### 1. Team Leadership

#### Similarities

- All three frameworks emphasize that leadership is not only about authority but about inspiring confidence, motivating teams, and aligning work with organizational vision. Each standard underlines that without effective leadership, even the most well-defined processes cannot achieve intended benefits.
- Collaboration, trust-building, and shared accountability are common themes. PRINCE2, ISO 21502, and PMBOK 7 each acknowledge that leadership extends beyond directing tasks—it requires engaging stakeholders, mediating conflicts, and fostering a culture where people feel responsible for outcomes.
- Communication is central to leadership in all three: project leaders
  must ensure clarity of objectives, transparent reporting, and
  responsiveness to team concerns.

- PRINCE2: Leadership is primarily embedded in role definitions and responsibilities. For example, the Project Manager directs work through Work Packages, while the Project Board provides strategic leadership via tolerances and decision-making. The focus is on structured governance rather than adaptive leadership behaviors.
- ISO 21502: Leadership is seen through the lens of competence and organizational governance maturity. It explicitly requires that leaders' competencies are verified before project governance is

formalized, linking leadership to the wider system of accountability and approval in the organization.

PMBOK 7: Leadership is formalized as one of the 12 Project
 Management Principles, highlighting stewardship, servant leadership,
 adaptability, and systems thinking. This makes PMBOK 7 much more
 explicit about interpersonal skills and adaptive leadership than
 PRINCE2 or ISO.

## Unique Points

- **PRINCE2**: Relies heavily on **structure over soft skills**. Leadership is implicit within the governance hierarchy—e.g., the Project Board's authority supersedes individual leadership traits. This structural reliance reduces emphasis on interpersonal adaptability.
- ISO 21502: Unique in requiring explicit competence validation of leaders. Before approving governance structures, organizations must confirm that project managers, sponsors, and governing roles have the necessary skills. This creates a formal link between governance and leadership competence.
- PMBOK 7: Codifies leadership as a guiding principle, making it part of its core philosophy. It uniquely positions the project manager as a servant leader—responsible not only for delivering outputs but for ensuring the well-being, engagement, and empowerment of the team.

# 2. Delivery & Value

### Similarities

- All three frameworks emphasize that projects should deliver outcomes
   that contribute measurable organizational value, not just
   deliverables. This shift from "output" to "outcome" is a shared
   philosophy across PRINCE2, ISO 21502, and PMBOK 7.
- Benefits realization is linked to delivery success in each. They all
  recognize that project completion is not the end—true success is
  achieved only when intended benefits are realized and sustained over
  time.
- Value is contextualized: delivery is expected to serve both business strategy and stakeholder needs, ensuring alignment across operational and strategic levels.

- PRINCE2: Frames delivery as producing products to agreed quality, time, and cost tolerances. Benefits are not its direct focus during execution but are monitored later in post-project reviews. This makes PRINCE2 more output-focused than ISO and PMBOK.
- ISO 21502: Directly links delivery to benefits management, requiring outcomes to be sustained beyond project closure. The guidance mandates explicit benefit identification, monitoring, and realization checks, embedding benefits into governance.
- PMBOK 7: Organizes delivery within a system for value delivery, where outcomes are the primary drivers of value. Value delivery is seen as continuous and systemic, rather than a one-time measurement

after closure.

### Unique Points

- PRINCE2: Uses Product Descriptions, Product Breakdown Structures
  (PBS), and Product Flow Diagrams to guide delivery. These tools
  make delivery tangible and product-focused, distinguishing PRINCE2
  as highly artifact-driven.
- ISO 21502: Mandates post-project activities to ensure benefits are realized and sustained, requiring ongoing accountability beyond closure. This is stricter than PRINCE2's optional Post Implementation Review.
- PMBOK 7: Positions value delivery as the organizing principle.
   Delivery is framed in relation to value networks, customer outcomes, and strategic alignment, going beyond structured product creation.

# 3. Tailoring & Adaptability

- Each standard highlights tailoring as essential: no one-size-fits-all approach is adequate for the diversity of projects.
- Tailoring applies across roles, processes, methods, and governance. It
  ensures that the project management approach aligns with context,
  complexity, and stakeholder expectations.

