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Project management – Principles and guidance for the management of projects

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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 April 2019. It was prepared by Technical Committee MS/2, *Project management*. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

Supersession

This British Standard supersedes [BS 6079-1:2010](#), [BS 6079-2:2000](#), [BS 6079-3:2000](#) and PD 6079-4:2006, which are withdrawn.

Relationship with other publications

The principles and guidance in BS 6079 can be embodied in structured methods such as PRINCE2 [1], [2], other standards and in bodies of knowledge such as the *APM body of knowledge* [3].

Information about this document

This is a full revision of the standard, and introduces the following principal changes:

- formally recognizing the organizational context of projects through the introduction of the "higher level management" role and its associated activities; and
- the addition of activities relating to the requirements definition, design, development, verification and validation of a project's primary outputs.

This revision focuses on the importance of projects being driven by organizational needs, drawing on cross-functional teams of specialists in pursuit of the stated business objectives. To this effect, the current text includes a fully revised set of accountabilities and process models which explicitly differentiate the directing of a project, with a view to achieving the benefits, from managing a project, with a view to delivering the outputs.

Use of this document

As a guide, this British Standard takes the form of guidance and recommendations. It should not be quoted as if it were a specification or a code of practice and claims of compliance cannot be made to it.

Presentational conventions

The guidance in this standard is presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Any recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is "should".

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").

Contractual and legal considerations

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

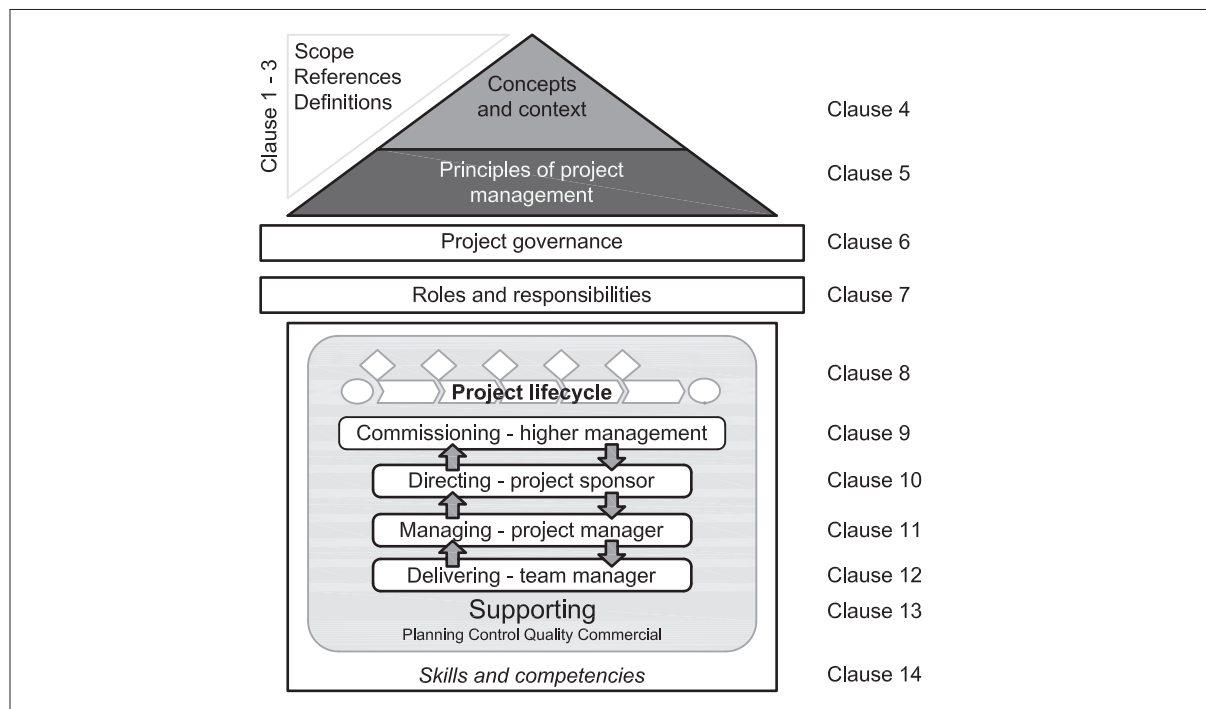
Introduction

This British Standard aims to help people achieve the desired outcome of a project efficiently and effectively and to support the improvement of organizational project management capability. The principles provided in this standard are relevant to projects of all sizes, complexity and duration, and their application is proportional to the circumstances and needs of the organization delivering them.

This British Standard draws attention to the management challenges and opportunities encountered in different project environments and presents possible approaches to these. The approaches presented are intended to be treated as guidance only; they might need to be tailored to suit the particular circumstances in which they are being used.

Without a focus on the required objectives, the full support of senior management for the project manager and team, and the appropriate choice and use of planning and control techniques, a project would usually fail to achieve the desired outcomes. [Figure 1](#) illustrates the structure of this British Standard, showing how each clause contributes to a full understanding and application of project management as a whole.

Figure 1 — Structure of this British Standard



1 Scope

This British Standard sets out principles and guidance for the commissioning, sponsoring, directing and managing of projects. It is relevant to all industry sectors in the public, private and voluntary domains, regardless of the size or type of the organization or project. It is intended that the application of this standard is proportional to the circumstances and needs of the particular organization.

