

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE
Reporting workbook - APS Strategic Commissioning Framework**Instructions**

This reporting workbook must be completed by agencies that employ staff under the *Public Service Act 1999*. Once complete it must be cleared by your agency's Chief Operating Officer and returned to the APSC by 12 September 2025 via SCF@apsc.gov.au. Guidance is at the top of each tab. Agencies can also refer to guidance in the Strategic Commissioning Framework resources toolkit: <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workforce-information/aps-strategic-commissioning-framework/resources-toolkit-strategic-commissioning-framework>.

This tab has definitions and collects information on reporting contacts. There are 5 other tabs to complete:

1. Survey questions
2. Report progress against your agency's Year 1 targets (2024-25). Year 1 targets are pre-populated by the APSC from your agency's 2024 reporting workbook. If your agency did not set a target, this tab will be blank
3. Report on any new procurement of core work in 2024-25 not covered by the limited circumstances
4. Report on core work for Year 2 (2025-26)
5. Set targets for the core work you will bring in-house in Year 2 (2025-26)

Background

This is the second year of agency reporting under the Strategic Commissioning Framework. The framework was released in October 2023 to help agencies reduce their reliance on contractors and consultants and prioritise APS employment for core work. The APSC supports agencies to implement the framework, monitors progress and reports annually to the Minister for the Public Service. The information reported will be used to support relevant APSC and cross-government work. Some information will also be reported publicly, including the extent to which your agency met Year 1 targets and your overall target for Year 2.

Portfolio	Education		CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS		CONTACT DETAILS	
Agency	Australian Research Council		Name of clearing officer (Chief Operating Officer)	Craig Maconachie	P:	02 6206 7220
Agency abbreviation	ARC		Date Cleared	<Insert>	E:	craig.maconachie@arc.gov.au
			CONTACT OFFICER		CONTACT DETAILS	
			Contact name:		P:	
			Contact details:		E:	

DEFINITIONS under the Strategic Commissioning Framework

ASL	The average number of employees receiving wages or salaries over the financial year, with adjustments for casual and part-time staff to show the average full-time equivalent. ASL captures direct employment and does not include workers paid through a third party or employees on unpaid leave.
Consultants	Individuals, partnerships or corporations procured by a government entity to provide professional or expert services or independent advice as part of a one-off or irregular task to support entity decision-making. The output reflects the independent view or findings of the consultancy or consultant, and the output may not belong to the contracting entity unless specifically required under the contract. Consultants generally operate under a lower level of direction and control, and the output may not belong to the entity.
Contractors	Individuals, sole traders or service providers procured by a government entity to perform a specialised role for a short and fixed-term. A contractor will generally hold requisite qualifications and licenses in their chosen field of work, and bring relevant industry experience to the role. Use of contractors are for short term arrangements involving a one-off or irregular tasks. The output is generally regarded a Commonwealth product and services are performed under the direction and supervision of the Commonwealth entity.
Core work	Core work is the work that should only be done by direct APS employees and should not be outsourced. There is a list of APS-wide core work on the APSC website at https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workforce-information/aps-strategic-commissioning-framework/resources-toolkit-strategic-commissioning-framework/core-work
FTE	The number of full-time equivalent workers at a point in time. Part-time workers are converted to full-time equivalent. For example, two staff each working three days per week would be counted as 1.2 FTE. Under the Strategic Commissioning Framework agencies use FTE to report on reductions in external positions as work is brought in-house under agency targets.
Labour Hire	Labour hire is a "triangular employment arrangement" where a government entity procures a labour hire company to provide a worker to undertake a temporary role which is often generalist in nature. There is no direct employment contract between the government entity and the individual employee. The labour hire company contracts the workers to provide that labour and is responsible for paying the worker. The output is generally regarded a Commonwealth product and is produced under the supervision of the Commonwealth entity.
Limited circumstances	Core work should only be outsourced in limited circumstances. These are listed in the Strategic Commissioning Framework and copied below. For core work, use of contractors/labour hire is only appropriate if at least one of the following is true: - APS recruitment processes have been unsuccessful or are unlikely to be successful (e.g. due to a competitive labour market and skills shortages). This may apply, for instance, if a current or recent recruitment round has not attracted suitable candidates for a similar vacancy. - There are genuine periods of high demand for staffing beyond what should be reasonably expected of an agency that are also unlikely to reoccur in future. APS employees should still be the first resort in this circumstance. - There is a temporary need to backfill a vacancy to meet critical business needs, pending a recruitment process or while APS capability uplift is underway. For core work, use of consultants is only appropriate if at least one of the following is true: - There is a need for independent research or assessment (for example, due to requirements in legislation or an assurance need) and it cannot be sourced from within the APS. This should be used on a one-off or limited basis - There is a temporary need for specialised or professional skills, at a level that would be inefficient to retain internally. That is, there is not an enduring demand for the skill - There is a genuinely urgent and/or unforeseen need for a skill or capability in an area that is an enduring function, and extra support is needed while capability building or recruitment processes are underway.
Outsourced Service Providers	External services procured via commercial arrangement to deliver a function of Government to, or on behalf of, an entity. Much of the work delivered by Outsourced Service Providers is expected to be non-core.
Relevant contracts	Relevant contracts are the contractual arrangements your agency intends to vary or forgo in order to achieve your targets.
Supplier expenditure	Supplier expenditure is the money paid to an external labour provider under a relevant contract. It is used as a metric to track progress against agency targets, as work is brought in-house and supplier expenditure under relevant contracts reduces.