• Flexibility is recognized as key to adapting methods to industry, organization, and environmental factors.

#### Differences

- PRINCE2: Tailoring means scaling the method to the project environment while ensuring its seven principles remain intact. This keeps tailoring within fixed boundaries—it cannot violate PRINCE2's underlying principles.
- ISO 21502: Positions tailoring in terms of organizational maturity. Practices are to be aligned with existing governance systems and compliance requirements. Tailoring thus reflects the maturity of the organization's systems, making it more compliance-driven than PMBOK or PRINCE2.
- PMBOK 7: Tailoring is framed as a core principle in itself. It explicitly
  guides project managers to adjust methods, performance domains,
  and practices, with examples and step-by-step tailoring guidance.

- PRINCE2: Clear rule: tailoring must not undermine its seven
   principles. This makes tailoring structured yet restricted compared to PMBOK's flexibility.
- ISO 21502: Links tailoring to ISO's broader maturity improvement goals, requiring alignment with corporate governance and compliance.

  This connects tailoring not just to projects, but to organizational

growth.

• PMBOK 7: Provides detailed tailoring guidance and examples, making adaptation a practical process rather than a theoretical concept. This sets it apart as the most flexible and actionable of the three.

### 4. Models, Methods, and Artifacts (Techniques)

#### Similarities

- All frameworks recognize that models, tools, and artifacts are vital for structuring project work, capturing information, and guiding decision-making.
- They encourage practitioners to select methods contextually, recognizing that the effectiveness of techniques depends on project environment, complexity, and stakeholder needs.
- Risk registers, stakeholder analyses, and performance measurement tools are widely acknowledged as useful across all three standards.

- PRINCE2: Provides a detailed list of management products such as the Project Brief, Project Initiation Document (PID), Risk Register, Issue Log, and End Stage Report. These artifacts are embedded within processes, making them mandatory in practice. PRINCE2 places stronger emphasis on documentation than the other two.
- ISO 21502: Intentionally remains tool-agnostic. It provides practice-level guidance (e.g., on risk, quality, stakeholder engagement) but avoids prescribing specific tools. This ensures wide applicability

across industries and sectors with differing toolsets.

PMBOK 7: Introduces an extensive Models/Methods/Artifacts
 (MMA) catalog, which is unique among the three. The catalog
 integrates predictive, agile, and hybrid approaches, covering
 techniques like Kanban boards, Monte Carlo simulation, Earned Value
 Management (EVM), and stakeholder mapping.

# Unique Points

- PRINCE2: Distinguishes itself through product-based planning artifacts such as the Product Breakdown Structure (PBS) and Product Flow Diagram (PFD), which emphasize deliverable-focused planning.
- ISO 21502: By deliberately avoiding specific tools, ISO maximizes cross-sector applicability and allows organizations to map its practices onto their existing systems.
- PMBOK 7: The MMA catalog is a comprehensive repository that covers both traditional and adaptive methods, giving practitioners flexibility to mix approaches in hybrid projects.

# 5. Development Approach

#### Similarities

 All three frameworks acknowledge predictive, iterative, adaptive (agile), and hybrid approaches as valid depending on project objectives, risk, and context.

- Each framework stresses that the development approach should align with uncertainty levels, stakeholder expectations, and organizational strategy.
- Flexibility in selecting life cycle approaches is considered essential for managing complexity and ensuring success.

### **Differences**

- PRINCE2: Naturally aligns with predictive environments, emphasizing controlled stage boundaries and tolerances. Agile compatibility is handled through a separate extension, PRINCE2 Agile, not within the core manual.
- ISO 21502: Embeds the development approach directly within the
  project life cycle, explicitly requiring organizations to define whether
  predictive, adaptive, or hybrid strategies are being used. It links these
  to governance gates, making the choice part of organizational
  accountability.
- PMBOK 7: Treats Development Approach & Life Cycle as one of its eight Performance Domains. This provides deeper integration than PRINCE2 or ISO, embedding adaptability directly into performance management.

