Project Planning: Applying the AI Capability Framework

1. Purpose of This Scenario

This scenario supports **project planning activities in research and knowledge-intensive work**, where teams define aims, scope, methods, roles, timelines, and risks before work begins. Project planning is a formative moment: early assumptions shape feasibility, ethics, quality, and downstream impact.

AI is increasingly introduced at this stage to generate project outlines, logic models, timelines, or risk registers. While these uses can accelerate coordination, they also risk **importing generic structures, narrowing methodological choice, or masking uncertainty** if treated as authoritative.

The purpose of this scenario is to help teams **use AI as a planning and sensemaking aid**, while ensuring that project intent, methodological judgement, and accountability remain explicitly human.

This scenario is designed to support:

- Research leads and principal investigators
- Project and programme managers
- Interdisciplinary research teams
- Professional services staff supporting research delivery

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2. Situation & Context

A project is at the planning stage. The team must:

- articulate the problem or question
- agree scope, methods, and deliverables
- identify roles, dependencies, and risks
- align with ethical, regulatory, and funding requirements

Typical pressures include:

- tight timelines or external deadlines
- interdisciplinary coordination challenges
- uncertainty about feasibility or resourcing

AI may be proposed to draft plans or models quickly. How it is used will shape **whether planning is thoughtful and adaptive or prematurely fixed**.

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3. Where AI Might Be Used (and Why That Matters)

AI may be used in project planning to:

- draft project outlines or work packages
- generate timelines or Gantt-style structures
- identify risks or dependencies
- summarise prior work or comparable projects

These uses matter because:

- generic plans can obscure context-specific constraints
- auto-generated timelines may imply false precision
- risk lists may overlook ethical or relational risks

This scenario treats AI use in project planning as **medium-risk with high leverage**, requiring careful framing and review.

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4. Applying the AI Capability Framework

4.1 Awareness

Before using AI, teams should clarify:

- the core purpose and success criteria of the project
- what is genuinely uncertain versus assumed
- which constraints are fixed and which are negotiable

Key awareness questions:

- What problem are we actually trying to address?
- Where do we need flexibility rather than optimisation?
- What assumptions might AI bake in by default?

AI should be used to **surface options and questions**, not to lock plans prematurely.

4.2 Human–AI Co-Agency

In project planning:

- humans remain responsible for intent, scope, and judgement
- AI may assist with organisation, drafting, and comparison

Good co-agency means:

- teams define planning parameters before using AI
- AI outputs are reviewed collaboratively
- ownership of decisions is explicit and human

Avoid:

- treating AI-generated plans as ready-to-run
- delegating methodological or ethical judgement to tools

4.3 Applied Practice

Appropriate AI uses include:

- generating multiple planning structures for discussion
- stress-testing timelines under different assumptions
- identifying gaps or misalignments in draft plans

Inappropriate uses include:

- finalising methods or milestones without review
- presenting AI timelines as commitments
- automating risk assessment without deliberation

AI should support **iterative planning**, not one-shot design.

4.4 Ethics, Equity & Impact

Project planning sets ethical direction.

Use the Framework to ask:

- Who may be affected by this project and how?
- Are risks distributed unevenly across partners or participants?
- Does AI use privilege dominant methods or perspectives?

Ethical planning requires **anticipating impact**, not just delivery.

4.5 Decision-Making & Governance

Good governance practices include:

- clear documentation of planning decisions and assumptions
- alignment with institutional and funder requirements
- explicit ownership of risks and mitigations

If AI is used:

- record its role in drafting or analysis
- ensure human validation of plans
- avoid opaque planning artefacts

This supports accountability and auditability.

4.6 Reflection, Learning & Renewal

After initial planning, reflect:

- Did AI use clarify or constrain thinking?
- Where should plans remain provisional?
- How will learning be incorporated as the project evolves?

Reflection supports **adaptive project capability**, not rigid execution.

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5. In-the-Moment Prompts & Checks

Human reflection prompts

- What are we most uncertain about right now?
- Where are we assuming linear progress?
- What would responsible flexibility look like?

Optional AI prompts

- “Generate alternative project plans based on different risk assumptions.”
- “Identify dependencies that could threaten timelines if delayed.”

Pause & check

- Are we mistaking structure for certainty?
- Is AI helping us plan responsibly?

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6. After-Action Reflection

Once planning is complete:

- Are assumptions clearly documented?
- Do stakeholders share understanding of scope and risk?
- How will the plan be revisited?

Use insights to inform project governance and review.

7. What This Scenario Delivers

This scenario helps organisations:

- plan projects more deliberately and transparently
- use AI to support coordination without overconfidence
- surface assumptions and risks early
- strengthen ethical and governance alignment
- build mature AI capability in research planning contexts

About CloudPedagogy

CloudPedagogy develops practical, ethical, and future-ready AI capability across education, research, and public service.

This scenario is part of the AI Capability Framework Scenario Library, supporting applied, context-sensitive practice using the CloudPedagogy AI Capability Framework (2026 Edition).

Framework: https://www.cloudpedagogy.com/pages/ai-capability-framework