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1.Explain the factors that affect implementation of a project

To implement a project means to carry out activities proposed in the application form with the aim to achieve project objectives and deliver results and outputs. Its success depends on many internal and external factors. Some of the most important ones are a very well-organized project team and effective monitoring of project progress and related expenditures. Overall management has to be taken over by the lead partner and project manager, who is often employed or engaged by the lead partner. The project management has to have an efficient management system and always has to be flexible to current needs and changed situations, as the project is rarely implemented exactly according to the initial plan. Nevertheless, the partnership should aim to deliver quality results and outputs. Quality means meeting expectations described in the application and those agreed within the partnership. Factors that affect project implementation are briefly discussed below:

**Deadline:**

Deadline is one of the key aspects that determine how a project is managed. Missing a deadline creates a bad impression for your team. However, completing a project on deadline does not mean that you compromise on quality. You have to be both alert about time and have a keen eye on quality. If the project has narrow deadlines with strict clients or stakeholders, project manager should be alert to all possible hindrances from before and take appropriate precautions, so that on-time delivery of quality products or services can be ensured. Not only should the manager be on their toes, but they should instill the same kind of attitude among the team members. Team members should flag issues, problems and hindrances the moment being faced so that solutions can be looked out for immediately.

**Budget:**

Budget is another critical factor that determines a project’s progress and management. In case the budget is high, then the number of days for completion of the project is also more and so is the number of resources allocated to it. Do not rush in such situations; rather focus completely on delivering products or services that are of best quality, with maximum utilization of resources. However, if the budget is less you have to adjust with limitations such as unavailability of resources, lack of time, and money. However, you cannot compromise on quality which means the stress level of you and your team increases. You may have to motivate your irritated overworked team members by encouraging them for their good performance and recognizing their efforts through rewards.

**Stakeholders:**

Techniques of managing projects will vary depending upon the kind of stakeholders for the projects. In case a project has multiple stakeholders from different backgrounds, there is a possibility of disagreement between them. In such cases, project management becomes extremely challenging as you cannot afford to have unhappy stakeholders and clients. Great convincing and negotiation skills are required in such cases to reach a consensus. It can be time consuming and hence the actual time dedicated to resources will reduce. The project manager needs to adopt tactful approaches in such cases and get the work done.

**Project Members:**

Project management techniques are also determined by the challenges faced by a project manager which, in turn, depends on the kind of team he or she is handling. If the team consists of members with diverse backgrounds and skills, a gap in terms of team spirit may exist. This obviously impacts work. Therefore, a project manager should apply techniques to bring the team close. He should ensure that regular team meets happen which can be both formal and informal. In team meetings and outings people from various backgrounds are bound to interact. This creates a bond between members and they are ready to be there for each other.

**Demand:**

Demand is another key factor that influences project management techniques. Demand itself depends on a few factors such as type of products or services, usability, etc. If the product is a perishable item such as grains or vegetables, the nature of demand will be different from that of garments that can be stocked and used for months. In case of services, such as creation of instruction manuals for electronic products, the demand depends on the number of users in the market. Depending on the kind of demand and the nature of the product or services offered, a project manager needs to apply appropriate management techniques ensuring on time delivery of goods and services.

For example, an app development company is creating a product for a new mobile offering from XYZ which will be released in the market after 6 months. Therefore, the app needs to be ready by at least a month before the release. The project manager will have the details in mind, while forming the team and allocating resources. Some of the techniques may involve daily morning stand-ups, regular testing sessions, survey within his or her organization, pilot testing among selected technology geeks. On the other hand, if an organization conducts training sessions on project management certifications, the project manager’s technique may involve researching the market, offering services at lower than market rate, looking for potential candidates who can take up the certifications, offering discounts if a person takes more than one course, having an online marketing team to promote the services that are offered at attractive prices etc.

