

DIPLOMA IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

**ASSIGNMENT: PROJECT MANAGEMENT MODULE THREE**

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**QUESTION ONE**

**Explain the factors that affect implementation of a project**

**Factors Affecting Implementation:**

A number of technical, economic and other factors affecting the implementation of a development programme. Knowledge about the nature, magnitude of the effect of each of these factors is necessary for development managers to be able to implement and manage the programme efficiently and effectively. Similarly, knowledge is also necessary for development policy makers and planners of None-Governmental Organization to formulate realistic policies and plans for development.

**Technical Factor:**

A project format can accommodate diverse activities or endeavors. An enormous variety of development activities may usefully be cast in project form. From technical point of view, projects of NGOs may be as diverse as irrigation, livestock, development, health, education etc. Every project is aimed at producing some output which may be an asset, or a commodity, or a function by which inputs are transformed into outputs. Production function involved is technical in nature. It is necessary for functionaries of NGOs to know the nature and form of the production process and the factors affecting it so as to be able to manipulate it to produce the desired results. Skilled and experienced technical staff with interest are essential for specifying the crucial technical factors involved in the implementation of a project.

**Economic and Financial Factors:**

The economic factors affecting a project are relevant from the point of view of the society as a whole whereas financial analysis takes the viewpoint of the individual participants. Financial analysis reveals the need for investment, credit, stipend to trainees, honoraria etc. and other incentives for the successful implementation of the project. On the other hand, economic analysis allows us to decide whether labor and other inputs to be used in the project should be remunerated at market prices or at shadow prices.

**Commercial Factors:**

The commercial factors affecting the implementation of a project include the arrangements for marketing the output produced by the project and arrangements for the supply of inputs and credit needed to build and operate the project. On the output side a careful analysis of the proposed market for the project's production is essential to ensure that there will be an effective demand at remunerative prices. On the input side, appropriate arrangements must be made for the project participants to protected the supplies of

raw material and infrastructure. Facilities of credit to farmers, artisans and trainees to purchase various tools, raw materials etc. should be made to ensure successful implementation of a project.

**Socio-cultural Factors:**

The socio-cultural factors affecting the implementation of a project include the stratification of the project participants based on caste and religion, social customs and traditions, mores and taboos, distribution of project benefits among the custom of the project, impact on environment and quality of life in general. Many projects have failed because they didn't meet the social objectives of their customs. V.K.R.V. Rao has rightly attributed the failure of planning due to "its lack of unity with social factors and the impediments imposed by the social and cultural forces."

**Political Factors:**

NGOs have faced many challenges in implementing their projects due to political outfits. Many NGOs, left the area, few fought with politicians and few compromised and accepted subordination. With the decentralization, people’s elected representatives have been given due place in planning and implementation viz. selection of beneficiaries. Sometimes these NGOs act to satisfy their vested interests. So, NGOs have to keep political considerations in mind and act on people's participation.

**Managerial Factor:**

Managerial skills are a necessary input for NGOs for the optimal use of resources, resource mobilization, information management, monitoring system, assessment of the needs of project participants. It is unfortunate with the NGOs, that most of NGOs have no professional development manager, for the very reason that support to NGOs is project based and expectations of these professional managers are greater.

**People’s Participation:**

The implementation of area specific development project is very difficult without the active and widespread participation of its custom. Sometime community is project partner to NGOs and NGOs have become ‘corporate partner’ to funding agencies. Many factors may motivate people to participate in a project or refrain from participating. It is necessary to find out factors and design specific strategy to enlist their participation. In few areas, NGOs have been successful in enlisting the support and participation of local community in the implementation of development projects. But that is more because of the charismatic personality of the project leader and less because of any institutional innovations that can be replicated in a large scale elsewhere. **Rauanan Weitz** has distilled some simple thumb rules for enlisting people's participation. These are:

1. Create a human relationship.
2. Know the traditions and social customs of the project participants.
3. Introduce programme gradually and adapt them to the ability of the target population to enable it to absorb the change involved.
4. Get yourself a partner from amongst the local leaders.
5. Encourage and promote development leadership among both the project employees and the local people.

