

Unique Aspects of *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide) – Seventh Edition*

Core Philosophy and Structure

A defining unique feature of the PMBOK® Guide – Seventh Edition is its fundamental shift from a process-based standard to a **principles-based standard** [16, pg. xii-xiii](#). This change was made to reflect the full value delivery landscape and focus on project outcomes rather than just deliverables [1, pg. xii-xiii](#); [16, pg. xii-xiii](#); [42, pg. 4](#). Instead of prescriptive processes, the standard is now built on **12 Project Management Principles** that guide the behavior of project professionals [40, pg. xiii](#); [80, pg. 7](#). The guide's structure is also uniquely organized around **eight interactive and interdependent Project Performance Domains**, such as "Stakeholder," "Team," and "Uncertainty," which represent a system of capabilities working together to achieve project outcomes [1, pg. xii-xiii](#); [19, pg. xiii](#); [26, pg. 10](#); [177, pg. 7](#).

Another unique concept is the **"System for Value Delivery"** [18, pg. xii](#); [24, pg. 4](#); [45, pg. 13](#). This presents a holistic, systems view where projects are seen as components of a larger system—including portfolios, programs, and operations—that work to advance an organization's strategy and business objectives [18, pg. xii](#); [45, pg. 13](#); [51, pg. 16](#).

People, Team, and Stakeholder Engagement

While the PMBOK® Guide has always addressed the human elements of project management, the Seventh Edition elevates this focus through the **Team Performance Domain** [194, pg. 25](#); [211, pg. 30](#). It explicitly details aspects such as project team culture, high-performing teams, leadership skills, and emotional intelligence [194, pg. 25](#); [204, pg. 29](#); [211, pg. 30](#); [218, pg. 32](#). Similarly, stakeholder engagement is framed as both a core **Principle** ("Effectively Engage with Stakeholders") and a dedicated **Stakeholder Performance Domain**, emphasizing building and maintaining relationships to foster alignment and satisfaction [25, pg. 4](#); [101, pg. 18](#); [179, pg. 23](#).

Planning, Risk, and Tailoring

In this edition, **Risk** is uniquely framed within a broader **"Uncertainty Performance Domain,"** which explicitly groups it with ambiguity, complexity, and volatility [29, pg. xviii](#); [402, pg. 93](#); [404, pg. 94](#). This contextualizes risk as one of several facets of uncertainty that project teams must navigate. While previous editions discussed tailoring, the Seventh Edition is unique in having an entire, dedicated top-level section titled **"Tailoring"**. This section provides a detailed, step-by-step process for deliberately adapting the project management approach, governance, and processes to the project's specific context [1, pg. xii-xiii](#); [20, pg. xiii](#); [29, pg. 73](#); [431, pg. 145](#); [443, pg. 151](#).

Other Unique Elements

The guide uniquely includes a dedicated section titled **"Models, Methods, and Artifacts"** [1, pg. xii-xiii](#); [21, pg. xiii](#); [172, pg. 171](#); [469, pg. 172](#). Rather than prescribing specific tools and techniques, this section acts as a flexible toolkit, providing a high-level grouping of commonly used options that project teams can draw upon [21, pg. xiii](#); [470, pg. 172](#). The PMBOK® Guide is also uniquely integrated with **PMIstandards+**™, an interactive digital platform designed to give practitioners access to a dynamic and evolving body of knowledge that supplements the printed guide [1, pg. xii-xiii](#); [21, pg. xiii](#); [22, pg. xiv](#); [176, pg. 22](#). Finally, the guide includes distinct, detailed appendices on the roles of the **Sponsor** and the **Project Management Office (PMO)**, offering expanded guidance on their behaviors, value propositions, and key capabilities [32, pg. 251](#); [607, pg. 256](#); [618, pg. 256](#).

