



PRINCE2® PROJECT BOARD SURVIVAL GUIDE

Helping you perform your role

INTRODUCTION

What is PRINCE2® ?

PRINCE2 (Projects IN Controlled Environments) is a project management method used extensively in more than 150 countries around the world, and its take-up grows daily. It is widely considered as the leading method in project management, with over one million PRINCE2 practitioners already benefiting from its pioneering and trusted approach. This is largely due to the fact that PRINCE2 is truly generic, it can be applied to any project regardless of project scale, type, organisation, geography or culture.

The importance of projects

A key challenge for organisations in today's world is to balance two parallel, competing requirements:

- to maintain current business operations: profitability, service quality, customer relationships, brand loyalty, productivity, market confidence etc – what we term 'business as usual'; and
- to transform business operations in order to survive and compete in the future – looking forward and deciding how business change can be introduced to best effect for the organisation.

As the pace of change accelerates in technology, business, society and regulation, and the penalties of failing to adapt to change become more evident, the focus of management attention inevitably moves to achieve a balance between business as usual and business change. Projects are the means by which we introduce change – and, while many of the skills required are the same, there are some crucial differences between managing business as usual and managing project work.

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What makes projects different?

A project is a temporary organisation that is created for the purpose of delivering one or more business products according to an agreed Business Case. There are a number of characteristics of project work that distinguish it from business as usual:



Change

Projects are the means by which we introduce change.



Unique

An organisation may undertake many similar projects and establish a familiar, proven pattern of project activity, but each project will be unique in some way: a different team, a different customer a different location. All these factors combine to make every project unique.



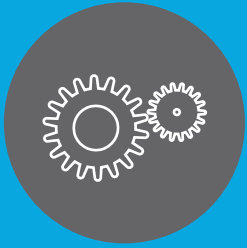
Temporary

Projects are temporary in nature. Once the desired change has been implemented, business as usual resumes in its new form and the need for the project is removed.



Uncertainty

The above characteristics will introduce threats and opportunities over and above those we typically encounter in the course of business as usual. Projects are more risky.



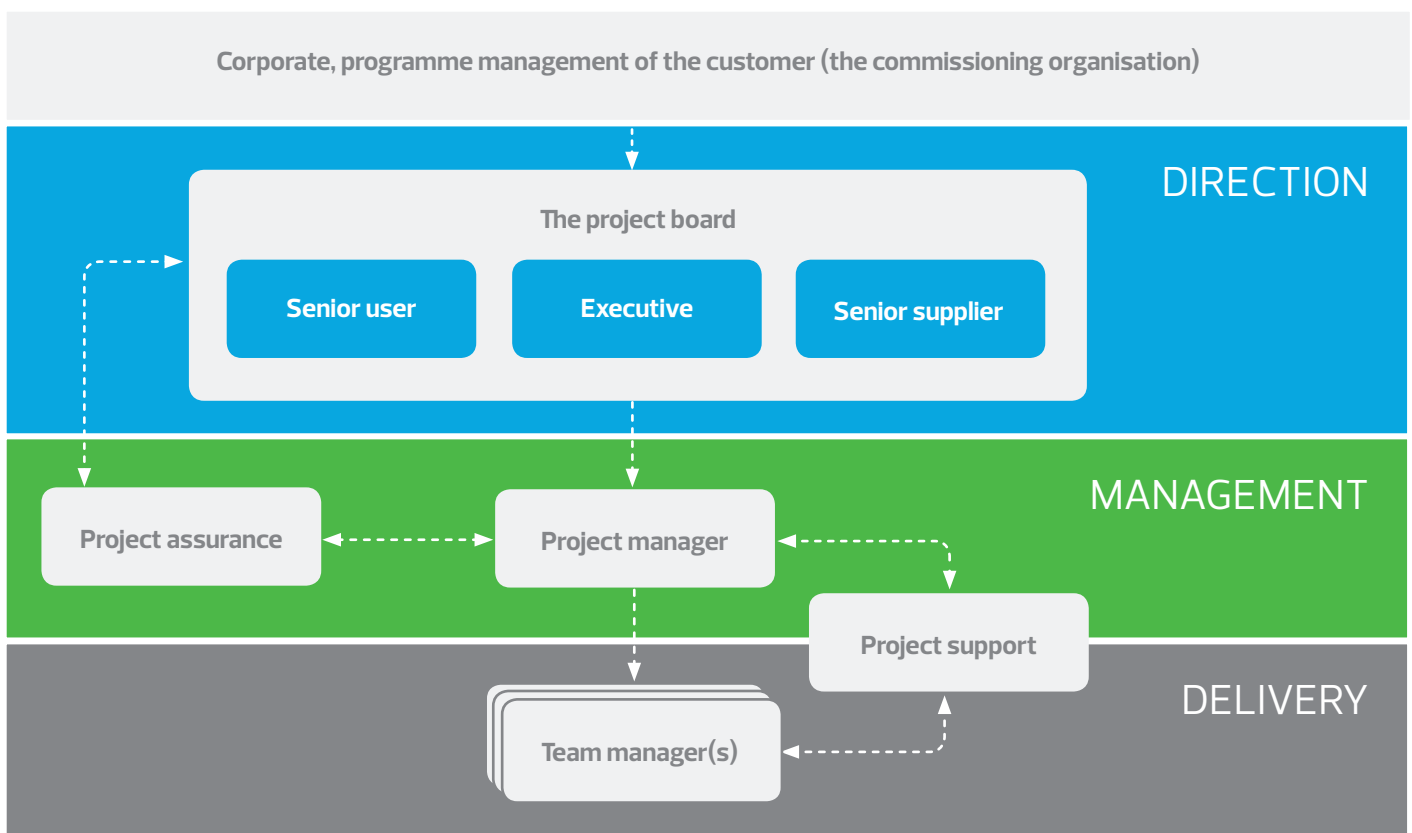
Cross-functional

Projects involve a team of people with different skills working together on a temporary basis to introduce a change that will impact others outside the team. Projects often cross the normal functional divisions within an organisation and sometimes span multiple organisations. This frequently causes stresses and strains within and between. Each has a different perspective and motivation for getting involved in the change.



THE ROLE OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT

The PRINCE2 project organisation is a temporary matrix structure. It comprises those people who direct the project (the Project Board), those people who manage the project (Project Manager) and those people who create or provide the project's products (Team Managers).



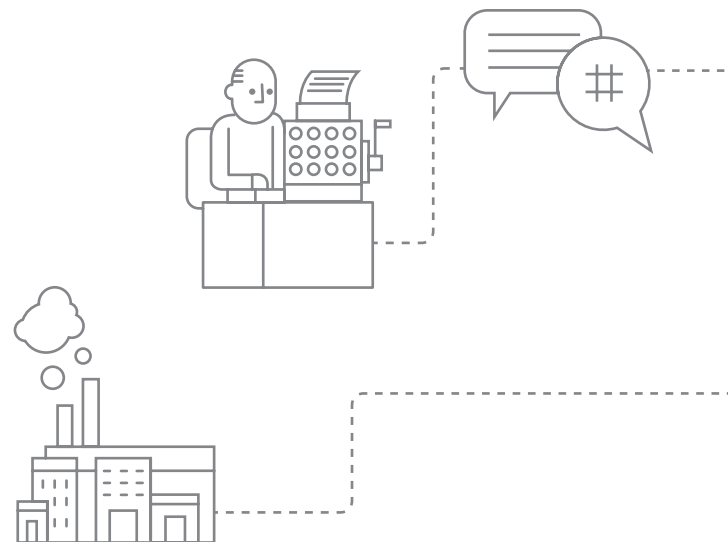
The Project Board represents the most senior level of management within the PRINCE2 project management team. Project Board members are accountable for the work they direct, but the extent of their business responsibilities is usually much wider than the project. They can rarely afford to get involved in the detail of every project for which they are responsible. This means that the effectiveness with which project work can be delegated is crucial. The Project Board is accountable to corporate, programme management of the customer – the “Commissioning Organisation”.

In PRINCE2, the Project Board delegates the management of the project to the Project Manager in a series of stages – each based on an approved Stage Plan. Provided the Project Manager can deliver the stage within the tolerances defined in the plan there is no necessity for the Project Board members to maintain close contact with the work. Should the Project Manager forecast that tolerances will be exceeded, the Project Board is alerted through an Exception Report and will review and approve the options for addressing the exception.

The stage boundaries represent major control milestones, when the Project Board reviews whether the Project Manager has delivered the previous stage properly and approves a plan for the following stage. The PRINCE2 processes provide other checks and balances, and this is how senior managers on the Project Board are able to manage by exception.

