

Assignment Guidance and Front Sheet

This front sheet for assignments is designed to contain the brief, the submission instructions, and the actual student submission for any WMG assignment. As a result, the sheet is completed by several people over time, and is therefore split up into sections explaining who completes what information and when. Yellow highlighted text indicates examples or further explanation of what is requested, and the highlight and instructions should be removed as you populate 'your' section.

To be completed by the student(s) prior to final submission:

Your actual submission should be written at the end of this cover sheet file or attached with the cover sheet at the front if drafted in a separate file, program or application.

Student ID or IDs for group work	5597768
----------------------------------	---------

To be completed (highlighted parts only) by the programme administration after approval and prior to issuing of the assessment; to be consulted by the student(s) so that you know how and when to submit:

Date set	22/4/2025
Submission date (excluding extensions)	19 th May 2025 by 12pm UK time
Submission guidance	To be submitted electronically via Tabula
Late submission policy	<p>If work is submitted late, penalties will be applied at the rate of 5 marks per University working day after the due date, up to a maximum of 10 working days late. After this period the mark for the work will be reduced to 0 (which is the maximum penalty). "Late" means after the submission deadline time as well as the date – work submitted after the given time even on the same day is counted as 1 day late.</p> <p>For Postgraduate students only, who started their current course before 1 August 2019, the daily penalty is 3 marks rather than 5.</p>
Resubmission policy	<p>If you fail this assignment or module, please be aware that the University allows students to remedy such failure (within certain limits). Decisions to authorise such resubmissions are made by Exam Boards. Normally these will be issued at specific times of the year, depending on your programme of study. More information can be found from your programme office if you are concerned.</p>

To be completed by the module owner/tutor prior to approval and issuing of the assessment; to be consulted by the student(s) so that you understand the assignment brief, its context within the module, and any specific criteria and advice from the tutor:

Module title & code	WM9J4-15
Module owner	Lydia Adigun
Module tutor	Lydia Adigun
Module marker	
Assessment type	Module Assignment- Report
Weighting of mark	80%

Assessment brief

MODULE ASSIGNMENT BRIEF

This module assignment (MA) is designed to enable you to apply your learning from the topics covered on the module and from your further reading. You are expected to demonstrate your understanding and application of the theories, frameworks and tools covered in the module by applying them to a project or programme in the public domain.

Overall Module Marks: 20 Marks are awarded for Portfolio of case study exercises leading to final group presentation and the remaining 80 marks are from completion of the MA.

For the MA, **20 marks** are awarded for 'Effort and Presentation' along the lines outlined in the MSc Marking Brief, and **60 marks** are for 'Comprehension and Analysis'. (See the Example Marking Criteria Grid)

The work should be presented and formatted as a report with numbered headings and sub-headings and a Table of Contents. There should be clear 'Introduction', Body of the Report and 'Summary and Conclusion' sections. Please use the Harvard (or APA) style of referencing.

Word Limit: - There is a word limit of 3,200 (+/- 200) words for this assessment. You will be credited for staying within the tolerances of this word limit. Additional words which dramatically exceeding these tolerances may not be marked.

QUESTION 1:

Research and analyse the conduct of **ONE** of the following high-profile projects/programmes:

- a) Hong Kong Pearl River Delta Bridge Project (also called the Hong Kong–Zhuhai–Macau Bridge (HZMB) - 2008-2019 OR
- b) The Edinburgh Trams Project (2007-2014), OR
- c) The 2012 London Olympics Legacy Programme, OR
- d) St Helena Airport Project (2005-2017), OR
- e) The BBC Digital Media Initiative (DMI), (2008-2013), OR
- f) The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), OR
- g) The Three Gorges Dam in China, OR
- h) The Delhi Metro Rail Project in India, OR
- i) The Lagos Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System, OR
- j) The Tokyo 2020 Olympics, OR
- k) The Elizabeth Line, OR
- l) M-Pesa Mobile Money in Kenya, OR
- m) The Uber Disruptive Business Model Project, OR
- n) The Netflix Original Content Development Project

Then:

(a) Prepare a brief but systematic analysis of your chosen case study, and in this context critically discuss and analyse what is meant by 'successful.'

It is expected that your work will include examples from the case study and reference to academic literature. Argue with justification whether the project/ programme you have selected was OR was NOT successful. **(10 marks)**

AND

(b) Critically analyse and discuss some (4-5) of the factors or practices that contributed to this outcome (successful/not successful). To what extent are these a result of good/poor project/programme strategy? Support and justify your answer with examples from the case study and theory. **(30 Marks)**

AND

(c) Evaluate and recommend how utilisation of programme or project 'best practices or theories' project/programme strategy either contributed to the success or might have assisted in avoiding the problem. **(20 Marks)**

