and whole-of-government objectives
- increased realisation of benefits from ICT-related investments, for agencies and for government
- improved capacity to determine the appropriateness of proposed investments
- better forecasting of future calls on the Federal Budget and on the ICT skills market
- increased ability to identify opportunities for re-use and interoperability
- increased capacity to respond to whole-of-government strategic directions
- reduced cost and time overruns through improved estimates, project management, governance and evaluation of ICT-enabled projects.
**Adding value across program/project lifecycles**

The framework is designed to add value to the entire program/project lifecycle.

Figure 2 outlines how the components of the framework will assist agencies to manage various stages of a program/project lifecycle. For context, it includes the relative roles of Finance/AGIMO and agencies.

**Figure 2: Value the ICT Investment Framework will add to program/project lifecycle**
Framework projects in detail
Stream 1—Strategic Investment and Governance

Whole-of-government ICT investment principles

Investment principles are necessary to guide effective decision making. The whole-of-government ICT investment principles guide the government’s approach to investment and have guided the development of projects under this framework.


Similar approaches are being adopted in state jurisdictions and the private sector, in Australia and internationally, to support compliance with whole-of-government enterprise architecture principles around interoperability and re-use. The whole-of-government ICT investment principles are at Appendix A and online at www.agimo.gov.au from August 2006.

ICT governance standards and handbooks

Good governance is a critical component of improving project management. AGIMO is working with Standards Australia to develop better practice guidance and to promote Australian Public Service-wide access to this guidance and other expert products, including those of the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), via www.agimo.gov.au.

Standards Australia recently released the Australian Standard for ICT Governance (AS8015) and is developing the Australian Standard for Governance of ICT Projects (AS8016), together with a suite of handbooks to support AS8015 and AS8016. AGIMO is contributing to the ongoing development of these products by participating on the Standards Australia ICT Governance Committee. In particular, AGIMO is participating in the development of the handbook ICT Governance Procedures for Government Organisations, which is expected to be available in mid-2007.

AGIMO will further promote the adoption of these standards across the Australian Public Service through the ‘Forums for sharing lessons learnt’ (details under Stream 4—Performance and Management Metrics) and through its Better Practice Program (details at www.agimo.gov.au).

Strategic ICT investment planning—good practice guidance, sample plans

Strategic ICT investment plans assist agencies to ensure that ICT objectives, activities and procurement align with and support overall business drivers. Approaches to strategic planning vary across Australian Government agencies. More consistent and transparent planning of ICT investments by agencies will facilitate more predictable and manageable patterns of investment across government. Samples and models of strategic planning are available at www.agimo.gov.au and more will be added as they are sourced from the public and private sector.

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3 Enterprise architecture is a structured approach to meeting the business needs of an organisation with the information and technological capability. A whole-of-government architectural approach, as proposed by the 2006 e-Government Strategy, encourages adoption of common principles, standards, methodologies and technologies by agencies, which facilitate interoperability and re-use across government.
Repository of agency investment priorities

Access to a repository of the ICT strategic investment priorities of agencies will assist agencies to identify:

- potential demand for resources across government including staffing with particular skill sets
- similar approaches and implementations by other agencies, enabling possible identification of lead agencies on particular implementations
- technical and business interdependencies
- opportunities for re-use and shared development of systems, products and intellectual property.

To develop the repository, AGIMO will ask agencies for high level descriptions of the nature and scope of large projects, with greater detail to be sought for projects that will be implemented in the short term. Members of the CiOC will be asked for details in the first phase, before the project is rolled out across agencies.

High level descriptions of agency ICT investments would include:

- the purpose of the project (i.e. expanding business or introducing technology capability, particularly in new technologies)
- components of the project and/or key words of areas covered (e.g. security, authentication, emerging technologies)
- indicative cost estimates
- indicative staffing estimates together with required skill sets
- an indication of the project’s contribution to achieving whole-of-government ICT strategic priorities, as articulated in Responsive Government: A New Service Agenda, the 2006 e-Government Strategy. These priorities include: meeting users’ needs; building connected service delivery; achieving value for money and enhancing public sector capability. Examples might include: expanding or facilitating dependencies with other agencies; expanding or facilitating shared services or whole-of-government capability.

