2 PROJECT INITIATION

Purpose

The purpose of Project Initiation is to begin to define the overall parameters of a project and establish the appropriate project management and quality environment required to complete the project.

Development of the Project Charter is a pivotal starting point for the project, establishing the project definition that will serve as the foundation for all future efforts. The completion of this process is marked by the Project Kick-off Meeting, in which the Project Manager presents the Project Charter.

Successful projects begin with a detailed project definition that is _understood and accepted_ by Stakeholders. Putting everything down in writing helps ensure a commitment among Project Team members and between the team and the Stakeholders. As part of Project Initiation, an initial Project Plan is developed, which comprises the Project Charter, Cost/Scope/Schedule/Quality (CSSQ) documents, and preliminary risk identification list. These documents, once approved, ensure a consistent understanding of the project, help to set expectations, and identify resources necessary to move the project to the next level of detailed planning. Potential problems are identified so that they can be addressed early in the project.

Also during Project Initiation, a high-level Project Schedule is developed as the roadmap to more detailed Project Planning and Project Execution and Control. This high-level schedule will be refined over time, and will serve as the primary source of information regarding project status and progress. An accurate, realistic, and complete schedule, rigorously maintained, is essential to the success of a project.

Sponsorship of the project must be confirmed or gained during Project Initiation. Having a Project Sponsor, and securing approval early in the project management lifecycle, helps to ensure a commitment to the project.
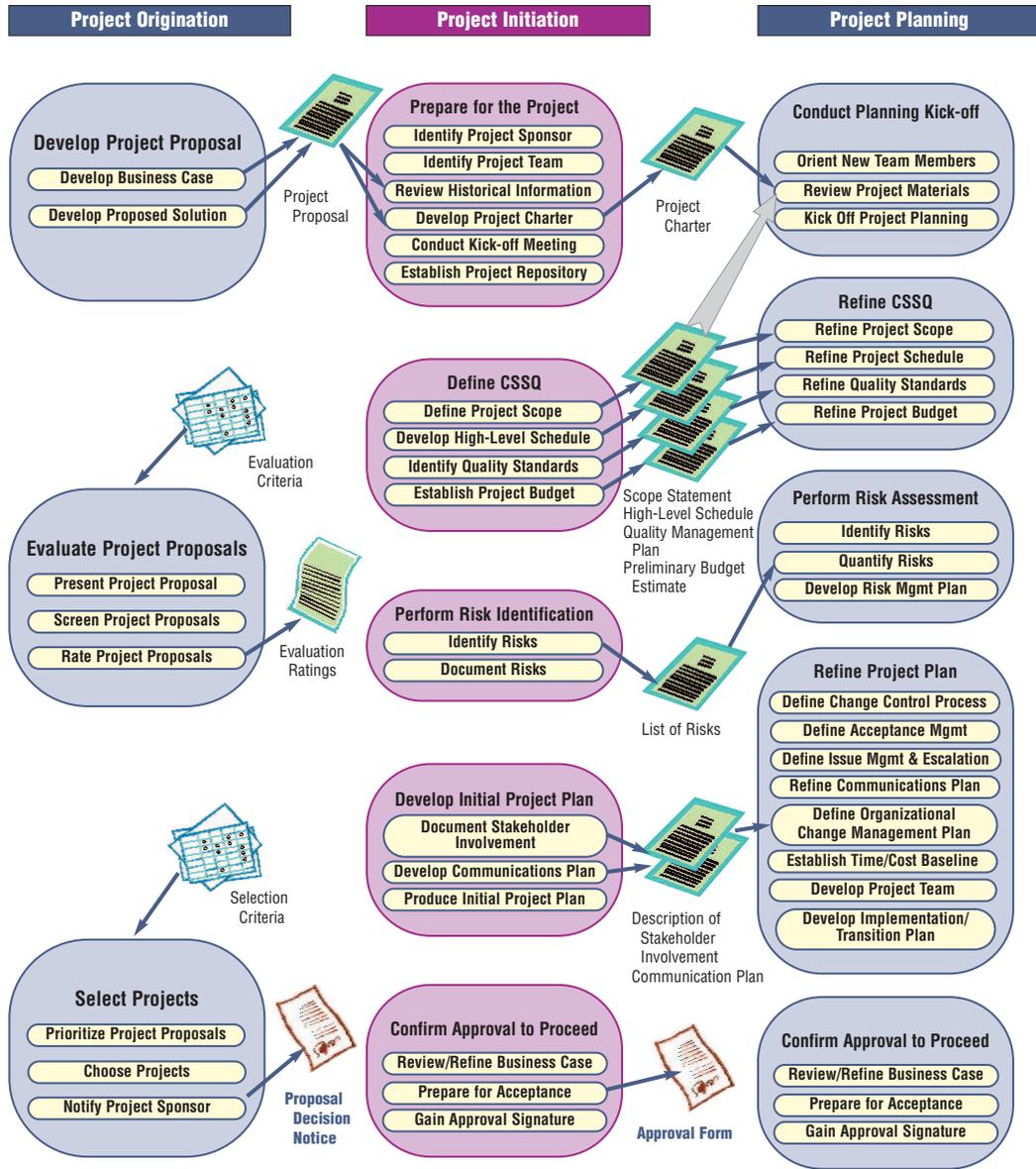
List of Processes

This phase consists of the following processes:

◆ **Prepare for the Project,** where the Project Sponsor and initial Project Team are identified and work with the Project Manager to create the Project Charter.

◆ **Define Cost/Scope/Schedule/Quality (CSSQ),** where the Project Manager, along with the Project Team define the scope of the project and identify the preliminary budget, high-level schedule and quality standards to complete the project.

◆ **Perform Risk Identification,** where the Project Manager and Project Team begin to identify and document any risks associated with the project.

◆ **Develop Initial Project Plan,** where the Project Manager and Project Team identify all Stakeholders and document their involvement in the project, develop means of communicating with them, and compile all documentation created during Project Initiation to produce the Initial Project Plan.

◆ **Confirm Approval to Proceed to Next Phase,** where the Project Manager reviews and refines the Business Case, secures resources required for Project Planning and prepares the formal acceptance package for review and approval by the Project Sponsor.

The following chart illustrates all of the processes and deliverables of this phase in the context of the project management lifecycle.

Figure 2-1

Project Origination

Develop Project Proposal
- Develop Business Case
- Develop Proposed Solution

Project Proposal

Evaluate Project Proposals
- Present Project Proposal
- Screen Project Proposals
- Rate Project Proposals

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Ratings

Select Projects
- Prioritize Project Proposals
- Choose Projects
- Notify Project Sponsor

Selection Criteria

Proposal Decision Notice

Project Initiation

Prepare for the Project
- Identify Project Sponsor
- Identify Project Team
- Review Historical Information
- Develop Project Charter
- Conduct Kick-off Meeting
- Establish Project Repository

Project Charter

Define CSSQ
- Define Project Scope
- Develop High-Level Schedule
- Identify Quality Standards
- Establish Project Budget

Scope Statement
High-Level Schedule
Quality Management Plan
Preliminary Budget Estimate

Perform Risk Identification
- Identify Risks
- Document Risks

List of Risks

Develop Initial Project Plan
- Document Stakeholder Involvement
- Develop Communications Plan
- Produce Initial Project Plan

Description of Stakeholder Involvement
Communication Plan

Confirm Approval to Proceed
- Review/Refine Business Case
- Prepare for Acceptance
- Gain Approval Signature

Approval Form

Project Planning

Conduct Planning Kick-off
- Orient New Team Members
- Review Project Materials
- Kick Off Project Planning

Refine CSSQ
- Refine Project Scope
- Refine Project Schedule
- Refine Quality Standards
- Refine Project Budget

Perform Risk Assessment
- Identify Risks
- Quantify Risks
- Develop Risk Mgmt Plan

Refine Project Plan
- Define Change Control Process
- Define Acceptance Mgmt
- Define Issue Mgmt & Escalation
- Refine Communications Plan
- Define Organizational Change Management Plan
- Establish Time/Cost Baseline
- Develop Project Team
- Develop Implementation/ Transition Plan

Confirm Approval to Proceed
- Review/Refine Business Case
- Prepare for Acceptance
- Gain Approval Signature

List of Roles

The following roles are involved in carrying out the processes of this phase. Descriptions of these roles can be found in the Section I Introduction.

◆ Project Manager

◆ Project Sponsor

◆ Project Team Members

◆ Customer

◆ Customer Representatives

◆ Stakeholders

◆ Performing Organization

List of Deliverables

Project deliverables for this phase fall into three categories of importance and formality:

◆ **Phase deliverables** – major deliverables approved by the Project Sponsor or a designated alternate that allows the project to proceed to the next phase.

◆ **Process deliverables** – drafts of major deliverables or minor deliverables that may or may not require a formal sign-off but nevertheless must be reviewed by Project Team members, Customer Decision-Makers, and the Project Sponsor. The review validates the project's progress, and allows the Project Manager to move on to the next process in confidence.

◆ **Task deliverables** – drafts of process deliverables or works-in-progress that are verified within the Project Team, and may or may not be reviewed by the Project Sponsor or Customer Representatives. Each task culminates with the production of one or more tangible deliverables, which allows the Project Manager to monitor project progress using concrete and real results.

Figure 2-2 lists all Project Initiation tasks and their outcomes and deliverables.

Figure 2-2

Processes	Tasks	Task Deliverables *(Outcomes)*
Prepare for the Project	Identify Project Sponsor	*Project Sponsor*
	Identify Initial Project Team	*Project Team*
	Review Historical Information	*Information Reviewed*
	Develop Project Charter	Project Charter
	Conduct Project Kick-off Meeting	Kick-off Meeting
	Establish Project Repository	Project Repository
Define CSSQ	Define Project Scope	Scope Statement
	Develop High-Level Schedule	High-level Project Schedule
	Identify Quality Standards	Quality Management Plan
	Establish Project Budget	Preliminary Budget Estimate
Perform Risk Identification	Identify Risks	Risks and Impacts
	Document Risks	List of Risks
Develop Initial Project Plan	Identify and Document Stakeholders' Involvement	Description of Stakeholder Involvement
	Develop Communications Plan	Communications Plan
	Compile All Information to Produce the Initial Project Plan	Initial Project Plan
Confirm Approval to Proceed to Next Phase	Review/Refine Business Case	Refined Business Case
	Prepare Formal Acceptance Package	Approval Form
	Gain Approval Signature from Project Sponsor	Signed Approval Form

Figure 2-3 illustrates the evolution of deliverables from task through process to phase output.

Figure 2-3

Evolution of Project Initiation Deliverables

Prepare for the Project
- Identify Project Sponsor
- Identify Project Team
- Review Historical Information
- Develop Project Charter
- Conduct Kick-off Meeting
- Establish Project Repository

Project Charter

CSSQ:

Define CSSQ
- Define Project Scope
- Develop High-Level Schedule
- Identify Quality Standards
- Establish Project Budget

Scope Statement
High-Level Schedule
Quality Management Plan
Preliminary Budget
  Estimate

Perform Risk Identification
- Identify Risks
- Document Risks

List of Risks

Develop Initial Project Plan
- Document Stakeholder Involvement
- Develop Communications Plan
- Produce Initial Project Plan

Description of Stakeholder
 Involvement
Communications Plan

Initial Project Plan

Confirm Approval to Proceed
- Review/Refine Business Case
- Prepare for Acceptance
- Gain Approval Signature

Approval Form

2.1 PREPARE FOR THE PROJECT

Purpose

After formal project approval, the project is assigned to a Project Team whose first responsibility is to **Prepare for the Project**. The Project Manager must work to ensure that the Performing Organization's expectations and all available project information are effectively conveyed to the Project Team. This can be done collaboratively with the Performing Organization's management team.

