REMOTE REVIEWS GUIDE

OVERVIEW

- The move to remote Reviews in response to COVID-19 occurred relatively quickly. Project Teams, Reviewers and the GCA have responded to the change and Reviews have been progressing as planned, ensuring Assurance and project progress are maintained.

- This note brings together some early feedback and lessons learnt designed to assist in all aspects of a remote Review.

BEFORE THE REVIEW

The Project Team should select a suitable freely available, digital collaboration platform. Infrastructure NSW is using MS Teams for Reviews which generally involve small meeting groups. MS Teams enables presentations and other material to be presented to meeting attendees via shared screen functionality.

The GCA Review Manager may organise a quick catch up with the Review Team to check that MS Teams (or another platform) is working for everyone. This allows for troubleshooting prior to the commencement of the Review, ensures the Review Team is comfortable with the approach to the remote Review and aligned on how they will work together.

The Review Team should agree on how they will communicate amongst themselves during the Project Briefing and Interviews, recognising that this is more difficult when sitting remotely. Review Teams have used instant messaging group chats to coordinate comments and questions during Interviews.

Identify a single point of contact within the Project Team who is responsible for meeting coordination and additional information requests from the Review Team.

PROJECT BRIEFING

Commence the Project Briefing with a 30 minute catch up including the Agency Review Lead, the Reviewers and GCA Review Manager to make sure everyone is connected and can work effectively.

Circulate any presentations, videos or other material to be presented, in advance as shared screen presentations, particularly where maps and plans are being shown, may be difficult to read.

Ensure there are pauses through the presentation to allow for questions and discussions.

Schedule comfort breaks.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews should be set up as separate meetings so interviewees clearly understand when their interview is scheduled to start and there is no risk of entering the previous interview. Remote interviews can take longer than face-to-face interviews.

Schedule 10-15 minute breaks between interviews to allow for interviews to run over, Review Team discussions and comfort breaks. Additional time should be allowed for morning tea and lunch breaks.

It is useful for the Review Team to agree who will lead each interview in advance and a system for indicating if others want to ask questions, for example, unmuting the microphone, to avoid speaking over each other.

If possible, Reviewers and interviewees should have their cameras on during interviews.

Schedule a Review Team only meeting of 30-45 minutes at the end of each interview day to allow the Review Team to debrief on the day and prepare for the next day.

The Review debrief with the SRO can occur at the conclusion of the interviews but allow sufficient time for the Review Team to discuss and align their observations, noting that this usually takes longer in a remote Review.

Project teams should be prepared to be flexible in the interview schedule. This may mean an extra half day for interviews, and / or addressing subsequent emails with extra questions from the Review Team.

REPORT WRITING

Feedback suggests report writing can be more challenging for remote Reviews. Consider using MS Teams, Google docs or another platform to collaborate and allow 'whiteboarding' of ideas.

GENERAL

MS Teams has a chat / comments function which is useful during meetings but attendees should be aware that comments can be seen by everyone.

Muting microphones when not speaking minimises feedback / background noise problems.

Turning videos off when not speaking can be useful when bandwidth is limited.

If Review Team Members need technical assistance, they should get in touch with the GCA Review Manager who in turn can access IT support