



Australian Government
Digital Transformation Agency

Digital Service Standard

Supporting agencies to deliver simple and seamless digital services

Version 2.0

Digital Transformation Agency



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Introducing the Digital Service Standard

The Digital Service Standard (the Standard) establishes the requirements for designing and delivering digital government services. The Digital Service Standard puts people and business at the centre of government digital service delivery. It guides digital teams to create and maintain digital services that are:

- user-friendly
- inclusive
- adaptable
- measurable.

The Data and Digital Government Strategy sets a 2030 vision for:

the Australian Government to deliver simple, secure and connected public services, for all people and business, through world class data and digital capabilities.

The Digital Service Standard supports this vision by promoting consistency across digital services and ensuring services:

- are accessible
- are secure
- are transparent
- meet the needs of people and business.

Version 2.0 of the Digital Service Standard has reduced the number of criteria to 10, compared to 13 criteria of the former version released in 2016. The changes reflect the government's increased level of digital maturity and adoption of trust and protection principles that have increased in the years since 2016. The updated Digital Service Standard strengthens inclusion and accessibility requirements, so no one is left behind when accessing government's digital services.

The **Digital Service Standard** is part of a suite of standards and guidance that sits within the **Digital Experience Policy**. The **Digital Experience Policy** supports a whole-of-government focus on improving the experience for people and business interacting digitally with government information and services. The **Digital Experience Policy** includes a suite of standards and guidance that supports agencies to deliver cohesive and consistent digital experiences, including the **Digital Inclusion Standard**, the **Digital Performance Standard** and the **Digital Access Standard**.

Services covered by the Digital Service Standard

The Digital Service Standard is mandatory and applies to digital services that are:

- owned by non-corporate Commonwealth entities
- informational or transactional
- new or existing public facing
- new staff facing.

This includes services provided through a website, mobile app or other digital platform

Version 2.0 of the Digital Service Standard will be assessed and enforced in 2 phases. Refer to the Transition approach section for details about the 2 phases.

Informational services

Informational services provide users with information, such as reports, fact sheets or videos. They may include:

- government agency websites
- smart answers and virtual assistants
- e-learning
- publications
- multimedia.

Transactional services

Transactional services lead to a change in government-held records, typically involving an exchange of information, money, licences or goods.

Examples of transactional services include:

- submitting a claim
- registering a business
- updating contact details
- lodging a tax return.

Staff-facing services

Staff-facing services provide information to government employees or support employee transactions. They may include:

- intranets
- learning management systems
- records management systems
- case/client management systems
- decision-making systems.

Services not covered by the Digital Service Standard

Agencies are recommended to apply the Digital Service Standard to existing staff facing services, though these services are not mandated.

The Digital Service Standard does not apply to:

- state, territory or local government services
- personal ministerial websites that contain material on a minister's political activities or views on issues not related to their ministerial role.

State, territory or local government and third parties may choose to apply the Digital Service Standard to improve access and discoverability of their digital services.

Some services may request an exemption from the Digital Service Standard. See the Exemptions section below.

Transition Approach

Implementation of the Digital Service Standard is phased to give agencies time to plan and update their services:

- **Phase 1: 1 July 2024** – New services
- **Phase 2: 1 July 2025** – Existing public-facing services

Phase 1 New services

From 1 July 2024, services that meet the following criteria will be required to meet Version 2.0 of the Digital Service Standard:

- public or staff-facing
- owned by non-corporate Commonwealth entities
- **new** informational and transactional services.

Example

new services designed or redesigned from 1 July 2024

▶ **Any new digital or ICT-enabled proposals coming forward in the 2024–25 MYEFO context will need to meet the requirements of the Digital Service Standard Version 2.0, as per the Investment Oversight Framework.**

Phase 2 Existing public-facing services

From 1 July 2025, services that meet the following criteria will be required to meet Version 2.0 of the Digital Service Standard:

- public-facing
- owned by non-corporate Commonwealth entities
- all **existing** informational and transactional services

Note: Existing staff-facing services are excluded

Example

▶ existing public-facing services

Public-facing services in existence prior to 1 July 2024 will be required to update their services to meet the requirements under Version 2.0 of the Digital Service Standard from 1 July 2025 or seek an exemption from the DTA.

As government service delivery and digital services mature, the DTA will review the Digital Service Standard and make improvements in line with agency application and feedback.