Roles

● **Project Manager**
● **Project Sponsor**
● **Project Team Members**
● **Stakeholders**

Tasks

2.1.1 Identify the Project Sponsor

If a Project Sponsor has not been identified, the Project Manager must work with Performing Organization management to identify and formally appoint someone to that position. Because the Project Sponsor will champion the project within the organization, secure spending authority and resources, and provide support to the Project Manager, it is imperative that he/she be identified as early in the project management lifecycle as possible. Building the relationship between the Project Manager and the Project Sponsor is critical to project success.

2.1.2 Identify the Initial Project Team

The extent to which the Project Team has been defined at this point may vary. At a minimum the manager for the project and certain individuals who can provide support in preparing for the project should be identified.

The tasks to Prepare for the Project are:

2.1.1 Identify the Project Sponsor
2.1.2 Identify the Initial Project Team
2.1.3 Review Historical Information
2.1.4 Develop the Project Charter
2.1.5 Conduct Project Kick-Off Meeting
2.1.6 Establish the Project Repository

During Project Origination, a Project Proposal was created. During Project Initiation, the Proposal is reviewed to determine the roles required to staff the project. With the help of appropriate Stakeholders, the Project Sponsor should take the lead in identifying the names of individuals within the Performing Organization who could fill the roles and become Project Team

members. Names of the individuals needed to complete Project Initiation tasks will be documented in the Project Charter. In selecting the Project Team, definition of the skills required to perform current tasks as well as skills for future project tasks is needed. Immediate project needs should be met first. After Project Team members have been identified, the Project Manager should provide them with a project orientation and review with individual team members their current and future roles on the project. This establishes a baseline understanding of team members' project responsibilities, which will be useful for conducting performance reviews later in the project.
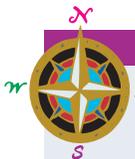
Some agencies hold a meeting at the beginning of Project Initiation, where all potential Stakeholders come together to review the Project Proposal, discuss required roles, and assign Project Team members. In other agencies, establishing a Project Team is a less formal process. You should choose and use the method to identify your Initial Project Team that will work best for your project and within your organization.

Take the opportunity, from the outset, to establish the concept of a Project Team that comprises not only the folks reporting directly to you, but also your Project Sponsor, Customer Representatives, Customer Decision-Makers, and all other players participating in the Project Schedule.

2.1.3 Review Historical Information

Development of the Project Charter will require review of documentation compiled or presented during Project Origination. Materials and information reviewed may include:

■ the strategic plan, a formal document produced by the Performing Organization that outlines the business goals and direction over a designated number of years

■ the Project Proposal, including the initial Business Case, which describes the project objectives and how they support the Performing Organization's strategic business direction

■ project selection criteria, defining the parameters used in determining whether or not to undertake a project and identifying its business justification and measurements of its success

■ information from a previous project similar in size, scope and objectives

■ project knowledge and experience of the individuals on the Project Team

2.1.4 Develop the Project Charter

The purpose of developing the Project Charter is to document critical success factors and define and secure commitment for the resources required to complete Project Initiation. The charter also documents the project's mission, history, and background, describes the business problem the project is intended to resolve, and lists the benefits to be realized by the Performing Organization as a result of implementing the product or service.

Information compiled during Project Origination is used and applied in the development of the Project Charter. To further understand how the project was selected and to write an effective, comprehensive charter, the Project Manager must work with the Project Sponsor and any appropriate subject matter experts and Stakeholders.

If issues or conflicting project expectations are uncovered while developing the Project Charter, the Project Manager must communicate with Stakeholders to resolve the discrepancies, elevate the issues when appropriate, and obtain consensus. Decisions that impact project expectations significantly should be thoroughly documented.

The Project Charter contains the following sections:

■ Background

■ Objective

■ Critical Success Factors

■ Required Resources

■ Constraints

■ Authority

(see Figure 2-4, the New York State Project Charter)

Developing the Project Charter is a collaborative effort. Working with the Project Sponsor, the Project Manager should document the outcomes that must be achieved in order for the project to be considered a success. These critical success factors should correlate with the goals and objectives of the project.

An effective way to define a critical success factor is to complete the following sentence, "The project will be a success if _____ ."

Various areas of the Performing Organization may be required to provide resources to the project in order to complete Project Initiation. The Project Sponsor and Project Manager must determine specific resource requirements and effort estimates, and include them in the charter. The Project Sponsor must communicate with the affected areas of the Performing Organization, proactively gaining agreement and securing the necessary resources.

Once the Project Charter has been developed, the Project Manager should schedule a meeting to review its contents, secure necessary resources, and gain formal approval. Meeting attendees should always include the Project Sponsor and the members of Performing Organization Management whose resources are affected. Attendees may also include other members of the Performing Organization who are able to provide resources that will add value to the project. During the meeting, the Project Manager presents the Project Charter for review. Resources are formally secured by gaining the signatures of the appropriate Performing Organization managers. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Project Sponsor will formally approve or reject the charter. Should the Project Sponsor reject the charter, he/ she must provide the reasons for rejection to allow the Project Manager to make necessary adjustments.

Based on the contents of the Project Charter, the Project Manager should have a general understanding of the amount of effort that will be required to complete Project Initiation and produce an initial Project Plan. It is imperative that the Project Manager begins to track the remaining Project Initiation efforts and communicate status. Items to discuss during status meetings include accomplishments, progress against schedules, work to be done, and any open issues that need resolution. As part of the Communications Plan for the project, a Project Status Report should be prepared and reviewed during the meetings. See 2.4.2, Develop a Communications Plan and Figure 2-10, the Project Status Report template, for more information.
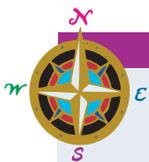
At this early stage in the project management lifecycle, the Project Manager needs to ensure that only Project Initiation resources are secured. Resources required in subsequent project management lifecycle phases will be determined and documented later, in the Project Plan.

Figure 2-4 New York State Project Charter

New York State
Project Charter

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Project Name: _____ Date:_____

Project Manager: _____ Project Sponsor: _____

> *Enter the **Project Name**.*
> *Enter the current **Date**.*
> *Enter the name of the **Project Sponsor**.*
> *Enter the name of the assigned **Project Manager**.*

Figure 2-4 (Continued)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Background:

> *Explain the events leading up to the project request. Describe any related projects that have or could have led to this project. Identify who has been involved, how they have been involved, and the current state of the project.*

Project Objective:

> *The **Project Objectives** identified in the Proposed Solution should serve as the basis for this Section. Be explicit as to how the expected outcome of the project will benefit the organization and help it achieve its business needs or fix the business problem. Provide details relative to the business cost benefit. It may be advantageous to provide a one-to-one correlation as follows:*
>
> *Business Need or Problem:*   *Project Objectives:*
> - *Business Need 1*   • *Project Objective 1*
> - *Business Need 2*   • *Project Objective 2*
>   • *Project Objective 3*
>
> *In developing this list, consider that a business need may be addressed by multiple project objectives and the same project objective may address multiple business needs.*

Critical Success Factors:

> *Provide a list of at least five (5) project **Critical Success Factors**. Critical success factors are outcomes that must be achieved in order for the project to be considered a success. They should correlate with the **Project Objectives** described in the section above.*

Required Resources:

> *List the names of all individuals needed to perform Project Initiation and whose participation must be approved by Performing Organization Management.*

Constraints:

> *List any known factors that limit the project's execution. The most frequent **Constraint** is the project end date. For each **Constraint** listed, be sure to elaborate on how it is limiting the project and how the project would benefit from its removal.*

Project Authority:

> *This section of the Project Charter describes the levels of **Authority** to the project. It identifies who is involved with the project and their expected authority, who has the ability to resolve decision conflicts, and who will provide overall direction to project efforts.*
>
> *This section should contain, at a minimum, the roles and responsibilities of the Project Team and the Stakeholders. It should also identify any known governing body or steering committee to which the project is accountable and how they are accountable.*

Figure 2-4 (Continued)

PROJECT CHARTER APPROVAL

Project Sponsor Name: _____

Action: Approve: ☐   Reject: ☐

Comments:

Project Sponsor Signature: _____

Date: _____

---

*Enter the **Project Sponsor Name**. The Sponsor should indicate approval or rejection of the Project Charter by checking the **Approve** or **Reject** box. If the Sponsor is rejecting the charter, he/she must indicate the reason in the **Comments** field.*

*The Sponsor indicates final acceptance of the Project Charter (including securing individual resources) by providing his/her signature on the **Project Sponsor Signature** line and the approval date on the **Date** line.*

AGREEMENT TO SECURE REQUIRED RESOURCES

Approver Name: _____   Role: _____

Approver Comments:

Approver Signature: _____

Date: _____

---

*Enter the **Approver Name** and **Role**. The approver is a member of Performing Organization Management. He/she indicates his/her agreement to provide required resources for the project by providing his/her **Approver Signature** and the approval **Date**.*

NOTE: *Duplicate the Approver Information section on this template if more than one approval signature is required.*

2.1.5 Conduct Project Kick-off Meeting

When the Project Charter is complete, the Project Kick-off Meeting is conducted. The Project Kick-off Meeting is the event that formally marks the beginning of the project. It is most likely the first opportunity for the Project Sponsor to assemble the entire Project Team to discuss his/her vision of the project, demonstrate support, and advocate project success. Project Team members are introduced to each other and given the opportunity to discuss their areas of expertise and how they will contribute to the project. The Project Charter is presented by the Project Manager and discussed in an open forum, to foster a mutual understanding of and enthusiasm for the project. At the conclusion of the meeting, Project Team members will understand their "next steps," and will leave the meeting ready and excited to begin work.

Prior to the meeting, an agenda and a presentation highlighting the contents of the Project Charter should be prepared by the Project Manager. The Project Manager should designate one of the Project Team members as the scribe for the session, to capture decisions, issues, and action items. The Project Charter and any applicable supporting materials are distributed to attendees for their review. The review of the charter contents ensures that expectations for the project and its results are in agreement. If not already done, the Project Manager must ensure that the Project Sponsor has provided his/her signature on the Project Charter, indicating his/her approval of the contents of the document. If the Project Sponsor does not approve the charter, he/she must indicate the reason, to allow the Project Manager to make necessary adjustments.

Following the session, the notes and action items should be compiled into meeting minutes and distributed to all attendees. (See Figure 2-5 for a sample agenda.)

Figure 2-5 Project Initiation Kick-off Meeting Agenda

Project Initiation Kick-off Meeting Agenda	Project: _____ Date:_____ Time: From: _____ To: _____ Location: _____

Invitees: List the names of individuals invited to the meeting

Invitees should include the Project Manager, Project Team, Project Sponsor, and any Customers with a vested interest in the status of the project.

