

Alpha Service

SERVICE DEFINITION

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Alpha Overview

Get your digital project off to the best possible start

What is an Alpha phase

During the Alpha phase, ideas and insights captured as part of the Discovery process are iterated and tested using prototypes; to help shape the digital service and deliver value early.

As part of the Alpha phase, we explore new approaches so that we can help you decide which of the ideas we have tested are worth taking forward to Beta.

The focus is very much on research rather than development - prototypes are built but their main function is to test with users. An MVP may be developed but it will be based on what minimum scope makes sense for your users and will be used to test assumptions and inform learnings. We will deliver at pace with rapid experimentation to test the assumptions from Discovery.

Our Approach

Our Alpha process takes into account a wide range of factors which will influence the successful outcomes of the project.

This includes immovable constraints in legislation, contracts or legacy technology. We will consider non-functional requirements including integration with existing infrastructure and software solutions, accessibility and GDPR.

By the end of Alpha, you will have a clear understanding of what your beta will look like and the team you'll need to build it.

An Alpha phase typically lasts from between 6 to 16 weeks and our process is designed for GDS compliance, meeting the GOV.UK Technology Code of Practice principles.

Some of the key benefits of an alpha project:

- ✓ Spot problems early and resolve them quickly
- ✓ Deep dive into user needs
- ✓ Validate your requirements and goals
- ✓ Clear and well-defined end-to-end user journeys
- ✓ De-risk Beta with working software delivered in Alpha
- ✓ Understand your costs, risks and benefits
- ✓ Define your technical strategy
- ✓ Aligned to GDS Service Design
- ✓ Support through GDS Assessments
- ✓ Compliance with Digital by Default Service Standard
- ✓ Transfer knowledge to your team

Our approach to Alpha covers:



Our focus is on testing and learning

- Short sprints to test and validate the outcomes and determine the requirements for the next sprint
- Frequent measuring and reporting of progress against roadmap to ensure meeting the project outcomes
- Experienced Agile team with an established process
- Inception Workshops
- Daily Scrums
- Sprint Reviews
- Sprint Retrospectives

We follow the core principles for agile:



We can provide the range of skills you need for a successful Alpha phase and can work collaboratively as part of a blended team.

Why work with PDMS?

PDMS can add value to your project through:



Industry expertise and track record

Successfully implemented Discover, Alpha & Beta service and solutions for a range of clients including central and local government.



Flexibility and customisation

There's no one-size-fits-all approach so we take the time to understand your organisation, people and systems and customise solutions and our service to meet your requirements.



Innovation and creativity

Experienced team with a focus on innovative solutions that leverage current technology and transform it through creative thinking.



Scalability and future-proofing

Up-to-date solutions that are scalable to provide long-term value and be ready for future growth and technological advancements.



Data security and compliance

Strong focus on protecting sensitive data often associated with government systems to ensure it is protected every step of the way.



Collaborative and personalised service

Capable of delivering at scale whilst maintaining a focus on a personalised service.





Accessibility

Accessibility is a core principle which is considered throughout our software and solution delivery process. The UK's Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018 stipulates that all digital services should comply to WCAG 2.2 AA level, and all sites and services PDMS develops are tested against these criteria. As well as providing for accessibility and inclusivity, designing, developing and testing websites against WCAG 2.2 also has significant benefits to the search engine performance, mobile-friendliness and overall usability of a website or service.

We use a combination of automated testing, manual testing and testing with assistive technology such as screen readers, to make sure our systems and websites comply with WCAG. We will also draft and publish accessibility statements. In line with UK Government advisory, PDMS recommends periodic review of accessibility due to ongoing content changes. We are also able to provide 'experts by experience' testing by arrangement which involves inviting users with a range of disabilities to test the website and feedback on improvements.





Using the Service - Onboarding

Ordering and Invoicing

Requests for more information or to place an order for our Alpha service, contact PDMS on sales@pdms.com.

We would propose arranging a meeting to find out more about your precise requirements and answer any specific questions you may have. If required, we are also happy to provide an additional detailed proposal which will cover the specific deliverables, approach, timelines etc.

Should we then progress to the order stage, the GCloud call off contract would be signed by both parties. Depending on the solution or service we are delivering, we will also provide a Statement of Work(s) which clearly defines the project deliverables and ensures that we are both fully aligned in terms of the approach and the outcomes.

The minimum contract period will depend upon the project deliverables and will be agreed as part of the onboarding process.

