Infrastructure Investment Prospectus

Western Cape Government
FOR YOU

PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES PROJECT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

High-level project overview; Unique value proposition and competitive advantage; Strategic significance and impact; Key stakeholders; Investment opportunity.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION & STRATEGIC CASE

Project scope and objectives; Justification; Sector-specific analysis; Market size and demand analysis.

PROJECT STATUS & IMPLEMENTATION READINESS

Current phase of development; Readiness for procurement; Regulatory and environmental approvals; Community and stakeholder engagement.

GOVERNANCE, POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Legal and regulatory framework; Government policies; Governance role; Investment needs and policy incentives.

ECONOMIC & COMMERCIAL VIABILITY

Value-for-money assessment; Cost-benefit analysis; Risk evaluation; Economic multipliers and macroeconomic benefits.

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS & FUNDING STRATEGIES

Total project cost breakdown; Funding sources; Revenue models; Innovative financing mechanisms.

PROJECT FEASIBILITY, APPROVALS & INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

Feasibility study findings; Master plan integration; Alternative evaluation; Infrastructure planning and prioritisation.

DELIVERY MECHANISM & PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

Phased implementation; Procurement methods; Bidding process; Supplier selection; Risk-sharing mechanisms.

PROJECT COMMUNICATION & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Investor engagement strategies; Community participation; Government and regulatory interactions.

SPECIAL (E.G. GENDER) PROCUREMENT ACTIONS & SOCIAL IMPACT

Gender-responsive procurement; Social benefits; Sustainability and environmental compliance.

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Long-term asset management; Performance monitoring; Digital technology leverage; Resilience planning and climate adaptation.

CONCLUSION & CALL TO ACTION

Summary of investment benefits; Next steps; Contact details and proposal submission.

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The Provincial Archives Project is a construction-ready, legally mandated infrastructure investment designed to address an urgent storage capacity shortfall at the Western Cape Archives and Records Service (WCARS). With an estimated 57,000 linear meters of unaccommodated records, the current capacity situation compromises legal compliance, undermines governance and limits public access to essential documentation.

The full project is structured across six phases, with a total estimated value of R1.22 billion. Phase 1 of the project, which is fully scoped, costs R328.7 million and is ready for implementation. This phase includes the demolition of outdated infrastructure and the construction of a five-storey archival facility, which has advanced mobile shelving, cold storage, scanning services, and digital transformation infrastructure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Aligned to the Western Cape Infrastructure Framework 2050 and the Panoptic Scoring Model, the project contributes to spatial justice, transversal governance, and long-term sustainability. It also strengthens public trust by enhancing access to records required for estate resolution, legal matters and public history.

The Provincial Archives Project now seeks investment and approval for execution, positioning itself as a cornerstone of institutional memory, transparency, and citizen rights in the Western Cape.

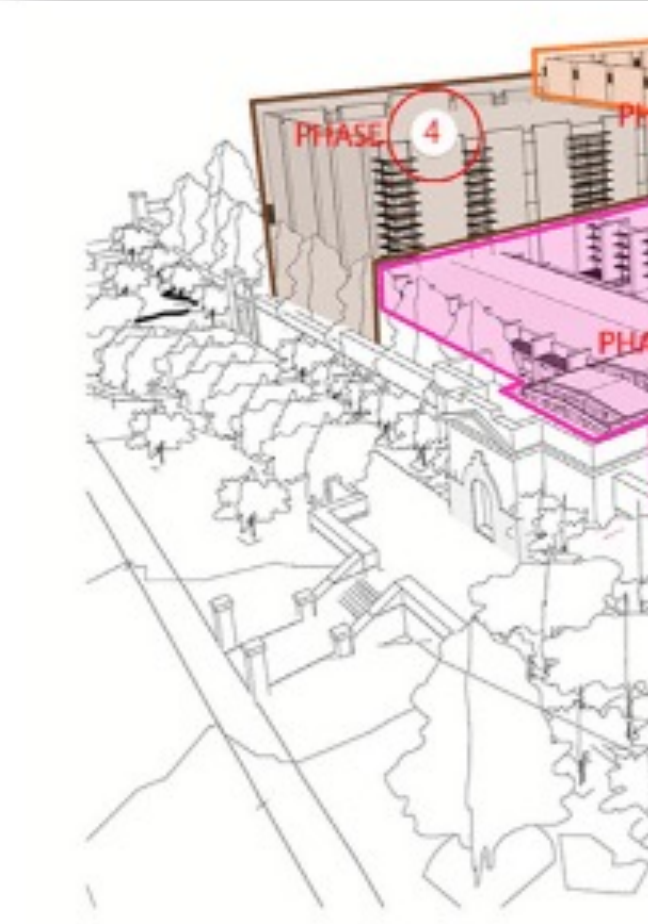
PROJECT DESCRIPTION & STRATEGIC CASE

Project scope and objectives; Justification; Sector-specific analysis; Market size and demand analysis.

