

# User requirement specification

6-8  
HOURS

8-12  
PEOPLE



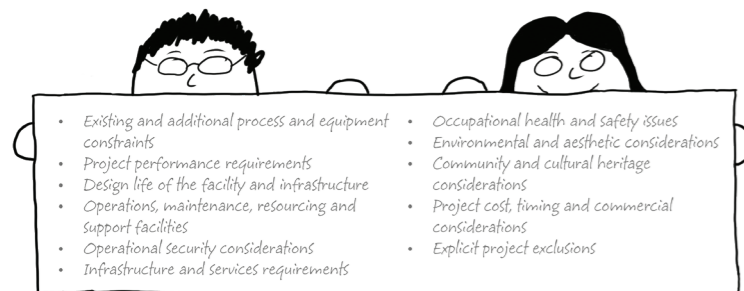
A User Requirement Specification (URS) workshop aligns and transforms the customer's and key stakeholder's thoughts, objectives and needs into specific measurable requirements.

The outcome is a list of agreed requirements that are used by the project team to drive their work. This ensures the project team remains focused on what the customer and key stakeholders see as important.

## Benefits

A User Requirements Specification (URS) is often called a Statement of requirements (SoR) or Customers Requirement Specification (CRS). They are all focused on reducing confusion and possible misunderstanding by bringing together the customer, key stakeholders and the project team. This provides an open, transparent and engaging opportunity to discuss and agree to the detail of the project.

These important conversations improve the quality of the project deliverables and reduce the project cost and time by significantly lowering the risk of rework. The requirements also provide a baseline to help with scope management. They can be used as a reference when the project is completed to establish whether the project delivered what was promised. On a large project a URS should address the following:



*The URS needs to be signed by all key participants to record that they are familiar with and committed to the user requirement specification.*

Smaller projects may just focus on a few of these. It's important the URS is signed off by all parties as this forms the foundation of the scope of work defined in the project work breakdown structure.

## Activities

### Pre-work

1. Identify all relevant project stakeholders both internal and external using the stakeholder analysis tool (operations, maintenance, marketing and government, NGO's, community and joint venture partners).
2. Evaluate the impact of the project on these stakeholders using the change impact assessment tool.
3. Define the business benefits and objectives using the benefits realisation tool.
4. Scope the possible project alternatives which could deliver these business benefits and objectives.
5. Create workshop presentations to describe the project considering the benefits and objectives, project alternatives, risks and stakeholders.
6. Work with the project sponsor to design and plan the workshop using the planning tools.
7. Create a workshop communications deck and ask the sponsor to send it to the participants; this raises the importance of the activity.
8. Create workshop posters, the URS template and arrange a scribe to be ready for the workshop.

### Steps

1. Bring everyone onto the same page using the SPACER tool.
2. Provide a common understanding of the detailed context and validate the project considering the benefits and objectives, project alternatives, risks and stakeholders.
3. Brainstorm the customer and key stakeholder requirements using the typical list as prompts.
4. Identify the requirements that are a 'must' or a 'want'.
5. List the 'must' requirements with detailed measurable and quantifiable terms.
6. Identify any project issues, including criteria and constraints.
7. Identify any material risks that may exceed the project risk threshold.
8. Document the next steps to be completed outside the workshop including communicating the outcomes.
9. Wrap up the workshop and capture feedback using the plus/deltas tool.

### Post session

1. Nominated scribe to populate the URS template during the workshop.
2. Facilitator to finalise the URS template.
3. The sponsor is to validate the URS information and issue to the customer, key stakeholders and project team.
4. Continually refer to the URS as a baseline to monitor project scope and deliverables.

### Tips

- During the concept stage of the lifecycle the URS is high level and brief. The URS is then revisited in detail towards the end of prefeasibility as the preferred alternative is surfacing. The customers can then visualise what the project will actually deliver. The approved URS is then maintained and updated during feasibility and execution.
- The opportunity framing and risk assessment workshops in prefeasibility need to be aligned with development of the URS.
- Use your organisation's URS predefined requirements checklist. This will make sure most of the common requirements are covered and help to identify any others.
- The URS should be written in the terms and language of the customer and clearly link the project objectives and deliverables using measurable terms.

### Duration

- The length of the workshop will depend on the size of the project and quality of the pre-work. Making sure the stakeholders have been identified and the impact assessed will focus the session.
- This URS workshop in feasibility could be a 6-8 hour session. If working with a blank canvas, this will require more time as the customer, key stakeholders and project team will take time to get onto the same page. A workshop in concept stage would require 4 hours as it is at a higher level.

## Tools

- Mandatory facilitation tools
- Detailed context
- Benefits realisation
- Project objectives
- Change impact assessment
- Stakeholder analysis
- Communication plan