Once we have a more detailed understanding of your specific requirements, we can provide a detailed cost breakdown which is usually on a Time and Materials basis. We can also provide Fixed Price quotes depending on the project deliverables.

- Time & Materials services will be invoiced monthly in arrears.
- Fixed Price projects payment milestones will be discussed and agreed as part of our onboarding process.
- Recurring fees will be invoiced annually in advance.

Use of the service is subject to the PDMS Terms & Conditions and any terms outlined in the Call Off Contract.

Pricing Overview

You can find pricing information in the Alpha Service Pricing Document and the PDMS Rate Card.



Implementation Plan

We will hold a number of briefing calls as part of our onboarding process where we will ensure that we have a shared understanding of the project outcomes, the broader project context and to establish agreed ways of working.

As part of our onboarding process, we will provide an implementation plan that may cover the following:

- Project Overview covering objectives and scope
- Project Roles & Responsibilities for stakeholders and key team members
- Project Delivery methodology e.g. Agile, Waterfall
- High level Project Timeline with major milestones etc.
- Risk Management to identify and mitigate any potential risks
- Change Management procedures
- Communication Plan, including channels, frequency and format
- High Level Technical approach
- Hosting (if applicable)
- Documentation and knowledge transfer
- Go-Live
- Post go-live processes such as support and system enhancements

Offboarding

We will agree an offboarding process which will include details of the data that will be provided, the format, any relevant documentation and details of how knowledge and learning can be handed back over to the organisations. Depending on the specific tasks related to offboarding at the end of a contract, there may be additional costs.

Termination Process

Our terms and conditions are tailored to meet the nature of the specific solution, project or service we are delivering to ensure that it best meets our client's objectives. The specific terms relating to contract termination would be agreed as part of the contract award and onboarding process and form part of our final contract.

Our standard termination clause, without cause requires 3 months' notice of termination.

Training

PDMS provides training for our services and solutions in a variety of different ways. We will outline and provide costs for an agreed training plan and knowledge transfer as part of our onboarding process.

We offer several different training approaches including:

- Workshops and training sessions – in person or online
- User guides – including online wikis
- Online video tutorials and how to guides – for self-paced training or as refresher materials

We can also provide in-depth training to “Super-Users” of the solution to support a “train the trainer” approach.





Data Security

PDMS is certified to ISO/IEC 27001, the internationally recognised standard for Information Security Management and is certified under the Cyber Essentials Plus scheme.

In the Isle of Man, the Data Protection Act 2018 makes provisions for the regulation of the processing of information relating to individuals.

The Data Protection (Implementation of GDPR) Order 2018 gives effect in the Island to EU Directive 2016/79 of the European Parliament (General Data Protection Regulation).



Data Back Up & Restoration

PDMS understands the requirements and the comfort that is brought about by backing data up. PDMS has exceedingly high levels of uptime, resilience and redundancy although there are still occasions where data will need to be restored to a previous date.

PDMS has therefore built a backup system which provides continuous recovery points for the data underlying the systems that we have developed. These backups are written to online storage for quick recovery and also regularly taken to tape so as to provide a point in time archive.

The underlying database engine allows point in time recovery, giving an RPO of near zero in the case of data corruption. In the unlikely event of a total system failure, our combination of backup strategies (including transactional data backups every 4 hours) supports an RPO maximum of 4 hours.

We perform periodic testing of the backup archives to ensure integrity of the data and restore capabilities.





Business Continuity

PDMS has a robust set of policies and procedures, which form part of an overall Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Framework to ensure that PDMS is able to provide services to its customers during, and after, significant events that can occur from time-to-time. These policies and procedures form part of PDMS' ISO 27001 and ISO 9001 certified management systems, and as such are externally audited to validate their appropriateness and effectiveness.

PDMS' general approach to business continuity is to ensure that there are no single points of failure within any part of the business.

This ethos means that we make use of multiple, geographical diverse, tier 3+ datacentres to house all of our business-critical data processing units. Our systems are setup in such a way that should a single datacentre fail then customers and PDMS staff should see no loss of service. Should an incident occur then the system will automatically fail over to the other data centre for the provision of services.

