

Green Cities, Infrastructure and Energy Programme

Gate 4 Review: Readiness for Service

23 March 2026

Title:	Gate 4 Review: Readiness for Service
Work package:	Internationalising NISTA's Gateway Review Methodology
Country:	Global

Version	Date	Reviewer
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The Green Cities, Infrastructure and Energy Programme ("GCIEP") is funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office ("FCDO") and is led by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) with an alliance of sub-consultants: Mott MacDonald Ltd, Adam Smith International Ltd, Marriott Davies Yapp LLP and Engineers Against Poverty.

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Gate 4 Review: About this Gate Review Workbook

Gate 4 Review: Overview

This Gate Review Workbook explains how to conduct the **Gate 4 Review: Readiness for Service** and should be read together with the **Guidance to Conducting Gateway Reviews**. Gate 4 is undertaken once the infrastructure project has been constructed, commissioned and is ready to be handed over for commencement of services. This gate provides assurance to the Project Board or approving authority on whether the project can proceed successfully into operational use.

Set out below are a number of criteria or “Lines of Enquiry” which should be used to explore issues in any assurance interview or Business Case review. It is not necessary to explore all of these Lines of Enquiry at interview, especially if the matter appears to have been dealt with in the relevant Business Case; the Review Team should use its discretion to decide what issues to concentrate on, bearing in mind (a) that Interviews should last no more than 45 minutes and (b) the Report Criteria it should use in writing the Report as listed at Schedule F to the Report Template.

Purpose of the Gate 4 Review

Gate 4 focuses on whether the project is ready to commence operations and whether the organisation is prepared for the changes that will occur before, during and after service launch. The Review checks that:

- the solution is robust, meets the agreed policy or strategic need, and is ready for implementation;
- the Business Case remains valid and has not been undermined by internal or external changes;
- the project’s expected benefits are still achievable, and there is a credible plan for realising them in the wider system;
- all testing, commissioning, integration and acceptance activities have been completed to the client’s satisfaction, with any defects identified and planned for remediation;
- operational resources, processes and controls are in place, including training, communications, user readiness and support arrangements;
- contract management arrangements are complete and prepared for the operational phase, and that contracts, variations and performance measures are up-to-date;
- the organisation has clear handover arrangements from the project team to the operational owner, including accountability for go/no-go decisions;
- risks, issues, dependencies and constraints are understood, remain manageable, and do not threaten implementation;
- contingency, continuity and reversion plans are feasible, tested and resourced, particularly for the initial period after commencement of operations;
- the client and supplier implementation plans remain realistic, aligned and achievable within the required timeframe;
- all regulatory, safety, information assurance or compliance obligations required for operation have been met;
- there are processes in place to support long-term success through business-as-usual (BAU) arrangements; and
- lessons learned from delivery to date have been identified and captured for future projects.

The Review concludes with an assessment of whether the project is ready to enter service, based on its current prospects of delivering the required performance to time, cost and quality, and whether any further actions are required before commencement of operations.

How to conduct the Gate 4 Review

1. Strategic case

1.1 Strategic – Is the project still required and aligned with current government and/or funding authority strategy at go-live?

Evidence:

- Updated statement confirming continued strategic alignment and need.
- Summary of material internal and/or external changes since last approval and any implications for go-live.
- Key strategic issues requiring decision by the approving body.

1.2 Strategic – Is the Business Case still valid and unaffected by material changes (scope, assumptions, dependencies)?

Evidence:

- Confirmation the Business Case remains valid and implementation remains justified.
- Evidence that organisations representing people affected by the project have reviewed and fed into the construction process, including on testing and resolving issues related to accessibility, employment opportunities during operations and maintenance (O&M).
- Summary of any changes and how consequences have been understood and addressed, including any changes in climate, nature or environmental requirements and assumptions.

1.3 Strategic – Where applicable, have delivery methods (e.g., standardisation/ offsite approaches) been applied and are operational implications understood?

Evidence:

- Evidence delivery methods used are documented (including off-site/ standardised components where relevant).
- Confirmation operational implications (interfaces, maintenance approach, spares/warranties, supplier obligations) are reflected in operating and handover arrangements.
- Environmental risks, requirements and long-term performance implications of the delivery method are identified and built into operations.

2. Economic case

2.1 Economic – Are intended benefits still achievable and is there a credible route to realise them (including in the wider system)?

Evidence:

- Updated benefits summary and confirmation benefits remain achievable after commencement of operations.
- Named operational owner(s) for benefits and agreed responsibilities for benefits realisation.
- Key benefits risks/issues requiring project board attention.

