BIM Project Inception Guide

This NATSPEC BIM Paper assists clients working with their Lead BIM Advisor to clarify and define their BIM requirements at project inception for the purpose of engaging the project team, with the goal of maximising the value of BIM to the project. It is designed to be used with the NATSPEC Project BIM Brief template and NATSPEC National BIM Guide.

The clear definition of BIM requirements prior to engagement allows consultants to scope and price their services more accurately when preparing bids, reducing the risk of having to renegotiate them later.
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NATSPEC believes that digital information, including 3D Modelling and Building Information Modelling will provide improved methods of design, construction and communication for the Australian construction industry. Further, NATSPEC supports open global systems. This will result in improved efficiency and quality.

Formatting conventions used in the NATSPEC BIM Project Inception Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text type</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Indicates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal italicised text</td>
<td>Project BIM Brief</td>
<td>The name of a specific document or standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey bold text</td>
<td>BIM uses</td>
<td>A cross reference to a Section, Clause, Table, Diagram, etc, in this document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue text</td>
<td><a href="http://www.natspec.com.au">www.natspec.com.au</a></td>
<td>Hyperlink/weblink</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes
In this document:
- ‘The Inception Guide’ shall be taken to mean the NATSPEC BIM Project Inception Guide.
- The numbering of Tables, Diagrams and Figures is derived from the Clause in which they appear.

Comments
NATSPEC thanks the many people and organisations that have assisted in the development of this document.
NATSPEC welcomes comments or suggestions for improvements to the NATSPEC BIM Project Inception Guide and encourages readers to notify us immediately of any apparent inaccuracies or ambiguities. NATSPEC also encourages users to share their experiences of applying it on projects with us.
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Website: www.natspec.com.au
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The **BIM Project Inception Guide** assumes familiarity with BIM and associated concepts. For more information on BIM visit the NATSPEC BIM Portal. See Resources > **Introduction to BIM** and Resources > **Glossary**.

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### Key points of the NATSPEC BIM Project Inception Guide

- The ability to influence whole of life costs is greatest during the earliest stages of the project.
- A clear brief and thorough project planning is critical for a successful outcome.
- Engage a well-qualified Lead BIM Adviser at the beginning of the project.
- Follow a structured process for defining BIM requirements and engaging the project team, as outlined in the *Inception Guide*.
- Use a structured process to select BIM uses that support project goals and objectives.
- Clearly define client information requirements and deliverables for each phase of the project, particularly for facility management, and document them in the Project BIM Brief prior to issuing Requests for Proposals for project team members.
- One of the key advantages of BIM is the ability to effectively capture data that will be useful during the operational phase of the project – take a whole of lifecycle approach.
- Contractors provide valuable project experience and deliver the bulk of facilities management information – involve them in project planning and design phases as early as possible.
- Base consultant and contractor selection on their demonstrated capabilities with respect to the requirements documented in the Project BIM Brief, rather than on marketing-style statements.
- Consultant and contractor bids should follow the format requested in Requests for Proposals to assist comparison and assessment based on stated performance criteria.
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE
The Inception Guide is to assist the client and Lead BIM Adviser clarify and define their BIM requirements at project inception for the purpose of engaging the project team, with the goal of maximising the value of BIM to the project.

1.2 INCEPTION PROCESSES
The Inception Guide outlines two processes:

1. The BIM project team engagement process. See Figure 2.1. It also provides guidance about what should be included in Requests for Proposals (RFP). It prompts the client and Lead BIM Adviser to make key strategic decisions regarding model use and deliverables prior to requesting proposals from consultants and contractors.

2. The BIM requirements definition process. Investing effort in the early definition of requirements reduces the risk of abortive work and loss of direction later in the project. It is crucial to the team engagement process because it allows consultants and contractors to scope and price their services more accurately when preparing bids, reducing the risk of having to renegotiate them later. BIM requirements can be documented using the NATSPEC Project BIM Brief template.