To address a critical storage capacity shortfall that directly prevents legal compliance, public service delivery, and democratic accountability, the Provincial Archives Project proposes a strategic, six-phase infrastructure expansion of the Western Cape Archives and Records Service (WCARS). The project complies with Schedule 5(a) of the Constitution, which gives Provincial Governments full authority over archives other than National archives. The Western Cape Act (Act No. 3 of 2005), which mandates that the province maintain a Provincial Archives and Records Service, offers additional legislative guidance.

The WCARS serves as the central archival repository for all Western Cape Government departments, municipalities, public entities, the Office of the Premier, and the Provincial Parliament. It has now, however, reached full storage capacity, with an immediate backlog of over 57,000 linear meters. This shortfall has prompted ad hoc measures with consequences that are unsustainable and non-compliant. These include instances where records are either held beyond their authorised retention periods within government departments or are outsourced to costly commercial storage solutions. These measures pose a serious risk to record integrity, legal defensibility and governance continuity.

The project scope includes Phase 1, which is fully designed, construction-ready and carries an estimated cost of R328.7 million. It will involve the demolition of old infrastructure and the phased construction of new archival facilities. A five-story stack building with two basements is being constructed during this phase. It will have cold storage, scanning capabilities, digital records infrastructure and contemporary mobile shelving. Subsequent phases cover the refurbishment of existing stacks, further expansion for future demand, new administration areas and a conference facility. The full six-phase master plan reflects a long-term vision for an archival institution.



SECTOR-SPECIFIC ANALYSIS - analysis of the archives and records management sector demonstrates that WCARS is a vital component of social justice, governance and cultural continuity rather than just a records warehouse. According to Auditor-General reports, ineffective record-keeping is a common obstacle to efficient oversight. By guaranteeing archival integrity, promoting government accountability and facilitating access to historical records, WCARS reduces these risks. Additionally, the institution plays a critical role in advancing digital transformation and inclusive access to information. This aligns to the Panoptic Principles in the Western Cape Infrastructure Framework 2050.

PHASING

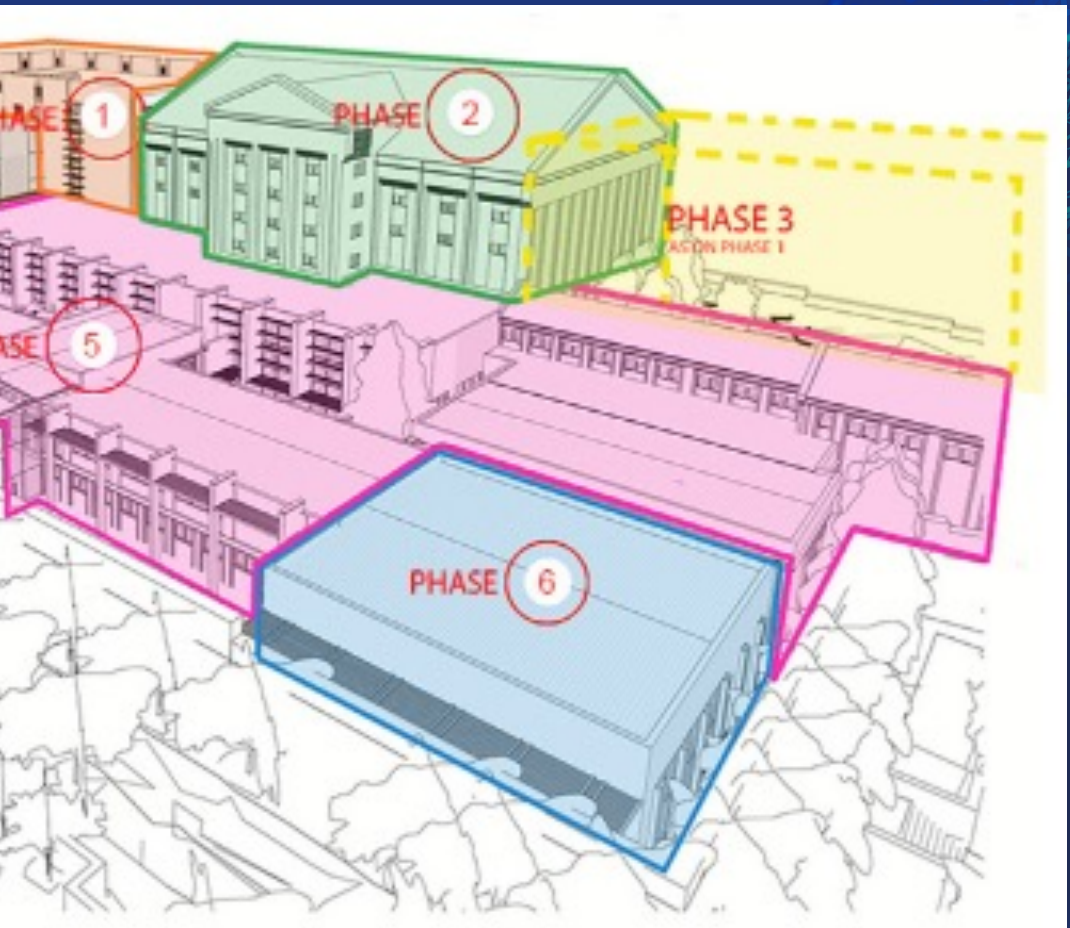


Figure 1: Phased Development Overview-Phases 1 to 6

PROJECT STATUS & IMPLEMENTATION READINESS

Current phase of development; Readiness for procurement; Regulatory and environmental approvals; Community and stakeholder engagement.

