13 Documentation

Project management documentation provides both a record of decisions and a means of documenting assumptions on which these decisions are based. Creating the documents also can help the Project Team focus on the tasks required at a particular stage in a project and should not be viewed as superfluous to the project. Such documentation is usually generated by the Project Manager and Team, and approved by the Project Steering Committee. It is important to remember that it is the project processes that are the focus - documentation is not an end in itself.

This section of the *Tasmanian Government Project Management Guidelines* includes:

- Levels of documentation - corporate, business and project
- Description of documents - the purpose of each of the commonly used project planning and management documents

13.1 Levels of Documentation

The approach advocated in these Guidelines uses three levels of documentation:

- A **corporate level** at which the Steering Committee takes ownership of, and responsibility for, a *Project Business Plan* - other documentation included at this level is a *Feasibility Report* and/or a *Business Case,* and any project funding submissions to senior management
- A **business level** at which the manager of the Business Unit (the Business Owner(s)) takes responsibility for an *Outcome/Benefits Realisation Plan* and other documentation required to support the testing, training and use of the project outputs to achieve required outcomes/benefits
- A **project level** at which the Project Manager and Team take responsibility for the development of a *Project Execution Plan* and various other project documents used to produce the outputs/deliverables

The full set of project documentation defined in these Guidelines can be a heavy load for a small project. However, small projects also demand a certain level of documentation. The Project Manager should consider which documents are required, based on decisions regarding the project size, and look at using scaled-down versions for small projects.

13.2 Description of Documents

The following commonly used project planning and management documents are described in the sections below:

- **Major Documents** (describe the management and direction of the project)
- **Other Documents**
- **Proformas** (assist in the management of the project; for example, the *Issues Register* is used to help manage any project issues)

13.2.1 Major Documents

- Project Proposal
- Business Case
- Project Business Plan
- Project Execution Plan
- Outcome/Benefits Realisation Plan
- Project Closure Report
- Project Review and Closure Report
- Project Phase Review
- Project Review and Evaluation Report

13.2.2 Other Documents

- Business Needs Analysis
- Project Brief
- Feasibility Study/Report
- Risk Management Plan
- Stakeholder Management Plan
- Organisational Change Management Plan
- Implementation Plan
- Communication Strategy/Plan
- Marketing Plan
- Training Strategy
- Handover Plan

13.2.3 Proformas

- Project Status Report
- Risk Register
- Issues Register

These templates are available on this website.

Major Documents

Project Proposal

The *Project Proposal* is usually the first document outlining what change is proposed. It introduces the project, providing sufficient information for a decision to be made as to whether it should proceed to the next step, eg preparation of a *Business Case.*

It is the document that converts an idea or policy into a proposal for a project, and contains basic details of the project's aims and the resources required, as a minimum, for the next step to be implemented.

It converts an idea or policy into the details of a potential project, including the outcomes, outputs, major risks, costs and stakeholders.

It expands the initial concepts, in order to:

- Provide broad details of the objectives, outcomes, outputs, scope, budget (costs), milestones, major risks, stakeholders, related projects of the initiative and an estimate of the resourcing and time required
- Define the guidelines/standards to be applied throughout the initiative
- Gain authorisation to proceed to the next step of the initiative

Business Case

The *Business Case* is a one-off, start-up document containing basic project details of what the objectives are, as well as exploring options and listing the required resources.

It is used by senior management to assess the justification of a proposed project, or to assess the development options for a project that has already received funding, and also to obtain approval, including resourcing.

If approved, it confirms senior management support and/or funding for a recommended course of action. For major project initiatives, it may also be used to support a submission to Cabinet and/or its Budget sub-Committee.

The project begins once the *Business Case* and associated funding has been approved.

Project Business Plan

The *Project Business Plan* is the high-level management document for the project. It is owned, maintained and utilised by the project's Steering Committee to ensure the delivery of defined project outcomes/benefits.

Once approval is given for the project to proceed, the *Business Case* can be used as the basis for preparation of a *Project Business Plan*. This plan enables the Project Sponsor/Steering Committee to monitor effectively the project from start to finish. It also identifies the project outputs and outcomes/benefits. It provides an overview of all the project components, and describes the roles and responsibilities of each of the parties.

