Quality Assurance Team

Policy and Procedures Manual

Version 1.0 ● 10 AUGUST 2007

Version History

The Quality Assurance Team Policy and Procedures Manual is available at **www.qat.state.tx.us/**.

Release Date	Version	Description
August-2007	1.0	Quality Assurance Team Policy and Procedures Manual released and superseded the Quality Assurance Review Guide for Major Information Resources Projects.
November-1996	1.0	Quality Assurance Review Guide for Major Information Resources Projects released and superseded the Guidelines for Quality Assurance Review.
February-1994	2.9	Guidelines for Quality Assurance Review released.

Contents

Preface

The 73rd Legislature (1993) enacted Article V, Section 133 of the General Appropriations Act. This Act established the Quality Assurance Team (QAT) comprised of representatives from the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) Office, the State Auditor's Office (SAO), and the Department of Information Resources (DIR) to approve and review major information resources projects. Approving agency expenditures for major information resources projects has an effect on SAO's compliance with certain auditing standards. Therefore, SAO delegates to the LBB voting authority on any decisions by the QAT to approve or not approve the expenditure of appropriated funds.

The 74th Legislature (1995) continued emphasis on quality assurance by including an Article IX rider in the General Appropriations Act that established a quality assurance review process that must be followed for all major information resources projects.

The LBB, SAO, and DIR adopted a charter which represents a common understanding of the authority and responsibilities of QAT. The QAT Charter is the basis for determining and fulfilling all actions executed by the QAT. Refer to the QAT Charter for additional information about QAT purpose, organization, roles, and responsibilities.

QAT, responsible for implementation of quality assurance review in Texas, continuously seeks to improve its processes. A publication, entitled *Guidelines for Quality Assurance Review,* was first issued to state agencies and universities in February 1994 to support the legislation enacted in the 73rd Legislative Session. A publication, entitled *Quality Assurance Review Guide for Major Information Resources Projects (Guide),* superseded the *Guidelines for Quality Assurance Review* in November 1996 in entirety. The *Guide* represented the extension of the legislation directing statewide quality assurance review of major information resources projects.

Based on further experience with quality assurance review since 1994, QAT published this *Policy and Procedures Manual* in 2007 which superseded the *Guide* in entirety. This *QAT Policy and Procedures Manual* maintains the same intent of the *Guide* – clarifying QAT processes – by extending definition and description of all QAT policies and procedures.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Manual Overview

The QAT Policy and Procedures Manual (Manual) presents the entire scope of QAT processes and represents the structure by which QAT currently conducts standard quality assurance review for information resources projects. The Manual is not intended to replace, convey, nor endorse specific project delivery methodologies and standards. As an extension to the QAT Charter, the Manual is revised continuously to complement the QAT Charter and to reflect current QAT processes established in response to legislative direction for the state of Texas.

The primary purpose of this Manual is to describe policy and procedures as established by the QAT. The Manual can also be used by agencies (state agencies and higher education institutions) as a basis for definition and implementation of internal practices that are impacted by QAT processes. Separate sources of information as follows should be used with the Manual for further clarification on topics, processes, and referenced documents that are outside the scope of QAT.

Texas Legislative Process	http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/Budget/TwoYearBudgetCycle_Graphic_0706.pdf
Information Technology Detail	http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/The_LBB/Access/Instructions.htm
Texas Project Delivery Framework	http://www.dir.state.tx.us/pubs/framework/index.htm
Contract Advisory Team	http://www.tbpc.state.tx.us/communities/procurement/prog/SC/SC_main

The Manual is organized by section to correspond with progression of quality assurance review processes throughout a project's life cycle. First, basic information for understanding QAT processes collectively is introduced, including a quality assurance review graphic. Second, QAT policy statements for application to agency project delivery practices are identified. Third, information for each major quality assurance review process is described in further detail. Overall, the Manual is organized as follows:

Introduction	
Process Overview	Provides foundational information and terminology for understanding QAT processes
Data Overview	Describes data methods and sources used by the QAT
Policy Statements	Identifies essential practices believed necessary by the QAT for successful delivery of information resources projects
State Project Portfolio Updating	Describes how QAT maintains a single view of projects delivered in the State
Project Monitoring	Describes how and when QAT monitors projects
Project Verification	Describes how and when QAT verifies projects
Project Review	Describes how and when QAT reviews projects
State Project Portfolio Reporting	Describes how QAT reports on projects delivered in the State

Appendices	
Project Flow	Depicts flow of a project throughout quality assurance review
Quick Reference	Depicts quality assurance review processes in a single graphic
Tools	Identifies quality assurance review templates and forms
Service Levels	Identifies QAT service commitments
Glossary	Describes terminology
Frequently Asked Questions	Provides questions frequently asked about quality assurance review
Contact Information	Identifies contact information

1.2 Process Overview

The quality assurance review process supports the primary purpose of the QAT which is to review the status of major information resources projects, and to make recommendations to the legislature to reduce risk of project overruns and failures. QAT defines project risk as the likelihood that a project will not deliver a quality solution based on the schedule, budget, and scope commitments made to state leadership. A major information resources project, as defined in Texas Government Code §2054.003 (10), is:

(A) any information resources technology project identified in a state agency's biennial operating plan whose development costs exceed $1 million and that:
- (i) requires one year or longer to reach operations status;
- (ii) involves more than one state agency; or
- (iii) substantially alters work methods of state agency personnel or the delivery of services to clients; and

(B) any information resources technology project designated by the legislature in the General Appropriations Act as a major information resources project

QAT defines quality assurance review as continual assessment of overall project performance to determine whether the project satisfies quality standards. QAT defines project performance as the accomplishment of work based on effective integration of scope, schedule, and budget. Effective control of a project's scope, schedule and budget is fundamental to achieving a quality project. Quality assurance review comprises an entire suite of processes that include:

Process	Description
Update state project portfolio	Organization and tracking of a series of agency projects into a single portfolio
Monitor projects	On-going observation of projects by collecting data and using the data to assess project performance
Verify projects	Assessment of a project's ability to deliver results compared to the initial anticipated benefits
Conduct project reviews	Scheduled meetings with the agency to validate QAT analysis of project data

Process	Description
Report on state project portfolio	Compilation of summarized information that represents QAT opinion of the current status and performance of projects

Quality assurance review does not involve QAT functioning as a statewide project management office with responsibility for management and success of projects. When necessary, QAT takes different actions throughout quality assurance review to help reduce project risk. Refer to the QAT Actions section for more details. Possible QAT Actions are:

QAT Action	Description
Make legislative recommendations	Make general recommendations related to state projects to the legislature
Make project recommendations	Make general project recommendations to the agency
Request Project Information	Request supporting data, project artifacts, or other information
Request Corrective Action Plan	Request agency to establish a project Corrective Action Plan
Request project audit or assistance	Request SAO to audit or review the project, or Comptroller of Public Accounts to provide project costs verification
Take no action	Make no project recommendations or initiate any requests

Appendix A presents quality assurance review from the perspective of a project flow. The following high-level graphical view presents quality assurance review from the perspective of major processes, including a notation for each. Each notated major process expands and describes subprocesses in further detail as a section of this Manual. Refer to the Quality Assurance Review Process Quick Reference, as identified in Appendix B, to see major processes and subprocesses in a single graphical view.

Quality Assurance Review Major Processes

Monitor Projects 2.0

Verify Projects 3.0

Conduct Project Reviews 4.0

Report on State Project Portfolio 5.0

Update State Project Portfolio 1.0

QAT Actions:
- Make general recommendations related to state projects to the legislature
- Make general project recommendations to the agency
- Request supporting data, project artifacts, or other information
- Request agency to establish Corrective Action Plan
- Request project audit, review, or assistance
- Take no action

1.3 Data Overview

QAT focuses on gathering and verifying project data from multiple sources. Although this Manual describes specific types and sources of data used by the QAT, QAT may request any supporting data, project artifacts, or other information from agencies at any time.

Data sources may include project deliverables submitted by agencies, project review results, Information Technology Details (ITDs) submitted with the Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR), Biennial Operating Plans (BOPs), Corrective Action Plans, SAO audit results, and other data sources as defined by QAT.

QAT data comes primarily from Texas Project Delivery Framework (Framework) deliverables submitted by agencies to QAT. The Framework captures a common set of project delivery data, and presents this data to agency and state leadership in such a way that project performance can be monitored based on uniform statewide quality standards and business needs.

QAT uses an application to store and access data that is maintained by the QAT. The QAT application includes a repository, with analytic, reporting, and administrative capabilities.

2.0 Policy Statements

QAT identifies and promotes a set of policy statements to guide successful delivery of information resources projects. The policy statements describe essential and foundational practices that when acted upon effectively, will improve project performance and reduce project risk. In addition, QAT uses the following policy statements as a basis for performing quality assurance review:

1. **Initiate projects that solve a business problem**

   Projects must deliver solutions that satisfy actual business needs and enhance the agencies' ability to achieve its core mission. Information resources projects defined with "business process reengineering" or "technology migration" as the desired business outcome tend to have high project risk. Technology and process improvement changes should relate directly to enhancing business operations, thereby enabling measurement, control, and determination of project performance in terms of solving a business problem.

2. **Blend contracting practices with project management practices**

   For projects involving procurement, practices used to award and administer contracts must be highly integrated with project management practices. Contract requirements, provisions, and stipulations as awarded are managed to closure from both a contract and technology perspective, regardless of whether the vendor-agency relationship was established for business process outsourcing or systems development only. Contracts must be written to comprehensively protect the interest of the State and agency, and must be managed seamlessly while project management is executed.

3. **Initiate projects with a manageable project schedule and scope**

   Establishing a manageable project schedule and scope are key indicators for predicting the likelihood of successfully delivering a project. Since the state of Texas operates legislatively on a biennium basis, defining a project scope that is achievable within a two-year period aligns the project with legislative oversight, reduces the overall complexity of the project, enables incremental implementation based on discrete and standalone sets of deliverables, and reduces project risk.

4. **Meet, do not exceed, scope and quality expectations**

   Projects are considered successful if they are completed on time, on budget, and meet project scope/quality requirements and specifications. Providing extra scope or quality, also referred to as gold plating, is a key indicator that project scope and quality expectations were poorly defined in terms of actual business needs. Projects must deliver what was committed to and consider process improvement during future efforts, thereby increasing a focus on delivering what was expected.

5. **Retain project accountability for projects involving procurement**

   Project accountability to the State rests with the agency and not vendors hired to assist with delivering products and/or services. Projects involving procurement must be planned and managed based on practices that promote agency ownership of project success and outcomes. First, agencies must ensure clear and concise high-level definition of project scope before pursuing procurement as an option for project delivery, allowing a better focus on business needs regardless of a technology solution.

   Second, projects must be managed by a Project Manager that works directly for the agency, further enabling agency accountability. Industry best practices promote the Project Manager as having primary responsibility for the success or failure of projects. Project Managers accomplish goals with help from project sponsors, the project team, management, and other stakeholders, one of which is the vendor.

6. **Complement use of the Framework with comprehensive project management practices**

   The Framework provides guidance and tools, not a specific methodology for project management. Agencies must define project and/or portfolio management methodologies to supplement use of the Framework. Processes critical for project success, such as establishing and following change control and risk management processes, must be implemented. Agencies must develop and use methods to control and measure project performance (schedule, budget, and scope) to limit unnecessary changes, and to balance tradeoffs among competing performance factors.

7. **Fully adopt a project life cycle approach**

   Projects must clearly define and adopt a project life cycle for use throughout project delivery from beginning to end, thereby providing a comprehensive, organized and focused approach

to resource commitment and usage. A project life cycle is a collection of phases. A project phase is a collection of logically related project activities usually culminating in the completion of a major deliverable. One or more project management life cycles (PMLC) can be used essentially for any project life cycle and relates more to "how" the project will be accomplished. The project life cycle relates more to "what" needs to be done to produce the product. For example, before a project is implemented, establishing a project life cycle comprising specification, design, build, and deploy phases is the basis for project schedule, budget, and scope commitments.

