



Permissions Capability Industry Information paper

Delivery of a Permissions Capability for government services

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CONTACT OFFICER

Requests for information about this paper should be directed to:

Permissions Capability team
Department of Home Affairs
PO Box 25, BELCONNEN, ACT 2616

Phone: (02) 6264 1111

Email: permissions.capability.procurement@homeaffairs.gov.au

Website: www.homeaffairs.gov.au

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Foreword

On 20 March 2020, the Australian Government announced a broad new policy approach to the acquisition and delivery of workflow processing capability. Consistent with the Government's response to the Independent Review of the Australian Public Service (the Thodey Review), the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs) and the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) were instructed to source and deliver a Permissions Capability (Capability) to underpin the modernisation of visa and citizenship service delivery within Home Affairs **and** that could be reused across government for other similar permission-based services. Many internal and external government services include similar permission-based elements including, for example, permits, accreditations, licences and registrations.

The development of a reusable Capability, designed and deployed with users at the centre, is fundamental to government agencies meeting the increasing digital service delivery expectations of both the Government and the individual and corporate users of government services. Currently many services across government are complex, time consuming, inconsistent and in some cases still paper based. Even where they are delivered digitally, they often mirror paper based processes and service delivery approaches. Designing the Capability with customers at the centre will ensure the experience for people and businesses accessing government services will be simple, clear, convenient, secure and fast.

Reusing the Capability in multiple service lines and government agencies will improve the consistency of user's experience when dealing with Government, and the efficiency of service modernisation and service delivery.

This paper outlines the high-level approach to developing a modern Capability consistent with the Whole of Government (WofG) Architecture approach outlined by the Minister for Government Services, the Hon Stuart Robert MP on 7 July 2020. As the Minister noted, a WofG approach to developing architecture will support "reusable technology components to reduce cost and complexity while speeding up delivery".

The approach to procuring the Capability will comprise acquisition of a 'base' functionality applied to initial simple use cases, followed by subsequent proposals delivered by responsible departments and agencies to transition other more complex use cases to delivery using the Capability. For the initial use case, Home Affairs is looking to digitise existing incoming passenger declarations – including health related declarations and passenger contact information – to support the national COVID-19 response and contact tracing by States and Territories. Home Affairs will also develop a simple digital visa product. Together, these initial use cases will prove the efficacy and utility of the Capability, while at the same time supporting the reopening of Australia's borders through COVID-19 safe resumption of international travel.

Given the intended scope of services to be delivered, the Capability will be publicly funded and operated. Relevant government agencies will at all times retain control of, and responsibility and accountability for, process design and implementation as well as all decision making. All data will be handled in accordance with relevant laws in relation to privacy in particular, and stored onshore in Australia.

Acquisition of the Capability will take place through an open approach to market and competitive procurement process, which is expected to commence before the end of October 2020. Interested organisations should ensure they are registered on AusTender (<https://www.tenders.gov.au/>) to receive notices regarding the approach to market. Given the nature of the likely initial use cases, the intention is to have the Capability in operation by the third quarter of 2021.

We look forward to working with industry in designing and developing the Capability.

Andrew Kefford PSM
Deputy Secretary Immigration and Settlement Services
Department of Home Affairs

Peter Alexander
Chief Digital Officer
Digital Transformation Agency

Definitions

Biometrics	<p>Biometrics are body measurements and calculations related to human characteristics. Biometrics authentication (or realistic authentication) is used in computer science as a form of identification and access control.</p> <p>Biometric data is an increasingly important tool in identity management globally, helping countries reduce fraud and integrity risks. The Australian Government already incorporates the collection of biometrics (fingerprints and facial images), for example, into visa application processes.</p>
Customer	<p>An individual or organisation that interacts with the Capability with the intent to apply for, modify, cancel or renew a permission, permit, licence or registration.</p>
Permission/s	<p>A permission is broadly defined to include processes involving the Government giving an individual or business the right to be someone, do something or have something following the provision of information and an assessment of eligibility against legislation, regulation, or policy. Permissions include, for example, visas, permits, licences, accreditations, and registrations.</p>
Permissions Capability	<p>A Permissions Capability (Capability) is the sum of all components (technical, workflow, staff, assessment, decision making, automation, risk assessment and treatment, customer profile, grant, distribution, etc.) that enables an individual to apply for, be assessed for and, if appropriate, be granted a permission.</p>
Reuse	<p>Reuse is defined as the sharing of the Capability or relevant components of the Capability between Australian Government agencies. Reuse of the Capability may involve sharing skilled resources, governance models, technology design patterns, business process design, technology platforms or commercial arrangements.</p>
Use case	<p>A specific situation or process to which the Capability or relevant component parts could potentially be applied. The use case involves an agency proposing a business case containing the business outcomes required to be achieved, along with details of the environment, dependencies, integration, business design and transformation requirements in line with government policy, legislation and the direction of the Whole of Government architecture work. An agency may have a number of different use cases, requiring reuse of relevant parts the Capability.</p>
User	<p>A user is anyone who will interact with the Permissions Capability. It can be a customer, third party provider, agent, government employee, contractor or any representatives of the Government.</p>

