

Facilitating a SOLUTION Definition Workshop

Tips, Traps and Templates

Contents

1.	PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT	2
2.	RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FACILITATOR	3
3.	BEFORE THE WORKSHOP	4
4.	AT THE WORKSHOP	5
4.1.	General Tips	5
4.2.	Setting the workshop rules	5
4.3.	Outlining the problem	5
4.4.	Proposing a solution	5
4.5.	Re-shaping the solution	6
4.6.	Scope agreed solution	6
4.7.	Concluding the workshop	7
5.	AFTER THE WORKSHOP	8
6.	DESIGN GUIDELINES – Investment Concept Brief	9
7.	Templates	10
8.	Appendix:	11
8.1.	Appendix 1: Sample email - Before the Solution Definition Workshop	11
8.2.	Appendix 2: Sample email - After the Solution Definition workshop	12
8.3.	Appendix 3: Investment Concept Brief – Fictional	13
8.4.	Appendix 4: Quality Assessment Form - Investment Logic Map	15

1. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is written to provide facilitators with practical tips and guidance to help them successfully facilitate a Solution Definition workshop. It also contains links to the templates that support the outcomes of the workshop.

What is contained in this document assumes you have read and understood the Investment Management standard and its associated guidelines. It also assumes you are skilled in the facilitation of Problem Definition workshops. This document is also used in, and closely coupled with, the Accredited Facilitator training course. Further detail on the Accredited Facilitator training course can be found at www.dtf.vic.gov.au/investmentmanagement.

2. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FACILITATOR

Workshops of the Investment Management standard are merely structured ‘intelligent discussions’ between those people who have the most knowledge of the problem, benefits or solution. It is the responsibility of the Facilitator to make this discussion a success. The output of the Solution Definition Workshop discussion is to complete the investment story by defining the ‘Solution’ the Investment Logic Map and producing an Investment Concept Brief. Good facilitation will challenge the proposed solution and may improve it by:

- introducing innovation
- identifying changes not previously identified that will be required to deliver the expected benefits, or
- defining a solution that will deliver additional or higher value benefits.

To be successful, the facilitator must:

- Make sure the right people will be attending the workshop and that 2 hours has been allocated for the discussion
- Conduct the workshop according to the guidance provided in this document, and
- Take action to finalise the discussion and the Investment Concept Brief in the 48 hours following the workshop.

The quality of the Investment Concept Brief you produce will be assessed using the Quality Assessment Form - Investment Concept Brief (see Appendix).

In developing the investment concept brief you will have provided the Investor with sufficient information to decide whether the investment is worth further consideration.

3. BEFORE THE WORKSHOP

Preparation falls into three categories:

PEOPLE

The quality of the solution developed will only be as good as the knowledge of the participants. It is therefore important to ensure that the participants are well selected. The roles of each person are defined in the Solution Definition Guideline that can be found at www.dtf.vic.gov.au/investmentmanagement. The ideal number of active participants at this workshop is around 5 but the nature of the investment may dictate that this is anything up to 12.

Investor

- This person will have attended the previous workshops that focussed on this investment. It is critical that they attend this workshop. If they have deputised someone else on their behalf they are unlikely to ever take ownership of the results.

Solutions Architect

- This person will play a key role and must be prepared. Before the workshop make sure they understand their role and ask that they provide you with the solution they plan to table. Ask them to also identify how they arrived at that particular option - what options were considered and why their proposed solution reacted best to the identified interventions and would produce the most benefit.

Strategist, Innovator and Implementer

- Provide the Investor with the Solution Definition Guideline and ask that they nominate the people and the roles they will play to help shape the solution
- Have the investor send an email outlining the purpose of the workshop to the participants. A suggested template for this email can be found in the appendix.
- It is preferable that these (particularly the Innovator and Implementer) are external to this investment and preferably to the organisation so they can be more objective.

KEY DOCUMENTS

Whereas no preparation was required for the Problem Definition workshop, there are two pieces necessary for this workshop:

Investment Logic Map

- This should have assessed as satisfactory using the Quality Assessment Form - Investment Logic Map. If this is not the case then it should be rectified by the Investor before proceeding. If it has not been well considered and solution upon which it is based will be weak.

Proposed 'likely best solution'

- Developed by the Solution Architect as discussed above. This should list the options considered. If it is non-existent or not well considered the chances of a good outcome are reduced.