Attendees: During the meeting, note who actually attended. If attendees arrived late or left early, indicating they missed some of the topics discussed, note their arrival or departure time.

AGENDA

Use the following suggested times as guidelines–the time you need to cover agenda topics will vary depending upon the needs of the project.

	PRESENTER NAME	TIME (MINUTES)
Introductions	Project Manager	5 min.

Project Manager welcomes everyone and briefly states the objective of the meeting.
Allow individuals to introduce themselves, and provide a description of their role within the Performing Organization and their area of expertise and how they may be able to contribute to the project efforts.
The material to be presented by the following agenda topics should come right from the Project Charter.

Sponsor's Statement	Project Sponsor	5 min.

After brief introductions, the Project Sponsor should describe the vision for the project, demon-strate support, and advocate for its success, setting it as a priority for all parties involved.

Project Request & Background	Project Manager	5 min.
Project Goals & Objectives	Project Manager	10 min.
Project Scope	Project Manager	10 min.
Roles & Responsibilities	Project Manager	10 min.

When reviewing roles and responsibilities be explicit about expectations relative to stakeholder availability and Project Sponsor commitment and support for the project.

Next Steps	Project Manager	5 min.
Questions	Project Manager	10 min.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Handouts:

Provide a list of the material to be distributed to the attendees.

Figure 2-5 (Continued)

Project Initiation Kick-off Meeting	Project: _____
	Date:_____
	Time: From: _____ To: _____
	Location: _____

Be sure that one of the Project Team members in attendance is scribing for the session, capturing important project-specific information that requires further review or discussion as well as potential issues that could impact the project. At the end of the meeting, the Project Manager and Project Team should review these points as well as any other notes captured by other team members to identify any additional actions required. The notes will be compiled into meeting minutes to be distributed to all the attendees and retained in the project repository.

DECISIONS

Decision Made	Impact	Action Required?

Document each project decision reached and its impact. Also indicate if the decision requires follow-up actions. If so, these should be captured below.

ISSUES

Issue Description	Impact	Action Required?

Document any project issues identified and its impact. Also indicate if the issue requires follow up actions. If so, these should be captured below.

ACTION ITEMS FOR FOLLOW UP

Action	Responsible	Target Date

Capture any follow up activities and the individual responsible for them as well as set a date as to when the action needs/should be completed.

At the end of the meeting, the scribe should recap the action items. These should also be included in the meeting notes to be distributed.

2.1.6 Establish the Project Repository

Maintaining information about the project in an organized fashion facilitates new team member transitions and creates a central point of reference for those developing project definition documents. Most importantly, it provides an audit trail documenting the history and evolution of the project.

All relevant project-related material, documents produced, decisions made, issues raised and correspondence exchanged must be captured for future reference and historical tracking. The project repository can be kept as hard copy in a binder or notebook, or as electronic files and email folders, or both, at the discretion of the Project Manager, in accordance with organizational records management policies. All files related to the project should be grouped by categories within project-specific folders. The structure should be intuitive so that anyone browsing the directory can easily locate needed information. Within the primary hard copy repository, information should be organized in indexed volume(s) to enable easy access. An index should provide reference to all material maintained electronically (e.g., a file directory or email folder by drive, directory, and filename). The most current hard copy of documentation should be kept in the primary hard copy repository, with earlier versions in the electronic file.

By the end of the project, a project repository may include the following materials:

- Project Proposal and supporting documentation, including the Business Case
- Project description/definition documents such as the Project Charter, the CSSQ, and the Project Plan
- Any working documents or informal documents defining Cost, Scope, Schedule and Quality (CSSQ) of the project
- Project Schedules (baseline and current)
- Project financials
- Project Scope changes and requests log
- Project Status Reports
- Team member Progress Reports and timesheets
- Issues log and details (open and resolved)

■ Project acceptance log by deliverable

■ Products

■ Risk identification/model documentation

■ Audit results, if encountered

■ Correspondence, including any pivotal or decision-making memos, letters, email…etc.

■ Meeting notes, results, and/or actions

The project repository should be available to everyone involved in the project and must, therefore, be considered "public information." It is not advisable to keep sensitive information concerning individuals on the project, such as salaries or evaluations, in the project repository. Some project-related documents may also be regarded as confidential. A confidential project repository should be established in a separate location to secure sensitive information.

Deliverable

◆ **Project Charter** – this is a document that provides authority to establish the project, broadly defining its purpose, goals, and objectives. Resources required to complete Project Initiation are also identified and secured. The charter serves as a contract between the Project Team and Project Sponsor. The Project Charter is the first in a series of project definition documents defining the business goals and objectives the project will meet. Information within the Project Charter is provided at a general level that will be further refined in documentation produced during subsequent project activities.

DEFINE CSSQ

CSSQ is the acronym derived from a project's quadruple constraints: Cost, Scope, Schedule, and Quality. Because the constraints are interdependent, they are defined and managed together. The CSSQ concept is incorporated throughout all project management lifecycle phases and is, therefore, documented throughout this *Guidebook*. The CSSQ work products are first created during Project Initiation.

Roles
● **Project Manager**
● **Project Sponsor**
● **Project Team Members**
● **Customer Representatives**
● **Stakeholders**
● **Performing Organization**
● **Customer Decision-Maker**

The purpose of **Defining CSSQ** is to:

■ Develop a written Project Scope statement to define the project. The scope statement will be used as the foundation for scope and schedule refinement during Project Planning.

■ Establish a preliminary Project Schedule to define, at a very high level, the activities that must be accomplished at certain points in the project in order to deliver the product described in the scope statement.

■ Define the quality processes and standards that will be used throughout the project.

■ Determine the appropriate approaches for staff and materials acquisition, and establish a preliminary budget for the project.

Tasks

2.2.1 Define Project Scope

The written scope statement is a document that serves as input to future project planning efforts. The scope statement (see Figure 2-6) should include:

The tasks to Define CSSQ are:

2.2.1 Define Project Scope

2.2.2 Develop High-Level Schedule

2.2.3 Identify Quality Standards

2.2.4 Establish Project Budget

- the business need the project will address.

- what the project will accomplish, how it will be accomplished and by whom.

- what the end result of the project will be (e.g., a product, service, other).

- a list of project deliverables, which, when produced and accepted, indicate project completion. Also included is a list of those items/deliverables that are not in scope for the project. The Project Manager must be **specific** about what is in scope and what is not in scope, as the weaker the boundaries between the two, the more difficult it will be to effect the change control process if required later in the project. Also, the details regarding what is in and what is out of scope are critical input to the creation of a detailed Project Schedule.

- critical success factors (usually cost, schedule, and quality measurements) that determine whether or not a project was successful.

The Project Charter, including the project outcome description, provides necessary information for defining the Project Scope relative to the business need and benefit for the organization undertaking the project. The scope statement will build on the outcome of the project described in the Project Charter by developing an approach to deliver that result, and by developing additional detailed information about the scope of work to be done. Interviews with other Project Managers who have had experience developing scope statements for similar projects can also be helpful.

"Scope creep" is a major bane of project management. How do you combat it? By pre-empting it with a thorough, accurate, precise, and mutually agreed upon Scope Statement. Avoid words and statements that require judgment or invite interpretation, such as 'improve," "enhance," "better," "more efficient" and "effective." Use numbers, facts, and concrete results. Use quantifiable terms, and provide target values or ranges. Emphasize outcome, not process. "We will work very hard for a long time to improve our response capability and enhance our effectiveness" belongs in a Dilbert cartoon.

While writing the Project Scope, the Project Manager and Customer Representatives must consider the effect the outcome of the project may have on the Performing Organization. The organization must be prepared to support the product once it is transitioned. If implementing the product will result in a change to the way the organization will conduct business, the Project Manager, Project Sponsor, and Customer must anticipate impacts and communicate them proactively to the Consumer community. Sometimes people are resistant to change. Selling the positive aspects of the project and the benefits of its product throughout the project's duration will facilitate acceptance. If adaptation to the new environment requires new skills, the Project Manager will need to identify appropriate training opportunities and include them in the Project Scope and Project Plan. (for information regarding training and training plans, see Develop Project Team, 3.4.7)

Figure 2-6 New York State Project Scope Statement

New York State
Project Scope Statement

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Project Name: _____   Date: _____

Project Sponsor: _____   Project Manager: _____

> *Enter the **Project Name**.*
> *Enter the current **Date**.*
> *Enter the name of the **Project Sponsor**.*
> *Enter the name of the assigned **Project Manager**.*

Figure 2-6 (Continued)

New York State
Project Scope Statement

A. BUSINESS NEED/PROBLEM:

*State the **Business Need/Problem** the project will address. This should be consistent with the Project Business Case developed during Project Origination. Tie the business need to the agency's mission.*

B. PROJECT OBJECTIVES (FROM PROJECT CHARTER):

Include a description of the deliverables that will be produced as part of the project. Be specific when describing what is in scope and out of scope. Note: This section will most likely be several pages in length.

C. PROJECT RESULTS:

State what will signify that the project is complete. Include the measures that will determine whether or not the project was successful from a cost, schedule and quality standpoint.

D. PROJECT CONTENT:

*Describe the **Contents** of the project, listing all deliverables of the project in detail. Also include items NOT in scope.*

2.2.2 Develop High-Level Schedule

A Project Schedule is a calendar-based representation of work that will be accomplished during a project. Developing a schedule means determining the start and end dates for all tasks required to produce the project's product, and the project management deliverables.

At this early stage in the project management lifecycle, information required to complete a Project Schedule is known only at an overview level, often based solely upon the expert judgment of the Project Manager or other individuals with experience managing projects with similar lifecycles. Even at a high level, this information still provides insight into preparing the first draft of a Project Schedule. The activities documented in the schedule at this early stage will be further broken down during Project Planning, when the schedule will be refined to include the specific individuals assigned and the amount of time required to complete the work.

A Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) is a very useful work product that a Project Manager should create to facilitate development of a Project Schedule. A WBS is a graphical representation of the hierarchy of project deliverables and their associated tasks. As opposed to a Project Schedule that is calendar-based, a WBS is deliverable-based, and written in business terms. All tasks depicted are those focused on completion of deliverables. There are no dates or effort estimates in a WBS. Using a WBS, Project Team members are better equipped to estimate the level of effort required to complete tasks, and are able to quickly understand how their work fits into the overall project structure.

The first hierarchical level of a WBS usually contains the phases that are specific to the lifecycle of the project being performed. (For example, the first level of the WBS for a software development project would most likely contain System Initiation, System Requirements Analysis, System Design, etc.) For this reason, a WBS may be reused for other projects with the same lifecycle. Once the first level has been completed, it is broken down into more detailed sub-levels, until eventually all tasks are depicted. When defined to the appropriate level of detail, a WBS is very useful as input to both creating and refining a Project Schedule, including estimating required resources, level of effort, and cost.

