



PROJECT GOVERNANCE GUIDELINE

Nova Scotia Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care

Final

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REVISION HISTORY

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PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 OBJECTIVE

The objective of project governance within the Seniors and Long-Term Care (SLTC) bed builds program is to ensure:

- The program is guided by a unified and coherent framework for how each project is directed, administered and controlled, regardless of the parties delivering.
- Effective project oversight and program communications are maintained.
- Project reporting is efficient and consistent.
- Service Providers and their Project Teams are empowered to seek and receive approval to advance their project through the lifecycle.
- Good governance gives both the Service Provider and Project Sponsor (SLTC) management and executives a clear line of sight of project issues, and provides them with the right information, in the right format, to make the right decisions at the right time.

The purpose of this document is to introduce the core governance related to project Steps and Gates in the *Facility Development Approval Process* (FDAP) process for the benefit of Service Providers and their Project Teams. For those Service Providers who have not recently completed a major capital project, *Part 2* of this document also serves as a background on the importance of good project governance.

1.2 APPLICATION

This *Project Governance Guideline* applies to all SLTC projects, unless otherwise specified.

1.3 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

At a minimum, the Project Sponsor expects Service Providers and their Project Manager to:

- Follow the Step and Gate process as detailed in the FDAP.
- Capture project-specific governance details in the *Project Charter*.

As a part of the FDAP documentation, the Project Sponsor has provided a standardized template for the *Project Charter* (see FDAP Appendix g).

1.4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section outlines the responsibilities assigned to each role throughout the project lifecycle, as also described in the core FDAP document. It serves as a high-level overview, while detailed responsibilities for each Step and Gate of the FDAP process can be found within the respective sections of *Part 2* of the FDAP document.

Project Sponsor (SLTC)

- Initiates, supports, and provides strategic guidance for the facility development project, ensuring alignment with the Project Sponsor priorities.
- Acts as the funding partner for the Long-Term Care (LTC) facility, responsible for approving funding allocations for the project.
- Provides the Service Provider with the FDAP document, associated appendices, reference documents, and applicable policies.
- Provides oversight throughout the entire development process to ensure the facility adheres to *SLTC Facility Design Requirements* and *SLTC Program Requirements*. This may include assisting with the interpretation of building codes and healthcare standards applicable to LTC environments.
- Retains authority to approve or reject any proposed changes or departures from the intended facility outcomes. Any modifications require supporting rationale and materials from the Service Provider and are subject to the Project Sponsor's sole discretion.
- Reviews and approves Step and Gate submissions (see Appendix A) from the Service Provider, including design plans, construction documents, and commissioning plans, as outlined in the FDAP document.
- Receives and reviews monthly status reporting through the *Integrated Project Management Package* (IPMP) and its output, the MSR (see Appendix B).

Service Provider

- Responsible for all work related to developing and constructing the LTC facility, adhering to the FDAP, *Development Agreement*, and applicable laws and policies.
- Maintains control over the full project scope, emphasizing planning, risk management, and mitigation strategies. Risks to manage include but are not limited to scope creep, cost changes, schedule delays, contractor issues, and disputes.
- Ensures ongoing cost prediction and control, allocating knowledgeable project management resources for this task.

- Provides clear rationale to the Project Sponsor for any proposed change or departure from the intended outcome of a facility, with supporting materials as required by the Project Sponsor.
- In addition to Project Sponsor approval, acquires all necessary approvals and permits (e.g., municipal planning, Office of the Fire Marshal, Nova Scotia Department of Environment & Climate Change).
- Maintains regular communication with the Project Sponsor, providing updates on project progress, challenges encountered, and the status of the facility's readiness for occupancy.
- Develops and maintains the *Project Plan*, ensuring all elements adhere to the Project Sponsor requirements and priorities.
- Ensures that the facility design is functional, compliant with regulatory standards, and aligned with LTC healthcare requirements.
- Ensures the provision of timely, accurate, and complete documentation for each Step and Gate submission, and for each monthly submission of the IPMP. Provides oversight during the construction process, ensuring that the project adheres to the approved design, timelines, and budget, and complies with building codes and LTC health and safety standards.
- As the contract holder, ensures that contractors fulfill their project expectations and meet all project requirements.

Project Manager – Hired by the Service Provider

- Supports the Service Provider with project responsibilities as detailed in their contractual agreement, including possible delegation of some of the Service Provider's responsibilities listed above.
- Maintains effective project oversight to ensure cost control, schedule management, and risk mitigation.
- Ensures the appropriate allocation of knowledgeable and experienced resources toward project management tasks.
- Maintains day-to-day communication and coordination among partners, including the Project Sponsor, Service Provider, Contractor, and Designers.
- Maintains the IPMP (see Appendix B).
- Reviews, approves and obtains Service Provider endorsement of the IPMP output, the MSR.