FACILITY

Ensure a room with an (electronic) whiteboard exists that can comfortably accommodate the number of people for two hours.

4. AT THE WORKSHOP

4.1. General Tips

- Before the workshop commences, neatly draw the ILM of on the whiteboard and include the proposed solution. The Problem, Interventions and Benefits can be relatively small (just there to remind them of the context). The proposed solution should be clear and central so you are able to use the right half of the board for working
- Be aware of the 2 hour time limit and make sure you don't fall behind the set agenda as this will diminish the quality of the Investment Concept Brief that is developed in the final 30 mins.

4.2. Setting the workshop rules

Set the context of the workshop, the objective of the workshop, the roles of each participant, the approach that will be taken, the time criteria and your role. These are set out in the Solution Definition Guideline. Unless everyone is clear about their roles time will be lost as the discussion proceeds. This is particularly important where the number of people is large.

Make it clear that the workshop will be finished in 2 hours....there is no 121st minute.

4.3. Outlining the problem

Hand out copies of the Investment Logic Map as it stands after the previous workshops and ask the Investor to talk people through this so they understand the problem that need to be solved, the interventions and the benefits (with KPIs) than need to be delivered by any investment.

Encourage discussion so that, at the conclusion of 15 mins, everybody will share an understanding of the need. There will be people at this session who have not previously been involved in the definition of the problem, interventions and benefits. They need to fully understand these and may want to debate them and change them. As a facilitator you need to be able to accept new critical comment that may result in minor change but not allow the workshop to become a complete review of the logic.

4.4. Proposing a solution

Ask the Solution Architect to briefly explain the high level options that were considered as a response to the problem, consistent with the interventions. Manage any discussion that results from this explanation with a view to obtaining consensus to the option that was selected.

Consistent with the proposed option ask the Solutions Architect to describe the detail of the solution. The Solutions Architect should use the drawing on the whiteboard to support this explanation.

4.5. Re-shaping the solution

Direct open discussion aimed at ensuring the participants have fully understood the proposed solution. The discussion that follows will encourage the Strategist, Innovator and Implementer to question and suggest how the solution can be reshaped to improve the viewpoint they are representing. The whiteboard depiction of the solution should be changed as changes are identified and agreed.

At the conclusion of this exercise, in turn, ask the Strategist, the Innovator and the Implementer if, from their respective viewpoints, the proposed solution can be improved.

The **Strategist** - Does it align with the organisation's policies, strategies and architectures?

The **Innovator** - Is it innovative in the way it seeks to solve the business need?

The **Implementer** - Is it sound and feasible from an implementation perspective?

Make any agreed changes on the whiteboard. Using this approach an agreed 'best likely solution' will be depicted.

4.6. Scope agreed solution

With the agreed most likely best solution depicted on the whiteboard, using the knowledge of the participants, it is now necessary to scope the solution in the form of an Investment Concept Brief. At this point it may be useful to hand out an example of a completed ICB.

The following questioning can be used to extract this detail:

- *Dis-benefits*: Most business cases only focus on the upsides. What are the downsides that 'the Premier' should be advised about?
- *Risks*: Considering the solution as a whole, why won't it work? Note the potential risks on the whiteboard and then ask that they quantify each (by Criticality and Likelihood). Then ask that they rank them in order of importance (assuming they can only note 2 or 3).
- *Critical dependencies*: Are there assumptions being made that, if they didn't occur, would alter the need for this investment in some way?
- *Timeframes*: What are the timeframes of 3 or 4 key events that will demonstrate progress towards delivering the benefits? These should be drawn from an analysis of the individual solution boxes that comprise the solution.
- *Costs*: Ask participants to put a cost on each box of the solution. In all cases, this should be a range. Note these costs against each box. Add the costs to create the high/low range to be used in the Investment Concept Brief.
- *Policy alignments*: Ask that they nominate the primary policy of government to which this investment is responding.
- *Context*: In a sentence, and on the basis of the combined knowledge, what is the compelling reason that this investment should be considered at this time?

