



Project Management Toolkit

Presented by



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ICS Group Overview

Since 1982, ICS Group has been helping clients worldwide improve business execution.

The ICS Group Project Management Toolkit is based on the discipline and profession of Project Management and ICS Group's experience with hundreds of project teams. The organization of this toolkit follows the Initiation, Planning, Execution, Managing & Controlling, and Closing Processes of a project as taught in ICS Group Suite of Project Management Workshops.

For additional information about ICS Group and its training and consulting services, please visit www.icsgrp.com or call client services at 845-319-6451.



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1.0 Introduction

To meet ever-increasing demands for new products and services, faster time-to-market, new regulatory requirements, and the globalization of the marketplace, organizations today are faced with more “unique or non-routine” work, or projects, than ever before. Examples include creating the office systems to support the hiring of new employees, or upgrading a manufacturing line to improve the ergonomics.

Projects start as ideas that, in whole or in part, serve to fulfill specific business objectives of an organization, and have become the method for accomplishing work in organizations challenged by the speed of change.

Most organizations have well-defined processes in place for the “routine and transactional” work – for example, ensuring that a new employee has completed all necessary paperwork to begin to work, or the manufacturing of an established product. But few have commonly understood and disciplined processes for organizing, planning, and successfully delivering the desired results for those “unique or non-routine” work efforts on time and within budget. The consequence is that too often such efforts fail to meet expectations, are completed later than expected, cost more than originally budgeted, and cause great wear and tear on all those needing to employ heroic means to complete them.

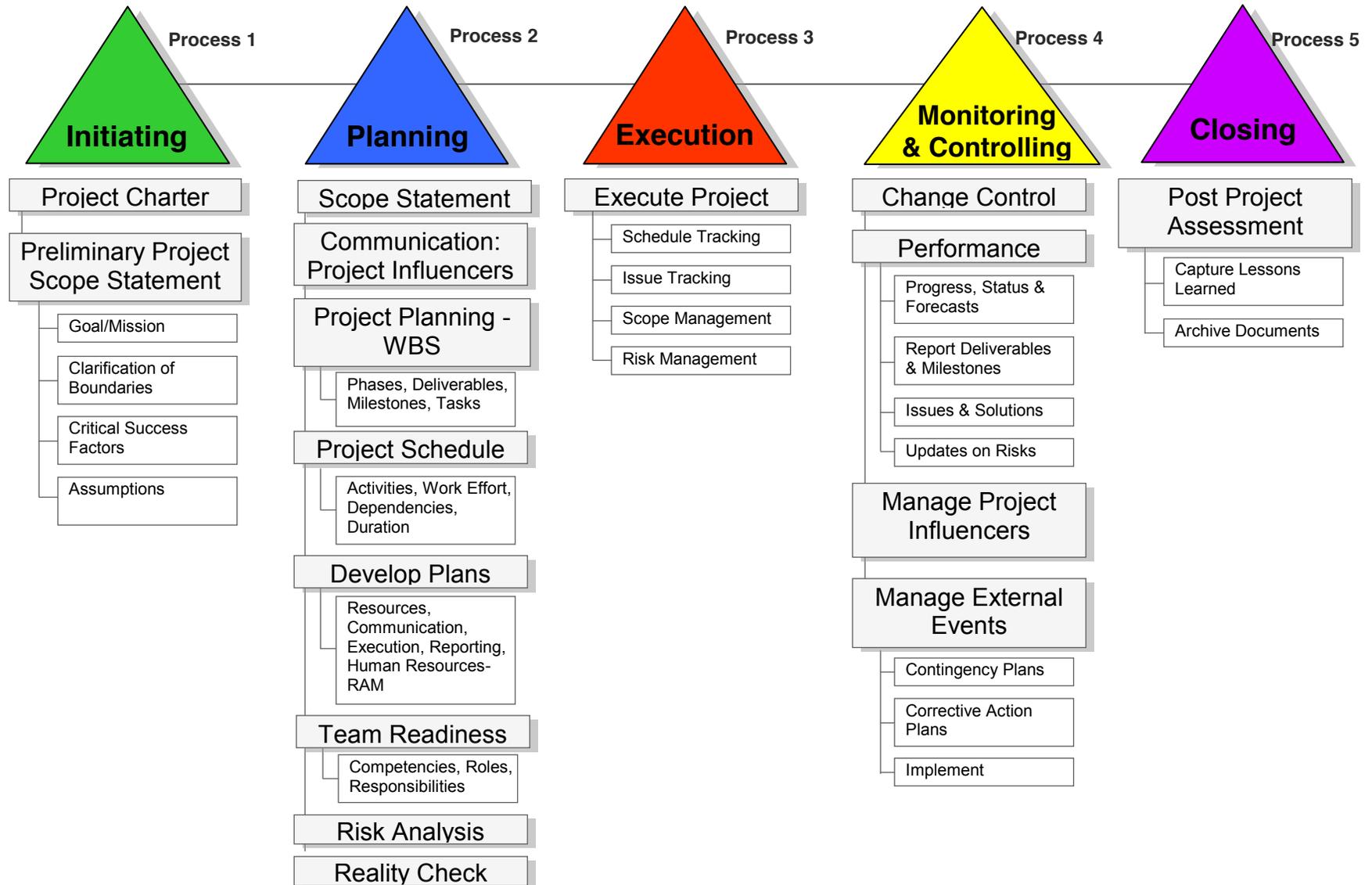
How to use this Toolkit

The disciplined work process outlined in this toolkit is designed to provide a framework for thinking about, organizing, and planning projects to maximize the likelihood of their successful completion – on time, on budget, and meeting the business need. It borrows greatly and directly from the discipline and profession of Project Management, yet can be easily used by individuals or teams who bring their business and functional expertise to the project but that have no formal exposure to the traditional Project Management process.

