CARES Contracts and Reports

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23. Quality Assurance Plan (Mar 18, 2005)

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Quality Assurance Plan

Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Business Plan Studies

March 18, 2005

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23-1

Table of Contents

23.-2

1. Scope and Purpose

The Quality Assurance Plan (QAP) is an integral part of project management. It contributes to the overall success of the project by helping to ensure the acceptability of each work product and that VA expectations are consistently exceeded. It incorporates repeatable processes, templates and standards into the execution of the project and the creation of each deliverable. It provides guiding processes and procedures for the study teams and the QA Group to assist in developing, monitoring and refining each deliverable. The QAP describes how deliverables are to be assessed and evaluated for quality, which roles and responsibilities are associated with this process and what standards and outcomes are expected.

2. The Quality Assurance Objectives

The objectives of the Quality Assurance Plan (QAP) are to ensure that both the Contractor and the VA are comfortable that:

- Adequate project planning has occurred at sufficient level of detail such that elements of timing, level of effort, review periods, and the like are clear from the onset.
- Methodologies are in sync with project plans, deliverables, dependencies (data, etc) and expected outcomes.
- Appropriate levels of oversight and technical expertise of the project execution team as well as the VA support team are sufficient for the tasks at hand
- Project deliverables receive a level of quality review sufficient to ensure clarity, accuracy, completeness and usability

The QAP describes how deliverables are to be assessed and evaluated for quality, together with the roles and responsibilities for implementing this process and the standards and outcomes that are expected. The foundation of the QAP is a framework in which:

- Requirements and objectives are clearly defined for each deliverable
- Templates and standards are developed to drive consistent, predictable deliverables, and
- Quality control checks are performed before deliverables are reported as complete.

A set of templates for project deliverables is created for the project. These set the documentation standards for each study. A set of templates for general project documents is also created for presentations, memos, minutes, project status reports, and correspondence. The templates force all documents to follow a predefined outline to ensure each document meets its objectives and is clear, accurate, complete and usable. All document templates will be accessed through the Project InVision tool.

A set of quality standards are created to ensure that deliverables meet PwC's own professional standards as well as VA expectations. These standards provide a quality

23-3

benchmark for the study teams creating each deliverable and are used by the QA Group to evaluate the acceptability of each work product. The standards are as follows:

- Clarity – Documents address their objectives and contain directness of thought, style and appearance.
- Accuracy – Documents are free of mistakes and errors. Data elements are correctly input and analysed.
- Completeness – Documents contain all the necessary elements, components and steps and are free from overlap and redundancy.
- Usability – Documents are fit and suitable for use as was intended.

3. Approach

3.1. Quality Management Process

The Quality Management Process (Figure 1.) helps ensure the project is performed according to PwC's high standards and VA expectations are consistently exceeded. The Quality Management Process comprises four, multi-level quality review activities performed throughout the lifecycle of the project:

- Initial Quality Review
- Interim Quality Review
- Deliverable Quality Review
- Final Quality Review

The quality review processes are focused on client expectations and objectives. They are designed to help ensure that work products are aligned with the Statement of Work for the project and the requirements and expectations agreed with the VA.
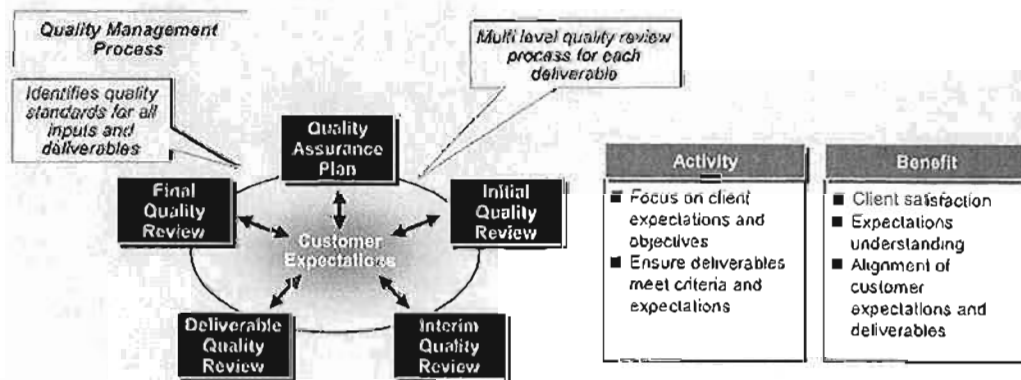
Figure 1. Quality Management Process

2 CARES 035

23-4

3.2. Timeline for Quality Assurance Process

The QA timeline (See Figure 2) displays when the Contractor will conduct quality reviews throughout the life of the project.