This British Standard provides guidance to senior managers, project practitioners and those who interact with project teams, regardless of project management experience. This includes:

- managers in organizations that undertake projects;
- project sponsors;

- c) project managers;
- d) team managers and members;
- e) project support staff, including members of project management offices;
- f) business and technical specialists;
- g) educators and trainers; and
- h) those involved in business change and benefits management.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

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

3.1 acceptance criteria

performance requirements or essential conditions that are to be achieved before project deliverables are accepted

3.2 bar chart

chart on which activities and their durations are represented by lines drawn to a common time scale

NOTE A Gantt chart is a specific type of bar chart.

3.3 baseline

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

3.4 business case

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

[SOURCE: PD ISO/TR 21506:2018, 3.8]

3.5 change control

process through which all requests to change the baseline of a project, programme or portfolio are captured, evaluated and then approved, rejected or deferred

3.6 configuration

functional and physical characteristics of a product as defined in technical documents and achieved in the product

NOTE In a project this would contain all items that can be identified as being relevant to the project and that are only to be modified after authorization by the relevant manager.

3.7 contingency plan

alternative course(s) of action devised to cope with project risks

3.8 critical path

sequence of activities that determine the earliest possible completion date for the project or phase

[SOURCE: PD ISO/TR 21506:2018, 3.18]

3.9 earned value

value of completed work expressed in terms of the budget assigned to that work

NOTE Earned value is also known as budgeted cost of work performed.

[SOURCE: BS ISO 21508:2018, 3.1.5]

3.10 earned value management

method that integrates project or programme scope, actual cost, budget and schedule for assessment of progress and performance

[SOURCE: BS ISO 21508:2018, 3.1.6]

3.11 governance

principles, policies and framework by which an organization is directed and controlled

[SOURCE: PD ISO/TR 21506:2018, 3.25]

3.12 management plan

documented description of how a project, or aspect of a project, is to be managed, in terms of the approach, methods and processes to be used

NOTE Examples include risk management plan, configuration management plan, project management plan.

3.13 milestone

significant planned, or to be planned, point in a project, programme or portfolio

[SOURCE: PD ISO/TR 21506:2018, 3.34]

3.14 outcome

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

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

3.15 output

specialist product (the tangible or intangible artefact) that is produced, constructed or created as a result of a planned activity, of a project life cycle phase or of a project

3.16 phase

division of the project life cycle into manageable sets of activities, such as conception, development, realization and termination

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.

3.17 process

set of interrelated resources and activities which transform inputs into outputs

3.18 product breakdown structure

decomposition of the product into its components

[SOURCE: PD ISO/TR 21506:2018, 3.49]

3.19 programme

set of interrelated projects, sub-programmes and other specific programme activities managed in a co-ordinated way to realize benefits

3.20 project

temporary management environment, usually undertaken in phases, created for the purpose of delivering one or more business outputs or outcomes

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

3.21 project complexity

measure of how difficult it is for an organization to undertake a specific project

NOTE This can be absolute or relative. Absolute complexity relates to the inherent difficulty of a project, regardless of organizational capability. Relative complexity relates to a specific organization's capabilities.

3.22 project management

planning, monitoring and controlling all aspects of a project and the motivation of those involved in it to achieve the project's objectives

3.23 project plan

documented description of the activities, schedule, costs and resources through which the project's objectives are to be achieved

3.24 resource

any variable capable of definition (including people, finance and materials) that is required for the completion of an activity and might constrain the project

NOTE A resource could be non-storable, so that its availability has to be renewed for each time period (even if it was not used in previous time periods). A resource could also be storable so that it remains available unless depleted by usage. Such a resource might also be replenished by activities producing credited and storable resource.

3.25 risk

uncertain event or set of events with a potential positive or negative impact

[SOURCE: PD ISO/TR 21506:2018, 3.72]

3.26 sponsor

person accountable for directing the project to ensure that the outcomes are delivered and the benefits for the organization are realized

3.27 stakeholder

person, group or organization that has interests in, or can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by, any aspect of the project

[SOURCE: PD ISO/TR 21506:2018, 3.79, modified]

3.28 work breakdown structure

decomposition of the defined scope of the project into progressively lower levels consisting of elements of work

[SOURCE: PD ISO/TR 21506:2018, 3.87, modified]

3.29 work package

group of related activities and deliverables within a work breakdown structure with a defined scope, timescale, cost and a single person accountable for it

4 Concepts and context

4.1 Projects

4.1.1 What is a project?

Projects are a mechanism which can be used by organizations to change their day-to-day operational ("business as usual") activities, including creating new capability. They are the engines of change in an organization and all organizations undertake projects.

Projects are temporary management environments, usually undertaken in phases, created for the purpose of delivering one or more business outputs or outcomes. They:

- a) create or enable specific benefits, outcomes and/or outputs;
- b) have a finite duration with planned start and end dates;
- c) invariably have effects both inside and outside of the organization;
- d) are supported by an organization that is temporary and can sometimes change through the project life cycle;
- e) are undertaken in manageable steps (phases) to take account of risk and uncertainty;
- f) are seldom carried out in isolation, and can often interact with other projects and organizational entities; and
- g) are achieved within agreed assumptions, constraints and performance limits.

4.1.2 Why organizations undertake projects

The motives for changing an organization's operational activities are as varied as the range of organizations that exist and might include:

- a) strategic long-term business transformation;
- b) research and development (R&D);
- c) to develop or update products or services;
- d) to improve administrative or operational efficiency; and
- e) to respond to changing patterns of demand.

An organization might undertake a project for itself or might undertake the project for another organization as a supplier.

4.2 Project management

4.2.1 What is project management?

Project management comprises planning, monitoring and controlling all aspects of a project and the motivation of all those involved in it, to achieve the project's objectives.