3.0 State Project Portfolio Updating

QAT maintains the State's project portfolio, which is a single view of all agency projects that meet the threshold for a major information resources project. Updating the State's project portfolio comprises on-going project identification, tracking, and project approval.

Following is a graphical view of state project portfolio updating, including subprocesses and a notation for each. Each notated subprocess is described in a section of this Manual.
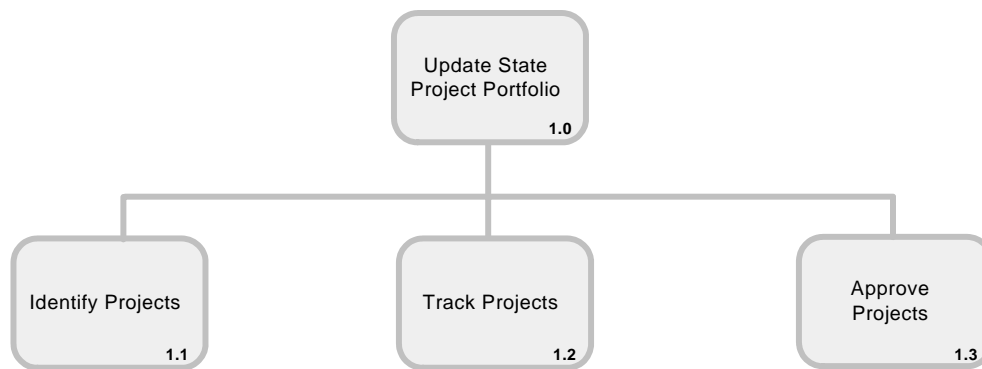
3.1 Project Identification

QAT identifies projects for inclusion in the State's project portfolio from various sources based on submission requirements for different deliverables. Agencies designate projects in the ITD. Agencies submit Business Case and Statewide Impact Analysis Framework deliverables to the QAT for each major information resources project identified when the ITD is submitted, and through BOP amendments. The Contract Advisory Team (CAT) may notify QAT of a major contract (contract that exceeds $1million) that may be associated with a major information resources project. Regardless of the source, QAT acknowledges identification and addition of a project to the State's project portfolio via email or letter to the agency.

3.2 Project Tracking

QAT tracks specific information for projects included in the State's project portfolio. At a minimum, QAT tracks a quality assurance review status and a quality assurance review project risk for each project.

QAT assigns and maintains a quality assurance review status which reflects QAT assignment of the project's state throughout quality assurance review. A review status is first assigned when a project is included in the State's project portfolio. A review status is not synonymous with project status. Possible review statuses are:

Review Status	Description
Justification (default)	Initial state when a project is first identified for inclusion in the State's project portfolio
Approved	State of an approved project
Unapproved	State of an unapproved project
Waived	State of an approved project not selected for project monitoring
Monitored	State of an approved project selected for project monitoring
Hold	State of a monitored project placed on hold as communicated by the agency and confirmed by the QAT
Closed	State of a closed monitored project as communicated by the agency and confirmed by the QAT
Cancelled	State of a cancelled monitored project as communicated by the agency and confirmed by the QAT
Complete	State of a project after all quality assurance review requirements are satisfied and project is excluded from the State's project portfolio

QAT assigns and maintains a review project risk for each project based on analysis of various sources of project information. A review project risk indicates QAT's assessment of the project's risk factors and is first assigned when a project is approved. A review project risk is tracked throughout the quality assurance review life cycle and is indicated as:

Review Project Risk	Description
High	Major risk factors that impact the likelihood the project will not deliver a quality solution based on the estimated schedule, budget, and scope
Medium	Moderate risk factors that impact the likelihood the project will not deliver a quality solution based on the estimated schedule, budget, and scope
Low	Minimal risk factors that impact the likelihood the project will not deliver a quality solution based on the estimated schedule, budget, and scope

3.3 Project Approval

QAT reviews and analyzes a project's risk to determine whether to approve the project before the agency expends funds. Projects are approved based primarily on analysis of the Business Case, with a specific focus on the identified initial risk considerations. Other sources of information, such as the Statewide Impact Analysis and BOP, are used as supporting information for project approval.

QAT evaluates project information, including the Business Case using the Business Case Evaluation tool identified in Appendix C. QAT defines evaluating as assessing project deliverables and other sources of project information to identify missing data and determine the

clarity of content, gauge the level of risk to which the project may be subject, determine the current performance, and assess the progress of the project.

QAT assigns a review project risk to each project based on evaluation of the various sources of project information, including the Business Case Evaluation tool results and findings. The review project risk is used to approve projects.

Although projects approved by QAT typically match projects approved by the LBB, the QAT may make general project recommendations to the agency or legislature before the project is approved based on the assigned review project risk. These project recommendations are based on QAT's impact analysis of changes resulting from the legislative process. Legislatures may have made changes to the funding and scope of projects submitted in the ITD. For example, funding may have been appropriated for only 50% of the agency's requested amount. Reduced funding would have a definite impact on the proposed project scope and would require rescoping.

QAT communicates approval of the project to the agency via a letter no later than September 1 following the legislative session for those projects identified in the BOP. QAT approval of projects occurs after LBB approval of projects as identified in the BOP. QAT also communicates approval of a project within 30 calendar days from when a BOP amendment is approved by the LBB and the project is therefore identified for inclusion in the State's project portfolio.

4.0 Project Monitoring

QAT continually monitors certain projects by collecting data and using the data to assess project performance once the project is initiated. Project monitoring comprises selection of projects for monitoring, definition of a monitoring schedule, and on-going assessment of project performance.

Projects are monitored once a project is approved by the QAT, regardless of when and if a project is initiated. Essentially, QAT monitors approved projects not yet initiated to assess status and expenditure of funds. Once initiated, project performance is monitored for the entire project life cycle through closure, regardless of the reason for closure.