Example Detailed Matrix of Marking Criteria

Category	Criteria	Description
Comprehension & Analysis	Relevant subject matter	All the material included should be relevant to the PMA. You should <i>not</i> include irrelevant or repetitive material or that which is tangential to the subject matter.
	Conceptual understanding demonstrated	Evidence of understanding the theories/models/principles employed. We would expect there to be an introduction which shows a good grasp of the question and provides a clear outline of the scope of the PMA. We would not expect you to launch straight in with no attempt to introduce and define the topic. The question set is the one to which we expect an answer, not the one that you think it should have been.
	Technical competence - theoretical constructs applied	Appropriate selection of theories/models/principles from the academic literature to fit the theme of the assignment. The factual material that you include should be correct and of sufficient quantity for the subject covered.
	Clearly developed critical arguments	Points are connected by clear lines of argument, building validly from evidence to conclusions. We are looking for a piece of work which is well argued.
	Evidence of originality & independent thinking	Evidence of taking an original/creative perspective on the topic. We are looking for clear evidence of your own insight, imagination and innovative thought. Whilst we expect you to use various sources, you should not place too much dependence on material paraphrased from books. <i>Material which is copied directly from books or other sources without proper acknowledgement will be severely penalised (see your student handbook).</i>
	Main issues	Main themes fully discussed and explored, optimising any word count limit. Inclusion of all PMA requirements.
	Analysis, synthesis, application	Intelligent synthesis of theory and practice. Critical application of concepts to illuminate the question.
	Discussion	We are looking for a piece of work with all the main issues explored and evaluated. In this category we would expect more than just descriptive work where there is little analysis or criticism.
	Conclusions	Logically derived, justified and clearly expressed conclusions.
	Recommendations	Where required, sound practical and justified recommendations.
Effort & Coverage	Range of appropriate academic references	Wide use of reputable, published background literature, supplemented – where appropriate – with relevant online resources.
	Use of sourced evidence from actual case organisation	Effort demonstrated to obtain a range of appropriate case-organisation information. We would expect answers to incorporate good, relevant use of company/industrial examples to illustrate any theoretical points.
	Objectives	The main objectives and requirements of the work are covered.
	Relevant material	Balance of supporting unbiased, reputable, and published material between academic and case information.
Overall Presentation	Production	Appropriate vocabulary, grammar and punctuation; PMA production is laid out and arranged correctly for an academic document, with appropriate use of fonts, indentations, line breaks, etc.
	Communication skills/clarity of expression	English-language drafting is easy to follow and understand; appropriate critical writing style for an academic document.
	Structure	A clear and logical structure throughout the PMA, reflecting the key themes, arguments and marshal your ideas clearly. Explicit introduction and conclusion sections, outlining and summarising the PMA. You should adopt a clear theme or line of argument. Please observe word count guidance.
	Use of diagrams	Diagrams/figures/tables are used appropriately to support the text and are properly labelled, sourced and clear to understand. Professionally presented.
	Contents sheet	Each assignment should contain a content sheet with the right level of detail/sections, including all the sub-sections of all questions, with relevant page numbers.
	Page numbers	All pages should be clearly and correctly numbered.
	References & Reference List	We would be looking for evidence of a critical and wide-ranging use of relevant literature. Any references should be properly cited and listed and you should appreciate and demonstrate the difference between a reference list and bibliography (if used).

Example Format:
MODULE TITLE

Table of Contents

1	Heading 1 – Suggested that you use this for each Question answered	5
1.1	Heading 2 – suggested that you use this for each sub-heading in each question answered.....	6
1.1.1	Heading 3 – you may use this heading as appropriate	6

Enter a page break here and between each question

- **Heading 1 – Suggested that you use this for each Question answered**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heading 2 – suggested that you use this for each sub-heading in each question answered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heading 3 – you may use this heading as appropriate

Word count	Word Limit: - There is a word limit of 3,200 (+/- 200) words for this assessment (not including tables and references). Additional words which dramatically exceeding these tolerances may not be marked.
Module learning outcomes (numbered)	<p>These should match your approved module proposal: see https://moduleapproval.warwick.ac.uk/#proposing to get there quickly.</p> <p>LEARNING OBJECTIVES:</p> <p>On completion of this module, case studies, exercises and assessments students should be able to:</p> <p>ILO1. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding and ability to analyse and successfully operate in the complex context and stakeholder environment in which programmes and projects are initiated.</p> <p>ILO2. Apply a range of theoretical models or frameworks to analyse the multiple factors (e.g systemic, strategic, human, organisational, operational and sustainability) that influence the initiation and governance of projects and programmes.</p> <p>ILO3. Evaluate project and programme practices, methods, tools and techniques and select approaches that are fit-for-purpose in a specific project or programme context.</p> <p>ILO4. Design project and programme initiation documents and management plans and be able to justify the design decisions.</p>
Learning outcomes assessed in this assessment (numbered)	2-4
Marking guidelines	In line with departmental guidelines and marks per part of MA question and 'Example Detailed Marking Grid'
Academic guidance resources	<p>Where further help may be received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPA Module & notes • PPS MA Briefing Session, Slides and Notes as part of Module (See Moodle & Teams) • Student questions to Tutor via Teams or Moodle.

The following is pre-populated for PGT assignments only:

Writing your Module Assignment (MA): specific additional advice for WMG's Postgraduate Taught Students
As a postgraduate level student in WMG you may have some concerns about your ability to write at the high standard required. This short guide is intended to provide general guidance and advice. It is important that if you have any questions, you discuss them with

your module tutor. Remember, in writing your MA you need to meet the expectations of the reader and university.