This toolkit is both a reference document and template library. Individuals and project teams can use the processes and templates described and contained in this toolkit in either a linear fashion, or in an iterative manner at various points in the life cycle of a project.

Please note: for the purpose of brevity in this document the role of Project Team Leader and Project Manager are represented by the term “Team Leader”.

The Project Management Process



Project Management Institute, A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge, (PMBOK® Guide) – Fourth Edition, Project Management Institute, Inc., 2008, Figure 8-12, Page 209

2.0 The 5 Processes of the Project Management Process

Process 1: Initiating

It is during the Initiating process that the sponsor, customer, and/or organizational approve of or commitment to the project. Also at this time, preliminary ideas or concepts about the project are articulated and documented, and the Sponsor and Team Leader begin to gain alignment around the project and priorities relating to its scope.

Process 2: Planning

The Planning process is the development and documentation of a feasible plan containing all the actions, resources and timing necessary to accomplish the business need that the project was undertaken to address. The output of this process is a project management plan: the extent to which it is detailed will be determined by the size and complexity of the project.

Process 3: Execution

Execution is the process in which the necessary actions are performed in order to accomplish the work laid out in the Planning process: the *doing* of the planned work.

Process 4: Monitoring & Controlling

During the Monitoring & Controlling process of the project, the activities and tasks performed in the Execution process are supervised in order to ensure successful accomplish of the goals laid out in Initiation and Planning. It is in this process that risks and proposed changes to the plan are assessed and resolved.

Process 5: Closing

The Closure process provides the formalized acceptance of the project and brings the effort to an orderly end. For closure to occur, all work associated with the project must be completed and all deliverables must have received sign-off, all contractual agreements related to the project must be concluded, and all related project documentation must be completed and compiled in a central location.

3.0 Initiation

3.1 The Project Charter

Projects begin with an idea. The decision to invest organizational assets – funds, people, and time – to make that idea a reality is a key business decision for the organization. The project must support an organizational objective or element of the business strategy in a way that will provide value back to the organization.

The Project Charter is created by the Sponsor or Team Leader – with the Sponsor’s approval *– and formalizes the existence of a project by the organization. It also provides recognition of the Team Leader’s authority in his or her role.

This document sets the general direction of the project, serving as a communication vehicle that will guide project development. It captures what people need to know at the outset, generally the statement of scope, objectives and main participants in the project. Once the Sponsor and Team Leader – and ideally the project Customer – are aligned around the Charter, it should be made available to the project stakeholders: all those associated with the project.

The Project Charter generally outlines:

- The business problem or opportunity: why this project is being undertaken
- The objectives, assumptions and constraints, and any high level milestones
- Order of magnitude budget estimate
- Key participants: the project manager, sponsor and key stakeholders, including those who will sign off on significant elements of the project.

The Charter may also include anything that is understood about the project scope, direction concerning the solution, roles and responsibilities, and risk.

*For more on the Sponsor role select the following link: [4.6.4 The Project Sponsor](#)

Project Charter

PROJECT CHARTER	Project Name:
1. Overview	
Date Submitted	
Sponsor	
Project Team Lead (Manager)	
Business Opportunity/Problem Statement <i>Provide a short snapshot of the analysis and recommendation. Focus on the bottom-line benefits to the organization. The project results should relate to organizational goals in the business strategy. State the business goal(s) the project is aiming to achieve, deliver or support. State how the project will affect the way the business functions, including business processes replaced, changed or eliminated.</i>	
Key Objectives	
2. Critical Assumptions and Constraints <i>State key assumptions and constraints applying to the project, and the impacts if assumptions do not hold. Consider interdependencies with other projects, and needs for specialized resources.</i>	
3. Order of Magnitude Budget	
4. Milestones	
5. Sign Off	
6. Other <i>Specify any other information available concerning the project scope, particular directions towards solutions, roles and responsibilities, or risk.</i>	

3.2 Preliminary Project Scope Statement

The Project Scope Statement is developed as a high level draft – thus termed “preliminary” – during the Initiation Process and will be reviewed and agreed upon in the Planning Process.

The Preliminary Project Scope Statement identifies the high-level deliverables and requirements that must be met in order to deliver a desired end result (e.g., a product, a report, a new work process) with the specified features and functions of the project “customer”.

It is comprised of the following components:

- Project Goal or Mission
- Clarification of Project Boundaries
- Critical Success Factors
- Assumptions

3.2.1 Goal/Mission

The Project Mission Statement clearly states the main deliverable and business or organizational objective of the project. The Mission should be concise and memorable, with little detail and no ambiguity, as it will be used to provide focus to the team and as a communication tool for all those associated with the project.

The first sentence of the mission statement answers the following three questions:

- Who are we (name of the project team)?
- What is the main deliverable of this project?
- Who is/are the customer/s and/or users of the main deliverable?

The second sentence provides the business or organizational objective of the project, and is usually stated as:

“This project supports [add the business and/or organizational objective/s of the project].”

Project Mission

The Mission Statement defines the purpose of the project and provides a clear and memorable focus to the project team members and any others who may need to be aware of the project.

Components of the Mission Statement	
Who are we? (Name of person or team responsible for doing the project)	
What is the main deliverable of the project?	
For whom is the project being done? (Who is the customer? Customer = The individual or group who must accept/live with the project results)	
What higher-level organizational objective/s is directly supported by this project?	

