

NC Department of Information Technology

AB102/AP105: Determining an IT Project

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Content

This document provides guidance on how to determine if an IT business need is an IT project and what needs to be done for IT Projects.

- Role of NCDIT Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO)
- Value of NCDIT EPMO
- IT Project Management Process
- IT Project Definition with Examples
- Support Resources



Learning Objectives

After reviewing this document, you should be able to do the following:

- Articulate the benefits of the IT Project Management Process that is managed by the EPMO, and how it helps state agencies plan and execute IT Projects faster, with reduced risk, better outcomes and within compliance of applicable NC statutes
- Understand how to assess an IT business need to determine if it may be an IT Project, and who to engage to get confirmation before moving forward with any IT procurement activity
- Understand the EPMO's high-level IT Project Management Process and how it relates to the streamlined IT Procurement Process
- Know where to go to get more information and support



Role of NCDIT Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO)

The EPMO, which has experienced Project Management Advisors (PMAs), is mandated by NC General Statutes to provide agencies with guidance, oversight, and governance support for IT projects, programs and portfolios.

- The EPMO was established under the Office of the State Chief Information Officer (see appendix for applicable statutes)
- The EPMO is responsible for developing and maintaining standards and accountability measures for all IT projects and programs, which includes establishing criteria for project/program management as well as the review and approval of IT Project Managers (PMs)
- The EPMO worked collaboratively with PMs, PMOs and senior IT leaders across the state's executive agencies, boards and commissions to develop a Quality Manual and support the Quality Management System (QMS). The EPMO continues to update the QMS and related processes / procedures to incorporate leading practices.
- The QMS is designed to meet current and future needs of the State CIO and state agencies through defined and measurable processes, quality objectives and management control measures
- The EPMO deployed a Project Portfolio Management System, called Touchdown, to enable the QMS by facilitating increased collaboration, information transparency and performance management throughout the project management life cycle



Value of EPMO

Agencies will experience multiple benefits by following the EPMO's ISO 9001-compliant IT Project Management Process.

- Provides confidence to agencies that they are performing the appropriate planning, execution, delivery and operational activities during the lifecycle of the IT Project to **increase the probability that the IT solution successfully meets the business needs**
- **Reduces the overall time to delivery** of an IT Project by having defined decision points along the way to ensure key requirements (e.g., funding, executive approval) are in place and identify use of standard solutions (e.g., Grants Management), which helps eliminate rework
- Ensures that IT Project Management leading practice are being applied to **reduce risks** and allow for faster identification and resolution of issues
- Allows for **sharing of deep IT project management expertise from the EPMO** team throughout an IT Project's lifecycle to help agency resources be more efficient and effective
- Provides a **single tool to house IT Project documents and key decisions** to support future references and reuse on other IT Projects
- **Documents compliance with NC statutes** related to IT project management



IT Project Management Process (1 of 2)

The EPMO's IT Project Management Process provides a structured approach to managing an IT Project, from initial business concept through closeout.

NCDIT IT Project Management Process (managed by the EPMO and enabled in Touchdown)