4.2.2 The benefits of project management

Having a formalized approach for managing projects has been shown to increase the chances of project success by enabling organizations to:

- a) increase the likelihood of delivering the project's outputs and achieving the project's outcomes and, hence, organizational objectives;
- b) improve the predictability and consistency of project delivery;
- c) improve the certainty of delivering the project within the predicted budget;
- d) achieve value for money;
- e) use scarce resources more efficiently; and
- f) develop competence and capability to deliver change.

4.2.3 Key components of project management

Project management comprises four key components:

- a) project governance – the principles, policies and framework by which a project is directed and managed (see [Clause 6](#));
- b) project life cycle – the high-level set of steps for undertaking the project (see [Clause 8](#));
- c) project delivery approach – the way in which the project's outputs and outcomes are undertaken and delivered (see [4.5](#)); and
- d) project management activities – the day-to-day activities used to manage the project (see [4.6](#)).

Whilst the components of project management can be used on any type of project, if they are to be used efficiently and effectively they should be tailored and adapted to suit the particular circumstances of each organization and project being undertaken. This tailoring is influenced by the project context.

Smaller organizations characteristically undertake projects without recognizing them or having any formal way of managing projects. As organizations grow they typically start to recognize projects as different from other work and increasingly formalize project management (see [4.3.6](#) for information on project complexity, organizational capability and maturity).

4.3 Project context

4.3.1 Key aspects of the project context

The project context is the environment and circumstances in which a project is undertaken. It influences the choice of the most appropriate project governance, life cycle, management and delivery approaches to be used.

Project context is a combination of:

- a) the importance of the project to the organization;
- b) the role of the organization in the project;
- c) the operating model of the organization
- d) the relationship of the project to programmes and portfolios; and
- e) project complexity and organizational capability and maturity.

NOTE Project importance and project complexity are both significant factors in determining how to manage a project, but they are not the same. An important project which has far reaching significance for an organization might actually be very simple to undertake.

4.3.2 The importance of the project to the organization

The importance of the project to the organization typically drives decisions related to project governance, such as:

- a) the level of governance and scrutiny the project should be subjected to, especially in relation to decision making and assurance;
- b) the most appropriate people to be involved in the project in terms of direction, assurance, management and the delivery of the outputs and outcomes; and
- c) the degree to which the organization is willing to accept the risk of the project failing or not delivering its outputs and outcomes.

4.3.3 The role of the organization in the project

There are primarily two roles that an organization can take in a project, either as:

- a) the customer (or promoter) organization, to contribute to the achievement of its own objectives. The customer organization owns the need for change and can either deliver all of the change themselves, or contract some or all of the change to a supplier organization; or
- b) a supplier (or contracting) organization, to make money by providing a service to another organization in achieving its objectives through the delivery of a project.

The distinction between customer and supplier organizations is not always obvious, especially where a supplier organization both delivers and operates the outputs from the project, such as in an outsource arrangement.

The role of the organization on the project typically determines:

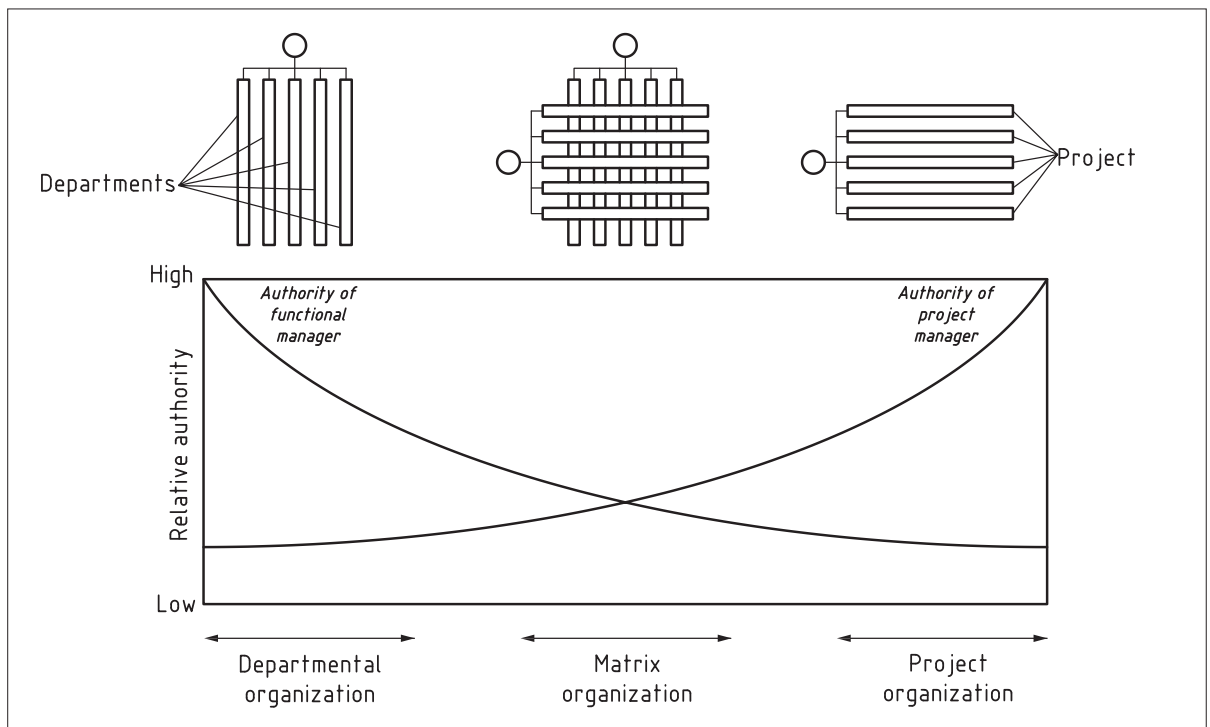
- 1) how project governance operates on both sides of, and across, a contractual boundary; the structure of the promoting organization's project management team; and the most appropriate people to be involved in the project; and
- 2) the working practices to be adopted in relation to the project life cycle, project management activities and project delivery approach. These might be adopted and tailored from either party's approaches or developed specifically for the project.

