



# CDC UNIFIED PROCESS JOB AID



## STAGE GATE REVIEW ASSESSMENT

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and instructions on the practice of using the **Stage Gate Review Assessment** workbook and to describe the practice overview, requirements, best practices, activities, and key terms related to this requirement. In addition, templates and other references relevant to this practice are provided at the end of this guide.

### Background

Stage Gates (SG) are phase-driven go/no-go decision points conducted to ensure projects observe appropriate requirements as they move through their life cycle. These decision points allow for Governance review of project performance against agreed upon baselines and determine the projects readiness to advance to the next life cycle phase.

SG Reviews are conducted by the IT governance organization (in conjunction with investment stakeholders) to ensure that projects, as they move through their life cycles, are fully complying with relevant IT project management requirements. The reviews also evaluate project performance against baselines and require corrective action plans or rebaselining as appropriate to the situation. Most importantly, SG Reviews determine that the project is ready to advance to the next Phase. SG Reviews are also the most appropriate time for the IT governance organization, in consultation with affected Business Owners, to change project cost, schedule or performance baselines in response to changing HHS mission priorities.

The Department of Health and Human Service’s (HHS) Enterprise Performance Life Cycle (EPLC) Framework identifies ten SG Reviews that must occur throughout the life of a project. To assist stakeholders with this compliance effort the CDC Unified Process has developed a SG Review Assessment workbook. Outlined within this Job Aid is an overview and instructions on how Governance, Critical Partners, Program/Project Managers, and Project Teams can utilize this workbook to simplify the preparation and execution of SG Reviews. Areas throughout the workbook highlighted in yellow represent cells designated for user defined information. All other areas are dynamically formatted and should not be modified without first contacting the CDC Unified Process for assistance.

### Practice Overview

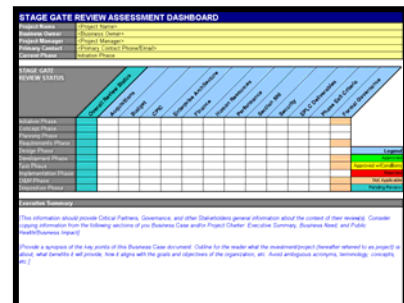
This Job Aid is intended to be used in conjunction with the Stage Gate Review Assessment workbook to provide guidance and instructions on the workbook’s layout, functions, and use.

#### Stage Gate Review Assessment - Dashboard

Located on the “DashBoard” tab, the SG Review Assessment Dashboard is a single-page consolidated view into the details of all SG Reviews performed throughout the life of a project. This dashboard allows stakeholders to monitor the contributions of Governance, Critical Partners, and other stakeholders to each life cycle SG Review. It also provides stakeholders a snap-shot view to gauge how well a particular project is performing against SG Review requirements as outlined by the EPLC Framework.

The SG Review Assessment Dashboard is organized into three main sections.

- *Top Section (Project Information)* – Highlighted in yellow, this section contains user defined cells that should be populated with information relevant to Project Name, Business Owner, Project Manager, Primary Contact, and the current Project Phase
- *Middle Section (Stage Gate Review Status)* – A matrix displaying project phases and Critical Partners. This section should never be modified by users. It is dynamically formatted based on user information entered in other worksheet within the SG Review Assessment workbook. This middle section lights up in green, yellow, and red to represent the approved, approved w/conditions,





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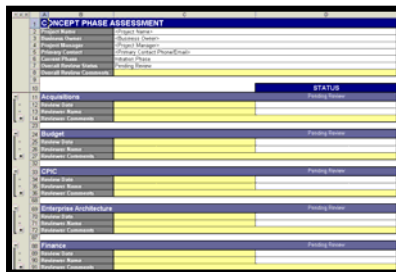
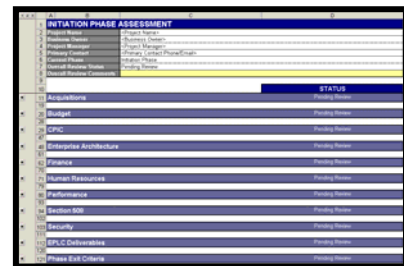
and/or rejected status of each Critical Partners input into each SG Review as well as an overall review status for each phase.

- *Bottom Section (Executive Summary)* – Highlighted in yellow, this section should be populated with user defined information that provides Critical Partners, Governance, and other stakeholder's general information about the context of their review.

### Stage Gate Review Assessment – Phases

Each of the ten tabs, labeled to align with EPLC Framework phases (e.g. Initiation, Concept, etc), contains an unique series of questions, specific to that phase, to assist stakeholders with performing Stage Gate reviews. The questions are categorized by Critical Partner and then grouped and organized in a manner that makes them easily accessible for users of the SG Review Assessment workbook. Each tab is formatted to allow for three different views of successively more detailed information related to that particular phases' SG Review.