Mission Statement:

The _____ team will _____
(who) (main deliverable)

_____ for _____
(customer/client)

This project supports the _____ 's objective to _____
(name of organization) (objective)



3.2.2 Clarification of Boundaries

The Clarification of Project Boundaries results in a two-part list:

- Major activities, deliverables and topics that are *within the scope* of the project and are the responsibility of the project core team
- Major activities, deliverables and topics that *may be related* to the project deliverable, but that are *outside* of the scope of the project. Out-of-scope activities are not the responsibility of the project core team and are not included in the budget for the project. Completing these activities is also not factored in when creating the project schedule. They may, however, include and/or influence:
 - Assumptions that the project core team needs to reveal and validate
 - Risks the team will need to assess and manage
 - Dependencies that need to be acknowledged and coordinated
 - Issues for the team and the sponsor to consider and resolve

This clarification of boundaries provides the project core team with a means of preventing “scope creep” and ensures the team members do not waste time or resources against activities that are out of scope; at the same time, it ensures the team does not overlook activities critical to accomplishing the project mission.

The completion point of the project should also be identified at this time. This sentence articulates the completion point for the project, and is usually stated as:

“This project will be considered complete when _____.”
[add the final activity or deliverable of the project]

This last sentence usually cannot be completed until after the scope of the project has been clarified and the project boundaries have been identified.

Clarification of Boundaries

<p>List the major activities and deliverables that are <i>within the scope</i> of the project and are the responsibility of the project team:</p>	<p>List the major activities and deliverables that are <i>outside the scope</i> of the project and are not the responsibility of the project team:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••••••••••••••	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••••••••••••••
<p>This project will be considered complete when the following has occurred: <i>[insert the final substantive activity or deliverable of the project]</i>"</p>	

3.2.3 Critical Success Factors

The Critical Success Factors (CSFs) are the fundamentals of the project that must be focused upon continually throughout its duration. They are the few, usually three to five, items that must go right or be right in order for the project mission to succeed. Conversely, if any one of these fundamental elements fails, the project will fail.

To differentiate between those items that are critical versus important, ask the following question for each CSF candidate:

If _____ happens will that, in and of itself, cause the project to fail?
[insert CSF candidate]

If the answer to this question is “Yes,” the element is a CSF.

If more than five CSFs are identified, discuss each to determine if each is truly *critical* to the success of the project. If all are truly critical, consider recommending to the project sponsor that the project is too large in scope to be successfully managed as one project, and that it should be divided into a series of “sub-projects”, each to be managed separately.

Critical Success Factors

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

3.2.4 Assumptions

An assumption is an event, activity, deliverable, circumstance or accountability that is taken for granted – that is considered to be true, real, or certain. It is an element that the project team has no control over, but relies on happening or being present in order for the project work to move forward toward completion. If the project team has control over the element, it is not an assumption.

Because assumptions affect all aspects of project planning, it is essential that project teams identify, document, and validate them as early in the project as possible. Along with CSFs, assumptions should be documented and revisited as planning continues or as changes occur in the project environment.

Assumptions that are not identified, validated and regularly reviewed may expose the project to significant risk.

4.0 Planning

4.1 Scope Statement

The purpose of the Scope Statement is for the team, sponsor and key stakeholders to have a common understanding of the project and its scope: this may include agreement on the approach, high-level deliverables, key milestones and budget.

Alignment around the Scope Statement ensures that the project relates to business objectives and will meet the needs identified by the customer and/or organization. It is the responsibility of the project team to work with the project stakeholders to ensure the appropriate questions have been asked and the project requirements are clear.

It is essential to have this alignment and sign-off around the Scope Statement before any further work on the project is done.

4.2 Communication Plan: Project Influencers

4.2.1 Stakeholders and Information Sources

Project Influencers may be broken into two groups:

Stakeholders are individuals or groups who are actively involved in the project; whose interests may be – or are *perceived* to be – positively or negatively affected as a result of project execution or project completion; and who may also exert influence over the project and its results. Stakeholders include the project manager, the project sponsor, the core team and individual contributors. For definitions of these roles see [4.6.2 Project Team Roles](#).

Information Sources are individuals or groups who, due to special knowledge, may provide critical or beneficial information to the project. They include:

- Customers
- "Historians" of similar projects
- Internal departments such as public affairs, legal, communications, human resources
- Subject matter experts inside or outside the organization
- Staff to key stakeholders
- Industry associations

4.2.2 Project Influencer Assessment

Successful communication with stakeholders throughout the project is critical to overall project success. The Project Influencer Assessment is a framework for this communication, and will help the team develop appropriate actions to take for each influencer: its output is an integral part of the Communication Plan. See [4.5.2 Communication, Communication Plan](#).

The steps for conducting a Project Influencer Assessment include:

1. Identify what will change due to the project execution or completion
2. Identify the Stakeholder or Information Source by name, including those who:
 - Benefit from project
 - Have been involved in similar projects before
 - Perceive they are at risk because of this project
 - Have strong opinions on topics touched by this project
 - Will have control over key resources needed for the project
 - Are subject matter experts inside or outside the company
 - Are unique customers or suppliers
 - Are influential individuals who may tend to make decisions without informing or consulting project teams

3. Establish an action plan: Determine communication or other actions to take to maximize positive and minimize negative impacts on project execution or completion. Ensure that there is an individual responsible against each action.

