

**Business Case Pro Forma for Professional Services,**

**Including External Consultancy**

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| **Project Title:** |  | | |
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| **Prepared By:** |  | Date: |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Approved By :** |  | Date: |  |

# Section 1: Case for Change/Need for the assignment

This section should address the following:

* Background and purpose of the assignment;
* Strategic/policy context;
* the need for the assignment;
* the implications of the assignment not going ahead;
* the scope of the assignment, i.e. tasks anticipated to provide desired outcomes; and
* the timing of assignment i.e. when is the information required and is there any possibility of deferring the assignment?

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| **Case for Change/Need for Assignment** |
| 1. Background 2. Strategic Context 3. Assessment of Need 4. Implications of Project Not Going Ahead 5. Scope and Timing of Assignment |

**Section 2: Expected Deliverables**

Please provide details on the deliverables expected from the consultants. If available, a copy of the draft terms of reference for the proposed service should be attached.

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| **Deliverables** |
| The deliverables expected from the project are as follows: |

**Section 3: Assessment of Alternative Options**

A full range of options for delivering the assignment should be assessed, including the following:

* Complete assignment using in-house resources;
* Partial completion of assignment using in-house resources[[1]](#footnote-1);
* Use of internal consultancy, for example, departmental economists, statisticians, etc;
* Staff substitution, for example, short-term/medium term secondment of industry expert(s); and
* Use of external professional services – what is the rationale behind using external providers as opposed to the alternatives considered?

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| **Option** | **Viable (Yes/No)** | **Explanation (if No)** |
| In-house |  |  |
| Partial In-house |  |  |
| Internal Consultancy |  |  |
| Staff Substitution |  |  |
| External Provider |  |  |
| Other: |  |  |

## Section 4: Benefits & Their Timing

Outline the expected benefits to be delivered from the assignment and give an indication of when they are likely to accrue.

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| **Benefit** | **Timescale** |
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**Section 5: Skills Transfer**

Please use this section to outline the potential for skills transfer where applicable. Points to consider include:

* What arrangements have been put into place to facilitate the transfer of skills to departmental staff to the extent that this is a benefit of the project?
* When is it anticipated that knowledge and skills will be transferred to internal staff?
* What are the implications of skills transfer for future consultancy support?

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| **Skills Transfer** |
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### Section 6: Proposed Division of Work

This section should provide details on the proposed division of work between the consultants and in-house staff. The following issues should be addressed:

* indicate what in–house support will be given e.g. technical/specialist inputs, accommodation, photocopying and typing services etc;
* provide indicative estimates of the expected number of days required from the consultants; and
* provide indicative estimates of the expected number of in-house staff days by staff grade.

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| **Division of Work** |
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**Section 7: Expected Costs of the assignment**

**External Provider Costs**

* What is the expected cost of the consultancy?
* Information derived from section 6 should be used alongside estimated contract rates to derive an estimate of the cost.
* Costs should be provided on a nominal basis.
* Affordability should be addressed, i.e. is budget provision available?

**In-House Costs**

* What are the estimated in-house support costs for the assignment?
* Information derived from section 6 should be used alongside staff rates to derive an estimate of the cost.)
* Costs should be provided on a nominal basis.

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| **External Provider Costs** |
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| **In-house Costs** |
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| **TOTAL COST =** | **£** |

This is an estimate and if it is known that the costs/budget increases by more than 10% the relevant approvals should be sought where necessary.

### Section 8: Risks

Please use the box below to outline any notable risks and how these will be mitigated/managed.

| **Risks and Mitigation** |
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### Section 9: Project Management/Performance Review Arrangements

This section should address the following:

* the proposed project management arrangements, including details of monitoring officers, draft reports, Steering Groups etc;
* proposed arrangements for on-going monitoring of performance and expected deliverables. The project managers should ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place for influencing performance at interim stages;
* identify person/persons responsible for managing/delivering skills transfer;
* the performance review arrangements for the assignment, e.g. the quality assurance employed from Departmental specialists; and
* skills transfer should be pro-actively managed and monitored like any other benefit.

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| **Project Management** |
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## Section 10: Implementation and Evaluation Plan

This section should provide details on the following:

* how the results of the project be implemented; and
* Proposed arrangements for evaluating the outputs delivered by the consultants.

This should include information on who is the responsible officer for ensuring the evaluation takes place and also information on when it is proposed to carry out the evaluation. Whilst ideally the evaluation should be independent of the project promoters, in most instances, evaluations should be carried out by internal resources, i.e. in-house staff or internal consultancy.

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| **Implementation & Evaluation** |
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| *For more information see* [*Better Business Cases NI*](https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/better-business-cases-ni)  *Departmental economists should be able to provide advice on specific appraisal queries.*  *Any questions or comments about this pro forma should be sent to DoF at the email address below.*  [*economicappraisal@finance-ni.gov.uk*](mailto:economicappraisal@finance-ni.gov.uk) |

1. While it may be accepted that resource constraints/skills shortages will not allow the full assignment to be completed in-house, the option of using in-house resources to produce an interim output supplemented by external input should be assessed. In addition, the option to relax the time constraint to allow more of the outputs to be achieved by in-house resources albeit over a longer timescale should be considered. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)