	Planning Stage	Stage I	Stage II
Initial Quality Review	▲ March 2005		
Interim Quality Review		▲ July 2005	
Final Quality Review			▲ January 2006
Deliverable Quality Review		As per project plan and deliverable schedule for 18 sites	

Figure 2. Quality Assurance Timeline

3.3. Roles and Responsibilities

Due to the size and complexity of this project the PMO established a QA management group (See Figure 3) which includes the PMO, the national functional leads and the QA Group.

Figure 3. National Project leadership Team and Quality Assurance Group

23-5

Leading the VA CARES project team is a strong national leadership team with a dedicated PMO led by Dr. Peter Erwin (PwC). Dr. Erwin has day-to-day oversight and responsibility for the operations of the project and is the single point of contact for technical communications between the VA COTR and Team PwC. The PMO is responsible for distributing project informat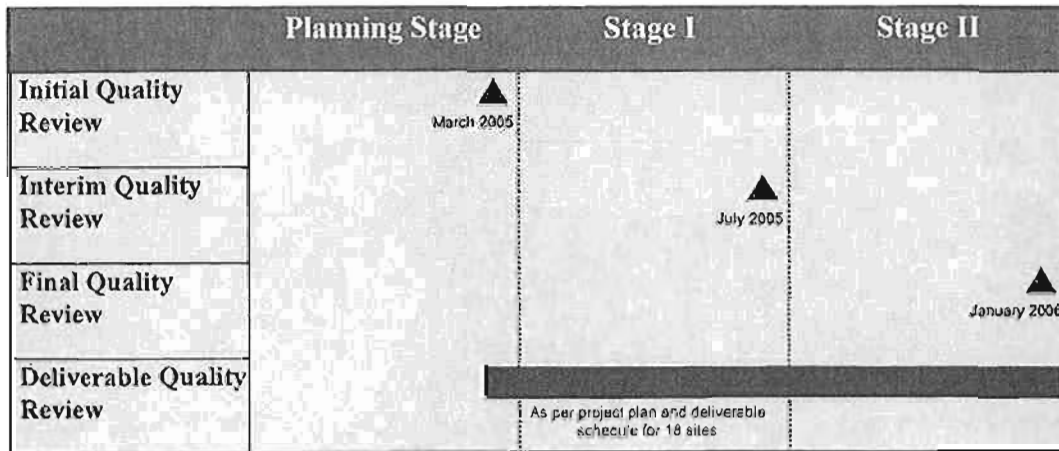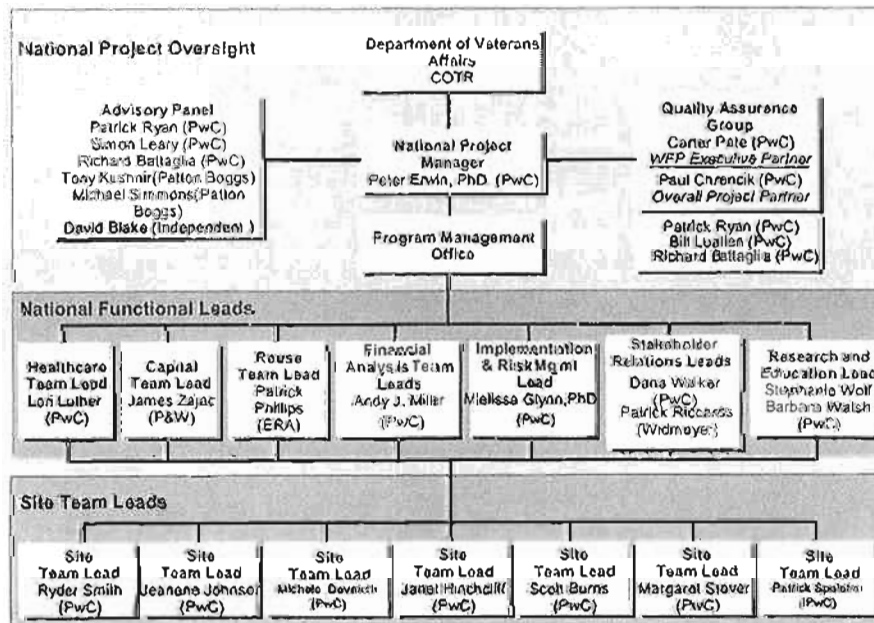ion to the study team in a consistent and timely manner in accordance with PwC quality standard processes and practices to ensure quality is ultimately delivered.

