



# PRINCE2 Project Management Explained!

By Andrew Cheah

PRINCE2 project management methodology is a process-driven project management method, which contrasts with reactive/adaptive methods, developed by Office of Government Commerce (OGC). PRINCE2 defines 45 separate sub-processes and organises these into eight processes as follows:



## Starting up a Project (SU)

In this process the project team is appointed and a Project Brief (describing what the project is going to achieve and the business justification for doing so) is prepared. In addition the overall approach to be taken is decided and the next stage of the project is planned. Once this work is done, the project board is asked to authorise the next stage, that of initiating the project.

## Planning (PL)

PRINCE2 project management method advocates product based planning which means that the first task when planning is to identify and analyse products. Once the activities required to create these products are identified then it is possible to estimate the effort required for each and then schedule activities into a plan. There is always risk associated with any work and this must be analysed. Finally, this process suggests how the format of plans can be agreed and ensures that plans are completed to such a format.

## Initiating a Project (IP)

This process builds on the work of the Start Up (SU) activity and the Project Brief is then turned into a business case. The approach taken to ensure quality on the project is agreed together with the overall approach to controlling the project itself. Project files are also created as is an overall plan for the project. A plan for the next stage of the project is also created. The result can be put before the Project Board for them to authorise the project itself.

## Directing a Project (DP)

These sub-processes dictate how the Project Board should control the overall project. As mentioned above, the Project Board can authorise an initiation stage and can also authorise a project. Directing a Project also dictates how the Project Board should authorise a stage plan, including any stage plan that replaces an existing stage plan due to slippage or other unforeseen circumstances. Also covered is the way in which the board can give ad hoc direction to a project and the way in which a project should be closed down.

## Controlling a Stage (CS)

PRINCE2 project management method suggests that projects should be broken down into stages and these sub-processes dictate how each individual stage should be controlled. Most fundamentally this includes the way in which work packages are authorised and received. It also specifies the way in which progress should be monitored and how the highlights of the progress should be reported to the Project Board. A means for capturing and assessing project issues is suggested together with the way in which corrective action should be taken. It also lays down the method by which certain project issues should be escalated to the Project Board.

## Managing Product Delivery (MP)


This process consists of three sub-processes and these cover the way in which a work package should be accepted, executed and delivered.

## Managing Stage Boundaries (SB)

The Controlling a Stage process dictates what should be done within a stage, Managing Stage Boundaries (SB) dictates what should be done towards the end of a stage. Most obviously, the next stage should be planned and the overall project plan, risk log and business case amended as necessary. The process also covers what should be done for a stage that has gone outside its tolerance levels. Finally, the process dictates how the end of the stage should be reported.

## Closing a Project (CP)

This covers the things that should be done at the end of a project. The project should be formally de-commissioned (and resources freed up for allocation to other activities), follow on actions should be identified and the project itself be formally evaluated.

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