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide information on the key concepts and broad approach for progressing the Permissions Capability (Capability). This includes:

- the drivers for change
- an overview of the base Capability
- the use and reuse case approach to ensure the Capability can be scalable and flexibly applied across government
- consultation and solution design
- further contextual considerations.

The paper is of particular relevance to industry and technology organisations capable of providing services and capabilities that align with the Capability requirements. These groups may include but are not limited to:

- business process specialists
- technology infrastructure and enterprise software experts
- biometrics enrolment and verification providers
- industry specific business processing or software vendors
- robotic process automation and artificial intelligence innovators
- cloud hosting providers.

Drivers for change

The Australian Government is committed to delivering better services through smarter investment in technology. This is what Australians and businesses expect and this is what the public service is delivering.

To deliver these better services, the Government's approach to technology procurement is evolving. Bespoke departmental-based solutions are progressively being replaced by digitally enabled, reusable capabilities. These reusable capabilities allow multiple agencies to solve similar problems in an efficient, collaborative, and technologically integrated manner.

Strong policy and service delivery responses to emerging issues, as demonstrated through the national COVID-19 response, require agility and speed. Multiple, ageing, siloed Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems and bespoke processes across government create unhelpful rigidity in policy decision making and implementation.

The costs of ageing, siloed ICT systems exert an ongoing cycle of fiscal pressures. These pressures are coming to bear as a number of systems underpinning government services are reaching their end of life. For example, in announcing the pursuit of a broader approach to the acquisition of workflow processing technology in March 2020, the Acting Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon Alan Tudge MP, noted that while the Government's visa application and processing systems continue to function, they are out of date, and processing and decision making in many cases is still undertaken manually, supported by old technology and limited risk assessment capabilities. As is the case in other service lines, the nature and structure of ageing systems mean they are unable to meet growing expectations of easy-to-access, digital service delivery.

Investing in multiple systems across multiple departments risks unnecessary duplication of effort and capital investment. Rather than investing once and reusing many times, current practice often involves investing many times, sometimes in the same technology, to solve similar business problems. The operating and ongoing maintenance costs of sustaining multiple systems places significant pressure on departmental budgets and Australia's economy.

