



## Technically Assured Organisation (TAO) Assessment Process Improvement

Recognition as a Technically Assured Organisation (TAO) is gained following an evidence-based assessment which, if successful, results in an entity achieving the status of a Technically Assured Organisation.

An improved TAO assessment process will be implemented in March 2025.

This change is relevant to all authorised TAOs and entities seeking to become authorised as TAOs and will impact existing registered TAOs seeking scope expansion and new TAO applicants with active applications underway.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why has the TAO Assessment Process changed?

Feedback received from across Transport and Industry has been used as an opportunity to improve the assessment process, which was last updated in 2022 when it was automated. The feedback received focused on timeliness, cost and quality of interactions and was the trigger for a review of the process. The results showed that it takes quite some time for a new applicant to prepare a submission and the rate of resubmission of applications is high. This creates perceived delays in assessment and is not the best use of time and resources.

### What has changed in the new process?

The improved process adopts comparable industry practice and the principle of a "two-stage assessment". It

includes a range of changes designed to make it easier to applicants to prepare for assessment. Enhanced information for applicants will be available during the process to allow the applicant to better prepare for assessment. Advance booking, timeframe commitments and scheduling of assessments will give certainty to the timeframes for assessment. Assessment expectations will include be clearer with each assessment stage having hold points and deliverables. Failure to meet the entry condition or the timeframe for the next step will lead to assessment cancellation and the process being restarted again when resources and business priorities allow. Refer to the Become a TAO webpage for the assessment process overview and further references:

<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/industry/asset-management-branch/become-a-tao>.

## Will there be a cost associated with TAO authorisation?

Initial TAO assessment, scope expansion and surveillance audit activities will remain a service where applicants are not charged for the review of evidence or processing of their applications.

In the case of applicants that fail to become accredited, timeframe restrictions and/or fees may be applied for any second attempts to become accreditation.

## We are already a TAO. Will we have to be reassessed?

There is no impact on the current TAO authorisation status or scope. Existing TAOs will maintain their ongoing engagement with Transport by participating in surveillance audits and other relevant Transport initiatives.

## We have an assessment underway in the supplier portal. What will change for us?

The online Portal will change on the 21st of February 2025 to reflect the new assessment process flow and stages. Your assessment will be automatically mapped into the new process based on your current application status.

If your assessment on Portal is in the “New” status and you have not had an initial meeting yet, your Authorisation Facilitator will arrange one and will lead you through the process.

If your assessment on Portal is “In Progress” (scoping) stage, your Authorisation Facilitator will call you, share the latest guidance materials (“evidence cookbooks”) unless you have it already, and brief on the next steps that include commitment to scoping completion and timeframes for the improved process.

If your assessment is “In Preparation” (self-assessment and submitting responses), its status will be automatically renamed to “In Preparation for Stage 1” on Portal. Your Authorisation Facilitator will call you, share the latest guidance materials (“evidence cookbooks”) unless you have it already, offer a meeting with Transport SMEs if necessary (scoping meeting). You will be required to commit to the application submission date and the assessment Stage 1 (gap identification/review) date will be scheduled to occur within the next six months. This will allow the forward planning for you and Transport. The ongoing pre-assessment reviews if any will be finalised as planned within this period and you will be able to update your application accordingly.

If your assessment is in “Preparation complete/Ready for Assessment” it will be automatically mapped on Portal to the “Preparation complete/Ready for Stage 2 Assessment” and the assessment will proceed as planned and as per the process published in TS 06197.2 TAO Authorisation Scheme Version 3. You will be provided enough time to attend assessment interviews and respond to all queries before the assessment will be finalised.

If your assessment is in “Being assessed” it will be automatically mapped in Portal to the “Being Assessed Stage 2”. The assessment will proceed and will be finalised as per the process published in TS 06197.2 TAO Authorisation Scheme Version 3. It means that you will be provided with enough time to attend assessment interviews and respond to all queries before the assessment will be finalised.

## What are the time expectations for different stages of the improved assessment process?

Stage 1 assessment is to occur within 6 months following the scope meeting. Stage 2 assessment and assessment finalisation occurs within 6 months following stage 1 assessment completion. Any applicant that is unable to commit to the new timeframes for assessment will have the option to cease their current application and re-apply in future.

## **We are a TAO and have applied for a scope expansion. What will change for us?**

Your application will be transitioned into the new process stages in the portal as outlined above. You will still have access to the rapid assessment approach if your application is suitable.

## **We are a TAO and do not have any scope expansion applications underway. What does this change mean for us?**

There will be no change for you unless you apply for additional scope of services, which will be subject to the improved assessment process.

## **We are thinking of applying to become a TAO but have not yet submitted an assessment application. What does this change mean for us?**

You are free to apply for TAO status. The process that will apply to your application will be the improved process. You can follow the details on the Become a TAO webpage <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/industry/asset-management-branch/become-a-tao>.

## **What will the impact be on tendering for work?**

There will be no impact on tendering for work. The agreed committed assessment timeline will be made available for interested parties within Transport including procurement and delivery agencies upon request. This will enable and support relevant agreements and decisions.

## **What will the impact be on delivering work as a TAO?**

There is no impact on delivering work as TAO. you will continue to deliver your work as per your contractual arrangements.