Senior managers acting as Project Board members must also provide leadership and direction to ensure that their projects remain aligned to the organisation's strategic aims. The Project Board is a guiding coalition that is necessary to support and direct the project.

As with company boards, if the composition of the Project Board is deficient then the project is likely to struggle, for example if the Project Board is affected by disputes within the board. Appointing the right Project Board is probably the single most important factor in achieving a successful project.

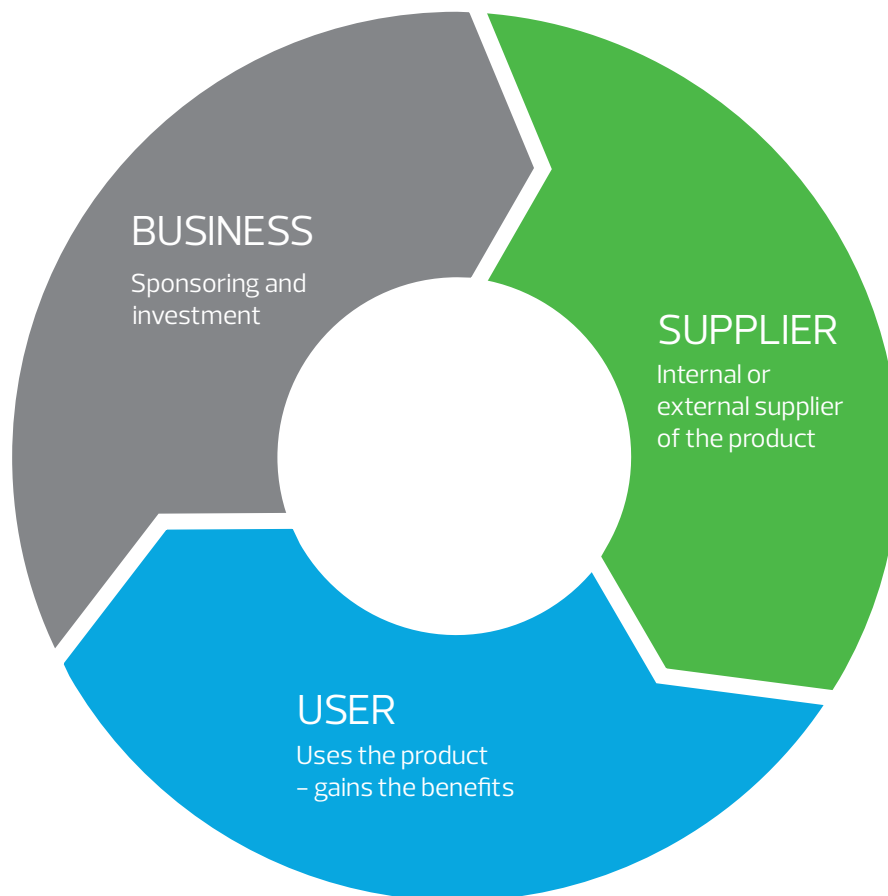


PROJECT BOARD COMPOSITION

Project Board members each fulfil one of three distinct roles:

- Project Executive – ultimately accountable;
- Senior User; or
- Senior Supplier.

This represents the practical application of the PRINCE2 organisation principle that a project always involves three primary stakeholder interests, those of the business investors, the users of the project's products and the suppliers of the products.



The project will only succeed if:

- the products work – they have to be technically reliable and capable of operational maintenance (Senior Supplier responsibility);
- they must also meet the users' requirements and enable the intended benefits to be realised (Senior User responsibility); and
- the overall return for the investment must meet business expectations (Project Executive's business accountability).

All three interests must be satisfied and therefore all three must be represented in the decision-making processes.

Consequently, Project Board members are responsible for Project Assurance from all three perspectives. However, they may delegate some of this responsibility to other people (a Project Assurance function) so long as they are independent of the project team.

The Project Board is also responsible for communication between the project and stakeholders external to the project team (for example, the Commissioning Organisation).

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD PROJECT BOARD

A good Project Board should display four key characteristics:



Authority

The members of the Project Board should be senior enough within the corporate organisation to make strategic decisions about the project. As the Project Board is accountable for the project, the individuals chosen must have sufficient authority to make these decisions and to provide resources to the project, such as personnel, cash and equipment. The managerial level required to fill the roles will depend on factors such as the budget, scope and importance of the project.



Credibility

The credibility of the Project Board members will affect their ability to direct the project.



Ability to delegate

A key part of the Project Board's role is to ensure that the Project Manager is given enough space to manage the project by keeping Project Board activity at the right level. Project Board members should not be involved in the detail of how the project is managed, nor in the specialist content of the project.



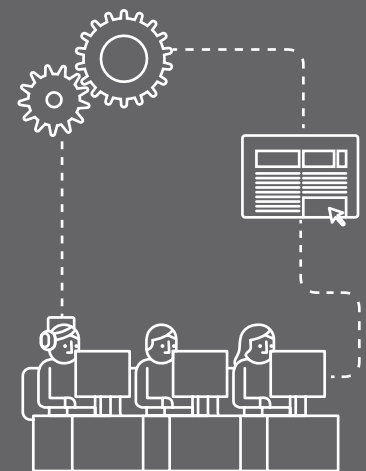
Availability

Project Board members who meet all the above characteristics are of little value to the project if they are not available to make decisions and provide direction to the Project Manager.

Project Boards do not always consist of three members. The range of user and supplier interests may suggest the need for more than one Senior User and/or Senior Supplier (but there is only one Project Executive).

The Project Board is primarily a decision-making function, so it is preferable to have no more than five members. Other managers may attend Project Board meetings, either to observe or to offer specialist contributions, but it is only the Project Board members who make decisions.

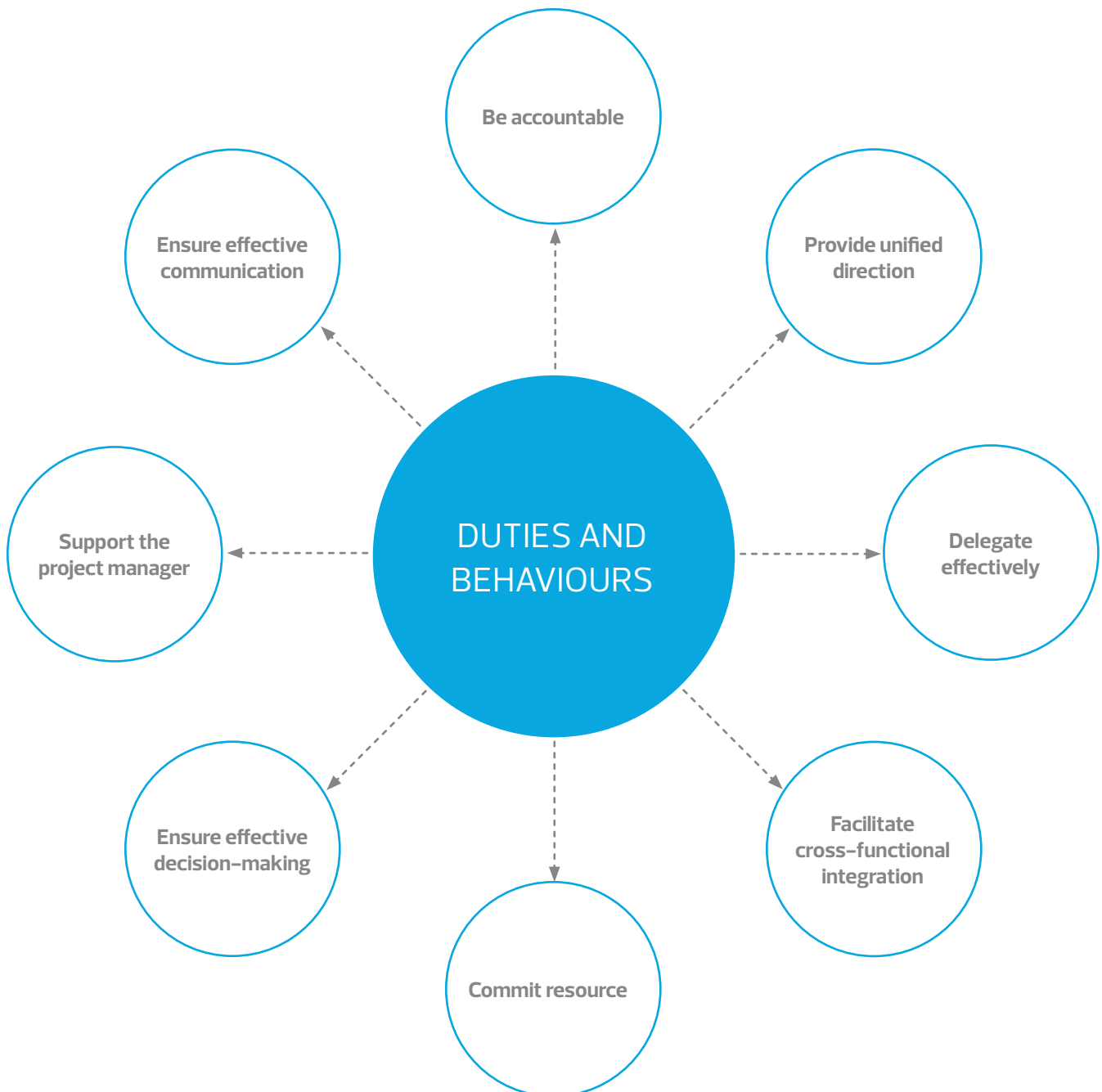
Where there are multiple suppliers or users represented, it may also be appropriate to establish supplier or user groups.