Base Permissions Capability

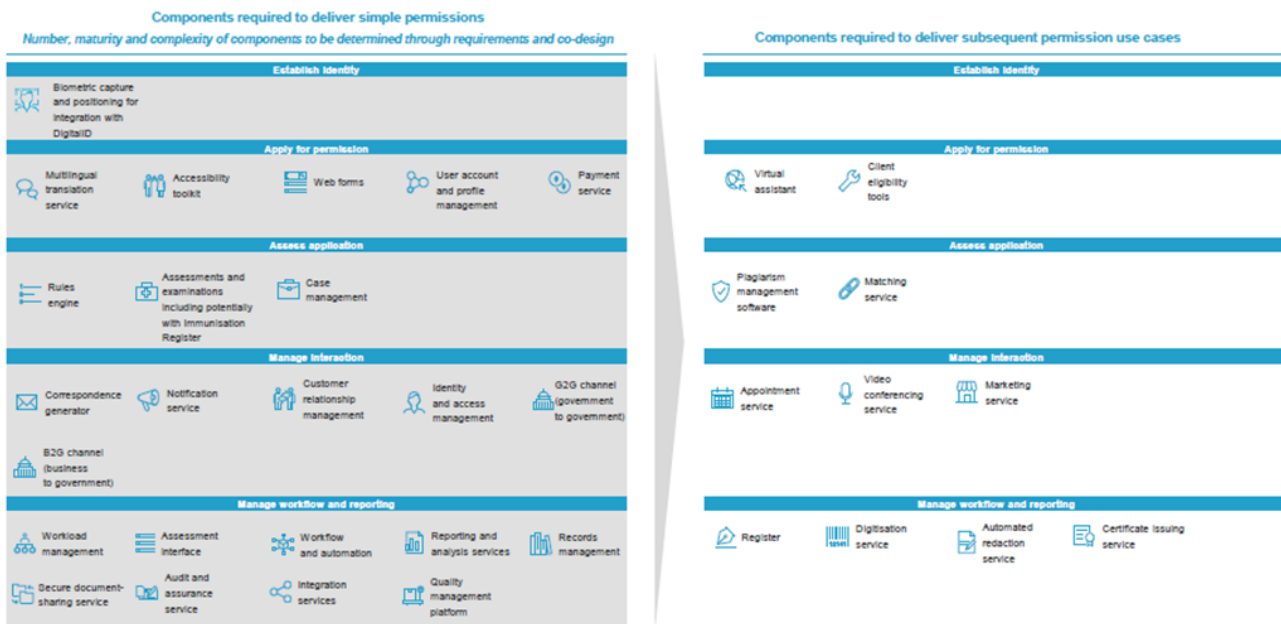
Initial research has identified elements that are common across permission services. The general permissions elements identified are:

1. **Channel and Access:** the options available to individuals and businesses to interact with government and the process in which access to systems and information is granted and maintained
2. **Discover:** the activities involved in seeking and providing information on permission types and eligibility
3. **Engage:** the activities involved in registering for a permission with Government – including uniquely identifying customers and the application process for customers to obtain a permission
4. **Action:** the activities involved in managing the permission assessment and decision making process including the risk assessment process
5. **Deliver:** the activities involved in finalising and providing an outcome to a permission applicant including recording the outcome/decision
6. **Maintain:** the activities involved in managing changes in circumstances from customers; managing customer complaints, reviews and appeals; provision of permission compliance; reporting the performance of the permission activity; managing permission processing quality.

Underpinning these elements are a number of short and long term components listed in the graphic below.

Permissions Capability component overview

Press Ctrl and Click on the graphic to view



Objectives and Principles of the Permissions Capability design

It is anticipated that implementation of the Capability will enable:

- [Improved service delivery performance and a better and more consistent government service experience for customers](#) through anchoring digital identity across processes and workflows, and increased assistive automation and workflow management that will reduce processing times for customers, reduce workload for staff on simple, manual, low-risk activities, and improve service quality
- [Reduced duplication of ICT investment across government](#) by enabling and encouraging reuse of Capability components by multiple agencies, and by providing multiple technology reuse models for flexible adoption
- [Enhanced business and policy agility](#) through decoupling of business logic from technology logic and providing real time business reporting
- [Use of contemporary integration](#) to enable agencies and partners to interact with the Capability through consistent, modern technology
- [Evergreening and sustainability](#) through developing components that can work as individual elements as well as fit together to deliver a more complex and integrated solution. This modular approach will enable the Capability to be easily upgraded, and modified at low cost. It will also enable enhancements to be shared across the Capability platform, applications, and libraries; providing multiple benefits to agencies including reducing the risk of ageing systems, improving customer experience, and increasing delivery agility
- [Improved cyber security resilience](#) through designing cyber security controls into the base solution and individual agency instances of a permission service, and use of contemporary technology solutions such as cloud that provide improved cyber threat reduction mechanisms and use of technology products that meet the security accreditation requirements of the solution
- [Enhanced, near real-time risk management and compliance](#) by leveraging agency intelligence services through carefully layered and structured Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), and secure data streaming.
- [Improved data sharing](#) through use of standardised, secure data streaming and information sharing channels, within relevant legislative frameworks
- [System adaptability, scalability and flexibility](#) with the ability to work in a modular configuration and reusing it to repopulate components and forms
- [Connected customer experience](#), which is consistent, simplified, accessible, and secure
- [Transparent and auditable](#) interactions and transactions.

