



PM CONNECT

A quarterly newsletter that brings information on modern project management methods, practices and tools to the international development community

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1. The Challenges of Development Projects

Development projects operate in challenging environments, where uncertainties about the future increase the risk to the project. Managers need to deal with extremely complex social, economic, and political factors that affect the delivery of goods and services.

Development projects are implemented in some of the most remote and difficult locations in the world; additionally, projects operate in areas of high

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2. The Value of a Project Management Methodology

Project management processes, tools and techniques are used to coordinate resources to achieve consistent results in a predictable manner. Project management is a science in that it relies on proven and repeatable processes and techniques to achieve project success. It is an art because it also involves managing and relating to people and requires the project manager to apply intuitive skills in situations that are totally unique for each project.

A good project management methodology provides the framework, processes, guidelines and techniques to manage the people and achieve the project objectives. A good methodology increases the odds of project success and therefore provides value to the organization, the project, the donor and the beneficiaries.

The benefits from a standard project management methodology outweigh the effort organizations need to invest in order to implement one. The cost of developing and implementing a project management methodology are offset by:

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New articles posted on the PM4DEV website:

- **Scope Management**
- **Time Management**
- **Budget Management**
- **Quality Management**

We hope these resources can provide you with ideas and insight in how to improve your project management practices. PM4DEV will continue to work to increase the quantity of the resources available to meet the challenges development organizations face today.

... *The Value of Project Management, from page 1*

- **Completing projects effectively and efficiently.** Once the processes, procedures and templates are created, they can be used on all projects in the future. This results in reduced effort to start the project, a shorter learning curve for project team members and time and budget savings from not having to reinvent processes and templates from scratch on each project.
- **Better results through better planning.** Projects experience problems because there is a difference between what the donor expects and what the project delivers. Using a methodology gives the project, the donor and the beneficiaries an opportunity to ensure there is a mutual understanding on what the project aims to achieve.
- **Resolving problems more quickly.** Having a proactive issues management process helps ensure that problems are resolved as quickly as possible and reduces the time project managers spend dealing with issues
- **Resolving future risk before the problems occur.** A sound project management methodology includes processes that facilitates the identification of potential risks and the development of risk response plans before the problems actually occur.
- **Managing expectations with stakeholders more effectively.** A project management methodology focuses on the development of formal and informal communications, which results in improved understanding of the project objectives and approach among the different stakeholders
- **Improved financial management.** Occurs as the result of better project definition, better estimating, more formal budgeting and better tracking of the project actual costs against the budget.

Organizations that have good processes, and follow them, obtain better results in a consistent, repeatable and predictable manner.

... *The Challenges of Projects, from page 1*

personal risk and high security threats to project staff. The lack of proper infrastructure, limited resources, and a changing environment put a strain on project managers who need to deliver the project outcomes. The constant changes in the social, economic, political, and natural environment; force many projects to change its original plans; in fact, project plans are built on many assumptions that eventually are challenged by the changes in the environment.



Changes in the environment are not always reflected in the original design, which causes projects to miss significantly its ultimate objectives; this is why it is not uncommon to find a project that has delivered all its expected outputs but has failed significantly in reaching its objectives. From extensive observation and experimentation through working with development agencies for years, we have seen the following weaknesses in development projects:

- Poor project planning
- Inadequate management skills
- Lack of accountability
- Lack of stakeholder involvement
- Unrealistic plans
- No measure to evaluate quality
- Poor, inconsistent project management discipline
- Duplication of efforts
- Poor risk management strategies
- Unmotivated project staff

3. The Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)

The Project **Work Breakdown Structure** is an outcome oriented analysis of the work involved in the project and defines the total scope of the project. It is a foundation document in project management because it provides the basis for planning and managing the project schedule, budget and requests for changes. The WBS is developed in the form of an inverted tree structure, organized by objectives; it looks like an organizational chart which helps the project team visualize the whole project and all its main components.



The WBS is a hierarchy of all project work, it is a vertical breakdown, moving from the project goal to the tasks or subtasks. This decomposition process allows a good level of confidence in estimating the final project schedule and budget. It shows all the work that needs to be accomplished.

At the top level is the project ultimate goal, the second level contains the project objectives, the third level has the project activities and depending on the size and complexity of each activity the WBS may contain a fourth level that describe the tasks.