Meeting the Digital Service Standard

The Digital Service Standard is made up of 10 criteria to help government agencies design and deliver services that are user-friendly, inclusive, adaptable and measurable.

To successfully apply Digital Service Standard, government agencies must meet all the criteria.

The Digital Service Standard expects that agencies are working in an agile way, based on [agile values and principles](#) and using agile tools and techniques. Each criterion links to the most relevant stage/s of the [Service Design and Delivery Process](#). However, agencies are strongly encouraged to consider how the criterion applies across the whole service lifecycle and not just in the single phase identified.

It is recommended that agencies consider the non-digital experience of users to make sure services are inclusive and accessible for all.

Exemptions

The DTA acknowledge that some agencies may be unable to meet one or more of the criteria set out by the Digital Service Standard due to a range of circumstances. These circumstances may include but are not limited to:

- legacy technology barriers that the agency cannot reasonably overcome
- substantial financial burden caused by changing a service to meet criteria.

Exemptions may be granted for one or more of the criteria set out by the Digital Service Standard. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Exemptions must be applied for through the DTA.

Further information can be found in the [Digital Experience Policy Exemption Guide](#).

Note: Even if a service or website is not covered by the Digital Service Standard, or an exemption is received, obligations may still apply under relevant Australian legislation, for example accessibility requirements under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

Measuring success of the Digital Service Standard

We will measure success by reporting on agencies' compliance with the Digital Service Standard.

The DTA will provide oversight of adherence to the Digital Service Standard by collecting self-assessed and quantitative data from agencies. The Digital Service Standard will be implemented in line with existing processes, such as the IOF and Wave, where appropriate, to reduce administrative and compliance burden on agencies.

Agencies must report on compliance with the Digital Service Standard to the DTA within specified timeframes and maintain continuous improvement against performance measures.

- **For new services** this will apply from 1 July 2024
- **For existing public-facing services** this will apply from 1 July 2025.

We will engage with stakeholders on the implications of compliance and develop a reporting framework before reporting requirements are put in place.

The Digital Service Standard criteria

The Digital Service Standard consists of the following criteria.

Each criterion is accompanied by:

- an explanation of its purpose
- your responsibilities in meeting it
- when it should be applied within the [Service Design and Delivery Process](#)
- suggested activities to apply it
- further resources and guidance.

1	Have clear intent	Deliver public value by understanding the drivers behind your service and the ecosystem it will exist in.	page 9
2	Know your user	Understand when, how and why people use your service within the context of their lives to make it valuable to them.	page 12
3	Leave no one behind	Be cognisant of all users and deliberate in your efforts to ensure services are inclusive and accessible for all.	page 15
4	Connect services	Supports users to move between individual systems, services and processes with ease.	page 19
5	Build trust in design	Build trust through useful, easy and stable services.	page 22
6	Don't reinvent the wheel	Deliver public value by identifying and using common platforms, patterns and standards.	page 25
7	Do no harm	Protect users from adverse and unintended consequences by considering digital rights and how your service impacts upon these.	page 28
8	Innovate with purpose	Pursue innovation with a clear and meaningful objective, and harness new technologies to meet contemporary challenges.	page 31
9	Monitor your service	Monitor your service to ensure it operates smoothly, remains secure and caters for evolving user needs.	page 34
10	Keep it relevant	Respond to changing user needs and preferences. Set out to deliver impactful improvements and upgrades.	page 37

Criterion 1

Have a clear intent

A clear, high-level definition of the user problem being solved balances their needs with government priorities and requirements.

Your responsibilities

To successfully meet this criterion, agencies need to:

- develop a business case for change
- survey the policy and service landscape
- understand the service's lifecycle
- adopt an agile methodology.

When to apply

Apply Criterion 1 during the Discovery phase to gain a deep understanding of the problem, the service's business case and the policy and strategic landscape.

Revisit this criterion across the Service Design and Delivery Process to ensure the service remains fit for purpose as government evolves.

How to apply

Questions for consideration

- What problem exists?
- What is happening in the policy and service landscape?
- What government priorities and initiatives align to the problem space?
- What might success look like?

Develop a business case for change

Be outcomes focussed: Consider what problems the service needs to solve and why they are important. Share early-stage assumptions, gather diverse perspectives from stakeholders and take advantage of pre-existing data and resources. Clearly state the risks of action and inaction, who might be impacted, potential barriers to success and any knowledge gaps.

