TEMPLATE
Always base your project schedules on template created from previous similar project
Always save template at the end of the project
PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Document the project code and brief description or Title in the File, Properties
Describe the project objectives and goals in the Subject and Comments section
SCHEDULING
Prefer to schedule using project start date even if you have a deadline to meet
Project Start Date or Finish Date are the only dates that you should enter in most cases
CALENDAR
Prefer to use Project Calendar supplied by the PMO in your organization
Capture all bank holidays and non working days are correctly
Create different calendars if project work will be performed from different countries
OPTIONS
Prefer to use Mon 28 Jan '02 date format
Use Project Summary Task to summarize the project Duration, Work, Cost and Dates
Use Fixed Work task type when adding or removing resource will change the duration
WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE
Use Nouns to name the deliverables such as Architecture, Technical Design, Test Case
Use Verbs to name the tasks such as Write test cases, Review Code
Each Summary Task should at least have two detail tasks
Milestone task should have no duration
SEQUENCING
Tasks that can start on project Start Date will not have any predecessor
Tasks that finish on the project Finish Date will not have any successor
Overlap tasks carefully as it may result into rework
Use relative lead or lag if possible
ESTIMATING
Use estimates from the previous similar project and tailor them if necessary
Use PERT estimates if not much is know and no previous data exists

Use work efforts when you want the duration to increase or decrease if resource units are changed

Use duration based estimates when duration will not change even if resource units are changed

CONSTRAINTS, DEADLINES AND TASK CALENDARS

Do not use Constraint as far as possible

Avoid using Must Start On and Must Finish On

Use Deadlines over Constraints

RESOURCE

If you don't know the resource names than use generic names such as Engineer, Tester

Define the group to which the resource belongs such as Testing, Management

COST

Use Ovt. Rate only if resource is paid for overtime and it is higher than the Std. Rate

Decide whether you will track billing cost or incurred cost

Decide which currency will be used

ASSIGNMENT

Assign your best resources to the critical path first

Try not to assign the same resource to the adjacent tasks on the critical path

Always uncheck the effort driven setting for a fixed duration task type

Keep resource work load within 120% and 80% for optimal resource utilization

OPTIMIZING

Breakdown long duration tasks on the critical path into smaller tasks and schedule in parallel

Schedule tasks in parallel if you have resources

Use additional resources if available (Crashing) or increase resource working hours

TRACKING

Always ensure to save a baseline

Update baseline if the targets are changed and approved; preserver the old baselines

Prefer updating tasks in the standalone version

REPORTING

Agree the reporting requirement, format, frequency, medium and reporting period

Use Copy picture to Wizard to present data in other than Microsoft Project

Customize Views to required format / templates
Use quick links like Statistics, Progress lines to keep an eye on project progress
CLOSING
Analyze planned vs. actual performance
Archive project data and file
Distribute the template and customizations in the organization