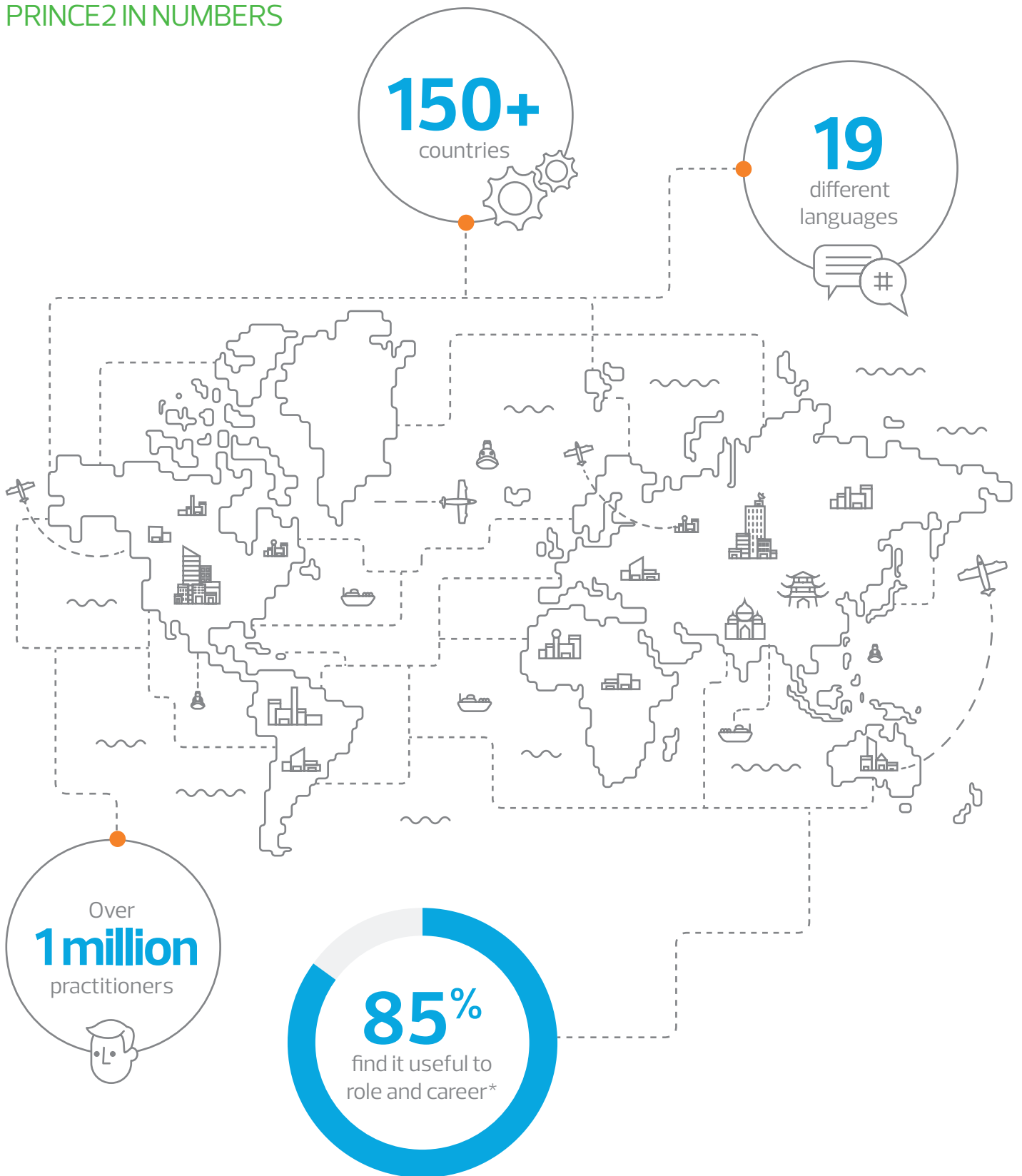
PROJECT BOARD'S DUTIES AND BEHAVIOURS

To understand the Project Board's responsibilities in the project's lifecycle fully it is important to be aware of the underlying duties and the behaviours they imply.

Why is this important? The fact is that surveys frequently cite lack of executive/senior management support as one of the top causes of project failure.



PRINCE2 IN NUMBERS



*PRINCE2 2016 Reserach Report published by AXELOS

THE PRINCE2 PROCESS LIFECYCLE

PRINCE2 provides a process model for managing a project. The processes can easily be scaled and tailored to suit the requirements of any projects. They consist of a set of activities that are required to direct, manage and deliver a project.

The PRINCE2 process model addresses project activity at four levels of management:



Commissioning Organisation

While not part of the project management team, this higher management level is an important influence as it sets the business and strategic context for projects



Project Board (Directing)

This is the most senior level within the project management team. The Project Board represents three key interests: those of the sponsoring business, the users and the suppliers. The Project Board is accountable for the success of the project within the boundaries set by the Commissioning Organisation. The Project Board uses the 'Directing' processes as shown in Figure 1.



Project Manager (Managing)

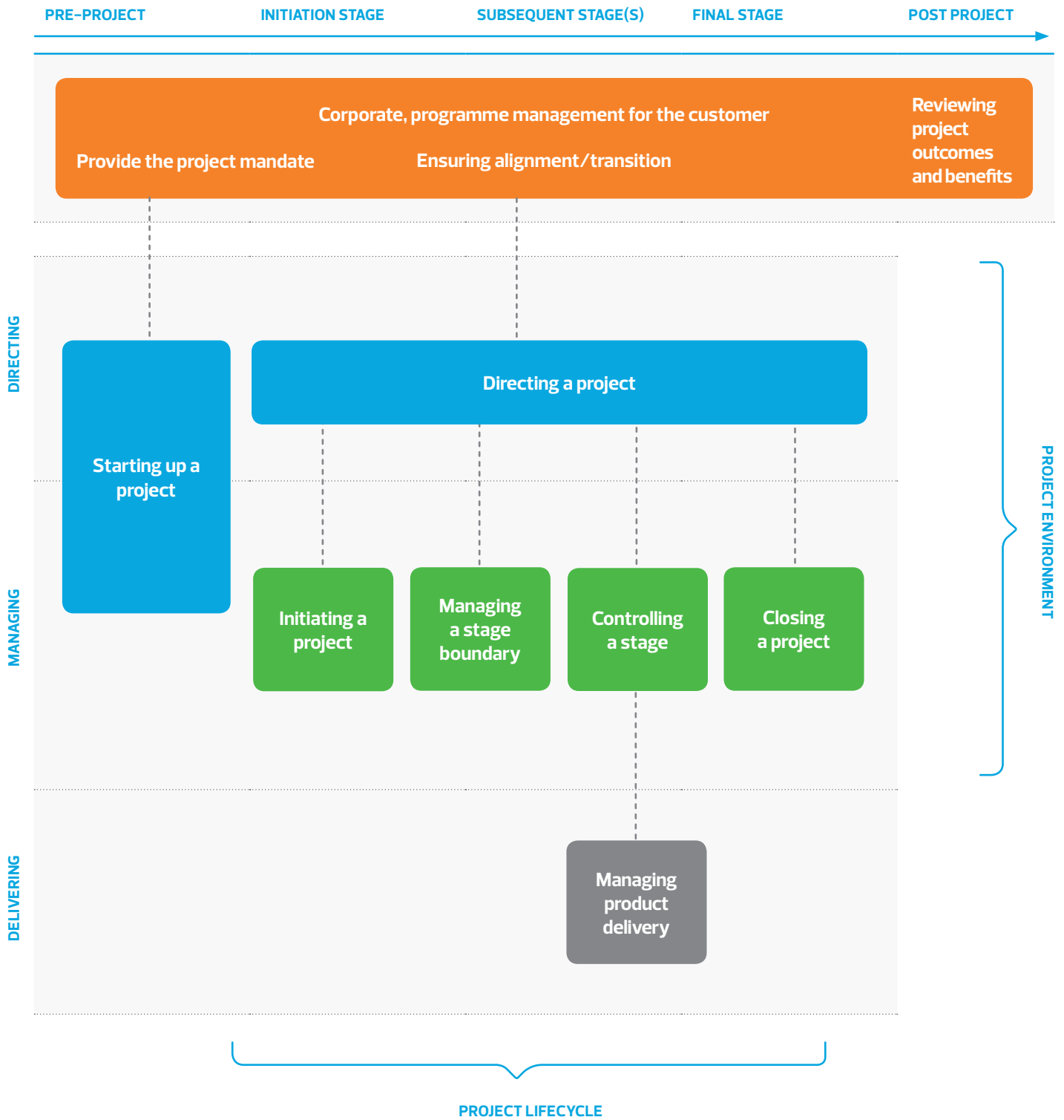
The Project Manager acts as the single focus for the day to day management of the project. The Project Manager has authority to run the project within constraints approved by the Project Board. The Project Manager uses the 'Managing' processes as shown in Figure 1.



