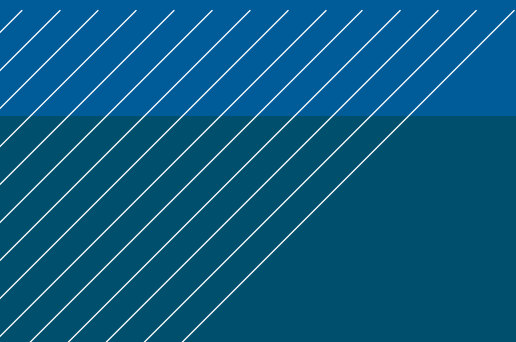


Service Logic and Investment Prioritisation

Evaluation Report for the 2009 SLIP Pilot



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1. Purpose of this Report

This report aims to document the lessons of the SLIP pilot (2009) so they can be used to improve future investment practices across the Departments and agencies of the Victorian Government.

2. About the SLIP Pilot

Since 2005 the Victorian Government's Investment Management standard has provided a set of practices built around a series of facilitated 'informed discussions' as a way of shaping and managing individual investments. These discussions questioned:

- Whether the investment was shaped to provide the maximum value to government
- Once funded, whether it was proceeding as planned, and
- Whether it delivered the expected benefits.

To date this approach has been used on more than 3,000 potential investments from governments across Australia and New Zealand. Details of the Investment Management Standard can be found at www.dtf.vic.gov.au/investmentmanagement.

What the original practices did not do was provide assistance to senior decision-makers whose job it was to rate the relative merits of candidate investments. In 2008 the 'informed discussion' format was applied to establish a prioritisation framework that could be used to select those investments that were the best response to the unmet needs of an organisation.

To test the evolving practice and determine the value that the new approach would provide to government, a pilot exercise was designed. This was known as SLIP Pilot 2009. This approach is now described as a set of practices which is available at www.dtf.vic.gov.au/investmentmanagement. The practices are:

- Enable decision-makers to prioritise competing investments,
- Evaluate the effectiveness of a program of investments, and
- Create policy that best responds to major challenges)

The scope of this and the invitation to participate is at Appendix 1. All Departments of the Victoria Government were invited to participate.

2.1 Participants

Five Departments elected to participate. However, the way it was to be applied varied as follows:

Department	Application
Department 1	Whole of Department
Department 2	Whole of Department
Department 3	Whole of Department
Department 4	Geographical Region
Department 5	Program of investments

2.2 Conduct

The approach taken by each participating Department is described in the relevant Appendices.

In summary:

- The Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) worked with each Department to provide guidance on the method and to facilitate each of the workshops/discussions. In total, nine workshops were held as part of the Pilot.
- Department 1 and Department 2 made the most use of the approach by engaging the key decision-makers, agreeing to the future service needs and the prioritisation criteria, and applying it to candidate investments
- The approach was not applied to the same degree in the other cases. The reasons for this are addressed in the Appendices.

3. Evaluation method

The evaluation format was developed prior to the pilot. The method was that, following the completion of the pilot, the executive who led the participation of each Department (known as the 'Investor') would be interviewed and asked for feedback in two parts:

- Part 1 requested responses to a set of open questions aimed at identifying what they had hoped to achieve, what worked, what didn't, etc.
- Part 2 invited them to rate the impact the SLIP practices had made in a number of key areas when compared to their previous practices. This rating information was collected when the open questioning of Part 1 had concluded so as to avoid influencing their responses.

4. Experiences of the Participants

The completed responses of each of the Departments are in the Appendices of this report.

An analysis of the responses received in Part 1 identified the following themes:

Note: The points in bold broadly articulate the feedback comments provided.

4.1 What worked

Provision of a strategic foundation

- What was produced formed the basis of the Department's Service strategy
- As the central view of new investment needs, it has been cascading through the individual business plans within the Department
- It galvanised thinking underpinning the strategic umbrella for the region.

Funding success

- Were more successful in the % of bids that went through to stage 2 of the budget consideration.

Enabling the merit of individual investments to be compared

- Allowed analysis of all investment proposals to determine their relative merit.

Avoidance of wasted resources

- Total value of 'future bids file' was reduced by over half
- The list of proposals in the budget consideration is now much more focussed
- For the time, cost and effort involved, there was no better way to achieve what was done.