Prime Design Consultant and Project Team (Architects / Engineers)

- Responsible for designing the facility in compliance with current LTC best practices, with expertise in LTC facility design.
- Must be fully qualified and registered to practice in Nova Scotia.
- Delivers designs that align with the overall project objectives and ensures adherence to all regulatory requirements.
- Supports the Project Manager by supplying pertinent information for the maintenance and monthly submission of the IPMP.

General Contractor

- Executes tasks associated with construction as per the guidelines and expectations set in the *General Contract Agreement*.
- Accountable for delivering quality work on schedule and within the budget.
- Supports the Project Manager by supplying pertinent information for the maintenance and monthly submission of the IPMP.

PART 2 – Project Governance

2.1 WHAT IS PROJECT GOVERNANCE?

Governance refers to the process of planning, coordinating, and monitoring all aspects of a project to achieve targeted objectives, goals, and benefits while ensuring compliance with policies, procedures, and alignment with your organizational structure. As noted in the Project Management Institute's (PMI) Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK), good governance ensures that a project is aligned with the major partners' needs and objectives.

Project governance presents a unified and coherent framework by which a project is directed, administered or controlled and addresses the central oversight and orchestration of the project. Project governance sets the framework under which project leadership can be empowered to make decisions that meet the objectives of the major partners and provides ways to address circumstances where partners may not be aligned.

Although individual roles and responsibilities are important to the tactical execution of a project, the governance needs to be developed from the outset and managed throughout the project in order to assure consistent, cohesive policies, processes and decision rights for a given area of responsibility. Every project follows a defined project lifecycle, where the project moves between distinct and sequential stages or steps. Dividing projects into clear steps enables better governance and management control, by allowing each step to have its own start and end point, and with each step serving a specific purpose or objective.

The central document that defines the governance of a project is the *Project Charter* (see Appendix G). A *Project Charter* is a formally approved document by the ultimate owner of the outcome of the project (in this case the Service Provider), and it defines the very fundamental information about the project, authorizes the existence of a project, and provides the Project Manager with the authority to apply organizational resources to project activities. It describes the project's need and high-level project parameters such as design, budget, schedule and organization. The *Project Charter* is particularly important in the project management process, for the following reasons:

- A clear statement of purpose outlines the motive for undertaking the project and defines the objectives to be achieved.
- A defined partnership structure identifies the main partners (e.g., Service Provider, Project Manager, Project Sponsor) and clarifies their roles and responsibilities.

Every project that is developed through the FDAP Process is expected to have a *Project Charter* that aligns with (but may go beyond), the templated provided. It can be further developed with your Project Manager.

The *Project Charter* ensures project objectives are communicated and agreed to, at the beginning of the project. Setting these objectives enables tracking and measurement of performance and provides a basis for accountability over outcomes. It also serves as the reference document in case of any disagreement about project related information. Considering its importance, it becomes essential to have the signed *Project Charter* in place.

2.2 PROJECT LIFECYCLE

Every project follows a defined project lifecycle, where the project moves between distinct and sequential phases, as shown in Figure 1. At the highest level, the projects can be divided into phases that advance from Planning, through Design, Construction, Handover and finally into Operations.

Figure 1. LTC Bed Build Project Lifecycle Phases



At a high level, the purpose of these phases can be defined as follows:

- **Pre-design:** The objective of this stage is to onboard the Service Provider that has been selected for their project to advance, and develop your project team, including procuring a Project Manager, Prime Design Consultant and Project team, including necessary engineers. This is also the time when the site selection process begins.
- **Design:** The objective of the design phase is to bring the project to a level of definition possible for a baseline budget and schedule, procurement of a contractor, and the start of construction. Consultation with key partners on the project design advances through this phase, allowing further development of the project costs, schedule, and project management approach.
- **Construction:** The objective of this phase is to undertake and complete all planned work in accordance with final design to deliver the project. This includes proactively tracking and reporting of progress of the schedule, cost, risks, and monitoring of project changes.
- **Handover:** The objective of this phase is to ensure the completion and closure of any outstanding project matters (e.g., works, reconciliations, warranties). During

this phase, the project is closed through a series of processes including acceptance and completion of any outstanding work, commissioning, and collection and archiving of all project documentation. Lessons learned and knowledge transfer activities are undertaken to help drive future improvements across the Project Sponsor’s portfolio of projects.

Each of these phases is too high-level to serve as an effective control; the transitions between them are what actually provide the necessary oversight and approvals. Dividing the project lifecycle into more granular Steps enables better governance and management control by allowing each Step to have its own clearly articulated activities and deliverables. The FDAP process has been broken into 12 Steps (see Figure 2 below). Step submissions provide the Project Sponsor with oversight throughout the project lifecycle, to ensure informed decision-making, maintain visibility to key project assumptions through the planning Steps, and maintain alignment with strategic objectives.