4.3.4 The operating model of the organization

Projects can be undertaken within organizations that already have the structures necessary to support project work. Such organizations might be oriented exclusively towards projects or, more commonly, might adopt a matrix structure, with accountability being assigned between the project team and the functional departments. Organizations which are set up solely on functional lines generally find the undertaking of project management ineffective and inefficient.

Departments are usually responsible for the quality of the deliverables and require clear scopes of work from the project manager (work packages). A commitment from the functional areas is usually needed concerning activity duration, costs and quality. Suppliers can be treated in the same way as an in-house function, except that relationships between the supplier and the project manager are defined in a formal contract.

Project management structures can be integrated with an organization's structure. In such cases, because of the unique nature of projects, project management needs a higher degree of flexibility than a more stable functional organization. [Figure 2](#) illustrates the primary forms of operating model and how the authority relationships change between them.

Figure 2 — *Authority relationships in organization structures*

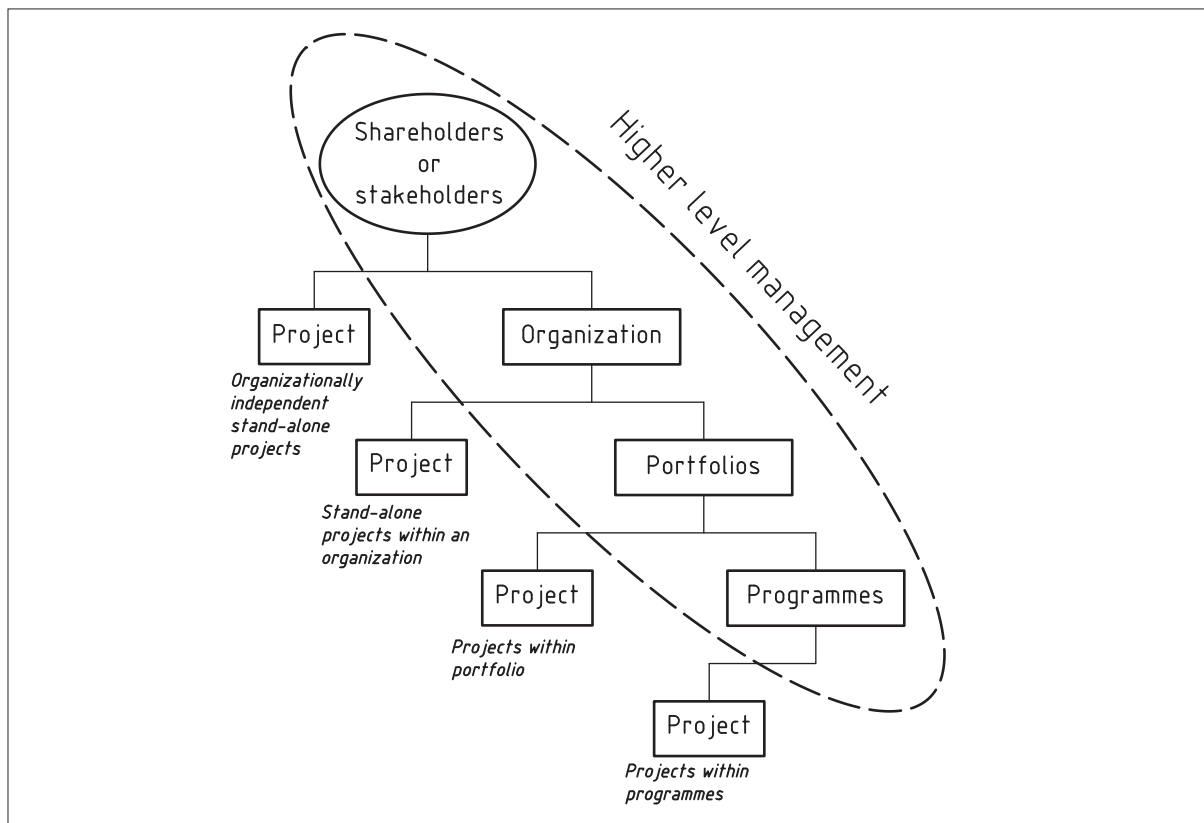
4.3.5 The relationship of the project to programmes and portfolios

As an organization undertakes more projects, those projects tend to become progressively more complex and interdependent. As a result, the organization might structure and co-ordinate its projects and other related work as programmes and portfolios.

A project might be standalone within the organization or in a separate legal entity, or part of a programme or portfolio as shown in [Figure 3](#).

The fundamentals of project management are the same in all situations, but what typically changes is:

- how project governance operates and, in particular, the level of reporting and level for decision making; and
- who defines the key components of project management.

Figure 3 — Showing projects in different contexts

4.3.6 Project complexity, organizational capability and maturity

Project complexity is a measure of how difficult it is for an organization to undertake a specific project. The more complex a project is for an organization, the less likely it is to deliver the intended outcomes and outputs.

Project complexity can be measured in relative terms or absolute terms. This British Standard uses the term “complex” for relative difficulty. For example, building a new airport terminal would be more complex for an organization with little relevant experience than for an organization that specializes in airport development.