As a complex project proceeds from milestone to milestone, the *Project Business Plan* will need periodic formal review, even re-creation, to document the changed conditions or objectives.

The Steering Committee may require the Project Manager or Project Team member to maintain the *Project Business Plan* on their behalf.

Project Execution Plan

The *Project Execution Plan* is the ‘road map’ used by the Project Team to deliver the agreed project outputs, and it outlines the responsibilities of the Project Team and stakeholders.

It expands the *Project Business Plan* by specifying operational (day-to-day) management procedures and control plans, including:

- Detailed project plans
- Resource schedules
- Quality procedures
- Output purchasing and development plans
- Risk management plan
- Project budgets

A *Project Execution Plan* will need periodic review and updating by the Project Manager. Appropriate support within the Project Team is required to administer this plan.

Outcome/ Benefits Realisation Plan

The *Outcome/Benefits Realisation Plan* is used to support the organisational change management process required for effective utilisation of the agreed project outputs by the Project Customers. It assists in ensuring the achievement of the project outcomes/benefits described in the *Project Business Plan*.

It describes how the project outputs will be maintained by the Business Unit(s) in order for the outcomes/benefits of the project to be realised, and contains the project outcomes/benefits and how they are to be utilised and measured. It may also include how outputs will be managed after the project closes.

The Business Owner(s) is responsible for creating and updating the *Outcome/Benefits Realisation Plan,* and for reporting on progress toward the achievement of the outcomes/benefits to senior management and the Steering Committee or its nominee.

Project Closure Report

A *Project Closure Report* is best suited to large and/or complex projects. It is a useful tool to assist a Project Sponsor and/or Steering Committee to ‘tidy up’ any loose ends and formally close the project. It represents the formal ‘ending’ or termination of a project, and may follow on from a *Project Phase Review Report* or a *Project Review and Evaluation Report.*

Its purpose is to provide confirmation that outputs have been delivered and project documentation has been completed, as well as including any outstanding issues with recommendations on how they should be resolved. Effectively, it is the final Project Manager’s *Status Report.*

The Project Manager usually completes a *Project Closure Report* in time for the final Steering Committee meeting. Statements from the relevant Business Owner(s), confirming that the project outputs have been formally accepted, implemented and any required training completed, can support the *Project Closure Report*.

Where the Business Owner(s) is responsible for reporting progress towards the achievement of the longer-term Target Outcomes, the details should include how the measurement and reporting are to be undertaken.

Project Review and Closure Report

The *Project Review and Closure Report* is ideal for capturing lessons learnt from small projects and formally closing the project, including a 'tidy up' of any loose ends. Its purpose is to assess the success of the project, inform future projects, provide confirmation that outputs have been delivered and that project documentation has been completed.

The Project Manager usually completes it in time for the final Steering Committee meeting. It provides confirmation that project documentation has been completed, that outputs have been delivered and accepted by the Business Owner(s) and the Target Outcomes have been or are being generated, as well as including any outstanding issues with recommendations on how they should be resolved. Effectively, it is a final Project Manager's *Status Report*.

A *Project Review and Closure Report* can also be used for a large and/or complex project if a detailed review is not being undertaken.

Project Phase Review Report

For large and/or complex projects, for which a phased approach has been adopted, a *Project Phase Review Report* is appropriate:

- At the end of a phase, to provide an assessment of how successful the phase was in meeting its targets, including delivery of the assigned outputs, before seeking approval to proceed to the next phase. The Project Manager or Project Team member could undertake the review, as long as they remained objective.
- At any time during a phase, to provide an assessment of the progress of the project, where the Project Sponsor or Steering Committee are seeking to make an informal judgement on the need to 'stop' a project. This type of phase review should be undertaken by an independent person (ie not the Project Manager or Project Team member).

Project Review and Evaluation Report

A *Project Review and Evaluation Report* is best suited to large and/or complex projects. Its main purpose is to verify that the project has been completed successfully, with the assigned outputs delivered (*Post-implementation*).