Team Manager (Delivering)

The Team Manager's prime responsibility is to supervise the creation of the products allocated to the team by the Project Manager. Note that in simple projects the Project Manager and Team Manager roles are often performed by the same person. The Team Manager and their team use the 'Delivering' processes as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Project Management processes by management level and stage





Starting up a Project

This process covers the pre-project activities required to commission the project and to get commitment from Commissioning Organisation to invest in project initiation by answering the question 'Do we have a viable and worthwhile project?'

Directing a Project

This process describes the Project Board's activities in exercising overall project control. The activities focus on the decision making necessary for Project Board members to fulfil their accountabilities successfully while delegating the day to day management of the project to the Project Manager.

Initiating a Project

This sets out the activities the Project Manager must lead in order to establish the project on a sound foundation. Every PRINCE2 project has an initiation stage. The key deliverable from this stage is the Project Initiation Documentation which includes an overall Project Plan and defines baselines for the six project performance targets of time, cost, quality, scope, risk and benefits. The Project Initiation Documentation represents an authoritative statement of what the project will deliver, how this will be achieved, and by whom.

Managing a Stage Boundary

PRINCE2 projects are managed in stages. This process describes the activities the Project Manager must undertake to provide the Project Board with sufficient information to enable it to review the success of the current stage, approve the next Stage Plan, review the updated Project Plan and confirm continued business justification and acceptability of the risks. Therefore, the process should be executed at, or close to, the end of each management stage.

Controlling a Stage

This process describes how the Project Manager manages the project execution/delivery activity during a stage and reports progress and exceptions to the Project Board.

Managing Product Delivery

This addresses the Team Manager's role in supervising the detailed work of creating the specialist products and provides the link between the Project Manager and the teams undertaking the project work.

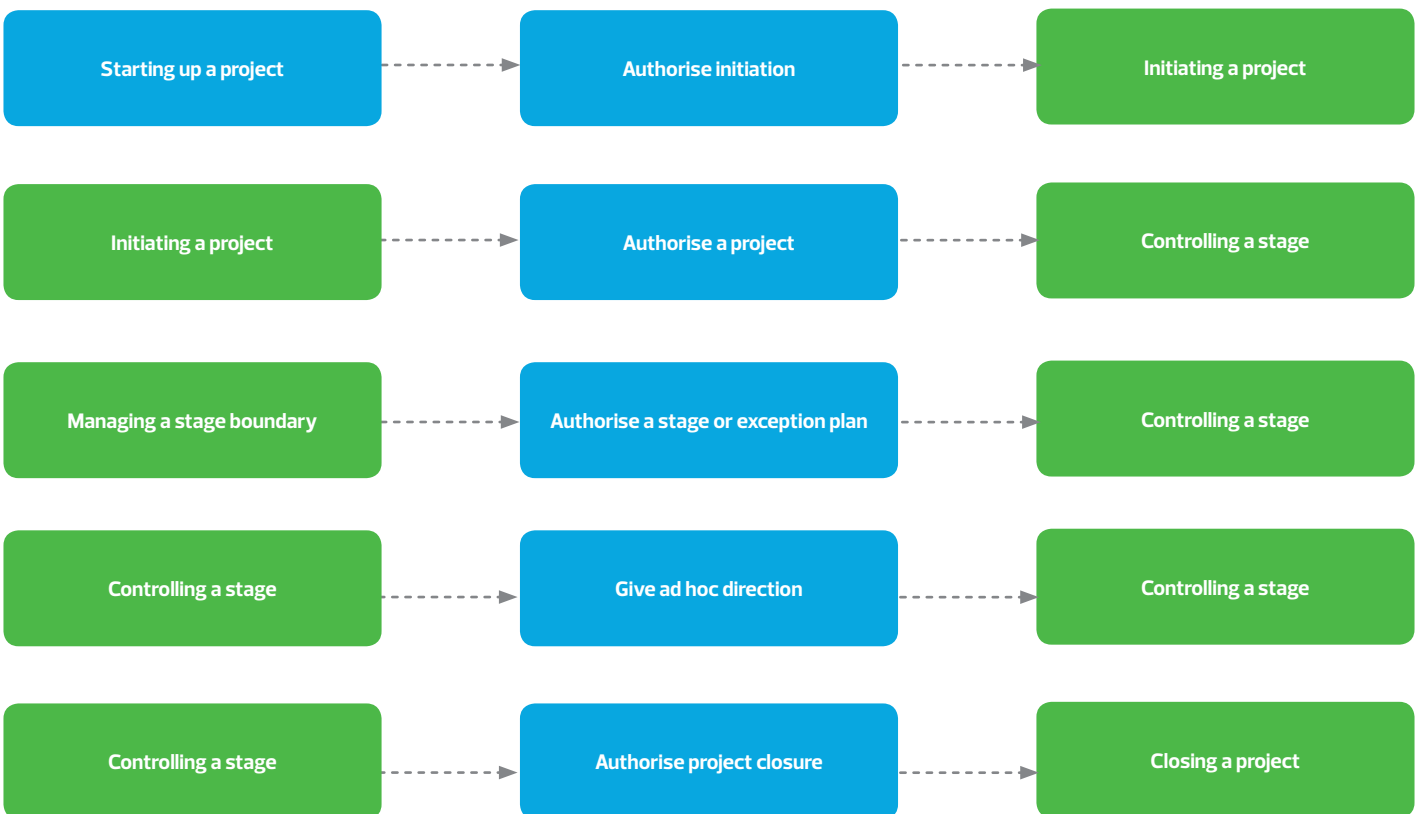
Closing a Project

This process describes the closure activity towards the end of the final stage of the project. The Project Manager leads the process, which provides for an orderly decommissioning, including any remaining project acceptance and handover requirements.

THE DIRECTING A PROJECT PROCESS IN MORE DETAIL

The purpose of the Directing a Project process is to enable the Project Board to be accountable for the project's success by making key decisions and exercising overall control while delegating day to day management of the project to the Project Manager.

There are five activities within the Directing a Project process:



The Directing a Project process starts on completion of the Starting up a Project process and is triggered by the request to initiate a project.

The Directing a Project process does not cover the day to day activities of the Project Manager, but the activities of those at the level of management above the Project Manager, the Project Board. The Project Board manages by exception. It monitors via reports and controls through a small number of decision points. There should be no need for other progress meetings for the Project Board. The Project Manager will inform the board of any exception situation. It is also important that levels of authority and decision-making processes are clearly identified.

The Project Board is responsible for assuring that there is continued business justification. The Directing a Project process provides a mechanism for the Project Board to achieve such assurance without being overburdened by project activity.

One of the functions of the Project Board is to provide informal advice and guidance to the Project Manager as well as formal direction. The Project Manager should seek advice whenever necessary during the project.

See appendix D for an example agenda for project board reviews. See appendix E for checklists for each of the five activities within the Directing a Project process.

APPENDIX A. THE ROLE OF THE PROJECT EXECUTIVE

The Executive's role is to ensure that the project is focused throughout its life on achieving its business objectives and the forecast benefits. The Executive has to ensure that the project gives value for money, ensuring a cost-effective approach to the project, balancing the demands of the business, users and suppliers.

The Executive is appointed by the Commissioning Organisation during the pre-project process, Starting up a Project. The role of the Executive is assigned to one individual, so that there is a single point of accountability for the project. The Executive is responsible for appointing the rest of the project management team, including the other members of the Project Board. Throughout the project, the Executive is responsible for the Business Case and needs to be able to take a balanced view on behalf of the wider organisation.