The relative complexity of a project for a specific organization is driven by:

- experience: whether the organization has experience of similar projects and, if not, what aspects of the project make it new or innovative. For example, the project might involve new processes or technologies that the organization has little or no experience of; or the project might have experience of similar projects, but at a much smaller scale;
- capability and maturity: whether the skills, knowledge and tools needed to deliver the project are available to the organization; and
- uncertainty: whether there are actions that can be taken to reduce uncertainty, such as research and experimentation.

Project complexity primarily drives the degree and rigour of project governance. It also drives the degree to which the organization might need to depend on external suppliers to fill shortfalls in the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the project.

The more complex a project, the greater the inherent risk of not delivering the intended outputs and outcomes. The complexity of the project should be regularly assessed by the sponsor and project manager in order to ensure that action is taken to reduce project complexity when and

where possible. Furthermore, by assessing a portfolio of projects in terms of their complexity and significance, it enables the programme board, or higher authority, to critically examine projects in terms of their risk; enable them to be managed according to the organization's appetite for risk; and apply available resources and skills in the best way to deliver the outputs and outcomes. It also ensures that the organization's managers are aware of the most complex, and therefore risky, projects in their portfolio and ensures that appropriate assurance and management attention is applied. If applied consistently within an organization, it might also form part of the assessment prior to a "go/no go" or deferral decision at a project gate.

4.4 Project organization

Senior leaders should ensure that an appropriate project organization is in place to undertake the project. This project organization is temporary and depends on the size, scale, complexity and nature of the project. Projects, typically, cut across departmental and organizational boundaries.

The design and implementation of project organizations should take into account the informal aspects of project management, such as motivation and co-ordination of project staff as well as levels of interpersonal skills and behaviours.

Typical roles in a project organization and their responsibilities are set out in [Clause 7](#).

The network of teams working on a project can be designed to promote collaboration. Where members of two or more teams have to communicate continually in order to co-ordinate their activities, bringing them together in one group improves the efficiency of communication. This involves being collocated physically, or virtually through collaborative communication technologies. Other possible measures include the deployment of liaison representatives between teams and joint workshops.

4.5 Project delivery approaches

Whilst project management practices can be applied to any type of project, the type of project output and outcomes to be delivered influence the strategy and approach to undertaking work on specialist deliverables. Different types of output or outcome require different delivery approaches, which in turn might determine the most appropriate project life cycle to be used (see [Clause 8](#)) and the approach to project governance and project management activities.

The delivery approaches used for a project's outputs and outcomes should be defined in, or referenced from, the project's management plan. This reflects how requirements are determined, the solution defined, built and integrated into any existing environment, and how the solution and its requirements are verified and validated (see [Clause 12](#) and [13.3.3](#)).

For simple, single output projects, the delivery approach and project life cycle might be explicitly linked at a project level.

For projects with multiple outputs, the delivery approach would be applied for each work package, as different work packages might be using different delivery approaches.

NOTE Delivery approaches are commonly called methodologies or development methods.

4.6 Project management activities

4.6.1 General

The management of a project comprises activities to:

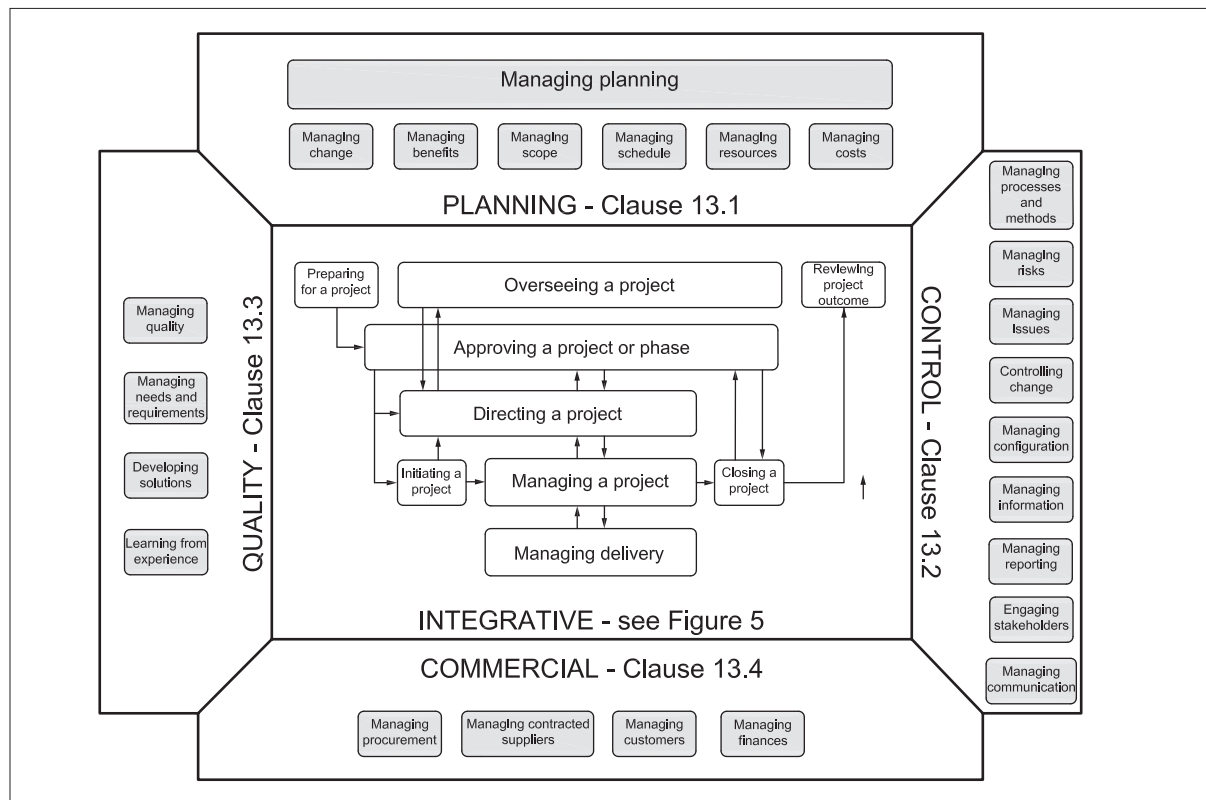
- a) manage the project through the project life cycle in a controlled manner, ensuring all aspects of the project are co-ordinated. These are referred to in this British Standard as "project integration activities" (see [4.6.2](#)); and