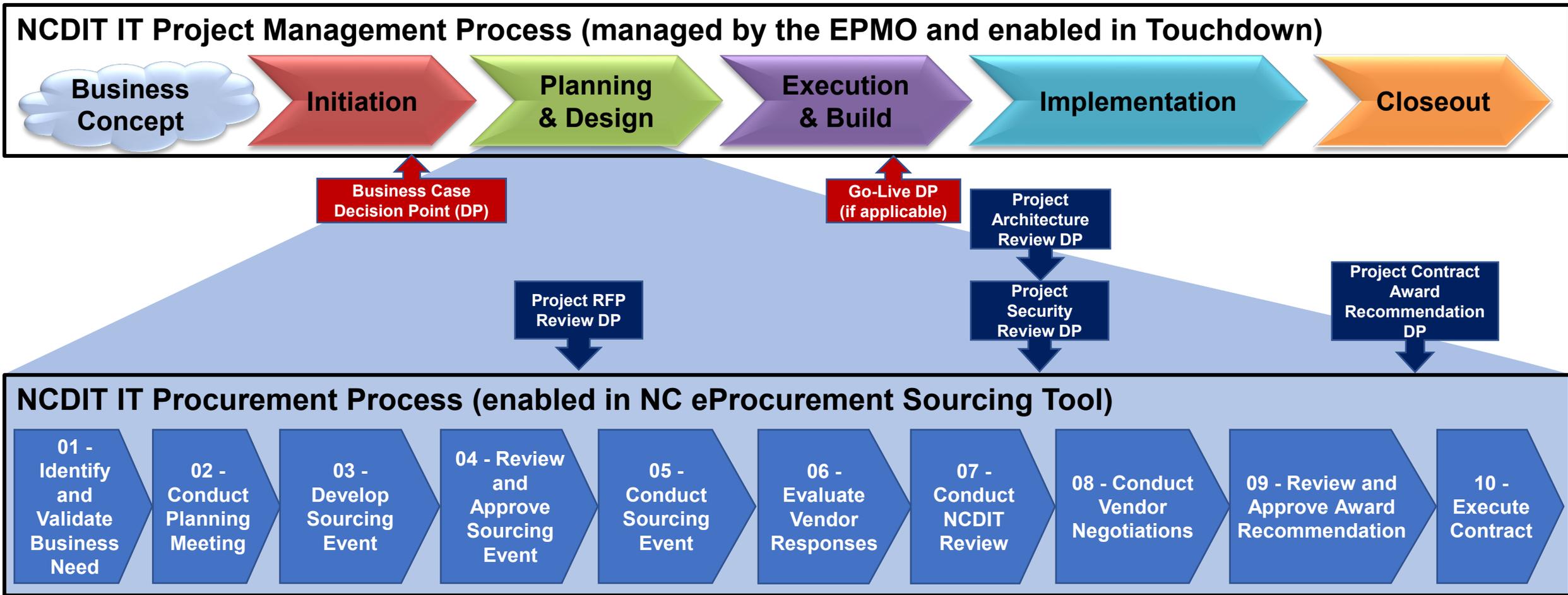


- For more details about the Quality Management System processes and forms, go to [Quality Management System Processes & Forms](#)
- To review the Quality Manual, go to [Quality Manual](#)
- For specific details about the IT Project Management Process, go to [IT Project Management Process](#)

The EPMO also offers a 2-day instructor-led State IT Project Manager Foundations Course to help build agency resources' project management skills and proficiency. For more details, go to [Project Management Training & Education](#)

IT Project Management Process (2 of 2)

Within the Planning & Design Phase of the IT Project Management Process, agencies use the NC eProcurement Sourcing Tool to complete procurement activities and four of the six defined Decision Points within the IT Project Management Process.



For more details about the IT Procurement Process, go to the [IT Procurement Process Playbook / Training Guide](#)

What is Considered an IT Project?

The EPMO has provided the following guidance to help state agencies determine what qualifies as an IT Project.

An IT Project is defined as:

- Temporary endeavor
- Has a start and end date
- Results in an IT product, system, application or service being implemented or delivered

NOTE: Per statute, there is **no** minimum dollar threshold for cost to determine if a business need is considered an IT Project

Key Questions

If the answer to any of the following questions is "Yes," the effort would typically be considered an IT Project:

- Does the state agency need to obtain an IT product, system, application or service?
- Will the IT product, system, application or service provide new or enhanced capability/functionality not currently possessed by the procuring organization?
- Does the effort involve providing an IT service to citizens, businesses, employees, or providing a method for an agency to improve services or be more efficient at providing services?

Listed below are a few examples of IT Projects:

- New technology purchases and implementation regardless of cost (e.g., new business application)
- Development and establishment of new IT service offering (e.g., ITSM/ITAM, CRM, Cisco telephony)
- Development and establishment of new capabilities
- Generally, feasibility studies and proof-of-concepts projects
- Generally, procurement using the RFP process for IT technology or services
- Outsourcing of business functions to a vendor that includes IT systems may be a project
- IT Reserve Fund Spending

Listed below are a few examples of what are not IT Projects:

- Purchases related to IT hardware replacement or upgrades
- Purchases related to IT software upgrades
- Purchases related to IT Operations and Maintenance (O & M)

What are the Types of IT Projects?

The EPMO has provided the following guidance to help state agencies determine if an IT Project is considered a Lite or Enterprise type, which determines the specific project workflow.

