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Project controls — Specification

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Summary of pages

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Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on 30 September 2025. It was prepared by Technical Committee MS/2, *Project, programme and portfolio management*. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to the committee manager.

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The provisions of this document are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its requirements are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is “shall”.

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type and does not constitute a normative element.

Where words have alternative spellings, the preferred spelling of the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* is used (e.g. “organization” rather than “organisation”).

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Introduction

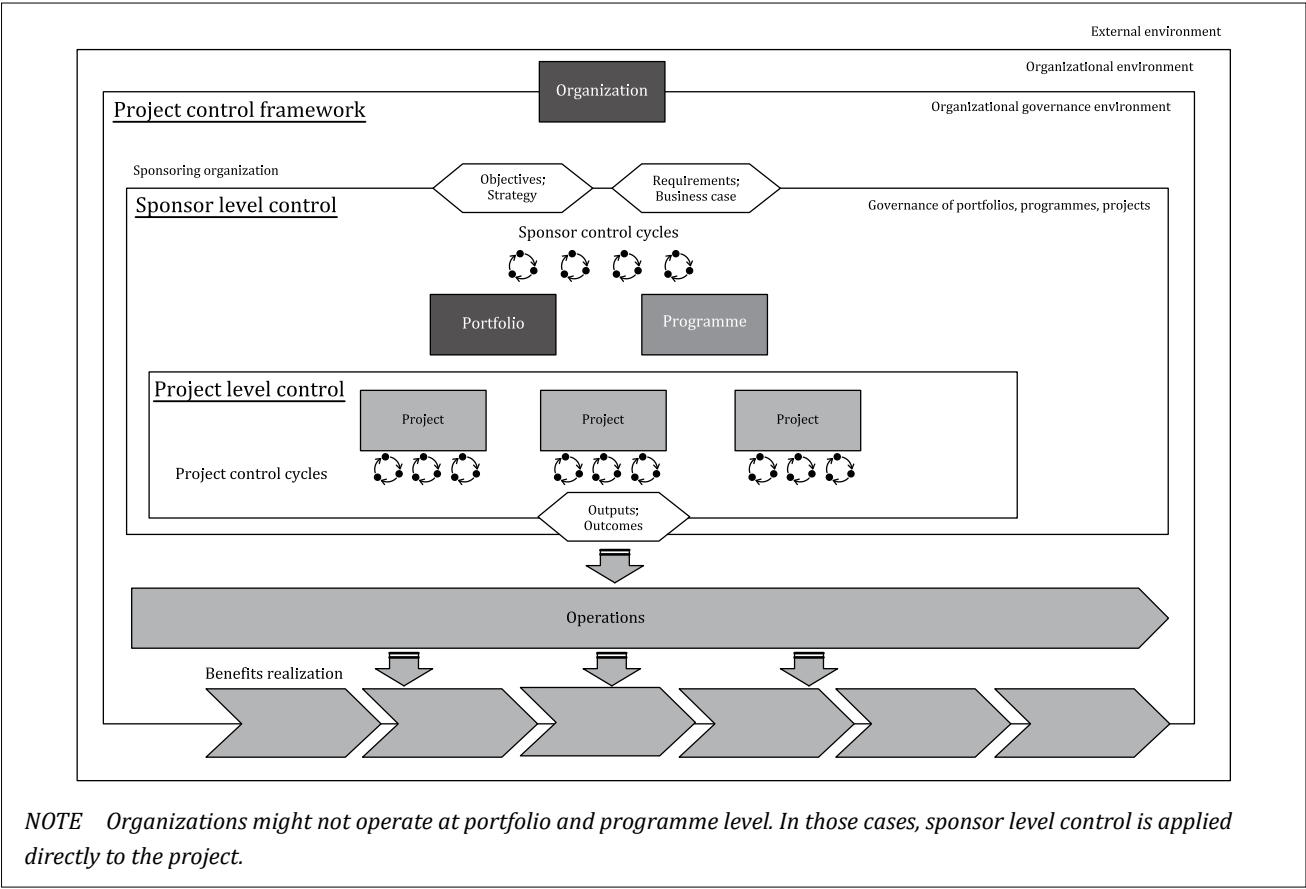
This document provides a basis for defining, implementing and assuring processes, methods, tools and techniques used to inform and enable control that organizations can use to inform timely decision making, and to promote the realization of tangible benefits from their projects. This document presents essential requirements for project controls so that top management and project teams can control any project.