2.2 Economic – Is there an evaluation plan for post-completion performance and benefits, and is it resourced and agreed with relevant stakeholders?

Evidence:

- Evaluation plan confirmed, including what will be evaluated, when, by whom, and the data to be used (and how it will be disaggregated).
- Evidence that the basis for evaluating ongoing performance is in place.

3. Commercial case

3.1 Commercial – Is the current phase of the contract properly completed and are contractual arrangements complete and up-to-date?

Evidence:

- Confirmation that the commercial documentation is complete and contractual arrangements are up to date for the operational phase.

- Record that any contract changes or variations are documented and approved through the required governance route.

3.2 Commercial – Is supplier/service performance management ready for Business as Usual (BAU) (KPIs, reporting, remedies)?

Evidence:

- Operational KPIs (or equivalent) agreed, with reporting cadence and responsibilities
- Evidence supplier mobilisation is complete and ready for operational delivery.

4. Financial case

4.1 Financial – Are implementation and operational funding arrangements confirmed and is whole life affordability still acceptable?

Evidence:

- Confirmation funding for go-live/transition and early operations is available/approved and affordability remains valid.
- Summary of affordability risks (including operation and maintenance (O&M) cost risks) requiring decision.

4.2 Financial – Are financial management and control arrangements in place for commencement of operations?

Evidence:

- Defined financial management arrangements for the operational transition (controls, reporting, tolerances).
- Confirmation ongoing operating/maintenance costs will be monitored against expectations and addressed.

5. Management case

5.1 Management – Has commissioning and testing been completed, and does the solution meet all acceptance requirements (including integration and any regulator obligations)?

Evidence:

- Completed commissioning, integration and user acceptance tests, with results signed off.
- Agreed outstanding list of defects to be remedied within an agreed time.
- Confirmation that acceptance criteria have been met, including any regulator mandated checks where applicable.
- Record of defects or incomplete works, with clear remediation plans and owners.

5.2 Management – Is the organisation ready to operate the service or asset from day one (people, processes, training and support)?

Evidence:

- Defined operating model, roles, responsibilities and escalation routes for the live environment.
- Continue to operate an inclusive grievance mechanism and investigation/ response procedures for operations and maintenance issues.
- Agreed list of any staff transfers.
- Training and communications completed for staff, end users and operational teams.
- Support arrangements, service desk processes, and early-life support plans in place and resourced.

5.3 Management – Are handover and business-as-usual (BAU) transition arrangements agreed, including clarity on who has the authority to approve or stop the transition, and who will take operational ownership?

Evidence:

- A documented and agreed handover plan from the project team to the operational business owner.
- A named owner responsible for approving or stopping key decisions, with clear responsibilities defined throughout implementation.
- Alignment between client and supplier implementation plans and readiness for transition.

5.4 Management – Are residual risks and issues acceptable, and are resilience, continuity and reversion arrangements in place and tested?

Evidence:

- Updated assessment of remaining risks, issues and dependencies, with management actions in place.
- Feasible and tested continuity, contingency and reversion plans covering go-live and early operations.
- Confirmation that resilience requirements have been addressed and responsibilities for maintaining them are defined.

5.5 Management – Are all commencement compliance obligations met, and are closeout and learning requirements in place?

Evidence:

- Confirmation that regulatory, safety, information assurance or other compliance requirements required for operation have been satisfied.
- Plans for capturing lessons learned and meeting post-implementation or close-out reporting requirements.
- Evidence that any remaining compliance-related actions are understood, timebound and with clear owners.

Glossary

Appraisal as regards:

- options, is a process of comparing different options; and
- projects, is a process of considering the overall state of a project (considering objectives, options, costs, benefits, risks and uncertainty) before reaching a decision.

Assurance is a review process designed to produce:

- an assessment for its sponsor and approver that shows the assurance team's confidence in the project's ability to meet its aims and objectives; and
- advice as to whether it has reached a sufficient stage of maturity to proceed to the next stage.

Assurance and approvals plan is a plan setting out the planning, co-ordination and provision of assurance activities and approval points throughout its life.

Authority is a local or central public sector body, which may commission a project.

Business as Usual is the project option that provides for a continuation of the current arrangements. This provides a benchmark against which to compare other options. Sometimes this is referred to as the 'Do Nothing' option.

Change management means the different plans/approaches needed to help manage organisational change. This should be supported by an overall strategy that explains the goals and aims, and a plan that explains how these will be achieved.