Breaking down the silos

- Allowed executives to see across boundaries
- Successfully focussed the different divisions on the needs of the whole department and establishing a criteria for prioritisation.

4.2 What didn't work

Timing of exercise

- Timing was not good (would have been better in June / July)
- There was already broad agreement to strategy - it should have been done much earlier.

Scope

- Some people didn't feel it captured everything....wanted to lift it to a higher level.

New language

- Some people didn't like the language (eg. 'Problem' instead of 'Driver').

4.3 Comparison to previous practices

The Investors were asked: “Compared to previous practices, to what degree do you think the Service Logic and Investment Prioritisation approach has impacted the following?”

Four of the five participating Departments provided responses to the following questionnaire - their individual responses are in the Appendices. What follows is an averaging of the four responses received:

Much worse	Worse	No Change	Better	Much better
-2	-1	0	+1	+2

Engagement

Senior executives and decision makers were engaged				*	
Key stakeholders are ‘on the same page’					*

Service need

Service need is well articulated					*
Decision makers / senior executives have agreed the service need exists				*	
Potential investments are prioritised on the basis of the service need					*

Interventions

A sound strategic response to the service need was identified and agreed					*
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Benefits

Benefits that any investment will be required to deliver are understood and articulated					*
The benefit that each individual investment is expected to deliver is understood and can be tracked					*

Solutions

The solutions are shaped to respond to Government priorities					*
The solutions are a balanced response to the identified interventions					*
All changes needed to deliver the expected benefits have been identified				*	
Solutions have leveraged existing or planned infrastructure					*

Business Cases

Reduction in the number and cost of business cases				*	
Business cases are more strategic					*

Evaluation

Basis has been provided for future program evaluation					*
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Time / Cost Efficiency

Efficiency of shaping opinions & investments					*
--	--	--	--	--	---

These responses indicate that:

1. The practices of SLIP generally provided improvement across the range of areas being canvassed.
2. The most significant improvements were:
 - Getting key stakeholders on the same page
 - Articulating the service need to better respond to the priorities of Government
 - Providing a better basis for future program evaluation
 - Efficiency of shaping opinions and investments.
3. The only exception was that of the reduction in the number of business cases
 - Based on comments received and the extent to which the approach was used it is likely that, at the time of responding, this was not yet apparent.

4.4 Some wisdom

When asked for some wisdom, lessons or observations the following themes and responses were provided:

Engagement of senior executives and the right people

- Raise the seniority and breadth of participants
- 'Senior folk' need to be educated in its use
- Get the right people in the room
- It needs to be developed 'in confidence' to obtain the confidence of senior stakeholders.

Use of SLIP in the Victorian Government budget processes

- We should have used the Service Logic as an engagement tool with central agencies
- DTF should ask departments for the prioritisation criteria developed in this process
- DTF should have the same mechanism for both assets and non-assets
- The Investment Management Standard should have ownership across central agencies. Presently many areas either don't understand it or are not committed to it
- The SLIP approach should be used to guide early discussions both within and across individual portfolio areas to develop investment ideas and shape multi-year investment priorities.

Timing

- Use it early in the process of selecting and shaping new investments.

5. Findings

1. The practices of SLIP provide substantial benefits over previous practices

A broad range of key benefits were identified. The most significant was the ability to bring the major stakeholders and decision-makers together to articulate future service needs and agree to the best strategic responses. This then enabled decision-makers to identify and progress those investments that would best respond to priority service needs and to terminate those that were no longer relevant.

Department 1 was able to reduce the size of their 'future bids file' by more than half and establish a more focussed list for budget consideration.

2. The practices of SLIP are low cost and require short turnaround

The three facilitated discussions that establish the criteria for prioritising investments require a total of 6 hours of executive/decision-maker time, usually over a period of one month. The actual prioritisation workshop would normally take another 2 or 4 hours of decision-maker time.

The cost of an Accredited Facilitator to conduct the full range of workshops discussions is estimated at \$7,000.

3. Failure to involve senior decision-makers limits the value of the SLIP practices

The primary reason that Departments discontinued their involvement in the Pilot or were unable to use it to full advantage was the failure to engage the relevant senior executives or key decision-makers.