During the quality process the national functional leads play a crucial role to ensure deliverable requirements and objectives are met, templates created and quality standards adopted for each deliverable. The national functional leads work with the PMO and oversee the quality processes and deliverables to ensure the project is delivered within PwC QA standards. The QA Group will be the final verification to ensure the project is compliant with PwC quality standards and meets VA expectations.

3.4. Monitoring Staff Performance and Oversight Needs

Throughout the project, leadership will perform ongoing monitoring of staff performance, project oversight and technical expertise to ensure quality performance. A Project Staff Performance Review Framework (described below) is utilized to support the monitoring and review process.

For staff performance, PwC has created a simplified, straightforward responsibility framework that is designed to assist team members to effectively managing their performance. It focuses on individual development and advancement where the pace is flexible according to business and personal needs, and readiness to take on new challenges. It is designed to facilitate substantive, qualitative feedback and reduce the focus on pre-designated numeric rankings. The aim is to ensure that team members are asking for and receiving frequent, meaningful and continuous input on performance.

The Project Staff Performance Reviews framework consists of the following main elements that support the stages of the annual review process:

- **Summary Role Expectations**, which highlight the characteristics of each level relative to People, Quality, Profitable Growth and Teaming.
- The **Responsibility Framework** itself, which details the attributes associated with each staff level.
- **Annual Expectations Form** – This form is used to develop team members' goals and expectations based upon the dimensions of: People, Quality, Profitable Growth and Teaming. At the beginning of each fiscal year, each team member works with their coach to finalize these goals, including activities for each goal and measurements for achievement.

- **Advisory Engagement Review Form** – This form focuses principally on performance of an engagement or project. Similarly to the framework, it is organized around People, Quality, Profitable Growth and Teaming. Each team member receives comments on their strengths and suggestions for improvements in these 4 main areas and in addition, they receive an assessment in each of these areas and an overall assessment for the engagement or project. Staff initiate and receive a review:

  - At the completion of engagements or projects where 80 or more hours of work is performed or at the completion of a critical phase of a project; or
  - Quarterly for longer term projects; or
  - For a series of smaller engagements for one person, one review may be created for the combined projects.

Two key principles of the PwC Responsibility Framework and the Project Staff Performance Reviews are the emphasis on individual self-management and a strong focus on effective feedback and coaching ensuring that development is linked to the project objectives.

For project oversight and technical expertise, PwC will perform ongoing assessments for adequacy, consulting with VA management as needed. Changes in project plans, deliverable content and other project drivers will be continually assessed against current levels of oversight and technical expertise to allow appropriate consultations in a timely manner.

3.5. Conduct of Advisory Committee Meetings

The Stakeholder Engagement Team will develop an evaluation form for Local Advisory Panel Chairs to complete following the public meeting. It is anticipated that this form will be completed with input from all panel members no later than five days after the public meeting. This form will provide an opportunity for the Panel to discuss meeting dynamics. It will also serve as a basis for creating and refining the tools and templates used to support enhanced communication and public meeting execution

Refer to Appendix E in the Stakeholder Methodology for further details on the process for obtaining feedback on Local Advisory Panel Meetings.

3.6. Coordination with OGCs (Other Government Contractors)

General and Comprehensive Planning studies are to be completed by Other Government Contractors (OGC) and are to work at the direction of the Department of Veteran Affairs. As indicated in the SoW the OGCs are to complete General Re-Use Plans, General Capital Plans, Comprehensive Re-Use Plans and Comprehensive Capital Plan for certain sites.