**Supply:**

In order to meet the demand within a stipulated date and time (which we came across as deadline), supply of resources is necessary. A project manager needs to ensure that supply is adequate, so that deadline is not compromised for want of resources. For example, the company has scheduled a training session with 15 students on a given date. Students have paid fees and they have been given the date, time and venue of the session. However, more people started registering for the session and the total number reached 25. The current venue has a capacity of 20 people. Now, the training provider should be in a position to arrange another venue immediately for the training session. If the session gets cancelled due to lack of space, it will be a big loss for the company both in terms of money and reputation.

**Price:**

Price is an important aspect of project management. Price is determined by high level managers in consultation with project sponsors after studying market trends. Price is an important determinant of the sale and profit and should be determined after careful calculation. The type of product or service is an important factor to be considered when talking about price determination. For convenience, we will categorize products into three 3 types: perishable products, non-perishable products, and specialized products. There are two factors that need to be considered here: the quantity that needs to be sold and the price that the buyer is willing to pay for it. In case of non-perishable items like cooking oil, grains and pulses, coal, demand is never a limitation. Additionally, being non-perishable, the products can be stored and marketed throughout the year. The storage and demand factors balance out the price. These kinds of products are usually not exorbitantly high priced.

However, it is different for perishable products and seasonal items. These are in the market for a short duration and are in high demand for that period. Owning to the high demand and limited supply, price is usually high. For example, an organization focused on export of fruits and vegetables, will have enough supply of the items during winter.

Project management is a complex concept. There is no one rule for managing projects as there is no single type of project. Services and products are the two key categories of offerings in the market and the management method differs significantly for both. Within each category, there are multiple varieties and again project management will vary depending on the type of product or service in question. The factors mentioned will give a clear idea regarding the key determinants of project management methods and techniques.

2.Explain any two methods for effective implementation of projects

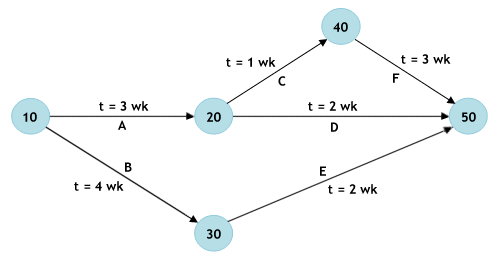
The Critical Path Method or Critical Path Analysis is a mathematically based algorithm for scheduling a set of project activities. It is an important tool for effective project management. Commonly used with all forms of projects, including construction, software development, research projects, product development, engineering, and plant maintenance, among others. Any project with interdependent activities can apply this method of scheduling.

The essential technique for using CPM is to construct a model of the project that includes the following:

* A list of all activities required to complete the project (also known as Work Breakdown Structure)
* The time (duration) that each activity will take to completion
* The dependencies between the activities.

**Project Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT)**

CPM uses a fixed time estimate for each project activity. While easy to understand and use, it does not take account of the time variations that can impact on the completion time of a complex project. The *Program Evaluation and Review Technique* (PERT) is a network model that allows for variations in activity completion times. In a PERT network model, each activity is represented by a line (or *arc*), and each milestone (i.e. the completion of an activity) is represented by a *node*. A simple example is shown below.



A simple PERT networks

Milestones are numbered so that the end node of an activity has a higher number than the start node. Incrementing the numbers by 10 allows for additional nodes to be inserted without modifying the numbering of the entire network. The activities are labelled alphabetically, and the expected time required for each activity is also indicated. The *critical path* is the pathway through the project network that takes the longest to complete and will determine the overall time required to complete the project. Bear in mind that for a complex project with many activities and task dependencies, there can be more than one critical path through the network, and that the critical path can change.

PERT planning involves the following steps:

1. ***Identify activities and milestones*** - the tasks required to complete the project, and the events that mark the beginning and end of each activity, are listed in a table.
2. ***Determine the proper sequence of the activities*** - this step may be combined with step 1, if the order in which activities must be performed is relatively easy to determine.
3. ***Construct a network diagram*** - using the results of steps 1 and 2, a network diagram is drawn which shows activities as arrowed lines, and milestones as circles. Software packages are available that can automatically produce a network diagram from tabular information.
4. ***Estimate the time required for each activity*** - any consistent unit of time can be used, although days and weeks are a common.
5. ***Determine the critical path*** - the critical path is determined by adding the activity times for each sequence and determining the longest path in the project. If the activity time for activities in other paths is significantly extended, the critical path may change. The amount of time that a non-critical path activity can be extended without delaying the project is referred to as its slack time.
6. ***Update the PERT chart as the project progresses*** - as the project progresses, estimated times can be replaced with actual times.