The design and development of the Capability components will be aligned with existing WofG policies, frameworks and strategies (such as the [Digital Service Platforms Strategy](#), [Whole of Government Hosting Strategy](#), [Secure Cloud Strategy](#), [National API Design Standards](#) and the [Digital Service Standard](#)).

Use and reuse cases

The Capability has the potential to support a wide range of service delivery needs across areas such as visas, permits, licences, registrations, and information provision (to and by government agencies).

The base Capability will be developed alongside the initial use cases in the Home Affairs Portfolio. The intention is that this base Capability will be reused and extended to other permissions services across government over time both within Home Affairs, and in other portfolios.

Initial use cases

The first use cases will be from the Home Affairs portfolio and comprise: a Digital Passenger Declaration; and a simple digital visa. The base Capability will include customer-facing functions necessary to deliver the initial use cases, as well as supporting core security, storage, language translation, reporting, case management, customer relationship management, and automation functionality.

Digital Passenger Declaration

The Government currently collects a range of passenger contact and other information, and declarations in relation to customs, quarantine and other matters, from citizens and non-citizens entering Australia in a manual, paper based process. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this information contained on the Incoming Passenger Card, has been supplemented by additional health related declarations. One of the initial use cases for the Capability will involve digitising, combining, integrating and enhancing multiple manual processes.

Eliminating processing delays resulting from the need to scan paper cards; capturing digital and structured data; supporting data sharing within relevant legislative frameworks with relevant Commonwealth and state and territory departments; enabling verification of information provided (e.g. address confirmation); and avoiding issues caused by illegible or incomplete cards will significantly enhance the national response to COVID-19 and contact tracing efforts in particular. In the future, collection and verification of vaccination information, for example, will assist in managing health related risks at the international border.

The Capability will need to be able to reliably perform this function at scale as international travel returns to pre-pandemic levels of over 40 million movements per annum.

The Digital Passenger Declaration will be a critical enabler of Australia's border operations while recovering from, and reacting to, the ongoing COVID-19 threat to public health. It will deliver an integrated and streamlined application experience that facilitates international travel, and ensures relevant Commonwealth and state and territory agencies have the necessary information, verified in digital form, to support the public health response to COVID-19 and other relevant functions in real time.

Key features of the Digital Passenger Declaration use case will include:

- **Anchoring identity through collection and use of biometrics** to maintain the link between individual identity, health and other declaration data for all travellers, from intention to travel through to post border clearance and post arrival
- **Risk profiling** using collected passenger health information to enhance the ability of agencies to review, integrate and use health and other data, to risk manage entry, monitor and identify emerging trends and risks ahead of and after the border to contribute to the protection of the Australian community
- **Targeted interventions** enhancing capability of border and quarantine officials to support targeted risk-based interventions and stream passenger flows through airports

- **Automation** creating agility of response and efficiencies by removing over-reliance on people-based interventions across the border continuum and mitigating the threat posed by possible biosecurity and other risks, while enhancing capability to detect and deter criminal exploitation
- **Information Sharing** promoting collaboration with Commonwealth, state and territory agencies, industry and international partners to implement best practice processes and systems to strengthen the management of biosecure borders and support interoperability and reciprocity.

In this context, the base Capability will be required to integrate with systems to support processes such as (but not limited to):

- identity resolution and management
- risk assessment
- client and health information, collection and use
- travel uplift, border entry/exit
- reporting
- information sharing, provision and retrieval.

The simple visa product

One simple visa product will be part of the initial phase of proving the Capability and delivering the capacity for faster, better informed visa decisions within Home Affairs.

The simple visa product will include an easy to use digital application, available for non-citizen travellers who meet certain criteria. The Capability components to support this visa are expected to:

- provide an integrated and streamlined application experience for clients
- provide adaptable question sets that respond to risk settings
- provide greater processing and compliance efficiencies
- facilitate visa holders' movement through the international border.

The simple visa product will be required to deliver capabilities and integrate with systems to support processes such as (but not limited to):

- biometric collection and use
- identity resolution and management
- risk profiling
- automation and processing efficiency
- border entry/exit
- client and health information
- payments and financial transactions
- risk and threat assessment
- reporting
- data capture, storage and dissemination.