Project Influencer Action Plan

Develop the action plan by listing candidates, such as those who:

- a. benefit from project
- b. have been involved in similar projects before
- c. perceive they are at risk because of this project
- d. have strong opinions on topics touched by this project
- e. will have control over key resources needed for the project
- f. are subject matter experts inside or outside the company
- g. are unique customers or suppliers

Influencer / Stakeholder Name	Why they are an Influencer/ Stakeholder	Action Plan Including frequency and means of communication	Team member responsible	By when
<i>Be as specific as possible, ideally listing individuals by name, rather than departments or groups.</i>				



4.3 Project Planning: Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)

The Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) defines the **Work Breakdown Structure** as a “deliverable-oriented hierarchical decomposition of the work to be executed by the project team to accomplish the project objectives and create the required deliverables.” In the WBS major project deliverables are broken down into successive levels of sub-deliverables, which are then broken down into tasks and subtasks.

In its final form, a WBS has similar structure and layout to the outline of this document, where sequential numbering conveys hierarchical structure. It will contain enough detail from which to create a project schedule, and should not include any work that falls outside project scope.

Phase → Deliverables/Milestones → Tasks

Each group of related major deliverables or activities is called a **phase** and it is assigned name for ease of communication and reporting.

Deliverables are the clearly defined and recognizable results or tangible work products of successfully completed activities/tasks performed during the project. “Receivables” should also appear on the project plan. They are deliverables that others outside the project owe to the project, and upon which the project is dependent.

Milestones are interim events or points in time during the project that indicate the completion of a significant segment of work or a phase, or an important decision that may affect the future of the project. They are used as measuring or tracking points to gauge the progress of the project. Individuals may identify different numbers of milestones based on their role in the project. For example, the project sponsor may identify three significant milestones as indicators of how the project is progressing, whereas a project manager may identify eight milestones or checkpoints within a particular phase. A milestone should be identified to indicate the completion of each phase of the project.

Each phase of a project is composed of a number of major activities that will lead to achieving one or more deliverables. **Activities** are composed of a series of **tasks** that are the lowest level of detail that can comfortably be managed. The team member who will perform the task should be involved in the activity/task planning process.

Tasks are often interdependent. The successful completion of one task may be required before the next one can begin. These dependencies must be recognized when the tasks are identified and incorporated into the overall project plan to develop a project schedule or Gantt chart.

4.4 Project Schedule

The **project schedule**, or **timeline**, should be developed only after the WBS has been established to ensure no critical tasks are omitted. The project schedule links tasks identified in the WBS – and their dependencies – with the resource against each task, each resource's availability, the estimate of calendar time to complete each task, and any project constraints. The schedule should also reflect the critical path, or sequence of activities that add up to the longest overall duration.

Estimates of time to complete each task should be based on typical work **effort** required and then adjusted to reflect the actual **duration** and "real world" conditions, or **calendar time**.

- Effort** The person-hours required to complete a task, without considering any slack time, waiting, non-working days or other delays. Effort (first-order approximation) is independent of the number of people working on a task.
- Duration** The number of hours required to complete a task, taking into account the number of resources. Thus (first-order approximation) a task with duration of 4 days with one resource will have duration of 2 days with two resources.
- Calendar time** The time it will take to do a task, considering work hours, resources assigned, holidays, slack time, waiting, etc.

The **Project Plan** comprises the project schedule and any plans for how the project will be executed, managed and controlled (see [4.5 Develop Plans](#) for further descriptions). The level of detail used in drafting a Project Plan will depend on the complexity of the project and the particular needs of the project team for communication, reporting and tracking purposes.

Project Schedule (Timeline)

Phase ↓	Date →								

4.5 Develop Plans

A detailed and reliably accurate project schedule or timeline greatly enhances but does not ensure the smooth execution of that schedule and the successful completion of the project. To successfully manage the execution of scheduled work additional planning is required, especially in the areas of:

- Resources
- Communication
- Execution
- Reporting
- Responsibility

4.5.1 Resources

In developing the project schedule, the Team Leader must understand what resources – people, equipment and materials – are required, in what quantities, when, and at what cost. This information is part of the Resource Plan, which supports overall resource allocation and outlines the information necessary to understand how long and to what degree resources will be required and when they can be released from project activities.

This information will become an important part of the Communication Plan (see below), and should be shared with the relevant functional managers, the project sponsor and any influencers who need to understand and support the resource commitments required by the project. Also determined at this time is the protocol to follow if the project schedule or resource needs change over the life of the project.

4.5.2 Communication

The process of communication occurs both formally and informally through all stages of the project life cycle. Successful communication depends on consistent delivery, comprehensive vertical and horizontal distribution and timeliness. Developing a Communication Plan helps the project team organize for efficient and consistent communication throughout the project.

The Communication Plan defines the information and communication requirements of the project stakeholders by addressing:

- Who needs what information and why? Consider project sponsor, team members, functional managers, other influencers and stakeholders.
- When do they get it? What is the timing, frequency, events?
- How will they get it? What is the appropriate forum or method to ensure communication has been successful with the particular target audience? Consider one-on-one meetings, town halls, team meetings, reports, informal means, online postings, etc.

4.5.3 Execution

To ensure efficiency, preparedness and responsiveness during in the Execution stage, the team must agree in advance how it will track – monitor progress and issues – and control – manage proposed changes to the project scope and any risks that arise.

For further elaboration on these topics see Execution Process, or choose one of the following links: [5.1 Schedule tracking](#), [5.2 Issue Tracking](#), [5.3 Scope Management \(Change Requests\)](#), [5.4 Risk Management](#).