- PRINCE2: Its separation of agile into PRINCE2 Agile highlights its predictive origins. The core methodology remains structured and stage-driven.
- ISO 21502: Requires the chosen development approach to be explicitly aligned with governance gates, making adaptability a formal governance decision.
- **PMBOK 7**: Embeds development approach guidance into its domain structure and provides **extensive adaptability resources**, making it the most practical for hybrid or fast-changing environments.

### 6. Governance & Business Case

#### Similarities

- Governance in all three frameworks establishes decision-making structures and accountability mechanisms to ensure alignment with organizational objectives.
- A business case is mandatory in each framework, ensuring that projects are justified in terms of value, benefits, and alignment with strategy.
- Stage gates or decision points serve as checkpoints for validating ongoing alignment with the business case.

- PRINCE2: Governance is enforced via the Project Board, which
  oversees strategic alignment. The Business Case is updated
  continuously throughout the life cycle, ensuring sustained justification.
- ISO 21502: Requires the business case to contain minimum specified content such as objectives, benefits, costs, risks, and timescales.

  Governance is integrated into broader organizational oversight, aligning project governance with enterprise systems.
- PMBOK 7: Places the business case within the value delivery system, emphasizing outcomes rather than fixed templates. Governance is conceptualized less as a rigid structure and more as alignment with the system of value delivery.

- PRINCE2: Embeds governance through the principle of Management by Exception, where tolerances dictate when escalation is needed. This minimizes micromanagement by ensuring the Project Board intervenes only when objectives are at risk.
- ISO 21502: Unique in requiring a formal specification of business-case content, ensuring that all cases meet a minimum standard of rigor and comparability across projects.
- PMBOK 7: Treats governance as value alignment, positioning the business case not just as a project initiation document but as a living mechanism for aligning projects with organizational strategy and benefits realization.

### 7. Project Life Cycle & Tailoring

#### Similarities

- All three frameworks require that projects be organized into defined phases or stages with decision gates. These gates serve as control points to validate whether the project should proceed, adjust, or terminate.
- They stress that the chosen life cycle should fit the project's complexity, risk, and context, not be applied in a one-size-fits-all manner.
- Tailoring within the life cycle is recognized as necessary—ensuring methods, processes, and governance structures remain relevant and proportionate.

- PRINCE2: Mandates stage boundaries that are highly structured, with each stage requiring approval through an End Stage Report and creation of a Stage Plan. These boundaries create strong control but also make PRINCE2 naturally more rigid.
- ISO 21502: Links each project phase explicitly to governance decisions, requiring that governance structures review progress, risks, and benefits before allowing transitions between phases. This makes life cycle control more integrated with organizational governance.
- PMBOK 7: Places life cycle selection under the principle of tailoring. It does not prescribe fixed stages but instead provides guidance for

predictive, adaptive, or hybrid cycles, encouraging flexibility to match the project environment.

## Unique Points

- PRINCE2: Strong emphasis on Stage Plans and mandatory stage boundaries, ensuring a predictable rhythm of governance reviews.
- **ISO 21502**: Obligates explicit **governance-gate linkage** for every phase transition, making life cycle progression part of organizational accountability.
- PMBOK 7: Explicitly encourages hybrid life cycles, blending predictive and adaptive methods. This makes it the most open to experimentation and modern practices.

# 8. Roles & Organization

- All three standards require clear definition of roles and responsibilities, ensuring that accountability and authority are well understood.
- Each framework distinguishes between the sponsor (or governing role), who secures resources and approves strategy, and the project manager, who leads day-to-day management.

• Team empowerment is recognized across all, though with varying levels of emphasis.

#### **Differences**

- PRINCE2: Provides prescriptive role templates within its
  organizational theme, defining responsibilities for the Project Board
  (Executive, Senior User, Senior Supplier), Project Manager, Team
  Managers, and others. This makes role allocation structured and
  uniform.
- ISO 21502: Takes a competence-based approach, where the temporary project organization must be approved only once the competence of appointed individuals is verified. Role descriptions are adaptable but linked to organizational maturity.
- PMBOK 7: Leaves role design flexible, encouraging empowerment and self-organization. Instead of prescribing positions, it frames roles as functions that can be adapted depending on team size, environment, and delivery approach.

