

Project Management Procedures

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Related Documents: Project Management Policy
Business Case, Project Charter, Project Status

Summary

The purpose of this Procedures document is to explain the use of the various project management documents.

Procedures

PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

A number of documents have been developed to assist with planning, monitoring and controlling projects. For each document there is a blank template to be filled out as information becomes available during the different stages of the project life cycle. In addition, each document will have examples for the user to follow.

BUSINESS CASE (BC)

An idea or an initiative is not a project until it has been approved by the Board. In order to standardize this approval process, a Business Case document has been developed. It is important that the initiator provide as much information as possible at this early stage. There are seven categories that require information, and the document includes leading questions to assist the user in answering those questions.

Project Description

- What is this potential project idea? Provide an overview of what you hope to do. If the project idea is approved to proceed, the initial description will be further defined later in a document called the Project Charter.

Project Objective

- Why should the organization consider this project? The initiator needs to convince the Board of the merits of embarking on this project and what benefits may be realized. The stated objective will be further defined under Project Purpose and Project Goals in the Project Charter

Project Alternatives

- Are there any alternative options that might result in similar outcomes?

Project Funding

- How would we pay for this project? Are we considering a grant application? Will the grant funding cover all costs, or might PAL be required to fund a portion? Funding information becomes the Project Budget in the Project Charter

Project Timeline

- When would this project start and finish? Are timelines dictated by the grant requirements? Does it seem doable with the limited details known at the outset? This information will be used to create a project schedule in the Project Charter
 - Schedules can be tabular format or in Bar Charts or Gantt chart format

Project Resources

- Do we have staff or volunteer resources available with the skill set to manage this project? (This is where the PMO Committee can offer guidance and support) Who is available to take the lead on this project? Do we require any outside resources (or contractors) to do all or part of the work? Information developed here will lead into Resources and Dependencies in the Project Charter

Project Risks

- Are there any known risks at this point in the process?
 - If so, it will be necessary to do a risk analysis and attach it to this document. (The PMO Committee can offer guidance in this area).

Approval

The Board of Directors must sign off in order for the project to move ahead. The Board would designate one Board member to act as the Project Sponsor, with the authority to sign on behalf of the Board. The initiator(s) would sign as the individual(s) submitting the idea for consideration.

PROJECT CHARTER (PC)

Once a project has been approved, the information from the Business Case would guide the information required to fill out the Project Charter. The more you work on the project and plan for the execution phase, the more detail will become evident. There may be several versions of the Charter throughout this planning phase. (This is known as *progressive elaboration*). It is important to the project life cycle that the team endeavor to get approval as early as possible. The final approved version will become the *project baseline*.

The text that follows provides an overview of what is required in each category of the Project Charter, but review this in conjunction with the guides and examples available.

Project Definition

The project description from the Business Case would be expanded here. The project definition includes three sub-categories of information.

- **Key Stakeholders (Who)**
The stakeholder table lists key people involved in the project and identifies their respective roles. This table could be modified to suit a specific project.
Note that the stakeholder list could also include key persons from outside of the organization.
- **Project Purpose (Why)**
Why are we undertaking this project? What are the benefits to the organization? This section can reiterate and expand upon the Project Objective from the Business Case.
- **Project Goals (What)**
The unique product, service or result can be stated here as a series of goals based on the original project objective.

Project Scope

- Project scope is essentially what needs to be accomplished. It expands upon the project goal stated earlier.
 - **Deliverables:** A subset comprised of measurable and tangible outcomes of the project activities. Quantifiable goods, services or results that will be provided upon the completion of a project.
 - **Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)** Sometimes the nature and scope of the project requires more definition. The WBS is a deliverable-oriented grouping of the work involved in a project that defines the total scope of the project. The lowest level of a WBS is known as a task, which can be more easily defined in terms of time required (hours or days) and the associated cost (if applicable).

Example: Developing Project Scope Using *Progressive Elaboration*



Project Approach

- The project approach considers how the project will be planned and may include such topics as whether to consider using outside resources, breaking the project into smaller or distinct components or phases, and the sequencing of the phases and activities. The project approach guides later project scheduling.