It contains an analysis of how successful or not the project was in delivering its outputs and generating the targeted outcomes/benefits, as well as including such things as lessons learnt, time taken and budget spent. It is usually prepared at the completion of a project, once the outputs have been accepted and handed over to the Business Owner(s), and the Target Outcomes can be measured.

It can also be a useful tool, at any stage of a project, to report to the Project Sponsor and/or Steering Committee an assessment of the progress of the project, including any shortcomings in the project's activities, thus enabling timely action to address any deficiencies discovered through the review process. It may also be used is these circumstances to make an informed decision about closing the project, providing validation of a decision to 'stop' the project, as well as capture the lessons learnt for the future.

This type of project review should be conducted by an independent person (ie not the Project Manager or Project Team member).

Other Documents

Business Needs Analysis

A *Business Needs Analysis* identifies the business processes that will be influenced by, or have influence on, the outputs produced by the project, and matches them against the organisational business needs.

It is a mapping of the business processes, accompanied by a description, either as part of the initial analysis prior to the approval of the project or during the project.

It is prepared by a suitably skilled Project Officer or consultant, owned by the Project Sponsor and approved by the Steering Committee.

Project Brief

A *Project Brief* outlines what is to occur in the Initiation Phase of a project. Where a project is being completed that may form part of a larger project, eg a project to develop a *Business Case*, or where an output is to be delivered from this initial phase, the brief's purpose is to document how the project or its activities are going to be managed.

The Project Manager prepares it once the project has been approved by the Steering Committee and is owned by the Project Sponsor.

Feasibility Study/Report

The Feasibility Study phase for a project is optional, but recommended.

The purpose of a Feasibility Study is to assess the viability of a potential project. A *Feasibility Report*, developed from the Feasibility Study, is presented to senior management to determine whether the project has sufficient merit to continue into more detailed phases.

The results of this phase are used to support the development of the *Business Case*. In most instances, the result of a Feasibility Study is the development of a *Business Case*.

A Project Officer prepares the report, which is owned by the Project Sponsor and approved by the Steering Committee.

Risk Management Plan

A *Risk Management Plan* describes how risks are to be managed in the project. It contains details of the processes to manage risks; for example, the risk review frequency and process of review, responsibilities and accountabilities.

It is prepared and maintained by the Project Manager once the project has been approved and resources allocated. It is owned by the Project Sponsor and approved by the Steering Committee.

For large projects, it may be a separate document; for small to medium projects, the *Risk Management Plan* can be detailed in the *Project Business Plan*.

Stakeholder Management Plan

A *Stakeholder Management Plan* is a listing of the stakeholders of the project, how they are to be engaged and what actions are being undertaken to communicate with them. Its purpose is to ensure all stakeholders who are affected by, or who may affect the project, are managed to maximise their positive impact and minimise their negative impact.

The Project Manager, with input and assistance from the Project Team, prepares it once the *Project Business Plan* has been approved. It is owned by the Project Sponsor and approved by the Steering Committee.

For large projects, it may be a separate document; for small to medium projects, the *Stakeholder Management Plan* can be detailed in the *Project Business Plan*.

Organisational Change Management Plan

An *Organisational Change Management Plan* is a plan to manage change within the organisation(s) required to realise the project's outcomes/benefits. Its purpose is to manage the requirements for organisational change, by identifying the changes, and when and how they are to be implemented, to implement successfully the outputs and achieve the desired outcomes/benefits.

The Project Manager, with input and assistance from the Project Team and Business Owner(s), prepares it once the *Project Business Plan* has been approved. It is owned by the Project Sponsor and approved by the Steering Committee. In some circumstances it can be documented as part of the *Outcome/Benefits Realisation Plan*.

Implementation Plan

An *Implementation Plan* documents the implementation of the project outputs, to enable the implementation of the outputs to be managed successfully. It contains details on what, how, when, who etc are required to utilise the outputs.

The Project Manager, with input and assistance from the Project Team, prepares this plan once the *Project Business Plan* has been approved. It is owned by the Project Sponsor and approved by the Steering Committee, and may be included as part of the *Outcome/Benefits Realisation Plan*.