The Executive's responsibilities comprise:

During start-up and initiation

- Confirm project tolerances with the Commissioning Organisation.
- Approve the Project Brief.
- Approve the Stage Plan for the initiation stage.
- Authorise project initiation.
- Decide whether to use a Change Authority and, if so, agree the level of authority to be delegated.
- Set the scale for severity ratings for issues.
- Set the scale for priority ratings for requests for change and off specifications.
- Approve the supplier contract (if the relationship between the customer and supplier is a commercial one).
- Approve the Project Initiation Documentation (and its components).
- Authorise the start of the project.

During the project

- Set tolerances for each stage and approve Stage Plans.
- Authorise each management stage and approve the Product Descriptions for each stage.
- Approve Exception Plans when stage-level tolerances are forecast to be exceeded.
- Communicate with stakeholders as defined in the Communication Management Approach (including briefing Commissioning Organisation about project progress).
- Provide overall guidance and direction to the project, ensuring it remains viable and within any specified constraints.
- Respond to requests for advice from the Project Manager.
- Ensure that risks are being tracked and managed as effectively as possible.
- Approve changes (unless delegated to a Change Authority).
- Make decisions on escalated issues.
- Approve completed products.

At the end of the project

- Provide assurance that all products have been delivered satisfactorily.
- Provide assurance that all acceptance criteria have been met.
- Confirm acceptance of the project product.
- Approve the End Project Report and ensure that any issues, lessons and risks are documented and passed on to the appropriate body.
- Authorise follow-on action recommendations and Lessons Reports to be distributed to the Commissioning Organisation.
- Transfer responsibility of the updated Benefits Management Approach to the Commissioning Organisation.
- Authorise project closure and send project closure notification to the Commissioning Organisation.

APPENDIX B. THE ROLE OF THE SENIOR USER

The Senior User is responsible for specifying the needs of those who will use the project's products, for user liaison with the project management team, and for monitoring that the solution will meet those needs within the constraints of the Business Case in terms of quality, functionality and ease of use.

The role represents the interests of all those who will use the project's products (including operations and maintenance), those for whom the products will achieve an objective or those who will use the products to deliver benefits. The Senior User role commits user resources and monitors products against requirements. This role may require more than one person to cover all the user interests. For the sake of effectiveness, the role should not be split between too many people.

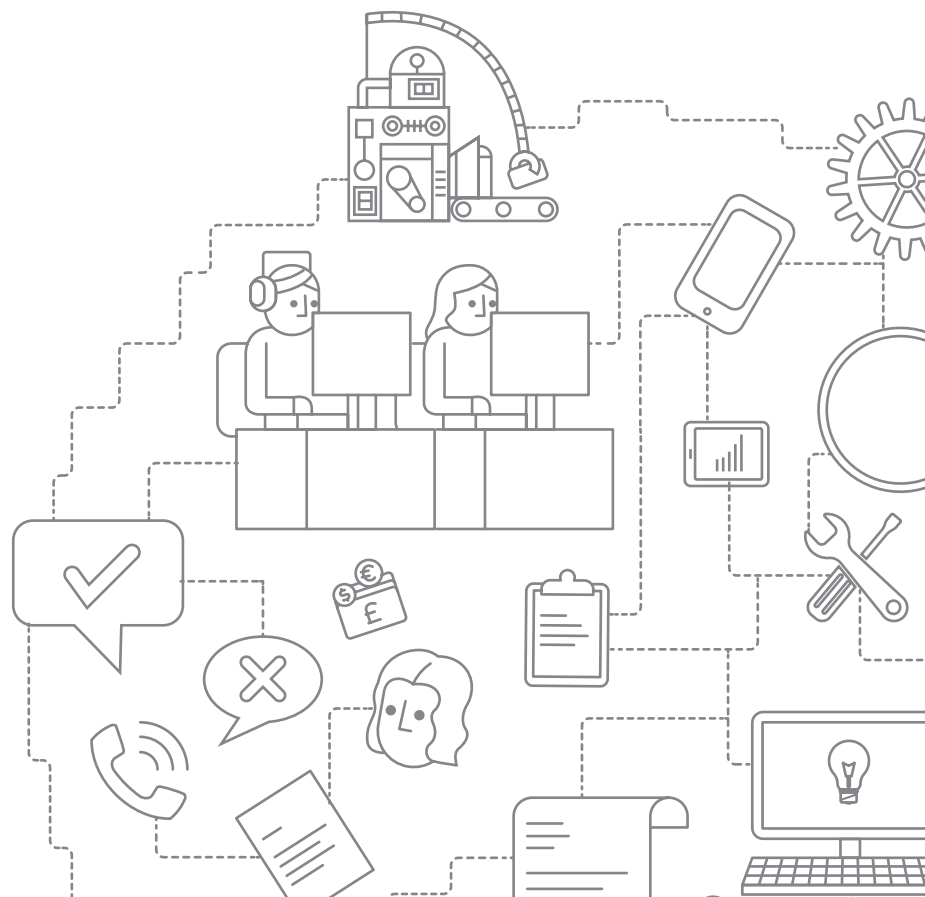
The Senior User specifies the benefits and is held to account by demonstrating to the Commissioning Organisation that the forecast benefits, which were the basis of project approval, have in fact been realised. This is likely to involve a commitment beyond the end of the life of the project.

The Senior User must be able to make decisions on behalf of those groups who will use or gain benefit from the project's products. The Senior User may also represent the interests of those who will maintain the specialist products of the project after closure but this is not always the case.

It is important to understand that, in practice, the Senior User is likely to be responsible for realising the benefits for the business and this is likely to involve business as usual commitments after the end of the project.

Specific responsibilities (in addition to the collective responsibilities of the Project Board):

- committing user resources;
- ensuring that users' needs are accurately specified;
- ensuring that the solution will satisfy user needs and contribute towards realising the benefits intended for the business; and
- communication between the users and the project team.



APPENDIX C. THE ROLE OF THE SENIOR SUPPLIER

The Senior Supplier represents the interests of those designing, developing, facilitating, procuring and implementing the project's products. The Senior Supplier must be able to make decisions on behalf of those providing the expertise or resources to create the products.

A Senior Supplier may instead be responsible for representing the interests of those who will maintain the project's products after closure. For example, when an external supplier is contracted for maintenance and support.

What matters is that long term operations, service and support interests are represented appropriately on the Project Board from the outset.

This role is accountable for the quality of products delivered and for the technical integrity of the project. The role includes committing all required supplier resources to the project and ensuring that proposals for designing and developing the products are feasible and realistic.

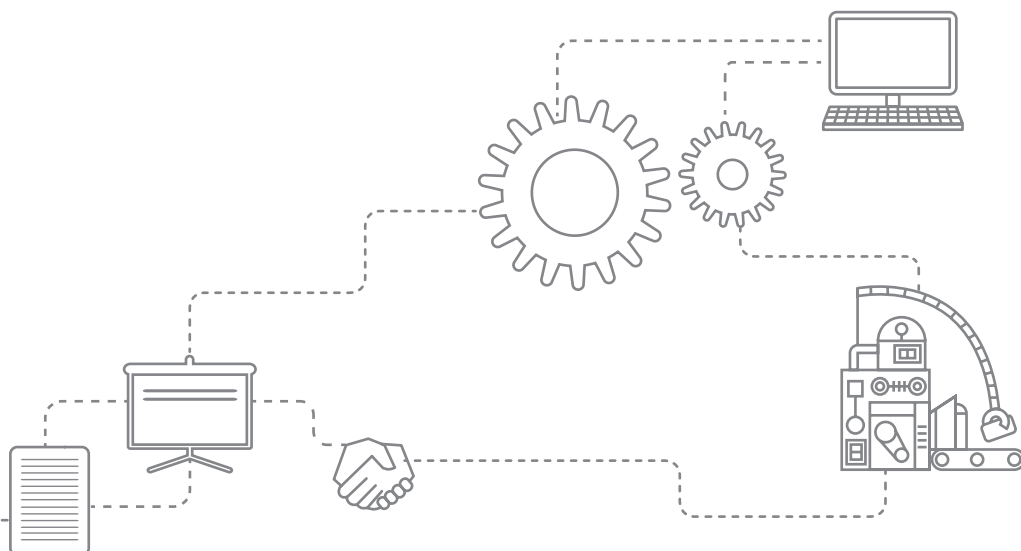
In large or complex projects there may be several discrete user stakeholders and/or supplier interests – too many to accommodate in a manageable Project Board. In these circumstances user and/or supplier Advisory Boards can be set up, chaired respectively by the Senior User or the Senior Supplier.