**Integration and Coordination:**

Many government and non-government agencies are undertaking development programmes at the grass-root, same time for the same area and same beneficiaries. It is essential that different development programmes under way in an area be integrated and coordinated for optimum results, otherwise it creates over lapping, duplication and wastage of scarce resources.

**QUESTION TWO**

**Explain any two methods for effective implementation of projects**

**Methods for effective implementation:**

Project involves many activities, project functionaries should use methods for effective implementation to complete in time and budget.

**Bar charts:**

First developed by Henry L. Gantt, it is sometimes referred as Gantt chart. Bar chart is a pictorial representation showing various activities involved in a project. The chart has two coordinate axes; one axis represents the activities and the other axis represents the time required for completion of the individual activities.

The axis represents activities, involved in a project, are drawn in the form of bars, and the length of the bar represents the time taken for the completion of each activity. In the projects, there are some activities required to be taken up simultaneously, while some are required to be taken up only after completion of other activities and there may also some activities, which are independent. Mostly the bar charts considered the construction of the building in the training center or elsewhere. The following are some of the activities involved in the construction of any construction.

**For example:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Activities | Time required |
| Digging of foundation | 3 Weeks |
| Pouring foundation concrete | 2 Week |
| Construction of walls | 8 Weeks |
| Construction of roof slab | 2 Weeks |
| Land leveling | 3 Weeks |
| Fixing of doors and windows | 1 Week |
| Digging of well | 3 Weeks |
| Plastering and finishing of walls | 3 Weeks |
| Electrification | 4 days |
| Total | 25 weeks and 4 days |

The above activities can be shown in a bar chart after identifying their logical sequence. If water required for the construction work is not available at the project site, the activity ‘digging of well’ takes priority. Let us assume that water required for the construction work is not available at the project site and it is also not easy to procure water from outside. Under these circumstances consider the following two Activities. Though **digging of well** seems to be the first activity that should be started since requirement of water is essential for the construction work, **digging of foundation** activity need not wait till the digging of well is completed. Water is required only for brick and concrete work and hence both the activities viz. digging of well and foundation can be done at the sometime. As we see from the bar chart, the total times required for the completion of the project is 25 weeks and 4 days to finish the work.

**Critical Path Method (CPM):**

A network represents logical sequence of activities having many paths starting from the initial event and leading to the last. If duration of all the activities that lie on a particular path are added, it gives the duration of that path. The path with longest duration is called critical path and the activities that lie on the critical path are called critical activities. It is the critical path that sets the overall duration of the project. For example, in the construction of training center, the longest duration is 27 weeks and is a critical path. The main function of PERT and CPM is to determine and control the time required to complete a project, the main benefit is time saved through the scheduling of tasks, both initially and as the project progresses. Since time and cost are closely related, saving time usually leads to savings in costs. In addition, both PERT and CPM have been adapted and applied explicitly to costs. They can, for example, be used to develop an optimum cost-efficiency schedule that can help managers to determine the savings and costs involved in achieving a shorter production schedule. Using extra labor to reduce the duration of an activity, for instance, may cost more than the bonus for early completion. Other extensions of PERT and CPM, such as pinpointing problem areas, improving communication, and comparing alternative actions, also enhance their usefulness. Proper analysis of cost incurred on a project in terms of environment degrading and social dilemmas have led agitations against those projects. There have been responsive causalities over these agitations and there have been deadlocks on such projects.

**CPM and PERT Methods**

Between 1956 and 1958, two scheduling control systems came into popular use. These are called Critical Path Method (CPM) and Program Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT). Both of these systems originally were designed to track time in projects involving concurrent activity and to monitor and control expenditures of time. Since their introduction, CPM and PERT have been expanded for use in many project applications, including budgeting, resource management, process

deﬁnition, and quality control. When the two systems are combined and used together, the process is referred to as a PERT/CPM network.

