What is involved in Project Development
Lifecycle 3

What is the Purpose of this Phase?

The purpose of Project Development is to formally scope up the project and finalise the Project Proposal. The Project Proposal needs to be approved by the appropriate authorised delegate (most often the Program Leader) internally in SMI prior to submission to Project Sponsors or a competitive scheme.

The final step of this phase is to have the Project Sponsor agree to the scope and budget of the project before moving to the contracting phase. A core aspect of the Project Development Phase is the creation of the Project Control Plan which is created for internal purposes to be used alongside the Project Proposal. It is finalised as part of the Contracting Phase and builds on the information provided to the Project Sponsor as part of Proposal submission.

This phase requires close links to UQ policy and procedures as any commitments made at this point may impact the contracting process. Submission of some Project Proposals require agreement to the Sponsor’s terms and conditions. In this circumstance the contract must be reviewed by the RPM and SMI Legal before the proposal is submitted. For details on specific roles and responsibilities by activity please refer to the Project Management Framework Overview.

NOTE - If the project does not receive funding at this phase move to close out and update the SMI Project Register.

What is considered to be a ‘Great’ Project Development Phase?

- Time is taken to plan the project to the level required to manage it effectively.
- Budget estimates are accurate and fully costed and a high level of confidence is held in them.
- Risks are identified and the Project Control Log established.
- Project Proposals are of high quality and consistent.
- Appropriate processes around confidentiality are followed.
- The sponsor endorses the Proposal.
- The form of contract for the Contracting Phase has been contemplated by both parties.

What are the Key Activities?

1. Identify and engage stakeholders

At the end of the Opportunity Identification phase the decision was made at the Go/No Go meeting to proceed to the Project Development Phase. The Project Concept will have been approved internally and possibly by the sponsor as well. In this phase the Project Concept is expanded into a formal proposal.

Engaging with stakeholders is key to ensuring that the Project Proposal is of the highest quality. The first step is understanding who the stakeholders are and the best way to engage them in producing the proposal.

2. Expand on preliminary scope created in opportunity development

The scope has previously been considered in the Opportunity Identification phase and a Project Concept developed in many cases. As part of the detailed development of the Project Proposal you will be unpacking the initial thoughts into more detail.
The scope of the project should first outline the objectives and the goals of the project and describe the intended benefit of the project to the sponsor. It should also outline the intended activities and methods broken down into key stages or milestones. The scope should also outline a set of clear deliverables expected from the project as well as an indication of the intended resources required and a description of what will not be included in the project scope. In specifying what will and will not be included, the project scope must make clear to the stakeholders, what they can expect will be delivered.

As a Project Manager being able to define a project scope properly will give you a focus and sense of purpose when executing the project as well as an ability to recognise when a variation to the contract should be sought from the Sponsor.

3. Complete a Project Schedule

A Project Schedule should be included in the Project Proposal and should contain enough information to give the sponsor clarity on the major steps and milestones involved in achieving the project deliverables.

As part of the Opportunity Identification there would have been some high level estimates about the time period needed to deliver the project. In Project Development this information is estimated more accurately and in more detail.

Start with understanding the availability of resources that might be needed for the project and their level of experience, this extends to external subcontractors as well as SMI resources. Involve these people in schedule planning to ensure your estimates are realistic. Ensure you factor in additional time if there is a need to recruit new resources. The Project Schedule should ideally be built around deliverables because they are tangible, can be checked for completeness and must meet predetermined quality standards to be considered complete.

4. Conduct risk assessment (second pass)

Usually when planning in detail new elements of the project are identified that may be relevant to the risk profile of the project. Revisit the risk assessment done in the Opportunity phase, but also to get a general assessment of the scale and complexity of the project. Any risks that are identified are entered into your Project Controls Log in the Risk Register.

5. Set up and populate the Project Controls Log (risk, issues, stakeholders)

The Project Controls Log is formally set up in Project Development Phase and is progressively updated with content throughout the life of a project, it should be used as an active tool. The Project Controls Log is the place where you should store your risks, issues, and any record of stakeholders.

- Risks are identified situations that may occur on the project. They are rated in terms of their likelihood and consequence and given a UQ mandated risk rating. Actions are then defined to ensure they either do not occur, or if they do, their impact is mitigated.
- Issues are realised risk, i.e – they are problematic situations that have occurred, or are occurring now. Actions should be defined to manage the impact of those issue, or to attempt to resolve the issue.

6. Determine the final project budget using the UQ budget spreadsheet (consulting with your Senior Finance Officer).

The UQ budget spreadsheet has a number of mandatory elements. It is worth considering including funding for post project impact demonstration activities, publications, IP or commercial opportunities.

7. Collate the draft Project Proposal for submission to sponsor (Part A of the Project Management Plan)

Once the planning of resources, budget, scope, risks, and schedule has occurred a draft Project Proposal will be collated.
8. Complete the Project Controls Plan containing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework with impact indicators, risk, governance, change control and communications plan. (Part B of the Project Management Plan.)

While the finalisation of the proposal is occurring, set up the Project Controls Plan (Part B when combined with Part A forms the Project Management Plan). The Project Controls Plan is an internal SMI document and answers the following questions:

- What change control processes will be used?
- What team meetings will we have to govern this project?
- How will the scope, budget and schedule be managed?
- How will resources be managed on the project?
- What are the risks and safety implications?
- What are the impact indicators?
- How will we assess quality and what is the quality criteria?
- How often will we report on this project?
- What communication will we do through the project?


Ensure that the content of your Project Proposal is correct and that it has been reviewed by internal stakeholders to ensure it has been professionally edited and formatted. The Proposal is an external facing document and should be professional and convincing enough for the sponsor to agree to fund the project.

10. Proposal approval by relevant authorised internal SMI authority prior to submission (most cases the Program Leader).

It is at this point that the proposal is approved for release to the project sponsor by the Program Leader. Key questions to be verified include:

- Does the proposal include accurate costs and times estimates
- Are we likely to have access to the capability and resources identified in the proposal
- Is the sponsor likely to meet all of our costs?

11. Submission of Final Proposal and approval by sponsor (trigger for contracting).

The last step is to submit the Final Proposal and ideally receive formal approval by the Project Sponsor. Usually this is a written approval which will trigger the contracting phase.

12. Update SMI Project Register with status (progressive)

This is a progressive activity as the project moves through the various phases of the lifecycle the SMI Project Register is updated with relevant detail. It would be the responsibility of the Lead Chief Investigator to let the Portfolio Support Office know of any updates that are required.

What tools and templates might I use?

Mandatory:
- Project Proposal (Part A)
- Project Controls Plan (Part B not fully completed until Contracting)
- Project risk register (2nd pass in Project Controls Log)
- Project Schedule (usually at Milestone Level in the Proposal)
- UQ Research Budget Spreadsheet
- Update SMI Project Register