

## Point of View

# Assuring Delivery Excellence in the Public Sector through Smarter Programme Delivery

## Overview

Difficult economic conditions are forcing ever-closer scrutiny of capital expenditure and operating costs. Across government, organisations are tightening their belts and looking at ways to reduce their capital budgets. At the same time, there remains pressure to invest in capital programmes to deliver new services, to enhance existing capability and to replace aging assets. Agility, and the ability of organisations to swiftly meet the shifting priorities of local and central government through smarter programme delivery, provides a clear and proven route to improved efficiency and better value for money.

*“The private sector never stops seeking greater efficiency in the ways that it purchases and provides services, and neither should government. There is scope to go further and increase the value for money the public sector achieves from both its activities and from some of its most valuable assets - the insight and energy of its people, as well as its bricks and mortar.”*

*Forward to the 2009 Treasury Operational Efficiency Programme Report*

In consequence, those organisations able to prioritise and accelerate the design and delivery of their capital programmes stand to benefit most through improved operational performance, faster implementation and an improved ability to meet changing customer needs and government priorities.

This paper describes how the application of Capital Programme Accelerators can promote and sustain smarter programme delivery. We are convinced that Smarter Programme Delivery is the key to organisational agility and central to the prioritisation of scarce resource to those programmes which will deliver most value. The application of Accelerator methodologies –the fast-track analysis of delivery capability and the targeting of the obstacles to smarter delivery – is a fast and simple means of delivering improved efficiency and driving better value for money.

## What is Smarter Programme Delivery?

The Capital Programme Accelerator model identifies five themes for Smarter Programme Delivery:

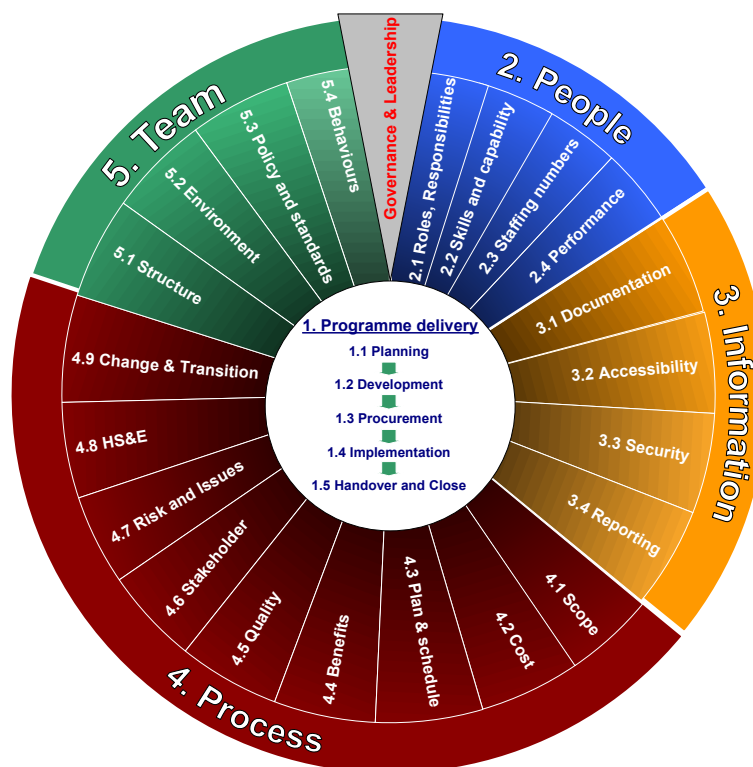
- Smarter governance – leadership which is empowered to make decisions on behalf of the business, and structures which support the determination of timely decisions
- Smarter team-working – programme teams comprising the right people with the right skills
- Smarter information – that is accurate, up-to-date and accessible to provide the basis for timely decision making
- Smarter processes which promote clarity, structure and accountability
- Smarter environment which fosters collaboration, innovation and knowledge sharing

One solution rarely suits all, as different organisations are influenced by a unique blend of circumstance and challenge. However, the structured application of accelerator methodologies can provide valuable insight and support to organisations that recognise the benefits offered by Smarter Programme Delivery.

### Step 1 – Rapid Diagnostic

Accelerator methodologies provide a powerful lens to view the effectiveness of the programme delivery landscape.