Figure 2. FDAP Project Lifecycle Steps



The Service Provider must provide Step submissions to the Project Sponsor with all required deliverables as defined in *Part 2* of the core FDAP document. Each Step submission must be accompanied by a completed *Appendix A: FDAP Step and Gate Forms Submission Checklist*, signed by the Service Provider and their Project Manager.

2.3 GATED PROCESS

Although the Project Sponsor uses the deliverables at each Step to exert its oversight responsibilities, not all Steps are created equal. At the conclusion of key Steps, it’s important to bring together a broader, multidisciplinary audience within the Project Sponsor team to assess whether the project is ready to move into the next Step. For a project to proceed past one of these more critical points, it must pass a mandatory checkpoint called a “Gate” to ensure that a minimum level of quality control and quality assurance have been exercised, to demonstrate that the project management deliverables requirements are met, and the project is in a position to move forward with correct assumptions on scope, cost, schedule, risk, etc.

Figure 3. FDAP Gate Submission Points



As shown in Figure 3 above, in addition to a kick-off Gate G0, there are at a minimum 5 Gates aligned with Step 4 (Gate G4), Step 6 (Gate G6), Step 7 (Gate G7), Step 11 (Gate G11), and Step 12 (Gate G12). Depending on the unique needs of a project, it may be prudent to add the rigor of an additional Gate depending on the decisions to be made. For example, a project may require an extra Gate at Step 3 (Gate G3) if extra scrutiny is warranted on the Functional Program. If more than the minimum 6 Gates are to be used, this can be defined in the *Project Charter*.

A summary of each Gate's objectives is as follows:

- **G0 – Project Initiation:** The Service Provider has been selected, the project is green-lit for inclusion in the budget and further development, and the team is ready to kick-off.
- **G4 – Approval for Detailed Design:** After initial planning, Functional Program, Concept Design and final site selection, the project has enough definition of scope to move into detailed design.
- **G6 – Approval for Procurement:** The project has undergone enough design work (with confident contingencies) to seek approval for the performance baseline of scope, cost and schedule and to proceed to construction procurement.
- **G7 – Approval for Construction:** Construction tenders have been received within the planned cost parameters, and the project is ready for award.
- **G11 – Approval of Occupancy:** When the final execution deliverable is the completed construction, commissioning is complete, and licensing requirements have been met and can be accepted.
- **G12 – Closeout:** The project has been appropriately closed out (e.g., contracts, deliverables, documentation) and all necessary responsibilities (e.g., warranty) have been handed over to the Service Provider.

There is an important distinction to be made between what Gates are intended to do and not do.

- Gates *do* provide authority to proceed to the next lifecycle Step, allowing the governance entities to ensure the project is still meeting its objectives.
- Gates *do not* review the quality or deliverables for a particular Step. They are not intended to assess the overall management of the project or progress against schedule and cost. This reporting is done through the monthly submission of the IPMP and its output, the MSR. Gates are also not intended to be an opportunity for partners to introduce project change.

Gate submissions play a critical role in ensuring oversight by extending beyond the day-to-day Project Sponsor team to include senior Project Sponsor representatives. This process

enables the Project Sponsor to monitor key points throughout the project lifecycle, providing assurance that the project adheres to compliance requirements and aligns with the Project Sponsor's broader organizational goals and strategies.

The Service Provider must provide Gate submissions to the Project Sponsor with all required deliverables as defined in the FDAP for each identified Gate (see Figure 3). Additional stage Gates may be necessary for projects requiring enhanced oversight, which may be determined in the Gate 0 kick-off meeting or detailed in the Service Provider's *Project Charter*.

2.4 STEP AND GATE REVIEW AND RESPONSE

FDAP Step Submissions

The Service Provider must provide Step submissions to the Project Sponsor with all required deliverables as defined in *Part 2* of the FDAP document. Each Step submission must be accompanied by a completed *FDAP Step and Gate Forms Submission Checklist* (see Appendix A) as a PDF, signed by the Service Provider. The Project Sponsor will review the submission and add comments directly to the PDF. A written response will be provided to the Service Provider within 3 weeks. Note that the timeline for the review of each Step begins when a complete submission is made. If the submission is incomplete, or non-compliant, it may be returned for correction, and the timeline will restart once the corrected submission is received.

Required and requested documents are to be submitted electronically. All reports and submissions will be reviewed by the Project Sponsor and responded to, in writing. Possible responses include:

- ***Approved*** – Approvals will be communicated in writing, and an electronic copy of the signed submission form will be returned to the Service Provider.
- ***Approved with comments*** – Conditional approval with comments specifying concerns that are to be addressed by the Service Provider. Comments may include the following:
 - Information: Known or anticipated issues that fall outside STLC jurisdiction.
 - Consideration: Operational concerns for review, offering discretionary recommendations.
 - Required: Issues that must be resolved in future Steps or submissions.
- ***Not approved*** – Comments or reasons for rejection will be provided, action items will be identified. Resubmission will be necessary.