4.5.4 Reporting

In addition to tracking and controlling, the team should decide how its members will report on progress and how this information will be documented and measured. The team should also agree as to how corrective action will be taken if the project is off track. It is essential that the team gain alignment with the sponsor, project influencers and other stakeholders – such as the team members’ functional managers – around who will be kept informed of progress and at what intervals. Often this update is in the form of a Project Reporting Plan.

For more on the Project Reporting Plan, see Monitoring & Controlling Stage, or select the following link: [6.1 Performance Reporting](#).

4.5.5 Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM)

Before work begins in the Execution Process, it is also important to clarify and document roles – who does what – and responsibilities – who decides what – on the part of the team members, sponsor and other project stakeholders.

A common approach to documenting these roles and responsibilities is to use the Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM). This is a simple table where the components of the project scope, or WBS, are listed on the vertical axis and the individuals or stakeholder groups are listed in the Organizational Breakdown Structure on the horizontal axis.

The format for assigning responsibility varies depending on the organization and project requirements. The sample template on the next page depicts the PARIS format, where Participant, Accountable, Review Required, Input Required, Sign off are the responsibilities assigned. Another type of RAM is based on the RACI format (Responsible, Accountable, Consult and Inform), which assigns the role that the resource is to play for each given activity. These charts may be constructed at a high level with major deliverables and milestones, or at a detailed level, incorporating low-level tasks, depending on the project and its needs.

Two other formats a team may apply are the RACI-VS, adding the additional roles of Verifies and Signs, and the RASCI, which adds the Supportive role.

Resource Plan

Resource Type	Duration	Dates needed Specific weeks/months	Release Dates and/or Conditions
People Type & skill level: Novice, intermediate, expert			
Materials			
Equipment			

Communication Plan

Information or message to be shared	With whom? Who is the audience?	What format?	How often?	Team member responsible	Response required?
Monthly update/ report, status, the project charter/ scope...	Be as specific as possible, to best tailor the communication.	Given the message and its target audience, what is the best way to ensure successful communication? (email, face to face, conf. call...?)	What is the frequency? At what intervals?		Do you need confirmation that the message was received? Do you need target audience to action against something or give approval?

4.6 Project Team Readiness

4.6.1 Project Core Team Required Competencies

Team selection is another factor that contributes to the success of the project. The Project Core Team should be identified based on the competencies required to accomplish the project as described in the Project Charter. As the scope of the project is defined and validated with the project sponsor, critical competencies should be identified and every effort made to select individual team members who possess the necessary skills and traits.

Sometimes team leaders are assigned team members without previous assessment of the necessary skills. This is an organizational reality. When the competencies/subject matter expertise needed to successfully complete the project are identified and the competencies/expertise represented by the team are understood, the project leader can develop recommendations to fill any gaps. These recommendations may range from adding subject matter experts to the core team to providing targeted training and mentoring to current core team members.

In addition, team leaders should identify their own competencies so they can recruit members who complement their skills and bring the best balance to the project team.

The attitude and availability of the team members are equally important to the success of the project. If team members feel overwhelmed by project responsibilities, or feel that they are being forced to work on a project they find unduly challenging, team and project effectiveness can be significantly affected. Creating a healthy project environment relies on understanding and addressing the issues associated with team selection, availability and effectiveness.

4.6.2 Project Team Roles

Individual or group responsibility on a project is defined in the aforementioned Responsibility Assignment Matrix; in addition, each individual associated with the project should be clear on his/her role on the project. Generic definitions of the project team roles include:

The **Sponsor**, also sometimes referred to as the project Champion, represents the team's interests to the organization and the organization's interests to the team, gives or helps get approvals, and ensures essential resources are provided.

The **Project Team Leader** – or Project Manager – has day-to-day responsibility for the project process, keeps the team focused on achieving project results, and fosters a team-oriented environment.

Core Team Members share mutual accountability for achieving project results; serve for duration of the project; and are responsible for a major segment of the project, often coordinating sub-teams and/or project contributors. Ideally a core team has 9 – 12 members. If the core team is too numerous, responsibility for the project and its success may be diluted and may pose a risk to the project.

An **Individual Contributor** or **Special Resource** contributes expertise or skill to the project, performs specific, discrete tasks, and is accountable for individual performance.

4.6.3 Core Team Roster

The Core Team Roster should be completed as early as possible in the project to facilitate communication and to ensure each team member understands his or her teammates' area of responsibility or Subject Matter Expertise. This will help to eliminate ambiguity and allow for more efficient collaboration during later stages of the project.

4.6.4 The Project Sponsor

The Sponsor role is critical to the success of the project, as is strong communication between Sponsor and Team Leader from Initiation through the close of the project.

The Sponsor, or project Champion, is typically the person responsible for the business objective of the project, and serves as a critical link between the day-to-day activity of the project and its strategic position or goal. S/he has ultimate authority over the direction of the project and may even stop the project if the identified project benefits are reduced or no longer possible to achieve.

Key aspects of the Sponsor Role:

- Represent the project and project team's interests to the organization
- Represent the organization's interests, or business need, to the team, thus providing general direction for the project
- Give or help get approval;
- Allocate or help secure appropriate resources;
- Communicate with the team around changing business priorities and strategic imperatives
- Work with and communicate to stakeholders, especially at a senior level; Assist in resolution of cross functional issues and address concerns of the wide range of stakeholders on the project
- Monitor project progress at a high level, ask key questions and raise red flags based on prior experience or understanding of the organization
- Review and accept or reject proposed changes to the project
- Support the resolution of conflict and any inter-project boundary issues

Ideally candidates for the sponsor role are:

- Prepared to assume overall responsibility for the success of the project and the business need it is meant to address
- Senior enough in the organization to act quickly and decisively to meet the project's needs – budget allocation, resource availability, making critical decisions
- Well-versed in the organization – its structure, political or sensitive issues – or area of the organization in which the project will take place
- Sufficiently accessible to the project Team Lead and be prepared to communicate at the agreed-upon intervals
- Familiar with the fundamentals of the project management

In setting up their relationship, the project team lead and sponsor should:

- Agree to their respective roles/responsibilities
- Work together to articulate the Project Charter and Scope
- Clarify areas, topics, milestones that the sponsor will need or want to approve
- Establish a shared understanding of the project TRS and its prioritization: see [4.8.1 The Project Balance, or The Triple Constraint](#) for additional information. This will establish the

grounds for discussion and negotiation during project Execution, Monitoring & Controlling.