**Figure 1 – Capital Programme Accelerator**



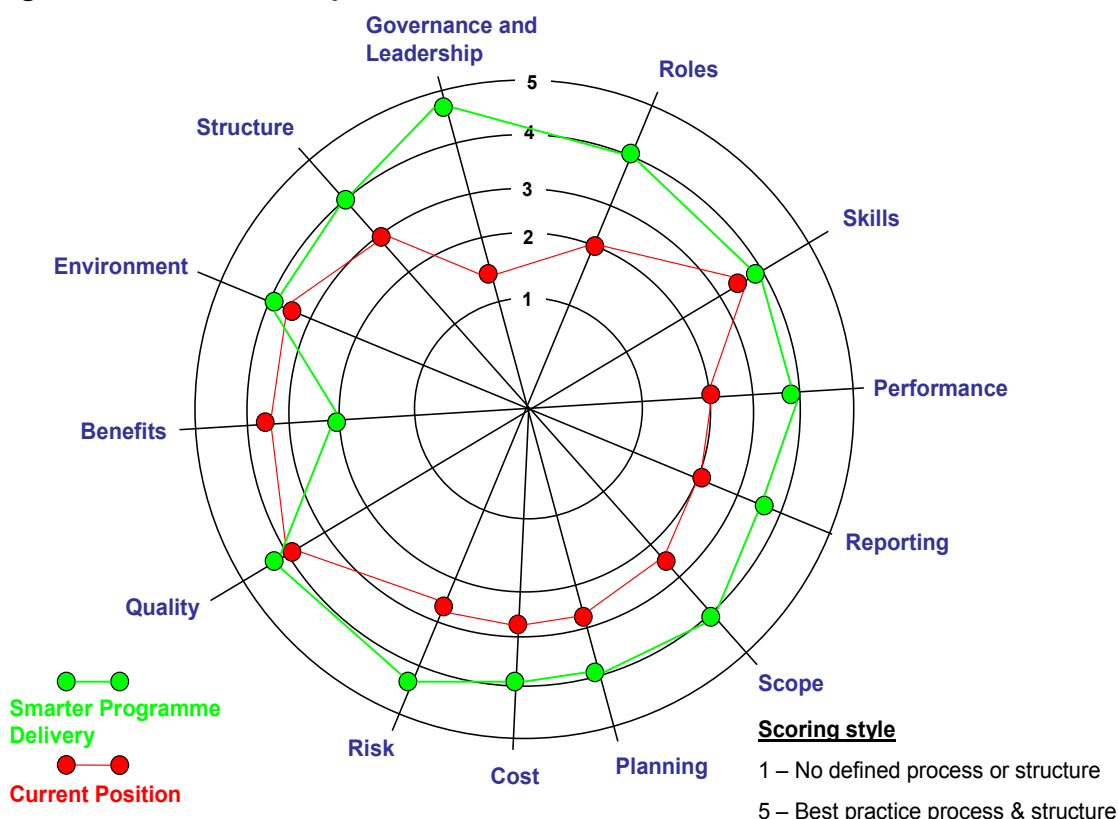
Step 1 considers delivery maturity through assessment of each of the five smarter delivery themes:

- **Governance and Leadership:** Is programme delivery owned at the right level in the organisation? Are the programme owners committed to successful delivery? Does the governance structure engage sufficiently with sponsors and end users? Is the governance structure documented and understood?
- **Team-working:** Are the staff suitably skilled for their designated delivery roles? Is there sufficient stakeholder advocacy? Do team members understand their role in the broader programme delivery jigsaw? Is the performance of the team being efficiently managed?
- **Information:** Does the programme have sufficient information to deliver the business requirement? Does information provision support effective decision making? Is the information accessible, controlled and backed-up? Are the reporting systems sufficient and understandable?
- **Process:** Are management processes in place, documented, accessible, understood and followed by all parties? Are the programme management processes efficient and effective?

- **Environment:** Are appropriate programme and project team structures in place? Does the physical and virtual environment support effective team-working? Are ways of working understood and managed? Is there a positive team spirit?

The results of this assessment can then be used to consider the gap between an organisations current capability and Smarter Programme Delivery.