Frame the problem: Form a simple, clear problem statement from the evidence that's already available. Use it as the basis of further research and validation, and to identify the users agencies need to engage with.

Don't jump to solutions: Don't anticipate a technical or design solution before validating the problems identified. Evaluate the rest of the Digital Service Standard criteria to understand what else could drive the problem. Consider if a new solution is required or if an existing platform or service might achieve the best outcome.

Align stakeholders to a vision: Engage key stakeholders to establish a shared vision for success. Set clear expectations for the project and make sure everyone knows why change is necessary.

Survey the policy and service landscape

See the bigger picture: Assess how the problems identified play out in the broader policy and government service ecosystems. Use resources such as the [Australian Government Architecture](#) and [Delivering Great Policy Toolkit](#) to understand the landscape and the intentions of different policies.

Align to government priorities: Have a clear understanding of how the service will contribute to government priorities, including the achievement of the [Data and Digital Government Strategy 2030](#) vision.

Understand the service's lifecycle

Invest for the future: Consider whole-of-life investment costs, including maintenance and upgrades, to ensure proper investment across short, medium and long-term horizons. Make sure the team are familiar with the [Investment Oversight Framework](#) and its thresholds. Get in touch with the Digital Transformation Agency for questions about the [ICT Investment Approval Process](#) and work with the relevant area of the Department of Finance to understand ongoing costs.

Adopt an agile methodology

Use a multi-disciplinary team: Consider tools and techniques based on [agile values and principles](#). Engage a [multidisciplinary team](#) to understand the whole problem and create an effective solution. Monitor time and effort expended to understand and refine whole-of-life investment costs from the outset.

Guidance and resources

- ▶ [Data and Digital Government Strategy](#)
- ▶ [The Delivering Great Policy model](#)
- ▶ [Introduction to human-centred design - Victoria State Government](#)
- ▶ [Agile Manifesto](#)

Criterion 2

Know your user

Deeply understanding the contexts and reasons that users choose or avoid a service will reveal how to make it more valuable to them.

Your responsibilities

To successfully meet this criterion, agencies will need to:

- understand the service's users
- conduct user research
- test and validate designs.

When to apply

Apply Criterion 2 during the Discovery phase to validate initial assumptions made in Criterion 1 ('Have a clear intent'). Test and validate the service with users as knowledge of the problem grows.

User needs aren't static. Revisit this criterion across the Service Design and Delivery Process to provide reliable, accessible services to users, when they need them.

How to apply

Questions for consideration

- Who will use this service?
- What are their wants and needs?
- What are their pain points and frustrations?
- What is their current experience with this or other services?
- What devices and technology do they use?

Understand the users of the service

Listen carefully for implicit and explicit needs: During user research, discuss their daily lives and observe their real-world actions to contextualise their needs. Use a discussion guide to capture all aspects of their experience. While some needs or pain points will be stated explicitly, pay attention to small or superfluous details to recognise the implicit ones. Use at least 2 methods of user research to make sure what they say matches what they do. For example, open-ended interviews and observing users completing relevant tasks.

Begin with pain points: Identify and address the most common pain points that the service should address. Prioritise them by most impactful; this isn't necessarily the number of users affected. Adopt continuous improvement to address pain points that emerge after launch or upgrades.

Observe usage patterns: Use various data sources to identify how often different users use the service. Stress test any solutions for pain points along task journeys and assess load-bearing capacity during peak periods.

Map experiences: Use visual aids to make sure the breadth of user interactions are captured and that the team works from a shared understanding. Build, test and refine journey maps and job stories. This will help to understand the end-to-end user journeys and behind-the-scenes processes. It will also reduce unintentional duplication and support agencies to communicate findings.

Conduct user research

Test your assumptions: Validate assumptions made in Criterion 1 ('Have a clear intent'). Qualitative user research conducted directly with people who may be impacted by the service will provide agencies with either confirmation that they are on the right track, or that they are solving the wrong problem and need to adapt their approach.

Gather different perspectives: Undertake ethical and inclusive user research to capture a breadth of needs and capabilities. Zoom out and consider how the digital service interacts with the agency's wider methods of service delivery. It is helpful to zoom in and out of the problem space to observe the different perspectives and impacts of the service being designed, and to explore how the problem may manifest at macro and micro levels.

Test and validate your designs

Embed co-design: Where appropriate, use co-design to involve users and stakeholders and demonstrate transparent, equitable decision making. Avoid tokenism by meeting people's physical, cultural and psychological safety needs in consultations. Maintain ongoing user engagement to keep the service fit for purpose and address changing needs over the course of people's lives.