The size and complexity of a project will determine the number of levels a WBS needs. For some projects additional levels may be included to represent intermediate objectives. Other projects may choose to structure the WBS by the geographical locations the project will work or

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4. Managing Quality

Quality management is the process for ensuring that all project activities necessary to design, plan and implement a project are effective and efficient with respect to the purpose of the objective and its performance.

Project quality management (QM) is not a separate, independent process that occurs at the end of an activity to measure the level of quality of the output. It is not purchasing the most expensive material or services available on the market. Quality and grade are not the same, grade are characteristics of a material or service such as additional features. A product may be of good quality (no defects) and be of low grade (few or no extra features).

Quality management is a continuous process that starts and ends with the project. It is more about preventing and avoiding than measuring and fixing poor quality outputs. It is part of every project management processes from the moment the project initiates to the final steps in the project closure phase.

QM focuses on improving stakeholder's satisfaction through continuous and incremental improvements to processes, including removing unnecessary activities; it achieves that by the continuous improvement of the quality of material and services provided to the beneficiaries. It is not about finding and fixing errors after the fact, quality management is the continuous

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With the objective of serving the needs of the global development community, **PM4DEV**® was created to provide with expert project management consulting and training services based on a **customized** methodology that offers the tools and processes to plan, implement, and monitor projects in a more **consistent, reliable and predictable** manner. PM4DEV's methodology is based on a project management cycle that incorporates all the processes, tools and practices to **effectively** manage projects of all sizes. Organizations should have the ability to complete a project successfully by combining systems, techniques, and knowledge and controlling and balancing the constraints of time, cost, and scope in order to produce quality

**DOING THE RIGHT PROJECTS...
... DOING THE PROJECTS RIGHT**

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....Quality, from page 3

monitoring and application of quality processes in all aspects of the project.

Quality has been defined as "the totality of characteristics of an entity that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs." The stated and implied quality needs are the inputs used in defining project requirements from the donor and the beneficiaries. It means that the product or services must meet the intended objectives of the project and have a value to the donor and beneficiaries and that the beneficiaries can use the material or service as it was originally intended. The central focus of quality management is meeting or exceeding stakeholder's expectations and conforming to the project design and specifications.

The ultimate judge for quality is the beneficiary, and represents how close the project outputs and deliverables come to meeting the beneficiaries' requirements and expectations. How a beneficiary defines quality may be completely subjective, but there are many ways to make quality objective; by defining the individual characteristics and determine one or more metrics that can be collected to mirror the characteristic.

The main principle of project quality management is to ensure the project will meet or exceed stakeholder's needs and expectations. The project team must develop a good relationship with key stakeholders, specially the donor and the beneficiaries of the project, to understand what quality means to them. One of the causes for poor project evaluations is the project focuses only in meeting the written requirements for the main outputs and ignores other stakeholder needs and expectations for the project.

Quality must be viewed on an equal level with scope, schedule and budget. If a project donor is not satisfied with the quality of how the project is delivering the outcomes, the project team will need to make adjustments to scope, schedule and budget to satisfy the donor's needs and expectations. To deliver the project scope on time and on budget is not enough, to achieve stakeholder satisfaction the project must develop a good working relationship with all stakeholders and understand their stated or implied needs.

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group the objectives by the communities participating in the project.

The Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) is an important planning tool used to define a project in terms of its outputs while providing a method for breaking these deliverables into meaningful work units. The WBS allows the project manager to clearly describe the hierarchical nature of the work to be performed and establishes a foundation for other elements of the project planning documents including the project's resource plan, budget, implementation plan, and project schedule.

With the WBS, the project manager will be able describe the outcomes of a project in a way that is clear to the project team, while at the same time capturing the order and sequence of the work necessary to produce those outputs. The WBS provides a means for carefully detailing the outputs of the project and facilitates the identification of specific the work elements, and groupings required to deliver each element.

The points of view provides a summary of themes, that in PM4DEV's experience, have proved critical in the successful implementation of project management methodologies. It draws on the expertise of Project management professionals and provides a guide to deliver a methodology that increases the chances of project success. For more information about PM4DEV services, contact our customer relations director:

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