Contingency is an allowance of cash or resource to cover the cost of risks that may arise.

Cost benefit analysis is a type of socio-economic analysis used to compare different project options and their effect on social welfare, quantifying as many of the costs and the benefits as feasible, including costs/benefits for which there are no satisfactory measures of economic value.

Critical success factors (CSFs) are the high priority objectives for a project, against which the success of the project may be judged.

Delivery confidence is the likelihood of a project delivering the agreed outputs to time, cost and quality.

Discounting is a method used to convert future costs and benefits to present values using a discount rate.

Early Business Case is the first stage in developing a project's business case. It focuses primarily on the Strategic and Economic Cases, establishing the 'strategic need' for the project, and a shortlist of options. High-level costs, benefits and risks are also developed.

Economic analysis is a means of assessing the costs and benefits of options to society as a whole, using cost benefit analysis, and an assessment of qualitative benefits and risks.

Environmental and social impact assessment is an assessment of the potential environmental and social impacts of a proposed project prior to the decision to move forward with the project.

Environmental and social impact risks are risks of potential negative consequences that result from impacts (or perceived impacts) on the natural environment or communities of people.

Financing, for a project, is the up-front borrowing and/or investment used to pay for capital costs.

Five Case Model (5CM) is a framework for the development and presentation of a business case, comprising the strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management – the five dimensions of the case. It is the methodology described in this Guidance.

Full Business Case is the third stage in developing a project business case. It focuses primarily on the procurement process, and updates the Economic, Commercial, Financial and Management Cases to reflect the negotiated deal.

Funding is the source of income used to repay the up-front finance for a project over its life.

G20 Principles refers to the “G20 Principles for the Infrastructure Project Preparation Phase” issued in July 2018 by the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors at the Buenos Aires summit.

Gateway approach involves a project passing through ‘gates’ or assurance review points before it is put forward for relevant central government approval. Each gateway requires the assurance team to develop an assessment report of the project and its business case.

Gender and Inclusion where ‘gender’ refers to gender equality and women’s economic empowerment, and ‘inclusion’ refers to the reduction of poverty and delivery of inclusive growth among excluded groups, such as women, youth, people with disabilities, and rural communities. Greater inclusion can be achieved through empowerment (through building assets, capabilities and opportunities) and transformation (addressing systemic barriers to economic empowerment).

- **Disability:** Long-term mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various attitudinal, informational and environmental barriers, may hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
- **Disability inclusion:** A process that actively seeks to ensure the full participation of persons with disabilities as empowered self-advocates in all development processes and emergency responses. Specifically, disability inclusion addresses barriers that hinder access to key services and employment opportunities, and highlights ways to improve health and social wellbeing outcomes.
- **Gender:** Socially constructed roles, attributes, opportunities and relationships that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. While many societies recognise that there are more than two genders, for the purposes of this analysis we focus on men and women. Expectations relating to gender differ from society to society and change over time.
- **Gender equality:** Women having the same opportunities in life as men, including equal access to services, equal pay for equal work, equal participation in decision-making, etc.
- **Social inclusion:** The process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society – improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity.

Intermediate Business Case is the second, and most substantial, stage in developing a project business case. It focuses on the Economic, Commercial, Financial and Management Cases, assessing the shortlist of options through cost benefit analysis to determine a ‘preferred option’, considering the affordability and commercial viability of the ‘preferred option’, and identifying the expected resources and management arrangements for the project.

Life cycle costs are the costs of an asset over its useful life, including dismantling costs (sometimes known as Whole-Life Costs).

MDB is a Multilateral Development Bank.

Objectives are the ‘targeted’ outcomes for a project, which reflect its overall rationale, and which must be made SMART for the purposes of evaluation – sometimes also referred to as project objectives, investment objectives or spending objectives.

Optimism bias is the demonstrated tendency for the writers of business cases to be over-optimistic about costs, benefits and time taken to complete a proposal.

Option appraisal is the process of examining options and weighing up the costs, benefits, risks and uncertainties of those options before a decision is made.

Outcomes refers to the consequences to society as a whole of a project.

Outputs refers to the change in the level or quality of a service delivered.

Preferred approach is the best ranking solution emerging from the options analysis at the Early Business Case stage. It is not the preferred option, which only emerges after full economic appraisal in the Intermediate Business Case stage.

Preferred option is the option selected, as offering best value, after a detailed analysis of the shortlist of options in the Economic Case at the Intermediate Business Case stage.