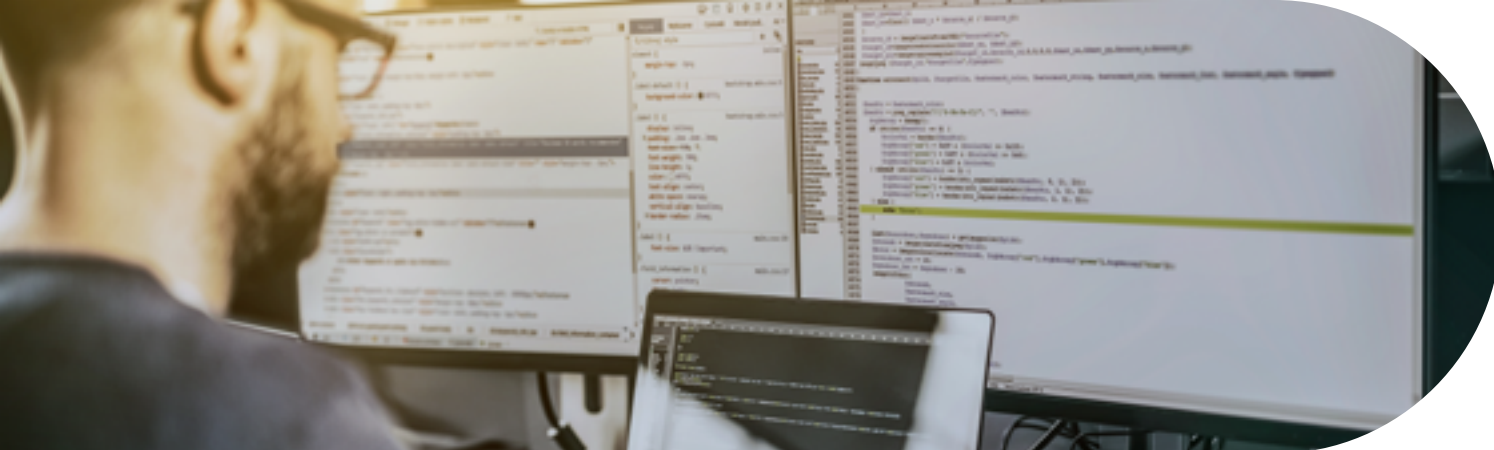
We can provide copies of the various policies and procedures that relate to Business Continuity on request.

Data Protection

PDMS has a dedicated, qualified Data Protection Officer who is responsible for overseeing data protection across the organisation. PDMS has a Data Protection Policy that details how PDMS and our staff will conform to the requirements of the applicable Data Protection Legislation. The Data Protection Officer provides support and advice to each department and ensures ongoing compliance with the legislative requirements through auditing each department. These audits cover all aspects of data protection from collection through to disposal, ensuring that we correctly follow the identified requirements.

PDMS will also, in conjunction with our customers as the Data Controller, provide assistance for any required Data Protection Impact Assessments as part of our services and solutions, which may identify any controls needed that are over and above the standard provision.





Support

We have a dedicated support team providing support for the solutions we have developed. We will agree a support service that meets your specific needs as part of our implementation plan and we provide a support and management contract which outlines our support commitments.

Support is typically available during office hours but can be extended to provide 24/7 coverage if required.

We have a number of channels for reporting support cases including an online system to record, manage and monitor the progress of individual support cases.

PDMS will work with you to identify suitable KPIs for ongoing monitoring to demonstrate adherence to agreed service levels. These will be included within regular project service reports. An example of a typical response time KPI is as follows:

Target achievement of SLA response times	P1 (High): Response within 1 working hour; resolution within 4 working hours	>95%
	P2 (Medium): Response within 4 working hours; resolution within 2 working days	
	P3 (Low): Response within 2 working days; resolution within 5 working days	

Account Management

We assign a dedicated Account Manager to all our customers. Our Account Managers, together with our Project Managers are a main point of contact for our customers. They are responsible for contract management and any account queries that you may have over the course of the contract. They will proactively support you to ensure that our services and solutions are delivering the best possible outcomes for your organisation.





About PDMS

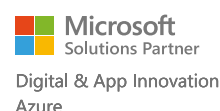
PDMS is a technology company specialising in software development and digital services. With a unique blend of software engineering excellence and creative digital design, we prioritise user-centric solutions. From analysis to ongoing support, we guide clients through every stage of their digital journey.

Our team consists entirely of full-time employees who are committed to continuous learning and skills development. Each member undergoes BPSS checks, with the majority holding SC security level clearance. Our diverse team brings expertise in project management, business analysis, UX design, software development, testing and infrastructure support.