6. More Information

For more information, please go to www.dtf.vic.gov.au/investmentmanagement or email investmentmanagement@dtf.vic.gov.au

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1: Scope of the SLIP Pilot

Service Logic and Investment Prioritisation Pilot (2009)

BACKGROUND

The Opportunity

This initiative aims to apply the practices and experiences of the Investment management standard to existing future bids data so departments can obtain better information to support their strategic planning and investment decision-making.

The way we currently work

At present many processes and approaches are used across the Victorian government to identify the service needs of departments, shape potential investments and support investment decision-making.

The implementation and usefulness of these approaches varies and the following problems still persist:

- inadequate information for decision-makers to understand context and make good investment decisions with confidence
- excessive numbers of business cases are developed compared to available budget, and the quality of business cases is often poor, and
- insufficient focus is placed on the benefits that investments will ultimately deliver to Government.

The Victorian Government's future bids process was endorsed by Government as a way of providing the pipeline of potential asset investments being developed by departments on behalf of Ministers - this would then be used to provide an input to strategic planning and better inform budget decision-making. Working as it was intended, it offers valuable support to people in departments and in medium and longer-term budget development and the annual budget process.

To date this has not worked as expected as the information collected does not provide immediate value to analysts, strategists and decision makers. To address this problem, as part of the 2009-10 budget cycle it was recommended future bids entries be accompanied by Investment Logic Maps / Investment Concept Briefs to clarify the logic underpinning the potential investment.

Making the right investments....a case study of what is possible

Since 2006, as the first step in their annual budget process, a Victorian Government agency has developed an Investment Logic Map for each potential investment. Key decision-makers then use these to understand the thinking behind each individual proposal and to assess their merits relative to competing proposals. This allowed synergies to be identified and the selection of the set of investments that strategically meet the needs of the agency at that time. The investments short-listed in this process then proceed to business case.

The approach had a substantial impact at the agency during the 2009-10 budget round:

- The number of business cases developed reduced from the previous norm of 65 to 16. This represented 4,000 person-days less resources being spent annually developing unnecessary business cases (A KPMG study conclusion)
- The KPMG study noted the following additional benefits:
 - quality of the funding submissions improved
 - quality of the business cases improved and are more strategic
 - Increased buy-in from the Investor (that senior executive responsible for the investment)
 - The approach efficiently facilitated difficult questions being addressed early in process
 - The agency experienced greater success in obtaining funding.

THE PROPOSED INITIATIVE

DTF is now seeking to leverage the experience of the agency across government to further improve implementation of the future bids by cooperatively revisiting the present version of the future bids with interested departments. DTF is inviting interested Departments to participate.

Approach

The initiative will focus on individual departments and involve the following 4 steps:

Step 1: Develop a Service Logic and Investment Prioritisation framework (SLIP)

In two 2-hour structured workshops with the best people identify:

- The new service needs that the organisation must address over the next decade
- The best strategic responses to these needs
- Benefits that any investment will be required to deliver.

The approach taken is defined in the SLIP Guideline <attached>.

Step 2: Sort future bids entries in the medium-term future bids time slot (period 0 - 5 years) against the Service Logic

A rudimentary sorting of existing future bids entries to identify those of highest priority in their ability to respond to the framework developed in Step 1.

Step 3: Develop (or Review) Investment Logic Maps for highest priority investments

For each entry selected in Step 2, conduct a 2-hour structured and facilitated workshop with the 'Investor, and those who best understand the investment to produce an Investment Logic Map.

Step 4: Identify set of investments best meeting service needs

Key decision-makers consider the logic of each of the proposals addressed in Step 3 and identify synergies. Based on service need and using the approach described in the SLIP potential investments will be prioritised.

Timing

This initiative will run from June to September, 2009

Commitment

The commitment required of Departments participating will be:

1. Senior decision-makers participate in 4 x 2 hour sessions over the period (Steps 1, 2 and 4 above)

2. Appropriate investors and key people participate in 2-hour Problem Definition workshops for each future bids entry rated as high priority in previous point (maybe 20?)
3. Fund an accredited facilitator for the ILM workshops (step 3).

Meeting to discuss further

A meeting will be held with any interested Departments to better understand the initiative so individual Departments can decide their interest in participating. It is preferred that three (3) Departments participate as this would provide a representative sample and lessons that others can use.