- PRINCE2: Provides RACI-like descriptions for every role, ensuring clarity of accountability. Its governance structure (Project Board) is unique in how it embeds both supplier and user perspectives.
- ISO 21502: Unique in requiring competence verification before governance approval, making role assignment a formalized step in

project setup.

 PMBOK 7: Frames roles as adaptable functions rather than titles, enabling agile teams to adopt fluid structures (e.g., servant leaders, product owners) while still meeting project needs.

### 9. Planning (Scope, Schedule, Cost, Resources)

#### Similarities

- All frameworks emphasize that planning must be integrated and iterative, addressing scope, schedule, cost, and resource requirements in a coordinated way.
- Planning is not a one-time exercise; it evolves as risks are identified, requirements clarified, and conditions change.
- They all highlight that planning must remain aligned with the business case and overall project justification.

- PRINCE2: Uses product-based planning as its foundation. It requires
  creation of a Product Breakdown Structure (PBS) and detailed
  Product Descriptions, which then drive the Work Packages, schedules,
  and costs. This makes PRINCE2 heavily deliverable-focused.
- ISO 21502: Aligns planning directly with the business case and benefits realization. Plans must explicitly show how outputs will

contribute to outcomes and benefits. It allows flexibility in planning artifacts but requires alignment to governance oversight.

PMBOK 7: Defines Planning as one of its eight Performance Domains, emphasizing integrated methods and adaptability. It leverages the MMA catalog to provide a wide range of planning tools, from predictive scheduling (e.g., critical path) to adaptive methods (e.g., backlog refinement).

## Unique Points

- PRINCE2: Strongly emphasizes PBS and Product Descriptions, ensuring that deliverables and quality criteria are fully defined before work is authorized.
- ISO 21502: Promotes progressive justification, requiring plans to be continuously validated against the evolving business case.
- PMBOK 7: Unique in its broad MMA catalog for planning, making it the most comprehensive in offering both traditional and agile planning techniques.

# 10. Risk Management & Uncertainty

- All frameworks recognize risk management as ongoing and iterative throughout the project life cycle, not a one-time activity.
- They all require risk identification, assessment, prioritization, mitigation planning, and escalation procedures.

- Each emphasizes the importance of assigning ownership to risks and ensuring accountability for response actions.
- Both threats (negative risks) and opportunities (positive risks) are acknowledged, though the terminology and emphasis differ slightly.

- PRINCE2: Defines risk as "the chance of exposure to the adverse consequences of future events". Risks are closely tied to tolerances and stage boundaries, meaning they are escalated when they threaten to exceed authorized limits. PRINCE2 prescribes the use of a Risk Register, Risk Log, and structured assessment techniques, embedding risk reviews at each stage.
- ISO 21502: Positions risk management within its governance and benefits framework. It explicitly requires projects to define risk appetite in the business case. Activities include identifying, analyzing (probability, consequence, proximity), treating (avoid, accept, transfer, mitigate, exploit, enhance), and monitoring. Risks must be owned by designated individuals.
- PMBOK 7: Expands risk into the broader concept of uncertainty. It frames Principle 10 as "Optimize Risk Responses", urging teams to balance threats and opportunities. Beyond risks, it addresses ambiguity, volatility, and complexity as uncertainty factors. Instead of prescribing specific tools, it uses the MMA catalog to recommend adaptive methods such as Monte Carlo simulations, risk-adjusted forecasting, and resilience planning.

### Unique Points

- PRINCE2: Strongly links risks to tolerances and exception
  management. It provides prescriptive governance tools like Risk
  Registers and mandates formal risk ownership.
- ISO 21502: Explicitly requires definition of acceptable risk levels (risk appetite) as part of the business case, making it the most governance-integrated approach.
- PMBOK 7: Unique in treating risk within the wider domain of uncertainty, incorporating complexity and resilience thinking rather than limiting itself to conventional risk registers.

## 11. Quality, Configuration & Change Control

- All three emphasize quality planning, assurance, and control as integral parts of project management. Quality is not only about final deliverables but also about processes and stakeholder satisfaction.
- Change control is universally recognized as critical to prevent uncontrolled scope creep and to maintain alignment with agreed baselines.
- Configuration management is treated as part of governance, ensuring that all project products and baselines are identifiable, traceable, and controlled.