- b) ensure the consistent and predictable application of project management techniques, required as part of undertaking the integration activities, by the project team. These are referred to in this British Standard as “project support activities” (see 4.6.3).

Such activities are often defined in an organization as a set of processes, procedures or methods, which prescribe what needs to be done, by whom and how.

Figure 4 shows the project support activities (around the edge of the figure) which can be drawn on when undertaking any of the integration activities (in the centre of the figure).

Figure 4 — *Project integration and support activities*



4.6.2 Project integration activities

Integration activities provide co-ordination and control of the project's progress through the project life cycle and ensure the integration of the project's constituent parts.

The integration activities are described in detail in [Clause 9](#) to [Clause 12](#) and comprise:

- commissioning a project, comprising preparing for a project, overseeing a project, approving a project or phase within a project, and reviewing project outcomes (see [Clause 9](#));
- directing a project (see [Clause 10](#));
- managing a project, comprising initiating a project, managing a project, and closing a project (see [Clause 11](#)); and
- managing delivery (see [Clause 12](#)).

Figure 5 shows each of the project integration activities together with:

- the roles accountable for each activity;
- the interfaces and information flows between each activity (solid arrows); and
- example key deliverables from and to each activity (dotted arrows).

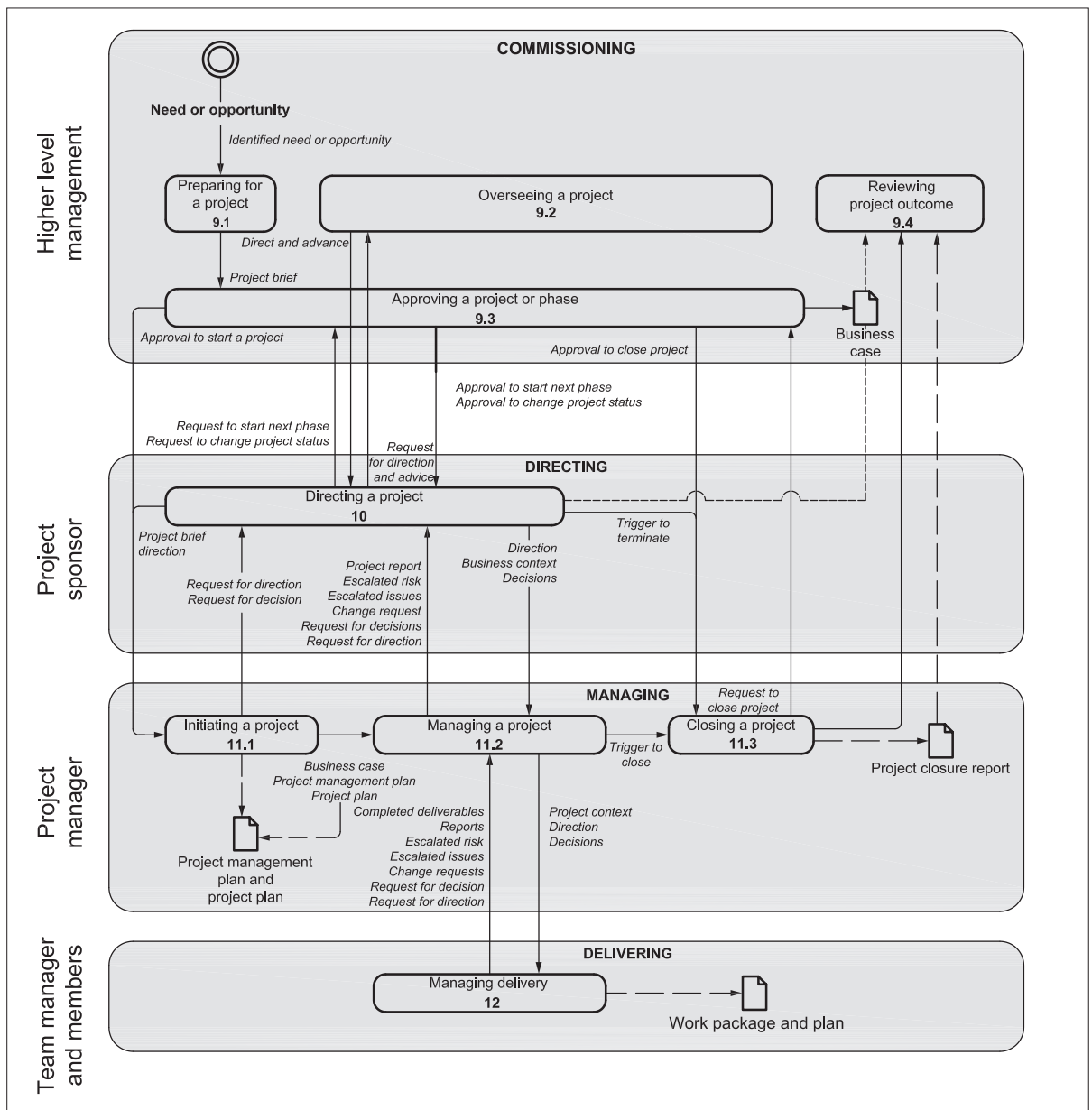
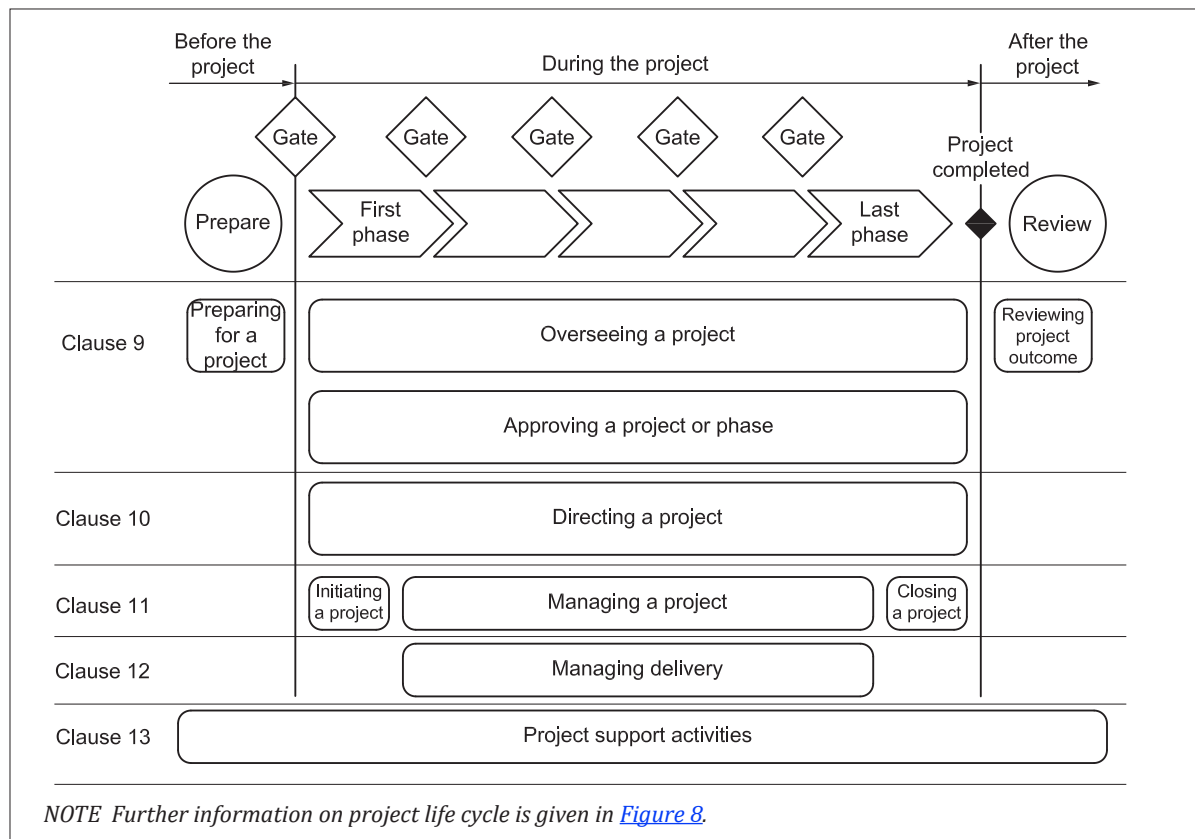
Figure 5 — The principal information flows between the project integration activities

Figure 6 shows the timing of the project integration and support activities in relation to the project life cycle.

Figure 6 — Project life cycle showing relationship to project integration activities



4.6.3 Project support activities

Support activities provide techniques and controls which have been shown to be effective in managing projects. In particular, they are employed as part of the control cycles used to manage the project on a day-to-day basis throughout the project life cycle.