As with a delegated Project Assurance role, Advisory Boards do not have any accountability for the project, but they provide valuable support and guidance for Project Board members by helping to agree a coherent approach for the stakeholder group concerned.

Advisory Boards may also usefully double as a form of Project Assurance.

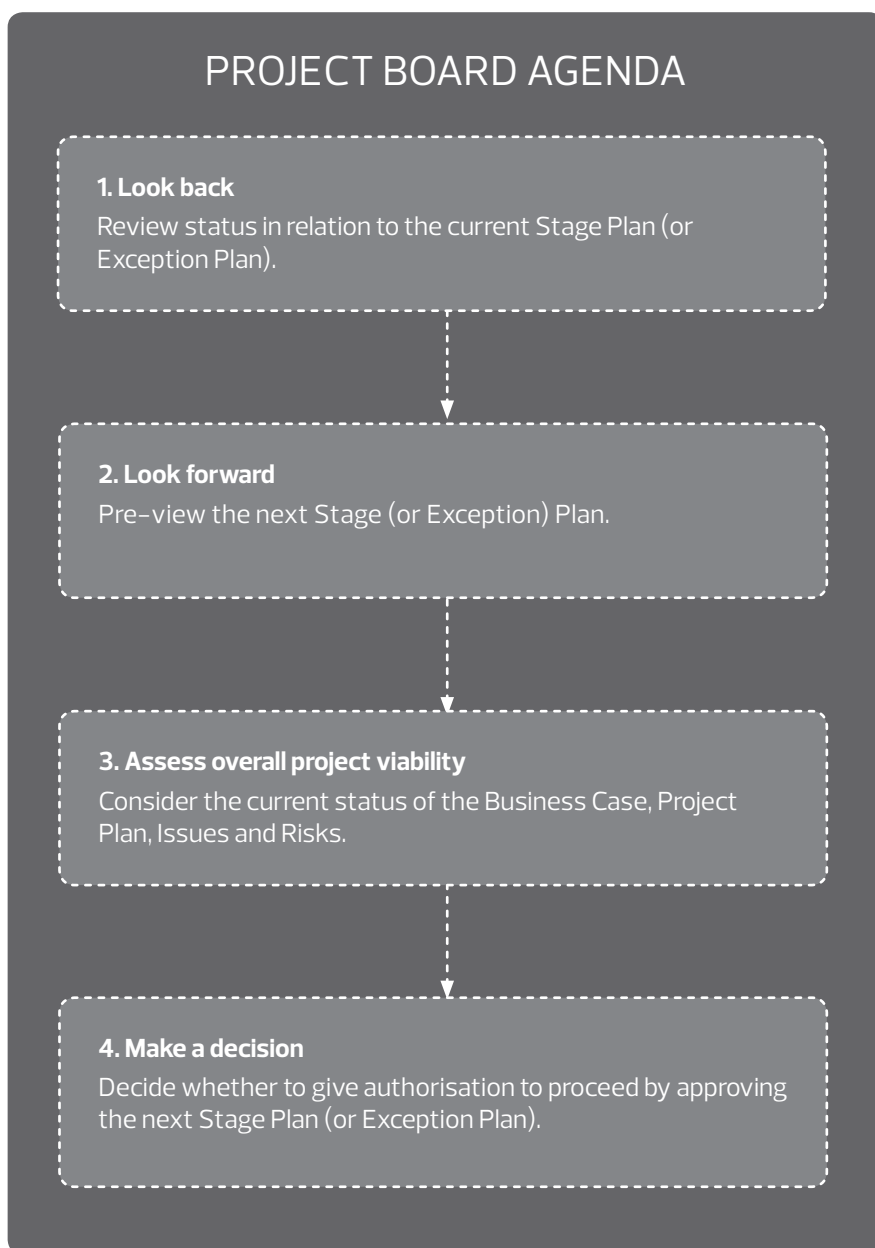
Specific responsibilities (in addition to the collective responsibilities of the Project Board):

- advising on the selection of design, development and acceptance methods;
- ensuring that the supplier resources required for the project are made available;
- making decisions on escalated issues, with particular focus on safeguarding the integrity of the complete solution;
- resolving supplier requirements and priority conflicts;
- briefing non-technical management on supplier aspects of the project;
- ensuring quality procedures are used correctly, so that products adhere to requirements; and
- undertaking Project Assurance from the supplier perspective (supplier assurance) and, where appropriate, delegate supplier Project Assurance activities.

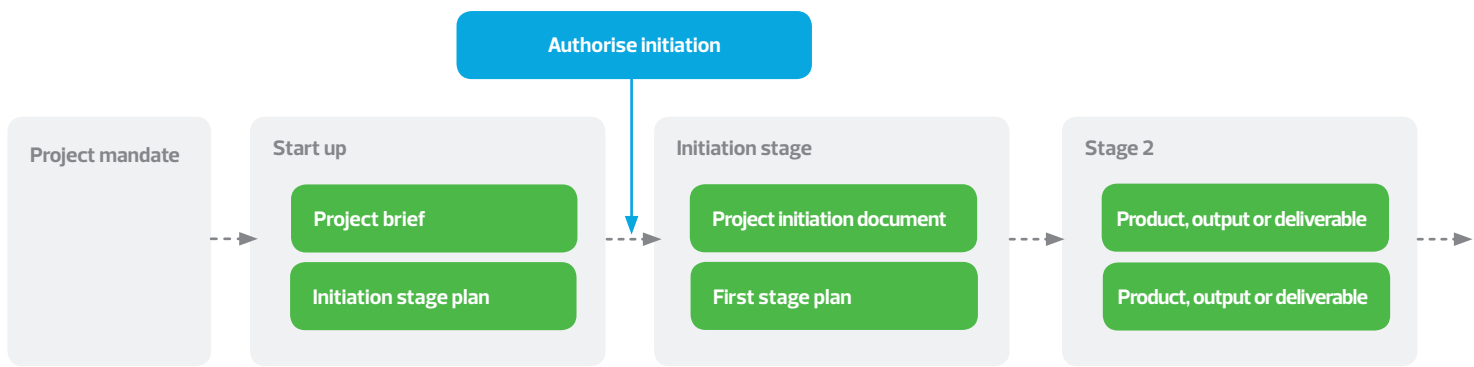


APPENDIX D. PROJECT BOARD AGENDAS

Project Board reviews should always focus on plans, approving them and assessing progress in relation to them. This basic agenda is easily adapted for Project Board meetings at different points in the project's lifecycle, and quickly becomes a familiar and effective approach for decision-making.



APPENDIX E. CHECKLISTS TO HELP PROJECT BOARD DECISIONS

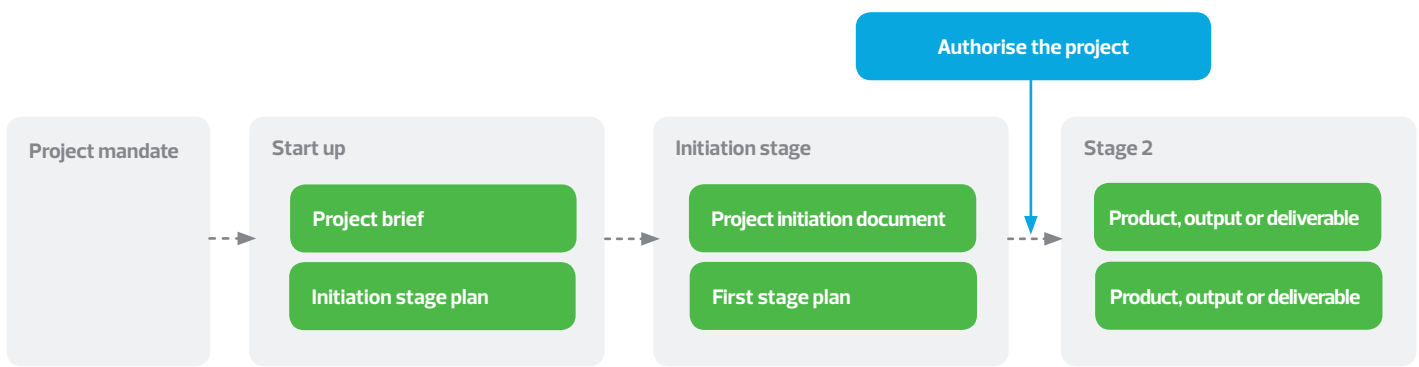


AUTHORISE INITIATION – QUESTIONS

YES/NO

EXPLANATION IF NO

- 1 Has the Project Board approved the Project Brief? Specifically, has it:
 - reviewed and approved what the project needs to deliver (this is called the Project Product Description)?
 - reviewed and approved the outline Business Case, particularly the projected benefits?
- 2 Has the Project Board approved the initiation Stage Plan? Specifically, has it:
 - obtained or committed the resources needed to initiate the project?
 - set tolerances for the initiation stage?
 - requested the necessary logistical support (for example, accommodation, communication facilities, equipment and any Project Support)?
 - confirmed that they have understood any risks that affect the decision to authorise the initiation stage?
- 3 Has the Project Board informed the Commissioning Organisation (and other interested parties) that project initiation has been authorised?