During monitoring, QAT takes action based on factors such as the current review project risk, and project performance issues and risks. QAT notifies the agency via email or letter of QAT Actions when necessary.

During monitoring, projects may have a review status of monitored, on hold, closed, or cancelled. A project may have been chosen for monitoring by the QAT and the agency later determined the project should be on hold, closed, or cancelled. QAT confirms the agency's determination and acknowledges a change of review status for monitoring via email or letter to the agency.

Following is a graphical view of project monitoring, including subprocesses and a notation for each. Each notated subprocess is described in a section of this Manual.
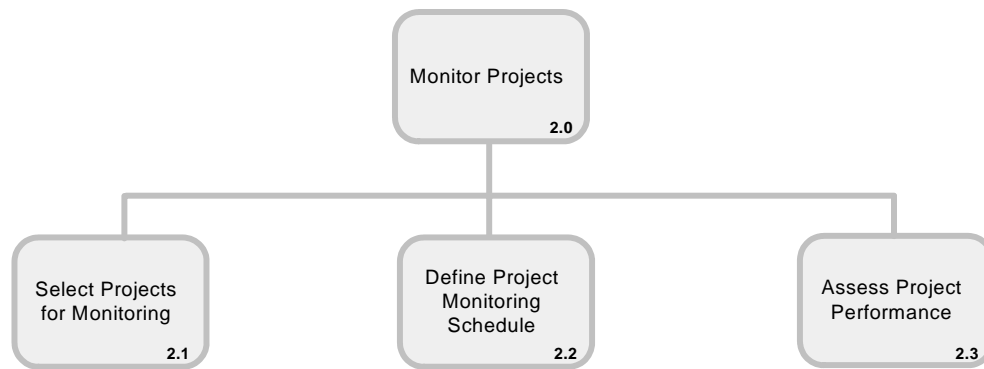
4.1 Project Selection

QAT selects which projects will be monitored when new projects are approved after inclusion in the State's project portfolio. Projects not selected for monitored are assigned a review status of waived. Projects previously selected for monitoring that span biennia continue to be monitored without reselection.

QAT analyzes various sources of project information, such as the Business Case, Statewide Impact Analysis, and BOP, to determine whether the project is monitored. Projects are selected based on factors such as the review project risk assigned during project approval, legislative direction, and project type and size.

4.2 Monitoring Schedule Definition

Once projects are selected for monitoring, QAT defines a monitoring schedule for the project. The monitoring schedule provides the reporting frequency for Monitoring Report submission and any other information requested by the QAT. Agencies submit a Monitoring Report and other requested information to the QAT based on the reporting frequency. The reporting frequency may be monthly, quarterly, every two months, every six months, or some other schedule as determined by the QAT. QAT determines and may change the reporting frequency based on factors such as the review project risk assigned during project approval, technology implications, and project type and size.

QAT communicates the monitoring schedule for a selected project to the agency via a letter no later than October 1 following the legislative session for those projects approved in the BOP. QAT also communicates the monitoring schedule for a selected project within 30 calendar days from when the project is approved following amendment to a BOP.

4.3 Project Performance Assessment

QAT continually assesses project performance to help projects have the means to achieve the stated outcomes. Project monitoring is also intended to aid the agency in identifying areas of high risk and possible failure points for projects.

QAT evaluates project information, including other submitted Framework deliverables and Monitoring Reports, using the Project Monitoring Evaluation tool identified in Appendix C. In addition to the Monitoring Reports, agencies submit a Project Plan (Project Plan, Communication Management Plan, Configuration Management Plan, Performance Management Plan, and Risk

Management Plan) during planning and implementation before spending more than 10% of project funds or issuing a solicitation. Agencies also submit an Acquisition Plan during planning and implementation before issuing a solicitation. Agencies use internal methods to track and determine whether the 10% threshold is satisfied. QAT evaluates project costs information and collaborates with CAT and TBPC to monitor proper submission of Project Plans and Acquisition Plans.

During monitoring, QAT reassigns a review project risk to each project based on analysis of various sources of project information, including the Project Monitoring Evaluation tool results and findings. QAT analyzes the effectiveness of scope, schedule and budget control, which is fundamental to achieving a quality project. QAT recognizes that understanding and managing the interrelationship of these three elements largely depends on agency monitoring and control of project risks.

QAT evaluates contract information to monitor contract amendment and change order changes. Agencies use internal methods to obtain agency head approval of amendment or changes orders that change the monetary value of the contract by more than 10% of the initial contract amount or significantly changes the contract completion date. Agencies notify the QAT when a 10% or greater change occurs via a letter and submission of the Framework Contract Amendment and Change Order Approval. QAT determines the extent of a 'significant' change to the contract completion date on a project-by-project basis based on project size, scope, and schedule.

In addition, for contracts having a total value in excess of $1.0 million, an amendment to the contract that changes the total value of the contract or any element of the contract by more than 10% of the total value of the contract requires QAT approval. QAT communicates approval of the amendment via a letter. Without this approval, the contract is invalid.

5.0 Project Verification

Following project monitoring, QAT verifies project results. QAT monitoring included monitoring project performance for the entire project life cycle through closure. Project verification comprises validation of closure and review of post project results.

During project verification, QAT takes action based on factors such as the current review project risk, and project verification issues and risks. QAT notifies the agency via email or letter of QAT Actions when necessary.
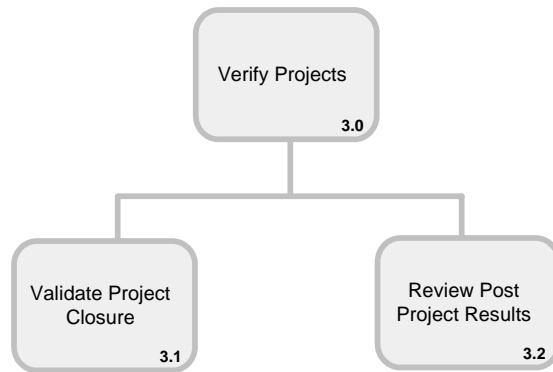
5.1 Validate Project Closure

QAT validates project closure based on analysis of various sources of information, including a specific focus on the planned project life cycle described in the Project Plan. QAT may request an agency to provide factual and objective proof of closure such as demonstration of system functionality or signed project artifacts. QAT establishes the validity of the agency's interpretation of full project closure based on current project evidence.