We prioritise customer success, fostering long-term relationships - working with over half of our clients for a decade or more.

With three decades of industry experience, we've honed our understanding of the unique challenges, pressures, and opportunities encountered by the public sector in harnessing technology for maximum impact. Passionate about leveraging technology for tangible outcomes, our digital projects have saved millions, benefiting both public and private sectors while reducing environmental impact and enhancing productivity and customer service.

Accreditations



Memberships





Social Value

Right from the outset, giving back to our local communities has always been important to PDMS. We do this in many ways including fundraising activities undertaken by our generous and enthusiastic staff, corporate charitable donations to local, national and international causes and providing services in kind - for example, a new website for a sporting club or a database for a wildlife charity.

However, what we are most proud of is the time that our team generously gives up to support many community charities and organisations - particularly those that focus on young people. We provide mentors to schools and students, support the work of Junior Achievement and help to broaden the horizons of young people, especially young girls, when it comes to career opportunities in tech. We've welcomed hundreds of students on work experience, placements and apprenticeships over the years and have loved helping young people to learn more about the world of work and grow in confidence.

We want to play our part in protecting our environment too. Our ISO14001 accreditation, is helping us to measure and minimise our impact.

PDMS has committed to achieving Net Zero and has pledged not only to take action to measure, reduce and offset its carbon footprint but to also champion environmental protection within all spheres of influence including biodiversity.

When awarded contracts to undertake work as part of the GCloud framework, we will discuss with the buyer appropriate levels of social value that we could offer that are aligned with the buyer's social value objectives, we also liaise with the relevant buyer project team to see how we can develop and maintain skills as part of any contract. We will look to support the buyer's own social value framework by offering work careers support, mentoring and supporting charities that help women and young girls to progress a career in tech, STEM ambassadors etc.

We regularly take on apprentices across different technical roles and 17% of our current development team started as apprentices.

We will pro-actively seek to openly share our knowledge/ expertise by providing online 'lunch and learn' training sessions on accessibility, agile delivery and UX design. Examples include work experience placements, careers talks & mentoring, diversity & inclusion initiatives and supporting the development of digital skills.

Our areas of social value focus are:



We will provide regular updates on how we are performing in relation to our social value commitments as part of our regular Account Management meetings and will provide an annual report detailing the activities undertaken which have been attributed to a buyer's specific contract and the impact delivered.



Our Clients





Isle of Man Aircraft Registry (IOMAR)

Challenges

IOMAR made a strategic decision to upgrade its administration system to provide a unified database. The aim was to centralise the storage of Aircraft Registry data with integrated capabilities to improve flexibility, boost staff productivity, and enhance customer service.

Benefits and outcomes



Minimal disruption to business during implementation which was vital to IOMAR's reputation



Secure platform with a centralised database and automated workflows



User-friendly dashboard to enable staff to manage ongoing tasks more easily



Improved efficiency, allowing IOMAR to focus more on customers and enhance their appeal to potential registrants



Immediate availability and improved timeliness of management information through real-time reporting



Sherilyn Kelly

General Manager & Head of Special Projects at IOMAR

"The ARDIS system has revolutionised the way we work. Its integrated functionality means that staff only need to input data once and can then generate certificates, letters and reports from a single source easily and efficiently, removing duplication and enhancing the quality of key business data."



Skills England

Challenges

The Occupational Maps were originally developed to showcase apprenticeship standards. As apprenticeships expanded and Skills England adopted a broader, occupation-centric approach, the Occupational Maps required enhancement to encompass other technical education programmes.

Benefits and outcomes



Interactive platform that provides IfATE's technical education data in a comprehensive and intuitive library



Tackled major risks iteratively with user feedback in Alpha phase then created a data service using an API-first approach in Beta



Stakeholders can easily extract occupation data in a range of formats to suit multiple user types and purposes



Platform provides clarity in navigating the interconnected world of education and careers



Positive user feedback on creativity, informative content, and ease of use



"It has been an incredible privilege to work with very talented professionals on delivering occupational maps service to public beta. As Product Owner and Contract Manager, I have been consistently impressed with the creativity and tangible outputs. I wanted to say a personal thank you to the Occupational Maps team. Though employed by PDMS, they have been valued members of my whole team. We delivered public beta on time and on budget. Thank you."

Hannah Morgans
Product Owner at Skills England



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