In Project Initiation, the information required to illustrate a complete WBS representing the entire project will not be known in sufficient detail. There will be enough information, however, to illustrate the tasks required to produce Project Initiation deliverables. The WBS is not static - the Project Manager should work with the Project Team during each project lifecycle phase to refine the WBS and use it as input to refining the Project Schedule.

Figure 2-6A is a sample High-Level Work Breakdown Structure organized by lifecycle phase for a software development project.

Figure 2-6A High-Level Work Breakdown Structure for Software Development Project

System Development Lifecycle
Work Breakdown Structure

System Initiation	System Requirements Analysis	System Design	System Construction	System Acceptance	System Implementation
Established Initiation Environment	Established Requirements Analysis Environment	Established Design Environment	Established Construction Environment	Established Acceptance Environment	Established Implementation Environment
Validated Proposed Solution	Business Requirements	Technical Architecture	Refined System Standards	Data Initialization and Conversion Test Results	Deployed and Operational System
System Schedule	Business Process Model	System Standards	Coded Software Modules	Acceptance Test Results	Transitioned Support Responsibilities
	Logical Data Model	Physical Database	Unit, Integration and System Test Results	Updated Supporting Materials	
	Functional Specification	System Component Prototypes	User and Training Materials		
		Technical Specifications	Technical Documentation		

Project Management Lifecycle

A preliminary list of the roles and skills required to perform the necessary work (e.g., Architect, Team Leader) should be created at this stage in the project. This list will be refined in subsequent phases, as more becomes known about the project. Additional constraints, such as completion dates for project deliverables mandated by the Project Sponsor, Customer, or other external factors, will most often be known early in the project management lifecycle and should be noted. There may be financial, legal, or market-driven constraints that help dictate a project's high-level timeline.

Using the information from the WBS as input, the Project Manager should begin to document effort estimates, roles and dependencies, in preparation for creating a Project Schedule using a project management tool. It may also be helpful to solicit input from past Project Managers, Project Team members and subject matter experts for insight into past project performance, and to help uncover required activities, dependencies, and levels of effort. Researching and documenting this information first will not only help organize thoughts on paper, but may bring new information to light. (See Figure 2-7, New York State Project Schedule Worksheet.)

Figure 2-7 New York State Project Schedule Worksheet

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New York State
Project Schedule Worksheet

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Project Name: _____   Date: _____

Project Sponsor: _____   Project Manager: _____

> *Enter the **Project Name**.*
> *Enter the current **Date**.*
> *Enter the name of the **Project Sponsor**.*
> *Enter the name of the assigned **Project Manager**.*

</div>

Figure 2-7 (Continued)

New York State
Project Schedule Worksheet

PROJECT SCHEDULE INFORMATION

Phase	Process	Task	Estimated Hours	Dependent Upon	Role

*Enter the name of the project **Phase**. Identify the **Process** within that Phase, and then list the **Tasks** that make up that Process.*

*Enter the **Estimated Hours** needed to complete each Task. If the current Task is dependent upon the completion of a prior Task, identify that prior Task under **Dependent Upon**.*

*Enter the **Role** and/or individual(s) to complete the activity, if known (e.g., Architect, Programmer, Civil Engineer).*

Information entered on this worksheet will be used as input to the High-Level Schedule.

Once the worksheet has been completed and reviewed, the Project Manager should enter the information into a project scheduling tool (e.g., Microsoft Project® or PlanView®) to produce the high-level Project Schedule. Information typically required for a project management tool includes activities, effort estimates to complete the activities, the role or individual assigned to them, and any known dependencies among them. The activities entered into the tool should be those required to complete the deliverables described in the Project Scope statement. Information will only be known at a very high level at this point, but will be refined during Project Planning.

2.2.3 Identify Quality Standards

If the Performing Organization has established quality standards, the Project Manager can reference the document containing the quality standards the organization already has in place. In most cases, however, this document does not exist, or the quality standards are not in place. The Project Manager and Customer Representatives must identify and document standards for each project deliverable during Project Initiation. If quality standards are not identified and documented, the Project Manager will have no way to determine if deliverables are being produced to an acceptable quality level.

The Project Scope statement documents what the outcome of the project will be, and will help determine the appropriate quality standards to use. Additional information discovered when defining your project approach (e.g., your materials acquisition strategy) that is above and beyond that contained in the scope statement may aid in identifying quality standards. Performance of a cost/benefit analysis can show whether the benefits of implementing the desired quality standards outweigh the cost of implementing them. Research of past projects that implemented quality standards similar to those that are candidates for the current project can also be helpful.
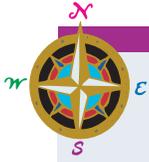
The amazing thing about quality standards is that nobody has them available when the project starts, but everybody knows what they were supposed to be when the product is delivered. Do not accept lack of documentation as an excuse to skimp on your homework. On the contrary, dig down through organizational layers to discover what was used in the past (here's another way your historical data research pays off!) and what will be expected in the future. And if you can't find anything – create it, document it, publicize it, and put it in your Project Status Report and your project repository.

Compliance to specific New York State standards and regulations may be required and could dictate the quality standards to be measured against for a particular project. Preliminary standards should be reviewed again and modified or refined during Project Planning. (See Figure 2-8, the New York State Project Quality Management Plan.)

Figure 2-8 New York State Project Quality Management Plan

<div style="border:1px solid">

New York State
Project Quality Management Plan

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Project Name: _____   Date: _____

Project Sponsor: _____   Project Manager: _____

> *Enter the **Project Name**.*
> *Enter the current **Date**.*
> *Enter the name of the **Project Sponsor**.*
> *Enter the name of the assigned **Project Manager**.*

</div>

Figure 2-8 (Continued)

New York State
Project Quality Management Plan

PART A. QUALITY PLANNING – IDENTIFIED QUALITY STANDARDS

*List the **Quality Standards** that have been identified for each deliverable of the project.*

Figure 2-8 (Continued)

New York State
Project Quality Management Plan

PART B: QUALITY ASSURANCE ACTIVITIES

Describe the processes that will be implemented to evaluate project performance on a regular basis, and validate that the quality standards defined in Part A are appropriate and able to be met.

(To be defined during Project Planning and refined during Project Execution and Control.)

Figure 2-8 (Continued)

New York State
Project Quality Management Plan

**PART C: QUALITY CONTROL ACTIVITIES**

Describe the processes that will be implemented to measure project results, compare results against the Quality Standards defined in Part A, and determine if they are being met. This also identifies ways to minimize errors and improve performance.

(To be defined and implemented during Project Execution and Control.)

2.2.4 Establish Project Budget

Using available tools, the Project Manager calculates the preliminary budget that will be required to complete project activities. All aspects of the project, including the cost of human resources, equipment, travel, materials and supplies, should be incorporated. At this point information will be presented at a summary level, to be refined during Project Planning, as more detailed information becomes known. However, the budget should be more detailed and more accurate now than it was during Project Origination. The Project Manager should use manual or automated tools to generate a Preliminary Budget Estimate. The budgeting tools may be simple spreadsheets or complex mathematical modeling tools. (See Figure 2-9 for the Preliminary Budget Estimate.) For historical purposes, and to enable the budget to be refined, the Project Manager should always maintain notes on how this preliminary budget was derived. Cost estimating checklists help to ensure that all preliminary budgeting information is known and all bases are covered.

The Project Manager must also have a general understanding of the cost of both the human resources and the equipment and materials required to perform the work. The method by which staff and products will be acquired for the project will directly affect the budgeting process.
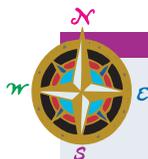
In coming up with the project's budget, many Project Managers fall into either of the two extremes, depending on their temperaments and prior experience: those that are risk-averse or have been burned in the past "aim high," inflating the Project Budget to protect against all eventualities; and those that are "green," optimistic, or afraid of rejection "aim low," underestimating the risks and realities. Neither approach, of course, is optimal: both put the whole project at risk, the former by either disqualifying the project in view of limited funds or inviting uninformed wholesale cuts, the latter by setting unrealistic expectations and guaranteeing multiple additional requests for more money. The best approach is to use organizational experience, your own expertise, and the best advice you can muster, to predict with the greatest possible accuracy what the project will actually cost, and then set up a separate change budget.

Above all, document the basis of your estimates!

A number of constraints, financial, political, and organizational, may dictate the methods by which required individuals, equipment, and materials are acquired. The Project Manager needs to be aware of existing resource acquisition policies, guidelines, and procedures. In addition, the preferences of the Performing Organization's management team and/or the

Customer Representatives may influence acquisition decisions. In any case, the strategies defined should satisfy the needs of project Stakeholders. Information from similar past projects can be used to gain an understanding of acquisition strategies; those that were successful and applicable may be considered for implementation on the current project.

Once the Project Manager assesses the needs of the project, financial considerations, time constraints, and individual skills and availability, a method is defined for acquiring project staff. Depending on the way different organizations relate to one another, strategies used to acquire staff may vary. It is important for the Project Manager to understand the reporting relationships, both formal and informal, among different organizations, technical disciplines, and individuals. Staff may be allocated from within an organization or from an outside source using an established staff procurement procedure. The Project Manager should work with the Project Sponsor to determine staffing options.

The skills required for the project influence the means by which staff members are acquired. If there are limited qualified in-house resources available to staff a project or if a Project Manager has had positive experiences with contract staff, for example, he/she may elect to retain contractors to fill the positions rather than allocating resources from within. If it is determined that it is necessary to recruit staff from outside the Performing Organization, the Project Manager should work with the agency Human Resource office. The Human Resource office can assist in the recruitment of qualified staff in accordance with Civil Service Rules. If the decision is made to utilize private consultants or contractors, the Project Manager should contact the agency Contract Management office for assistance regarding State Contract vendors, and Procurement Guidelines, as established by the NYS Office of General Services.

As is the case with human resources, a method is defined by which equipment, materials, and other non-human resources will be obtained. The Project Manager, in conjunction with the Project Sponsor, should determine the method to be used to acquire these resources. Section II:3 contains more information regarding Procurement and Contractor Management.

Regardless of how staff and products are acquired for the project, the Project Manager must add the estimated cost of all resources to the Preliminary Budget Estimate.

Figure 2-9 New York State Preliminary Budget Estimate

<div style="border:1px solid">

New York State
Preliminary Budget Estimate

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Project Name: _____   Date: _____

Project Sponsor: _____   Project Manager: _____

> *Enter the **Project Name**.*
> *Enter the current **Date**.*
> *Enter the name of the **Project Sponsor**.*
> *Enter the name of the assigned **Project Manager**.*

</div>

Figure 2-9 (Continued)

New York State
Preliminary Budget Estimate

BUDGET INFORMATION

Phase	Process/Task	Labor Cost	Material Cost	Travel Cost	Other Cost	Total Cost	Planned Date of Expenditure
	TOTAL Budget						

The **Phase**, **Process**, and **Task** Names come from the High-Level Schedule.
The **Labor Cost** is the cost of human resources required.
The **Material Cost** is the cost for equipment and supplies.
The **Travel Cost** is any predicted cost that will be incurred if travel is required.
Enter any costs outside person, material, and travel costs under **Other Costs**.
Total the costs for each activity and enter the total under **Total Cost**. Then enter the **Planned Date** the expenditure will be made.

