



City of Albuquerque Information Technology Services Division Project Management

Step 3 - Project Alternatives Analysis

Document Purpose

This document is an investigation and assessment of alternatives for a proposed project. It will provide sufficient information to allow the project sponsor to select an alternative. At that point, the project sponsor can then authorize or decline to authorize Step 4 – Project Initiation.

Before You Start...

Before working on this document you should have completed Step 3 – Project Concept Report. The Project Concept Report describes the context, scope and expectations of the proposed project. Please see the IT Project Management Overview for more information on the different steps in managing an IT project.

How to Complete this Document

Here are some guidelines and conventions to help you complete this document successfully:

- 1. Questions are numbered sequentially and are UPPERCASE (capital letters). All questions must be answered in order to complete this document.*
- 2. Text in italics is for guidance only. Do not remove this text as it provides context and will help your audience make good decisions.*
- 3. A picture is worth a thousand words. Use recognized diagramming methods such as (but not limited to) Entity Relationship Diagrams, system diagrams and UML as appropriate for the subject being described. Make sure, however, that your intended audience will understand them.*
- 4. Tailor your responses to your audience. Do not assume in depth technical knowledge.*
- 5. Check for spelling and grammar.*
- 6. Tell the truth. This document is based on the Scientific Method. Support your argument with fact-based evidence.*
- 7. Make sure that you have also downloaded a copy of the Alternatives Analysis Spreadsheet – you will need it for question 5 onwards.*

Project Alternatives Assessment

This information can be found in Step 2 – Project Concept Authorization.

On what research is this analysis based? Where did suggestions for alternatives come from? Did you limit your research to certain kinds of solutions? If so, why? What other assumptions (if any) did you make in your research?

How would you describe the kinds of solutions already available? Are there many or few? Are there any natural groupings (e.g. web-based vs thick client, hosted vs own servers, open source vs commercial)? Are there industry best practices? Describing the state of the industry will help your audience to understand the kinds of solutions that are available.

Are any solutions already in use in the City? How suitable would they be for this project? Taking advantage of existing investments may offer a fast, effective solution with relatively low cost. It also makes sure that the City is making the best use of its existing assets. If these solutions are not suitable for further analysis, your answer must make clear why they are being discarded at this point.

Both worksheets in the Alternatives Analysis spreadsheet provide a number of criteria by which an alternative can be assessed. Which criteria will be crucial in an evaluation? Which criteria are of less importance?

Complete the worksheets in the Alternatives Analysis spreadsheet based on your response for Question 4. There must be one Alternative Evaluation sheet per identified alternative (insert a new worksheet then copy and paste from the Alternative Evaluation Worksheet), and you must include a “Do Nothing” scenario as an alternative. You must also complete an Alternative Assessment that summarizes all the alternatives identified. You might not yet have exact responses to questions such as cost, in which case you should use your best guess and judgment. If an estimated value is used, it should be clearly stated alongside the value.

Which solution appears to be the best? Why? Although the Project Sponsor might override and pick another solution, having a recommended solution is a good starting point for discussion.

Next Steps

- 1. Check spelling and grammar*
- 2. Make sure that the Alternatives Analysis spreadsheet is complete*

3. *Check for audience suitability*

4. *Present Alternatives (see below). Meeting invitations should include:*

- *CIO*
- *DFAS Director*
- *Project Sponsor*
- *Department Director (if different to Project Sponsor)*
- *Project Initiator*
- *Applications Development Group Manager*

PAA Presentation

The PAA presentation is an opportunity to discuss and select an alternative. Presentation style (e.g. presentation slides, handouts, location etc) should fit the audience, the project and the presenter; but will usually involve working through the documents as a group.

Changes may be made to the analysis and meeting attendees are strongly encouraged and expected to question and comment on the document. You should incorporate suggested improvements. If the changes are substantial, it is often best to reconvene the presentation once the analysis has been updated.

Once the analysis is completed and accepted, those present will be asked to select an alternative and authorize step 4 - Project Initiation.

Decision

Decision time. Please read and check all the boxes that describe this decision. Where more information is required, you should explain with enough detail so that it is clear to everyone what the decision is, what any further deliverables should be.