A good MA generally requires you to answer the question and to include...

1. A title, with your student number, module, lecturer's name, and any other documentation required by the university.
2. A contents page and if appropriate, an abstract.
3. An introduction which acts as a 'map' to the rest of the document, describing the aim or purpose of the work and explaining how this aim is achieved. At this point it is usually helpful to paraphrase your conclusion.
4. Evidence of an appropriate level of background reading of relevant texts.
5. Evidence of systematic and clear thinking, indicative of good planning and organisation.
6. Writing which makes sense, is clearly and carefully presented (proof-read and grammar checked).
7. A critical style of writing which compares and contrasts the main theories, concepts and arguments with conclusions that are based in evidence presented.
8. High levels of accurate academic referencing.
9. A logical and well-defined structure with headings and subheadings.
10. Clearly labelled and well-presented diagrams and other graphics that are discussed in the text.
11. Adherence to usual academic standards including length and a timely submission.
12. A reference section in which every source that is cited in the text is listed.

Where to get help:

1. **Talk to your module tutor if you don't understand the question or are unsure as to exactly what is required.**
2. The university Academic Writing centre provides workshops and useful tools to help you in all aspects of your work. <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/skills/academicwriting/>
3. Avoiding Plagiarism, the university's site to help you to reference properly <https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=42224>
4. Wellbeing support services <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/wss>
5. Numerous online courses provided by the University library to help in academic referencing, writing, avoiding plagiarism and a number of other useful resources. <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/your-library-online/>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2	UNDERSTANDING PROGRAMME SUCCESS	1
2.1	Traditional Measures of Success.....	1
2.2	The role of Stakeholders.....	2
2.3	Strategic and long term success.....	2
2.4	Summary of Success Criteria	2
3	EVALUATION OF DMI PROGRAMME	3
3.1	Time and Schedule Performance	3
3.2	Budget and Cost Performance.....	3
3.3	Scope and User Satisfaction	4
3.4	Strategic and long term success.....	4
3.5	Strategic Alignment.....	4
3.6	Stakeholder Analysis.....	4
3.7	Summary: Was DMI Successful ?	6
4	FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE FAILURE OF THE DMI PROGRAMME	7
4.1	Governance and Accountability	7
4.2	Oversight and Risk Management.....	9
4.3	Stakeholder Engagement and Requirements	11
4.4	Benefits Management and Strategic Misalignment.....	11
5	APPLICATIONS OF BEST PRACTICES TO PREVENT FAILURE	12
5.1	Governance and Accountability	12
5.2	Benefit Realization Management	14
5.3	Stakeholder Engagement	15
5.4	Risk and Escalation Management.....	15
6	CONCLUSION	16
7	REFERENCES	17

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Name	Pg.No
1	DMI Stakeholder Analysis	5
2	Comparison of DMI Governance Practices with Best Practice Expectations	8
3	Example Risks Identified (or overlooked) in the DMI Programme	10
4	RACI Matrix for Key Roles and Responsibilities in the DMI Programme	13

1. INTRODUCTION:

The Digital Media Initiative (DMI) was one of the BBC's most ambitious technology transformation programmes. It aimed to modernize the organization's production and archiving workflows by replacing legacy tape-based systems with a fully digital solution (BBC Trust, 2013). Central to this vision was the development of bespoke production tools and an integrated digital archive system. However, what began in 2008 as a forward-looking strategic investment ended in 2013 as a failed programme (NAO, 2013). After spending £125.9 million, the initiative was terminated with only a limited-use archive database to show for it (NAO, 2013). Even after a £27.5 million settlement from Siemens, the BBC recorded a net loss of £98.4 million, positioning DMI among the most high-profile public sector IT failures in recent UK history (Public Accounts Committee, 2014).

Although aligned with the BBC's wider digital transformation objectives, DMI failed to deliver against the core dimensions of success: timely delivery, cost control, stakeholder satisfaction, and benefits realization (BBC Trust, 2013; APM, 2020). This report contends that these failures were driven by fundamental breakdowns in governance and accountability, poor stakeholder engagement, ineffective risk oversight, and an absence of benefits-led programme thinking.

This report critically evaluates DMI's strategic execution by analyzing the key factors that contributed to its failure. It draws on project and programme management literature to assess what went wrong and considers how the adoption of best practices, such as clearly defined governance roles, proactive benefits management, and structured stakeholder engagement, might have improved the outcome.

2. UNDERSTANDING PROGRAMME SUCCESS

2.1 Traditional Measures of Success

The project's success is traditionally defined using the cost, time, and quality—that is, delivering the project on schedule, within budget, and according to the defined quality standards. This combination is also called the iron triangle, which is seen as the foundation of project success (Morris et al., 2011; OGC, 2011). However, while these metrics remain important, they are often inadequate for evaluating success in complex or strategic programmes. Large-scale initiatives, especially in the public sector, frequently operate in

changing environments with multiple stakeholder groups and evolving goals. In such contexts, a more comprehensive definition of success is needed.