A project control framework is created to define and oversee the controls to be applied before, during and after a project. Control is applied at three levels:

- a) by the organization. This includes organization-wide requirements for control of projects at any level, including establishing project organizations and systems;
- b) by the sponsoring organization. This includes supporting the organization's responsibilities for business case viability, outcomes and objectives, benefits expectations, budgeting and finance, requirements, scope change, governance, assurance and reporting. Control at this level is applied before, during and after the project, from project concept through to value and benefits realization for all interested parties; and
- c) by the project manager and supporting team. This includes control related to project management practices, such as planning and estimating (schedule, costs, resources and benefits), scope management, value management and quality management, procurement and contract administration, issues and risk management, change control and reporting. Control at this level is applied during each phase of the project from project initiation to project closure.

Figure 1 recognizes that project control at organization, sponsor and project levels provides oversight of the project, spanning its life cycle. It takes into account both detailed analysis of the current situation and a longer-range view of what is likely to happen in future. Once the outputs are in use, operational data, research evidence, lessons learned and expert analysis can inform improvements to project control practices. Project control supports benefits realization both during and after the project has closed.

Figure 1 — Example of a project control landscape



1 Scope

This British Standard specifies requirements for the design, operation and application of project controls, including definition, gathering, integration and analysis of data necessary for project control.

This British Standard is intended for use by, but not limited to:

- a) senior management within the organization responsible for the achievement of the organization's objectives which require projects to deliver specific outcomes that realize benefits;
- b) individuals involved in the governance, direction, management, procurement and control of projects, such as project sponsors, project board members and project managers;
- c) individuals involved in controlling projects, who need a common basis upon which to understand, conduct, compare, evaluate and communicate the controls practices used on their project; and
- d) managers of work packages, which are subject to project controls.

In addition, this British Standard can also be useful to individuals involved in:

- 1) the governance, direction and management of portfolios and programmes;
- 2) project teams, programme and project offices;
- 3) audit and assurance teams; and
- 4) other teams related to the management of projects, such as finance, accounting, human resource management, procurement and legal.

This British Standard is relevant to all sizes and types of project in different contexts, across all sectors or industries, including public, private and charities.

NOTE 1 [Annex A](#) lists the key deliverables specified in requirements for project controls.

NOTE 2 The deliverables are listed and referred to separately in this British Standard, they can be contained in higher level organizational and project management documentation.

NOTE 3 [Annex B](#) lists the subclauses within which roles or entities are involved in project controls practices.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.¹⁾

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this British Standard, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1 baseline

agreed reference levels against which a project's plan or outputs are monitored and controlled

NOTE The project's baseline can be made up of multiple baselines, each of which can represent an aspect of the total baseline, such as schedule, cost, scope, risk. Where "baseline" is referred to, this can mean the whole baseline or a baseline for the aspect under consideration.

[SOURCE: [BS 6079:2019](#), 3.3, modified – Note added]

3.2 benefit

created advantage, value or other positive effect

[SOURCE: [BS ISO 21506:2024](#), 3.6]

¹⁾ Documents that are referred to solely in an informative manner are listed in the Bibliography.

3.3 business case

documented justification to support decision-making about the commitment to a project or programme

[SOURCE: [BS ISO 21506:2024](#), 3.8, modified – the words “project, programme or portfolio” have been replaced by “project or programme”]

3.4 change control

activities through which requests to change a baseline (3.1) are captured, evaluated and then approved, rejected or deferred

NOTE Change control can include evaluation and implementation of a request to authorize acceptance of a deviation from a specification and to apply a waiver to previously agreed obligations.

[SOURCE: [BS 6079:2019](#), 3.5 modified – “process” replaced by “activities”, “the” replaced by “a”, deleted “a project, programme or portfolio”; “all” deleted and Note added]

3.5 configuration

traceable arrangement of parts or elements in a particular form or combination

NOTE 1 In the context of a project, configuration management typically applies to the functional and physical characteristics of the outputs and their constituent parts and associated documentation. Configuration management can also apply to the relationships among the outputs and the project management documentation, such as project plans and contracts.

NOTE 2 See also [BS ISO 10007](#) for guidance on configuration management.

3.6 control

comparison of actual performance with planned performance, analysing variances and taking appropriate preventive and corrective action as needed

[SOURCE: [BS ISO 21506:2024](#), 3.13, modified – “corrective action and preventive” replaced with “preventive and corrective”]

3.7 control cycle

iterative sequence of activities used to track the progress of the work, analyse status, identify variances and take the necessary preventive and corrective action

3.8 controls

processes, methods, tools and techniques used to inform and enable control

3.9 corrective action

direction and activity for modifying the performance of work to bring performance in line with a plan

[SOURCE: [BS ISO 21506:2024](#), 3.15]

3.10 event

occurrence or change of a particular set of circumstances

NOTE 1 An event can have one or more occurrences and can have several causes and several consequences.