- Agree to how they will communicate: by phone, in person...?
- Agree to the frequency of the communication – weekly? Bi-weekly? Monthly? This will, in part depend on the nature of the project and its duration.
- Establish the reporting process:
 - At what level of detail does the sponsor expect to be informed
 - What documents or supporting material should be used: see [6.1 Performance Reporting](#), [5.2 Issue Tracking](#), [5.3 Scope Management \(Change Requests\)](#), [4.7 Risk Analysis](#) and the associated templates

The Team Leader may need to provide some guidance to the Sponsor, as individuals in the sponsor role are not always thoroughly versed in the requirements of that role and how best they can support the project and team.

Typically there is one sponsor for a project, though it is not uncommon for this role to be filled by two or more individuals or an oversight committee. No matter how many people are associated with the role of project sponsor, the same issues as outlined in “Key aspects of the Sponsor Role” above will be important for project success: strong communication with the Team Lead, timely decisions, etc.

The Team Leader is accountable for ensuring all Sponsors and all members of the oversight committee are updated and involved at the appropriate level. This may add significant time to the Team Leader’s communication reporting responsibility, and may result in confusion in terms of decision-making and change control if it is not properly managed.

To help smooth this process, at the outset of the project it is recommended that the Team Leader and Sponsors/Sponsoring body discuss the points listed above in “In setting up their relationship, the Team Lead and Sponsor should:” and agree to how they will be managed. Ideally, Sponsors will consent to having all discussions and decisions with the Team Lead occur as a group OR have only one individual is responsible for representing the Sponsoring body and its decisions to the team. The goal is to avoid the need for the Team Leader to work with every individual separately.

If it is not possible to reach such an agreement, the Team Lead will have to build additional time into his/her schedule for communication and reporting purposes.

4.7 Risk Analysis

A risk is a potential event that can affect the project in a positive or negative way, the outcome of which is uncertain. Risks can be identified at any stage in a project, and should be managed according to the potential impact they pose to the project and its CSFs. Actions to be taken in response to a risk event should be identified for each risk to the extent possible, and a process for invoking a response should be documented.

The process for assessing and managing risk may be outlined as follows:

1. **Identify Risk:** Risk may be identified through the review of the project CSFs and out of scope activities – especially those that critical to the project, or a change in assumptions.
2. **Quantify Risk:** Through quantification of risk the team can prioritize the risks they have identified.

For each risk, the team should consider what is the probability of the risk event occurring and what is the impact to the project if it does occur. The team should agree to a scale that may be applied to the Probability and Impact, such as a scale of 1 to 3, where 1 = low probability/low impact and 3 = high probability/high impact. This scale may vary depending on the complexity and size of the project.

After each risk event has been assessed and assigned a number against Probability and Impact, the team can review the Risk Index, which in this case would vary from 1 to 9.

3. **Respond:** With a Risk Index against each risk event, the team can now decide the appropriate response to that risk:
 - **Accept:** this is the most passive response where the team allows that the risk may occur and accepts any consequential impact to the project.
 - **Mitigate:** this is a moderate approach, where the team may decide to take action that will lessen either the probability of the risk occurring or its potential impact to the project
 - **Transfer:** this is another moderate approach, in which the team outsources the risk by assuming a warranty, insurance or guarantee from a third party. This does not remove the risk, but may lessen financial or time-related burdens if the risk event should occur.
 - **Avoid:** with this most active response the team, with alignment from the sponsor, changes something in the project plan or its scope to ensure the risk event does not occur. If the risk proves to be too significant, the project may be cancelled.

Make trade-off choices a conscious decision

Risk Management

	Risk Event	Potential Consequence <small>(To schedule, resources, cost, quality, scope)</small>	Probability <small>(Scale 1-3)</small>	Impact <small>(Scale 1-3)</small>	Risk Index <small>(P x I)</small>	Response / Contingency Plan <small>(Accept? Mitigate? Transfer? Avoid?)</small>
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						

4.8 Reality Check

During the Initiation and Planning stages, members of the project team further detail and expand upon the information presented in the original Project Charter and Preliminary Project Scope Statement.

Once the team has gained a better understanding of the project through the work accomplished in the Planning stage, it should review the Charter, Scope and Project Plan to assess whether the project is feasible.

At this time, the team may need to:

- Refine resource assignments and remove overloads to ensure no over-commitments
- Update the Plan with validated and adjusted information and increased detail
- Incorporate risk impacts, mitigation and backup plans into the schedule
- Identify scope, schedule and cost conflicts before full Execution begins
- Optimize the Plan through conscious trade-offs

The decision around feasibility will in part depend on how well the timing, budget, resources, and scope of the project are balanced. Any discrepancies or concerns should be presented to the project sponsor together with the team's assessment of options and its recommended approach. Final budget approval may also be requested and received at this time.