23-7

As indicated in both the SoW and in Team PwC's proposal, the work of the OGCs are an integral part of the study process at these sites. Team PwC will coordinate their work with the work of our study team and as such their inputs are on the critical path for each site. Team PwC anticipates that the OGCs will provide the deliverables from such studies in accordance with timeframes agreed by PwC and the VA. Team PwC assumes that such direction will be commensurate with the work of Team PwC at each site.

The Team PwC Capital and Re-Use Planning teams will require early coordination with the OGCs at each site and inputs from them as to the scale of potential value of the site, as well as guidance as to any particular site and or building re-use factors that the capital planner should consider in developing capital planning options.

4. Initial Quality Review

4.1. Purpose and Scope

The initial quality review assesses whether the planned project approach is sound.

4.2. Process

The initial quality review is conducted by the QA Group at the end of the planning phase of the project. This review considers whether the scope, objectives, and deliverables for the project are well defined and considers whether the methodologies, tools and templates adequately address the objectives to ensure client expectations are met for the engagement. This review will also consider whether the planning processes, risk mitigation strategies, and controls for the project are well designed. The QA Group will meet with project leaders individually to conduct their assessment. Findings and recommendations will be discussed at a group meeting of the project leadership.

Prior to the initial review, Team PwC will request and receive data specifying the data requirements, formats, and information required to support the analyses. The initial review will conduct a review and test of the data inputs for completeness, accuracy and validity. The testing will be conducted at a sample site to be agreed with the VA. The team will use this information to validate the models and tools to be used by each study.

23-8

4.3. Key Activities and Quality Assurance Objectives

Focus Area	Key Activity	QA Objectives Supported
General nature of QA review	Review planning, scheduling, resources and logistical concerns	• Adequate project planning has occurred at sufficient level of detail such that elements of timing, level of effort, review periods, and the like are clear from the onset.
On-going review of technical direction	The planned approach addresses the steps required to produce the deliverables within the required time frames	• Methodologies are in sync with project plans, deliverables, dependencies (data, etc) and expected outcomes.
Review scope and level of effort	Work plan/project budget includes appropriate time for the steps listed in the technical approach	• Appropriate levels of oversight and technical expertise of the project execution team as well as the VA support team are sufficient for the tasks at hand
Review staffing	Skill sets of the project team are appropriate given the assignments	• Project deliverables receive a level of quality review sufficient to ensure clarity, accuracy, completeness and usability
Review project administration	Work paper files have been established and include cornerstone documents	
Review project management	Appropriate project controls systems have been established	

5. Interim Quality Review

5.1. Purpose and Scope

The interim quality review covers the technical quality of the work in progress, overall project status, and client satisfaction.

5.2. Process

The interim quality review is conducted midway through the life of the engagement as specified by the QAP. This review assesses the implementation of project methodologies, tools and templates to ensure they are effectively and consistently applied throughout the project. In addition, this review assesses client satisfaction and considers whether the project planning processes, risk mitigation strategies, and controls for the project have been effectively implemented and addressed.

The QA Group will meet with project leaders individually to conduct their assessment. They will review project documentation. The QA Group will also conduct interviews with senior leadership of the VA (Director of OSI, COTR and others to be agreed) to obtain client feedback. Findings and recommendations will be discussed at a group meeting of the project leadership.

23-9

5.3. Key Activities and Quality Assurance Objectives

Focus Area	Key Activity	QA Objectives Supported
General nature of QA review	Review work in progress, project status and client satisfaction	• Adequate project planning has occurred at sufficient level of detail such that elements of timing, level of effort, review periods, and the like are clear from the onset. • Methodologies are in sync with project plans, deliverables, dependencies (data, etc) and expected outcomes. • Appropriate levels of oversight and technical expertise of the project execution team as well as the VA support team are sufficient for the tasks at hand • Project deliverables receive a level of quality review sufficient to ensure clarity, accuracy, completeness and usability
On-going review of technical direction	Technical quality of work is sound, recommendations(if any) are reasonable, and the appropriate alternatives have been considered	
Review scope and level of effort	Progress appears to be on schedule and on budget and scope appears to be controlled	
Review staffing	Working relationships are functional, team morale high and no interpersonal conflicts exist that may jeopardize the project	
Review project administration	Work paper files are properly maintained on an ongoing basis	
Review project management	Project control systems are in regular use and appear to be functioning properly	

6. Deliverable Quality Review

6.1. Purpose and Scope

The deliverable quality review provides for deliverables that are accurate, complete, clear, usable, and compliant with all requirements identified in the SOW. The deliverable quality review enables Team PwC to provide deliverables within agreed upon time frames as well as within the professional standards as listed in the QAP. The structure of the project teams and internal quality assurance process enable the project to meet the standards set by the QA management group

6.2. Process

The deliverable management process (See Figure 4) depicts the numerous quality checkpoints as a deliverable is developed. The PMO, the QA Group, and the national functional leads are the three management groups that will review the document to ensure quality standards are met for each deliverable.