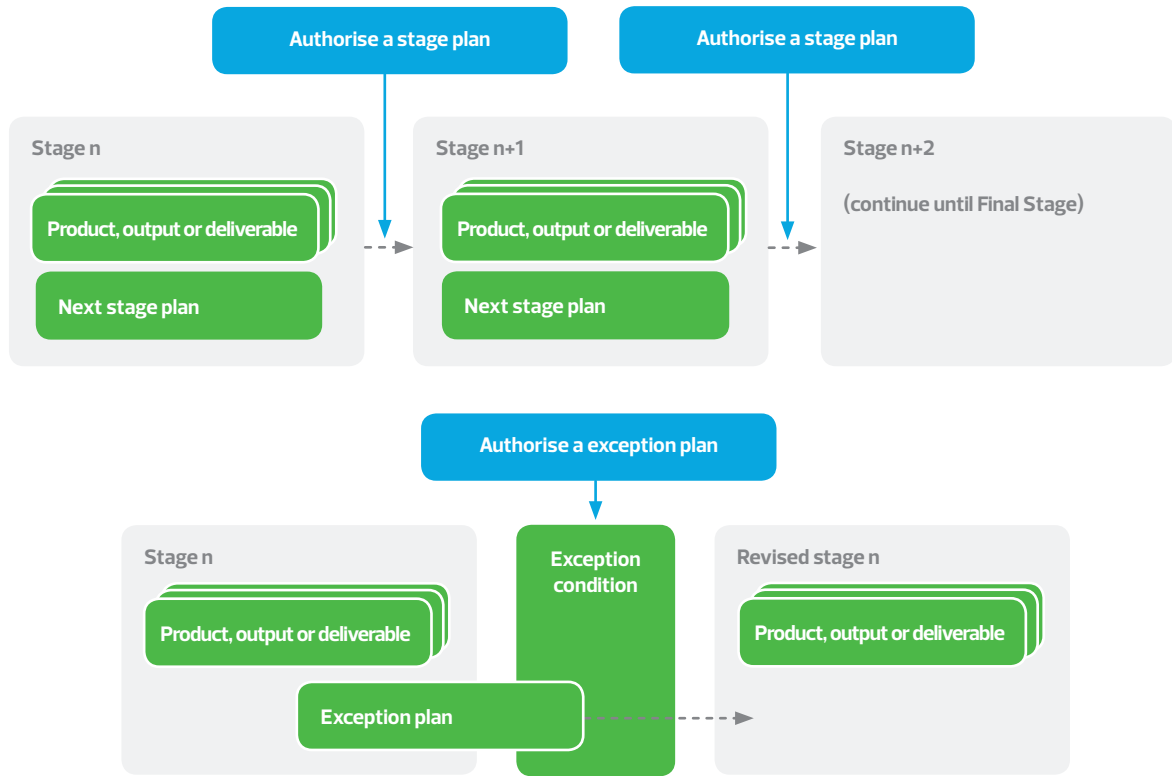
AUTHORISE THE PROJECT – QUESTIONS

YES/NO

EXPLANATION IF NO

- 4** Has the Project Board approved the Project Initiation Documentation? Specifically, has it:
- confirmed that the Business Case is viable, desirable and achievable?
 - confirmed that lessons from previous similar projects have been reviewed and incorporated?
 - confirmed that the Quality Management Approach will deliver the quality expectations?
 - confirmed that the Risk Management Approach will safeguard the project?
 - confirmed that there has been a risk assessment, and that risk response actions have been planned?
 - confirmed the validity and achievability of the Project Plan?
 - confirmed that the Benefits Management Approach covers all expected benefits?
 - confirmed that all members of the project management team have agreed their roles (the project management team structure, roles and responsibilities)?
 - ensured that the project controls are adequate for the nature of the project?
 - ensured that the information needs and timing of communications, as defined in the Communication Management Approach, are adequate for the nature of the project?
 - reviewed the tolerances for the project provided by the Commissioning Organisation to ensure that they are appropriate and realistic?
 - considered the consistency of the various components and approved the Project Initiation Documentation overall?

- 5** Has the Project Board informed interested parties that the project has been authorised?



AUTHORISE A STAGE OR EXCEPTION PLAN – QUESTIONS

YES/NO

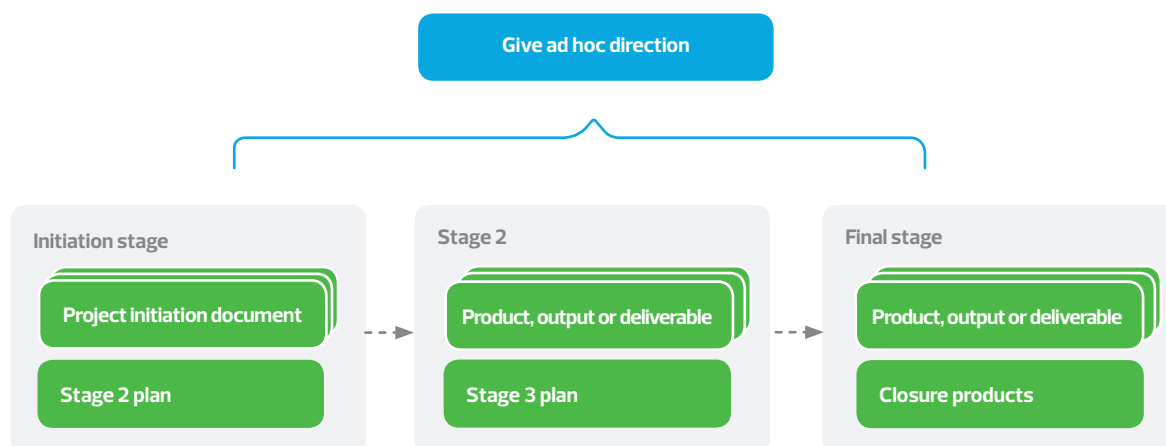
EXPLANATION IF NO

- 6** Has the Project Board reviewed the End Stage Report? Specifically:
- did the board review the performance status of the project?
 - has the board reviewed the benefits achieved and lessons learned during the stage?

- 7** Has the Project Board assessed overall project viability? Specifically, has it:
- reviewed the Project Plan and the position in relation to project tolerances?
 - obtained decisions from outside the project for any potential deviations beyond project tolerances? For example, if this project is part of a programme, then programme management should have examined the impact on the programme and taken appropriate action.
 - reviewed the Business Case to ensure that the project is still justified?
 - reviewed the key risks to ensure that the exposure level is still acceptable and that response actions are planned?

- 8** Has the Project Board reviewed and approved the next Stage Plan (or Exception Plan)? Specifically, has it:
- reviewed the plan for which the Project Manager is seeking approval? (This will be a Stage Plan for the next management stage or an Exception Plan.)
 - authorised the Project Manager to proceed with the submitted plan (Stage Plan or Exception Plan) or instructed the Project Manager to prematurely close the project?
 - set the tolerances for the next management stage or (in the case of an Exception Plan) revised the current stage tolerances as necessary?

- 9** Has the Project Board informed interested parties that the next stage has been authorised or an exception plan for the current stage has been approved?