2 BIM PROJECT INCEPTION PHASE

2.1 INCEPTION ROLES
The roles associated with the project inception phase included in the Inception Guide are summarised below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>The organisation or individual procuring the building or infrastructure development. Although the client may be different to the employer or owner, this term has been adopted for the role described in this document. Day-to-day functions during inception may be performed by client’s agents or representatives. The client enters into a contractual relationship with the Lead BIM Adviser early in the inception process and consultants and contractors at the end of the consultant &amp; contractor selection process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead BIM Adviser</td>
<td>The organisation or individual responsible for assisting the client to define their BIM requirements for the project and coordinating the selection and engagement of the project team. They facilitate liaison between the client and prospective consultants and contractors. The role may be performed by an organisation or individual with expertise in construction project management supported by a BIM expert or experts. For this document the title applies to the role played up to the point of team engagement. The same organisation or individual may continue in a similar executive role, e.g. Lead Consultant, Design Lead, Construction Lead after this point or pass these responsibilities on to others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Consultants & Contractors | Professional organisations or individuals to be appointed by the client to perform expert tasks on a project such as design, documentation and management. For the purpose of this document it also includes the contractor in the following roles:  
  - Executive: e.g. managing the design team under a D & C contract.  
  - Advisory: e.g. providing advice and/or direction on buildability or constructability.  
  - Information provider: e.g. as the party nominated to provide as-built data during construction and commissioning. |

The NATSPEC BIM Portal includes a client – Lead BIM Adviser discussion checklist which summarises some of the issues that need to be considered during initial meetings. See Resources > Templates, proforma & checklists.
### 2.2 BIM PROJECT TEAM ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

#### 2 stage BIM capability assessment:
- **Request for Qualification (RFQ) stage:** A general statement of capability, unrelated to any specific project, requested from potential consultants.
- **Request for Proposal stage:** BIM Capability Statements in this instance address the specifics of the project and the BIM uses identified in the Preliminary Project BIM Brief.

#### Features of the BIM project team engagement process

**Assumptions:** That constraints associated with the project such as budget and planning approval conditions have been sufficiently investigated to determine the project’s feasibility and it is sensible to start assembling the project team.

**Start point:** During initial discussions between the client and Lead BIM Adviser.

**End point:** Signing of Client/Consultant agreements for the project team.

**Key process deliverable:** Project BIM Brief.

**Primary outcome:** Engagement of the core project team.

**Supporting documents:** Refer to 2.3 Inception documents for details.

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#### Figure 2.2 BIM project team engagement process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements Definitions</th>
<th>Requests for Qualifications</th>
<th>Qualification Assessment and BIM Brief Formulation</th>
<th>Requests for Proposals</th>
<th>Proposal for Assessment and Acceptance</th>
<th>Team Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>Request for Qualification</td>
<td>Draft Preliminary Project BIM Brief</td>
<td>Recommend consultants</td>
<td>Approve recommendations and amended</td>
<td>Sign Client/Consultant Agreement including (Final) Project BIM Brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead BIM Adviser</td>
<td>Request for Qualifications</td>
<td>Distribute Request for Proposal and Preliminary Project BIM Brief</td>
<td>Assess Bids</td>
<td>Approve Preliminary Project BIM Brief</td>
<td>Sign Client/Consultant Agreement including (Final) Project BIM Brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants &amp; Contractors</td>
<td>Qualification Statement</td>
<td>Submit Bid including proposed BIM response &amp; fee proposal</td>
<td>Distribute Request for Proposal and Preliminary Project BIM Brief</td>
<td>Recommend consultants and amendments to Preliminary Project BIM Brief</td>
<td>Sign Client/Consultant Agreement including (Final) Project BIM Brief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See 3.1 BIM requirements definition process for more details.
2.3 INCEPTION DOCUMENTS
The consultant and contractor engagement process is supported by a number of documents. Refer to Figure 2.2 to see how they relate to it.

**Client Brief**
A statement of the client's project requirements which provides the basis for its design and documentation. It fundamentally influences the nature of BIM implementation. It includes:
- Statement of need
- Client's vision statement
- Project description
- Site information
- Functional requirements
- Design and operational policies
- Performance and quality requirements
- Client/Employer information requirements
- Programme
- Budget

**Request for Qualifications (RFQ)**
A request from the Lead BIM Adviser to prospective consultants and contractors for a statement of their capabilities with respect to typical types of work procured by the client.

**Qualifications statements**
A statement sent by consultants and contractors to the Lead BIM Adviser in response to a RFQ. They should follow the format requested in the RFQ to assist comparison. For uses where they state a capability, consultants should be requested to provide details of anything they require from other team members in order to implement them, e.g. file formats, model, content, model setup. These statements can form the basis of a register of prequalified consultants and contractors for projects the client is likely to undertake, or the basis for selecting a short list of potential consultants or contractors for a specific project.