Project support activities are described in detail in [Clause 13](#) and can be summarized as relating to:

- planning;
- control;
- quality; and
- commercial.

5 Principles of project management

5.1 Be driven by needs and benefits

Senior leaders in an organization should be able to demonstrate explicitly how each project they undertake contributes to their organization's strategy. Those projects which do not align with or contribute to the organization's strategy should be screened out as soon as possible.

Strategic fit ought to be assessable from the beginning when a project is proposed; organizations which have clearly communicated strategies are able to screen more effectively than those which don't. Without a clear strategy and effective screening of proposed projects, there is likely to be more

projects competing for scarce resources, resulting in the organization losing focus and jeopardizing its overall performance.

The validity, feasibility and viability of the project should be monitored, in terms of both progress to date and predictions of project outcome. The organization should be prepared to redirect or terminate a project if the project's objectives are not likely to be met.

5.2 Engage stakeholders throughout the project

There should be appropriate communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders throughout a project. The engagement of stakeholders, such as suppliers, users and customers, adds value in all phases of a project. Usually, the earlier stakeholders are engaged, the better the project's result. If a project is to be successful in terms of outcomes achieved and benefits realized, its outputs need to be acceptable to the stakeholders. Stakeholders might be those developing aspects of the project's outputs, future users of the outputs or those impacted by them, either during development or in operation or disposal. A solution is more likely to be acceptable if the project team understands the stakeholders' needs and viewpoints and takes them into account in the project plan and choice of solution. Engaging the stakeholders is a powerful mover for change, while ignoring them can lead to failure.