NOTE 2 An event can also be something that is expected which does not happen, or something that is not expected which does happen.

NOTE 3 An event can be a risk source.

[SOURCE: [BS ISO 31000:2018](#), 3.5]

3.11 forecast

assessment that anticipates a future scenario

NOTE 1 Examples could be intuitive subjective anticipation; reference class forecast.

NOTE 2 A forecast can be associated with confidence and perceived reliability of an estimate.

3.12 gate

decision point for the formal authorization to start a new phase (3.19) of a project (3.24)

[SOURCE: BS 202002:2023, 3.4, modified – note deleted]

3.13 handshake

activity of mutual agreement and exchange to accept planned deliverables and to finalize inputs for the next phase

NOTE 1 The term “handshake” is used to emphasize dialogue and mutual agreement between interested parties to enable smooth transitions and to achieve agreed objectives; see BS ISO 21919-1 for further guidance.

NOTE 2 A handshake can involve exchange of signals between parties to provide synchronization.

3.14 interdependency

relationship between activities external to, and activities within, a project’s scope

3.15 issue

unplanned event that has an impact or a potential impact on objectives and requires management action

NOTE An issue could be a problem, benefit, query, concern, change request or a risk that has occurred.

[SOURCE: BS 202002:2023, 3.6]

3.16 opportunity

risk (3.26) occurrence that would have a favourable impact

[SOURCE: BS ISO 21506:2024, 3.39]

3.17 outcome

result of change, typically affecting real-world behaviour and/or circumstances

NOTE 1 Outcomes are desired when a change is conceived. They are achieved as a result of the activities undertaken to effect the change.

NOTE 2 Outcomes can be change resulting from the use of the outputs from one or more projects as well as from unplanned emerging circumstances.

[SOURCE: BS 6079:2019, 3.14, modified – Note 2 inserted]

3.18 output

product (the tangible artefact or intangible product, such as new skills or knowledge) that is produced, constructed or created as a result of a planned activity

[SOURCE: BS 6079:2019, 3.15, modified – “specialist product” replaced by “product”; “of a project life cycle phase or of a project” deleted]

3.19 phase

division of the project life cycle (3.25) into manageable sets of activities

NOTE “Stage” is a commonly used alternative to “phase”. In this British Standard, there is no assumption regarding the use of the words “phase” or “stage” with respect to level in the work breakdown structure, for example, a stage is not assumed to be a sub-part of a phase or vice versa.

[SOURCE: BS 6079:2019, 3.16, modified – “such as conception, development, realization and termination” deleted]

3.20 plan

documented description of the objectives, outcomes (3.17) and outputs (3.18) that are to be achieved within defined constraints

NOTE 1 Constraints can include schedule, costs, benefits, risk, resources, emissions.

NOTE 2 A plan for a project includes all relevant constraints. A plan for an individual constraint is typically qualified to denote which constraint is referred to, e.g. “schedule plan” or “cost plan”.

NOTE 3 Once approved, a plan is denoted as a “baseline” (3.1).

3.21 portfolio

collection of portfolio components grouped together to facilitate their management to meet strategic objectives

NOTE A portfolio can include projects, programmes, portfolios or other related work.

[SOURCE: BS ISO 21506:2024, 3.46, modified – note added]

3.22 preventive action

action to eliminate the cause of a potential nonconformity or other potential undesirable situation

[SOURCE: BS ISO 21506:2024, 3.52, modified – note deleted]

3.23 programme

group of programme components managed in a coordinated way to realize benefits (3.2)

NOTE The components of a programme can include projects, programmes and other related work.

[SOURCE: BS ISO 21506:2024, 3.54, modified – note added]

3.24 project

temporary management environment, usually undertaken in phases (3.19), created to achieve one or more defined objectives

NOTE A project can be standalone or be within a portfolio or part of a programme.

[SOURCE: BS 6079:2019, 3.20, modified – “for the purpose of delivering one or more business outputs or outcomes” replaced by “to achieve one or more defined objectives” and in note “might” replaced by “can”, “or be” added]

3.25 project life cycle

defined set of phases (3.19) from the start to the end of a project (3.24)

NOTE An example project life cycle can be found in HM Government publication, GovS 002: Project delivery portfolio, programme and project management [1], where the following phases (3.19) are given: Feasibility, Appraisal, Definition, Delivery, Operation.

[SOURCE: BS ISO 21506:2024 3.64 modified – note added]