4.7. Concluding the workshop

Advise them that within 24 hours (first thing in morning?) they will be provided with ICB version 0.1. This will contain observations of the quality of the ICB and any suggestions for improvement. They will be asked to provide suggested changes within 24 hours. Within a further 24 hours you will distribute ICB Version 1.0

5. AFTER THE WORKSHOP

The Problem Definition workshop is used to identify and scope the type of solution that is likely to be required to respond to the business need and produce the benefits that are sought. What happens in the following 48 hours is just the finalisation of the workshop discussion. This finalisation should be decisive and only include those people who participated in the workshop. After the first version has been finalised it is then able to be provided to anyone to make whatever comments they wish.

Within 24 hours of the workshop:

- Update the existing ILM to reflect any agreed changes to the problem, interventions or benefits and to depict the agreed solution
- Download the current version of the ICB format from the investment management website and populate it with the data collected at the workshop. Test that it meets the tests of the Quality Assessment Form - Investment Concept Brief (Appendix).
- Make any observations draft ICB and suggest where its strengths and weaknesses are and how it might be improved
- Send an email with v0.1 of the ICB and your observations directly to each of the participants at the workshop avoiding, if possible, channelled it through a single. In the email ask that participants advise you (and copy to all other participants) any suggested changes within 24 hours and that you will make changes and provide them with v1.0 within 24 hours of that time. All of this reinforces the 'what do we think today' principle that underpins this approach. A sample email format is attached in the Appendix.

Within 48 hours of the workshop:

- Consider the feedback received to Version 0.1 of the ICB and amend as is necessary - if no feedback has been received finalise the ICB as you think best.
- Send an email to all participants with Version 1.0 of the ICB. Highlight that this has not just been an exercise in agreeing to the investment logic at one point in time (usually pre-funding) but is an enduring document that should be changed to reflect a changing story throughout the investment lifecycle. It should be the primary reference document at each meeting of the Governance body and a current copy should be available to all stakeholders and anyone working to implement the investment.

6. DESIGN GUIDELINES – Investment Concept Brief

Any of these rules can be broken but in doing so be aware of the impact it will have on the storytelling. These have been developed to assist facilitators develop high quality Investment Concept Brief. Any of these rules can be broken if it makes sense but each breach will reduce the impact of the ICB.

Item	Practice	Reason
Template	Always use the current ICB template. Do not alter the template and stick to the one page format. Current templates can be found at www.dtf.vic.gov.au/investmentmanagement .	Formats continue to improve to make them more useful as communication tools and contain better information.
Use of words	Be brief, clear and specific in your statements	It forces you to be precise in the words you chose to convey your message. It also maintains clarity and consistency when reading the ICB.
Use of ranges	Express Timeframes and Costs in ranges from lowest to highest	Forces realistic estimates to be made
Completing the Control Fields	Ensuring that the document control fields have been completed in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment Name • Department/Agency/Organisation name • Investor Name and • Facilitator Name 	Provides legitimacy and accountability to the investment

7. Templates

The templates that have been developed to support the Solution Definition Workshops are available for download at www.dtf.vic.gov.au/investmentmanagement:

- Investment Concept Brief
- Quality Assessment Form – Investment Concept Brief:

8. Appendix:

8.1. Appendix 1: Sample email - Before the Solution Definition Workshop

<Greeting>

You may (or may not) be aware of the business need we have in relation to < > and the thinking we have been doing to shape an investment that will respond to that need. Consistent with the Victorian Government's Investment Management standard we have already held Problem Definition and Benefit Definition workshops that have formed the basis of any investment.

Consistent with this approach we will now hold a two-hour Solution Definition workshop with the aim of defining and scoping the most likely best solution to our identified problem. The guideline for this workshop is attached. We would like you to in this workshop in the capacity as a the <Strategist / Innovator / Implementer>. No preparation will be required as the format of the workshop will allow us to all understand the problem, consider a proposed solution to the problem and shape it so it can provide the best result.

The workshop will be held as follows:

Date:

Time:

Venue:

The end result of this exercise will be an Investment Concept Brief <example>.

Please let me know if you are able to attend.

If you would like to read more about the benefits and practices of this approach you should refer to www.dfvic.gov.au/investmentmanagement.

<sign off>

8.2. Appendix 2: Sample email - After the Solution Definition workshop

<Greeting>

Thanks for your participation at yesterday's Solution Definition workshop for <investment name>. I have attached Version 0.1 of the Investment Concept Brief that we produced and ask that you provide me with any suggested amendments by CoB today. I will then make any necessary changes and have version 1.0 to you by CoB the following day.