GIVE AD HOC DIRECTION – QUESTIONS

YES/NO

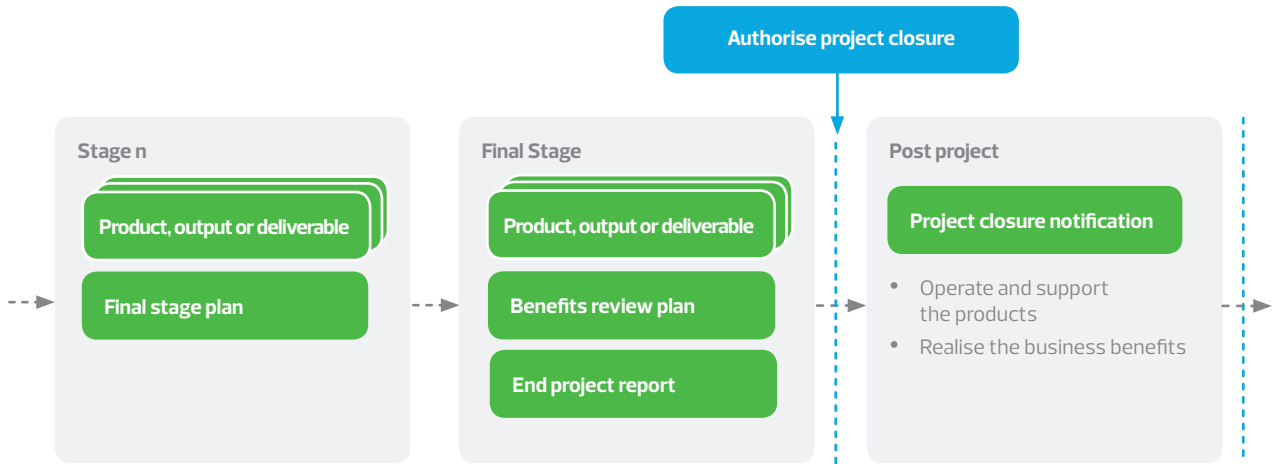
EXPLANATION IF NO

- 10** Has the Project Board responded to the Project Manager's requests? Specifically, has it:
- reviewed the request? (This could be informal or formal, the latter in the form of an Issue Report.)
 - made a decision – for example, approved, rejected, deferred decision, requested more information?
 - provided guidance to the Project Manager?

- 11** Has the Project Board responded to reports it has received? Specifically, has it:
- reviewed the latest Highlight Report in order to understand the status of the project and satisfied itself, that the stage is progressing according to plan?
 - made decisions on Exception Reports – adjusted tolerances or approved responses to the exception as appropriate?
 - made decisions on Issue Reports within the board's delegated limits of authority or sought advice from Commissioning Organisation?

- 12** Has the Project Board responded to external influences? Specifically, has it:
- ensured that the project is kept informed of external events that may affect it?
 - ensured that the project remains focused on Commissioning Organisation objectives set, and remains justified in business terms?
 - ensured that the Project Manager is notified of any changes in the Commissioning Organisation environment that may impact on the project and that appropriate action is taken?

- 13** Has the Project Board informed interested parties of the project's progress in accordance with the Communication Management Approach?



AUTHORISE PROJECT CLOSURE – QUESTIONS

YES/NO

EXPLANATION IF NO

- 14** Has the Project Board confirmed handover and acceptance? Specifically, has it:
- verified that all required user acceptance and operational/maintenance acceptance exist?
 - ensured that, where appropriate, the resulting changes in the business are supported and sustainable?
 - ensured that any customer quality expectations that cannot be confirmed until after the project closes (e.g. performance levels regarding reliability) are included in the Benefits Management Approach as a post-project check?

- 15** Has the Project Board approved the End Project Report? Specifically, has it:
- used the version of the Project Initiation Documentation which was approved at project initiation as the baseline to assess the success of the project?
 - ensured follow-on action recommendations have been reviewed and allocated?
 - approved the End Project Report for distribution to any interested parties, such as the Commissioning Organisation?

- 16** Has the Project Board reviewed the Lessons Report and agreed who should receive it?
Has the Board ensured that the appropriate groups (for example, the Commissioning Organisation, centre of excellence) have been made aware of their responsibility for taking any recommendations forward?

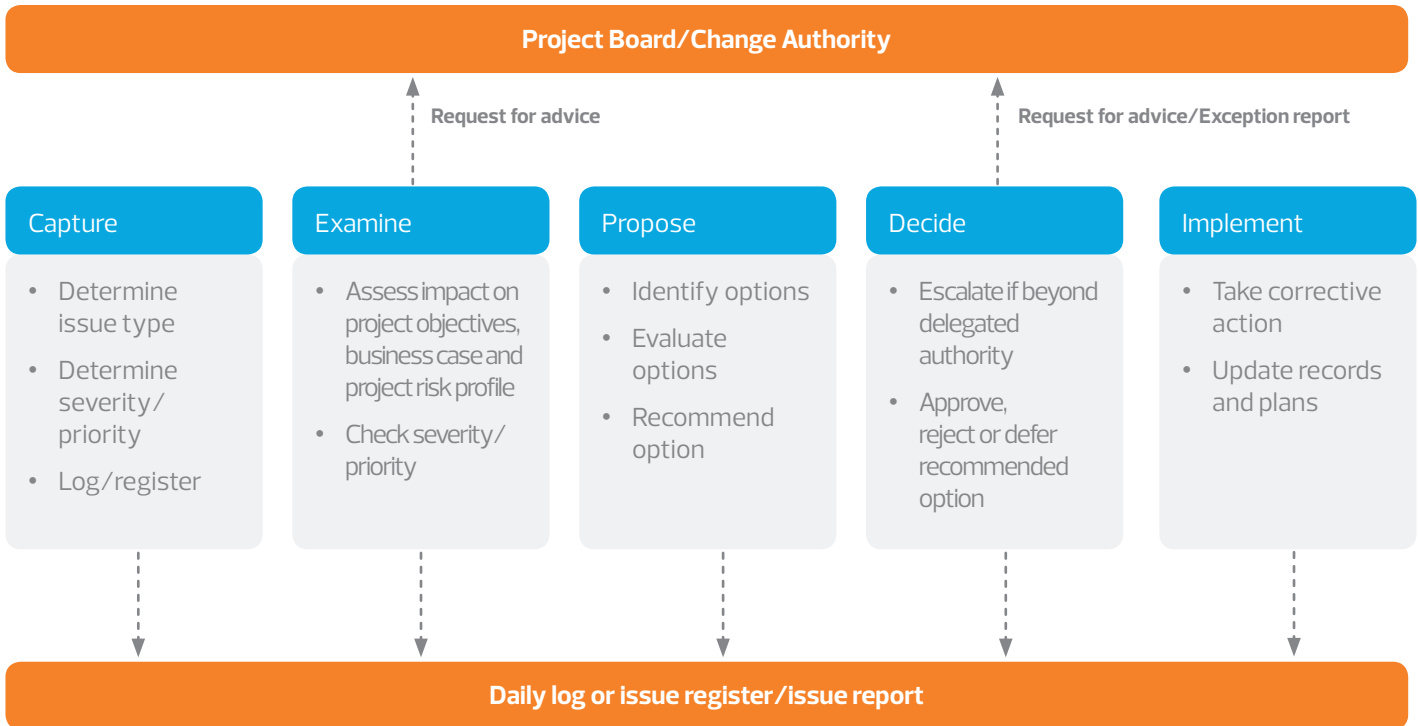
- 17** Has the Project Board confirmed the Business Case? Specifically, has it confirmed the updated Business Case by comparing actual and forecast benefits, costs and risks against the approved Business Case within the Project Initiation Documentation? It may not be possible to confirm all the benefits as some will not be realised until after the project is closed.

- 18** Has the Project Board approved the updated Benefits Review Plan? Specifically, has it:
- confirmed that it addresses the expected benefits that cannot yet be confirmed?
 - confirmed that the responsibility for the Benefits Management Approach has been transferred to Commissioning Organisation?

- 19** Has the Project Board issued the project closure notification? Specifically, has it:
- reviewed and issued a project closure notification in accordance with the Communication Management Approach?
 - advised those who have provided the support infrastructure and resources for the project that these can now be withdrawn?
 - released the resources provided to the project?
 - provided a closing date for costs being charged to the project?

APPENDIX F. ISSUE/RISK HANDLING AND ESCALATION

The Project Manager's process



Project Board's responses

ISSUE TYPE	PROJECT BOARD (OR CHANGE AUTHORITY) RESPONSE	CONSIDERATIONS
REQUEST FOR CHANGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the change Reject the change Defer decision Request more information Ask for an Exception Plan (if the request for change cannot be implemented within the limits delegated to the Change Authority) 	<p>If a request for change involves extra cost, there are three principal ways to fund it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use the change budget (if being used and if of sufficient size); increase the project budget; or de-scope other elements of the project. <p>Tolerance should not be used to fund requests for change.</p>
OFF-SPECIFICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant a concession Instruct that the off-specification be resolved Defer decision Request more information Ask for an Exception Plan (if the concession cannot be granted within the limits delegated to the Change Authority). 	<p>The Project Board may decide to accept the off-specification without immediate corrective action. This is referred to as a concession. When a product is granted a concession, the Product Description will need to be revised before the product is handed over to the User.</p>
PROBLEM/CONCERN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide guidance Ask for an Exception Plan 	<p>Could the problem/concern be resolved by relaxing the stage tolerances?</p>

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

Andy Murray

Head of Projects and Programmes

T +44 (0)7776 301602

andy.murray@rsmuk.com

Nigel Bennett

Consulting Director

T +44 (0)7796 274640

nigel.bennett@rsmuk.com

rsmuk.com

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