The initial view is that of the SG Review Assessment Phase Dashboard. This view is also retrievable by selecting the one (1) from the top left of the worksheet (1 2 3). This is a single-page consolidated view into the details of a particular phase SG Review. It provides a summary of Governance and Critical Partner SG Review inputs that have been recorded that specific SG Review Assessment Phase tab. This view is dynamically formatted, except for the one user defined field labeled Overall Review Comments. The dynamic formatting is based on user information entered in other areas within the SG Review Assessment workbook. This view lights up in green, yellow, and red to represent the approved, approved w/conditions, and/or rejected status of each Critical Partners input into that phase's SG Review as well as an overall review status for that phase.



A secondary view accessible by selecting the two (2) from the top left of the worksheet (1 2 3) provides a summary of each Critical Partner's assessment of the deliverables considered as part of that particular SG Review. This view displays three fields highlighted in yellow representing cells designated for user defined information. These cells should be populated with information entered by each of the Critical Partners performing that SG Review and be relevant to Review Date, Reviewer Name, Reviewer Comments.

The third and most detailed view is accessible by selecting the three (3) from the top left of the worksheet (1 2 3) to display all of the questions, specific to that phase, that Governance, Critical Partners, and other stakeholders will use as guidance when performing the Stage Gate reviews. This view displays additional fields highlighted in yellow. Again, these yellow highlighted fields represent sections containing user defined cells that should be populated with information relevant to the question being asked. These questions should be answered by the appropriate critical partner as they relate to the project and project deliverables under review in that particular SG Review. A status selection should then be made from the dropdown menu within each status cell. Depending on the Critical Partner's status selection the cell will light up in green, yellow, and red to represent the approved, approved w/conditions, and/or rejected status of each question. Also, if appropriate, a Not Applicable selection is available that has no bearing on the overall Critical Partners status. Once all questions have been answered an overall status will be displayed for that Critical Partner. This overall status will then dynamically propagate itself throughout the workbook where appropriate. It's important to note that in order to achieve an overall status all Critical Partner questions must have a



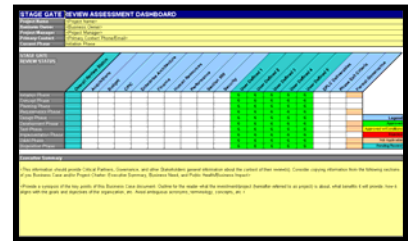
status value appended to them, even if Not Applicable. Until this is completed the status of that particular Stage Gate review will remain as Pending Review.

### Stage Gate Review Assessment - Customization

Although there is are a number of predefined questions the SG Review Assessment workbook also allows for easily customization of the content on each tab, and to add additional Critical Partners if necessary. To add or modify questions, simply identify the phase and appropriate Critical Partner location to insert new questions. Insert questions above the line labeled *“Insert New Questions Above This Line”*.



In addition, each phase tab contains hidden rows that can be used by CDC Centers to define additional critical partners relevant to their organizational governance. These hidden rows allow for the easy insertion of up to five additional critical partners. The dashboard also has hidden columns that correspond to these phased rows. This allows for inclusion of additional phase status as part of the SG Review Assessment dashboard report. Simply unhide the needed columns and rows.



### Best Practices

The following best practices are recommended for the practice of a **Stage Gate Review Assessment**:

- **EPLC Understanding** – Review the HHS EPLC Framework document well in advance of any SG Review. Each phase within the Framework document outlines the specific EPLC deliverables to be reviewed, criteria for that review, persons and their associated responsibilities related to that review, and phase exit criteria
- **Plan** – Project planning should begin early in the project’s life and continue to evolve/mature as work progresses through the project life cycle. If done properly, and consistently, SG Reviews should be easy to satisfy and little more than review and validation of your good work

### Practice Activities

For projects the following practice activities are appropriate:

- Prepare for SG Review
- Request Critical Partner review
- Critical Partner performs review and enters review status into SG Review Assessment

*NOTE:* The same activities apply for a Governance-level review except that Governance may also enter comments in to the SG Review Assessment

### Key Terms

Follow the link below to for definitions of project management terms and acronyms used in this document.  
[http://www2.cdc.gov/cdcup/document\\_library/glossary/default.asp](http://www2.cdc.gov/cdcup/document_library/glossary/default.asp)

### Related Templates/Tools

Below is a list of template(s) related to this practice. Follow the link below to download the document(s).  
<http://www2.cdc.gov/cdcup/library/matrix/>

- Stage Gate Review Assessment Practices Guide
- Stage Gate Review Assessment Template
- HHS EPLC Framework Document