23-10
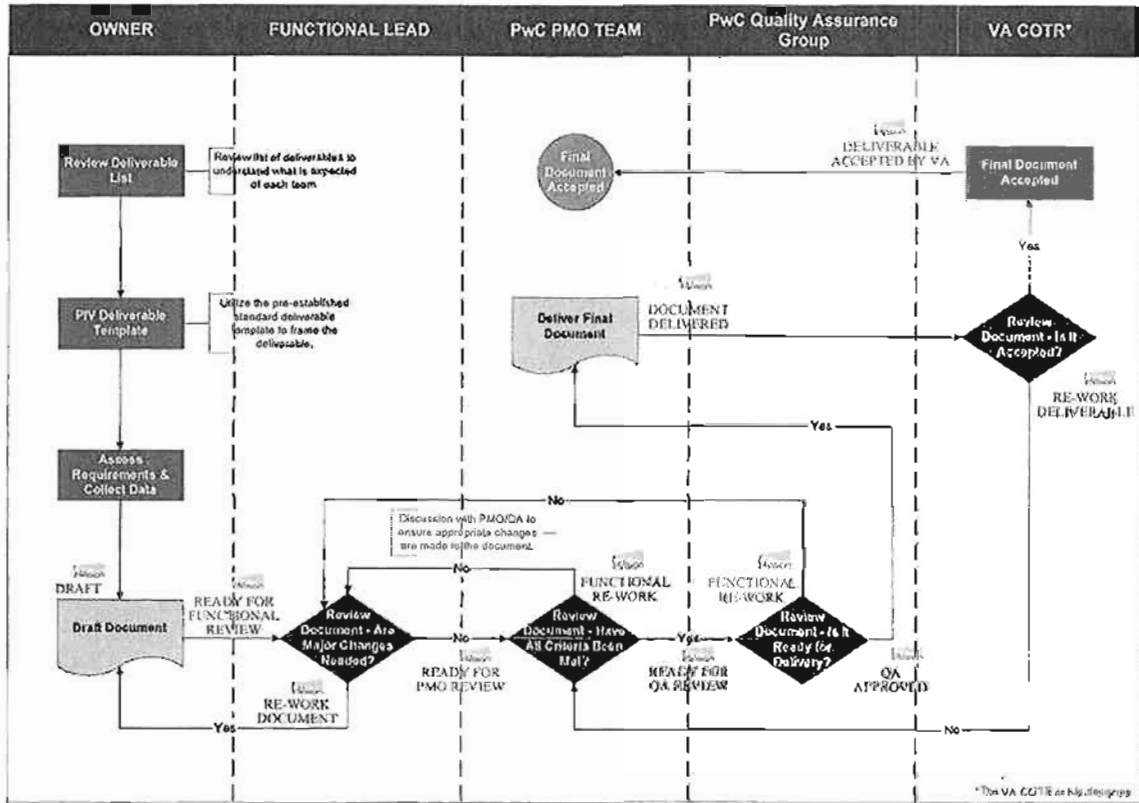
Figure 4. Deliverable Management Process

6.3. Key Activities and Quality Assurance Objectives

Focus Area	Key Activity	QA Objectives Supported
General nature of QA review	Review deliverables prior to release to client	• Project deliverables receive a level of quality review sufficient to ensure clarity, accuracy, completeness and usability
On-going review of technical direction	Deliverable is logically organized, supports conclusions, and addresses VA expectations	
Review scope and level of effort	Deliverables are within the scope of full performance and acceptability	
Review staffing	Appropriate staff is used in the development and review of project deliverables	
Review project administration	Document presentation meets applicable standards	
Review project management	Deliverables produced are within project scope	

23-11

6.4. Roles and Responsibilities for Deliverable Management

The roles and responsibilities table (See Figure 5) describes the roles and responsibilities for Team PwC groups involved in the deliverable management process as shown in Figure 4.

