



NORTHERN WATER PROJECT

Client: Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT)

Location: SA, Australia

Contract form: Design, Build, Operate and Maintain (DBOM)

Project lifecycle stage: Development

Duration: 2024 - Ongoing

At a glance: The Northern Water project involves the construction and operation of a large-scale seawater desalination plant in the Spencer Gulf, connecting to northern South Australia via several hundred kilometres of pipeline infrastructure.

The project will be delivered through a collaborative Design, Build, Operate and Maintain (DBOM) contract model. Under this model, the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) will engage a single consortium via two integrated contracts: one for the design and construction of the plant and pipeline, and the other for its operation and maintenance. Proposals for both contracts will be tendered concurrently and submitted as a joint proposal through a multi-month interactive tender process during the procurement phase. Progression to the delivery phase is contingent upon securing the necessary project approvals and stakeholder agreements.

Objectives

The Northern Water project will establish a climate-independent water source for South Australia's Far North, Upper Spencer Gulf, and Eastern Eyre Peninsula regions. The project aims to support the growth of industries critical to achieving net-zero emissions targets, including emerging green manufacturing and expanding clean energy sectors.

Ahead of the project's market release, DIT required the development of key tender documentation to support effective procurement.

Our services

SmedTech was engaged by DIT to support the development of the Contract Scope and Contract Requirements (CSCR) documentation, including the technical specification documentation for both the Design & Build and Operate & Maintain phases of the DBOM contract.

In this role, we:

- Collaborated with the technical team to draft and update the CSCR documents in line with the Department Style Guide, embedding best practices in requirements and processes from across Australia.

- Administered the end-to-end review process for the development of the documentation, including the coordination of stakeholder feedback, and facilitation of targeted review workshops.
- Conducted a comprehensive review of the DBOM contracts to identify and resolve specification gaps, working closely with the legal team to ensure contractual integrity and robustness.
- Delivered specialised input into critical project components, including the development of testing and commissioning requirements and the scope definition for the independent certifier.
- Ensured all documentation was cohesively aligned with the overarching contract framework to deliver the intended technical and commercial outcomes.

Our impact

SmedTech successfully delivered a comprehensive, contract-aligned suite of CSCR documentation, positioning the State to enter the tender phase with clarity and confidence. Our work has laid a strong foundation for effective market engagement and supports the successful delivery of the Northern Water project.