The Provincial Archives Project is currently at an advanced stage of planning, with Phase 1 fully construction-ready. The architectural designs, costing estimates and phasing strategy have been completed, enabling immediate progression to implementation pending budget allocation and final approvals. As outlined in the Roeland Archives Project – Workstage 03 report and the Masterplan Phasing document, the project has been developed through a planning process led by the Department of Infrastructure (DOI) in partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport (DCAS). The Phase 1 development, which includes demolition of the outdated South East Wing and construction of a five-storey archival stack facility with two basement levels, is technically prepared for tendering and execution.

The detailed cost estimate for Phase 1 confirms a total projected expenditure of R328,719,289 (including VAT and professional fees). This cost reflects escalations calculated over the pre-construction and construction periods and includes allowances for contingencies, design development and professional disbursements.

The project's readiness for evaluation within structured public infrastructure frameworks is further confirmed by its inclusion in the Request for Projects document issued for the Panoptic Evaluation Scoring sessions. This signals its alignment with the Western Cape Infrastructure Framework 2050, the Western Cape Infrastructure Strategy 2050, and the Infrastructure Implementation Plan 2050, all of which require evidence-based, policy-aligned investment-ready proposals. In preparation for this process, the Department has already assembled key documentation, including project plans, costing schedules and strategic alignment statements.

While specific regulatory and environmental approvals are not detailed in the current documentation, the planning and costing process led by the Department of Infrastructure suggests that technical compliance and planning permissions are being managed as part of standard project preparation protocols. Additionally, the project aligns with legislative mandates under the Provincial Archives and Records Service of the Western Cape Act, 2005, indicating a strong legal foundation.

Although explicit documentation of community or stakeholder consultation is not included, the project is being submitted for transversal evaluation under the Western Cape Infrastructure Framework 2050 Panoptic Principles, an approach that necessitates collaborative, cross-sectoral planning and governance. Its strategic alignment with service delivery, governance, and heritage mandates makes it highly relevant to a wide range of public stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The project's readiness for evaluation within structured public infrastructure frameworks is further confirmed by its inclusion in the Request for Projects document issued for the Panoptic Evaluation Scoring sessions.

GOVERNANCE, POLICY & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Legal and regulatory framework; Government policies; Governance role; Investment needs and policy incentives.

The Provincial Archives Project is firmly grounded in a well-defined legal and policy framework that mandates the establishment, maintenance and expansion of the Western Cape Archives and Records Service. Its legal basis stems from Schedule 5(a) of the Constitution of South Africa, which designates "Archives other than the National Archives" as an exclusive provincial legislative competence. In line with this constitutional responsibility, the Provincial Archives and Records Service of the Western Cape Act, 2005 (Act No. 3 of 2005) obliges the Western Cape Government to establish and manage a provincial archives and records service.

The Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport is the mandated department responsible for archival services in the province, leads governance oversight, and the Department of Infrastructure, which provides technical, engineering, and project management expertise, is the implementation partner. This collaboration demonstrates compliance with Principle 4 of the Panoptic Evaluation Framework, emphasising transversal governance and integrated delivery.

Policy alignment is reinforced through the project's alignment to the Western Cape Infrastructure Framework 2050, the Western Cape Infrastructure Strategy 2050 and the Western Cape Infrastructure Implementation Plan 2050. These strategic policy instruments emphasise infrastructure-led development, long-term sustainability and equitable public service. The Panoptic Principles further guides the project's evaluation, particularly in relation to innovation, resilience, spatial justice and long-term stakeholder value.

The enabling environment for this project includes participation in the Panoptic Evaluation Scoring sessions, a province-wide infrastructure prioritisation process aimed at building a credible, investor-ready infrastructure project pipeline. Through this mechanism, the project is being assessed on its policy compliance, statutory readiness and delivery potential. It also creates space for aligning the project with broader investment frameworks and ensures that it meets the expectations of both public sector funders and external partners.

Although the documents do not list explicit financial policy incentives, the escalation-adjusted cost estimates and inclusion of professional fees and contingency provisions indicate a comprehensive understanding of the project's investment needs. Phase 1 alone requires R328 million, with the entire six-phase programme valued at approximately R1.22 billion. This positions the project as a major capital investment opportunity, which supports good governance, legislative compliance and long-term public value.