In the most technical of uses, both CPM and PERT are used to analyze time use on a mathematical model. CPM provides modeling for phase start and end dates with the intention of identifying the ﬂoat, or that amount of time that can be absorbed in later phases to offset time overruns in earlier ones. PERT is employed to show weighted averaging of phase time estimates and is not used as commonly as CPM.

While mathematical modeling provides some value to the highly technical project and a certain level of control to the project manager (particularly in engineering and similar environments), CPM and PERT can be used effectively purely for visual aid modeling. Leaving the mathematical analysis and weighted averaging of time studies behind, virtually any project manager can employ the techniques of these tools for visual control of any project. In fact, too much emphasis on purely mathematical modeling can take away time for hands-on management and supervision, and tends to move the project manager out of touch with the team.

A practical application for CPM involves using the visual representation of a project and its phases to calculate the maximum time in which projects can be completed, given overall deadlines. CPM can help you to identify points at which time segments can be moved around and time overruns can be absorbed without missing a ﬁnal deadline. In CPM, concurrent activities are also called ‘‘parallel’’ tasks, and those activities that cannot begin until a previous activity has been completed are called ‘‘dependent’’ activities.

By mapping out the parallel and dependent activities in a model of the project, you can identify a pattern for how the job could progress. You can discover avenues for parallel activities that could save signiﬁcant time throughout the project by identifying workﬂow with the use of CPM. The process of developing CPM often begins by organizing phases and developing a schedule using the Gantt chart. Thomsett M. C. (2002), *The Little Black Book of Project Management*.

**QUESTION THREE**

**Identify an assumption that a project manager should bear in mind when executing project**

**Documentation**

**Assumptions**

“What events, conditions or decisions outside the control of the project are necessary for the success of the project?” External factors largely outside the control of project management, but important to the success of the project, should be stated in the form of assumptions, e.g. qualified volunteers available in sufficient numbers. In most instances, it would still be necessary to add the reasons which lead the planner to believe that the assumption will materialize. Why state assumptions? Why call attention to uncertainties inherent in the project? Primarily because project may stand or fall on the basis of such external factors. The planner can reduce the uncertainty in which the project will operate (and establish the bounds of managerial responsibility) by specifying the situations which must be ‘taken as given’ if the project is to achieve its objectives, but over which the participants (donor, government) have little or no control. Furthermore, stating such assumptions doesn’t imply that the project’s design is effective, only that the designer is being realistic. A single project is only one of many forces at play, and usually a relatively small one at that uncertainties about at every level of the project: the project components are by themselves unlikely to bring about progress from each design level to the next. These factors are necessary but only with the addition of the assumptions are the conditions established which are both necessary and sufficient for progress to the next level, for instance, the project may be intended to complement a programme of the government, of another UN agency, or of a bilateral donor or other donor. The very fact of stating such expectations concerning ‘third parties’ will start the project off on a sound and more realistic foundation. The assumptions identified in the project document should be:

1. **Well founded:** After stating each assumption, the planner may wish to add why the assumption has a good chance of materializing, e.g. legislation to reduce import duty on raw material for handloom industry by 25% will pass by 1 January. The Minister of Commerce, Minister of Labor have announced their support, the trade union has made an official representation, and a parliamentary drafting committee has been established. This suggests that some checking is often required before an assumption can be stated. For example, high chronic underemployment in an area where a rural labor intensive road project is planned does not necessarily mean that sufficient manpower will always be available; it could turn out that key project phases requiring peak manpower levels coincide with the harvesting or marriage season.
2. **Precise:** The assumptions should be stated in operational terms rather than nebulous hopes. Thus: not “Researchers will have access to all necessary data” but “The project’s data cell will provide the necessary statistical data by 1 January.” Stating assumptions in this manner may also serve to alert the project’s management to opportunities that may arise to make recommendations or exert influence, when appropriate, in order to increase the probability of an assumption materializing.
3. **Highly probable:** This point is critical. A project based on a set of assumptions which are unlikely to materialize is in trouble before it starts. Obviously some assumptions may be more important than others, ranging from the highly desirable to the absolutely indispensable. It is quite unlikely that a project which is based on several essential assumptions, each of which has only a limited chance of being realized, will be successful. Note: under assumptions do not list