Because the critical path determines the completion date of the project, the project can be completed earlier by allocating additional resources to the activities on the critical path. PERT also identifies activities that have slack time, and which can therefore lend resources to critical path activities. One drawback of the model is that if there is little experience in performing an activity, the activity time estimate may simply be a guess. Another more serious problem is that, because another path may become the critical path if one or more of its associated activities are delayed, PERT often tends to underestimate the to time required to complete the project.

PERT incorporates uncertainty by making it possible to schedule a project while not knowing precise details and durations of all activities. The time shown for each project activity when creating the network diagram is the time that the task is *expected* to take based on a range of possibilities that can be defined as:

* ***The optimistic time*** - the minimum time required to complete a task
* ***The pessimistic time*** - the maximum time required to complete a task
* ***The most likely time*** - an estimate of how long the task will actually take

The expected time (the time that will appear on the network diagram) is defined as the average time the task would require if it were repeated a number of times over a period of time, and can be calculated using the following formula:

expected time = (optimistic time + (4 x most likely time) + pessimistic time) / 6

The information included on the network diagram for each activity may include:

* the activity names
* the expected duration
* the earliest start (ES)
* the earliest finish (EF)
* the latest start (LS)
* the latest finish (LF)
* the slack

In order to determine these parameters, the project activities must have been identified and the expected duration of each calculated. The *earliest start* (ES) for any activity will depend on the maximum *earliest finish* (EF) of all predecessor activities (unless the activity is the first activity, in which case the ES is zero). The *earliest finish* for the activity is the *earliest start* plus the *expected duration*. The *latest start* (LS) for an activity will be equal to the maximum *earliest finish* of all predecessor activities. The *latest finish* (LF) is the *latest start* plus the *expected duration*. The *slack* in any activity is defined as the difference between the *earliest finish* and the *latest finish* and represents the amount of time that a task could be delayed without causing a delay in subsequent tasks or the project completion date. Activities on the critical path by definition have zero slack.

A PERT chart provides a realistic estimate of the time required to complete a project, identifies the activities on the critical path, and makes dependencies (precedence relationships) visible. It can also identify the earliest and latest start and finish dates for a task, and any slack available. Resources can thus be diverted from non-critical activities to those that lie on the critical path should the need arise, in order to prevent project slippage. Variance in the project completion time can be calculated by summing the variances in the completion times of the activities in the critical path, allowing the probability of the project being completed by a certain date to be determined (this will depend on the number of activities in the critical path being great enough to allow a meaningful normal distribution to be derived).PERT charts can become unwieldy, however, if the number of tasks is too great. The accuracy of the task duration estimates will also depend on the experience and judgment of the individual or group that make them.

3.Identify an assumption that a project manager should bear in mind when executing project documentation

Project assumptions and constraints show up frequently in our day-to-day business operations. Successful project managers and business analysts keep an eye out for the assumptions and constraints present on their projects.  After all, they can impact your project across a number of variables, including your project requirements and your resulting solution.  Given the risks that can arise from project assumptions and constraints, I think it’s worth taking a closer look at what they are and how we should identify and manage them.

People make assumptions about things that they believe to be true every day. When was the last time that you left the house headed out to do your errands and calculated the time it would take to get those errands done based upon your assumptions for what you needed to do, where you were stopping, and what traffic would be like along the way? Of course, there was always the risk that you would get those errands done in more time than you planned if the order of stops, what you did at each stop and the traffic did not behave as you assumed it would behave.

In comparison, constraints are fixed boundary conditions or limits on what you can do.  Going back to the morning errands example, you may find yourself constrained by the speed limits on the road you are traveling, the hours that the stores are open and the particular products that you can find in any given store.  In this example, constraints are the things you cannot change but that you need to be aware of and manage to.