#### Differences

- PRINCE2: Defines quality as "the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service which bear on its ability to satisfy stated and implied needs". Quality is addressed through Quality Plans, Quality Reviews, and Product Descriptions. Change control is formalized under Project Issues, categorized as Requests for Change, Off-Specifications, or Questions. A Change Authority (delegated by the Project Board) handles approvals. Configuration management is fully embedded, requiring a Configuration Librarian and a Product Status Account to track items.
- ISO 21502: Focuses on outputs being "fit for purpose or use". Quality management requires a quality management plan with acceptance criteria, assurance methods, and validation techniques. Quality assurance includes independent audits. Change control follows a five-step structured cycle: framework setup, request identification, assessment, planning, implementation, and closure. A Change Register must track all requests.
- PMBOK 7: Integrates quality into its Delivery and Measurement
   Domains, emphasizing built-in quality and prevention over inspection. It
   does not prescribe tools but references an extensive quality toolkit in
   the MMA catalog. Change control is framed as part of the value
   delivery system, requiring all changes to be assessed in terms of
   potential value contribution.

# Unique Points

• PRINCE2: Heavy reliance on configuration management artifacts (logs, baselines, reports) and structured governance roles like the

### Change Authority.

- ISO 21502: Unique five-step change control cycle with mandatory tracking and closure of each change request. Independent quality audits are also emphasized more strongly than in PRINCE2 or PMBOK.
- PMBOK 7: Embeds quality into domains rather than treating it as a separate discipline, while linking change directly to value realization, making it the most adaptive.

### 12. Stakeholder Engagement & Communication

### Similarities

- All three standards stress that stakeholder engagement is fundamental to success, requiring early identification, analysis, and continuous engagement.
- Communication is seen as a tailored process—messages must be adapted to stakeholders' influence, interest, culture, and needs.
- Engagement and communication are not one-off actions but ongoing strategies that evolve as the project progresses.

#### **Differences**

 PRINCE2: Stakeholder engagement is operationalized through artifacts like the Communication Management Strategy, and formal reporting tools such as Highlight Reports, Exception Reports, and End Stage Reports. Communication flows are structured through governance roles, ensuring accountability but making the process formal and report-driven.

- ISO 21502: Treats stakeholder engagement and communication management as two separate practices. Stakeholders must be mapped by interest, influence, and expectations, and managed with planned strategies. Communication is formalized as "enabling stakeholder interactions that are effective and likely to contribute to successful outcomes", considering cultural and geographic factors.
- PMBOK 7: Elevates stakeholder engagement to an entire Performance Domain, making it one of the eight domains of project success. Engagement is framed as building and maintaining positive relationships, starting before project initiation and continuing throughout. Stakeholder analysis includes power, impact, proximity, alliances, and attitude. Communication is adaptive, with strategies like push, pull, and interactive methods.

- PRINCE2: Unique in delivering stakeholder communication primarily through predefined management products and governance roles, keeping it formal and structured.
- ISO 21502: Unique in treating stakeholder engagement and communication management as distinct practices, requiring explicit planning, execution, and monitoring of each.
- PMBOK 7: Unique in positioning stakeholder engagement as a
   Performance Domain, with emphasis on adaptive strategies,

collaboration, and active co-creation with stakeholders, rather than just reporting.

## 13. Benefits, Post-Project Activities & Lessons Learned

#### Similarities

- All three frameworks emphasize that benefits realization is the ultimate measure of project success. Deliverables and outputs only matter insofar as they produce outcomes that create measurable value.
- They each require **post-project activities** to evaluate outcomes, verify benefits, and ensure sustained alignment with the business case.
- All emphasize lessons learned as critical to organizational learning—capturing insights, documenting experiences, and feeding them back into future projects.