**Figure 2 – Illustrative Output from the Accelerator**



### Steps 2 and 3 – Towards Smarter Programme Delivery

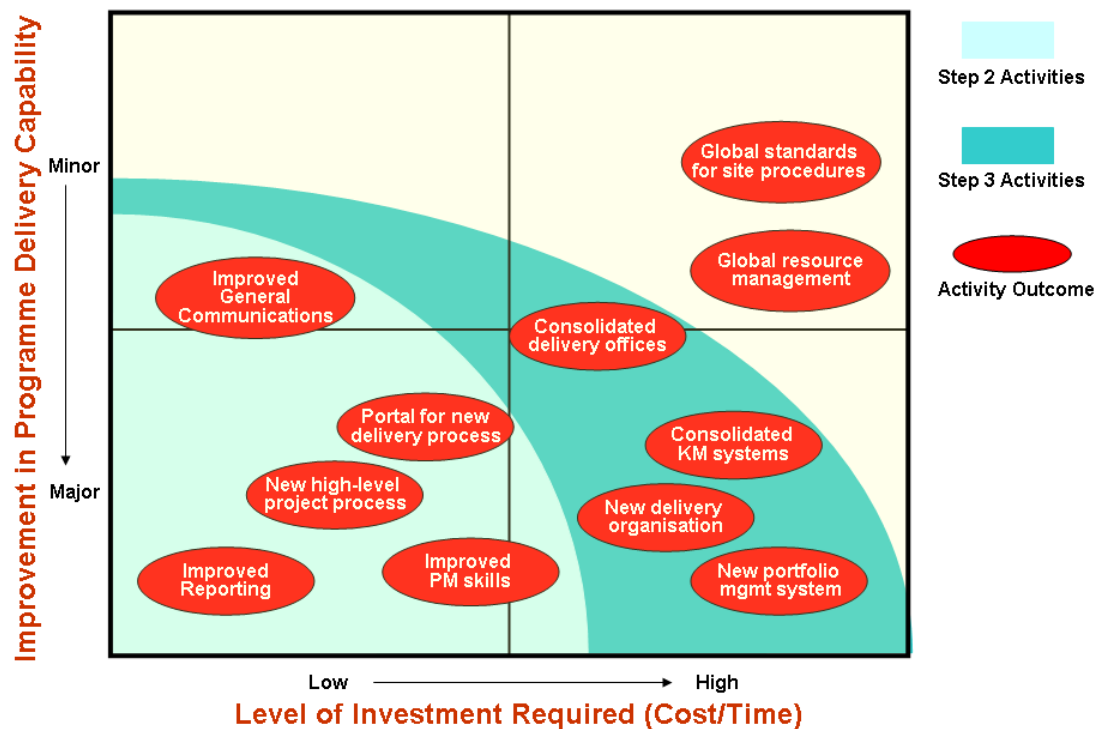
Following diagnosis steps 2 and 3 can then be focused to deliver a number of prioritised initiatives aimed at bridging the gap and promoting Smarter Programme Delivery. Typical initiatives might include:

- **Process redesign/organisation change:** Consolidation and standardisation of project delivery processes; the broader application of gateway reviews; the establishment of clearer programme governance structures; and better stakeholder engagement.
- **Improved reporting:** The development of timely and effective programme performance reporting solutions. Often significant improvements can be made with minimal change to the underlying reporting process or systems. For example, if project data is in multiple formats, there are standard reporting products that can be applied to collect and collate data from common formats, such as Excel and Access, and to present powerful reports and dashboards at project and programme level.

- **Improving the project delivery environment:** Co-location of project or programme delivery teams can often reap significant benefits. This is not always possible and there are a range of solutions that can be implemented to improve support to those members of the project team who work remotely, to improve the efficiency of management processes, and to improve knowledge management and the sharing of project information.
- **Skills improvement:** If new skills are required, training programmes can be developed to address identified gaps, or a recruitment plan enabled to bring in the necessary skills. Mentoring initiatives can be used to coach and bring on the potential of more junior team members.
- **Portfolio management solutions:** The introduction of enterprise-wide portfolio management systems is sometimes viewed as a highway to smarter programme delivery. Such solutions offer a range of benefits including improved planning, better project prioritisation and automated linkages with finance and HR systems; however, they often require a significant investment and can add to the burden of already over-stretched project delivery teams. Application of the Capital Programme Accelerator model can help organisations to understand the tradeoffs between the incremental optimisation of existing toolsets and the introduction of enterprise-wide solutions.

Once identified, initiatives can be grouped and prioritised. Step 2 activities tend to include those ‘early benefit’ initiatives which offer highest return for the lowest investment, whereas step 3 activities tend to focus on ‘longer term’ initiatives that will help to sustain and embed Smarter Programme Delivery.

**Figure 3 – An Illustrative Prioritised Initiative Matrix**



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## Agility through Smarter Programme Delivery

This document outlines a three step approach to Smarter Programme Delivery. The methodology can provide real benefit to those organisations with long-established, steady state delivery organisations as well as those contemplating the challenge of consolidation, change or transformation.

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