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Survey questions

Instructions

In this tab, we want to understand three things:

1. Whether your agency is setting a target for 2025-26 and if not, why not - (column A)

2. The steps you have taken to embed the Strategic Commissioning Framework in agency operations (columns B - J)

3. The steps you have taken so far to build in-house capability to deliver core work (columns K - U)

Notes

• Column A: is a mandatory question. Please select the drop down option that best aligns with your agency's approach to target setting in 2025-26

• Columns B-I: are mandatory. Agencies should answer each question with a yes or no

• Column J: If you have taken additional steps to embed the framework please mention them in this free text field

• Column K-T: are mandatory. Agencies should answer each question with a yes or no

• Column U: If you have taken additional steps to build in-house capability to deliver core work please mention them in this free text field

Background

For information on setting a target visit: <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workforce-information/aps-strategic-commissioning-framework/resources-toolkit-strategic-commissioning-framework/targets-monitoring-and-accountability>

For more information on the limited circumstances for outsourcing core work visit: <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workforce-information/aps-strategic-commissioning-framework/resources-toolkit-strategic-commissioning-framework/outsourcing-limited-circumstances>

1. Is your agency setting a target in 2025-26? <i>(Select from options from drop down list)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	2. Which of these steps has your agency taken so far to embed the framework?									3. Which of these steps has your agency taken so far to build in-house capability to deliver core work?										
	a. Worked with business divisions to identify the agency's core work <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	b. Reviewed and updated HR policies and forms <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	c. Reviewed and updated procurement policies and forms <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	d. Updated Budget processes to factor in the framework's principles <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	e. Updated project planning processes to consider the framework's principles <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	f. Established internal reporting processes for the framework <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	g. Updated finance, procurement and/or HR systems to enable reporting <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	h. Internal communication to set expectations for hiring and procuring managers <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(non-mandatory)</i>	i. Other If your agency took other steps not covered by the previous columns, please briefly describe <i>(free text)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	a. Reviewed and updated workforce plans <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	b. Recruited employees with priority skills <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	c. Reallocated existing APS employees to deliver core work <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	d. Partnered with APS agencies to deliver core work (e.g. Australian Government Consulting, ABS) <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	e. Invested in training and development <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	f. Supported staff development through mobility opportunities <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	g. Succession planning <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	h. Upskilled staff through guidance or standard operating procedures <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	i. Transferred knowledge from external workers to APS employees <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	j. Built knowledge transfer requirements into new contracts <i>(yes/no)</i> <i>(mandatory)</i>	Other k. If your agency took other steps not covered by the previous columns, please briefly describe <i>(free text)</i> <i>(non-mandatory)</i>
Not setting a target - Other reason	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes	yes	no		yes	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no	

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Report progress against Year 1 targets (2024-25)

Instructions

Your agency's targets for Year 1 (2024-25) have been pre-populated below. Please report on the extent to which targets were achieved. Explanations can be provided if targets were not fully met. If your agency did not set a target in 2024-25, please leave this tab blank.

The primary metric is actual reductions in supplier expenditure under relevant contracts. If your target included expected reductions in external positions (as FTE) please report on actual reductions in external positions also.

When setting targets in 2024, each agency was asked to document its methodology for calculating expected reductions. This should (in most cases) identify relevant contracts and any assumptions. Refer to this methodology as you calculate actual reductions as agency methodology is not reported to the APSC.

Notes

- Targets capture the total reduction in supplier expenditure as work is brought in-house, not the difference between supplier expenditure and any related employee costs. Please report actual reductions accordingly.
- Actual reductions in external positions (Column F) is non-mandatory.
- Outcome column (G) calculates automatically. % is based on actual reductions in supplier expenditure. Each target will be categorised as: exceeded, fully met (100%), substantially met (61-99% met), partially met (16-60% met), or not met (0-15% met). This categorisation will inform public reporting.
- Explanation columns (H-J) allow you to provide context for any targets not fully met. If your primary/secondary reasons are not in the drop-down list, use free text in column J. Please keep this short and high level. Do not include personal information.