Experienced project managers look for three elements as they and the team define, analyze, and document the project assumptions and constraints. Let’s have a closer look at each of these elements.

## **Identifying Project Assumptions**

Assumptions are factors that we believe to be true, although these factors are not confirmed to be true. Assumptions add risk to a project since it is possible that they will turn out to be false. Assumptions can impact any part of your project life cycle and resulting solution implementation, so it is important to document and analyze them. This is where project risk management comes into play.

## **Identifying Business Constraints**

Business constraints limit the solution based upon the current organizational state. They usually focus on the available time, money and resources for a project. Common business constraints include budget and time restrictions, resource limitations, and resource skill limitations. For example, your project’s business case may contain assumptions about realizing the business benefits for your project. Any assumptions about a specific business benefit should be documented and linked to the project requirements that will deliver those benefits. This may introduce additional risk into the premises contained in the business case, since it is possible that the assumptions you are assuming to be true may not be true in the end. Again, focusing on project risk management can heavily impact the project’s outcome.

## **Identifying Technical Constraints**

Technical constraints often focus on architecture decisions that limit your solution design. They tend to be inflexible and unchanging and can have an impact on your solution implementation. They include areas such as development languages, hardware, other infrastructure, and software that must be used for your project.

The assumptions and constraints are an important aspect of your project requirements.  You need to make sure that you analyze and document them appropriately on your projects. Although they are not requirements, I often recommend documenting them along with the requirements that they impact. It is a simple step to manage and communicate the project’s requirements, assumptions, and constraints once you have them identified and documented.  You may also identify new risks related to your project’s assumptions and constraints that need to be added to your risk register.

Remember, any project stakeholder may be involved with identifying and defining the project assumptions and constraints, so keep your ears open!  The project team should use these assumptions and constraints to identify potential risks that may impact project implementation and delivery or have a negative impact on end-user expectations of the resulting solution.  Project risk management is essential to keeping a handle on the assumptions and constraints that are part of your project.

4.When designing a project proposal, why is it important to formulate a project rationale?

A project rationale is an argument in favor of implementing the proposed project by your [organization](https://www2.fundsforngos.org/tag/organisations/). It gives a detailed explanation of why the project is required in the area. In other words, it describes the issues and problems the community is facing and how your organization and the proposed project will address them with the [funding](https://www2.fundsforngos.org/tag/funding/) support expected from the donor. This section of the proposal can be very crucial because it is here that you need to convince the funder that why it is absolutely necessary to get the grant for implementing the project.

This section of the proposal is also referred to as project background since it gives an idea of what has been happening in the area prior to implementing the project. You can also refer to this section as the ‘problem statement’ since it analyzes the problem in an in-depth manner.

An important part of this section should be a short description of your organization. After the donor has read and understood the problems and issues of the area, it may want to know why your organization is the best choice for addressing them. In the description of the organization, make sure you refer to your previous projects implemented similarly, and/or you can highlight the innovative idea you have for this project.

5.Explain any five good practices in project design

A project design is a strategic organization of ideas, materials and processes for the purpose of achieving a goal. Project managers rely on a good design to avoid pitfalls and provide parameters to maintain crucial aspects of the project, like the schedule and the budget. For any project to be successful, it must consider strictly follow the following steps:

**1. Define Project Goal**First and foremost, you should meet with your team and key stakeholders to define the ultimate goal or outcome of your project. This might be the product that is going to be developed, the service that will be provided, or the problem your project will solve.  Consider the needs and expectations of all stakeholders and/or beneficiaries when determining your goals and get their approval early on. Make sure your team members weigh in on the accuracy and feasibility of the goals you define, as well. Remember, the more of this you can figure out ahead of time, the easier your project will be to manage later.

**2. Determine Outcomes, Objectives, and/or Deliverables**  
After the primary goals have been established, break each down into smaller, more manageable pieces. In some industries, such as nonprofit and education, these pieces are objectives or outcomes—for example, solutions to problems that have been identified for the population you’re trying to help, or learning goals that students need to achieve. In other industries, such as project management and software development, the smaller pieces may be deliverables, such as a marketing plan, or a prototype of the software.