Agencies should be able to draw on their existing strategic, investment and annual procurement plans to provide information to populate the repository. In this way, the repository will build on existing business processes and reinforce the annual business planning cycle.

The repository should capture a large part of agencies’ future investment intentions. It is neither possible nor desirable to try to foresee all potential investments or changes in government priorities that may impact on longer term plans. Information on projects not forecast through the repository may be available to agencies through the ‘Database of agency ICT-related projects’ (details under Stream 4—Performance Management and Metrics).

The repository will be designed to address agency security concerns and will be accessible to agreed agency and Finance personnel. The development of the datasets, templates and trial of the repository will be undertaken by CiOC members in its first phase to test the repository’s usability and value. Interviews may be used to supplement other data collection methods. The trial of the repository and a report on its value and usability is scheduled to be completed by the end of March 2007.
Framework projects in detail

Stream 2—Business Case Tools and Reviews

**ICT Business Case Guidance and Tools**

Rigorous business case planning ensures that ICT investment across government is well planned and managed. Robust business cases reduce the risk of time and cost overruns and of projects not achieving anticipated benefits. Better business case guides will strengthen the quality of strategic alignment, project planning, financial estimates, and cost benefit and options analysis.

The **ICT Business Case Guide and Tools** will help agencies to develop business cases with comprehensive cost benefit analysis of business, technical, and implementation options, and more detailed project planning. Agencies trialling the ICT Business Case Guide and Tools over the past year\(^4\) report that benefits include the development of a common language around investment and business planning between agencies and Finance.

The revised **ICT Business Case Guide and Tools** will be released for use across government in the 2007–08 Budget cycle.

AGIMO will provide training in business case development and use of the **ICT Business Case Guide and Tools** on a train-the-trainer basis intensively from September to December 2006 and then as requested by agencies.\(^5\) Initially, up to 80 trainers can be trained, with a maximum of four people from each large agency and two from smaller agencies. Agencies can purchase additional training if required. In addition, all users of the **ICT Business Case Guide and Tools** will be able to access introductory training material from August 2006 to help familiarise themselves with the process.

The **ICT Business Case Guide and Tools** are supported by an **ICT Business Case Review Guide**, which informs the development of business cases and assists in quality assurance checking. The **ICT Business Case Review Guide** provides a series of questions covering strategic and technical alignment, program and project planning and phasing, benefits realisation, evaluation, governance, risk, interdependencies, market testing and procurement. Together, the **ICT Business Case Guide and Tools** and **ICT Business Case Review Guide** set the standards against which business cases will be assessed.

The **ICT Business Case Guide and Tools** and **ICT Business Case Review Guide** are currently available from the CIOC and CIO Forum extranets or by contacting AGIMO’s ICT Investment Framework Team on 02 6215 1547 or ictinvestmentframework@finance.gov.au.

**Targeted cost benefit analysis guidance (for investing in websites, legacy systems and developing technologies)**

Agencies have identified the need for targeted guidance on how to get the most out of investments in three areas that have particular needs—websites, legacy systems and developing technologies. AGIMO will develop guidance to help agencies understand the costs, benefits, risks and implementation issues specific to these three issues. For example, guidance on legacy systems will cover the issue of capitalisation and depreciation of assets to assist agencies in decision-making on residual value and refresh cycles. The guides will include tailored cost benefit analysis tools and risk assessment support tools, and will complement existing Finance guidelines such as the **ICT Business Case Guide and Tools**.

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\(^4\) Agencies that have or are trialling the tools include Attorney-General’s Department, Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, and Comsuper.

\(^5\) This builds on earlier training provided to agencies in association with the early business case tool the Demand and Value Assessment Methodologies (DVAM)
The development of this material depends on further testing and possible refinement of the *ICT Business Case Guide and Tools*, which is expected to be completed by March 2007. Accordingly, this project will commence in March 2007 and first drafts are expected to be available in August 2007.