Calculate the total of all rows in the table and enter the values in the **TOTAL Budget** row at the bottom of the worksheet.

COMMENTS: *(List any assumptions pertaining to the costs entered above.)*

Deliverables

◆ **Project Scope Statement** – documents a description of the project's deliverables, results, and critical success factors, and defines what is out of scope.

◆ **High-Level Project Schedule** – a representation of tasks, durations, dependencies, and resources, to the extent that is currently known about the project. It should be produced using an automated project management tool. This schedule should be reviewed and approved by the Project Sponsor and Customer Decision-Makers.

◆ **Quality Management Plan** – describes how the Project Team will implement the identified quality standards, the plan can be a very informal or highly detailed document, based on the needs of the project. It defines how project reporting will work, controls to be used in managing the project, audit needs, communication commitments, and any other quality processes that will be used throughout the course of the project. The Quality Management Plan will become part of the final Project Plan created during Project Initiation and revised during Project Planning. At the end of Project Initiation, the Quality Management Plan should include a description of the policy and standards the organization has put in place to address quality. Any type of structured tool or checklist can be used to ensure that all quality measures have been considered. It may be a complex, industry-standard tool, or a simple "To Do" list.

◆ **Preliminary Budget Estimate** – documents a preliminary estimate of the cost to complete the project.

2.3   PERFORM RISK IDENTIFICATION

Purpose

Risks are events that can potentially affect the cost, schedule, and/or efforts of a project. **Risk Identification** begins during Project Initiation with the documentation of known project risks so that early planning can mitigate their effects. Throughout the duration of the project, risks must continue to be identified, tracked and analyzed to assess the probability of their occurrence, and to minimize their potential impacts on the project.

Roles

- Project Manager
- Project Sponsor
- Project Team Members
- Customer Representatives

Tasks

2.3.1 Identify Risks

The Project Manager solicits input from the Project Team, Project Sponsor, and from Customer Representatives, who try to anticipate any possible events, obstacles, or issues that may produce unplanned outcomes during the course of the project. Risks to both internal and external aspects of the project should be assessed. Internal risks are events the Project Team can directly control, while external risks happen outside the direct influence of the Project Team (e.g., legislative action).

The tasks to Perform Risk Identification for Project Initiation are:

2.3.1   Identify Risks

2.3.2   Document Risks

A list of risks is started, and as the scope, schedule, budget, and resource plan are refined during Project Planning, it is updated to reflect further risks identified.

The project should be analyzed for risk in areas such as:

- culture of the Performing Organization
- anticipated impact on the Performing Organization of the resulting product or service
- the level to which the end result is defined (the more complete the definition, the lower the possibility of risk)
- technology used on the project (proven vs. new)
- relationships among team members
- impact on work units

Documentation associated with Project Initiation can also be used to help identify risks. Some examples are:

■ the Project Scope Statement may uncover previously unidentified areas of concern (again, the more complete the scope definition, the lower the possibility of risk);

■ project constraints indicate likely risk sources;

■ the High-Level Project Schedule may produce extremely aggressive or unrealistic scheduling

■ preliminary staffing requirements may be problematic if required resources have limited availability or unique skills that would be hard to find and/or replace should they leave the project.

Refer to the parts of this document concerning CSSQ and Project Charter information, to review for possible areas of risk.

Historical information can be extremely helpful in determining potential project risks. Data and documentation from previous projects, or interviews with team members or other subject matter experts from past projects provide excellent insight into potential risk areas and ways to avoid or mitigate them.

2.3.2 Document Risks

The Project Manager documents identified risks to inform the risk identification and assessment process. Risk identification lists are typically organized by source of risk to help the Project Manager organize and record ideas. These lists may be generic or industry-specific. The Project Manager may even decide to create risk identification lists specifically geared toward the current project. At this point, the Project Team is simply identifying and listing risks. During Project Planning, the items on the list will be transposed to a Risk Management Worksheet, where they will be quantified and plans will be developed to mitigate them should they occur.

Deliverable

◆ **The List of Risks** – a listing of identified sources of risk and potential risk events. Risk Assessment will be performed during Project Planning using the list of risks.

2.4 DEVELOP INITIAL PROJECT PLAN

Purpose

The Project Plan is a collection of information used to describe the environment that will govern the project. The work products previously produced during Project Initiation become part of the **Initial Project Plan**. In addition to compiling these work products, developing the Initial Project Plan involves identifying the Stakeholders that will be involved in the project and establishing and documenting a plan for project communications. The Project Plan is an evolving set of documents - new information will continue to be added and existing information will be revised during Project Planning.

Roles

● **Project Manager**
● **Project Sponsor**
● **Project Team Members**
● **Customer Representatives**

Tasks

#### 2.4.1 Identify and Document Stakeholders' Involvement

The Project Manager defines the organization of the Project Team and outlines Stakeholders' roles and responsibilities. All Stakeholders who will be involved in some capacity on the project should be identified. Some may be indirectly involved in an ancillary agency unit, a Steering Committee, or as external vendors or suppliers. Necessary contacts with agencies such as the Department of Civil Service, Division of the Budget, Office For Technology, CIO's office, and Office of the State Comptroller must be included. Members of these agencies are key Stakeholders in many projects and interaction with them should be coordinated and planned.

The tasks to Develop Initial Project Plan are:

2.4.1 Identify and Document Stakeholders' Involvement

2.4.2 Develop a Communications Plan

2.4.3 Compile All Information to Produce the Initial Project Plan

In defining the high-level schedule for Define CSSQ, a preliminary list of roles and skills required for the project was produced. This list may be useful when creating the list of stakeholder roles needed to perform the tasks leading to the desired project outcome and the responsibilities for each role. Even if the information is known only at a preliminary level, it is helpful to the Project Manager. When docu-

menting roles and responsibilities, the Project Manager should evaluate whether the individuals being assigned are in appropriate roles, if this information is known. If it is decided that assigned individuals may be weak in certain areas, or there are no individuals to fill certain roles, the Project Manager documents this information.
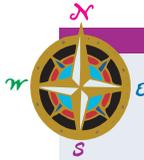
One of the greatest challenges in project management is getting the work done by individuals and business units that do not report to the Project Manager, or even to the Project Manager's entire chain of command. The earlier you can identify whom you need cooperation from, and the more detail you can provide as to the extent and outcome of that cooperation, the better your chances of actually influencing the work done. Make your case early and convincingly (emphasizing how the folks that DO have influence will benefit), and you may actually get them to do what your project requires.

2.4.2 Develop a Communications Plan

The Communications Plan is a document describing the means by which project communications will occur. The communication process must be bi-directional. The Project Manager must receive input from Project Team members and Stakeholders about their information and communications requirements, determine the best and most cost effective way in which the requirements can be met, and record the information in a formal, approved document. Similarly, the Project Manager must provide details to the team and the Stakeholders regarding the communications he/she expects to receive, and document these requirements in the plan.

The Communications Plan is developed early in the project management lifecycle. It must be reviewed regularly throughout the course of the project and updated as necessary to ensure it remains current and applicable.

Some of the requirements the Project Manager and Stakeholders will need to communicate and understand, and which should be documented in the Communications Plan include:

■ How often and how quickly information needs to be disseminated.

■ By what means the Project Manager and Stakeholders prefer to receive information (via phone, email, paper).

■ The communication mechanism currently used in the organization, and how it might be leveraged or improved.

■ The effectiveness of communications in past projects and whether specific improvements were recommended.

The methods and technologies used to communicate information may vary among departments or organizations involved in the project, and by Stakeholders. These differences must be considered when creating a Communications Plan. For example, will all departments have access to email, or will exceptions need to be made? Are there any other considerations that may affect or limit communication? For example, there may be regulatory or contractual obligations that will affect the means by which communication can take place.

A great way to communicate with the Project Sponsor and the Customer Representatives is to conduct a status meeting. Some items to discuss during the meeting include accomplishments, progress against schedules, work to be done, and any open issues that need resolution. A Project Status Report should be prepared and reviewed during the meeting. Use Figure 2-10, the Project Status Report template, as a guide.

Figure 2-10 New York State Project Status Report

Agency Name
Project Name

Project Status Report

As of (Date)

Distribution:

Original Copy

Project Repository

Project Team

(List names)

Stakeholders

(List names)

Prepared By:

(Project Manager name)

Figure 2-10 (Continued)

Project Status Report

STATUS SUMMARY:

*Summarize the project's **Status**. This section should be brief, presenting a few major accomplishments or possibly a critical issue. On large projects with many teams it may present the points you most want noticed. Remember, the point(s) in the Status Summary will be repeated in the appropriate section of the Status Report. If possible, present a high level Gantt chart of deliverables to visually represent the schedule below.*

SCHEDULE:

Project Phase	Project Process	Planned Start	Actual Start	Planned End	Actual End	Explanation of Variance

Enter planned and actual start and end dates pertaining to each Phase and Process of the project. Explain variance when planned and actual dates are not in agreement.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Original Project Estimate	Total Approved Changes	Total Current Estimate	Amount Expended to Date	Estimated Amount to Complete	Forecast Total	Project Variance

Explanation of Variance:

*Enter the dollar amount of the **Original Project Estimate**.*
*If any changes have been approved, enter the **Total Approved Changes** in dollars.*
*Total the dollar amounts in columns A and B and enter the result as **Total Current Estimate**.*
*Enter the dollar **Amount Expended** on the project as of the date of this report.*
*Enter the dollar **Amount Estimated to Complete** the project.*
*Total the dollar amounts in columns D and E and enter the result as **Forecast Total**.*
*Subtract the dollar amount in column F from the dollar amount in column C and enter the result for **Project Variance**.*

Figure 2-10 (Continued)

Project Status Report

ISSUES AND ACTION ITEMS:

Issue Identification					Action Plan			
Issue #	Date	Priority	Issue Name	Description	Action	Owner	Due Date	Status
1.								
2.								
3.								

Develop an **Action Plan** for each identified Issue, and track its progress via the Activity Log.
Assign an **Issue #** to each Issue on the report, for easy reference.
Enter **Date** when the Issue was originally raised.
Record **Priority** (High, Medium or Low) that the Issue was assigned.
Assign a short but descriptive **Issue Name**, and provide a detailed **Description of the Issue** and its impact on the project.

Describe an **Action** (or a series of Actions) that will be performed to resolve the Issue.
Assign an **Owner** to that Action, and establish a **Due Date** by which the Action should be complete.
Record action **Status** (Open or Closed). As long as any Actions for an Issue are open, the Issue itself stays on the Issues and Action Items page of the Project Status Report; when all Actions are Closed, the Issue moves to the Closed Issues page for one reporting period, and subsequently is removed from the report.

There are likely to be multiple Actions per issue.

Figure 2-10 (Continued)

ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS REPORTING PERIOD:

For Reporting Period of xx/xx/xxxx – xx/xx/xxxx

*Enter project **Accomplishments** for the reporting period, identifying activities, meetings, and any deliverables produced.*

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT REPORTING PERIOD:

For Reporting Period of xx/xx/xxxx – xx/xx/xxxx

List project activities planned for the next reporting period. Use the Project Schedule as a basis for this information, adding meetings, presentations, etc. as necessary.