2.2 The role of Stakeholders

Stakeholder acceptance and satisfaction are essential to determining real programme success. Even if outputs are delivered, they hold little value without stakeholder support or adoption. Engagement should go beyond one-way updates. It involves identifying key stakeholders, understanding their expectations, and involving them meaningfully throughout the programme. Thiry (2015) emphasises that stakeholder needs evolve, so ongoing engagement is critical. Without it, programmes risk delivering solutions that miss the intended output and outcomes.

2.3 Strategic and long term success

Beyond stakeholder satisfaction, a successful programme must also achieve its intended business outcomes. A technically well-executed project can still fail if it does not generate value or meet broader organizational needs. This highlights the distinction between “doing the project right” and “doing the right project” (OGC, 2011).

The success criteria outlined in project strategy literature include four key dimensions: project efficiency, customer impact, business and direct success, and long-term preparation for the future (Patanakul and Shenhar, 2012). These help evaluate both immediate performance and strategic contribution.

Furthermore, programme success should align with the organisation’s strategic direction. It should enable long-term capability and competitive advantage, not just short-term outputs (Morris et al., 2011). Even if full delivery fails, the learning or innovation gained may still contribute to future success.

2.4 Summary of Success Criteria

In summary, programme success is no longer defined solely by delivery within time, cost, and quality constraints. While the Iron Triangle remains relevant, it must be expanded to include stakeholder satisfaction, business value, and strategic alignment. Programmes must not only meet delivery expectations but also create meaningful outcomes, gain user acceptance, and contribute to long-term organizational goals.

3. EVALUATION OF DMI PROGRAMME

3.1 Time and Schedule Performance

The DMI programme experienced significant delays, failing to meet key deadlines and demonstrating poor time management. Initially contracted to Siemens in 2008 with a delivery target of May 2009, no working system was delivered, leading to contract termination (Public Accounts Committee, 2014). Even after the BBC took the project in-house, revised deadlines were repeatedly missed, reflecting poor planning, inadequate feasibility testing, and unrealistic scheduling (NAO, 2013; OGC, 2011). Time performance is a key measure of project success, and DMI fell short (Patanakul and Shenhar, 2012). The key milestones of DMI are shown in the timeline below.

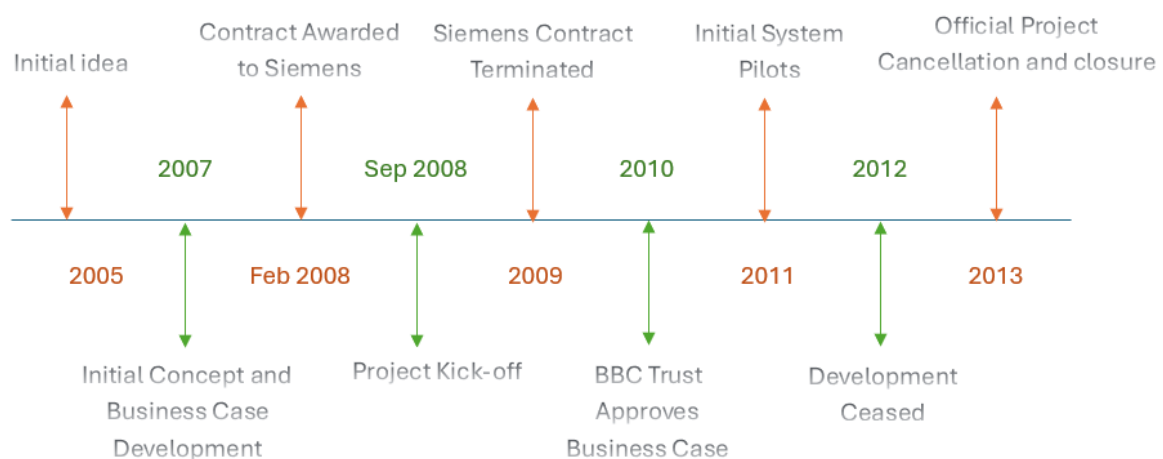


Figure 1: Timeline of major events in the DMI programme (Source: Adapted by author)

3.2 Budget and Cost Performance

DMI was also a budgetary failure. The initial budget was estimated at £81.7 million, later revised to £133.6 million. By the project's closure, the BBC had spent £125.9 million, and even after recovering £27.5 million from Siemens, the BBC had incurred a net loss of approximately £98 million (NAO, 2013). Projects are deemed successful in cost terms if they deliver within budget or at least yield value commensurate with their cost (Patanakul and Shenhar, 2012). DMI did neither—it consumed massive resources with negligible return. According to OGC (2011), a programme must add value, or it is better to close it. The BBC did eventually terminate DMI, recognising that continued investment was unjustified (BBC Trust, 2013).

3.3 Scope and User Satisfaction

Moreover, DMI failed to achieve its intended objectives. Only partial tools were delivered and tested in a small number of departments, which highlights that the full system was never scaled across the BBC as intended (Oral Evidence, 2014; BBC Trust, 2013). Users found these tools neither useful nor aligned with expectations. This signifies a misalignment between stakeholder expectations and final outputs. The NAO (2013) observed that user needs and technical development became increasingly disconnected, with no effective resolution. DMI failed to deliver the scope and failed to meet customer satisfaction, part of the "impact on the customer" success dimension (Patanakul and Shenhar, 2012).