4.8.1 The Project Balance, or The Triple Constraint

All projects are done under some constraints. These tend to fall into three types: Time, Resources/Cost, and Scope/Quality (or TRS), and are referred to as The Project Balance, or The Triple Constraint. They represent the inevitable trade-offs a team and sponsor must make on a project, as one element cannot change without impact one or both of the others: projects often fail when one constraint changes and the others are not adjusted. To ensure project success, the team must understand the priority among the three elements on their project and manage their work accordingly.

At the outset of the project:

The team leader should ask the sponsor to prioritize the TRS against the business need. Though all three may be very important to the project, it is critical to know which of the constraints is most crucial, which is second-most crucial, and which may be the most flexible. It may prove difficult for the sponsor to articulate this ranking: the team leader can ask probing questions to help elucidate their prioritization.

- **Time (T)** is the duration of time required to complete the defined scope or, according to PMBOK, planned dates for performing scheduled activities and the planned dates for meeting milestone schedules.

Questions a team leader might ask the sponsor:

- By when does the project need to be completed?
- Is there flexibility around this date?
- Do any parts of the project need to be done by specific dates?
- Is there any particular reason for these dates?
- What are the consequences of missed deadlines?
- Are there any specific external requirements for timing: such as legislation or existing contracts with third parties?

- **Resources (R), or Cost**, is the monetary value or price of a project activity or component that includes the monetary worth of the resource required to perform and complete the activity or component, or to produce the component (PMBOK). This includes effort, or man-hours, set against the project.

Questions a team leader might ask the sponsor:

- What is the project budget?
- Is there flexibility around this amount?
- Who will work on the project?
- What skills do they have?
- How much time will they be able to dedicate to the project?

- **Scope (S)** is the work that must be performed to deliver a product, service or result with the specified features and functions, and Quality is the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfills requirements (PMBOK).

A team leader might ask the sponsor to confirm or validate:

- The preliminary project scope
- The Team Leader's understanding of what is in/out of scope
- Anything else the sponsor can share about the criteria for project or product success

During the project:

Changes during a project occur for a variety of reasons: a stakeholder requests an additional product feature; a key resource is suddenly unavailable; an activity on the critical path takes additional time to complete.

Successful project management involves constant watch for any change to the project, assessment the impact on the project TRS, and identify actions or revisions that may be required to ensure the business need is still met.

For example: if a stakeholder requests a new feature be added to a product and the team accepts and incorporates the proposed change in scope without assessing possible impact to the resources/cost and time, it is possible that, among other challenges:

- It will take more time to complete the work: the project may miss its deadline
- It will take more resources or cost more to complete the work: the project may be over-budget or resources may become over-burdened.

Such trade-offs exist whether or not they are made consciously; ideally each change to the project occurs as a conscious decision. The Team Leader is responsible for ensuring the sponsor is informed of and/or makes the decision around changes to the project TRS.

Throughout the Execution and Monitoring & Controlling processes it is imperative to ensure strong communication between the Team Lead, Sponsor and Stakeholders around these issues. To manage this, the team can use the following templates, discussed later in the Execution stage: *Communication Plan*, *Scope Management (Change Requests)*.

5.0 Execution

5.1 Schedule tracking

The project team should regularly track the work being accomplished; this tracking should be frequent enough to catch issues quickly. It may focus around milestones, or key checkpoints.

These milestones should be:

- “Pacing dates” for the team to drive to: major deliverable or phase completion
- Key interim dates that ensure real progress is being made
- Checkpoints for reporting understandable progress
- Sharp-edged and unambiguous: It should be impossible to misjudge if the work is really complete
- Cross-functional, highlighting dependencies

Actual reporting on progress of the scheduled work, assessment of any impact to the project from discrepancies in actual versus schedule, and reporting to the project team and Stakeholders takes place during the Monitoring & Controlling stage of the project.

5.2 Issue Tracking

An issue is a matter of importance to the project that, if unaddressed by an action or a decision, will affect project performance; issues continually flow through the life cycle of all projects. A successful Issue Tracking plan will address how the team will identify and track issues before they turn into problems and require immediate attention. During Execution, the team will implement any issue resolutions or actions identified during the Monitoring & Controlling process.

Considerations for Issue Tracking include:

1. How will issues be raised within the project team?
2. How will issues be documented, and by whom?
3. How will issues be resolved, escalated for resolution (to whom) and closed out?
4. How will information about issues be communicated, and to whom?

Issue resolution and updates to the team and project stakeholders about related actions takes place during the Monitoring & Controlling stage of the project.

See template: [*Issue Tracking*](#)

5.3 Scope Management (Change Requests)

Requested or proposed changes to the project and its scope arise during the Execution process and are assessed and managed in the Monitoring & Controlling process. During Execution, the team implements any accepted changes to the scope and/or work against a project schedule that has been updated or revised accordingly through Monitoring & Controlling.

Scope changes can include:

- Additions or subtractions to the scope – these typically represent new requests desired by a stakeholder that were not originally planned.
- Errors and omissions in the original plan
- Task changes, resource assignment changes, and cost and date changes.

When planning for scope management, the team should consider the following questions:

1. How will requested changes in scope be raised, and by whom?
2. How will scope change requests be documented, and by whom?
3. How will scope change requests be evaluated with regard to impact to schedule, cost, resource requirements, quality standards and external project dependencies? What criteria will be used in this evaluation?
4. Who will perform this evaluation?
5. How will requested changes be approved and by whom?
6. How will approved changes be communicated and to whom?