ACCEPTANCE AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT:

Deliverable Acceptance Log

Deliverable Name	Sent for Review (Date)	Sent for Approval (Date)	Action Approve/Reject	Action Date

*List the **Deliverable Name** of each deliverable completed, the **Date** it was **Sent for Review**, the **Date** it was **Sent for Approval**, the **Action** taken and the **Date** the action was taken.*

Change Control Log

Change #	Log Date	Initiated By	Description	Action Accept/Reject	Action Date	Reject Description

*As change requests are received, indicate the **Change Number**, the **Date** it was received in the **Log Date** column, the name of the person who **Initiated** the change request, a **Description** of the change, the status of the change (whether **Accepted** or **Rejected**), the **Date** it was **Accepted** or **Rejected**, and a brief **Description** of the reason for **Rejection**.*

Lost Time

If there was time on the project during the report period when no productive work could be done by the Project Team due to actions outside of their control, explain how much time and why. For example, if there was a power outage necessitating leaving the building, this is considered lost time. This period of inactivity may result in project variance. It is important to note that this is not due to the inability of the team to meet work estimates. Change control may be instituted to cover the effort and cost impact for this lost time.

Closed Issues

*This follows the same format as open issues. Use the table for Issues and Action Items above. Identify **Closed Issues** and retain only until the next Status Reporting period.*

Staffing

Team Member	Role	Information/Notes

*Identify the name of each **Team Member**, their **Role** on the project, and any pertinent **Information** relative to the project, such as availability, pre-planned absences, etc.*

Figure 2-11 New York State Project Communications Plan

New York State
Project Communications Plan

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Project Name: _____   Date: _____

Project Sponsor: _____   Project Manager: _____

> *Enter the **Project Name**.*
> *Enter the current **Date**.*
> *Enter the name of the **Project Sponsor**.*
> *Enter the name of the assigned **Project Manager**.*

Figure 2-11 (Continued)

New York State
Project Communications Plan

Stakeholder	Message/Information Need	Delivery Vehicle	Frequency
Project Sponsor			
Project Manager			
Project Team Member			
Quality Team Member			
Procurement Team Member			
Other Stakeholder			

*Enter the Stakeholder role in the **Stakeholder** column. Sample stakeholders are provided for your use. Describe the different types of information needed in the **Message/Information Need** column, and how each type of information will be delivered to the stakeholders in the **Delivery Vehicle** column. (Phone, email, formal documentation, etc.) Describe how often and how quickly the project stakeholders will need information in the **Frequency** column.*

Figure 2-11 (Continued)

New York State
Project Communications Plan

EXISTING SYSTEMS:

Discuss any communications vehicles (or methods) already in place, and how they will be leveraged on this project.

METHOD FOR UPDATING THE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN:

Describe how and when the plan will be updated throughout the project.

OTHER COMMUNICATIONS INFORMATION:

Discuss any communications information not yet covered.

2.4.3 Compile All Information to Produce the Initial Project Plan

All work products and deliverables from Project Initiation processes will be compiled for the Initial Project Plan. At this point in the project management lifecycle, the Project Plan will consist of the following information:

■ Project Charter

■ CSSQ

■ List of Risks

■ Description of Stakeholder Involvement

■ Communications Plan

This information will be refined and supplemented in later project phases as the Project Manager and team become more knowledgeable about the project and its definition. The Project Plan is not a static document; it requires iterative refinement.
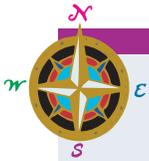
"Don't judge the book by its cover." Hogwash! While we are not advocating style over substance, the format, style, and presentation do mean a lot. During the few minutes that most decision-makers will spend reviewing your written deliverables you want them to be well disposed towards you, and able to abstract the most information in the least amount of time. A professional-looking document will make a good first impression; a well-organized text that clearly and logically builds your case will solidify that impression. So don't just slap some papers together, snap a rubber band around them, and submit it as the deliverable; treat your Project Plan as a repository of your brightest hopes for the future.

Deliverables

◆ **Description of Stakeholder Involvement** – a document describing, to the level of detail currently known, the roles and responsibilities of all Stakeholders, internal and external, who will in any way be involved in the project. This document is part of the Project Plan. This document will most likely be updated later as more about the project becomes known.

◆ **Communications Plan** – a document written by the Project Manager that describes:

■ How often and how quickly information will be needed by internal and external Stakeholders

■ How different types of information will be disseminated to the Stakeholders (via email, phone, spreadsheets, formal documentation, etc.)

■ The communications systems already in place and how they may be leveraged on the current project

■ How the Communications Plan will be updated throughout the course of the project

■ Any other information regarding the means by which information will be communicated to all project Stakeholders

◆ **Initial Project Plan** – the key deliverable produced during Project Initiation. The initial plan will be refined iteratively throughout the entire project management lifecycle and will serve as the main guide to follow during Project Execution and Control. The Initial Project Plan incorporates the deliverables above and is used to:

■ Document project planning assumptions

■ Document project planning decisions regarding alternatives chosen

■ Facilitate communication among internal and external Stakeholders

■ Define key management reviews as to content, extent and timing

■ Provide a baseline for progress measurement and project control

For an example of a Project Plan, see Figure 2-12, the New York State Project Plan.

Figure 2-12 New York State Project Plan

<div style="border:1px solid">

New York State
Project Plan

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Project Name: _____   Date: _____

Project Sponsor: _____   Project Manager: _____

---

*Enter the **Project Name**.*
*Enter the current **Date**.*
*Enter the name of the **Project Sponsor**.*
*Enter the name of the assigned **Project Manager**.*

REVISION HISTORY

Revision #	Revision Date	Section Revised	Revision Description

---

Once the Project Plan has been approved, changes to any component of the plan should be tracked for historical purposes. Prior to applying the change, the previous version(s) should be retained. The Project Manager should append the following revision information to the new version being created:

***Revision #** is the next sequentially generated number based on the method established by the Project Manager.*

***Revision Date** is the date on which the revisions were started.*

***Section Revised** highlights which component of the plan was updated. This could include the Project Charter, the Communications Plan, the Quality Plan…etc. A revision could affect more than one component of the Plan. If a revision affects all components, the use of "ALL" would suffice.*

***Revision Description** provides a brief account as to why the component required updating, and what was changed. This could be the same for each component listed (i.e., all components require updating as a result of completing Project Initiation) or could be very specific.*

</div>

Figure 2-12 (Continued)

New York State
Project Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Describe, at a summary level, what is presented within this document, to allow the reader to understand its contents at a glance.

The Executive Summary may include, but is not limited to:
- *Purpose of the document*
- *Structure of the document*
- *Material presented – provide a short description of each component of the Project Plan and its relevance*

Figure 2-12 (Continued)

New York State
Project Plan

DESCRIPTION OF STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITY

Name/Title	Agency/Department	Project Role	Responsibility	Phone	Email

*List all **Stakeholders** involved in the project, with their associated **Agencies**, **Roles**, **Responsibilities**, **Phone** numbers and **Email** addresses. Be sure to include NYS Employees, contractors and consultants.*

Figure 2-12 (Continued)

New York State
Project Plan

PROJECT PLAN DOCUMENTS SUMMARY

When compiling information to produce the Project Plan, prepare the following documents in a consistent, comprehensible format. Be sure to provide a logical flow between documents, to enable the reader to follow and understand the collection of material being presented.

Documents to be Created in Project Initiation	Documents to be Created in Project Planning
Project Charter	
Project Scope Statement	*Refined* Project Scope
Project Schedule Worksheet	Project Schedule
Project Quality Management Plan	*Refined* Project Quality Management Plan
Preliminary Budget Estimate *Including Staff Acquisition Plan and Materials Acquisition Plan*	Project Budget
List of Risks	Risk Management Worksheet
Description of Stakeholder Involvement	*Refined* Description of Stakeholder Involvement
Communications Plan	*Refined* Communications Plan
	Change Control Process
	Acceptance Management Process
	Issue Management and Escalation Process
	Organizational Change Management Plan
	Project Team Training Plan
	Project Implementation and Transition Plan

2.5 CONFIRM APPROVAL TO PROCEED TO NEXT PHASE

Purpose

The purpose of **Confirm Approval to Proceed to Next Phase** is to formally acknowledge the completion, review and acceptance of all deliverables produced during Project Initiation. Formal acceptance and approval by the Project Sponsor or an authorized designee also signifies that the project can continue into its next phase, Project Planning.

Roles

- Project Manager
- Project Sponsor
- Project Team Members
- Customer Decision-Makers

Acceptance and approval are ongoing. The Project Manager should review and gain approval from the Project Sponsor and Customer Decision-Makers for all interim deliverables upon their completion. Interim acceptances should streamline final acceptance.

Tasks

2.5.1 Review/Refine Business Case

At the completion of Project Initiation, the Project Manager must review the Business Case that was created during Project Origination. Because more information is now known about the project, the Project Manager will need to refine the Business Case to include the new information. The refined Business Case will be presented to the Project Sponsor as part of gaining approval to proceed.

The tasks to Confirm Approval to Proceed to Next Phase are:

2.5.1 Review/Refine Business Case

2.5.2 Prepare for Formal Acceptance

2.5.3 Gain Approval Signature from Project Sponsor

2.5.2 Prepare for Formal Acceptance

At this time, the Project Manager should schedule a meeting to discuss and gain agreement to secure Project Planning resources. Meeting attendees should always include the Project Sponsor and the members of Performing Organization Management whose resources will be affected. Attendees may also include members of other agencies who are able to provide resources that will add value during Project Planning. During the meeting, resources are formally secured by gaining the signatures of the appropriate Performing Organization managers

on the Project Deliverable Approval Form. (See Figure 2-13 for an example of a Project Deliverable Approval Form.)

In addition to reviewing the Business Case, all other deliverables produced during Project Initiation should be reviewed by the Project Manager to ensure that Customer and Project Sponsor approvals have been received. Once the review has been completed, the Project Manager should organize the refined Business Case and all other deliverables into a cohesive package and prepare a formal approval form.

2.5.3 Gain Approval Signature from Project Sponsor

The Project Manager must review the revised Business Case and the Initial Project Plan with the Project Sponsor. Based upon changes to the Business Case and policies within the Performing Organization, the Project Sponsor must decide if a project re-approval cycle is warranted. If project re-approval is necessary, the Project Manager should ensure the appropriate Project Origination processes are followed.

At this point in time, the Project Sponsor may decide to terminate the project. This "go/no-go" decision may be based upon factors outside the control of the Project Manager (i.e., the organization may have new priorities that are in direct conflict with the project or increased risk may have been introduced to the project.) Realistically, termination of a project could happen at any point during the life of a project and is something a Project Manager should always keep in mind.

At the end of this task, the Project Manager must present the deliverable acceptance package to the Project Sponsor or an authorized designee and obtain his/her signature on the Project Deliverable Approval Form, indicating approval to proceed to Project Planning. If the Project Sponsor does not approve the contents of the acceptance package, he/she should indicate the reason for rejecting it. It is then the responsibility of the Project Manager to resolve any issues regarding the deliverables and to present the updated package to the Project Sponsor again.

