Project Initiation

Document

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| Title of Project or Initiative |  |

Document Purpose:

The completion of this document creates clarity of purpose and identifies the change management needs and implications of any development initiative or project. The involvement of key stakeholders in completing the document will ensure a shared understanding of the initiative and forms the first steps in an effective change management and engagement process.

1) Brief description of the project including overall aim

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2) What opportunity or problem is this initiative addressing?

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3) What diagnosis has been carried out to confirm the exact nature of the issue?

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| *This avoids intuitively jumping to conclusions about the issue without any proper evidence. This question ensures that proper info / data has been gathered and analysed and that this clearly demonstrates the actual issue and root cause(s) or the actual scale of the improvement opportunity.* |

4) Who is the Authorising Sponsor for this initiative?

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| *Rule of thumb: The authorising sponsor of the project or initiative is the person at the lowest point in the organisation to which all impacted staff or departments report. Ideally the authorising sponsor should be one single person who is accountable for the staff or affected departments. The authorising sponsor should not be a group or a committee.* |

5) What is the nature of their commitment to this initiative?

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| *Action tends to happen when the authorising sponsor is passionate and focused in their commitment to an initiative. This project may just be another in a wide array of work competing for their attention. If there are difficulties trying to secure their focus or attention on this initiative then perhaps the time isn’t right for this project in the first place.* |

6) Who is responsible for the implementation (Change Agent/Project Manager)?

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| *The change agent is the person that the authorising sponsor delegates responsibility to manage the implementation of the project. This may just be one person managing a small project or it could be that they lead a project team that organises the implementation of a larger initiative.* |

7) What is the current state that requires changing?

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| *This is often called the baseline position and draws on data produced for question 3 to paint a clear picture of the current state that is causing dissatisfaction.* |

8) In terms of urgency, is the current situation widely believed to be causing severe difficulty for the organisation or is it purely an opportunity to improve and grow?

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| *This question determines the amount of change management effort that will be required to make this project succeed. If the current situation is causing severe pain for the organisation or department then the readiness and impetus for change is already high. If on the other hand the project is purely an opportunity to improve a process or service then the readiness and impetus has to be created. In this case effort and energy have to be applied to get people moving.* |

9) What are the consequences of the organisation not implementing this initiative?

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| *This is a good ‘acid test’ and linked to question 8. If the consequences of this project not being implemented are not particularly painful then this indicates the amount of effort that will be required to engage people to change.* |

10) What are the detailed impacts (technical, business and human) that will need to be managed to achieve the desired future state?

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| *Most initiatives have to some extend a technical/professional/service impact, a business impact and a people impact. This question is asking you to think of all implications that have to be managed to ensure progress. Particularly remember the people component which is sometimes neglected.* |

11) What is the scope or boundaries to this initiative?

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| *This is to clarify exactly what people/departments/processes this change covers and what is excluded or outside of scope.* |

12) What benefits or outcomes will the initiative deliver (service improvement, efficiency, financial etc)?

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| *This is to force you to think about the project in terms of desired outcomes and actual benefits that need to be delivered. This is incremental to the business case for the initiative and will be the key interest of the authorising sponsor.* |

13) How will these benefits or outcomes be tracked and success measured?

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| *Following on from question 12, the measures that you establish to monitor progress must focus on deliverables but more importantly on outcomes. I.e. some measures may tell you that you have successfully undertaken activities but have these activities produced the desired end result?* |

14) What are the implementation costs?

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| *This is the overall cost benefit analysis linked to questions 12 and 13. What is the overall cost (could be financial or other) in order to achieve the benefits set out.* |

15) What is the implementation time-frame?

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| *This is usually agreed by the authorising sponsor and should be based on the timescale to which benefit delivery is required. Project planning will highlight if this timescale is reasonable.* |

16) What are the key milestones and target dates?

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| *With the above end point in mind what are the particular parts of the project which must be completed (in the right sequence) in order that the overall timeframe is met. This forms the basis of a project plan. Project planning software is helpful especially for larger more complex projects.* |

17) Who will be monitoring progress?

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| *In terms of reporting who needs to see what and when in terms of progress measures, issues and risk resolution. This will be agreed by the authorising sponsor and for larger projects there may be a set of project governance arrangements put in place.* |

18) What resources will be required throughout implementation?

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| *These are linked to the activities and milestones in question 16 and are defined within a project plan for larger projects in order to ensure that the right resources are available at the time they are required. For smaller projects this should be more straightforward to answer but nevertheless a key consideration. Usually this is about people and skills but may also include IT or infrastructure.* |

19) What are the constraints and risks with this initiative?

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| *These are the key areas where issues and risks may arise with this project. Issues and risks come in two categories:*   1. *Issues and risks to the organisation or service as a result of this project.* 2. *issues and risks to the project itself being hampered or derailed.*   *For larger more complex projects there may be a issue and risk log kept and reported to the authorising sponsor or steering group.*  *Issues and risks are differentiated by time. An issue is currently happening, a risk is an issue that may happen in future.* |

20) What benchmarking has been conducted with other projects internally or externally to the organisation where learning could be shared?

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| *A common issue with projects is failing to recognise or learn from other similar projects either across the same organisation or in other similar organisations. Consequences are reinventing the wheel or being hampered by issues that have already been encountered and resolved by others.* |

Authorising Sponsor Signature

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Change Agent (Project Manager) Signature(s)

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