(a) prior obligations and pre requisites or

(b) inputs to be provided by one of the partners to the project; these are not things over which the partners to the project have no control. It should never be assumed that the target group wants the project. Reasonable efforts should always be made to confirm this beforehand. This is not to suggest that the target group is bound to accept the eventual recommendations or findings of the project, but merely that the target group or their spokesmen or people’s elected representatives agree that the project should take place. If such an assumption were made and turned out to be untrue, the potential contribution of the project would likely be zero.

1. **Assumptions (Immediate objective to development objective):** What events, conditions or decisions outside the control of the project are necessary so that the achievement of the immediate objective will contribute to the attainment of the development objective?
2. **Assumptions (outputs to immediate objective**): List the assumptions necessary so that the immediate objective will be achieved once the outputs have been produced.
3. **Assumptions (activities to outputs**): List the assumptions, in addition to the activities listed which are necessary for the production of the outputs.
4. **Assumptions (inputs to activities)**: List the assumptions necessary in order for the activities to be undertaken once the inputs are available. Once the assumptions have been listed, verify that:
5. Planned performance, at each level, together with the assumptions, create the necessary and sufficient conditions for progress to the next level;
6. Each assumption has a strong probability of materializing;
7. Whenever possible, assumptions are stated in operational terms so that project management can recommend or inspire action by others to increase the probability of an assumption materializing.

**Assumptions** **in Project Management**

We always make assumptions and are bound by constraints, and we always deal with them in our daily life. For example, suppose you plan to go shopping at a big mall, which is far away from your home. It will take one hour to reach there by car. You assumed that you would leave your home around 6:00 PM and reach there by 7:00 PM. After that, you can enjoy shopping. This was your assumption. What about the constraints? At first glance, you can think of two constraints. The first constraint is the amount of money to be spent on shopping. If you have $500 in your hand, it won’t cost you more than this amount. This is your first constraint. The second constraint can be the mall’s closing time. You cannot continue your shopping after this time if the mall closes at 10:30 PM. You have to wrap up everything before this time.

Likewise, projects also have assumptions and constraints. It is necessary for you to understand them if you want to complete your project successfully. A successful project manager always keeps an eye on his project’s assumptions and constraints and understands them perfectly.

The assumptions and constraints can be identified and documented throughout the project’s life cycle. These parameters play a vital role during the planning process. Your [**risk management**](https://pmstudycircle.com/2013/05/what-is-risk-management/) plan is heavily dependent on assumptions. It might affect your project’s outcome if you failed to analyze them properly.

The assumptions and constraints are an essential aspect of your project. Although they are not managed like the requirements or[**risks**](https://pmstudycircle.com/2012/02/types-of-risks-and-various-risks-related-terms/), proper documentation of them helps to protect you from many potential issues. You can find your project’s assumptions and constraints in the project scope statement.

**An assumption** is a belief of what you assume to be true in the future. You make assumptions based on your knowledge, experience or the information available on hand. These are anticipated events or circumstances that are expected to occur during your project’s life cycle. Assumptions are supposed to be true but do not necessarily end up being true; Sometimes, they may turn out to be false, which can affect your project significantly. They add risks to the project because they may or may not be true.