Engage designers: Make sure the team has the expertise to capture and interpret useful information from users' personal experiences. Use service designers and user experience (UX) designers to conduct user research, map experiences and design the service to meet and surpass the needs of all users.

Guidance and resources

- ▶ [Customer journey mapping \(Digital.NSW\)](#)
- ▶ [Journey maps \(Digital Profession\)](#)
- ▶ [Create a discussion guide \(Victorian Government Digital standards\)](#)
- ▶ [User Testing/Validation \(Think Design\)](#)
- ▶ [Putting innovation theory into practice \(Observatory of Public Sector Innovation\)](#)
- ▶ [Human-centred design playbook \(Victorian Government\)](#)
- ▶ [Human-centred design resources \(Queensland Government\)](#)

Criterion 3

Leave no one behind

A deliberate effort to challenge assumptions and design for marginalised users will ensure the service is inclusive, accessible and useful for all.

Your responsibilities

To successfully meet this criterion, agencies will need to:

- understand the diversity of your users
- comply with legislation and standards, including the:
 - *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
 - latest version of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)*
 - *Australian Government Style Manual*.
- implement a feedback mechanism

When to apply

Apply Criterion 3 during the Discovery and Alpha phases and build upon the understanding of users developed in Criterion 2 ('Know your user'). This criterion will extend outcomes to cater for the needs and unique challenges facing different user groups.

Adhere to this criterion in all phases of the Service Design and Delivery Process to keep up with changing user needs.

How to apply

Questions for consideration

- Who are the users that will use the service?
 - Which types, if any, are disproportionately affected?
 - How can agencies track impact on different types of users?
 - What cultural, language, access or socioeconomic barriers need to be planned for?
 - How will agencies make the service inclusive and accessible for all?
- How are the voices of marginalised and vulnerable users being heard?
- How will the service be available for people who can't use digital?
- Can existing inequalities be prevented in a digital world?

Understand the diversity of your users

Conduct segmented user research: Go broad and deep on the learnings from Criterion 2 ('Know your user') by conducting targeted and ethical user research. Make sure the service captures and responds to unique circumstances and needs.

Use data-driven insights: Collect and analyse information about different users to understand the different barriers they might experience when using the service. Eliminate these barriers through design and validate the effectiveness of solutions with real-world users.

Include non-digital users: Test how easily users can access the service to understand the impact of the digital divide. Make sure those users have a voice in decisions affecting them. Design omni-channel pathways that cater to non-digital access and experiences that some users rely on to access government services.

Form partnerships: Some types of users are under-represented in research, may be difficult to reach or require different or tailored engagement approaches. If this is the case, collaborate with other agencies, community groups or the private and not-for-profit sector to reach them.

Comply with legislation and standards

Use existing standards as a baseline: Comply with legislation and standards to make sure the service uses best practice and meets the expectations for government services. Consider any specific legislation or policies relevant to the service as well as the [*Disability Discrimination Act 1992*](#), the latest version of the [*Web Content Accessibility Guidelines*](#) (WCAG) and the [*Australian Government Style Manual*](#).

Offer content in alternate formats: Offer content in different mediums, such as text, images and audio and segment long documents or tutorials into chunks. Provide human-validated multilingual support for critical information. Evaluate the service with users who depend on assistive technology, integrate their feedback and resolve pain points through design.

Consider different platforms: Comprehensively test the service across devices and platforms users may access it through prior to launch. Anticipate how content will appear on different devices in designs and assess whether platform-specific interfaces support or fail to meet accessibility standards.

Design for affordability and connectivity: Design and develop the service to use as little bandwidth and data as possible. Where it suits the service, make it cache for offline access or offer downloadable, print-friendly versions of critical content.

Use accessible language: Use plain language in both the content and user interface to make sure the service is usable by all. Replace niche terminology or jargon with widely understood terms. Always adhere to the [*Australian Government Style Manual*](#) and [*plain language guidance*](#).

Implement a feedback mechanism

Incorporate feedback: Give users the ability to provide feedback, report issues and suggest service improvements. Act promptly on feedback and provide timely, transparent responses describing how it's being actioned.

Raise awareness of your service: Plan an ongoing awareness campaign and deploy it across a variety of channels to reach users. Consider training frontline staff so they can inform, suggest or demonstrate the service to people.