**Request for Proposal (RFP)**
A request from the Lead BIM Adviser to prospective consultants and contractors for a statement of their proposed response to the specific requirements of a project. The RFP includes information consultants and contractors require to make a reasonable assessment of the scope of services required so they can calculate their fees. It should include the Client's Brief and Project BIM Brief. It may also include concept designs, schematic designs, etc.

**Consultants' bids**
A document sent by consultants and contractors to the Lead BIM Adviser in response to a Request for Proposal (RFP), which includes information such as their proposed scope of services and fees. Bids are the basis for consultant and contractor selection for the project.

**Project BIM Brief (PBB)**
There are two key editions:
- Preliminary PBB: Documents the client's BIM requirements, taking into account the RFQ BIM Capability Statements of consultants and contractors.
- Final PBB: Documents the client's BIM requirements following assessment of the RFP BIM Capability Statements of consultants and contractors. It is finalised in response to bids and any subsequent negotiations, and appended to project team Client/Consultant Agreements.

**BIM Capability Statements**
A statement of BIM capability provided by consultants and contractors to the Lead BIM Adviser. There are 2 types:
- RFQ BIM Capability Statement: A statement of general BIM capability included in Qualification Statements, provided in response to a RFQ.
- RFP BIM Capability Statement: A statement describing proposed responses to the specific requirements of the Project BIM Brief included in a consultant's or contractor's bid, provided in response to a RFP.

**Client/Consultants agreements**
Project Client/Consultant agreements should be based on industry-standard or client-standard documents and, prior to their signing, appended to the Project BIM Brief.

Key to document authors
- Client
- Lead BIM Adviser
- Consultants and Contractors

For templates of some of the above documents visit the NATSPEC BIM Portal.
See Resources > Templates, proforma & checklists.

The NATSPEC Project BIM Brief template has the advantage of being aligned with the NATSPEC National BIM Guide. See NATSPEC BIM Documents > National BIM Guide.

For a template of a Client Brief visit the Australian Institute of Architects Acumen website.
See Project > Project inception > Brief.
3 BIM REQUIREMENTS DEFINITION

3.1 DEFINITION PROCESS

Figure 3.1 below summarises the BIM requirements definition process. It shows the main elements requiring definition, which are examined further in this section.

![Figure 3.1 BIM requirements definition process](image)

3.2 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

High priority should be given to determining the project procurement strategy, e.g. Design-Bid-Build (DBB) (traditional method), Design and Construct (D&C), Early Contractor Involvement (ECI), Managing Contractor (MC), Alliancing. The procurement strategy directly influences the selection of project team members and BIM processes such as model development.

Contracts supporting the procurement delivery system will need to define:

- The integration or separation of risk and responsibilities for the design and construction contracting entities, and therefore,
- The division of responsibilities for model development. There may, for example, be only one BIM Manager throughout the project if D&C or ECI is used, and potentially two, a Design and a Construction BIM Manager if DBB is used.
- This will also influence model development. It will determine whether there are separate design and construction models, developed sequentially, or whether they can be developed in parallel or combined. How design responsibilities are distributed for major subcontract packages also directly influences the extent to which the design of building elements is resolved by one party before being passed onto another for finalisation.

The procurement strategy will also determine the level of client involvement at each project stage. The commitments demanded by each procurement strategy should be clearly understood by the client when considering options.


See Technical Resources > TECHreports > TR 06 Procurement Past and Present.


3.3 CLIENT INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

The client’s primary responsibility at project inception is to clearly define and articulate their project and information requirements. However, not all clients will be able to articulate them to the extent necessary to define detailed BIM requirements – the Lead BIM Adviser may need to assist.

References and templates that can assist the definition of client information requirements can be found at [www.bimtaskgroup.org/bim-eirs/](http://www.bimtaskgroup.org/bim-eirs/)

3.4 BIM USES

Many of the difficulties associated with implementing BIM stem from not adequately defining how it is to be used. A crucial early step during project inception is to identify which BIM uses are appropriate for realising project goals.

BIM uses are deliberately not presented as being intrinsically linked to project phases. It is much more appropriate to select BIM uses that support project goals at the beginning of the project and then plan how they will be deployed during different phases of the project.
With BIM, the effective management of data is essential for anything beyond basic geometrical modelling. Each specific BIM use has significant datasets associated with it which have to be managed over extended periods of time. Each additional use multiplies the effort required to manage a model. Including non-essential data only makes finding required information more difficult – select uses carefully, and before adding any data to the model, always ask the question: “Who will need this information, and what are their requirements?” Once BIM uses have been finalised, many aspects of planning the implementation of BIM can be resolved with greater certainty.