3.4 Business Outcomes and Benefit Realization

DMI also failed to achieve the expected business outcomes and benefits that justified its existence. With a promised financial saving of £97.9 million and major improvements in production processes by 2017, the project was closed in 2013, long before the realization of any benefits (BBC, 2009; NAO, 2013). The net effect was negative, with the BBC writing off most of its investment and reverting to alternative solutions. In OGC (2011) terms, if a programme adds no value, it should be closed. DMI was indeed closed when the lack of benefit realization became evident.

3.5 Strategic Alignment

Best-practice programme management emphasizes remaining aligned with corporate strategy. A truly successful project not only fits strategic goals but also delivers capability to advance them (Morris et al., 2011; OGC, 2011). DMI's strategic intent was valid—supporting digital transformation, but it did not translate into deliverables. Strategic alignment alone does not equate to success. In this case, the BBC was left with none of the promised products.

3.6 Stakeholder Analysis

Understanding stakeholder roles, interests, and influence is crucial for programme success, especially in complex environments like the DMI. Stakeholder analysis helps anticipate needs, manage expectations, and align delivery with strategic objectives (APM, 2020; Bourne, 2016). Table 1 summarizes the key stakeholders involved in the DMI programme, providing essential context for the engagement and governance challenges discussed in later sections.

Table 1: DMI Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder Name	Type	Role / Responsibility	Interest Level	Influence Level
BBC Executive Board	Internal	Strategic leadership and programme oversight	High	High
BBC Trust	Internal	Statutory governance and final project closure approval	High	High
BBC Finance Committee	Internal	Budget planning, approvals, and financial oversight	Medium	High
BBC Future Media & Technology Division	Internal	Responsible for in-house delivery after Siemens contract ended	High	High
BBC Internal DMI Project Team	Internal	Day-to-day project management and implementation	High	Medium
John Linwood (CTO & Programme Director)	Internal	Executive sponsor, accountable officer for DMI	High	High
BBC Archive Team	Internal	End-user group expected to benefit from improved digital media systems	Medium	Low
BBC Editorial & Production Teams	Internal	Primary users of DMI for digital content creation and management	High	Medium

BBC North (Salford & Bristol)	Internal	Regional BBC hubs affected by implementation	Medium	Low
Siemens	External	Original contracted vendor for DMI technology delivery (2008–2009)	High	High
Capita	External	Independent assurance provider post-Siemens	Medium	Medium
Accenture	External	Brought in for advisory or technical review (as referenced in some reports)	Medium	Medium
PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers)	External	Possible involvement in auditing or assurance capacity	Low	Low
National Audit Office (NAO)	External	Independent auditor post-closure to evaluate project failure	High	High
Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee	External	Conducted accountability hearings and reviewed public expenditure	High	High

3.7 Summary: Was DMI Successful?

In conclusion, DMI failed to meet the core success criteria outlined in Section 2. It was late, over budget, lacking in stakeholder satisfaction, and failed to deliver intended benefits or long-term strategic value. Despite its alignment with digital transformation goals, the

programme must be considered unsuccessful due to fundamental breakdowns in delivery, planning, and stakeholder alignment.

4. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE FAILURE OF THE DMI PROGRAMME

4.1 Governance and Accountability

Effective programme governance ensures clear roles, decision-making authority, and accountability structures to align a programme with its strategic goals (APM, 2020). In the case of DMI, governance was inadequate for the programme's scale and complexity. The Public Accounts Committee confirmed that the absence of a Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) led to missed early warning signs. This absence likely contributed to weaknesses in decision-making, oversight, and benefit realization—areas that are typically the responsibility of an SRO (The Stationery Office, 2011).

Instead of centralizing accountability, delivery and benefits realization were split between the Future Media & Technology division and operational units. This fragmentation resulted in misalignment and confusion. Morris et al., (2011) argue that weak governance structures and unclear accountabilities often allow risks to go unaddressed.

The BBC's decision to terminate Siemens and bring the programme in-house further escalated risk—but without adapting governance structures to match the new complexity (National Audit Office, 2013). Pellegrinelli, Partington and Hemingway (2007) state that programmes lacking empowered boards and strong sponsor commitment often fail in execution. DMI exhibited both these weaknesses.

The APM (2020) emphasizes the importance of adapting governance to match risk exposure, particularly during major transitions. However, the BBC did not strengthen oversight nor address internal capability gaps. As a result, DMI lacked the strategic control mechanisms needed for a digital transformation programme of this scale. These governance failures directly contributed to delivery delays, unresolved risks, and ultimately, programme collapse.