The enabling environment for this project includes participation in the Panoptic Evaluation Scoring Sessions, a province-wide infrastructure prioritisation process aimed at building a credible, investor-ready infrastructure project pipeline.

ECONOMIC & COMMERCIAL VIABILITY

Value-for-money assessment; Cost-benefit analysis; Risk evaluation; Economic multipliers and macroeconomic benefits.

The Provincial Archives Project represents a strategically sound and economically viable public infrastructure investment. It also has clear value-for-money considerations, macroeconomic benefits and risk mitigation aligned to the Western Cape Infrastructure Framework 2050's Panoptic Principles.

A robust value-for-money assessment is embedded in the project's design and procurement readiness. The estimated cost of Phase 1 stands at R328,719,289 (incl. VAT and professional fees) for 8,313 m of constructed area, according to the February 2024 cost estimate (see Figure 2: Cost Summary Table below). The design leverages efficient mobile shelving, digital infrastructure, cold storage and scanning facilities, all aimed at optimising space and long-term operational value. A value-engineered alternative (Option 2) was also costed at R280 million for a reduced 6,975 m footprint, demonstrating fiscal prudence and scenario planning by the Department of Infrastructure. These figures incorporate detailed escalation provisions (47% pre-construction, 7% during construction), a 22% allocation for professional fees, and a 5% total contingency, ensuring planning ac curacy.

The project provides a strong cost-benefit rationale. The WCARS currently faces a critical shortfall of over 57,000 linear meters of storage, resulting in millions of Rands being spent by government departments on constructing or leasing private storage. These alternatives do not fulfil the legal requirement for central archival preservation and introduce risks to data integrity, loss of records, and administrative inefficiencies. The Archives Project, by consolidating records into a centralised, purpose-built facility, is poised to eliminate fragmented storage costs while improving governance, audit compliance, and service delivery across the provincial and local government.

In terms of economic multipliers, the project supports a wide range of positive spillovers. These include the creation of employment during construction and the procurement of local goods and services, particularly during Phase 1 demolition and construction. In the long term, the facility enhances operational efficiency for all Western Cape Government departments, municipalities and public entities by ensuring records are readily accessible, legally compliant and digitally integrated. All of this supports quicker decision-making and reduced administrative overheads.

Risk evaluation has been integrated into both the financial and functional planning, and project delays, design underperformance, or financial overrun are mitigated through detailed staging, contingency budgeting and prior completion of technical design work. Systemic risks, such as further loss or destruction of records not yet transferred, are especially serious, and the project's urgency is underlined by the backlog already disrupting governance and service delivery. The infrastructure motivation explicitly highlights the threat this poses to transparency, equity and access to rights-based information, with direct implications for citizen dignity, legal claims and estate resolution.

The project supports the Panoptic Principles, especially Principle 3, by creating sustainable stakeholder value, reinforcing trust in government and contributing to the six capitals, including cultural, human and social capital. By enabling public access to records, enhancing oversight and safeguarding the province's documentary heritage, this investment delivers continuing economic, institutional and democratic dividends.

Systemic risks, such as further loss or destruction of records not yet transferred, are especially serious, and the project's urgency is underlined by the backlog already disrupting governance and service delivery.

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS & FUNDING STRATEGIES

Total project cost breakdown; Funding sources; Revenue models; Innovative financing mechanisms.

The Provincial Archives Project is a major capital infrastructure initiative with a total projected investment of approximately R1.22 billion across six development phases. This funding requirement reflects both the scale of the problem being addressed and the long-term value that the project will generate for the Western Cape Government and its people. It is a cost that represents more than bricks and mortar; it's an investment in legal compliance, improved governance and equitable access to public information.

At the heart of the project's financial plan is Phase 1, which is fully scoped, designed and construction-ready. The estimated cost of this phase is R328,719,289 (including VAT and professional fees) for 8,313 m of constructed space. This estimate, developed by the Department of Infrastructure and dated 7 February 2024, includes comprehensive provisions for:

Professional fees and disbursements (21%): R49.6 million

Construction escalation (pre- and during construction): R78.6 million

Contingency and design development allowances (5% total): R11.4 million

VAT (15%): R42.8 million

Each cost component has been escalated and benchmarked using current market rates, ensuring the proposal reflects a real and deliverable financial commitment.

In support of value management and financial planning, the Department of Infrastructure has also developed a value-engineered option (Option 2) with a reduced footprint of 6,975 m at an estimated total cost of R280,002,379, including slightly higher professional fees (22%) and similar contingency and escalation assumptions. While this option offers a lower capital outlay, it delivers proportionately less storage and may not fully address the scale of WCARS's capacity gap.

To date, all planning, design and pre-construction work has been funded through public sector budgeting processes. Future funding for implementation is anticipated to come primarily from provincial capital allocations. The project's submission for evaluation at the Panoptic Evaluation Scoring Sessions (July 2025) signals its intent to be included in the Western Cape's strategic pipeline of infrastructure investment, as governed by the WCIF 2050, WCIS 2050 and WCIIP 2050. These documents are designed to promote prioritised, risk-mitigated and investment-ready projects that align with long-term public value.