Role	Responsibility
Owner	• Reviews deliverable list • Uses PIV template as standard • Assesses requirements and collects data • Drafts document
Functional Lead	• Reviews draft document and determines if changes are needed
PMO	• Reviews draft document and determines if draft criteria have been met • Delivers final document • Accepts final document
QA Group	• Reviews draft document and determines if ready for delivery to VA
VA COTR	• Reviews document and determines if it is acceptable • Accepts final document

Figure 5. Roles and responsibilities for the Deliverable Management Process.

6.5. Deliverables

The deliverables for the engagement are captured in Figure 6 below. The engagement goes through three stages and each deliverable must fall into one of these three Stages: Planning, Stage I, or Stage II. Figure 6 displays all the deliverables, the stage each deliverable falls under and the appropriate party taking responsibility for the deliverable.

PMO Deliverables	Planning	Stage I	Stage II
Quality Assurance Plan	x		
Site specific timeline with milestones and designated teams	x		
Templates for status reports	x		
Certificate of completion for each deliverable	x	x	x
Weekly status reports	x	x	x

23-12

Stakeholder Management Deliverables	Planning	Stage I	Stage II
Communication Plan	x		
Training and Education Plans	x		
Public website for and other vehicles for stakeholders	x	x	x
Official record of stakeholder comments received throughout the project		x	x
Meeting minutes and summaries of public meetings		x	x
Monthly updates to site LAPs		x	x

Health Care Studies Deliverables	Planning	Stage I	Stage II
Analytical Methodology	x		
Clinical Analysis - Access		x	x
Clinical Analysis - Quality of care		x	x
Clinical Analysis - Enhancement of services		x	x
Clinical Analysis - Continuity of care		x	x
Clinical Analysis - Workload		x	x
Clinical Analysis - Clinical inventory		x	x
Clinical Analysis - Impact			x
Clinical Analysis - Patient care issues and specialty programs			x
Clinical Analysis - Future flexibility			x
Clinical Analysis - Innovation			x
High-level options		x	
Human resources analysis		x	x
Research and education analysis		x	x
Costing analysis		x	x

Capital Planning Deliverables	Planning	Stage I	Stage II
Analytical Methodology	x		
General Capital Plan		x	x
Comprehensive Capital Plan		x	x
Stage I, II highest and best use analysis		x	x
Desktop valuation analysis		x	x
Real property baseline report		x	x
Inputs to financial modelling		x	x
Inputs to implementation plan and option assessment		x	x

23.13

Reuse Planning Deliverables	Planning	Stage I	Stage II
Analytical Methodology	x		
Baseline real property reports		x	
Environmental baseline reports		x	
Preliminary highest and best use analysis		x	
Preliminary desktop valuation analysis		x	
Inputs to financial and economic analysis and assessment options		x	x
Inputs to presentation of options to LAPs and the evaluation of reuse related stakeholder comments		x	x
Revised market assessments for each site			x
Refined value analysis			x
Implementation assessments			x

Business and Implementation Planning Deliverables	Planning	Stage I	Stage II
Implementation plans for each selected option			x
Risk analysis for each selected option			x
High-level risk profile for intermediate options		x	
Risk mitigation plans for each selected option			x
Risk adjusted assessment for each selected option			x

Financial Analysis Deliverables	Planning	Stage I	Stage II
Interim report and presentation		x	
Business Plan			x

Figure 6. Deliverables Chart

7. Final Quality Review

7.1. Purpose and Scope

The final quality review takes place at project close to assess whether quality was ultimately delivered.

7.2. Process

The QA Group reviews the engagement to ensure all client objectives and requirements for the project have been met, all the deliverables as defined by the SOW have been delivered to the VA under the agreed standards, and client satisfaction has been achieved.

The QA Group will meet with project leaders individually to conduct their assessment. They will review project documentation. The QA Group will also conduct interviews with senior leadership of the VA (Director of OSI, COTR and others to be agreed) to obtain client feedback. Findings, actions and lessons learned will be discussed at a group meeting of the project leadership.