5.3 Having a single point of accountability is critical throughout the project

Single point accountability for a project is critical to its successful delivery. Projects are often too large and complex for a single individual to manage every aspect personally. For this reason, projects are broken into life cycle phases and work packages, which are the accountability of a named individual. Work packages can be further divided into smaller work packages and ultimately into individual activities. In practice, single point accountability means that every activity and work package at any level in the work breakdown structure should have a single person accountable for its delivery in order to ensure that:

- a) it is clear what is expected of each person;
- b) accountability is traceable throughout the project organization;
- c) overlaps are eliminated, as no deliverable can be delivered within two different work packages;
- d) where any gaps in accountability appear (e.g. due to loss of a team member), the next person up the breakdown structure is accountable to fill them; and
- e) if scope, cost or time prove to be inadequate to create the deliverables, it is clear who is accountable for raising these issues and who to escalate the issue to.

5.4 Promote collaborative working

Collaborative working should be promoted to ensure that all necessary work is co-ordinated and controlled. The need for many projects to draw on people from a range of organizations and departments within organizations means that a collaborative team approach is essential. Effective collaboration generally leads to better progress, more satisfactory results and fewer errors. Organizations which use projects as a management approach should have working practices which ensure lateral co-operation and communication across all functions and organizations involved, including partners, suppliers, customers and stakeholders. Governance and decision making should also be on a collaborative and cross-functional basis.

5.5 Governance and management should be appropriate and proportionate

In order for a project to remain viable, the effort and costs of undertaking governance and management should be appropriate and proportionate to the work being undertaken, risks involved

and benefits likely to be realized. Organizational approaches should be tailored in order to reduce the management effort, whilst maintaining rigorous control.

Project delivery organizations should have a common approach to directing and managing projects. This enables all members of the organization and their stakeholders to have a shared understanding of the overall approach and what is expected of them. If an organization has a standard project management approach, this should be tailored by the project manager, to suit the particular project and its context. Tailoring is not, however, a licence for ignoring standard methods. Tailoring should be undertaken within permitted limits or, if outside those limits, approved by an appropriate manager in a controlled way.

5.6 Experience and lessons should be captured, shared and applied

At the start of any project, those involved and key stakeholders should identify and apply relevant lessons from previous experience when planning the project. Throughout the project life cycle, lessons should be continually captured, evaluated and action should be taken to mitigate delivery risk and facilitate continual improvement of the final project deliverable. Where relevant, organizational project management approaches should be updated and these changes communicated to the wider organization to benefit other project teams.

5.7 Define working methods for specialist deliverables and outputs

In order to ensure the quality of the project's outputs, the methods through which a project's specialist outputs and outcomes are developed or achieved should be defined.

Due to the unique nature of projects there might be working methods and processes that need to be developed or defined to manage specialist deliverables such as special environments or facilities required. These working methods should be developed early in the project life cycle and improved as the project progresses.

5.8 Take a gated approach to projects

The outcome of a project is always uncertain and often requires investigative work to determine what outputs are required and whether different options for a solution are viable in business and technical terms. A gated approach should be taken by breaking the project into life cycle phases, each of which progressively adds to knowledge regarding the project and reduces risk. In this way, the amount of funding committed to the project is limited and only extended once continuation of the project into the next phase has been justified.

6 Project governance

6.1 What is project governance?

Project governance comprises the principles, policies, processes, methods and framework by which a project is directed and managed. It sets out the constraints within which those involved in the direction, management and implementation of projects should act and, as such, provides the empowerment, authority and oversight which is necessary for effective project management.

A governance framework should include the authority limits, decision-making roles and rules, degree of autonomy, assurance needs, reporting structure, accountabilities and responsibilities together with the appropriate management frameworks.

Project governance should be an integral part of, and align with, the governance of the organization within which the project is being undertaken.

NOTE Project governance can be defined in a project's management plan.

6.2 Aspects of project governance

6.2.1 General

Project governance influences the working methods and process, roles and responsibilities, reporting and contractual aspects of a project's management framework for those management activities covered in [Clause 9](#) to [Clause 13](#) covering the integrative and support activities.

6.2.2 Decision making

Decision making is critical to the success of projects. Ineffectual decision making has been shown to be a major factor in project failure. Authoritative decisions are needed for:

- a) indicating higher level management's continued commitment – or otherwise – to the business objectives and the means by which they are to be achieved;
- b) approval of the allocation of resources, particularly finance;
- c) timing of key project events;
- d) relationships with external organizations, including suppliers;
- e) changes to the project's organization structure; and
- f) acceptance or otherwise of changes to the project.

When making decisions, it should be clear:

- 1) who has the authority to make decisions and on which aspect of the project;
- 2) by when the decision needs to be made;
- 3) the organizational policies and other criteria against which the decision should be made;
- 4) who (which role, person or group) is accountable for the decision; and
- 5) which stakeholders and subject matter experts should be consulted to ensure that decision makers have reliable advice upon which to base their decisions.

Decisions should be:

- holistic, taking account of the external context, whole life of outputs (such as in life service, disposal) and negative impacts;
- phased, where possible, to take into account risk;
- communicated to the relevant stakeholders;
- appropriate to the level of authority of the decision-maker; and
- traceable through the project organization.

Decisions should be traceable throughout the project so that it is clear what primary decision any lower level decisions depend on and vice versa. For example, when a project manager, on receiving direction to start a phase from the project sponsor, authorizes a team manager to start the delivery of a work package.

Decisions can be conditional, in which case actions should be agreed on what is required to fulfil such conditions, including who is accountable and the timescale within which any conditions should be met.