For questions about Year 1 targets contact SCF@apsc.gov.au.

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New outsourcing of core work in 2024-25 not covered by the limited circumstances

Instructions

The Strategic Commissioning Framework outlines limited circumstances where core work can be outsourced (see Background below). Please use this tab to report on any new outsourcing of core work in 2024-25 not covered by the limited circumstances. New outsourcing includes:

- new contracts for core work that were signed in 2024-25 and/or
- variations signed in 2024-25 that increased the value of existing contracts for core work.

Notes

- Column A is mandatory.
- If you answer 'no' in Column A, no further input is required on this tab. Move to next tab "4. Identify Core Work for 25-26".
- If you answer 'yes' in Column A, all columns are mandatory except Column D (job function if known).
- Column F: if you answer 'yes' in Column A, and have new outsourcing of core work (outside of the limited circumstances) in multi-year expenditure arrangements please write the core work component at Column F.
- Column G: if you answer 'yes' in Column A, include expenditure arrangements of core work for 2024-25 only. This can be a subset of what you have included at Column F or it can be a stand-alone single year arrangement in 2024-25.
- Use multiple rows if required. You can use one row per contract, or group multiple contracts for the same job family on one row. Please do not include personal information.

Background

Core work should only be outsourced in the limited circumstances below.

For core work, use of contractors/labour hire is only appropriate if at least one of the following is true:

- APS recruitment processes have been unsuccessful or are unlikely to be successful (e.g. due to a competitive labour market and skills shortages). This may apply, for instance, if a current or recent recruitment round has not attracted suitable candidates for a similar vacancy.
- There are genuine periods of high demand for staffing beyond what should be reasonably expected of an agency that are also unlikely to reoccur in future. APS employees should still be the first resort in this circumstance.
- There is a temporary need to backfill a vacancy to meet critical business needs, pending a recruitment process or while APS capability uplift is underway.

For core work, use of consultants is only appropriate if at least one of the following is true:

- There is a need for independent research or assessment (for example, due to requirements in legislation or an assurance need) and it cannot be sourced from within the APS. This should be used on a one-off or limited basis.
- There is a temporary need for specialised or professional skills, at a level that would be inefficient to retain internally. That is, there is not an enduring demand for the skill.
- There is a genuinely urgent and/or unforeseen need for a skill or capability in an area that is an enduring function, and extra support is needed while capability building or recruitment processes are underway.

For more information visit: <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workforce-information/aps-strategic-commissioning-framework/resources-toolkit-strategic-commissioning-framework/outourcing-limited-circumstances>.

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Set target/s for Year 2 (2025-26)

Instructions

Each agency must set a target for the core work it intends to bring in-house in Year 2 (2025-26).

Agencies can set one target or many. Use multiple rows if you have targets in more than one job family. The work in your targets will generally be a sub-set of the core work you identified on tab "3. Identify Core Work for 25-26".

If your agency does not outsource any core work, or your outsourcing of core work is minimal and aligns with the limited circumstances in the framework, you may not need to set a target. If so, leave this tab blank.

Notes

Please provide the following information for each target.

- In Column A, report the type of work you plan to bring in-house (can be a description of key tasks, functions or job roles). Please do not include personal information.
- In Columns B-C, select the relevant job family (and if possible the main job function) from the drop down menus.
- In Columns D-G, report the expected reduction in supplier expenditure (\$ excl GST) as this work is brought in-house. If possible, also provide the expected reduction in external positions (as FTE) at Column H.
- In Columns I-N, report your agency's reasons for prioritising this type of work in 2025-26. The drop down menu options relate to the factors agencies should consider when identifying core work.

Targets should capture the total reduction in supplier expenditure as work is brought in-house, not the difference between supplier expenditure and any related employee costs.

Please document the methodology your agency used to estimate reductions in supplier expenditure for your targets, including any assumptions and relevant contracts. This will depend on current outsourcing arrangements and the changes the agency intends to make. Your methodology does not need to be reported to the APSC but should be kept as an internal record, in order to replicate the approach when it comes time to assess actual reductions at end of financial year. See guidance on maintaining records: <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workforce-information/aps-strategic-commissioning-framework/resources-toolkit-strategic-commissioning-framework/targets-and-reporting#maintaining-records>

Background

For more information on setting targets visit: <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workforce-information/aps-strategic-commissioning-framework/resources-toolkit-strategic-commissioning-framework/targets-monitoring-and-accountability>

Job family and job function drop down menus are mapped to the APS Job Family Framework: <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/aps-workforce-strategy-2025/workforce-planning-resources/aps-job-family-framework>. While some agencies do not use the APS Job Family Framework, reporting by job family is essential to provide a consistent view across the APS.

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