5.2 Review Post Project Results

QAT reviews project results following project closure. Agencies submit a Post-Implementation Review of Business Outcomes within six months after project closure. QAT reviews project information, including the Post-Implementation Review of Business Outcomes using the Post-Implementation Evaluation tool identified in the Appendix C.

QAT acknowledges exclusion of a project from the State's project portfolio via email or letter to the agency, indicated all quality assurance review requirements are satisfied. Acknowledgement occurs following QAT completion of a post project review.

6.0 Project Reviews

QAT conducts project reviews as needed. Project reviews are scheduled meetings with the agency held to specifically validate QAT analysis of project data from various sources. Project reviews establish formal contact with agency project teams and help to identify issues and risks that are unknown to QAT. Conducting project reviews comprises selection of projects for review and holding project review meetings.

Following is a graphical view of project monitoring, including subprocesses and a notation for each. Each notated subprocess is described in a section of this Manual.
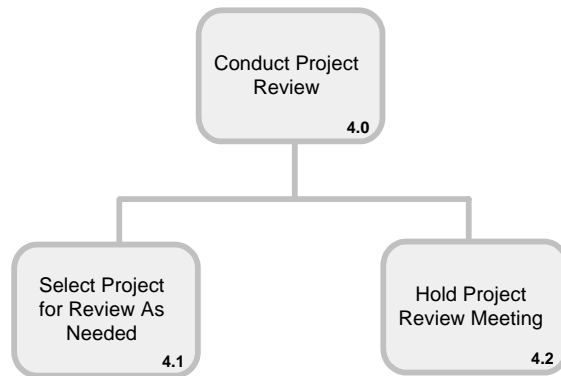
6.1 Project Selection for Review

QAT selects projects for review as needed based on project performance or issues identified during monitoring, QAT may schedule one or more project review meetings for a project. QAT notifies the agency when a project has been selected for review by initiating a project review meeting.

6.2 Project Review Meetings

QAT coordinates with each agency to schedule a project review meeting. QAT prepares and forwards a meeting agenda to the agency using the Project Review Agenda tool identified in Appendix C. The Project Review Agenda identifies whether the meeting will be held on-site at a location determined by the agency or off-site at a location determined by the QAT. QAT uses the Project Review Agenda as a standard agenda for all project reviews, requesting additional information on a project-by-project basis as needed. The agency uses the Project Review Agenda to anticipate, prepare, and address specific agenda items.

The agency determines who will attend the project review meeting. Attendees may include agency and contractor project personnel, subject matter experts (SME), project sponsors, executive leadership, and other stakeholders.

QAT documents project review results and findings using the Project Review Report tool in Appendix C. The Project Review Report summarizes project performance and any Monitoring Report discrepancies. QAT uses the Project Review Report as a standard report for all project reviews, providing additional information on a project-by-project basis as needed.

QAT also documents QAT Actions in the Project Review Report. QAT takes action based on factors such as the current review project risk, and project performance issues and risks. QAT notifies the agency via email or letter of QAT Actions when necessary.
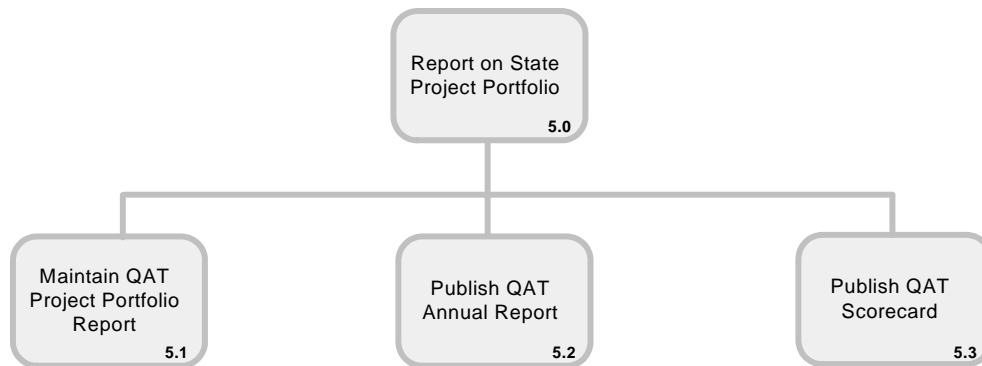
7.0 State Project Portfolio Reporting

QAT reports on the State's project portfolio. Reporting is a compilation of summarized information that represents QAT opinion of the current state and performance of projects for different purposes. Certain reporting is required by the legislature and certain reporting is necessary for

effective quality assurance review. State project portfolio reporting comprises maintaining a QAT project portfolio report, publishing a QAT Annual Report, and publishing a QAT scorecard.

While reporting on the State's project portfolio, QAT takes action based on factors such as the current review project risk, and project performance issues and risks. QAT notifies the agency via email or letter of QAT Actions when necessary.

Following is a graphical view of project porfolio reporting, including subprocesses and a notation for each. Each notated subprocess is described in a section of this Manual.

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                    │  Report on State │
                    │ Project Portfolio│
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│  Maintain QAT    │ │  Publish QAT     │ │  Publish QAT     │
│ Project Portfolio│ │  Annual Report   │ │  Scorecard       │
│  Report     5.1  │ │             5.2  │ │             5.3  │
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7.1   Project Portfolio Report

QAT maintains a QAT Project Portfolio Report as a baseline of projects included in the State's project portfolio. Although various reports are used by QAT, the QAT Project Portfolio Report is critical to quality assurance review. The Report provides a current snapshot of project information, useful for understanding the status of projects as they progress through the quality assurance review life cycle.