23-14

7.3. *Key Activities and Quality Assurance Objectives*

Focus Area	Key Activity	QA Objectives Supported
General nature of QA review	Conduct final review of project, work papers and document lessons learned	• Adequate project planning has occurred at sufficient level of detail such that elements of timing, level of effort, review periods, and the like are clear from the onset.
On-going review of technical direction	Deliverables are consistent with the scope of the project as detailed in the SOW	• Methodologies are in sync with project plans, deliverables, dependencies (data, etc) and expected outcomes.
Review scope and level of effort	Project is fully complete and has been appropriately planned and controlled	• Appropriate levels of oversight and technical expertise of the project execution team as well as the VA support team are sufficient for the tasks at hand
Review staffing	Engagement personnel receive timely feedback regarding their performance on the assignment including performance evaluations	
Review project administration	Work papers adequately document the work performed	• Project deliverables receive a level of quality review sufficient to ensure clarity, accuracy, completeness and usability
Review project management	Project manager has properly closed out the engagement including finalizing all electronic documents	

8. Tools to Assist in Quality Management

The PMO will utilize the following tools to manage the project:

- **Microsoft Project** - a project planning and scheduling application that is used to prepare the work breakdown structure/project plan, assign resources, track progress and analyze costs.
- **Project InVision** - a web-enabled enterprise project management tool that supports the issue management process, the risk management process, the deliverable management process, communication, and project monitoring and reporting. Project InVision supports quality assurance through:
  - A central repository for all project information
  - Incorporation of PwC's project management best practices, which are important for driving repeatable, successful execution of each study
  - A knowledge management tool that provides managers with status of studies at a glance through customizable reports and dashboards, while providing detailed task information for those performing the tasks
  - Facilitation of communications between staff performing tasks, program managers, COTR, and executive management
  - Customization to incorporate various study methodologies and workflows

23-15

	Timing of Submissions to COT		
	Submit downselected options to COTR	Present Downselected options to VHA/CIB	Submit draft business plans to COTR
Boston	7/13/2005	8/3/2005	12/28/2005
NY City	6/28/2005	7/14/2005	12/29/2005
Walla Walla	6/30/2005	7/22/2005	12/13/2005
Waco	7/15/2005	8/5/2005	12/30/2005
Big Spring	7/7/2005	7/28/2005	12/21/2005
Lousiville	7/18/2005	8/8/2005	1/3/2006
Montgomery	7/15/2005	8/5/2005	12/28/2005
Muskogee	7/20/2005	8/10/2005	1/5/2006
Canandaigua	7/5/2005	7/22/2005	11/22/2005
Livermore	7/12/2005	7/29/2005	12/7/2005
Gulport/Biloxi	7/12/2005	7/29/2005	12/7/2005
West LA	7/12/2005	7/29/2005	12/7/2005
Montrose/Castle Point	7/12/2005	7/29/2005	11/29/2005
St. Albans	7/12/2005	7/29/2005	12/7/2005
Lexington	7/5/2022	7/22/2005	11/30/2005
White City	7/12/2005	7/29/2005	12/7/2005
Perry Point	7/12/2005	7/29/2005	12/7/2005
Poplar Bluff	6/20/2005	7/5/2005	9/7/2005

23-16

23-16

Submit final draft business plans to COTR	Present revised final draft business plans to VHA/CIB	Submit soft copies of final business plans
1/12/2006	2/7/2006	3/1/2006
1/13/2006	2/6/2006	2/28/2006
12/28/2005	1/23/2006	2/13/2006
1/17/2006	2/7/2006	3/1/2006
1/6/2006	2/2/2006	2/24/2006
1/18/2006	2/8/2006	3/2/2006
1/12/2006	2/3/2006	2/27/2006
1/20/2006	2/10/2006	3/6/2006
12/7/2005	12/29/2005	1/23/2006
12/21/2005	1/18/2006	2/15/2006
12/21/2005	1/18/2006	2/8/2006
12/21/2005	1/18/2006	2/8/2006
12/13/2005	1/9/2006	2/7/2006
12/21/2005	1/18/2006	2/8/2006
12/14/2005	1/10/2006	2/1/2006
12/21/2005	1/18/2006	2/8/2006
12/21/2005	1/18/2006	2/15/2006
9/28/2005	10/20/2005	11/10/2005

R/VHA

23.17