A Lite Type IT Project is defined as:

- Initial Project Cost Estimate, less internal agency personnel cost, is \leq \$250,000, or 5-year Operations & Maintenance budget is $<$ \$500,000
- Project is designated as 'Low' risk

NOTE: OSBM review of Lite type IT Projects is not needed

An Enterprise Type IT Project is defined as:

- Initial Project Cost Estimate, less internal agency personnel cost, is $>$ \$250,000, or all other IT projects not meeting Lite Project criteria

See [Project Job Aids](#) for specific details on the Enterprise Project Workflow and Lite Project Workflow

Support Resources: NCDIT EPMO

The EPMO provides multiple options to help agencies determine if a business concept is considered an IT Project.

- **Option 1:** The PMO has assigned a Project Management Advisor (PMA) for each agency to discuss an IT need to determine if it qualifies as an IT Project. See link below.
NOTE: We recommend having this discussion early in the planning process to allow the agency enough time to complete the required activities in the Initiation Phase of the IT Project Management Process and successfully pass through the Business Case Decision Point.
NOTE: Final authority for determination of IT Projects resides with the SCIO.
NOTE: Per statute, exigencies of any kind (i.e. Expiration of State or Federal funding, Impending product/system/application/service end-of-life, Impending expiration of an existing product/system/application/service contract, Covid 19 type “emergencies”, etc.) do not eliminate the requirement to follow the established State of North Carolina IT Project Management Process.

Click here for a list of Project Management Advisors (PMA) assigned to each agency:
[PMA Assignments.](#)

- **Option 2:** During the first step of the IT Procurement Process, agencies are required to complete and submit a one-page IT Procurement Intake Form to NCDIT. **This form is available in the Sourcing Library of the NC eProcurement Sourcing Tool, and can be requested from your Agency Procurement department.** Once the completed form is submitted by Agency Procurement to NCDIT via the NC eProcurement Sourcing Tool, the EPMO will review the submitted Intake Form and respond with their determination if the procurement qualifies as an IT Project or a confirmation that all appropriate IT project management activities in the Initiation Phase and the Business Case Decision Point have been completed. The EPMO’s approval of the IT Procurement Intake Form is required prior to any IT procurement activity taking place.



Additional Support Resources: NCDIT PMO

For agencies that do not have in-house skilled project management resources or need addition project management resource capacity, NCDIT PMO provides Project Management Services.

- NCDIT PMO has PMP-certified project managers who are highly experienced in delivering a wide variety of successful implementations for North Carolina state government, and are available to provide quality project management services to state agencies for an hourly rate
- Benefits include:
 - Achieving expected results using well-defined methods, techniques and processes to monitor project outcomes, performance and measure technical, financial and progress results
 - Avoiding costs associated with staffing and maintaining in-house IT project management resources
 - Reducing costs compared to commercially available alternatives by only paying for the time the project manager works on your specific project
 - Improving project expediency and efficiency by using NCDIT's enterprise tools, including Touchdown, iServer, ServiceNow and more
 - Easily obtaining project management services by using a Memo of Understanding with no need for an RFP to procure supplemental staff or technical services
- For more information, the latest OSBM-approved hourly rate, and to request Project Management Support, click here: [Project Management Services](#)



Appendix: Applicable IT Project Management Statutes

The NC General Assembly understands the importance of managing IT projects throughout their lifecycle. The Assembly mandated the State CIO to establish project management standards and provide oversight for all IT projects conducted by agencies.

NCGS § 143B-1340 (a). Project management. Overall Management.

- All information technology projects shall be managed through a standardized, fully documented process established and overseen by the State CIO. The State CIO shall be responsible for ensuring that participating agency information technology projects are completed on time, within budget, and meet all defined business requirements upon completion. For separate agency projects, the State CIO shall ensure that projects follow the Department's established process and shall monitor schedule, budget, and adherence to business requirements.

NCGS § 143B-1341 (a). Project management standards.

- The State CIO shall establish standardized documentation requirements for agency projects to include requests for proposal and contracts. The State CIO shall establish standards for project managers and project management assistants. The State CIO shall develop performance measures for project reporting and shall make this reporting available through a publicly accessible Web site.