See template: [Scope Management \(Change Requests\)](#)

5.4 Risk Management

Throughout execution, the team must continually be aware of risk to the project. This process will include:

- Maintaining the summary Risk table created earlier during Planning (**reference??**).
- Review of the Risk table and trigger points at every team meeting to ensure actual potential project risks are reflected
- Clarity around how risks will be monitored, reviewed, and the risk strategy: team members should be clear on whether the actual risks should be accepted, avoided, mitigated or transferred.

Update, assessment and response to risk takes place during the Monitoring & Controlling stage.

See template: Risk

Scope Management (Change Requests)

Proposed Change	Date requested	Who is requesting it?	Why is it being requested?	What does it impact?	Proposed Actions
[Describe change proposed]				[Scope; cost; quality; schedule; resources]	

6.0 Monitoring & Controlling

6.1 Performance Reporting

Work and team performance should be carefully monitored by the team in order to control project Execution: this is best done when the team can identify quickly potential problems or any variance against the baseline project plan, is able to take corrective action in a timely manner, and can ensure that only approved changes are implemented.

A Project Reporting Plan provides one focal point where project progress, and any changes or issues that arise may be documented and reported to the appropriate Stakeholders, both internal and external to the team. This plan might include: criteria by which project progress will be measured, how often progress will be measured, how corrective actions will be identified and applied, and escalation procedures.

The specific elements of the Project Reporting Plan will depend on the size and complexity of the project. Considerations for determining the depth and breath of project progress reporting include:

- What project information is required for reporting project progress?
 - To the project sponsor
 - To the project team members
 - To the project stakeholders
 - To others outside of the project team
- How should project progress be measured, documented and reviewed?
- How often should project progress be reported, and to whom?
- How should project progress be communicated (email, on-line, hard copy, etc.)?
- How will project information be collected, and by whom?
- How will project progress information be used, for example:
 - How will corrective action be defined/invoked to put a project back on track?
 - How might resources be re-deployed to address identified issues?
 - If additional budget is required, how will this request be made?
 - If issues arise that the project team cannot resolve, how will these issues be raised, and to whom?

The following pages contain three examples of how this information may be organized. Each contains topics that may be important to a project and its Stakeholders: they are samples of communication tools and may be revised to meet particular project and organizational needs. They should be updated and shared at regular, agreed upon intervals:

- A Project Reporting Plan
- The Project on a Page (I): this is a generic one-page, simple document
- The Project on a Page (II): a more complex version of the one-page document, in this case an example of a product development reporting tool.

Project on a Page (I)

Project Name:

Mission (who, what, for whom)

This project supports the organization's objective to _____
(a specific published objective)

Clarification of Project Boundaries

Ins:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Outs:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

This project will be considered completed when

Critical Success Factors

-
-
-
-
-

Project Variables

Fixed Negotiable

- **Time**
End Date _____
- **Resources**
Budget \$ _____
Human Resources _____
- **Scope** _____

Interim Deliverables / Milestones

-
-
-
-

Risks

-
-
-

Status

-
-
-
-
-

Major Open Issues

-
-
-
-
-

Team Operating Norms

(e.g. What goes on in the room, stays in the room, we speak with one voice outside of meetings)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Team Meeting Norms

(e.g. Have an agenda and use it, One person talks at a time)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Sponsor Norms

(e.g. Be available for informal discussion, approve decisions before publication, bust barriers with peers)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Project Team Members

1. X
2. X
3. X
4. X
5. X
6. X
7. X
8. X
9. X

Sponsor:

✓ ✓



7.0 PROJECT CLOSURE

7.1 Lessons Learned Capture

The Lessons Learned Capture provides the team and the organization an opportunity to identify and record information about the project for the purpose of improving future project efforts. The Lessons Learned Capture can be performed at the conclusion of the project or, on large projects, at interim points in the project life cycle.

The Lessons Learned Capture should be a collaborative session that includes as many team members and contributors as available. It should be lead by a neutral facilitator and occur as soon as possible after the conclusion of the project. The session should be scheduled at the project start and incorporated into the Project Schedule.

Most importantly, lessons learned during the course of the project are recorded as historical reference for future project efforts. The **Post (or Interim) Project Assessment** meeting can capture lessons in progress. At any time during the project, the team can pause, ask and document "What is going well" and "What can we be doing differently".

It should be noted that for large, complex projects these questions might be asked at the end of each phase, or at key milestones.

Steps may include:

- Review all project files. The project documentation will contain a complete history of the project and should be reviewed in order to prepare for the session.
- The core team considers the following questions:
 1. What went well, what did we do well?
 2. If we had to do it again, what would we do differently?
- Solicit input to the above questions from others who participated in the project
- Record the results of these questions. In order to more easily research these lessons for future project efforts, it may be useful to organize this information by topic. Refer to the template provided for an example of a potential organization of this information.
- Summarize conclusions, based on the information collected.
- Complete the documentation of the Lessons Learned Capture. Archive all project documentation.

Lessons Learned Capture

Below are examples of topics that may be reviewed during a post project assessment and are meant to provide as illustration. Actual topics will vary based on the nature of the project. While providing such topics may help prompt the team members' and other participants' thinking, it is also possible to simply ask open-ended questions about what went well during the project and what should be done differently next time.

Topic	Went Well	Do Differently
Mission	• •	• •
Clarification of Boundaries	• •	• •
Critical Success Factors	• •	• •
Risk Management	• •	• •
Team Roles & Responsibilities	• •	• •
Project Communication	• •	• •
Planning	• •	• •
Budget	• •	• •
Schedule	• •	• •
Scope Management	• •	• •
Issue Management	• •	• •
	• •	• •
	• •	• •
	• •	• •