Suppose in our shopping example; you assumed that it would take one hour for you to reach the destination. What will happen if, due to traffic, you don’t reach the mall on time? Your assumption is false, and your plan for shopping is endangered. This can also happen to your project. For example, you have assumed that some particular equipment will be made available to you whenever you need it. However, the equipment is not provided when the time comes. Now, you are in a difficult situation. Assumptions play an essential role in developing a[**risk management plan**](https://pmstudycircle.com/2013/07/a-short-guide-to-project-risk-management-plan/)**.** Therefore, as a project manager, you must collect and identify as many assumptions as you can. It will assist you in developing a sound risk management plan.

The following are a few instances of assumptions:

* You will get all the resources required by you.
* During the rainy season, cheap labor will be available.
* All relevant[**stakeholders**](https://pmstudycircle.com/2012/03/stakeholders-in-project-management-definition-and-types/) will come to the next meeting.

**Summary**

As you can see how important the assumptions and constraints are for your project. An assumption is anything you think to be true but there is no guarantee, and a constraint is a limitation on you and your project. Assumptions and constraints can be anything; they might be related to human resources, budget, time or any kind of functionally. Assumptions need to be analyzed, and constraints need to be identified. As a project manager, you must analyze how assumptions and constraints affect your project and what will happen if any assumption fails or any constraint gets resolved or turns out to be false. If you handle your project constraints and assumptions appropriately, it will help you deliver your project on time while meeting stakeholders’ expectations. Here, is where this blog post ends. I hope that you now have a better understanding of assumptions and constraints. If you have something to share, do so through the comments section below, and I will be happy to respond to your comments. This is an essential topic from a PMP certification exam point of view. You may see a question on this topic on your exam.  [Usmani](https://pmstudycircle.com/author/Fahad%20Usmani/), F. ( 2019   February 7), <https://pmstudycircle.com/2012/10/assumptions-and-constraints-in-project-management/comment-page-1/#comment-226175>

**QUESTION FOUR**

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

**Because protection rationale** designing a project proposal it is optional to formulate project rationale. At this point, in the project document, the planner may wish to explain the reasons for recommending a particular approach or strategy. He may wish to discuss why, under the circumstances, the proposed solution is considered more timely or acceptable than some obvious alternatives. The planner may wish to add information essential to an understanding of the project, or to develop any aspect of the previous steps which requires further amplification. He may wish to discuss why it is the organization that should be conducting this project, or describe how the project fits into a unified, integrated, coordinated or multi-disciplinary approach. This section is optional; it may be used, however, if the balance of the project document does not adequately convey the reasoning underlying the recommended approach.

The project document outline the inter-relation of the various design components can be seen at a glance in the Project Document Outline (Form-1). Use of this form is optional but can be helpful in organizing various design components and in putting them into their perspective, thereby making it easier to prepare the document narrative. The information presented in the outline must obviously be limited to key aspects in summary form. For example, for a human resource input, the following entry might appear: Training specialist to develop curriculum to outline (Form-1 curricula) showing the questions appropriate to each section appears overleaf, followed by a completed outline for a typical project of International Labor Organization (ILO).

**QUESTION FIVE**

**Explain any five good practices in project design**

**Good practices for project design:**

There are six good practices in any design process of a development intervention. They are critical during formulation and start-up and when any revision of the project is undertaken, such as during annual and mid-term reviews.

1. Involve all relevant stakeholders in participatory processes of project design.
2. Undertake a thorough situation analysis, together with primary stakeholders, to learn as much as possible about the project context as a basis for designing a project strategy and implementation processes that are relevant.
3. Develop a logical and feasible project strategy that clearly expresses what will be achieved (goal and purposes) and how it will be achieved (outputs and activities).
4. Agree and focus on cross-cutting issues of poverty, gender and participation.
5. Plan for long-term capacity development and sustainability to ensure that the project contributes to the empowerment and self-reliance of local people and institutions.
6. Build in opportunities and activities that support learning and enable adaptation of the project strategy during implementation.