At a minimum, QAT continually tracks the following information provided in the Report:

- Project Name
- Agency Name
- Review Status
- Review Project Risk
- Initial Project Costs
- Other data as defined by QAT

7.2   Annual Report

QAT publishes an annual report by December 1 of each year. The QAT Annual Report summarizes trends based on issues identified with the State's project portfolio. The Report presents a summarized status of projects, including QAT assignment of project risk, estimated total project costs, expended total project costs, and other information.

QAT submits the QAT Annual Report to state leadership and archives for future reference. Before publishing, QAT collaborates with agencies to resolve reporting anomalies and allow agencies to respond to requests for additional information or clarification.

7.3 Scorecard

QAT plans to publish a scorecard on the QAT Web site as a summary of project performance for monitored projects for the preceding quarter. QAT uses various sources of project information, such as the Monitoring Report, Project Review Reports, and BOP, to produce the scorecard.

QAT plans to publish the scorecard 30 days after the end of each quarter to allow QAT to resolve reporting anomalies, and allow agencies to respond to requests for additional information or clarification before publishing.

More scorecard information will be provided in a future iteration of this Manual.

8.0 QAT Actions

Throughout quality assurance review, QAT makes decisions regarding which steps should be executed by QAT in response to findings. Descriptions of each QAT Action are:

Make legislative recommendations
QAT may identify and communicate general recommendations related to state projects directly to the legislature. While agencies retain responsibility for project management and success, QAT may provide recommendations to enhance the agency's ability to satisfy commitments made to state leadership. For example, QAT may recommend that the legislature review initial project commitments and provide agency feedback, thereby establishing clearer project goals and expectations.

Make project recommendations
QAT may identify and communicate general project recommendations directly to the agency. While agencies retain responsibility for project management and success, QAT may pinpoint recommendations to reduce project risks. For example, QAT may recommend that the agency consider additional project phases, thereby establishing a manageable project schedule and scope for each phase.

Request project information
QAT may request additional information (e.g., supporting data, project artifacts) to perform a more comprehensive analysis of current project data. For example, although an agency has already submitted a Project Plan, QAT may request an updated version to better understand a revised project scope.

Request Corrective Action Plan
QAT may request the agency to develop, submit, and act upon a Corrective Action Plan. Agencies may use the Corrective Action Plan tool identified in Appendix B. Once an agency establishes and submits the Corrective Action Plan, QAT uses those plans to further evaluate the project as part of quality assurance review. For example, QAT may use the Corrective Action Plan as a basis for project reviews.

Request project audit or assistance

QAT may specifically request SAO to perform independent audits, reviews, and non-audit services at the request and on behalf of the QAT. SAO provides input to QAT from an independent advisory perspective, inviting LBB and DIR to participate as needed. SAO performs the audit or review based on SAO policies, procedures, and practices that are outside the scope of QAT policies, procedures, and practices. Separate and distinct from QAT project reviews, execution of these services requires SAO to maintain a 'neutral' role as a member of QAT. For example, during an SAO audit or review, SAO represents SAO (independent of QAT) which may include participation by DIR or the LBB, and during a QAT project review, SAO participates as a member of QAT.

QAT may also specifically request the Comptroller of Public Accounts to verify the accuracy of project costs information provided by state agencies and to determine an agency's compliance with quality assurance review from a financial perspective. For example, QAT may request the Comptroller of Public Accounts to provide vendor expenditures for a project.

Take no action
QAT may take no action deliberately such as initiating a request for additional project information or making project recommendations to the agency. For example, although a project is experiencing turnover of key resources, QAT may determine the project has satisfactory risk management plans and will take no further action while continuing to monitor the project.

Appendix A – QA Review Project Flow

The following graphic depicts quality assurance review from the perspective of a project flow.

