



Department of Transport
An Roinn Iompair



Post Project Review Methodology for Transport Projects

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1. Background

1.1 General

1.1.1 This guidance explains the background to post project reviews, sets out the proposed content of such reviews and indicates the data and information needs required to complete the reviews.

1.1.2 Post-project reviews potentially answer two types of questions:

- Did the funding Agency (and the State) get what it asked for?
- Did the State get what it needed?

Project reviews of the first type are normally part of the contracting process and are undertaken to ensure that the project was delivered to the Agency's specification and that the requirements of the contract were met.

Project reviews of the second type are concerned with whether the project met the needs that were identified at the outset and are thus concerned with project performance.

These two different types of review are usually referred to as **post completion** and **post project** reviews respectively. A post completion report is concerned with the implementation or construction phase of the project, whereas a post project report covers all aspects of the project's planning, implementation and initial operation.

For civil and building engineering schemes, post completion reviews are commonplace. Post project reviews are less frequently undertaken and the methodology used varies.

1.2 The Department of Finance Guidelines

1.2.1 The Department of Finance (DOF) Guidelines¹ indicate that it is the responsibility of the Sponsoring Agency to carry out post project reviews. These should be carried out for all projects costing in excess of €30 million. In addition to post projects reviews on all of these larger projects, post project reviews should be carried out on a representative sample of all projects generally. The sample should cover at least 5 percent of completed projects. The DOF Guidelines require post-project reviews to embrace both post completion and post implementation aspects.

¹ Guidelines for the Appraisal and Management of Capital Expenditure Proposals in the Public Sector. Department of Finance, February 2005, as amended by the Value for Money Circular of January 2006.



- 1.2.2 The DOF Guidelines indicate that a post-project review should have the aim of drawing out lessons for the future. A post-project review should be undertaken once sufficient time has elapsed to allow the project to be properly evaluated with sufficient evidence of the flow of benefits /costs from it. Any significant lessons learned should be translated into changes in the sponsoring Agency's project practices and communicated for future reference to the sanctioning authority by way of regular reports on projects so that the sanctioning authority can apply any general lessons to its project approval procedures.

The Department of Finance Guidelines are interpreted as requiring both post completion and post project reviews. The post completion review should be part of the project delivery process and completed prior to final hand over of the project to the client. The data and information gathered as part of the post completion report will form part of the post project report.

- 1.2.3 The rest of this Guidance sets out the steps to be undertaken to comply with the Department of Finance guidelines.



2. Organisational Aspects of the Review

2.1 Responsibility for the Review

The responsibility for the Post Project Review rests with the sponsoring Agency. The Review should be carried out by a staff member of the Agency or a consultant appointed by the Agency. The person(s) undertaking the Review should not have been directly involved in the oversight of the project planning or implementation, or in the appraisal of the project.

2.2 Timing of the Review

The Department of Finance Guidelines indicate that a post-project review should be undertaken once sufficient time has elapsed to allow the project to be properly evaluated with sufficient evidence of the flow of benefits and costs from it. It is envisaged that, except in special circumstances, the Review should be commenced one year after project opening. This timing ensures that at least a full year's experience of operation of the transport facility or service and the traffic volumes arising are available to inform the analysis. At the same time, it also enhances the likelihood that personnel engaged in the project planning and implementation are still available to help address data and information gaps.



3. Overall Approach to the Review

3.1 Contents of the Review

The Post Project Review should evaluate four phases of the project viz.

- Project conception;
- Project planning;
- Project implementation; and
- Project operational performance

A post completion report will already have been prepared at the time of project completion which will have recorded and assessed the project implementation process.

In conducting the Post Project Review, the emphasis should be on assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall project planning and implementation processes, and its operational performance to date.

3.2 Project Conception

This part of the Review should provide an account of the background to the project, how the project arose and reference relevant transport programmes or policies. It should then consider the Project Brief and review its comprehensiveness and relevance. In particular, it should assess whether the need for the project was soundly established within the Project Brief and whether the objectives were clearly specified.

3.3 Project Planning

The Review should address the following aspects of project planning where appropriate:²

- Demand analysis and forecasting;
- Route selection process;
- Preliminary and final design processes;
- Project appraisal processes;
- Compliance with procurement, EIS and other statutory requirements;
- and
- Consultation processes.

² The precise requirements will differ as between road and public transport projects.



3.4 Project Implementation

With regard to project implementation, the Review should address the following:

- Project management structures;
- Monitoring and evaluation;
- Budget compliance;
- Project schedule compliance;
- Project scope, value and risk management;
- Project compliance with required deliverables.