The information meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Wednesday June 17, 2009
Time: 1.00 to 2.00pm
Venue: Treasury Theatre, Treasury Place, East Melbourne

7.2 Appendix 2: Department 1

Department	Department 1
Key Person (Investor)	
How was it applied	To identify and prioritise the new service needs that Department 1 would be required to consider over the next decade.
What did you hope to achieve	Introduction of a better investment decision-making discipline in the form of parameters and guidance that would identify future funding priorities Obtain buy-in from the department's executives to identify future investment needs and agree to the relative departmental priorities Establish a 'future bids folder'
What was developed	Two workshops were held with director level representatives of each of the program areas. This established the criteria to be used to prioritise emerging service needs. A third workshop was held with the Executive Directors to validate the prioritisation criteria.
How was it used	Enabled us to identify the reactions most critical to the needs of the department It provided a tool that allowed an analysis of the list of investment proposals to determine if they were priorities - demonstrating their comparative merit Ultimately it allowed us to create a 'future bids folder' - key investment areas going forward It established the priority investments that should go forward as part of the 2010/11 Budget process The list of proposals in years 0 - 2 of the future bids is now much more focussed compared to previously (which was a more of a wish list)
What worked	Everything worked well - but initially took some time to get buy-in. It allowed executives to see across boundaries The total value of proposals in the 'future bids file' was reduced by over half. We were much more successful in the % of our Budget-1 bids that went through to Budget-2.
What didn't	Nothing....but we probably should have used it as an engagement tool with central agencies
Would you use it again	Yes. It gave us the ability to prioritise investments and justify our prioritisation.
Any additional wisdom, observations or suggestions?	The number of business cases we develop hasn't reduced this year as we have been far more successful in the number of bids accepted as part of the annual budget process. Some suggestions for DTF: As part of Budget 1 guidance, DTF should ask departments for the prioritisation criteria developed in this process DTF should have the same mechanism for both assets and non-assets
The Investor Survey that compared this experience to previous practices is attached	

INVESTOR SURVEY DEPARTMENT 1

Compared to previous practices, to what degree do you think the Service Logic and Investment Prioritisation approach has impacted the following:

Much worse	Worse	No Change	Better	Much better
-2	-1	0	+1	+2

Engagement

Senior executives and decision makers were engaged				✓	
Key stakeholders are 'on the same page'				✓	

Service need

Service need is well articulated				✓	
Decision makers / senior executives have agreed the service need exists				✓	
Potential investments are prioritised on the basis of the service need				✓	

Interventions

A sound strategic response to the service need was identified and agreed				✓	
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Benefits

Benefits that any investment will be required to deliver is understood and articulated				✓	
The benefit that each individual investment is expected to deliver is understood and can be tracked				✓	

Solutions

The solutions are shaped to respond to Government priorities					✓
The solutions are a balanced response to the identified interventions					✓
All changes needed to deliver the expected benefits have been identified					✓
Solutions have leveraged existing or planned infrastructure				✓	

Business Cases

Reduction in the number and cost of business cases			✓		
Business cases are more strategic			✓		

Evaluation

Basis has been provided for future program evaluation				✓	
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Time / cost efficiency

Efficiency of shaping opinions & investments				✓	
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Any additional comments (What was good or bad? What will improve it? Quotable quotes?)

The framework is an efficient tool to focus the minds of executives on the key priorities of the department. If a proposed initiative lies outside the Service Logic Map parameters then we will immediately ask ourselves the question – why are we planning to do it? However, there has not yet been adequate lead time to observe the impact on the number of business cases but we feel confident that this will reduce as proposed initiatives that do not fit within the framework are no longer pursued. The integration with the Investment Logic Map and the Budget process makes it a seamless framework.

7.3 Appendix 3: Department 2

Department	Department 2
Key Person (Investor)	
To what was it applied	The future service needs across entire Department Department 2
What did you hope to achieve	As the responsibilities of Department 2 are so broad, we saw SLIP as a way of focussing the organisation on the key areas requiring future investment and providing a broad understanding across the divisions of what were the key priorities.
What was developed	In two 2-hour facilitated discussions with executive level representatives of each of the Divisions the Service Logic was developed and the KPIs and Public Value Messages that would be used to prioritise candidate investments were defined.
How was it used	It was tabled with the Departmental executive who thought it was useful but wanted to develop it further when the current planning round had been completed. The content within it was used as the basis for the Departmental Service Strategy. As it is the centralised view of new investment needs, it has been cascading through the individual business plans within the Department.
What worked	It was successful in focussing the different divisions on the needs of the whole department and establishing criteria for prioritisation.
What didn't work	Some people struggled with language (esp. 'Problem') Some didn't feel it captured everything, wanting to lift it up to a higher level.overall though, everyone was generally happy with it.
Would you use it again	Yes, as the basis for the department's Service Strategy.
Any additional wisdom, observations or suggestions?	
The Investor Survey that compared this experience to previous practices is attached	