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                │ Identify Project │
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                         │◄──────────────────────┐
                    ◇ Approve ◇    no    ┌──────────────────┐
                    ◇ Project? ◇ ──────► │ Make Project or  │
                         │               │   Legislative    │
                         │ yes           │ Recommendations  │
                         │               └──────────────────┘
                    ◇ Monitor ◇    no    ┌──────────────────┐
                    ◇ Project? ◇ ──────► │ Waive Monitoring │
                         │               └─────────┬────────┘
                         │ yes                     │
                ┌──────────────────┐               │
                │ Continually Assess│               │
                │Project Performance│               │
                └────────┬─────────┘               │
                         │◄───────────────────────┘
                ┌──────────────────┐
                │  Verify Project  │
                │     Results      │
                └────────┬─────────┘
                         │
                    ┌─────────┐
                    │   END   │
                    └─────────┘
```
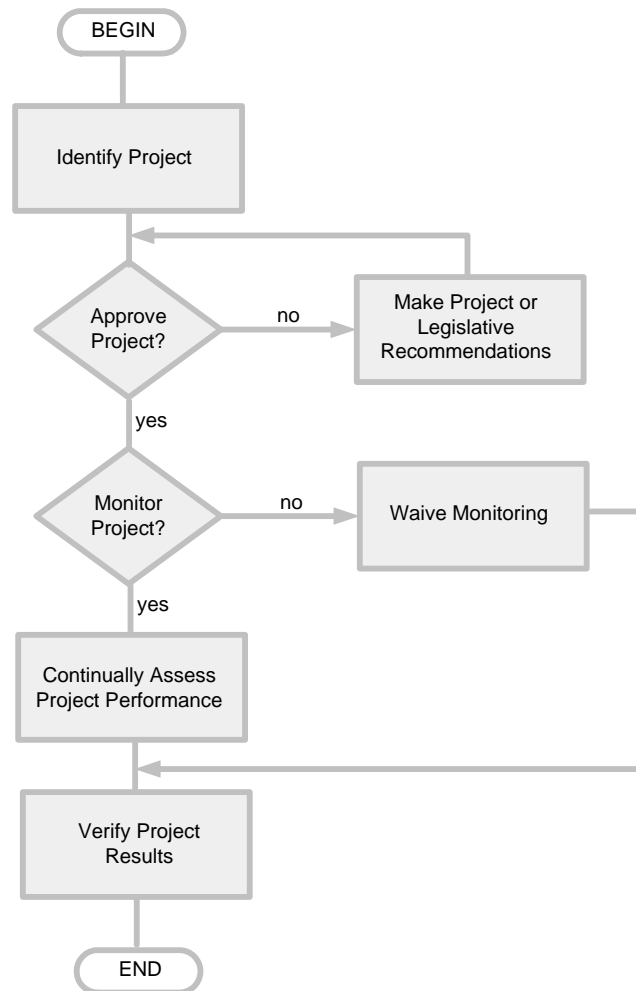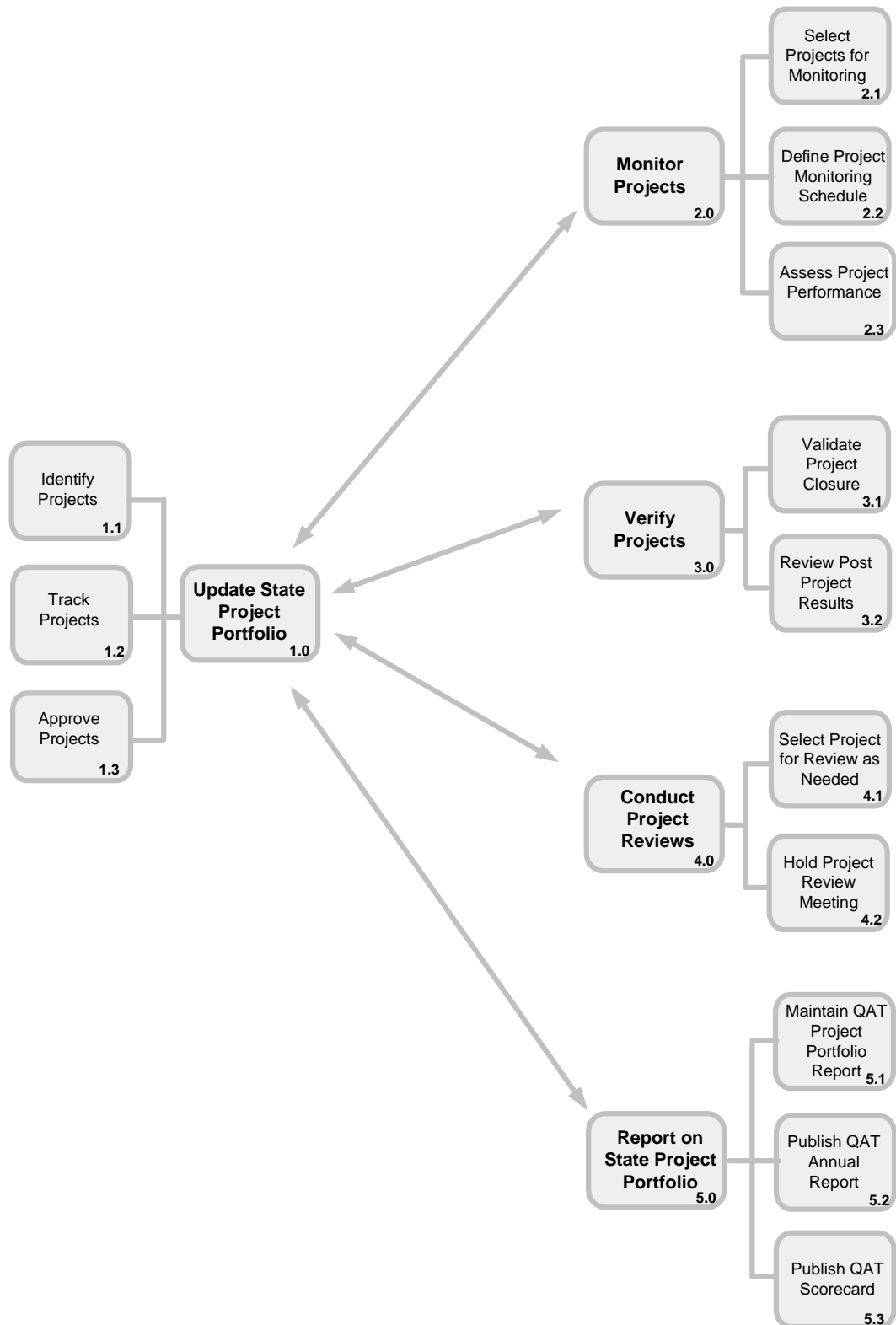
Appendix B – QA Review Process Quick Reference

The following graphic depicts major processes and subprocesses for quality assurance review in a single representation. The graphic may be obtained as a separate tool at **www.qat.state.tx.us/**.

Appendix C – Tools

The following tools are used during quality assurance review either by the agency or QAT. Current versions, as associated with the current version of the Manual, are identified.

Form Name	Version	Used By
Quality Assurance Review Process Quick Reference	1.0	agency
Business Case Evaluation	1.0	QAT
Project Monitoring Evaluation	1.0	QAT
Post-Implementation Evaluation	1.0	QAT
Project Review Agenda	1.0	QAT, agency
Project Review Report	1.0	QAT
Corrective Action Plan	1.0	agency

Appendix D – Service Levels

QAT commits to the following services:

Service	Commitment
Project Identification	Notifies
Project Approval	Notifies: • No later than September 1 following a legislative session for BOP projects • Within 30 calendar days from when a BOP amendment is approved
QAT Action	Notifies when applicable
Review Status	Notifies to confirm agency's determination of a project status change
Monitoring Selection	Notifies: • No later than October 1 following a legislative session for approved BOP projects • Within 30 calendar days from approval of a project following BOP amendment
Contract Amendment Approval	Notifies
Project Exclusion	Notifies
Project Review	Notifies

Appendix E – Glossary

QAT uses the following terms:

agency: as defined in Texas Government Code, Chapter 2054, a department, commission, board, office, council, authority, or other agency in the executive or judicial branch of state government that is created by the constitution or a statute of this state, including a university system or institution of higher education

BOP: Biennial Operating Plan provided by agencies as an ITD prior to a legislative session and is the approved ITD following a legislative session

business: activities that achieve the core mission(s) of the organization. The activities include providing direct services to constituents, and indirect support such as accounting and information resources management

business outcomes: results of a project that improve the ability of the organization to achieve its mission. Outcomes may include things such as fulfilling broad organizational goals, attaining specific operational objectives, and providing specific, measurable operational improvements.

CAT: Contract Advisory Team created to assist agencies in improving contract management practices comprised of five members, one from each of the Office of the Attorney General, Comptroller of Public Accounts, Department of Information Resources, Texas Building and Procurement Commission, and Office of the Governor

DIR: Texas Department of Information Resources

evaluating: assessing project deliverables and other sources of project information to identify missing data and determine the clarity of content, gauge the level of risk to which the project may be subject, determine the current performance, and assess the progress of the project.

finding: results of evaluating collected project information against quality assurance review standards; includes observations, opportunities for improvement, or noncompliance issues

ITD: Information Technology Detail provided by agencies that describes plans for information technology projects for the upcoming biennium

LBB: Legislative Budget Board

major information resources project: as defined in Texas Government Code, Chapter 2054, any information resources technology project identified in a state agency's biennial operating plan whose development costs exceed $1 million and that:

- requires one year or longer to reach operations status;
- involves more than one state agency; or
- substantially alters work methods of state agency personnel or the delivery of services to clients;

and any information resources technology project designated by the legislature in the General Appropriations Act as a major information resources project