During the design phase, some organizations break down outcomes, objectives, and/or deliverables even further into the tasks and activities required to complete them. Others save the task/activity breakdown for a later phase of the project life cycle, such as during [project scheduling](https://www.smartsheet.com/definitive-guide-project-scheduling). It’s up to your organization to decide what works best.

Whatever your process, it’s helpful to use the [SMART acronym](https://www.smartsheet.com/blog/demystifying-5-phases-project-management) when identifying outcomes, objectives, and/or deliverables. Make sure they are:

**Specific:** Be as clear and direct as possible so that later, you can plan the tasks that will be performed to achieve them. Provide specific guidance on which resources are involved and their roles.

**Measurable:** Outcomes, objectives, and/or deliverables must be quantifiable. This way, you’ll be able to measure results and track progress.

**Achievable**: Make sure goals can realistically be achieved given the resources, budget, and time frame available.

**Relevant:** All outcomes, objectives, and/or deliverables should logically result in achieving project goals and producing intended results.

**Time-Bound**: Provide a timeline for when they will be achieved/completed.

**3. Identify Risks, Constraints, and Assumptions**  
Now that you’ve determined what you want your project to achieve, identify anything that could stand in the way of its success. Document any risks and constraints on budget, time, or resources that could affect your team’s ability to reach goals, milestones, and outcomes. Then try to resolve as many of these problems as you can. This will help prevent delays once the project is underway.  It’s also good practice to document any assumptions made during the project design phase. These will come in handy when you create a [Statement of Work (SOW)](https://www.smartsheet.com/how-write-statement-work-any-industry) and/or project schedule, and will also help you estimate costs more accurately.

“Look out for assumptions,” says Lonergan. “All projects are built on assumptions, and smart project managers know this. At the start of the project, the scope for assumptions is unlimited. Smart project managers capture these within the design process, then deal with them in a very disciplined manner.”

For example, if you assume that a necessary piece of equipment will be available when the project reaches the installation phase, this should be noted. That way, if the person who makes the schedule discovers the equipment isn’t available until a later date, you’ll be informed and can adjust the timeline and budget accordingly—before the actual work begins.

**4. Prepare a Visual Aid**   
Once you’ve determined your goals, outcomes, and risks, you can prepare a visual aid to represent part or all of the project. Visualizations are particularly common in the creative, construction, nonprofit, and software development verticals. However, using visualizations can be useful when managing any type of project since they provide team members and stakeholders an easily understandable snapshot of the project’s goals, outcomes, deliverables, products, services, and/or functionality.

**5. Ballpark Your Budget**  
It’s important to know the budget right from the start. Even if you don’t have a complete picture of the costs and incomes your project will generate, create a budget in as much detail as you can. The clearer you can be about your budget during the project design phase, the less likely you are to experience unexpected cost overruns later.

Estimating your budget will also help you determine the feasibility of the project. If the cost is more than your client, customer, funding source, or partnering entity can spare, the project can’t realistically be undertaken.

6.Is it important to involve stakeholders in project implementation, explain your answer?

Project stakeholders are individuals and organizations that are actively involved in the project, or whose interests may be affected as a result of project execution or project completion. Take it from me – these are the people you need to pay the most attention to. They need to be identified in your planning – especially in your communication plan.  They may also exert influence over the project’s objectives and outcomes. The project management team must identify the stakeholders, determine their requirements and expectations, and, to the extent possible, manage their influence in relation to the requirements to ensure a successful project. They can make or break a project!

Stakeholders have varying levels of responsibility and authority when participating on a project and these can change over the course of the project’s life cycle. Their responsibility and authority range from occasional contributions in surveys and focus groups to full project sponsorship, which includes providing financial and political support. Stakeholders who ignore this responsibility can have a damaging impact on the project objectives.