**AGIMO support for Finance reviews of ICT-related Budget proposals**

Since the 2005–06 Budget cycle, AGIMO has supported Finance’s Budget Group in its assessment of Budget proposals that have a significant ICT component. AGIMO focuses on value for money, management of risk, and alignment with whole-of-government ICT frameworks, architectural principles and policies (such as the 2006 e-Government Strategy, *Responsive Government: A New Service Agenda*). AGIMO assesses ICT-related business cases against good practice as outlined in the *ICT Business Case Guide and Tools* and the *ICT Business Case Review Guide*.

**Stream 3—Portfolio, Program and Project Management**

*Information on how Portfolio, Program and Project Management Offices can improve project management capability*

An effective Portfolio, Program or Project Management Office (PMO) is a common feature of organisations with sound project management. In the United Kingdom, agencies adopted PMOs or Centres of Excellence (CoE) to improve their performance and distil best practice management across their organisation. Under the United Kingdom model, PMOs build an agency’s capability and provide the means to review performance for continual improvement.

AGIMO is assembling information on PMOs as they operate in both the public and private sector. The terms of reference for the United Kingdom’s Office of Government Commerce (OGC) Centres of Excellence are available from www.agimo.gov.au and AGIMO will continue to add information on PMOs. Agencies will be able to draw on this material as they wish.

One of the priorities for the Australian Government’s ICT Professional and Skills Development Taskforce is developing project management capability for ICT. The Taskforce was established under the Management and Advisory Committee (MAC) Report 5, and is chaired by AGIMO. AGIMO’s ICT Investment Framework Team works closely with the Taskforce to ensure the activities of both teams are synchronised.

**Self assessment tools/models to measure project management maturity in agencies**

Project management maturity models describe competencies and capabilities against which agencies can assess their own performance. By assessing their own maturity in project management against these identified core competencies and capabilities, agencies can target the elements of project management that require attention in their organisation.

AGIMO is providing easy access to publicly-available project management maturity self assessment tools. For example, a link to the OGC ‘P3M3’ model is available at www.agimo.gov.au. Links to other tested project management models and tools will be posted to the website as they are identified.

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6 (i) The UK Cabinet Office’s Office of Public Services Reform report was based on the KPMG’s study of PMOs. The study found a strong correlation between the presence of a ‘mature’ PMO and greater project success — 95% of organisations with a mature PMO reported a 100% project success rate.

Framework projects in detail

**Guidance on breaking down large programs/projects into modular units**

Best practice ICT project management promotes keeping delivery time frames as short as possible. The private sector and some governments have responded to this by breaking up large ICT-related projects and programs into logical, modular units of manageable proportions. While some Australian Government agencies are adopting the modular approach, it is not yet universal.

In more traditional phasing of projects, each phase depends on the previous one and benefits are often not achieved until the end of the project. This may take several years. The modular approach differs in that modular units generally have shorter timeframes (e.g. three or six months) with stand-alone benefits realised at the end of each modular unit.

Breaking down deliverables into modular units helps to address many problems, including managing risk, continuity, flexibility to respond to changing requirements, and reducing the time required to secure a return on investment.

In the first quarter of 2007, AGIMO will make available international best practice approaches to developing modular as well as phased approaches to implementing large programs/projects. Examples of phasing approaches are already available online at [www.agimo.gov.au](http://www.agimo.gov.au), and others will be posted to the website as they are identified.

**Panel of ICT investment advisers**

AGIMO will assist agencies to access appropriately skilled resources by creating a panel of ICT investment advisers covering:

- business case development
- project, program and portfolio management
- quality management
- risk management
- change management.

This will be of particular benefit for small-medium sized agencies. Agencies will be able to use the panel to source advisers to assist project sponsors, steering committees or project managers. Alternatively, panel members may act as project resources, complementing existing agency resources and skills.