Table 2 is the Comparison against MSP's governance themes shows the gap between best practice and DMI's reality:

Table 2: Comparison of DMI Governance Practices with Best Practice Expectations

Governance Theme	Best Practice Expectation	DMI Reality
Programme Organization	Clear hierarchy with SRO, Programme Board, BCMS, and defined responsibilities	No clear SRO. The CTO had dual roles. The Programme Board lacked authority and visibility.
Vision	Shared, compelling vision communicated to align teams and stakeholders	Vision existed initially, but was not reinforced after the Siemens contract termination.
Leadership & Stakeholder Engagement	Proactive engagement strategy and tailored communication	Production staff disengaged. Technical and user teams were misaligned.
Benefits Management	Defined benefit profiles, ownership, and monitoring linked to business case	Benefits vague and untracked. No central strategy post in-house transition.
Blueprint Design & Delivery	Clear future-state blueprint with phased delivery through tranches	One partial toolset delivered. No integration with archive/production systems.
Planning & Control	Realistic schedules, gated reviews, and structured reporting	Unrealistic timelines. No strong control mechanisms. Escalation was absent.
Business Case	Routinely updated with ROI and strategic relevance	Not updated in time. Cost escalated while value diminished.
Risk & Issue Management	Risk register, escalation paths, and mitigation planning	Risks identified but not acted on. No formal escalation. NAO cited management gaps.
Quality Assurance Management	Independent reviews built into lifecycle	Minimal assurance. PwC and NAO only involved near end of project.

4.2 Oversight and Risk Management

DMI's oversight at both executive and trustee levels was inadequate. A core oversight failure was the delay in escalating critical risk information. By the end of 2011, DMI had been flagged as "red" in internal risk ratings, indicating serious issues. However, this was not communicated to the BBC Executive Board until June 2012, and to the BBC Trust until July—creating a six-month gap where decision-makers remained unaware of the programme's deteriorating condition (National Audit Office, 2013). This suggests not only a lack of structured escalation processes, but also a weak culture of transparency. According to *Managing Successful Programmes* (OGC, 2011), effective programme oversight requires timely and transparent reporting to allow corrective action. Without this, programmes in high-risk environments cannot recover in time.

Risk management in DMI was also poorly handled. For instance, the BBC's internal audit found that their RAID (Risks, Assumptions, Issues, Dependencies) log was not regularly updated. Several major risks were either not logged or went unreviewed during critical periods, including between January and April 2012 (BBC Trust, 2013). As a result, potential problems were not tracked or mitigated effectively. A technical review further revealed that project requirements were fragmented across multiple systems, making risk identification difficult (BBC, 2013).

PwC (2013) also highlighted that DMI's risk reporting overly focused on technical issues, while neglecting organisational or business risks. This left major gaps in strategic risk visibility. Media coverage also revealed that warning signs had been visible since 2011, but failed to trigger action (Sweney, 2013). If DMI had maintained a structured risk register and proper escalation pathway, critical threats, such as a lack of internal capability and missing assurance checks, might have been mitigated. Table 3 below illustrates example risks that were unmanaged or unlogged during the programme's lifecycle, directly contributing to its failure (BBC Trust, 2013; PwC, 2013; National Audit Office, 2013).

Table 3: Example Risks Identified (or overlooked) in the DMI Programme

Risk ID	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	RAG Rating	Mitigation Strategy	Owner	Status
R-001	In-house development may exceed the BBC's technical capability	High	High	Red	Recruit experienced system architects; engage technical advisors	Programme Manager	Not logged
R-002	Inadequate stakeholder engagement may lead to misalignment of user needs	Medium	High	Red	Form a cross-departmental steering group; continuous user feedback	Change Manager	Partially logged
R-003	Lack of independent assurance may result in blind spots	High	High	Red	Quarterly external reviews; escalate audit issues to the Board	Risk Lead	Ignored
R-004	Unclear accountability (no empowered SRO) may stall decisions	High	Medium	Amber	Appoint a clear SRO with authority; define the RACI model	Executive Board	Not addressed
R-005	The over-ambitious scope may lead to under-delivery	Medium	High	Red	Review scope vs. capacity; implement stage-gate process	Programme Board	No action taken

4.3 Stakeholder Engagement and Requirements

One of the main reasons for DMI's failure was the lack of clearly defined user requirements and weak stakeholder engagement. From the beginning, the BBC treated DMI more as a technology project than a business change programme (National Audit Office, 2013). Early tech components were rolled out to demonstrate progress, but there was little effort to gather and confirm what end users actually needed, particularly those involved in production and archiving. As a result, the system being developed did not reflect operational realities.

By mid-2012, an internal review showed there was still no clear blueprint or finalized vision for what the system should deliver (BBC, 2013). This contributed to frequent changes, confusion in procurement, and the rollout of tools that did not match user workflows. Many intended users reported disengagement, expressing that they no longer wanted the tools, largely because they felt excluded and saw no clear benefit (Public Accounts Committee, 2014).

According to Managing Successful Programmes, stakeholders should be involved early and continuously, not simply informed, to ensure their needs guide the design and delivery process (OGC, 2011). In DMI, the Future Media & Technology division worked in isolation, assuming user requirements instead of consulting stakeholders. This created resentment and confusion. An internal audit later found that there was no shared vision for how DMI would support daily work (BBC Trust, 2013). Without stakeholder buy-in, many staff simply ignored the system or developed workarounds, especially during the transition to Salford (Public Accounts Committee, 2014).