**QUESTION SIX:**

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

**Involve stakeholders in project design processes:**

Projects without good stakeholder consultation are setting themselves up for failure. Those that do consult widely increase their chances of success. Involving stakeholders in project design is important specifically for:

1. Inspiring them to identify, manage and control their own development aspirations, and so empower themselves.
2. Ensuring the project goals and objectives will be relevant and, as a result, meet the real needs of the rural poor.
3. Ensuring the project strategy is appropriate to local circumstances.
4. Building the partnerships, ownership and commitment needed for effective implementation.

Local participation early on can also be cost-effective in the long run. If the investment hadn’t been made up front, much money would have to have been spent later for one-way information campaigns before and during project implementation. The first step in project design is to conduct an initial stakeholder analysis. This requires listing potential stakeholders (individuals, social groups and organizations), prioritizing who must be involved (and not everyone who it would be nice to involve) and agreeing with them on how they can best be involved. This is the basis for being able to understand their needs. Stakeholder participation in design is not limited to working with local communities or valuing their views above others.

The idea of a ‘community’ that one consults is quite simplistic and can cause problems. For example, if implementing partners or project staff consult a community, will all local voices be heard? Which ones will accidentally be forgotten or ignored? Also, what is good for one community is not necessarily good for another or for its region. So which community will you listen to if they have contradictory opinions? Understanding differences within and between local communities means, listening and listening again – and working together. Only then can we gain insights into local relationships and interests. Some people think that illiteracy and geographic isolation of target groups makes participation impossible. But many examples show how including the poorest, most isolated and illiterate of groups is possible with some creativity and time. Good participatory processes involve sharing perspectives and negotiating differences. Stakeholders can be involved in many ways, including comprehensive participatory rural appraisal (PRA) processes, informal discussions and planning workshops. However, people’s physical presence is not enough. Some very poorly designed projects have included many local people who did not participate freely. Ensuring high-quality participation is key and will require creating project structures that can respond to people’s requests.

**QUESTION SEVEN**

**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.**

A project is successful when it achieves its objectives and meets or exceeds the expectations of the stakeholders. But who are the stakeholders?

**Stakeholders** are individuals who either care about or have a vested interest in your project. They are the people who are actively involved with the work of the project or have something to either gain or lose as a result of the project. When you manage a project to add paths to a highway, motorists are stakeholders who are positively affected. However, you negatively affect residents who live near the highway during your project (with construction noise) and after your project with far-reaching implications (increased traffic noise and pollution). The project sponsor, generally an executive in the organization with the authority to assign resources and enforce decisions regarding the project, is a stakeholder. The customer, subcontractors, suppliers, and sometimes even the government are stakeholders. The project manager, project team members, and the managers from other departments in the organization are stakeholders as well. It’s important to identify all the stakeholders in your project upfront. Leaving out important stakeholders or their department’s function and not discovering the error until well into the project could be a project killer. A sample of the project environment featuring the different kinds of stakeholders involved on a typical project. A study of this diagram confronts us with a couple of interesting facts. First, the number of stakeholders that project managers must deal with ensures that they will have a complex job guiding their project through the lifecycle. Problems with any of these members can derail the project. Second, the diagram shows that project managers have to deal with people external to the organization as well as the internal environment, certainly more complex than what a manager in an internal environment faces. For example, suppliers who are late in delivering crucial parts may blow the project schedule. To compound the problem, project managers generally have little or no direct control over any of these individuals. Watt A. (2014), *Project Management*.

**Reference:**

1. Thomsett M. C. (2002), *The Little Black Book of Project Management*.
2. [Usmani](https://pmstudycircle.com/author/Fahad%20Usmani/), F. ( 2019   February 7), <https://pmstudycircle.com/2012/10/assumptions-and-constraints-in-project-management/comment-page-1/#comment-226175>
3. Watt A. (2014), *Project Management*.