AGIMO will validate that panel members have relevant skills and resources prior to inclusion on the panel. Advisers will be sorted against general, methodology-specific or IT-specific skills and experience. For example, a project manager may be experienced in PRINCE2, and have both general project management experience as well as ICT project management experience.

A whole-of-government contract for advisers and/or project resources will be let and managed by AGIMO. This arrangement is expected to reduce the procurement burden for agencies associated with obtaining expert advice.

The panel will be established by the fourth quarter of 2007.

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Stream 4—Performance Management and Metrics

Performance Indicator Catalogue (indicators for all project lifecycle stages)
AGIMO has developed a Performance Indicator Catalogue, with indicators suitable for measuring performance across the whole project lifecycle, from planning to implementation to realising benefits. The catalogue also assists different levels of management in an agency (from project team member to CEO) to identify appropriate indicators against which they can manage performance. The draft catalogue is online at [link].

As part of AGIMO’s business case review function, agencies’ ICT business cases will be assessed to ensure adequate identification of benefits and performance indicators, and planning for benefits realisation and evaluation.

Analysis of ICT expenditure across government
AGIMO is reviewing data on the Australian Government’s current and proposed ICT expenditure. The analysis will produce trend data and assist agencies and government to improve ICT investment decisions. Data sources include AusTender, the Australian Government Consolidated Financial Statements and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Data analysis will provide a better perspective on ICT assets across the Australian Public Service and help agencies identify the intangible values of their investment in ICT, which can be significant. Analysis of AusTender contract expenditure data will be available from the CIOC extranet from July 2006.

In addition, AGIMO is investigating other sources of data and metrics that may be useful to agencies when planning their investments and developing business cases. Examples include infrastructure or personnel costs or proportions of expenditure on running, growing or transforming their business.

Forums for sharing lessons learnt
Agencies will be encouraged to share evaluation findings on managing projects and realisation of benefits. Sharing will occur through the CIOC, the PM&C Implementation Community of Practice, the Canberra Evaluation Forum, and the AGIMO Better Practice Seminar Series. Other strategies to share lessons learnt will be developed from September 2006.

Database of agency ICT-related projects
AGIMO will capture data from endorsed Budget proposals (from the 2006–07 Budget onwards) to create a database of agency ICT-related project information. Information will include a brief summary of the project, keywords on content to enable searching, and contact details for officers responsible for the project. Agencies will be able to refer to the database and agency contact officers when developing future projects and business cases. Agencies can learn from the implementation of other projects, including implementation success factors, design features, benefits identification and measurement and costing approaches. This will be particularly useful for agencies investing in emerging technologies. The database will also assist agencies to explore possible business and technical interdependencies, and opportunities for re-use, consistent with the 2006 e-Government Strategy.

The database will be available via a secure online facility to agreed agency nominees. The first elements of the database will be available by the first quarter of 2007.
Appendix A: Whole-of-government ICT investment principles
Principle 1: Government should be provided with sufficient information from an agency and whole-of-government perspective to enable appropriate assessment of allocation of funds for ICT enabled business change programs and projects.

Principle 2: Agencies are responsible for the effective, efficient and ethical use of resources to deliver the Government’s requirements (section 44 of the FMA Act). Agencies will ensure they have adequate governance and monitoring processes in place to achieve this.

Principle 3: Investments in new business capability involving ICT should be justified by and measured against costs and benefits.

Principle 4: Agencies are responsible for measuring the outcomes achieved by ICT and the return on the investment in ICT, and for sharing learnings across government at key points in each projects’ lifecycle.

Principle 5: Finance is responsible for developing, in consultation with agencies, the frameworks that assist agencies to achieve the efficient and effective use of ICT by the Australian Government. Finance will do this through: facilitating re-use, interoperability, sharing and collaboration; encouraging use of standards; and providing strategic guidance to agencies and government on ICT investment.

Principle 6: Central agencies\(^9\) will support agencies to enhance skills in managing ICT investments, by coordinating the provision of information, tools and training.

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\(^9\) Department of Finance and Administration (Finance), Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C).
Appendix B: Timetable for ICT investment framework deliverables
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