While no specific revenue model is proposed, given that archives operate as a public good, the project creates indirect financial efficiencies. These include reduced reliance on expensive commercial storage, improved compliance that avoids audit findings and penalties, and faster administrative decision-making that supports cost-effective public service delivery.

Although no innovative financing mechanisms like PPP or blended finance arrangements are provided, the project's readiness, strategic alignment and long-term benefits make it a strong candidate for future exploration of alternative funding approaches. Its role in supporting better cooperation across government departments, the shift to digital systems and the role it plays in protecting our shared history and culture, positions it well within the kind of investment portfolio envisaged by the Panoptic Principles and mission-oriented infrastructure.

ROELAND ARCHIVES PROJECT
OPTION 1 - ORIGINAL FULL SCOPE

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ESTIMATE BREAKDOWN

Construction Area 8313 m2 — 7 February 2024

	IMPROVEMENTS		Area		Total (Excl.VAT)	Rate per m2 (excl.VAT) - excludes escalation contingency & fees	Rate per m2 (incl.VAT) - excludes escalation contingency & fees
A	BUILDING WORK & SERVICES						
A.1	Basement Items				R 29,354,483	R 3,531	R 4,061
A.2	Basic Items				R 30,531,241	R 3,673	R 4,224
A.3	Special Items				R 71,477,584	R 8,598	R 9,888
A.4	External Works				R 1,568,742	R 189	R 217
			SUB-TOTAL A		R 132,932,050	R 15,991	R 18,389
B	SCHEDULED ESTABLISHMENT COSTS						
B.1	Scheduled Establishment, Overheads etc.		10.00%		R 13,293,205		
			SUB-TOTAL B		R 146,225,255	R 17,590	R 20,228
C	CONSTRUCTION COST ESCALATION						
C1	Prior to construction:						
C1.1	10-Dec-18 to	15-Jan-25 =	73	months	69,407,290	R 8,349	R 9,602
	escalation over period	47.47%					
	monthly escalation	0.65%					
C2	During construction:						
C2.1	15-Jan-25 to	15-Jul-26 =	18	months	9,218,156	R 1,109	R 1,275
	escalation over period	7.12%					
	monthly escalation	0.40%					
	cash flow factor	0.60					
			SUB-TOTAL C		R 224,850,701	R 27,048	R 31,105
D	CONTINGENCY						
D.1	Building contingency		2.5%		R 5,621,268	R 676	R 778
D.2	Design development contingency provision		2.5%		R 5,761,799	R 693	R 797
	ESTIMATED IMPROVEMENT COST (EXCL VAT)				R 236,233,768	R 28,417	R 32,680
	Improvement Cost (excl. VAT) - R/m2 CONSTRUCTION AREA		8,313	m2	R 28,417		
	ADD PROFESSIONAL FEES & DISBURSEMENTS (21%)				R 49,609,091		
	ESTIMATED IMPROVEMENT COST INCL. FEES (EXCL VAT)				R 285,842,859		
	VAT (15%)				R 42,876,429		
	ESTIMATED IMPROVEMENT COST INCL. FEES (INCL VAT)				R 328,719,289		
	Final Improvement Cost with fees (incl. VAT) - R/m2 CONSTRUCTION AREA		8,313	m2	R 39,543		

Figure 2: Cost Summary Table - Option 1

To date, all planning, design and pre-construction work has been funded through public sector budgeting processes. Future funding for implementation is anticipated to come primarily from provincial capital allocations. The project's submission for evaluation at the Panoptic Evaluation Scoring sessions (July 2025) signals its intent to be included in the Western Cape's strategic pipeline of infrastructure investment. These documents are designed to promote prioritised, risk-mitigated and investment-ready projects that align with long-term public value.

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PROJECT FEASIBILITY, APPROVALS & INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

Feasibility study findings; Master plan integration; Alternative evaluation; Infrastructure planning and prioritisation.

The Provincial Archives Project has been developed through a detailed and structured feasibility and planning process, led by the Department of Infrastructure in collaboration with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport. The findings of this process confirm both the necessity and feasibility of the project. The WCARS has reached full capacity, with a documented backlog of over 57,000 linear meters of unaccommodated records. Without intervention, this will continue to compromise legal compliance, increase operational risks and impose unnecessary costs on departments and entities across the Western Cape Government.

The feasibility work is reflected in the Roeland Archives Project-Workstage 03 Report (dated February 2019) and the high-level cost estimate dated February 2024 (2024 02 07 - Roeland Street Archives Estimate R0[1].pdf), which together confirm that Phase 1 of the project is construction-ready. Phase 1 includes the demolition of an inefficient wing of the existing building and the construction of a five-storey stack building with two basement levels, housing modern mobile shelving, scanning, cold storage and digital infrastructure. A second, value-engineered option was also considered to evaluate whether a reduced scope alternative could offer financial savings while still achieving strategic objectives. This option, at 6,975 m and a reduced cost of R280 million, is more affordable but comes with limitations in capacity for future archival demand, therefore compromising long-term resilience.