Reuse cases

Reuse is a key design imperative of the Capability. Reuse presents an opportunity to provide quality and cost-effective government services through standardisation and reuse of common artefacts, processes, and/or solutions. Reuse can also exist independently of technology and service components, through the consolidation of contracts, negotiation processes and vendor selection processes. Benefits of reuse to the Government include lower build or run costs, better customer experience, increased speed to market, risk mitigation, talent access, or flexibility.

Reuse of the Capability may involve sharing skilled resources, governance models, technology design patterns, business process design, technology platforms or commercial arrangements.

This flexible approach to reuse will help accelerate digital transformation by making it faster, cheaper, and easier to roll out. The Capability proposes a flexible reuse model to meet the needs of a range of agencies across Government:

- **Pattern reuse** - using the pattern of design / groups of components as service offerings in developing further common use cases
- **Platform reuse** - use of a platform by multiple agencies / tenants or use of shared libraries of components (software and hardware) to build new platform instances
- **Service Reuse** - reuse configuration, hosting or solution-based service delivered by a service provider using one or more platforms.

The Permissions Capability will also use existing WofG capabilities such as [myGovID](#), [myGov](#) and [Notify](#) where appropriate.

Concepts for future reuse

In addition to fully-developed proposals for the application of the Capability to support the Digital Passenger Declaration and simple visa, the request for tender is expected to include a request for tenderers to describe how they will enable a scalable, reusable platform that can support multiple, distinct use cases. These could encompass, for example:

- personnel security clearance processes like the Department of Home Affairs' [Employment Suitability Clearance](#)
- the licensing of companies to import and sell tobacco, and associated compliance measures
- a simple request by an individual or company for information about themselves (e.g. request for a police check, or border movement history)
- provision of a permit to export or import certain goods
- provision of a Commonwealth security accreditation (e.g. Aviation Security Identity Card)
- a more complex visa product.

Consultation and Solution Design

The Government is delivering digital transformation to improve people's experience of government services. DTA is leading this through helping agencies create services that are simple, clear and fast.

To deliver a capability that reflects the whole user experience, the Capability will start with user needs, not government needs. A focus on the user experience will deliver a capability that reflects how users think, what they want to do, is built on user needs and is accessible to everyone.

Consultation with users across a variety of areas will be used to inform the design of a flexible and adaptable Capability. Design consultation will include relevant government agencies, overseas and local customers, third party providers, and Government.

Further contextual considerations

Digital landscape

Expectations of simple, fast and effective digital government services that are robust, secure, and resilient, will continue to rise. The DTA's [Digital Transformation Strategy](#) outlines three key priorities to improve government services:

- Government that's easy to deal with.
 - To make government easy to deal with, simple and intuitive services that support user needs and life events, while eliminating the need to deal with multiple agencies or layers of government.
- Government that's informed by you.
 - Government will use data analysis to make sure services meet user needs, to understand better what people and business expect from the Government and to improve future services. In doing this, Government will ensure that users retain control over their information.
- Government that's fit for the digital age.
 - Australians expect government to be easy to deal with and to provide smart and convenient services.

Appendix A: Permissions Capability Model

Permissions Capability Model

1. Channel and Access Management

Represents the options available to customers and users to interact with government and the process in which access to systems and information is granted and maintained

- Access
- Permissions Capability account
- Languages
- Assistance / Act on Behalf of

- Interfaces

DISCOVER

ENGAGE

ACTION

DELIVER

2. Information Management

Create and deliver online content for customers to increase awareness of permission services and increase future engagement

- Service / production information
- Opt-in notifications

3. Registration, Identification and Application

Enable customers to connect at their own convenience, allowing for customisation of user accounts and lodgement of permission applications

- Registration
- Identification
- Application
- Payment

4. Assessment

Enable delegated requests to the relevant user through automated workflow, and feedback on progress is communicated to the user

- Eligibility
- Risk
- Review
- Request additional information

5. Outcome Management

Support the finalisation of the permission application and delivery of the outcome to the customer. Outcomes are recorded and used for reporting purposes

- Decide
- Record
- Notify

MAINTAIN

6. Change of Circumstances

Allow customers to manage any changes to circumstances throughout the application process

- Change circumstances
- Amend or cancel permission
- Manage payments/refunds
- Notify

7. Complaints, Reviews and Appeals

Manage complaints, reviews and appeals

- Lodge complaint or appeal
- Review and resolve
- Amend/uphold decision
- Notify