- PRINCE2: Tightly links benefits to the Business Case, which must be reviewed throughout the project. Post-project evaluations, such as the Post Implementation Review (PIR), assess whether anticipated benefits were realized. Lessons are formally captured in a Lessons Learned Report, and closure requires a formal handover of products to operations.
- ISO 21502: Positions benefits within Benefit Management (Clause 7.3). Benefits must be identified, analyzed, tracked, and sustained throughout and beyond the project. Post-project activities are mandatory, including benefit monitoring and responsibility transfer to

ensure continuation. Lessons learned are captured systematically in Clause 7.18, with emphasis on structured dissemination across the organization.

PMBOK 7: Frames benefits within the Value Delivery System. The
focus is on outcomes and their contribution to strategic goals.
Benefits realization is not just post-project but an ongoing process
tied to the principle "Focus on Value". Lessons learned are embedded in
its principle of continuous learning and improvement, encouraging
iterative feedback and adaptation.

## Unique Points

- PRINCE2: Formal closure products like the End Project Report, Lessons Learned Report, and PIR make it uniquely prescriptive in documenting closure and benefit follow-up.
- ISO 21502: The only one that makes benefit sustainment checks and accountability transfer mandatory, ensuring that benefits are not lost after handover.
- PMBOK 7: Distinct in embedding benefits into a system of value delivery, linking them to enterprise strategy rather than treating them as project-end activities.

# 14. Measurement, Performance & Reporting

- All frameworks require regular progress monitoring and reporting to ensure alignment with objectives and to enable governance bodies to make informed decisions.
- Emphasis is placed on transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making.
- Each highlights the importance of linking performance data to forecasts, risks, and benefits.

- PRINCE2: Uses the principle of Management by Exception, setting tolerances for time, cost, scope, and risk. If tolerances are breached, escalation occurs via Exception Reports. Reports include Highlight Reports (status for the Project Board), Checkpoint Reports (from Team Managers), End Stage Reports, and the End Project Report. The reporting system is structured, formal, and linked to governance roles.
- ISO 21502: Defines performance management as enabling "appropriate and timely progress reporting and supporting decision-making" (Clause 7.13). Reports are tied to governance gates, ensuring that progress data supports approval decisions. ISO recommends performance measures such as earned value analysis, productivity metrics, quality audits, and benefit realization indicators.
- PMBOK 7: Introduces Measurement as a Performance Domain, framing it as systematic collection, analysis, and communication of data. It emphasizes both leading and lagging indicators, predictive analytics, and visualization tools like dashboards. PMBOK also

recommends agile measures such as velocity, throughput, and burn charts in addition to traditional earned value.

### Unique Points

- **PRINCE2**: Exception-based reporting minimizes administrative effort, as only deviations trigger escalation.
- ISO 21502: Uniquely ties reports directly to governance gates, embedding reporting within organizational oversight.
- PMBOK 7: Unique in highlighting diagnostic and predictive indicators, offering the most modern toolkit with dashboards, KPIs, and adaptive measurement techniques.

## 15. Procurement & Supplier Management

#### Similarities

- All three frameworks stress that procurement and supplier management are critical where external vendors are involved.
- They emphasize clear contracts, governance oversight, and accountability for ensuring supplier performance.
- Each recognizes procurement as not just transactional but also a governance-driven function ensuring alignment with project objectives.

- PRINCE2: Integrates suppliers into governance through the Senior Supplier role on the Project Board. This role represents supplier interests and ensures technical integrity of deliverables. Supplier management is thus a core governance responsibility, not a separate process.
- ISO 21502: Treats procurement as a distinct practice (Clause 7.12), covering activities like requirement definition, planning, supplier selection, contract management, and closure. Supplier performance must be monitored continuously, and procurement must align with organizational policies and governance procedures.
- PMBOK 7: Frames procurement within the MMA catalog, offering both predictive and adaptive techniques. Traditional tools include make-or-buy analysis, source selection, and contract negotiation, while adaptive practices include lean contracting, incremental funding, and iterative procurement to support agile projects.

- **PRINCE2**: The only framework where suppliers are formally represented on the **governing board**, giving them a voice in high-level decisions.
- **ISO 21502**: Uniquely prescribes **contract governance processes** and requires that procurement activities comply with organizational approval systems.
- PMBOK 7: The only one to explicitly include agile/lean procurement techniques, offering flexibility for modern, adaptive environments.