INVESTOR SURVEY DEPARTMENT 2

Compared to previous practices, to what degree do you think the Service Logic and Investment Prioritisation approach has impacted the following:

Much worse	Worse	No Change	Better	Much better
-2	-1	0	+1	+2

Engagement

Senior executives and decision makers were engaged				✓	
Key stakeholders are 'on the same page'					✓

Service need

Service need is well articulated					✓
Decision makers / senior executives have agreed the service need exists				✓	
Potential investments are prioritised on the basis of the service need				✓	

Interventions

A sound strategic response to the service need was identified and agreed				✓	
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Benefits

Benefits that any investment will be required to deliver is understood and articulated				✓	
The benefit that each individual investment is expected to deliver is understood and can be tracked					✓

Solutions

The solutions are shaped to respond to Government priorities					✓
The solutions are a balanced response to the identified interventions				✓	
All changes needed to deliver the expected benefits have been identified				✓	
Solutions have leveraged existing or planned infrastructure				✓	

Business Cases

Reduction in the number and cost of business cases			✓		
Business cases are more strategic					✓

Evaluation

Basis has been provided for future program evaluation					✓
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Time / Cost Efficiency

Efficiency of shaping opinions & investments					✓
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Any additional comments

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7.4 Appendix 4: Department 3

Department	Department 3
Key Person (Investor)	
To what was it applied	Future service needs across entire department
What did you hope to achieve	Supporting strategic priorities across different portfolios requires Department 3 to continue to develop a framework for priority setting that can both balance and identify opportunities to integrate a diverse set of investment priorities. Being an experienced user of Investment Logic Maps, Department 3 saw the Service Logic approach as a way to enable the dialog between all Divisions that would identify future service needs, which could inform its corporate planning processes and test a different approach to investment prioritisation.
What was developed	A single 2-hour workshop was held with Group Manager level people representing each Division. This established Service Logic for Department 3 over the next 10 year period - the priority service needs, the preferred strategic response to these and the benefits that would be sought.
How was it used	The Service Logic that was developed and the discussion that it involved was later translated into the draft Corporate Plan for Department 3, and into the Department 3 Budget framework.
What worked	The workshop and discussion was an effective way of getting dialog across the Divisions and agreeing to shared, high level priorities.
What didn't work	There was difficulty obtaining participation at the workshop from the high-level executives representing each Division.
Would you use it again	The process has been helpful in informing Department 3 corporate objectives and completing the second workshop may be helpful early on in a future budget process to encourage alignment of investments to the corporate plan. However, to do this we would need to do some work internally to assist Senior Leaders to understand the value.
Any additional wisdom, observations or suggestions?	A Service Logic approach would be best used to help guide early discussions within and across individual portfolio areas in the development of investment ideas and in shaping multi-year investment priorities. It is less clear that the Service Logic could be used by Department 3 as a gateway for potential investments to be submitted (or not) at Stage 1 of the Budget process.
The Investor Survey that compared this experience to previous practices is attached	

INVESTOR SURVEY DEPARTMENT 3

Compared to previous practices, to what degree do you think the Service Logic and Investment Prioritisation approach has impacted the following:

Much worse	Worse	No Change	Better	Much better
-2	-1	0	+1	+2

Engagement

Senior executives and decision makers were engaged			✓		
Key stakeholders are 'on the same page'				✓	

Service need

Service need is well articulated				✓	
Decision makers / senior executives have agreed the service need exists			✓		
Potential investments are prioritised on the basis of the service need				✓	

Interventions

A sound strategic response to the service need was identified and agreed				✓	
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Benefits

Benefits that any investment will be required to deliver is understood and articulated				✓	
The benefit that each individual investment is expected to deliver is understood and can be tracked			✓		