The BBC's failure lay in treating stakeholder engagement as a tick-box activity rather than an integral part of programme strategy. This resulted in a loss of trust, poor adoption, and ultimately a lack of support for the programme long before its termination.

4.4 Benefits Management and Strategic Misalignment

One of the biggest reasons DMI failed was the BBC's poor handling of benefits and its inability to keep the programme aligned with what the organization actually needed. Programmes are not just about delivering output, they are about achieving outcomes and creating value. According to Managing Successful Programmes, benefits should be actively managed

throughout the lifecycle, with regular reviews to ensure continued alignment with strategic goals (OGC, 2011). If the situation changes, it is essential to reassess whether the original plan remains valid.

However, this did not happen in DMI. The original business case promised nearly £100 million in benefits, including staff time savings and easier content reuse (National Audit Office, 2013). But as delays mounted and delivery changed, the business case was not updated. Even in 2012, the programme continued to rely on outdated assumptions from 2010 (BBC Trust, 2013). As Pellegrinelli, Partington and Hemingway (2007) explain, when strategy and delivery become disconnected, programmes risk becoming exercises in “doing for the sake of doing” — a pattern clearly visible in DMI.

A good benefits strategy involves mapping outputs to outcomes, assigning benefit owners, and reviewing benefit relevance over time (OGC, 2011; APM, 2020). DMI failed to do this. The divisions responsible for delivering benefits were not engaged or held accountable. As delays grew, strategic focus eroded. Even the Executive Board acknowledged that by the end, the original goals were outdated and no longer fit for purpose (Public Accounts Committee, 2014).

In the end, DMI was not just a delivery failure but a strategic one. The programme continued well beyond the point at which its original value proposition was viable—ultimately consuming resources without delivering the promised transformation.

5. APPLICATION OF BEST PRACTICES TO PREVENT FAILURE

5.1 Governance and Accountability

Effective governance is the foundation of many successful projects and programmes. Yet the BBC failed to establish this for DMI. One of the core weaknesses was the absence of a single accountable leader. Best practice highlights that a clearly appointed Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) is essential for maintaining alignment between delivery and strategy (APM, 2020; Müller, 2009). In DMI, responsibility was fragmented. The Future Media & Technology division handled delivery, while business units were expected to realize benefits, resulting in no unified leadership (Public Accounts Committee, 2014).

A simple governance tool like a RACI matrix could have clarified roles, reduced confusion, and ensured strategic accountability was assigned to a specific individual or board (Thiry, 2010). The table 4 below is an example of how accountability might have been structured:

Table 4: RACI Matrix for Key Roles and Responsibilities in the DMI Programme

Task / Responsibility	SRO (Exec Sponsor)	Programme Manager	Future Media & Tech	User Departments (Production, Archive)	Steering Group	BBC Trust
Define programme vision and strategic alignment	A	C	C	C	R/C	I
Approve the business case and funding	A	C	I	I	R/C	C
Delivery of technical solution	I	A	R	C	C	I
Requirements gathering and prioritisation	C	C	C	R	I	I
Stakeholder engagement and communication strategy	C	A/R	C	R	C	I
Benefits realisation tracking	A	R	I	R	C	I
Risk register oversight and escalation	A	R	C	C	C	I
Programme performance reporting	A	R	C	C	C	I

In addition, forming a cross-departmental steering group could have enabled faster decisions and ensured risk signals were escalated early (APM, 2020). DMI lacked this layer of oversight and transparency, which meant project updates often failed to reach senior management in time (NAO, 2013). Leadership also failed to reassess the programme's strategic fit, allowing DMI to continue despite significant changes in value and feasibility. Regular strategic reviews might have helped the BBC either stop or adapt the programme earlier, saving time, resources, and reputation.

5.2 Benefits Realisation Management

Despite spending £125.9 million, the DMI programme delivered almost none of its intended benefits. According to Thiry (2015), benefits are the reason a programme exists. Yet the BBC allowed DMI to continue without revisiting its original business case even as delays and delivery changes made the promised outcomes unrealistic (BBC Trust, 2013). Regular benefit reviews at key decision points could have led to early course correction or justified closure, reducing sunk costs (APM, 2020; OGC, 2011).

Using tools like a benefits map or BoOP map would have visually linked each output to intended outcomes and strategic goals (OGC, 2011; Thiry, 2015). This could have made benefit tracking more transparent and clarified how each element contributed to the wider business case.

Another key gap was benefit ownership. No one in the BBC was directly accountable for converting outputs into measurable value. Thiry (2015) highlights that assigning benefit owners creates active responsibility and improves alignment with business needs. In DMI's case, the absence of ownership meant benefits were overlooked and neglected as the system's relevance declined and expectations went unmanaged.

By embedding benefit-focused thinking across the lifecycle and reviewing the business case each time the scope or delivery changed, the BBC could have better ensured DMI remained strategically valid and deliverable.

