# Template for Creating a Project Vision Statement

## An ESRI Technical Paper

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Template for Creating a Project Vision Statement

The purpose of this document is to capture the client's overall vision for the project. This information will help ensure that the project goals and high-level requirements are well understood. The information provided in this document is often required prior to completing a detailed project proposal or implementation plan. Please provide all information to the best of your ability, omitting only those sections that may be irrelevant to your project or the current scope of work. If you have an existing document that addresses the same issues, please feel free to attach it in its entirety or reference it as appropriate.

High-Level Project Overview

This section describes the business requirements being met by this project.

Problem Statement

This section summarizes the problem being solved by this project. The following issues should be addressed:

- Describe the problem.
- Describe the stakeholders affected by the problem.
- Describe the impact of the problem on the organization.
- Describe what a successful solution would mean (i.e., what are the key benefits this project will provide to the organization).

Project Position

This section summarizes at a high level the unique needs the project intends to fill in your organization. Describe alternatives to the proposed solution, and state why the proposed solution is best suited for meeting your organization's needs.

A project position statement communicates the intended use of the application and the importance of the project to all affected users.

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1 This document has been adapted from the Rational Unified Process but has been tailored to a GIS project life cycle perspective. For more information on the Rational Unified Process, please refer to http://www-306.ibm.com/software/rational/info/technical/lifecycle.jsp.
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Organizational Position

Summarize key issues that motivate your organization's technology decisions. Describe the organizational hierarchy as it relates to this project (i.e., how will your department meet the needs of other users/departments in the organization). Describe how this project will promote your department's mission. Some key questions include

- What is your organization's reputation?
- What would you like it to be?
- How will this project support your goals?

User Description

This section should profile the target users of the application. This section should not be used to state specific requirements but should provide context for why the requirements are needed.

User Profiles

Describe each unique type of user of the system. User types can be as divergent as super users and novice. For example, a geographic information system (GIS) super user might need a sophisticated, flexible tool for editing GIS data, while a novice user might need a user-friendly tool for querying map features. A thorough profile should cover the following topics for each type of user:

- Technical background and degree of sophistication
- Key job responsibilities
- Deliverables the user produces and for whom
- Problems that interfere with success
- How the target user defines success and how the user is rewarded

User Environment

Describe the working environment of the target user as it relates to this project. Following are some suggestions:

- Number of people involved in completing the typical tasks? Will this change?
- How long is a task cycle? Amount of time spent in each activity? Will this change?
- Any unique environmental constraints: mobile, outdoors, slow modem connection, and so forth?
- Which systems platforms are in use today? Future platforms?
- What other applications are in use with which this application might need to integrate?

Current User Needs

List the key problems with existing solutions as perceived by the user. Clarify the following issues for each problem:

- What is the nature of the problem?
- What are the reasons for this problem?
- How is it solved now?
What solutions does the user want?

Describe the relative importance the user places on the problem. Is it a problem that must be solved or an issue the user would simply like addressed?

**Alternative Solutions**

Identify alternatives the user perceives as feasible. Solutions might include buying a competitor's product, building a homegrown solution, or simply maintaining the status quo. List any known competitive choices that exist or may become available. Include the major strengths and weaknesses of each competitor as perceived by the end user.

Alternate Solution 1
Alternate Solution 2

**Application Overview**

This section provides a high-level view of the application capabilities, interfaces to other applications, and systems configurations.

**Application Perspective**

This section of the document should put the application in perspective to other related products and the user's environment. If the application is independent and totally self-contained, state it here. If the application is a component of a larger system, then this subsection should relate how these systems interact and should identify the relevant interfaces between the systems. A diagram can be provided to describe the system and its interactions.

**Summary of Application Capabilities**

Summarize the major benefits and features the application should provide. Organize the functions so the list is understandable to the customer or to anyone else reading the document for the first time. A simple table listing the application function, its key benefits, and supporting features might suffice. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Function</th>
<th>Key Benefit</th>
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<tr>
<td>Provide Internet map view and query</td>
<td>Department personnel can view and query</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capabilities to department personnel.</td>
<td>critical business data with a thin client application that does not require</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>licensing or maintenance on a per user basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Internet map printing capability</td>
<td>Department personnel can create maps on demand and reduce map requests to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to department personnel.</td>
<td>the GIS department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide data download capability to the</td>
<td>Public is granted access to publicly available spatial data. GIS staff do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public over the Internet.</td>
<td>not need to respond to frequent data requests.</td>
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**Assumptions and Dependencies**

List each of the factors that affect the features stated in the project vision document. List assumptions that, if changed, will alter the project vision document. For example, an assumption may state that a specific operating system will be available for the hardware designated for the software application. If the operating system is not available, the proposed solution may need to be updated.
List and briefly describe the application features. Features are the high-level capabilities of the system that are necessary to deliver benefits to users. Each feature is an externally desired service that typically requires a series of inputs to achieve the desired result. For example, a feature of an Internet mapping system might be the ability to provide simple map layouts for local printing.

Because the vision document is reviewed by a wide variety of involved personnel, the level of detail should be general enough for everyone to understand. However, enough detail should be available to provide the team with the information it needs to create a use case model.

To effectively manage application complexity, we recommend for any new system, or an increment to an existing system, that capabilities be abstracted to a high enough level so 25–99 features result. These features provide the fundamental basis for application definition, scope management, and project management. Each feature will be expanded into greater detail in the use case model that is defined later in the project.

Throughout this section, each feature should be externally perceivable by users, operators, or other external systems. These features should include a description of functionality and any relevant usability issues that must be addressed. Try not to describe the design of the features. Keep feature descriptions at a general level. Focus on capabilities needed and why, not how, they should be implemented.

**Feature 1**

**Feature 2**

**Additional Application Requirements**

**Constraints**

This section describes any design constraints, external constraints, or other dependencies. For example, if the application must be integrated with existing information technology or Web design standards, state the applicable constraints here.

**Quality Ranges**

Define the quality ranges for performance, robustness, fault tolerance, usability, and similar characteristics that are not captured above.

**Precedence and Priority**

Define the priority of the different system features. A table referencing the features listed above may be helpful.

**Applicable Standards**

List all standards with which the application must comply. These can include data (Federal Geographic Data Committee [FGDC], Spatial Data Transfer Standard [SDTS]), communications standards (TCP/IP, ISDN), and platform compliance standards (Windows, UNIX, etc.).
**System Requirements**  
Define any system requirements necessary to support the application. These can include the supported host operating systems and network platforms, configurations, memory, peripherals, and companion software.

**Performance Requirements**  
Use this section to detail performance requirements. Performance issues can include such items as user load factors (estimated transactions per hour), bandwidth or communication capacity, throughput, accuracy, reliability, and response times under a variety of loading conditions.

**Documentation Requirements**  
This section describes the documentation that must be developed to support successful application deployment. Define what types of documentation are expected for the application (i.e., user manual, online help, installation guide, customization guide, training guides, read me files). Special formatting and printing constraints should also be identified if relevant.