8. Compliance and Enforcement

Conduct compliance and enforcement activity

- Provide information
- Conduct compliance casework
- Record and report
- Notify

9. Reporting and Data Analytics

Conduct performance reporting and analytics to inform both the capability and broader policy needs

- Report performance
- Perform data analysis
- Input to policy decision

10. Quality Assurance

Manage permission processing quality

- Select quality assurance cases
- Conduct and merge
- Record and report
- Monitor staff performance

11. Enablers

Provide enablers which underpin and assist in the management of all aspects of the permissions capability

- Workflow processing / workload management
- System updates
- Document production and forms capability / records management
- Rules based engine
- Search
- Risk
- Correspondence

12. Transition

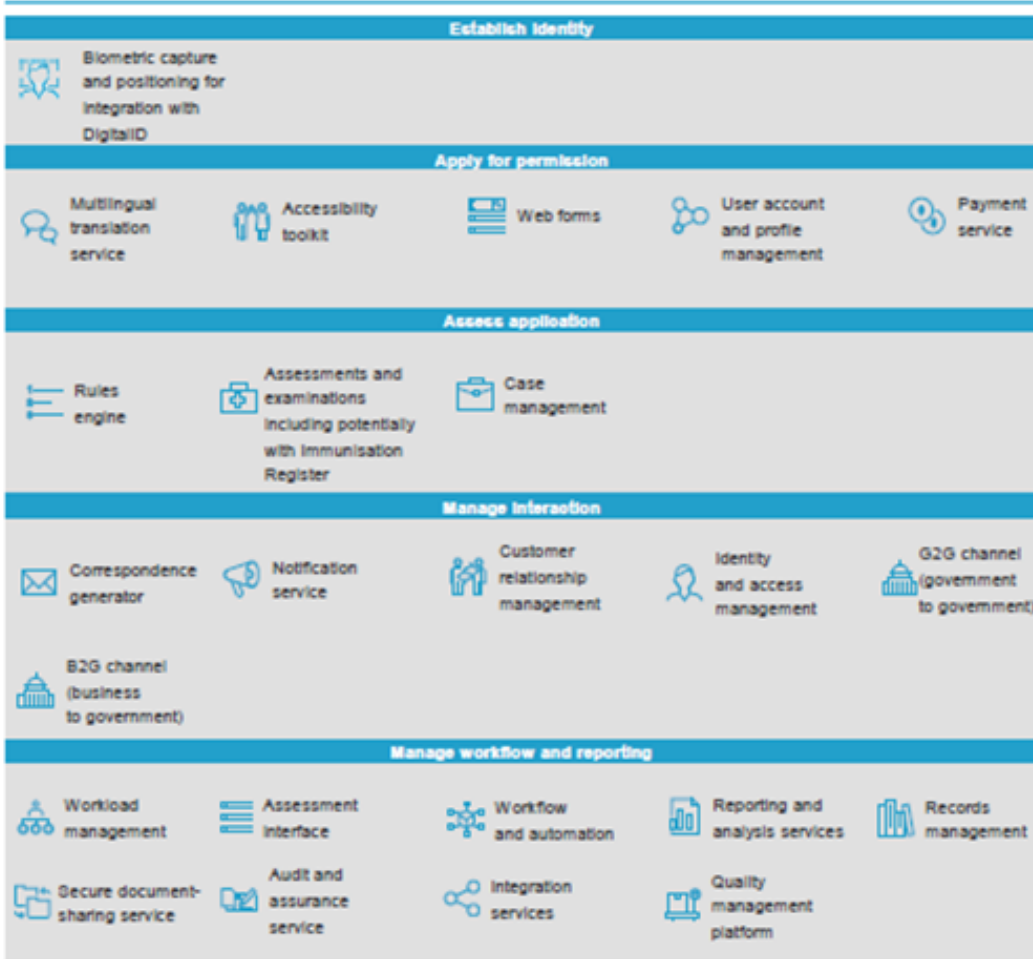
Manage the transition from the current system to the new system, including any interim arrangements

- Transition requirements
- Interim requests
- Data migration

Permissions Capability component overview

Components required to deliver simple permissions

Number, maturity and complexity of components to be determined through requirements and co-design



Components required to deliver subsequent permission use cases