Unique Aspects of *Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2®* 7

Core Philosophy and Structure

The PRINCE2® method is uniquely built around **five integrated elements**: Principles, People, Practices (formerly Themes), Processes, and the Project Context [1075, pg. 4](#). A central and unique part of this structure is the new integrated element called "**People**," which explicitly covers leading successful change, leading successful teams, communication, and understanding the "project ecosystem" of relationships [1076, pg. 4](#); [1169, pg. 32-33](#); [1171, pg. 33](#). Another foundational and unique element is its set of **seven defined Processes**, such as "Starting up a project" and "Closing a project," which provide a clear, step-by-step journey through the entire project lifecycle [1036, pg. 214](#); [1077, pg. 4](#); [1213, pg. 214](#). This process model is a distinctive feature of the PRINCE2 journey [1214, pg. 215](#).

Governance, Stakeholders, and Performance

PRINCE2 has a unique governance structure organized into **four distinct management layers**: Commissioning, Directing, Managing, and Delivering [1039, pg. 76](#); [1326, pg. 76](#). This structure is guided by the "Manage by exception" principle, where authority is delegated by setting tolerances for seven performance targets [1125, pg. 25-26](#); [1144, pg. 25-26](#). Regarding stakeholder engagement, PRINCE2 has a unique approach of structuring its project board and management team to represent three specific primary stakeholder interests: **Business, User, and Supplier** [1032, pg. 74-75](#); [1139, pg. 24](#). In managing performance, PRINCE2 is unique in elevating "**Sustainability**" to one of the seven core performance targets that must be managed and controlled, alongside traditional metrics like cost and time [1086, pg. 7-8](#); [1088, pg. 8](#).

Practices and Management Products

PRINCE2 uniquely combines issue management and change control into a single top-level **Practice** named "**Issues**," which includes a formal 5-step technique for managing both [1035, pg. 168](#); [1654, pg. 168](#); [1673, pg. 173](#). The methodology is also characterized by its use of **16 specific "management products"**, such as the Business Case and Project Initiation Documentation, which are the formal documents required to manage the project effectively [1031, pg. xvii](#). The latest edition introduces a unique management product called the "**Digital and data management approach**," which outlines how digital technology and project data will be created, used, and managed [1750, pg. 203](#); [2049, pg. 296](#).

Commercial Context

PRINCE2 uniquely and explicitly defines the project context in terms of a "**commercial context**" involving a customer and supplier relationship [1092, pg. 9](#); [1094, pg. 9](#). It provides specific guidance on how project roles, plans, and practices should be adapted when a formal commercial agreement or contract exists between the parties involved [1095, pg. 10](#).

Unique Aspects of *ISO 21502:2020*

Core Structure and Lifecycle

ISO 21502 has a unique structure that divides project management guidance into two main categories: "**Integrated project management practices**" and "**Management practices for a project**" [805, pg. 18](#); [809, pg. 26](#). The integrated practices describe the project lifecycle, including uniquely formalized sections on "**Pre-project activities**" and "**Post-project activities**" [805, pg. 18](#); [808, pg. 25](#); [921, pg. 25](#). These activities respectively focus on justifying the project's start and

verifying that outcomes are sustainable and benefits are being realized after project closure [896, pg. 19](#); [927, pg. 26](#).

Governance, Accountability, and Context

While all standards address governance, ISO 21502 provides a dedicated **governance framework** to authorize, direct, and control the project [802, pg. 9](#); [858, pg. 9](#). It places clear accountability for project governance and achievement of objectives on the **Project Sponsor** role [870, pg. 12-13](#). The standard also contains a unique section describing the project from a **"Customer and supplier perspective,"** outlining how governance and team structures should be determined by both parties when a contractual boundary exists [852-853, pg. 7](#).

Specific Management Practices

In its guidance on change, ISO 21502 is unique for explicitly including **"societal change"** alongside organizational change as a distinct management practice [822, pg. 41](#); [995, pg. 41](#). This recognizes that some projects, particularly in government or infrastructure, have impacts that extend beyond a single organization into society at large [993, pg. 41](#); [995, pg. 41](#). The standard also treats "Issues management" and "Change control" as two separate management practices, unlike PRINCE2 which combines them [817, pg. 35-36](#); [818, pg. 36-37](#).

Organizational Preparedness

Finally, ISO 21502 includes a unique section titled **"Prerequisites for formalizing project management"** [804, pg. 16](#); [884, pg. 16](#). This provides guidance for organizations on what to consider *before* establishing a formal project management environment, such as the types of projects undertaken and the organization's capacity to absorb change