project: as defined in Texas Government Code, Chapter 2054, a program to provide information resources technologies support to functions within or among elements of a state agency that ideally is characterized by well-defined parameters, specific objectives, common benefits, planned activities, a scheduled completion date, and an established budget with a specified source of funding

project costs: as defined in the Information Technology Detail (ITD) instructions, a total of all costs that are associated with a project, including all Information Resources (IR) internal staff costs and all IR procurements, whether purchased, rented, leased, leased for purchase, or licensed, for all hardware, software, and services, regardless of source of funding or method of procurement. The project life-cycle costs include all development costs until a project is placed in production. End-user staff members advising the project team on user requirements are not included in the project cost unless more than half of their time is devoted to the project.

project risk: likelihood that a project will not deliver a quality solution based on the schedule, budget, and scope commitments made to state leadership

project performance: accomplishment of work based on effective integration of scope, schedule, budget, and quality parameters of a project

project performance management: processes for comprehensively planning, measuring, and controlling the performance of projects

QAT: Quality Assurance Team created to perform quality assurance review comprised of representatives from the Legislative Budget Board, State Auditor's Office, and Texas Department of Information Resources

QAT action: specific activities triggered in response to implementing quality assurance review, excluding on-going administrative activities and actions

quality: degree to which the project fulfills the stated requirements and specifications

quality assurance review: continual assessment of overall project performance to determine whether the project satisfies quality standards

quality management: processes required to help ensure a project will satisfy the business goals and objectives; it consists of quality planning, quality assurance, and quality control

review project risk: QAT assignment of project risk based on assessment of a project's risk factors

review status: QAT assignment of the project's state throughout the quality assurance review life cycle and is not synonymous with project status

SAO: State Auditor's Office

scope: within the context of a project, the sum of the products and services to be provided by the project

stakeholder: a group or individual who can affect or who is affected by the project

TBPC: Texas Building and Procurement Commission

Texas Project Delivery Framework: consistent, statewide method to select, control, and evaluate projects based on alignment with business goals and objectives; captures a common set of project delivery data, and presents this data to agency and state leadership in such a way that project performance can be monitored based on uniform statewide quality standards and business needs

Appendix F – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Is QAT responsible for project management as part of quality assurance?

QAT is responsible for quality assurance review of projects at a state level. Quality assurance review does not involve QAT functioning as a statewide project management office with responsibility for management and success of projects. Each agency is responsible for developing and using sound project management practices, including full accountability for project success.

Why does QAT require agencies to demo system functionality as part of a project review?

A demo provides evidence of actual implementation versus planned implementation. QAT compares the status of demonstrated functionality to planned functionality as part of project scope.

Does quality assurance review apply to all projects?

Quality assurance review applies to major information resources projects as defined in Texas Government Code, Chapter 2054.

Is the 10 percent contract cost threshold based on the initial contract amount or an amended contract amount?

The contract cost threshold is based on the initial contract amount.

What happens if a project does not meet the QAT threshold for a major information resources project after the project has been initiated?

Nothing – required Framework deliverables must still be submitted for the project.

Appendix G – Contact Information

QAT

Contact Person	Contact	Phone	Email	Address
Richard Corbell	Primary	512-463-1200	qat@lbb.state.tx.us	Legislative Budget Board Attn: Richard Corbell REJ Building, 5th Floor 1501 N. Congress, Austin, TX 78701
Ralph McClendon	Secondary	512-936-9750		State Auditor's Office Attn: Ralph McClendon REJ Building, 4th Floor 1501 N. Congress, Austin, TX 78701
Dustin Lanier	Secondary	512-463-7120		Department of Information Resources Attn: Dustin Lanier 301 W. 15th, Ste. 1300, Austin, TX 78701

Texas Project Delivery Framework

Contact Person	Phone	Email	Address
Rose Wheeler	512-936-5900	rose.wheeler@dir.state.tx.us	Department of Information Resources Attn: Rose Wheeler R301 W. 15th, Ste. 1300, Austin, TX 78701

Contract Advisory Team / TBPC

Sergio Upton	512-463-8169	sergio.upton @tbpc.state.tx.us	Texas Building and Procurement Commission Attn: Sergio Upton 1711 San Jacinto, Austin, TX 78701