Guidance and resources

- ▶ [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- ▶ [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#)
- ▶ [Australian Government Style Manual](#)
- ▶ [First Nations digital inclusion plan](#)
- ▶ [Accessibility Toolkit – Vision Australia](#)
- ▶ [Dos and don'ts on designing for accessibility – Accessibility in government \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)
- ▶ [Four Principles of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(apsacademy.gov.au\)](#)
- ▶ [Online Accessibility Toolkit | Online Accessibility Toolkit](#)
- ▶ [Accessibility and Inclusivity Toolkit – NSW Government](#)

Criterion 4

Connect services

Designing and building a connected, interoperable service grants users a simple, seamless experience and enables government to function as one.

Your responsibilities

To successfully meet this criterion, agencies will need to:

- design for interoperability
- join up services.

When to apply

Apply Criterion 4 throughout Beta to ensure smooth integration with other government services and systems.

Adhere to this criterion across the Service Design and Delivery Process whenever new functionality, integrations or upgrades are introduced.

How to apply

Questions for consideration

- How will this service integrate with existing systems and data?
- What standardised protocols will be used to exchange data?
- How will we test for smooth interoperability with other platforms?
- How will the service accommodate future growth and change?
- What information does government already hold that the service could reuse?
- Which mechanisms will allow users to opt in or out of data sharing?

Design for interoperability

Share data: Always begin by reviewing any obligations against privacy policies and the *Privacy Act 1988*. If external data can be used, make the service interoperable and leverage governments' open datasets. Support safe, ethical data-sharing practices by using the government's [DATA Scheme](#).

Request information once: Assess the data the agency already collects and whether it can be reused to deliver the service. Where it can be reused, eliminate unnecessary data entry requests and fulfil a 'tell us once' approach.

Publish open APIs: Thoroughly document the service's APIs. Where appropriate, open them for other services and third parties to build upon existing government offerings. Align with the [API Design Standard](#) to support cross-jurisdictional data sharing, maintain a consistent, reusable vocabulary and support wider API literacy.

Plan for scale and flexibility: Make sure the service can cater for growth and changing preferences without impacting performance, functionality or stability. Embed adaptability into the design patterns from the outset to allow malleability that future changes may require.

Utilise a Digital ID: Where appropriate, endeavour to integrate the Australia Government Digital ID System, accredited by the [Trusted Digital Identity Framework \(TDIF\)](#), to allow users to access the service with a single set of credentials.

Align with joined-up services

Orient to life events: Design services around users' life circumstances, such as birth registrations or changes to their name, rather than forcing users to adapt to how government is organised. Clearly describe expected or potential next steps to contribute to a seamless experience and explore interlinking with other federal, state and territory services to reduce data-entry burden on users.

Guidance and resources

- ▶ [Trusted Digital Identity Framework \(TDIF\)](#)
- ▶ [Australian Government - API Design Standard](#)
- ▶ [Life Events | NSW Government](#)
- ▶ [Life Events | Digital Transformation Agency](#)
- ▶ [Life Events | APS Reform](#)

Criterion 5

Build trust in design

Making sure the service is useful, easy, inclusive, transparent and stable will build users' trust and confidence in government.

Your responsibilities

To successfully meet this criterion, agencies will need to:

- adopt transparent data handling
- implement security measures
- maintain a reliable service
- be accountable for the service.

When to apply

Apply Criterion 5 throughout Beta to protect users' digital rights and ensure robust security measures are in place.

As cyber threats become more prevalent and sophisticated, adhere to this criterion across the Service Design and Delivery Process.

How to apply

Questions for consideration

- How are users informed about the collection, use and storage of data?
- How will informed consent be obtained from users?
- Which encryption and authentication mechanisms will provide the most robust security?
- How does the service comply with data protection legislation and policies?
- What processes are in place to prevent misinformation?
- How is the service built to be resilient against cyber threats?
- What assurances are in place to promote ethical use of data?

Adopt transparent data handling

Consider privacy, consent and control: Safeguard user data by adhering to the [Australian Privacy Principles](#) and the [Privacy Act 1988](#). Always get explicit, informed consent before collecting a user's data and provide a means to update or delete it. Allow users to report inaccurate data and respond with how it has been rectified. Notify users about their responsibilities to protect their data, such as not sharing their password with others.