...my observations

<any observations on the investment itself or the process and any suggestions that might improve the case for the investment or the strength of the investment concept brief>

...about Investment Concept Briefs

An Investment Concept Brief provides any interested party with a clear understanding the logic that underpins a potential investment. It should be written in plain English so that anyone can understand it and make a judgement as to its worth.

The creation of an Investment Concept Brief is not just an exercise in agreeing to the investment logic at one point in time (usually pre-funding). It is an enduring document that should be changed to reflect a changing story throughout the investment lifecycle. It should be the primary reference document at each meeting of the Governance body and a current copy should be available to all stakeholders and anyone working to implement the investment.

<sign off>

8.3. Appendix 3: Investment Concept Brief – Fictional

Public Transport Initiative (Fictional)

Department of Transport Investment Concept Brief

Context What is the compelling reason this investment should be considered further?
Public transport is failing to meet current demand and will be further impeded by growth in patronage.

Benefits What benefits will this investment deliver to Government? Refer to Investment Logic Map on the reverse.

Dis-Benefits What negative impacts to government are likely to result from the identified solution?
Undertaking transport infrastructure projects may disrupt public transport services during delivery phases of projects. (short term)
Undertaking transport infrastructure projects may disrupt road traffic particularly when projects such as grade separations occur. (short term)

Risks What are the primary risks to the success of this investment?

Risk	Criticality (H/M/L)	Likelihood (H/M/L)
Inability to accurately forecast patronage growth	M	H
Incorrect identification of public transport needs	H	M
Shortage of technical skills and construction resources	H	H
Inefficient project co-ordination	M	H
Transport operators not working collaboratively	M	M

Critical Dependencies What external conditions are critical to the need for this investment?
Government's policy regarding congestion taxes/charges
Government policy regarding the environment.
Government targets regarding public transport usage.

Timeframe What are the expected timeframes for the key deliverables?

Description of deliverable/milestone	Time from funding (Months)
Identify current and future service requirements	6 months
Delivery of new rolling stock	1-2 years
Delivery of new infrastructure i.e track, stations	1-12 years
Improved reliability and efficiency of public transport system	1-12 years

Cost What are the likely costs of this investment?

Item (change or asset needed)	Cost (range)
New transport infrastructure	Approx \$9.5b
New rolling stock	Approx \$1b
New IT system	Approx \$20m
TOTAL	Approx \$10.5b