Deliverable

◆ **Signed Project Deliverable Approval Form** – a formal document indicating that the deliverable has been reviewed and accepted.

Figure 2-13 New York State Project Deliverable Approval Form

New York State
Project Deliverable Approval Form

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Project Name: _____   Date: _____

Project Sponsor: _____   Project Manager: _____

---

*Enter the **Project Name**.*
*Enter the current **Date**.*
*Enter the name of the **Project Sponsor**.*
*Enter the name of the assigned **Project Manager**.*

DELIVERABLE INFORMATION

Project Phase: _____   Date: _____

Deliverable Name: _____   Author: _____

---

*Enter the current **Project Phase**.*
*Enter the current **Date**.*
*Enter the **Name** of the **Deliverable** being presented for approval and the **Author's** name.*

If appropriate, information for multiple deliverables may be included for approval on a single acceptance form.

ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

Criteria:

---

*For each deliverable being presented, describe the **Criteria** that must be met in order for the deliverable to be considered acceptable. The text from the Project Plan can be used.*

Figure 2-13 (Continued)

New York State
Project Deliverable Approval Form

REVIEWER INFORMATION

Reviewer Name: _____ Role: _____

Deliverable Name: _____

Recommended Action: Approve: ☐   Reject: ☐

Reviewer Comments:

Reviewer Signature: _____

Date: _____

> *Provide the above information for each individual designated as a **Reviewer** for a deliverable.
> The **Reviewer** should include his/her recommendation for **Approval** or **Rejection** of the deliv-
> erable, any **Comments**, and the **Date** reviewed. If the recommended action is rejection of the
> deliverable, the reviewer must explain the reason. NOTE: If the deliverable being presented
> for approval is a project MANAGEMENT deliverable, the reviewer is most likely a member
> of Performing Organization Management who is agreeing to secure required resources for
> the next project management phase. If the deliverable being presented for approval is a
> PROJECT deliverable, the reviewer is most likely a subject matter expert who is providing
> subject expertise and recommending that the approver either approve or reject the
> deliverable. Duplicate the above if more than one reviewer is required.*

APPROVER INFORMATION

Approver Name: _____ Role: _____

Action: Approve: ☐   Reject: ☐

Approver Comments:

Approver Signature: _____

Date: _____

> *Provide the above information for each individual designated as an **Approver** for a deliverable.
> The **Approver** should check whether he/she is **Approving** or **Rejecting** the deliverable and
> include any **Comments**. If the approver is rejecting the deliverable, he/she must provide the
> reason. If the deliverable is being approved, the approver should sign the form and enter the
> **Date** approved.*
>
> *Duplicate the above section if the signature of more than one **Approver** is required.*

Figure 2-13 (Continued)

New York State
Project Deliverable Approval Form

PROJECT MANAGER INFORMATION

_____
Name (Print)

_____   _____
Signature   Date

> *Once a deliverable has been approved, the* **Project Manager** *should indicate his/her agreement by providing a* **Signature** *and* **Date**.

Project Initiation
End-of-Phase Checklist

How To Use

Use this checklist throughout Project Initiation to help ensure that all requirements of the phase are met. As each item is completed, indicate its completion date. Use the Comments column to add information that may be helpful to you as you proceed through the project. If you elect NOT to complete an item on the checklist, indicate the reason and describe how the objectives of that item are otherwise being met.

Figure 2-14

Item Description	Page	Completion Date	Comments	Reason for NOT Completing
Prepare for the Project:	**57**			
Identify and assign the Project Manager	57			
Identify and appoint the Project Sponsor	57			
Identify Project Team Members	57			
Identify Customer Representatives	58			
Review historical information	58			
Document how issues were resolved and decisions made	59			
Review Project Charter template	60			
Work with Project Sponsor and Project Team to gain consensus on project expectations	60			
Write the Project Charter document	60			
Schedule time and location of Kickoff meeting	60			
Invite appropriate attendees	64			
Prepare meeting presentation and agenda	64			
Designate meeting scribe	64			
Prepare materials for distribution at meeting	64			

Item Description	Page	Completion Date	Comments	Reason for NOT Completing
Conduct Kick-off meeting	64			
Distribute notes to all attendees	64			
Establish the project repository	67			
Update the repository with all project correspondence	67			
Define CSSQ:	**69**			
Write the Project Scope Statement	70			
Create preliminary list of roles and skills required	76			
Complete the Project Schedule Worksheet	76			
Create High-Level Schedule	79			
Identify organization's existing quality standards, if any	79			
Identify and document quality standards for each deliverable	79			
Develop staff and materials acquisition plans	85			
Estimate costs of all resources	86			
Calculate the preliminary project budget estimate	86			
Perform Risk Identification:	**90**			
Solicit input on risk identification from Project Team, Project Sponsor, and Customer Representatives	90			
Analyze scope, charter, historical information	91			
List all risks identified	91			
Develop Initial Project Plan:	**92**			
Identify Internal and External Stakeholders	92			
Outline Stakeholders' roles and responsibilities	92			

Item Description	Page	Completion Date	Comments	Reason for NOT Completing
Understand Stakeholder communication requirements	93			
Write Communications Plan	94			
Compile all documentation and deliverables from Project Initiation	102			
Produce Initial Project Plan	103			
Confirm Approval to Proceed to Next Phase:	**108**			
Review and refine the initial Business Case	108			
Review all other deliverables from Project Initiation	108			
Obtain buy-in from other managers	108			
Organize deliverables into package	109			
Prepare formal approval form	109			
Present approval package to Project Sponsor for signature	109			
Resolve any issues	109			
Update package as needed to resubmit to Project Sponsor	109			
Get Approval Signature	**109**			

Measurements of Success

The main measurement of success for Project Initiation is the decision to proceed with – or to halt – the project. While in the majority of cases, a well-executed Project Initiation leads to a transition to Project Planning, in some cases the organization is best served by deciding that the project should not continue.

Before the final sign-off, however, the Project Manager can assess how successfully the project is proceeding through its processes by utilizing the measurement criteria outlined below. More than one "No" answer indicates a serious risk to the continued success of your project.

Figure 2-15

Process	Measurements of Success	Yes	No
Prepare for the Project	Do you have a committed, interested and influential Project Sponsor attached to the project?		
	Did you verify that your Project Charter reflects the vision of the areas of the Performing Organization affected by/involved in the project?		
	Did you identify specific benefits the product or service developed by your project will bring to the Customer?		
	Do you have a clear structure for the project repository?		
Define CSSQ	Has your Scope Statement been reviewed and accepted by Customer Representatives who will benefit from your project?		
	In your High-Level Project Schedule, do you know if the effort allocated to various project phases correlate to industry-accepted norms?		
	Has your Quality Management Plan been approved by the member of your organization responsible for quality assurance?		
	Did you review the impact your project costs will have on upcoming fiscal year budgets with the Finance office?		
	Have your staff and materials acquisition plans been reviewed with the Performing Organization who will be paying for the staff and products being acquired?		
Perform Risk Identification	Has the Project Sponsor reviewed your list of risks?		
Develop the Initial Project Plan	Are your Internal and External Stakeholders satisfied with the frequency and content of communications you are providing (consistent with your Communications Plan) as evidenced by a lack of complaints?		
	Have you proactively sought to gauge Stakeholders' satisfaction level?		
Confirm Approval to Proceed to Next Phase	Do you have an approval form signed by your Project Sponsor authorizing you to proceed to Project Planning, or halting the project?		
	Have you provided sufficient information in your Initial Project Plan to allow the Project Sponsor to take the necessary action?		

Phase Risks / Ways to Avoid Pitfalls

Project Initiation lays the foundation for the rest of the project management lifecycle. In the same way that a faulty foundation will result in an unstable and eventually unusable building, an incomplete or improperly executed Initiation will result in a flawed project.

What are some of the key elements of Project Initiation that require the most attention? The following table identifies processes and tasks that are highlighted in this section.

Figure 2-16

Process	Task	Why is it important?
Prepare for the Project	Identify Project Sponsor	A project without a Project Sponsor is like a ship without a rudder – no matter how sleek the hull or how tall the masts, it just can't get anywhere useful.
	Conduct Kick-off Meeting	To continue with a ship metaphor, it's important to get everybody on board before setting sail!
Define CSSQ	Develop High-Level Schedule	Can't sail the seven seas without a map!
Perform Risk Identification	Identify and Document Risks	Identifying and documenting risks is like putting up lighthouses. Fewer wrecks.
Develop Initial Project Plan	Develop Communications Plan	Frequent and comprehensive communications is one of the key project success factors.
Confirm Approval to Proceed to Next Phase	Gain Approval Signature	Just how far out on the plank are you willing to walk? Thought so.

PITFALL #1 – NO SPONSOR, NO CHAMPION

In Prepare for the Project, the first imperative is securing a Project Sponsor. Without the Project Sponsor to guide and support the project, the Project Manager has an impossible choice of either trying to take on the responsibilities of a Project Sponsor – for which he has no authority, or trying to secure the commitment of unwilling or uninterested executives – over whom he has little influence.

Having one Project Sponsor who is high enough in the organization to be of help, and interested enough in the outcome to be involved, is ideal. However, in many cases, the organization insists on two people – usually managers from two main business functions involved in the project – serving as joint Project Sponsors. This situation is not a disaster – unless the managers are severely at odds with each other, especially about what the project ought to accomplish. In most cases, the Project Manager can sit down with the Project Sponsor(s) (as early as possible), and hammer out a common vision of what the project is supposed to do. Some of the useful questions to ask to gain consensus are:

■ What are we trying to accomplish? What is the desired outcome?

■ Who will benefit, and in what ways?

■ Why is the project important to YOU?

■ How is it going to change the way people do their work?

■ How will the organization adjust?

However, when the number of Project Sponsors exceeds two, trouble may be afoot. There will be so many more delays getting everyone to the same place, or chasing everyone down, so many more difficulties achieving a consensus, so many more corrections to deliverables, so many more minds to convince, so many more personalities to please. You'd better add lots of time to your schedule for securing necessary approvals!

The effort you will expend in securing an interested, influential Project Sponsor now will pay dividends throughout the duration of the project. In some organizations, often those with a defined project selection method, projects may only be requested by someone willing to be the Project Sponsor.

PITFALL #2 – INEFFECTIVE KICK-OFF MEETING

The importance of selecting an effective Project Team and writing a comprehensive Project Charter is self evident and well understood. However, the other key, but frequently overlooked or lightly regarded task in Prepare for the Project is the kick-off meeting. When conducted, the kick-off meeting is often wasted in a pro-forma, listless exercise of bringing unwilling participants together and stultifying them with boring recitations of project objectives, replete with industry buzzwords and technical jargon. Instead, you should look at the kick-off meeting as your opportunity to ignite interest in the project, secure enthusiastic participation in crucial activities later on, and set accurate expectations about what the project is – and is not – likely to accomplish.

How? First of all, the kick-off meeting should be a creative, participatory exercise, involving all attendees. Second, it should emphasize and focus on how the project and its eventual product will benefit each attendee. And third, it should be a showcase for the Performing Organization's commitment – and interest – in this project, and your team's enthusiasm for it.