Communication Strategy/Plan

A *Communication Strategy/Plan* details the communication methods and tools for the project, to ensure all stakeholders are engaged and to maximise support for the project. It contains a list of all stakeholders and what communication strategies will be undertaken.

The Project Manager, with input and assistance from the Project Team, prepares it once the *Project Business Plan* has been approved. It is owned by the Project Sponsor and approved by the Steering Committee. In some circumstances it can form part of the *Stakeholder Management Plan.*

Marketing Plan

A *Marketing Plan* is similar to the *Communication Plan,* but for a general audience. Its purpose is to 'sell' the project, and contains details of stakeholder groups and how they will be influenced through the project's communication strategies.

The Project Manager, with input and assistance from the Project Team, prepares it once the *Project Business Plan* has been approved. It is owned by the Project Sponsor and approved by the Steering Committee. In some circumstances it can form part of the *Stakeholder Management Plan.*

Training Strategy A *Training Strategy* details the training of the users of the project outputs. Its purpose is to enable the business users to acquire the requisite skills to utilise the project outputs, and contains details on the training requirements for the various user groups and how and when that training is to be conducted.

The Project Manager, with input and assistance from the Project Team, prepares it once the *Project Business Plan* has been approved. It is owned by the Project Sponsor and approved by the Steering Committee. In some circumstances it can form part of the *Outcome/Benefits Realisation Plan.*

Handover Plan A *Handover Plan* details the requirements for handover of the project outputs. Its purpose is to ensure that all outputs are successfully handed over to the Business Owner(s), and contains details of all the outputs, when they will be handed over and the requirements for those outputs to be utilised.

The Project Manager, with input and assistance from the Project Team, prepares it once the *Project Business Plan* has been approved. It is owned by the Project Sponsor and approved by the Steering Committee. It can form part of the *Outcome/Benefits Realisation Plan*.

Proformas

Project Status Reports The purpose of status reporting is to report to appropriate people on actual progress against planned progress. Status reports should:

- Be concise
- Report progress to date
- List the next steps to be completed
- Identify issues of concern

They should include reporting against the performance measurements for the project, identifying both successes and failures, and contain details on progress against milestones, the current status of risks, issues, budget and recommendations. These reports should be communicated to members of the Project Team, management and other interested parties, as appropriate. The Project Manager prepares the reports prior to Steering Committee meetings.

Risk Register The *Risk Register* is a listing of all risks and their current status, including how those risks are being managed. Its purpose is to document and track the management of the risks associated with the project.

The Project Manager, with input and assistance from the Project Team, prepares it, and should be updated fortnightly, or at least monthly, to reflect any changes in the risk status. This document should be maintained separately to the *Project Business Plan.*

Issues Register The *Issues Register* is a listing of all issues associated with the project, including details of how these issues are being managed and their current status. Its purpose is to document and monitor the issues associated with the project.

The Project Manager, with input and assistance from the Project Team, prepares it as an internal working document. Issues that are brought to the attention of the Steering Committee for consideration are escalating into risks, and consideration should be given to adding them to the *Risk Register*.

Tips from Project Managers

At Project Management Forums, participants made the following suggestions concerning documentation:

- Canvas all stakeholders for input during document production
- Ensure independent review
- Don't swamp stakeholders with too much documentation at any one time
- Documents are only one mechanism by which to communicate with Stakeholders
- Obtain agreement with the Steering Committee as to what documentation is required by them
- Assign responsibility for development, acceptance and maintenance of documents
- Don't assume the Project Manager has responsibility for all documentation
- Documents can provide a knowledge base for future projects
- State the purpose/intention of each document - ask yourself what would happen if you did not have this document
- The minimum required documents for a project are a *Project Business Plan* and a *Project Execution Plan*
- Establish a baseline for monitoring and reporting purposes
- Formally document decisions and actions from meetings
- Clearly define and agree on project governance
- Ensure the process for issues management is defined
- Establish a consistent structure and approach for status reporting
- Minimum reporting to the Steering Committee includes:
    - Milestones
    - Risks
    - Issues
    - Budget
- Ensure that there are resources and time scheduled in the *Project Business Plan* to develop, review and maintain documents.