5.3 Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement in DMI was underdeveloped, contributing to poor user adoption and a lack of trust. Despite affecting a wide range of users, especially producers and editorial staff, DMI did not meaningfully involve them in shaping the solution (Public Accounts Committee, 2014). According to the APM Body of Knowledge (2020), engagement must go beyond communication; it should actively influence decisions and foster shared ownership.

DMI treated engagement as a procedural task rather than a strategic activity. Frameworks such as MSP (2011) and stakeholder engagement guidance from Bourne (2016) stress the importance of mapping stakeholders, understanding their influence and expectations, and designing two-way communication strategies. A simple stakeholder engagement matrix could have helped the BBC tailor its approach to each group's power, interest, and needs.

Moreover, the absence of a change management plan added to the problem. Burnes et al. (2012) argue that ethical leadership and adaptive engagement are essential during organizational change. By excluding key users from design decisions, the BBC undermined commitment and triggered resistance. The result was a breakdown in user confidence many opted to bypass the system entirely, weakening DMI's value (NAO, 2013; Public Accounts Committee, 2014; BBC Trust, 2013).

If the BBC had developed and followed a clear engagement strategy, involving users and important members in decision-making and feedback, the programme might have maintained broader support and navigated its delivery challenges more effectively.

5.4 Risk and Escalation Management

DMI's failure can be traced to the absence of a healthy risk culture. Despite serious concerns being raised more than a year before the collapse, there is little evidence that these warnings led to meaningful action (BBC Trust, 2013). APM (2020) stresses that having a risk register is not enough; risks must be discussed openly and escalated promptly.

In DMI, critical risks remained within the project team for too long. Escalation to the BBC Executive Board and Trust was delayed by months (Public Accounts Committee, 2014). This lack of structured escalation undermined the ability to act while recovery was still possible.

Implementing a formal escalation protocol, such as automatic board review if milestones slipped beyond tolerance, which could have enforced earlier intervention.

Müller (2009) argues that risk governance should be embedded at all levels of a programme, not just at the top. DMI had no such structure. A stronger risk culture would have enabled open discussions, regular risk workshops, and proactive involvement from independent reviewers, like Internal Audit or PwC, much earlier in the lifecycle.

With these risk governance practices in place, the BBC could have identified and addressed emerging threats before they became unmanageable. Instead, by the time action was taken, most of the damage had already been done.

6. CONCLUSION

The BBC's Digital Media Initiative (DMI) was a strategically ambitious programme that ultimately failed to deliver on its promises of digital transformation, cost savings, and operational improvement. Through the lens of established programme management principles, this report has critically analyzed DMI's failure against key success criteria—time, cost, quality, stakeholder satisfaction, and benefits realisation.

The evaluation revealed that fundamental weaknesses in governance, oversight, stakeholder engagement, and benefits management contributed significantly to the programme's collapse. The report also demonstrated that applying best practices, such as assigning a single point of accountability, managing benefits actively, engaging stakeholders meaningfully, and embedding risk culture, might have prevented many of these issues.

Ultimately, DMI highlights that success in large-scale public programmes is not just about delivering output but about ensuring strategic alignment, organisational value, and stakeholder trust. The lessons drawn from this failure offer valuable guidance for future programmes navigating complex and high-risk environments.

REFERENCES:

- APM (2020) *APM Body of Knowledge*. 7th edn. Princes Risborough: Association for Project Management.
- BBC (2009) *Digital Media Initiative: Strategic Business Case*. London: BBC.
- BBC (2013) *BBC DMI Technical Review: Hypotheses and Findings*. London: BBC.
- BBC Trust (2013) *Review of the BBC's Digital Media Initiative*. London: BBC.
- Morris, P.W.G., Pinto, J.K. and Söderlund, J. (2011) *The Oxford Handbook of Project Management*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- NAO (2013) *The BBC's Management of the Digital Media Initiative*. London: National Audit Office.
- OGC (2011) *Managing Successful Programmes*. 3rd edn. London: The Stationery Office.
- Oral Evidence (2014) *Digital Media Initiative: Oral Evidence, Public Accounts Committee*. London: House of Commons. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmpubacc/744/131216.htm> (Accessed: 22 May 2025).
- Patanakul, P. and Shenhar, A.J. (2012) 'What project strategy really is: The fundamental building block in strategic project management', *Project Management Journal*, 43(1), pp. 4–20.
- Pellegrinelli, S., Partington, D. and Hemingway, C. (2007) 'The importance of context in programme management: An empirical review of programme practices', *International Journal of Project Management*, 25(1), pp. 41–55.
- Public Accounts Committee (2014) *The BBC's Digital Media Initiative: Eighteenth Report of Session 2013–14*. London: The Stationery Office.
- PwC (2013) *BBC DMI – Independent Technical Review: Hypotheses and Findings*. London: PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP.
- Sweney, M. (2013) 'BBC's £100m DMI project "should have been stopped two years ago"', *The Guardian*, 24 May. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2013/may/24/bbc-dmi-project-stopped> (Accessed: 22 May 2025).

- The Stationery Office (2011) *Directing Change: A Guide to Governance of Project Management*. 3rd edn. London: The Stationery Office.
- Thiry, M. (2015) *Program Management*. 2nd edn. London: Routledge.