Eliminate ambiguity in the user interface: Provide validating feedback and progress tracking as users interact with the service. Design to eliminate the need for error messages in the first place. When creating error messages, make them understandable and actionable. Tell users what information they need before they start a task and, where appropriate, allow them to pause and resume at their own pace.

Implement security measures

Secure by design: Use the [Information Security Manual](#), [the Essential Eight](#) and other resources from the [Australian Cyber Security Centre](#) to thoroughly assess the service's threats, posture and protections. Plan for the requirements and [system hardening](#) that will support the service throughout design, build, operation and decommissioning.

Maintain a reliable service

Available and consistent: Make the service available, stable and consistent for users in different places and time zones, at different times, on different days. Schedule maintenance for a predictable period of downtime and give notice to users well ahead of time.

Be accountable for the service

Embrace contestability: Offer clear avenues for users to submit complaints, contest decisions or report issues, including security data and cyber concerns. To increase the likelihood of useful feedback, make avenues anonymous by default and identifying by choice wherever possible. To demonstrate that feedback has been addressed or will inform future action, provide users with timely and transparent responses. Responses should be tailored to the feedback.

Undertake periodic audits: Audit the service, data-handling practices, security incidents and compliance with whole-of-government policies. Use an independent review to test assumptions and identify issues that may be taken for granted. Use these results to improve and keep the service fit for purpose (Criterion 10 'Keep it relevant').

Guidance and resources

- ▶ [Australian Privacy Principles](#)
- ▶ [Privacy Act 1988](#)
- ▶ [Privacy for Government Agencies - Office of the Australian Information Commissioner](#)
- ▶ [Australian Cyber Security Strategy 2020 - Home Affairs](#)
- ▶ [Protective Security Policy Framework \(PSPF\) - Attorney General's Department](#)
- ▶ [Information Security Manual \(ISM\) - Australian Signals Directorate](#)
- ▶ [National Identity Security Storage - Home Affairs](#)
- ▶ [Building Trust in the Public Record - National Archives of Australia](#)
- ▶ [National Data Security Action Plan - Prime Minister & Cabinet](#)
- ▶ [Notifiable data breaches - Office of the Australian Information Commissioner](#)
- ▶ [Data and Digital Government Strategy | DDGS](#)
- ▶ [Essential Eight – Australian Cyber Security Centre](#)
- ▶ [System hardening and administration | Cyber.gov.au](#)
- ▶ [Better Practice Complaint Handling Guide – Commonwealth Ombudsman](#)

Criterion 6

Don't reinvent the wheel

Drawing on other agencies' experiences and adopting common platforms, patterns and standards will deliver value for government and familiarity to users.

Your responsibilities

To successfully meet this criterion, agencies will need to:

- 'build once, use many times'
- design for a common, seamless experience
- reuse data where possible.

When to apply

Apply Criterion 6 during the Discovery and Alpha phases to capture potential solutions, new and existing, that the service could use to solve problems.

Foster a culture of sharing experiences with other agencies, build on the learnings taken from them and align to common platforms, patterns and standards throughout the Service Design and Delivery Process.

How to apply

Questions for consideration

- What could be aligned with on the Australian Government Architecture?
- What platforms, patterns and standards could the service reuse?
- What are the alternatives to building from scratch?
- Which agencies run similar services that could be built upon?
- How can new or bespoke components be made for future reuse?
- What data do we already collect and can it be repurposed?

'Build once, use many times'

Apply reuse in decision making: Use the Australian Government Architecture to understand the tools, capabilities, policies and standards for building government services. Identify and document how they are applied in decision making.

Apply learnings from predecessors: Reach out to teams and agencies for their experiences and lessons creating similar services and how to apply them to other services.

Design for a common, seamless experience

Adopt open standards where appropriate: Consider how reuse and open standards can support other services across government. Where appropriate, design and build with them to bring the service to more platforms, improve data-sharing capability, prevent vendor lock-in and create familiarity for users.

Reuse data where possible

Review your existing data: Review the data already collected and how it can be reused in the service. Where appropriate, consider if safe, ethical data-sharing arrangements under the [Data Availability and Transparency Act Scheme](#). Actions to leverage ethical, data-driven decision making can be found in Criteria 5 ('Build Trust in Design') and 7 ('Do No Harm').

