

July 2023

# PR24 Business Plan Tables: completion and validation guidance

## About this document

The purpose of this document is to:

- explain our expectations in relation to the submission of business plan tables;
- explain how companies' approaches to populating our business plan tables could impact our ability to regulate the sector effectively; and
- introduce the data validation software application we are developing and sharing, 'Proteus'.

We are publishing this guidance alongside our publication of version 5 of our business plan tables. We consider that this additional guidance is helpful given the particular issues regarding the populating of our business plan table.

## Our expectations in relation to data and information

We expect the business plan data and information that you submit to be accurate, consistent and complete. For example, this means that we expect:

- all expected elements of business plan tables to be populated appropriately;
- data and information to be internally consistent, for example, data in a company's business plan table should be consistent with data and information the company puts in other files;
- data and information to be provided in accordance with our guidance; and
- our templates to be populated accurately including, for example, no undue alternations to the structure of these templates.

Your completed spreadsheet should be uploaded to your company's area of our SharePoint [data capture site](#). Please upload the tables we have requested by:

- 31 July 2023 to the folder, "PR24 Early Submission Jul 2023"; and
- 2 October 2023 to the folder, "PR24 Business Plan Oct 2023".

If you require any assistance with this, please contact [PR24@ofwat.gov.uk](mailto:PR24@ofwat.gov.uk) copied to [christopher.pepper@ofwat.gov.uk](mailto:christopher.pepper@ofwat.gov.uk)

## The impact of altering our business plan table template

At PR24 we will receive a large amount of data from companies. We need to store this in a way that is secure, accessible and facilitates the efficient running of our PR24 models. We load all key regulatory data into our database, 'Fountain'. Data on Fountain is considered the 'single version of the truth' which is used to inform companies' determinations.

Our upload of data to Fountain is an internal process. In this note we summarise how we upload data to Fountain and how companies' approaches to filling in our business plan table template could impact this upload (and therefore affect our ability to regulate the sector effectively).

In common with other databases, Fountain requires that input data conforms to certain requirements<sup>1</sup>. If these requirements are not met, the data cannot be uploaded without further alteration. If alterations are required after submission, then this would complicate and delay our internal processes.

The data from each business plan table is mapped to a specific unique reference identifier (a 'bon code'). Within Fountain, each bon code is associated with a specific definition. This means, for example, that if a company were to change the units or item descriptions within our published business plan tables this would create a discrepancy between the table definition of the data in the company's submission and the definition in our database.

At previous price controls we have found that some companies have altered our templates or otherwise provided data in a way that hinders our processes (for example, entering text data in cells which require numeric data or altering the layout of our tables). We ask that you do not do this.

## Our new data validation tool, 'Proteus'

We have started to develop a software tool 'Proteus' to help us to identify some of the potential discrepancies that may arise in how companies populate our business plan tables.

At this stage, the primary objective of Proteus is to help us to identify:

- data issues that might prevent us loading data into Fountain;
- a specific set of potential unexpected changes to our published template; and
- a specific set of potential data validation issues (for example, whether text data is entered where numeric data is expected).

We will not rely on Proteus to help us identify all data issues.

Although Proteus is intended for internal usage, we are publishing it (including its supporting code) in the interests of transparency on [GitHub](#). We will continue to publish any updates to this code on GitHub.

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<sup>1</sup> For this reason, we include a set of (often hidden) standardised worksheets in our data requests ('F\_output' sheets).

We do not require companies to use this tool. However, you may wish to do so before submitting your business plan tables to help identify potential data validation issues. To enable this, it is published under the [Open Government Licence](#).<sup>2</sup>

We provide further details of Proteus in the user guide and 'read me' file published alongside it.

We will continue to develop Proteus in the coming months as appropriate. If you have any feedback on it, please send this to [PR24@ofwat.gov.uk](mailto:PR24@ofwat.gov.uk) and copied to [maria.diapouli@ofwat.gov.uk](mailto:maria.diapouli@ofwat.gov.uk) and [alex.whitmarsh@gov.uk](mailto:alex.whitmarsh@gov.uk) by **5pm Monday 28 August 2023**.

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<sup>2</sup> The Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat) is not liable for any errors or omissions and shall not be liable for any loss, injury or damage of any kind caused by its use.

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