The project is fully integrated into a six-phase Master Plan, which lays out a clear and staged infrastructure roadmap (see Figure 1: Phased Development Overview-Phases 1 to 6). The Master Plan ensures long-term adaptability, enabling the facility to meet future demand growth, accommodate modern archival standards and align with digital transformation objectives. Phases 2 to 6 will focus on refurbishing existing stacks, expanding staff and admin spaces, and delivering a new conference facility designed to support the Province's long-term governance and public access goals.

From a planning and prioritisation perspective, the project has been formally submitted for inclusion in the Panoptic Evaluation Scoring sessions. This confirms that the project is being assessed using transversal, evidence-based criteria in line with the Western Cape's infrastructure vision.

While detailed approvals such as environmental or regulatory compliance are not documented in the current set of reports, the project's progression through formal planning stages suggests that these are being managed through standard departmental processes.

The Master Plan ensures long-term adaptability, enabling the facility to meet future demand growth, accommodate modern archival standards and align with digital transformation objectives.

DELIVERY MECHANISM & PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

Phased implementation; Procurement methods; Bidding process; Supplier selection; Risk-sharing mechanisms.

The Provincial Archives Project is structured around a phased delivery mechanism, guided by a six-phase master plan that enables implementation to occur in manageable, costed segments aligned with budget availability and operational needs (see Figure 1: Phased Development Overview-Phases 1 to 6). This staged approach allows for risk mitigation, procurement flexibility and infrastructure continuity.

Phase 1 is the most advanced and is construction-ready, with all planning, costing and design work completed. This phase will involve the demolition of the outdated South East Wing of the Roeland Street site and the construction of a new five-storey stack building with two basement levels, housing cold storage, scanning facilities, digital infrastructure and high-density mobile shelving. The Department of Infrastructure, in partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, has led the preparation of this phase, including the production of detailed cost estimates and escalation models as reflected in the 7 February 2024 financial estimate (2024 02 07 - Roeland Street Archives Estimate R0[1].pdf).

The project will be delivered using conventional public-sector procurement methods, in line with provincial and national supply chain regulations. While the documents do not detail specific bidding processes, the inclusion of professional fees, escalation rates and contingency planning suggests that the project team anticipates open competitive tendering for construction contracts and professional service providers.

Supplier selection will likely be overseen by the Department of Infrastructure using established criteria, including compliance with procurement legislation, technical capability, value-for-money principles and alignment with project timelines.

These processes are designed to ensure transparent, competitive procurement that supports economic participation and transformation objectives where possible.

While no formal risk-sharing mechanisms (e.g. PPP or joint ventures) are mentioned in the current documentation, risk management has been integrated into the project's design and planning. The high-level cost estimates account for pre- and during construction escalation, as well as professional fees (21–22%) and a 5% combined contingency. These provisions reflect an understanding of procurement-related risks such as price volatility, delays and variations during implementation.

The project's phased structure not only allows for funding alignment and manageable execution but also supports adaptive procurement across future phases (Phases 2 to 6), which will include refurbishment, administrative expansion and public engagement facilities. This approach reinforces the project's alignment to the Western Cape Infrastructure Framework 2050, particularly the Panoptic emphasis on transversal governance, spatial justice and long-term infrastructure resilience.

PROJECT COMMUNICATION & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Investor engagement strategies; Community participation; Government and regulatory interactions.

The Provincial Archives Project is a public infrastructure investment with province-wide significance, engaging multiple layers of government, regulatory authorities and internal stakeholders across the Western Cape. While the documents reviewed do not provide a detailed communication strategy or stakeholder engagement plan, the project's progression and inclusion in key planning processes demonstrate active coordination with the relevant institutional actors.

The project is being led by the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport in close partnership with the Department of Infrastructure, reflecting a cross-departmental governance model that supports transversal alignment. This partnership underscores one of the core principles of the Western Cape Infrastructure Framework 2050's Panoptic Principles, demonstrating that integrated planning and delivery across government departments enhances both project effectiveness and stakeholder trust.

Government and regulatory interactions are evident in the project's planned submission to the Panoptic Evaluation Scoring sessions, which were scheduled for July 2025. This process serves as a key platform for infrastructure pipeline development in the province. Through this mechanism, the project is not only being reviewed for readiness and alignment with policy frameworks, but is also being positioned for budget prioritisation and long-term investment inclusion. This marks an important avenue of primary stakeholder engagement within the context of public sector infrastructure. This process ensures that key decision makers, including Treasury, Heads of Departments and political authorities, are presented with a credible case for funding.