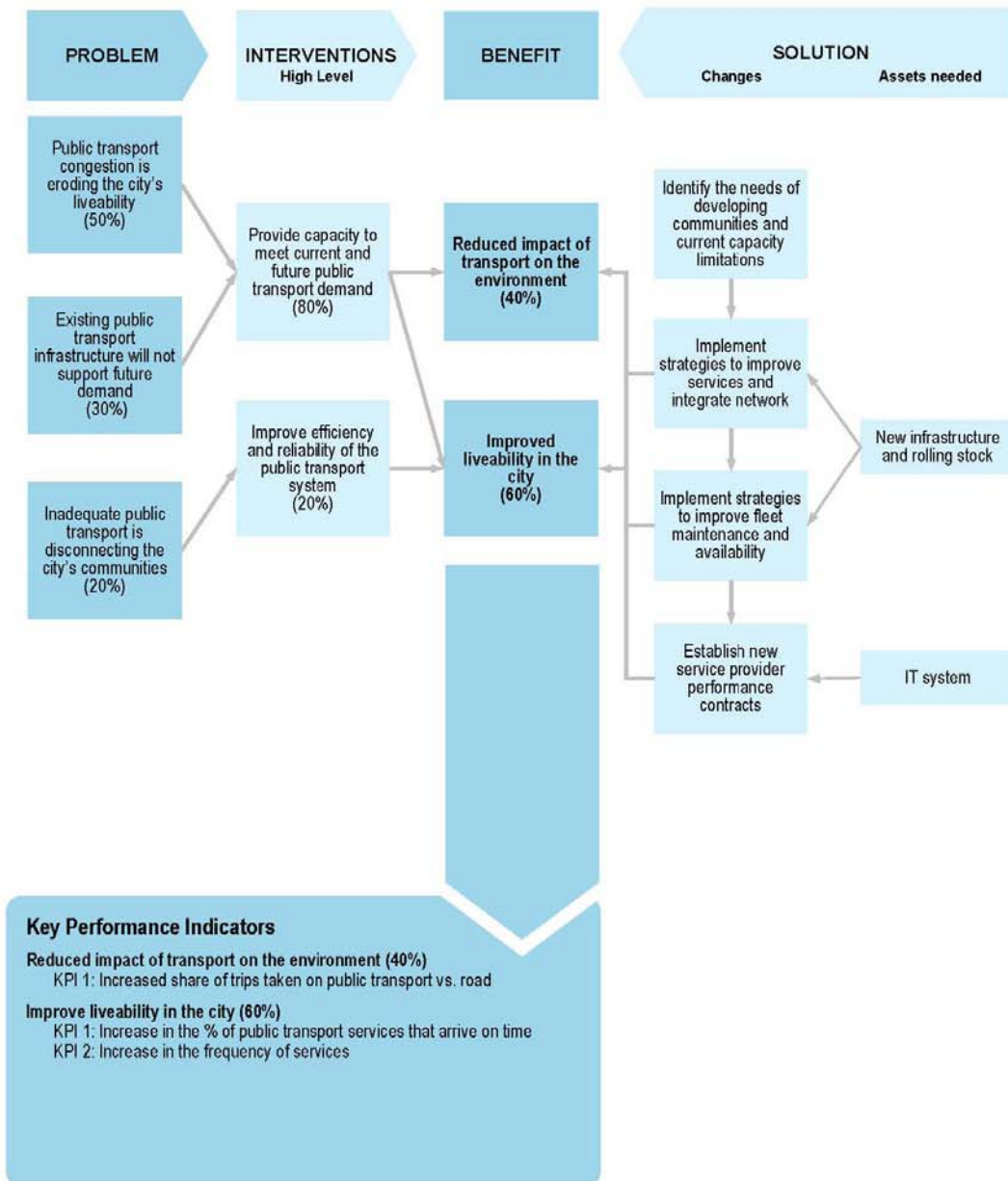
Policy Alignment What is the primary policy to which this investment will contribute?
Deliver and Sustain Future Public Transport Demand

Investor Who is the senior person who will ultimately be responsible for delivering the identified benefits?

Name	Position	Signature	Date

Public Transport Initiative (Fictional)

Department of Transport Investment Concept Brief



Template Version
3.5

Document Version
[Add]

Last Reviewed
[dd/mm/yyyy]

Investor
[Name]

Facilitator
[Name]

Page 2 of 2

8.4. Appendix 4: Quality Assessment Form - Investment Logic Map

The purpose of this form is to assist an Investor, a Facilitator, or anybody with an interest, to assess the quality of an Investment Concept Brief that has been developed under the Investment Management standard.

<p>Test 1: The ILM has probably changed as a result of the Solution Definition workshop. Based on the Quality Assessment Form for ILMs, is the ILM contained in this Concept Brief of a satisfactory quality?</p>	<p>Assessment: YES / NO / PARTIALLY</p>
<p>Any Comments</p>	
<p>Test 2: Is the Solution both understandable and logical to a lay-person and are the Changes a reasonable response to the Interventions that were identified?</p>	<p>Assessment: YES / NO / PARTIALLY</p>
<p>Any Comments</p>	
<p>Test 3: Is there an accurate translation between Solution that is depicted in the Investment Logic Map and the Solution that is assessed in the text of the Investment Concept Brief?</p>	<p>Assessment: YES / NO / PARTIALLY</p>
<p>Any Comments</p>	
<p>Test 4: Has required detail been provided under each of the headings of the Investment Concept Brief?</p>	<p>Assessment: YES / NO / PARTIALLY</p>
<p>Any Comments</p>	
<p>Test 5: Is the detail that is provided under each heading that which will give most value to a person making investment decisions?</p>	<p>Assessment: YES / NO / PARTIALLY</p>
<p>Any Comments</p>	
<p>Test 6: Has the Investment Concept Brief been signed by the Investor?</p>	<p>Assessment: YES / NO / PARTIALLY</p>
<p>Any Comments</p>	
<p>How do you rate this Investment Concept Brief?</p>	<p>Assessment: SATISFACTORY / UNSATISFACTORY</p>
<p>Any Comments</p>	