To make it a creative, joint exercise, you may consider asking the attendees to share ideas on why the project is important and how it will benefit the organization as a whole. To involve self-interest, you may also want to ask participants to explain how the project will benefit each of them specifically, making their jobs better, easier or more fulfilling; and if they can't come up with anything, have the Project Sponsor make appropriate suggestions. To showcase executive commitment, develop a draft of "talking points" for the Project Sponsor to use in a statement at the beginning of the kick-off meeting, explaining why the organization is making a significant investment in this project, from both budgetary and human resource standpoints. Finally, this is a great opportunity to showcase yourself and your team, and demonstrate great enthusiasm for the project, which will be contagious and will set the tone for the activities to come.

PITFALL #3 – CHICKEN BEFORE EGG, SCHEDULE BEFORE TASKS

The task that gives Project Managers the most trouble is coming up with a Project Schedule before the project tasks are well defined and before many important project decisions are made. It is a lucky Project Manager who is not seized by "analysis paralysis" at this stage of the game. How can I commit myself to an estimate (and let's not kid ourselves – the estimate you do put down will become a commitment, which the Performing Organization will immediately embed in whatever budgetary or strategic plan they are developing) without knowing enough about the project? This paradox is easily resolved if you can estimate as you go along – one phase at a time. Unfortunately, that is a luxury afforded few, if any, Project Managers. The budgeting process demands answers well ahead of the game, and there is no avoiding it.

The one thing that can help at this stage is experience – either personal, or in the form of organizational historical data. If you have been involved in similar projects in the past, you develop a feel for how long things take, and what obstacles – other than product-related – must be overcome and accounted for in the schedule. However, if you are new to project management, to the Performing Organization, or to the technology, you need to fall back on organizational knowledge. If you are lucky, the organization captured lessons learned from prior projects, and you can find out how long similar efforts have taken. More likely, no such knowledge base exists other than in people's heads, and your Project Sponsor can perform an important service in helping identify and recruit Project Managers who may have been involved in similar efforts. Make sure those efforts were actually successful – after all, you do not want to make the same mistake twice. Ask to see their initial and final Project Schedules. If they don't have either one (or worse, both) move along – anecdotal evidence is of very limited use in real life.

Armed with all applicable knowledge, the moment finally comes to grab a mouse and start scheduling. Most of the time, the end date for the project will be pre-defined by some event outside your control – executive commitment, governmental mandate, or some physical constraint. In that case, "backing into" an estimate is eminently reasonable. Walk through the entire project lifecycle backwards, making informed "guesstimates" along the way, and see if you end up at the beginning with today's date.
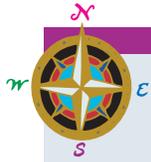
Keep in mind that most early estimates tend to be on the optimistic side, before reality sets in. Consider your first attempt optimistic. Now make a second, more pessimistic attempt, assuming Murphy's law. This will provide you with the worst-case scenario. The truth is probably somewhere in the middle.

In other cases, there is a budget limit that must be adhered to. Once again, you can back into your schedule by estimating how many weeks, months or years of effort by a reasonably-sized team the expected budget would support, and from there you can use the industry-standard percentages for product development lifecycles to approximate what your effort is going to be. Decide whether you will schedule according to effort, which is defined as the number of hours, days, or weeks per person, versus duration, which is defined as the number of work days or work weeks per task regardless of number of people. For a phase for which you have the most data (or experience), run a "reasonableness" check to see if the estimate makes sense. Finally, you may have a completely blank slate – freedom to commit necessary resources over a reasonable time frame to get the job done in quality fashion. And when you wake up from that pleasant dream, you will go back to the first two options.

But most of all, do not obsess over your preliminary schedule (that's why it's called "high-level"). <u>Document carefully all your estimating assumptions, and run it by as many experienced and knowledgeable people as you can – not the least, your Project Sponsor (that's also why it's called "high-level").</u>

PITFALL #4 – PRETENDING NOTHING WILL GO WRONG

The one process that shockingly few organizations engage in despite the fact that it can provide the most "bang for the buck" is risk management, which consists of risk identification, assessment, and mitigation. Notice, there is nothing here that says "risk avoidance." You can't avoid risk – stuff will happen, and most of it will negatively impact your project, if you let it. What you can do is anticipate it, and be ready with a solution before the problem arrives. Once again, either your own experience, or organizational knowledge (captured as historical data in a repository, or as knowledge in people's heads) is the

key. What obstacles, problems and disasters did other projects run into before? How were they dealt with? What was the impact on the schedule?

Consider every aspect of your project. Ask yourself, what can possibly go wrong? What assumptions am I making that may not be accurate, or consistent? Then, for every risk factor that you identify, you need to determine how it can affect your project.

PITFALL #5 – NOT ENOUGH TALK

Another activity that costs very little, but can provide enormous benefits, is communication. In fact, one of the few success factors consistently cited by the majority of New York State agencies in analyzing successful projects was frequent and comprehensive communication. Communication keeps all the players in the loop, avoids unpleasant surprises, and builds confidence in project progress and success. Nobody ever complains that they are being told too much, but they usually resent being told too little.

Building an effective Communications Plan starts with accurately accounting for all the players. Don't forget the Project Team, the Project Sponsor(s), all of the Customers, and internal and external Stakeholders. Anyone who will be in any way affected by the product or service that your project will develop must be communicated to at some point, and most likely throughout, the project lifecycle. For every player involved, determine how frequently the communication should occur (hint: early and often) and what it should contain (hint: the more the merrier). Of course, make sure it's OK with your Project Sponsor(s), but if you run into opposition on that front, remind them that even the old Soviet Union did end up discovering glasnost (openness).

PITFALL #6 – IS THE PROJECT OFFICIAL?

Finally, you are all done with Initiation. Your schedule is a work of art. Your Project Charter inspires masses to commit great deeds. Your Project Plan is correct and complete. You think you are done? Not until you have a signature of someone that matters on a piece of paper that certifies that your opinion of your

work is justified, and that you have authorization to proceed to the next phase.

Remember that unless you are in the highly unusual situation of being your own boss, you do not have the authority to certify your own work, or the clout to commit resources to continue. And unless you want to go very far out on that proverbial limb, you need to have proof that someone with proper authority – most likely, your Project Sponsor – is on board with what you have done, and what you are about to do.

No matter how happy your Customers and your Project Sponsor may be with your approach and your schedule, no matter how enthusiastic your Project Team, or your whole department, is with your plans, the only cover that you will have when things go terribly wrong (which, of course, if you've done everything correctly – including getting the approval form – will not happen) is that signature on that piece of paper. So please, do yourself a favor, and get that bulletproof vest before venturing into the shooting gallery known as The Rest of the Project.

PITFALL #7 – WE DON'T REALLY NEED TO FOLLOW ALL THESE STEPS, DO WE?

Skipping tasks and their documentation in Project Initiation can cause serious consequences affecting all of the subsequent phases of your project. Project Management (as well as just basic Management) methodologies were developed not because people had nothing better to do with their time, but in response to crises and disasters that resulted precisely from seat-of-the-pants approaches. (See PITFALL #5 in Project Planning.)

Frequently Asked Questions

What if no one will agree to be the Project Sponsor?

Although no one may have assumed the official role of Project Sponsor, someone secured the funding for this project, and someone appointed you to manage it. Talk to that person, explain the role of the Project Sponsor, and notify him that you will consider him your Project Sponsor unless someone else is identified to fill that position. (See Pitfall #1, No sponsor, no champion.)

What happens later on if my time/money estimates are off by 50 to 100 percent?

Accurate estimating takes a lot of effort, knowledge, available historical data, and a bit of luck. Chances are, your estimates are going to be off; the only questions are, by how much, and what will you do about it.

Your lack of accuracy could be due to one or both of the following: (1) you did a lousy job estimating (usually due to lack of historical comparative data) and/or (2) things changed. In the first case, take responsibility for your mistake, use it as a "learning opportunity," and make sure everyone realizes what you are doing. In the second case, make sure everyone's aware of the changes as soon as they occur, and use the change control umbrella to cover you. Remember – management hates "surprises." It is better (for your career, at least!) to be off by a lot if everyone knows about it well ahead, than to be off by a little – and have it be a total surprise to the decision-makers. In both cases, it behooves you to document your estimating process and assumptions, and reforecast on a regular basis. If an underestimate becomes apparent, identify root causes, define corrective actions and alternatives, and work back with the Project Sponsor to head off any significant degradation of Project Schedule.

And finally, if your project is in real trouble, it may be time to initiate Project Triage. (See Section II:1, Project Triage.)

How do I justify the initiation time to the Project Sponsor or Customer who just wants it done?

It's called "Customer education." Encourage your Project Sponsor and your key Customers to read (or at least peruse)

this *Guidebook*. Explain to them the benefit they will derive from proper planning. Illustrate your arguments by pointing to other projects (hopefully, disastrous) and explaining why they failed (hopefully, due to lack of planning). Seek persuasive allies among their colleagues. And finally, use it as a continuous improvement opportunity: explain what has to be accomplished, and ask for a creative way of getting the same result using some other means. Who knows, they may actually come up with a process improvement that you can use as a best practice later on. (See Pitfall #7 for more details.)

What can you do if the Performing Organization doesn't recognize the importance of project management or feels that they can do it better?

This is a kind of variation on the theme of the previous question. You can either try to persuade the folks that it's the right thing to do, or lead by example and just do it the right way. It is unlikely that everyone doesn't understand project management; seek out people with similar ideas, and have them bolster your arguments. Seek assistance from OFT PMO with justifications and examples of successful projects done right. Brandish this *Guidebook* and follow the practices it advocates.

Is the Project Manager expected to perform all of the tasks required of the role? Can some tasks be delegated in whole or in part?

Great question! Management means "getting work done through others." Delegation is one of its principal tenets. Depending on the size of the project, the Project Manager may be physically unable to perform some of the duties outlined in this book. For example, take new team member orientation. Ideally, the Project Manager would spend a chunk of time with every team member, inculcating proper disciplines and techniques. However, what if the Project Team comprises hundreds of members? Project Team Leaders must be identified to take on those responsibilities. But remember, it is still the Project Manager's responsibility to verify that delegated tasks are being executed correctly.

The most succinct way to answer this question is this: the Project Manager must do whatever it takes to have every task

done right, on time, and within budget. Whether you accomplish this by sitting on the beach and firing off occasional e-mails (improbable), or by spending all your waking moments in the office (undesirable), you are still doing a fine job.

What do you do if the Project Sponsor doesn't fulfill his/ her role to the level of satisfaction expected by the Project Manager?

The first thing to remember is it doesn't pay to fight your Project Sponsor. The Project Sponsor is your principal ally and bene-factor. Reason, persuasion and education are the way to go.

First, make sure your Project Sponsor knows that you are both trying to accomplish the same goal: to solve a business issue with the product of the project. Second, make sure the Project Sponsor understands – and agrees with – the approach the proj-ect is taking. Finally, once you have established commonality of interests, you can gently educate your Project Sponsor on the responsibilities of the position, and if his understanding differs, try to come to terms to which you both agree. Always argue from the benefit standpoint, explaining how a particular action on her part will benefit the project – and eventually the Project Sponsor.