**BIM uses included in the NATSPEC National BIM Guide**

Depending on how they are defined, the list of uses for BIM is almost endless. The *NATSPEC National BIM Guide* identifies the following 24 BIM uses:

1. Modelling existing conditions.
2. Site analysis.
3. Space and equipment validation.
4. Architecture – spatial and material design models.
5. Design visualization for communication and functional analysis.
6. Documentation.
7. Code checking.
8. Sustainability evaluation.
11. MEP virtual testing and balancing.
12. Lighting analysis.
13. Other engineering analysis.
14. Quantity Take-off and Cost Planning - 5D.
15. Clash detection/coordination.
16. Construction system design.
17. Digital fabrication.
18. Construction scheduling and sequencing - 4D.
19. Site utilisation planning.
20. Lift planning.
22. COBIE/commissioning.
23. Other FM information handover/commissioning systems.

See *NATSPEC National BIM Guide Part 7: Requirements for using BIM* for more detailed descriptions of these uses.

The NATSPEC BIM Portal includes a BIM uses checklist as an aid to defining the extent of BIM implementation and scope of consultant and contractor services on a project. See Resources>Templates, proforma & checklists.

### 3.5 BIM USE SELECTION

Use a structured process to select BIM uses that support project goals and objectives, and align them with the capabilities of available consultants and contractors.

**Goals of BIM implementation:** Goals should be based on stated performance criteria, for example:

- Reducing project duration.
- Reducing reworks.
- Improving quality or safety.
- Improving building operability/maintainability.

At the outset of the process, define performance measurement methods for the purpose of comparing alternative options. Some criteria may be difficult to quantify realistically so more qualitative methods such as rating, ranking and weighting may need to be devised.
3.6 DELIVERABLES
Deliverables and BIM uses are two sides of a coin – BIM uses represent the tool or process – deliverables represent the output. For this reason, deliverables directly influence the selection of BIM uses for a project. Deliverables also directly influence model content. To extract the required deliverables from a model, the relevant data has to be inputted, e.g. data about doors to generate door schedules. Working out the deliverables required is best done from a whole of project lifecycle perspective. This includes identifying the information the client and team needs for decision making purposes at key points in the project. Identifying the information required during the operational phase of a building and working back through the construction and design phases – “Beginning with the end in mind” – will also help the definition of deliverables. This highlights the value of involving the building’s operators and the contractor early in the project so that they can contribute effectively to the process. It should be borne in mind that the contractor usually delivers the bulk of information the client needs for facility management purposes.

3.7 PACKAGING AND PROGRAMMING DELIVERABLES
Once the required deliverables have been identified, it is useful to subdivide them into defined packages (data drops) based on:
- who will have primary responsibility for providing them; and
- at what point in the project programme they are required. See Figure 3.7.

This assists the preparation of Requests for Proposals and the assessment of consultants’ bids. As part of the process it is also important to decide which deliverables will be derived directly from models, and which will be produced by other means.

![Figure 3.7 Examples of deliverables over the project lifecycle](image)

Figure 3.7 shows the relationship between data drops and the project lifecycle. Data drops include information which assists effective decision making by the client and project team about the project.

A sample data drop specification can be found at [http://www.bimtaskgroup.org/cobie-data-drops/](http://www.bimtaskgroup.org/cobie-data-drops/)

**Categories of deliverables by type**
The definition of deliverables can be assisted by further categorising them for different purposes, for example:

**Project description and documentation**: These are deliverables required internally by the project team to progress the project’s design and construction. They include briefing documents, spatial programs,
room data sheets, design development models and drawings, analysis and simulation studies, design, coordination and cost planning reports, documentation for consenting authority approval, tendering and construction, construction sequencing and site utilisation studies, as-built or record models and drawings, commissioning and handover information.

These are deliverables created in response to the brief. They include items not necessarily explicitly specified by the client, but which imply, at a minimum, standard industry practice. The use of BIM and other innovations can provide benefits such as improved coordination, better cost control and design optimisation through simulation; offering new opportunities to raise project standards of quality and performance.

**Project management:** These are deliverables required internally by the design team for the collaborative planning, management and administration of the project. They include BIM management plans, programs, minutes of meetings, RFIs and reports on project planning, execution, progress and coordination.