Solutions

The solutions are shaped to respond to Government priorities				✓	
The solutions are a balanced response to the identified interventions				✓	
All changes needed to deliver the expected benefits have been identified			✓		
Solutions have leveraged existing or planned infrastructure				✓	

Business Cases

Reduction in the number and cost of business cases			✓		
Business cases are more strategic				✓	

Evaluation

Basis has been provided for future program evaluation				✓	
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Time / Cost Efficiency

Efficiency of shaping opinions & investments				✓	
--	--	--	--	---	--

Any additional comments

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7.5 Appendix 5: Department 4

Department	Department 4
Key Person (Investor)	
To what was it applied	Geographical Region
What did you hope to achieve	Although ample data existed, being a very complex and layered system, it was difficult to understand and agree what high level principles and service parameters should guide investment. This information was needed to support a corridor plan. Establish a criteria for investment prioritisation that is based on a service perspective rather than a provider perspective. Enable a dialog and obtain a level of agreement to the service needs and investment parameters from the range of key players in the Department.
What was developed	Two workshops were held with nominated managers and executives having knowledge, responsibility or roles in strategising high-level service design or investment. . These workshops identified the future service needs for Department 4 and established the criteria that could be used to prioritise potential investments.
How was it used	It galvanised thinking that underpinned the development of the 'strategic umbrella' for the region. It helped to remove some of the silo thinking It obtained some good buy-in / agreement to the service needs of the corridor.
What worked	For the time, cost and effort there was no better way to achieve what we were seeking to do. It now needs to be revisited to get the active involvement of the key decision-makers.
What didn't work	The timing of this was not good. It was completed in August which was late in the planning cycle (better June / July).
Would you use it again	Yes. Next is to build/revisit and raise/broaden (and seniority) of participants to further galvanise, tighten and refine logic in parallel with advancing the development of corridor high level principles and service parameters.
Any additional wisdom, observations or suggestions?	The pilot should continue. It would be helpful if the considerable DTF (process) expertise continues to be contributed. Output/results (content) needs to be kept 'in-confidence' by DTF to ensure 'brand' integrity and to build/retain the confidence of most senior participants. in the technique. DTF could make the different & levels of benefits available from the different logic tools more easily understood by the very senior folk.
The Investor Survey that compared this experience to previous practices is attached	

INVESTOR SURVEY DEPARTMENT 4

Compared to previous practices, to what degree do you think the Service Logic and Investment Prioritisation approach has impacted the following:

Much worse	Worse	No Change	Better	Much better
-2	-1	0	+1	+2

Engagement

Senior executives and decision makers were engaged				✓	
Key stakeholders are 'on the same page'				✓	

Service need

Service need is well articulated				✓	
Decision makers / senior executives have agreed the service need exists				✓	
Potential investments are prioritised on the basis of the service need				✓	

Interventions

A sound strategic response to the service need was identified and agreed				✓	
--	--	--	--	---	--

Benefits

Benefits that any investment will be required to deliver is understood and articulated				✓	
The benefit that each individual investment is expected to deliver is understood and can be tracked				✓	

Solutions

The solutions are shaped to respond to Government priorities			✓		
The solutions are a balanced response to the identified interventions			✓		
All changes needed to deliver the expected benefits have been identified			✓		
Solutions have leveraged existing or planned infrastructure				✓	

Business Cases

Reduction in the number and cost of business cases			✓		
Business cases are more strategic			✓		

Evaluation

Basis has been provided for future program evaluation				✓	
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Time / Cost Efficiency

Efficiency of shaping opinions & investments				✓	
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Any additional comments

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7.6 Appendix 6: Department 5

Department	Department 5
Key Person (Investor)	
To what was it applied	Program of investments
What did you hope to achieve	To establish a clear basis against which to judge the relative value, and prioritise, future investments.
What was developed	One 2-hour workshop was held with the senior executives and strategists from Department 5 who were working to develop the program strategy
How was it used	It wasn't used. There was already broad agreement as to the content of the program strategy statement so, in retrospect this was superfluous. Also, in parallel with this exercise an alternative approach was underway with the same objective.
What worked	
What didn't work	
Would you use it again	Yes. But it needs to be done early.
Any additional wisdom, observations or suggestions?	Do it early. Get the right people in the room.
<i>Note: An Investor Survey was NOT completed in this instance</i>	