3.5 Project Operational Performance

This phase of the Post Project Review should consider:

- Achievement of the project objectives;
- Demand or traffic volume outcomes;
- Operational performance of the project and safety outcomes;
- Implications of operational performance for the project's potential economic return;

3.6 Focus of the Review

With regard to each of the project phases, the Review should concentrate on:

- Confirming that all phases of project planning and implementation complied with relevant Department of Finance, Department of Transport Guidelines, and Agency guidelines.
- Confirming that necessary approvals were obtained from the sanctioning authority at appropriate project planning decision points;
- Assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall project planning and implementation processes, and its operational performance to date;
- Assessing whether the project has delivered and is likely to continue to deliver on its objectives;
- Identifying any problems with project planning and implementation and analysing how they arose; and
- Drawing lessons from the project planning and implementation for future management of projects.

Further guidance on the implementation of the Review is contained in the Next Section.

4. Detailed Guidance on Issues for Consideration in the Review

4.1 Introduction

This Section of the Guidance indicates the issues that should be considered for each of the four project phases. An indicative table of contents for the Post Project Review Report is presented in Appendix 1.

4.2 Issues Relating to Project Conception

The Review should consider whether:

- The need for the project was soundly established within the Brief;
- The need was supported in relevant policy statements, plans, programmes and strategies e.g. in the National Development Plan, the DTO's Platform for Change etc.);
- The objectives set for the project were clearly specified.

4.3 Issues Relating to Project Planning

Demand and Traffic Analysis and Forecasting

4.3.1 The Review should consider whether

- Demand and or traffic modelling approach was appropriate to the nature of the project, at the time the project was being planned;
- Projected demand or traffic growth rates were benchmarked against recent trends;
- Projected demand or traffic growth rates were taken into account of national, regional and local population projections and economic forecasts;
- The sensitivity of demand or traffic forecasts to relevant factors was considered.

Design Processes and Option Development

4.3.2 The Review should consider whether

- The options considered were sufficiently different to offer real choices;
- Non-capital or management options were considered;
- Any screening of options was undertaken in a systematic manner and was fully documented;
- The completeness of the adopted design, as indicated by the lack of subsequent design alterations and contractor claims;



Project Appraisal

4.3.3 The Review should consider whether

- Project appraisal was carried at all the relevant project phases;
- Relevant appraisal techniques were approach used;
- The appraisal methodology used (CBA, Multicriteria Analysis etc) was in line with the Department of Finance requirements;
- Appropriate application rules and parameter values as per the Department of Transport CAF guidelines were used;
- Sensitivity testing was undertaken.

Compliance with Relevant Legislation and Processes

4.3.4 The Review should consider whether

- EU and National rules in respect of procurement were adhered to;
- Procurement decision-making processes were sound;
- Appropriate reference to the National Development Finance Agency was made;
- EU and National rules in respect of EIS were complied with;
- The planning processes, including the EIS were implemented speedily and effectively.

Consultation

4.3.5 The Review should consider whether

- Consultation processes were of good quality.

4.4 Issues Relating to Project Implementation

This issues will have been analysed in the post-completion review report.

Project Management

4.4.1 The Review should consider whether

- Project management structures and practices were in line with Department of Transport , Department of Finance (and NRA, where appropriate) guidelines and requirements;
- Monitoring reports were timely and of good quality;
- The project remained within pre and post procurement budget;
- The project met pre and post procurement target costs;
- The project met the post procurement target schedule;
- Project budget and schedule variances were managed effectively.



Project Design

4.4.2 The Review should consider whether

- The project design requirements were fully met;
- Project capacity decisions had a sound basis, either in the project brief or in the preliminary and detailed design analyses;
- The design analyses proved to be a sound basis for project implementation;
- Ad-hoc alterations to the design were necessary during the implementation phase and whether these reflected badly on the quality of the preliminary design process.

Project Scope, Value and Risk Management

4.4.3 The Review should consider whether

- Active management of scope changes was undertaken;
- Risk management was actively pursued throughout the planning and implementations phases;
- Opportunities for value management were identified and actively pursued.

4.6 Issues Relating to Project Operational Performance

The Review should consider whether

- The project objectives were met;
- Post opening demand/traffic volumes are in line with those predicted and used in the project appraisal;
- Any departure of traffic volumes from those predicted has implications for the predicted economic return to the project;
- There are any problems with the technical performance of the project on the ground ;
- There are any safety problems emerging;
- There are any further actions necessary to secure the anticipated benefits of the project.

4.7 Dissemination of Post Project Review Findings

The sponsoring Agency, in its annual report under the multi-annual investment framework, should report to the Department of Transport summary findings of its post project reviews. This report should, where appropriate, include details of actions taken on foot of these reviews to improve the Agency's project management arrangements.



The sponsoring Agency should also, where appropriate, disseminate technical summaries of the Post Project Reviews to the relevant actors involved both in the project under review and in that Agency's project management processes generally.



Appendix 1: Outline Table of Contents for the Report

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary
2. Background to the Project
3. Demand Analysis and Forecasting
4. Project Appraisal Procedures
5. Project Design Processes and Route Selection
6. Procurement and Statutory Processes
7. Project Implementation
8. Project Operational Performance
9. Overview of Issues Arising
10. Conclusions and Recommendations