Guidance and resources

- ▶ [Australian Government Architecture](#)
- ▶ [Digital and ICT Reuse Policy](#)
- ▶ [Reuse Clauses – Digital Sourcing ClauseBank](#)
- ▶ [Digital Sourcing Lifecycle – BuyICT](#)
- ▶ [DATA Scheme – Office of the National Data Commissioner](#)

Criterion 7

Do no harm

Understanding how a service impacts users' digital rights and privacy will protect them from adverse and unintended consequences.

Your responsibilities

To successfully meet this criterion, agencies will need to:

- Protect users' digital rights
- Understand privacy impacts
- Understand the limits of data.

When to apply

Apply Criterion 7 throughout Discovery, Alpha, Beta and Live to identify and manage existing and emergent risks to users.

Adhere to the criterion through the entire life of a service to minimise and, ideally, eliminate negative impacts on users, even if unintentional.

How to apply

Questions for consideration:

- Are there any adverse or unintended consequences foreseeable?
- Which user rights will be most affected?
- What data is drawn upon for decision making?
- How will the findings of a Privacy Impact Assessment be addressed?
- How is the collection, use and storage of data being made clear to users?
- How is users' informed consent being obtained?

Protects users' digital rights

Uphold digital rights: Consider how the service might impact the digital rights of users. Build with pre-emptive measures in mind, such as net neutrality, access to information without censorship and freedom of online assembly. Identify users facing greater personal risks and make sure they're provided with the means to access, communicate and contest the service transparently or anonymously. If rights are breached, move quickly to implement changes that prevent future harm.

Consider flow-on effects: Consider the implications of the service beyond its immediate impacts. Workshop environmental, economic or social impacts and undertake scenario planning to explore unforeseen issues and opportunities.

Understand privacy impacts

Undertake a Privacy Impact Assessment: Undertake a Privacy Impact Assessment to capture issues. Mitigate unwarranted and unauthorised surveillance, data collection and malicious data breaches and share these actions with users.

Obtain consent: Where required, seek and obtain informed consent from users prior to collecting, storing or disclosing any of their data. Consider opt-out options and build the service to require as little user data as possible.

Be transparent: Communicate how data will be used or may be used in the future at the time of consent. This includes how it may be shared with other people or between services and secondary or less obvious uses.

Understand the limits of data

Use data ethically: Data should only be collected and used for the stated purpose that the user agrees to. Account for how data models, datasets and algorithms may produce discriminatory results and provide transparent detail to users on how decisions and calculations are made. Before sharing data, apply the [DATA Scheme's Data Sharing Principles](#) to help assess whether it would be safe to do so.

Use qualitative and quantitative data: Quantitative data, which is numeric or measurable, helps us understand what is happening on a service. Qualitative data, which is descriptive or observable, helps us understand why. Use both to fully understand the story and match any correlation with a provable causation. Do this before making important decisions.

Guidance and resources

- ▶ [DATA Scheme](#)
- ▶ [Guide to undertaking privacy impact assessments](#)
- ▶ [OAIC website](#)
- ▶ [Access and equity \(homeaffairs.gov.au\)](#)
- ▶ [Consent to the handling of personal information | OAIC](#)
- ▶ [Ensuring the protection of Human Rights](#)

Criterion 8

Innovate with purpose

Innovating with clear intent will give meaning and justification to harnessing new technologies and avoid new for the sake of new.

Your responsibilities

To successfully meet this criterion, agencies will need to:

- follow guidance on critical and emerging technologies
- maintain interoperability in the face of new technology
- track adoption of new technology

When to apply

Apply Criterion 8 during Discovery and Alpha to deliver modern, high-quality services.

Consider this criterion throughout the Service Design and Delivery Process to keep the service at pace with changing user expectations.

How to apply

Questions for consideration:

- How does a new technology benefit the service?
- How will agencies validate if new technology is interoperable with services?
- What can be learnt from other agencies' experiences?
- What are the ongoing requirements of supporting a new technology?

Follow guidance on critical and emerging technologies

Stay current: Technology can advance at a staggering pace. If available, refer to government guidance on risks, opportunities and developments for up-to-date advice on critical or emerging technology that may impact the service.

Regularly check the Australian Government Architecture: Follow published guidance in the [Australian Government Architecture](#) for the adoption of critical and emerging technologies.

Maintain interoperability in the face of new technology interoperability

Consider interoperability: Consider if new technologies will impact the service's interoperability. Plan for its introduction or implementation in partnership with other affected agencies to prevent further divergence or disconnection.

Be digital ready: Undertake an assessment of the preparedness for new technologies. Consider the resources and training for a new technology that will be required by the agency and team.