Programme is a series of coordinated activities designed to pursue a long-term goal. In the infrastructure area, it is normally seen as an overarching structure under which a number of related individual projects can be coordinated and delivered. A programme business case can also be produced using the Five Case Model.

Project Owner is the senior person who represents and champions the Project within the relevant Ministry or Local Authority and who has overall responsibility for the success of the Project. The Project Owner is not part of the project executive team, but will chair the supervisory board overseeing the Project. In the UK this person is known as the “Senior Responsible Officer”. Guidance setting out the responsibilities of the Project Owner/SRO can be found at <https://projectdelivery.gov.uk/library-product/the-role-of-the-senior-responsible-owner/>

Public Value is the net measure of social welfare resulting from an option or project looking at the ‘whole of society’, or more particularly, it is the sum of total benefits and total costs, including private and social costs and benefits. It is sometimes referred to as ‘net present social value’.

Qualitative risk/benefits are risks/benefits that are not easily measurable in financial terms.

Quantitative risk/benefits are risks/benefits that are easily measurable in financial terms.

Risk is the possibility of a negative event arising that could adversely affect the project.

Sensitivity analysis is an analysis tool used in the cost benefit analysis of the Economic Case; it is a process of changing key variables and modelling their impact on the preferred options.

Shortlist refers to the shortlist of project options to be taken forward to detailed economic analysis in order to find a single preferred option.

SMART Objectives are objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound.

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 for the year 2030. They address global challenges, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice.

Value for money (VfM) is the optimum combination of whole-of-life costs and quality, or fitness for purpose, of a good or service, also taking into account risks, that meets the user’s requirements (though there are many different possible definitions).

Report criteria – Lines of Enquiry

Objective

Review of the Project to see if it is ready for service commencement

Timing

Following completion of construction and prior to commencement of service

#	Criteria	Definition
1	Strategic Strategic Need	<p>Assessment and recommendations related to: reconsideration of the Strategic Case and reconfirmation of the strategic need for the Project.</p> <p>Hints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes to the strategic context or any other factor since the Gateway 3 review and have these been reflected adequately in the Strategic case? • Have these affected the overall strategic need and aims of the Project?
2	Economic Economic Case and Benefits	<p>Assessment and recommendations related to: confirmation of the expected benefits and how they will be realised</p> <p>Hints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have any of the key economic assumptions used in the Full Business case been changed and if so, what effect has this had on Public Value? • How will the intended benefits be delivered and measured?
3	ESIA	<p>Assessment and recommendations related to: the Environmental and Social Impact Plan</p> <p>Hint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the planned environmental and social actions been integrated into the relevant management plans and delivery and are explicitly referenced in contract agreements? • Are required safeguards in place and working effectively?
4	Commercial Service arrangements	<p>Assessment and recommendations in respect of: the procurement competition and contract services</p> <p>Hints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has there been any challenge to the procurement competition? • Are handover and all other relevant arrangements in place for service commencement? • Are staff trained and ready for service commencement • Has commissioning been successfully completed? • Are the Key Performance Indicators for services agreed and are in the Contract, and are monitoring arrangements clear?
5	Financial Funding arrangements	<p>Assessment and Recommendations in respect of: the affordability of the project</p> <p>Hints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all necessary funding arrangements and financial controls and management in place? • Does the Project remain affordable? • Does the Authority understand what risks it is taking and are there contingencies in place to deal with them?
6	Management	<p>Assessment and recommendations in respect of: the management plans</p>

		<p>Hints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an agreed handover procedure and handover date • Have the various management plans identified in Gateway 3 been updated and are they ready for service commencement? • Does the Authority have adequate staff to perform its management duties under the plans • Have all relevant health and safety requirements and other compliance issues been satisfied? • Are there any outstanding stakeholder (including community) issues?
7	Compliance with 5 Case Methodology	<p>Assessment of degree of compliance of the Full Business Case with the overall business case regulatory requirements and recommendations as to how any areas of weakness or omission should be dealt with.</p> <p>Hint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this stage (service commencement) it is expected that the business case should be in a satisfactory position, however it is possible that particular issues may still need to be resolved and these should be recorded – together with a relevant timeline for completion.
8	Outstanding actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have all required actions left over from the previous Gateway Review been cleared • Are there any other issues which you have identified which would impact the suitability of the project to pass through Gateway 4 and proceed to service commencement?
9	Delivery confidence	<p>Is there any other matter which should be flagged which could have an effect on overall Delivery Confidence?</p>