Although specific community participation activities are not referenced in the current documents, the project's public value orientation, ensuring legal access to records, enabling transparency and preserving shared heritage, indicates broad societal benefit. The infrastructure motivation document (File reference #: WCA12/1/1/1) further highlights how improved archival access supports community dignity, resolution of estates and justice-related processes. These aspects reinforce the project's relevance to social stakeholders, particularly vulnerable or historically marginalised communities who depend on reliable access to public records.

Going forward, the phased nature of the project provides opportunities for deeper public communication, including updates on construction progress, digital transformation efforts and improved service offerings. As future phases include public-facing facilities such as a conference centre and reading rooms, stakeholder engagement will likely expand to include researchers, civil society organisations and educational institutions.

SPECIAL (E.G. GENDER) PROCUREMENT ACTIONS & SOCIAL IMPACT

Gender-responsive procurement; Social benefits; Sustainability and environmental compliance.

The Provincial Archives Project is designed as a public good infrastructure initiative with social benefits. While the project documentation does not include a specific socially responsive procurement framework, it is being implemented under the auspices of the DOI and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, both of which operate within the Western Cape Government's procurement policies that are guided by principles of equity, redress and inclusion.

The project's primary social value lies in its mandate to preserve, protect and provide equitable access to public records. The current storage backlog of over 57,000 linear meters has a direct impact on the public's ability to access information. This particularly affects those who rely on official documents to resolve estates, prove legal identity, or assert historical land or labour rights. These vulnerabilities often disproportionately affect women, elderly persons, rural populations and those historically disadvantaged. By resolving the storage shortfall and enabling lawful, timely transfers of records to The WCARS, the project helps reinforce administrative justice and dignity for all residents.

The project also contributes to the Western Cape Government'sbroader sustainability goals. Phase 1 includes design elements that promote more sustainable archival practices, such as high-density mobile shelving, which maximises storage efficiency and reduces spatial demand. The inclusion of cold storage and digital infrastructure indicates a shift toward digitisation and energy-conscious records management. While no explicit reference is made to environmental compliance standards or certifications, the project's intent to consolidate dispersed storage practices inherently reduces the carbon and operational footprint currently associated with fragmented off-site storage.

Upon procurement, although detailed supply chain models are not specified in the documents, the project is expected to follow standard public procurement processes, including open and competitive tendering. This offers opportunities for inclusive supplier development, including participation by women-owned businesses, black-owned enterprises and local contractors, in accordance with provincial supply chain regulations. The scale and phased nature of the project create further potential for local economic participation and skills development over time.

In alignment with the Western Cape Infrastructure Framework 2050's Panoptic Principles, the project represents infrastructure that builds trust, promotes spatial justice and supports long-term stakeholder value. Its role in protecting documentary heritage, supporting digital access, and promoting institutional integrity reflects a clear commitment to inclusive and sustainable development.

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE STRATEGY

Long-term asset management; Performance monitoring; Digital technology leverage; Resilience planning and climate adaptation.

The long-term success of the Provincial Archives Project depends not only on the delivery of new infrastructure but also on the operations and maintenance strategy. While the documents provided do not include a dedicated O&M plan, the architectural and infrastructure design elements embedded in Phase 1 and the broader six-phase master plan indicate a strong foundation for sustainable asset management, operational efficiency and future-proofing.

The Roeland Street Archives Estimate and associated planning documents highlight key features that support long-term asset durability. These include the use of high-density mobile shelving systems, specialised cold storage for fragile or sensitive materials and integrated digital scanning and records infrastructure. Such features are not only space-efficient but also reduce wear on physical assets, extend the life of archival collections, and reduce dependency on high-volume paper retrieval. The building design itself includes two basement levels and five above-ground storeys, maximising footprint while allowing for spatial flexibility and controlled environmental conditions essential for archival preservation.

In terms of performance monitoring and management, the project's readiness for integration into the Panoptic Evaluation Scoring sessions implies a level of transversal accountability and structured oversight. Though no standalone KPIs are outlined, the project aligns to the Western Cape Infrastructure Framework 2050's Panoptic Principles, which promote transparency, sustainability and adaptive governance, all of which require effective operational tracking and performance feedback loops.

The project also builds a platform for leveraging digital technology to modernise service delivery. The inclusion of scanning facilities and planning for digital records infrastructure positions the WCARS to reduce manual handling of documents and move toward a hybrid or less paper-based records management environment. This enhances operational efficiency and supports broader goals of digital transformation within the Western Cape Government.

From a resilience and climate adaptation perspective, the consolidation of archival storage into a purpose-built, environmentally controlled facility inherently improves protection against environmental risks, including heat, moisture and fire. The infrastructure also reduces the need for multiple, less-regulated off-site storage facilities, which often lack consistent environmental safeguards. While specific green building certifications or energy systems are not documented, the inclusion of cold storage, spatial efficiency and digital workflows suggests an emerging commitment to climate-conscious operations.

