MBIE Technology Projects Review Workstream 3 IQA Report

Background and Purpose

This report is the output of independent advice and support provided by Maven Consulting to MBIE's Internal Assurance branch for the second phase of the Technology Project Stocktake, Workstream 3. This phase addressed controls that were rated "Partially Effective" or "Not Effective" in Phase One of the workstream. This report is intended to be used as an annex to the Internal Assurance's final report on Workstream 3. It should be read in conjunction with Maven's earlier report on the first phase of Workstream 3.

Process

Internal Assurance provided a table highlighting the changes to project controls that resulted in improvement of initial ratings to "Effective." The table included a brief explanation of the rationale for the improved rating in each case, but there was not sufficient detail in the table to provide assurance that the improved rating was justified in every case. To address this, Maven requested a meeting with Internal Assurance on 3rd September, 2026, during which Internal Assurance discussed the evidence for the improved ratings in a sample of projects.

The ARP Steering Committee requested that Internal Assurance further strengthen the evidential trail and visibility of the reassessment process and that Maven undertakes a spot check of a sample of reassessed findings to confirm that the evidence received supports the revised rating.

Projects Examined

Five projects were chosen for examination of the revised ratings:

1. Our Future Services
2. IPONZ Platform Upgrade
3. Callaghan Innovation Systems Transition
4. Resolve Enhancement 25-26
5. I&E Workflow Management Tool.

Each of these is discussed briefly below.

1. Our Future Services

Revised rating:

- *Project viability reconsidered post any changes* – improved from "Partially Effective" to "Effective"

The Internal Assurance team provided notes for meetings with the Portfolio Manager and Senior Advisor for OFS, and with the Programme Director. The latter meeting covered the project viability specifically and it was noted that the business case needed to be revised to address viability issues and decisions to proceed further are dependent on a report back to Cabinet. Therefore, it is fair to conclude that the project viability is being considered and the controls in this regard are effective.

2. IPONZ Platform Upgrade

Revised ratings:

- *Project viability reconsidered post any changes* – improved from "Partially Effective" to "Effective"
- *Financial information able to be traced* – improved from "Partially Effective" to "Effective"
- *Exec and ministerial reporting aligned to Cabinet, Ministerial, Treasury, Executive requirements* – improved from "Partially Effective" to "Effective".

The Internal Assurance team provided detail of discussions with the Project Manager and Portfolio Delivery Manager, and of an IQA report from August 2026, that make it clear that the project viability is being reconsidered and options include pausing or cancelling the project.

Internal Assurance provided reports from the Project Manager that showed the issue of lack of alignment of financial information between project workbooks and governance reporting has been addressed.

Internal Assurance stated that they have sighted ministerial reports clearly showing the project status and that this issue has been addressed. (Note that Maven did not sight these reports.)

3. Callaghan Innovation Systems Transition

Revised ratings:

- *Clear benefits in place, measurable and assigned to owners* – improved from "Not Effective" to "Effective"
- *Project viability reconsidered post any changes* – improved from "Partially Effective" to "Effective".

Internal Assurance provided the project benefits map, which is very basic, containing just one benefit - the reduction of the number of agencies administering the programmes and grants from two to one. Maven is of the view that the benefits map does not meet the "clear benefits in place, measurable and assigned to owners" criteria. However, as this project is now approaching its end, it is probably not worth retroactively building a more detailed benefits map for this project.

The initial project viability rating reflected the fact that Internal Assurance could not verify that project viability had been considered in the project change request to extend the project closure dates by five months. The project has now provided the change request, which does not require additional funding, a change to scope or benefits, or otherwise impact upon the project deliverables. Therefore, it is fair to conclude that project viability had been considered in the change.

4. Resolve Enhancement 25-26

Revised ratings:

- *Assurance in place aligned to project complexity* – improved from "Not Effective" to "Effective"
- *Financial information able to be traced* – improved from "Partially Effective" to "Effective".

Following discussions with the project manager, Internal Assurance concluded that the project did not meet the risk profile requirement for an assurance plan, and therefore the project meets the control requirement.

The project provided documentation showing that the initial issue of the financial workbooks and governance financial reporting not matching has been addressed and that expenditure to date totals now match except for a small timing discrepancy.

5. I&E Workflow Management Tool

Revised ratings:

- *Clear benefits in place, measurable and assigned to owners* – improved from "Partially Effective" to "Effective"
- *Financial information able to be traced* – improved from "Partially Effective" to "Effective".

The project has now provided a benefits map, which establishes measures, targets and timelines for two benefit areas. Baseline measures are not available but the benefits map provides proxy measures that will be used. This is a significantly improvement on the benefits map discussed in paragraph 3 above and justifies the improved rating for this control.

The project has provided documentation showing alignment between the financial workbooks and FMIS.

Conclusions

Maven concludes, based on the additional evidence provided by projects and by Internal Assurance, that in almost all cases the improved ratings for the project controls examined are justified. Only in the case of the benefits map for the Callaghan Innovation Systems Transition project is the evidence not conclusive, and, as discussed above, the fact that this project is nearing its end means that further work to address this gap is not merited.

The fact that almost all projects are now rated as "Effective" overall means that current control standards are largely being met. It should not be taken as evidence that the current MBIE standards across all controls are sufficient to address the risks in significant IT projects. Workstream 4 has identified areas for improvement across all the control areas and the stocktake and remediation conclusions support the need for the ongoing and continuous improvement identified in that workstream.