Track adoption of new technology

Track adoption: Prior to implementing a new technology, determine whether it aligns with the clear intent of the service and whether it risks leaving certain types of users behind. If implemented, monitor how users respond to the new technology and respond to any accessibility or usability concerns.

Guidance and resources

- ▶ [Interim guidance for agencies on government use of generative Artificial Intelligence platforms](#)
- ▶ [Promoting and protecting critical technologies – Department of Industry, Science and Resources](#)
- ▶ [Critical Technologies Statement](#)

Criterion 9

Monitor your service

Continuous monitoring and measurement of services will ensure they operate smoothly, remain secure and cater for users' evolving needs.

Your responsibilities

To successfully meet this criterion, agencies will need to:

- establish a baseline for the service
- identify the right performance indicators
- measure, report and improve according to strategies.

When to apply

Apply Criterion 9 during Beta and Live and consider it during Discovery. Collate metrics and monitor the service with a holistic approach and report results to build government's view of its services landscape.

Adhere to Criterion 9 across the Service Design and Delivery Process to promote continuous improvement.

How to apply

Questions for consideration:

- What attributes are currently being measured?
- What do existing results say about the service or opportunity?
- What is the story that the data tells us?
- How have results changed over time?
- What service improvements are necessary?

Establish a baseline for the service

Understand the current state: For existing services, determine the current state by identifying and reviewing existing metrics. For new services, establish a baseline for the problem identified in Criterion 1. Both are a yardstick to measure progress.

Use benchmarks to gauge performance: Compare the service to similar services or existing standards to identify areas of improvement. Seek out best practices of similar and well-performing services to consider if they can be adopted.

Identify the right performance indicators

Select meaningful metrics: Collect metrics that accurately capture the service's ability to deliver the outcomes that users expect. These might include adherence to design standards and privacy legislation, site/app performance, security benchmarks or tasks completed by users.

Measure, report and improve according to strategies

Measure against the Data and Digital Government Strategy: Make sure the service meets the [Data and Digital Government Strategy](#). Consider how information collected and reported could improve the service in line with the Strategy's implementation plan.

Apply benefits management: All digital and ICT-enabled investment proposals must define their purpose, outcomes and methods for measuring, monitoring and optimising them. Find out more in the [Benefits Management Policy](#).

Guidance and resources

- ▶ [Measuring cost per transaction](#)
- ▶ [Measuring completion rate](#)
- ▶ [Measuring user satisfaction](#)
- ▶ [Establish metrics – Service NSW](#)
- ▶ [Measure how content performs](#)
- ▶ [Collecting data to measure performance | Digital.NSW](#)

Criterion 10

Keep it relevant

By responding to users' feedback and changing needs with impactful improvements, the service will remain fit for purpose.

Your responsibilities

To successfully meet this criterion, agencies will need to:

- improve the service across its life
- schedule regular assessments
- communicate service upgrades.

When to apply

Apply Criterion 10 during Beta and Live phases to test the effectiveness of your improvements with users.

Consider this criterion across the Service Design and Delivery Process to ensure the service remains fit for purpose.

How to apply

Questions for consideration:

- What is outdated or needs improving?
- What is and isn't working?
- What feedback has been received?
- How will changes be communicated?
- How do improvements align with the performance indicators set?

Improve the service across its life

Make improvements: Increase people's use of the service by continuously optimising performance, enhancing security, introducing relevant features, addressing bugs and increasing compatibility. Use metrics identified in Criterion 9 ('Monitor your service') to reveal the biggest opportunities for impact and ground improvements in evidence. Provide adequate training and materials for staff to support change.

Schedule regular assessments

Undertake assessments: Define the goals and scope of the assessment then observe performance and experience over time. Performance metrics might include load times, responsiveness or bottlenecks. Experience metrics might include entry/exit points, dwell time or task abandonment. Ongoing monitoring should be part of business-as-usual processes and a detailed review part of regular service evaluation.

Communicate service upgrades

Communicate the change: Develop a communication plan for how, when and through which channels to share updates and findings with users. When writing content, show how users' feedback informed the actions that have been taken. Highlight key achievements or milestones reached and use real-life stories to demonstrate how users shaped change.

Guidance and resources

- ▶ [NSW service performance dashboard](#)
- ▶ [Using performance data to improve your service](#)
- ▶ [Monitor and improve](#)