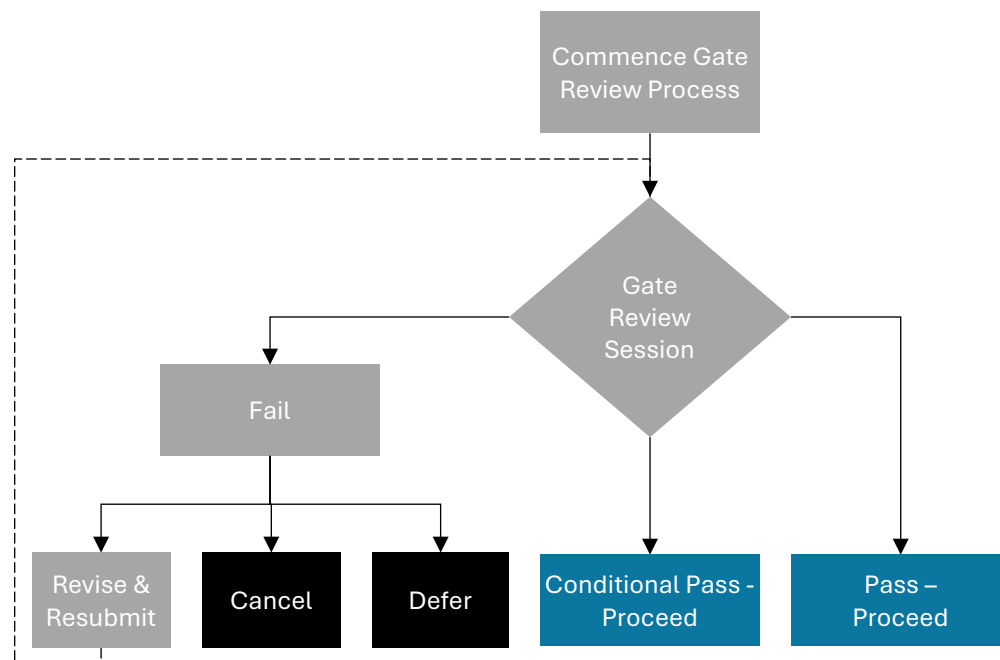
Note: Service Providers who move onto the next Step of the FDAP without the Project Sponsor's approval do so at their own risk. Should submission approval not be given by the Project Sponsor, any costs incurred as a result of the decision to move forward will be the responsibility of the Service Provider.

Gate Approvals

As noted above, Gate approvals provide authority to proceed to the next Step of the project lifecycle. Gate reviews take place at the completion of critical project Steps and provide an opportunity for a more senior and multi-disciplinary Project Sponsor governance entity to review and assess the status, progress and risks on the project, the project's compliance with the FDAP, and the quality of the key deliverables before they become inputs to the next Step.

Each Gate submission must include a completed *FDAP Step and Gate Forms Submission Checklist* (see Appendix A) as a PDF, filled out and signed by both the Service Provider and Project Manager. The Project Sponsor will review the Gate Form and relevant Step materials and hold a Gate Review Meeting with the Service Provider and Project Manager present, before giving final approval. During the Gate meeting, the Service Provider and Project Manager are responsible for taking notes and capturing action items. After the meeting, the Service Provider or Project Manager must confirm with the Project Sponsor that the notes and actions were accurately captured. Once confirmed, the Project Sponsor will sign the document to complete the review. A response on Gate Approval from the Service Provider will be provided within 3 weeks of the Gate Review Meeting.

Figure 4. Gate Approval Decision Process



Similar to the Step deliverables approval, a Gate review leads to one of three decisions as shown in Figure 4 and detailed below:

- **Pass** - Proceed to the next Step.
- **Conditional Pass** - Proceed to the next Step subject to agreed action plan.
- **Fail** – Not fit to proceed
- **Revise and resubmit** in accordance with specific direction
- **Cancel** the project.
- **Defer** the project.

The key to a successful gated process is to be rigorous in its application. These points are chosen in the project lifecycle precisely because they are an opportunity to prevent significant scope, schedule and cost overruns if a project is not truly ready to proceed. Passing a project with a *Conditional Pass* should be avoided if possible. If there are conditions, they must be detailed, time-bound and captured within the Gate Approval Form.

PART 3 – APPENDICES

- FDAP Appendix A: Facility Development Approval Process (FDAP) Step and Gate Forms Submission Checklist
- FDAP Appendix B: Integrated Project Management Package (IPMP)
- FDAP Appendix G: Project Plan and Charter Template