Likewise, project managers who ignore stakeholders can expect a damaging impact on project outcomes. Sometimes, stakeholder identification can be difficult. For example, some would argue that an assembly-line worker whose future employment depends on the outcome of a new product-design project is a stakeholder. Failure to identify a key stakeholder can cause major problems for a project. For example, late recognition that the legal department was a significant stakeholder in a year 2000 rollover (Y2K) software upgrade project caused many additional documentation tasks to be added to the project’s requirements.

Stakeholders may have a positive or negative influence on a project. Positive stakeholders are those who would normally benefit from a successful outcome from the project, while negative stakeholders are those who see negative outcomes from the project’s success. For example, business leaders from a community that will benefit from an industrial expansion project may be positive stakeholders because they see economic benefit to them community from the project’s success. Conversely, environmental groups could be negative stakeholders if they view the project as doing harm to the environment. In the case of positive stakeholders, their interests are best served by helping the project succeed, for example, helping the team to acquire the needed permits to proceed. The negative stakeholders’ interest would be better served by impeding the project’s progress by demanding more extensive environmental reviews. Negative stakeholders are often overlooked by the project team at the risk of failing to bring their projects to a successful end.

Key stakeholders on every project include:

• **Project manager.**This is the person responsible for managing the project.

• **Customer/user.**This refers to the person or organization that will use the project’s product. There may be multiple layers of customers. For example, the customers for a new pharmaceutical product can include the doctors who prescribe it, the patients who take it and the insurers who pay for it. In some application areas, customer and user are synonymous, while in others, customer refers to the entity acquiring the project’s product and users are those who will directly utilize the project’s product.

• **Performing organization.**This refers to the enterprise whose employees are most directly involved in doing the work of the project.

• **Project team members.**This is the group that is performing the work of the project.

• **Project management team.**These are the members of the project team who are directly involved in project management activities.

• **Sponsor.**This is the person or group that provides the financial resources, in cash or in kind, for the project.

• **Influencers.**People or groups that are not directly related to the acquisition or use of the project’s product, but due to an individual’s position in the customer organization or performing organization, can influence, positively or negatively, the course of the project.

• **PMO.**If it exists in the performing organization, the PMO can be a stakeholder if it has direct or indirect responsibility for the outcome of the project. In addition to these key stakeholders, there are many different names and categories of project stakeholders, including internal and external, owners and investors, sellers and contractors, team members and their families, government agencies and media outlets, individual citizens, temporary or permanent lobbying organizations, and society-at-large. The naming or grouping of stakeholders is primarily an aid to identifying which individuals and organizations view themselves as stakeholders. Stakeholder roles and responsibilities can overlap, such as when an engineering firm provides financing for a plant that it is designing. Project managers must manage stakeholder expectations, which can be difficult because stakeholders often have very different or conflicting objectives.

For example:

• The manager of a department that has requested a new management information system may desire low cost, the system architect may emphasize technical excellence, and the programming contractor may be most interested in maximizing its profit.

• The vice president of research at an electronics firm may define new product success as state-of-the-art technology, the vice president of manufacturing may define it as world-class practices, and the vice president of marketing may be primarily concerned with the number of new features.

7.The local community where a project is to take place or taking place is a very important ingredient when it comes to decision making on project implementation. Do you agree with this statement? Backed up by relevant examples, explain your answer.

The importance of community engagement in the implementation of projects necessitates an understanding of dealing with host communities and key stakeholders, particularly those who represent a perceived threat to your project. This is often a dilemma for project managers and failure to get it right can be costly in terms of public controversy, delayed or abandoned projects – as well as running the risk of damaged careers, reputations and relationships.

Not involving communities in project development can have serious long-term negative impacts on a community’s economic, environmental and social outcomes. Establishing dialogue and building strong and genuine relationships with local communities and other stakeholders is now recognized as a vitally important part of any project. From large-scale resource projects and transport infrastructure to the development of local community facilities, stakeholders’ matter!

Recent high-profile projects in gas, energy, electricity, water, wind, waste and transport have all encountered public controversy, outrage and media attention due to perceived shortcomings in participatory design and the standard of public consultation – with some organizations even hiring security firms to facilitate community engagement in rural Ireland.