Project Schedule

- At a minimum, the project schedule should consist of a series of project milestones with original start dates and end dates. It can be in a table or spreadsheet format, as is the case with the Project Charter developed for PAL, or it could be in a graphic bar chart format or Gantt chart format. The graphic formats tend to be used on more complex projects, but it is a personal choice.
- Note that the schedule developed in the Project Charter is the planned outcome and will become the baseline for tracking changes as the project progresses.

Budget

- The budget table (or spreadsheet) should include the overall project cost as well as the various cost categories. The planned budget will become the baseline for tracking costs throughout the project.

Resources

- All internal resources should be listed and their roles on the project should be identified.
- Ideally, a Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM) should be developed and specific tasks assigned to each resource. This would tend to reduce the problem of tasks lagging or not getting done because no one is clear as to who is responsible. The PMO committee can assist by providing guidance and forms to use when assigning work.

Dependencies

- This category refers to situations outside the control of the internal resources. For example, delays could occur due to the unavailability of an external resource or contractor to work on your project.
- It can also mean that a specific activity cannot start until another predecessor activity is completed.

Other

- The PAL Project Charter has a category called "Other" which can be used for things like explaining certain milestones or constraints. A milestone is a significant point or event in a project and a constraint is a hinderance that can have an effect on meeting a milestone.

Sign-Off

A sign-off differs from an approval in that certain key stakeholders must agree on the content of the document. Generally, that would include at least the Sponsor and the Project Manager/Coordinator. This may change depending on the project.

PROJECT STATUS (PS)

The Project Status is a tool used to monitor the project through the execution phase. It compares baseline projections from the Project Charter, to actual results observed through regular reviews of the key components. The focus of the regular reviews would generally be in the categories of Scope, Schedule, Budget, and Risk.

Scope

In this category, the focus would be on changes to the scope of the project, remembering that the scope is *what* we are doing and includes specific deliverables. Changes in scope, when deliberate, must be handled through the use of a document called a Change Request. Change requests can affect scope, time, or cost and must be signed off by certain identified key stakeholders.

Unintentional scope changes are often referred to as *scope creep*. It is important that the Project Manager keep an eye on the scope and watch for any movement away from what was envisioned...the baseline, plus any agreed change requests. This is often best handled by regular meeting held throughout the execution phase.

Schedule

The most likely changes noticed will be schedule slippage. The project manager should monitor the schedule on a regular basis, watching for key milestones and noting when they have been met and when they have been missed. Missed milestones could affect the completion date. If a milestone is missed, a discussion needs to take place regarding how to make up the time.

Budget

Changes to the budget will generally come from two sources, approved change requests and unanticipated extras. From a financial management perspective, approved change request amounts must be reflected in the financial spreadsheets with the amounts added to the appropriate categories and the final project total adjusted accordingly.

But there could be extra expenses that were unforeseen when the budget was first developed and approved. These are to be expected but would have to be justified by explanation and related receipts, where applicable.

Changes to the budget can be dealt with as they occur rather than only when the regular status report is issued.

Risks/Issues

A risk is an uncertainty that can have a negative (or positive) effect on meeting project objectives. An issue is a matter under question or dispute that could impede project success. (Another view is that an issue is a risk that has happened). Possible project risks should be considered during planning and handled like the general PAL organizational risks. Other risks or issues may come to light later in the project.

Risks should be entered in a risk table and should be analyzed to determine the probability of the risk occurring, and the impact, should they occur. Consider mitigation strategies to lessen the effect of the risk, as well as response strategies that could be implemented. The risk tools developed for general organizational risk can be used for project risks.

Issues would generally be entered into an Issue Log, but for expediency we can use the Risk Register for now, if it becomes necessary. The PMO is available to assist with risk and issue matters.

Tracking Project Status

The Project Status document includes a number of tables for entering current status regarding project scope (deliverables), schedule, budget, change requests, risks and issues. Refer to the Project Status Guide for information on how to complete the categories each month.

[This document will be revised and updated to address problems and clarify matters as they come up on projects. Ask the PMO when you are uncertain about how to proceed]