**Client:** These are deliverables additional to those noted above which may be required to satisfy client review and approval processes, e.g. special visualisations or reports for stakeholder consultation or marketing. Reporting requirements can vary significantly from client to client and entail significant effort, so it is important that the client’s expectations in this area are well defined. Procurement strategies which involve lower levels of direct client involvement in the project may result in more time spent on formal report preparation.

Apart from content, the client may have technical requirements associated with their existing IT systems, software platforms and management systems, e.g. data exchange formats, co-ordinate systems, compliance plans, delivery strategies for asset information.

Unless the client specifies other standards, deliverables should conform to the requirements of the NATSPEC National BIM Guide, Clause 10.10: Final BIM Deliverables.

**As-built and Facility Management information:** These deliverables also need special attention because there is little industry consensus about what scope is appropriate, and client requirements can vary significantly. The interpretation of terms used to describe this group of deliverables, e.g. as-built drawings, record model, can also vary, so expectations associated with them need to be clearly spelt out.

Some options include:
- The construction model updated with fabrication models and documented changes.
- As above with dimensional or location changes verified by on-site measurement or laser scans.
- Facility management data embedded in the model.
- Facility management data provided as a separate file or database in a pre-agreed format referenced to the model, e.g. Construction Operations Building Information exchange (COBie) spreadsheets.

### 3.8 HOW FAR TO TAKE REQUIREMENTS DEFINITION?

How far should you take the BIM requirements definition process prior to engaging the project team?

At the outset of the process set goals and parameters appropriate for the circumstances of the project. A trade-off between the desired level of definition and available time often has to be made – the time invested in early requirement definition has to be weighed up against the risks of additional costs and delays later in the project resulting from an inadequate process.

### 4 CONSULTANT AND CONTRACTOR SELECTION

#### 4.1 BID ASSESSMENT

Consultant and contractor selection is based on the assessment of bids submitted in response to Requests for Proposals (RFP). Refer to 2.3 Inception documents for details of these documents.

Clarifications provided in response to queries by any consultant or contractor should be circulated to all. To simplify assessment, consultant and contractor bids should follow the format of the RFP. Assessment should be based on their compliance with the Preliminary Project BIM Brief, and assessment of capabilities should be based on demonstrated, verifiable experience for each requirement in the RFP, rather than general assertions or marketing-type statements.
The Inception Guide does not provide a detailed methodology for assessing consultant BIM capability. Tools for assessing BIM capability and maturity can be found in the Penn State BIM Planning Guide for Facility Owners (see http://bim.psu.edu) and on the BIM Excellence website www.BIMexcellence.net.

Following assessment, it is possible that some of the BIM uses in the Preliminary Project BIM Brief will need to be modified – the required capability may not be available for some uses, or there may be opportunities to take advantage of a consultant’s capabilities that the Lead BIM Adviser was not aware of, or the Preliminary Project BIM Brief had not foreseen. Ideally, the Lead BIM Adviser should continue in an executive BIM role such as Information Manager or Design BIM Manager. If this is not the case, priority should be given to selecting an individual/s for the role/s, based on the (final) Project BIM Brief.

4.2 RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL
After assessment, the Lead BIM Adviser’s recommendations, including any amendments to the Preliminary Project BIM Brief, are sent to the client for evaluation and approval. When the client is satisfied with the Lead BIM Adviser’s recommendations, a Client/Consultant Agreement, with the (final) Project BIM Brief appended, is signed by both the client and consultant/contractor.

4.3 CONTRACTUAL PROVISIONS AND FEES
All of the elements of definition noted previously influence the scope of services for project team members which, in turn, directly influence contractual provisions and fees. BIM processes generally involve the investment of a greater proportion of resources early in the project which realise greater efficiencies and improved outputs later. Fee proposals should reflect this redistribution of effort. For more information on contractual provisions and fees visit the NATSPEC BIM Portal. See Resources > BIM Topics > Protocols, contracts & addenda

While the Inception Guide assists in the development of documents that can be referenced by agreements and contracts, it is not itself intended to be referenced by them.

5 REFERENCES
ACIF & APCC, 2014, Project Team Integration Available at www.acif.com.au
BIM Task Group 2013, Employer’s Information Requirements - Core Content and Guidance Notes Version 07 28.02.13 Available at www.bimtaskgroup.org/Resources > Commercial > BIM EIRs - Overview
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// Australian Elevator Association
// Australian Institute of Architects
// Australian Institute of Building
// Australian Institute of Building Surveyors
// Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors
// Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (ACT)
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