## **Modern project management**

In order to bring about the societal acceptance and the license to operate necessary for implementation of such critical infrastructure in energy, transport and natural resources that is required to sustain society and future generations, it is clear that engineers and project managers must take time out at this stage to master the art of stakeholder engagement. There is a strong case for making such communication training a part of undergraduate programmes.

The Project Management Institute’s tenth ‘Knowledge Area’ acknowledges the importance of stakeholder engagement. Just as safety and environmental risks have gained paramount importance, the risks associated with affecting local communities are too great to be ignored and project proponents must meet a range of stakeholder engagement standards in order to avoid or mitigate risk. Short- and long-term social and community impacts must be carefully considered.

Conflict assessments are just as important today in projects as safety, environmental and economic assessments. The traditional view of project management (which consists of the ‘iron triangle ‘of cost, scope and time, where project managers were actively incentivized to deliver against these criteria alone) has changed. Today, there is a requirement for a fourth pillar: people. The traditional low priority given by engineers in the past to techniques relating to communication and public engagement has to be reversed if vital project outcomes are to have any chance.

Engineers, in particular, need to hone their skills in environmental and project conflict avoidance and resolution techniques – with an increasing demand for environmental and community mediation and related alternative dispute resolution tools at various stages along project delivery roadmaps, from concept to implementation.

## **Community expectations**

## Today, more informed and sophisticated communities demand transparent and effective processes that enable community involvement in decision-making. Increasingly, public input and participation is expected and, in most cases, demanded at the earliest stages of a project’s design. Host communities need to understand the full implications of a project at concept stage, so that there is opportunity for concerns to be raised and addressed.

Planning and design processes are more likely to be aligned with community views if these views are directly reflected in concept development, and feedback is provided on how the input influenced the decision. Such early engagement can assist in establishing strong relationships that can continue throughout the implementation and operational stages of projects. Regular engagement at each stage of a project is more likely to reveal important issues and provide valuable feedback as a project develops.

The public also has legitimate expectations from consultation. Ireland finally ratified the Aarhus Convention in 2012 and recent Aarhus draft recommendations provide for “the most comprehensive, broad, active and accessible participation possible”. The International Association for Public Participation ([**www.iap2.org**](http://www.iap2.org/)), in its Core Values, asserts: “The public should have a say in decisions that affect their lives.”

Genuine public consultation has been a legal requirement in the UK since the Gunning Principles were established for over three decades now in R v Brent Borough Council [1985]. These minimum consultation principles are:

1. Consultation must take place when the proposal is still at a formative stage;

2. Sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response;

3. Adequate time must be given for consideration and response; and

4. The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account.

## **Stakeholder-centric project management**

Today’s projects are complex socio-political challenges that require stakeholder-centric project management, which should be aligned to stakeholder value and satisfaction. Such challenges have unpredictable consequences and require agile collective collaboration with all stakeholders.

Today’s PMOs are facing other new challenges, ranging from increasing project size and complexity to outsourcing, managing distributed teams, managing generation gaps between team members and, above all, the rise of social media in a world where everyone can be a journalist. The PMO team now needs to be collaborative; it requires effective leadership, support and resilience in the face of these new challenges. It must also engage in a continuous evaluation process and have independent review. High-performing project managers are known to lean more towards relationships as they see projects as essentially social enterprises; they are strong on social awareness and active listening. They are rarely seen at their desks!

A body of knowledge is developing around consultation, from stakeholder registers, analysis and mapping to detailed engagement and communication plans. New tools and processes are being rolled out, with software and online systems for stakeholder interest maps, impact charts, proximity maps, campaign plans, message calendars and the like (too much for this brief overview). But remember: you can have all the tools and sophisticated software you like but, if you lose credibility, you are in trouble!

Component parts of the project management discipline have long become respected specialisms in their own right: estimating, planning and scheduling, risk and resource management. Stakeholder engagement is now becoming a specialism, a crucial ingredient in the success of any project, requiring experience, skill and knowledge.

**Reference:**



