

## 10 Status Reporting

Formalised regular reporting on the status of the project is an integral part of the quality management of the project. The frequency of status reporting will vary, depending on the size of the project and the requirements of the Steering Committee/Project Sponsor.

This section of the *Tasmanian Government Project Management Guidelines* includes:

- Purpose of the Project Status Report - including a definition of project status reporting and suggested structure for it
- Status Report structure
- Frequency of reporting

### Definition

Project status reporting is regular, formalised reporting on the progress of the project against the *Project Proposal*, *Project Business Plan* or *Project Execution Plan*. Usually it is reported by the Project Manager to the Project Steering Committee, Project Sponsor or Senior Manager, depending on the size and management structure of the project. Status reporting also can be to individuals or committees that are contributing to the work of the project, such as Reference or Working Groups, Quality Consultants etc.

### 10.1 Purpose of the Project Status Report

Formalised regular reporting on the status of the project is an integral part of the quality management of the project. In order to make appropriate decisions, the Steering Committee, Project Sponsor or Senior Manager needs to be informed properly about the status of the project. The Project Manager should establish this reporting as part of the management activities for the project.

Another purpose for the *Project Status Report* is to provide an ongoing history of the project, which becomes very useful in terms of tracking progress, evaluation and review. *Project Status Reports* form part of the project review processes, both during and after completion of the project.

The *Project Status Report* is a document that is used by the Project Manager for formalised regular reporting on the status of the project to the Steering Committee, Project Sponsor, Senior Manager or other Key Stakeholders.

Depending on the size of the project, the substance of the report is based on:

- Regular review of project progress, against the project plan, at Project Team planning meetings
- Sub-project status reports to the Project Manager, in the case of large projects
- Regular review of project progress against the milestones in the approved *Project Business Plan*

- Regular meetings with the Project Sponsor/Senior Manager
- Regular review of the effectiveness of actions as outlined in the *Risk Management Plan*, and their effect on the gradings for likelihood and seriousness for project risks
- Regular review of the *Issues Register*
- Regular review of progress against budget
- Regular updating of milestones

These status reports should highlight any problems that are occurring or have the potential to occur.

## 10.2 Status Report Structure

While the Project Sponsor/Steering Committee should agree to the proposed structure of the *Project Status Report* and frequency of reporting to them, the report should include, as a minimum, the following:

- Status of the project:
  - description
  - milestones for the last reporting period
  - milestones for the next reporting period
  - impact of achievement/non-achievement of milestones for the remaining period of the project
- Budget Report - with respect to planned expenditure, actual expenditure deficit/surplus and revenue against planned output delivery, if appropriate
- Risk Management Report - specifying any changes to the major risks identified since the previous report, and modification to the strategies put in place to manage them; any new risks that have arisen since the last report, as identified in the *Risk Register*
- Issues Report - including areas of concern, specific problems and any action/decision that needs to be taken by the Steering Committee or Project Sponsor/Senior Manager, as identified in the *Issues Register*
- Any general information
- Recommendations

It is important to keep the report focused, and to report on/against milestones, not percentage of work completed. A milestone can be defined as a progress marker that identifies when significant points in a project have been reached. Milestones are anchored within the timeframe for the project, and reflect the critical path towards the final delivery of the outputs. If milestone slippage is occurring it could be a danger sign that the project will not be completed within the specified timeframe.

(Refer to the *Project Management Proforma: Project Status Reporting*)

## 10.3 Frequency of Reporting

The frequency of status reporting will vary, depending on the size of the project and the requirements of the Steering Committee/Project Sponsor.

With very small projects, it may consist of fortnightly consideration of any issues that could affect progress by the Project Manager and/or a meeting with the Project Sponsor/Senior Manager.

For large and/or more complex projects the *Project Status Report* forms an integral part of the project, as information for the reports is drawn from the project management processes in place for the project.

In either case, meetings should be scheduled regularly to discuss project status, either verbally or based on the written status report. The meetings should be often enough that progress could be reported against a number of milestones since the last meeting.

Ideally, the timing for the meetings should be linked to key milestone dates (including the end of a phase), and not to a pattern (for example, the last Friday in the month). In reality, it is not always possible and depends on the nature of the project. Prior notification of meeting dates/times should be provided to members via an agreed meeting schedule.

In the case of projects with a Steering Committee, it is important that the Project Manager attends Steering Committee meetings and speaks to the *Project Status Report*. Usually, the Project Manager does not have voting rights on the Steering Committee, but should be there to answer queries and concerns and to take appropriate action.

(Refer to the *Project Management Fact Sheet: Steering Committee 'nuts and bolts'*)