CONCLUSION & CALL TO ACTION

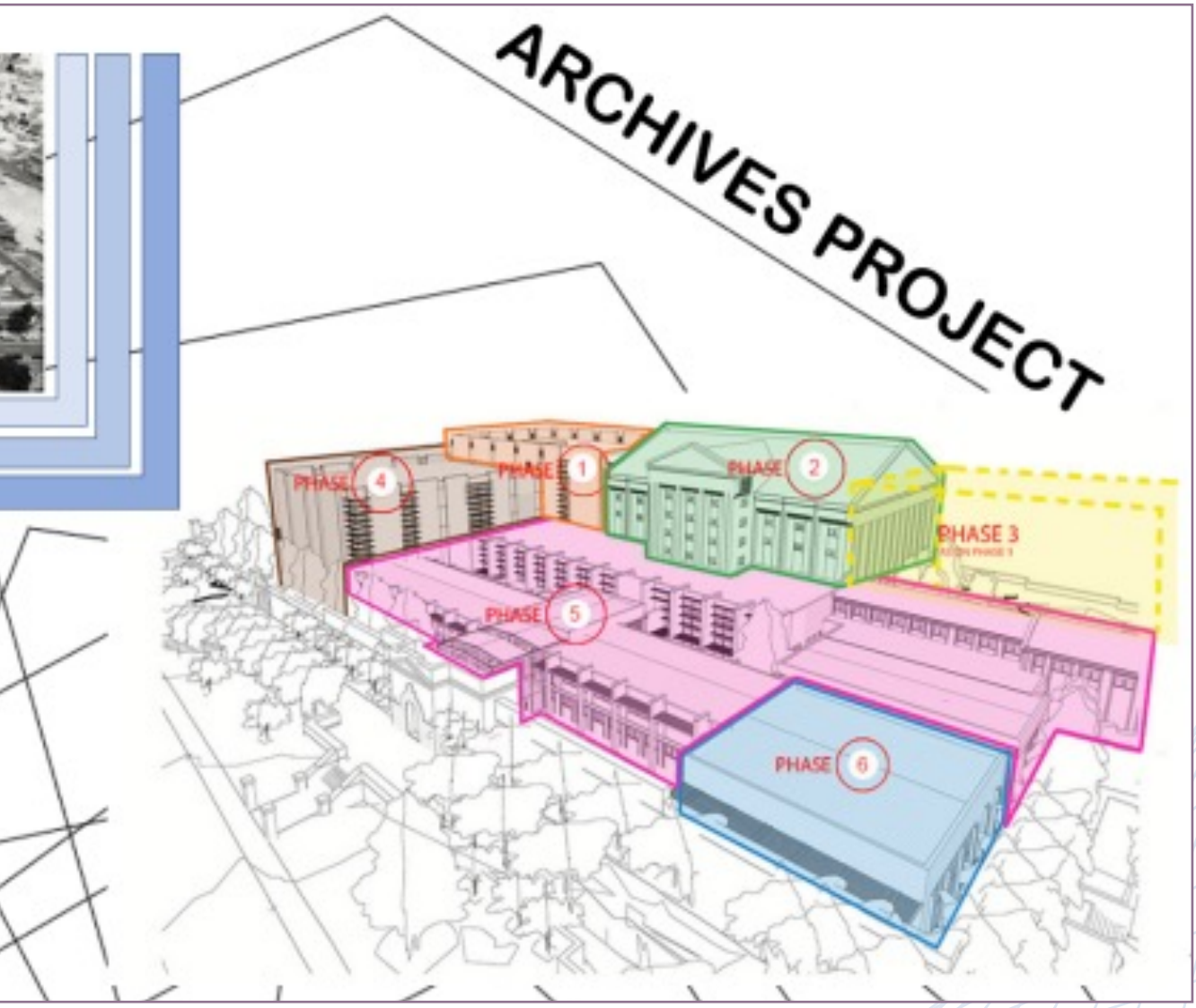
Summary of investment benefits; Next steps; Contact details and proposal submission.

The Provincial Archives Project is a legally mandated, strategically aligned, and construction-ready infrastructure initiative that delivers far-reaching benefits across governance, public service and cultural heritage. With the Western Cape Archives and Records Service currently operating at full capacity and facing a backlog of over 57,000 linear meters of unprocessed records, the project responds directly to systemic risks affecting legal compliance, accountability and citizen access to critical information.

Phase 1, valued at R328.7 million, is ready for implementation. It will deliver a purpose-built archival facility featuring cold storage, high-density shelving and digital infrastructure. This will create much-needed capacity while advancing digital transformation and operational resilience. Subsequent phases will refurbish, expand, and modernise the broader WCARS facility.

The project forms part of a credible, investment-ready pipeline. Inclusion in this process is a critical step toward securing the necessary funding and moving the project into execution.

We invite the relevant political authorities, infrastructure planning bodies and heads of departments to support this strategic investment in institutional memory, good governance and public trust.


ARCHIVES PROJECT
PHASE 4
PHASE 1
PHASE 2
PHASE 3
PHASE 5
PHASE 6

CONTACT DETAILS

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