

The PRINCE2® Processes In 666 Words

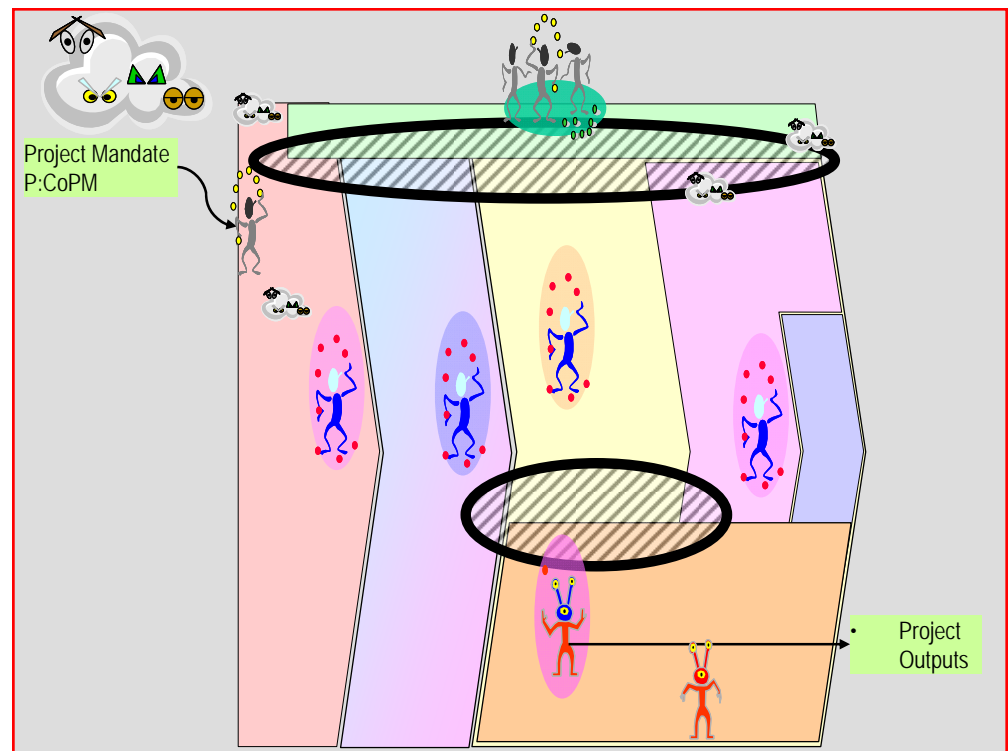
By Simon Harris, PMP, CGEIT, Ex PRINCE2® examiner

“These next 666 words cover the entire process model in the 327 pages of the 2009 PRINCE2 manual. Of course brevity is at the price of a little lack in detail.

As the picture at right shows: PRINCE2 has some structure, some sequence, some players and some output triggered by arrival of the ‘*project mandate*’. Perhaps less obviously from the picture is that the mandate is from the organisation’s Corporate or Programme Management.

Start-up

PRINCE2 is a means to exercise control over projects. A PRINCE2 project starts with the arrival of a project mandate: a trigger for a project in any form you like. The mandate triggers the guidance in Starting up a Project (SU). If we are a project in a programme then Programme Management, otherwise Corporate Management, otherwise Corporate Management appoint the project’s Executive and project manager who then consider historic ‘lessons learned’, select a team, define the project’s end point and plan the proper planning of the project (yes, ‘plan the planning!’). The results of SU are passed across the primary control interface: from project manager to project board. If the project board like what they receive then they authorise the first stage - the Initiation Stage.



Initiation

For Initiation what should have happen by its end is:

1. *Control strategies* are designed that match SU's ground-work defining the project's end-point and development approach.
2. The *project management team* extend the definition of the project's goal into a full *business case* by taking costs and timescales from a fully developed but high level *project plan*.
3. The newly created project plan describes the timings and resourcing of work to create the products needed. The project plan reflects a solid understanding of the strategies (*quality, risk, change, and communications*) and controls needed to safely run this project.
4. The team working on Initiation then assemble all the information relevant to describing the project into a *Project Initiation Document*. They also create the next stage’s detailed plan of day to day activity (called a *Stage Plan*). The whole package is passed to the project board. If the board like what they see then the first delivery stage is approved by them.

The project moves into technical activities.

The Delivery or Specialist Stages

Delivery stages have three core themes: 1) the project manager hands-out work-packages to the specialist technicians, 2) everyone reports progress and concerns upwards, 3) everyone participates in the handling of concerns about off-plan situations.

The bulk of the work in a delivery stage comes from the technical specialists building the products the customer wants. The small addition to "the bulk of work" is the overhead caused by the management of the project. The work-packages that are the "small addition" are described by PRINCE2 as activities within processes like Starting up a Project (SU). If the "small addition" does not add more value than cost then you are doing it wrong.

The approach of stage end is signalled as a delivery stage exhausts the supply of work defined in the detailed stage plan. As stage end approaches the project manager prepares for "what next?"

End of Stage and End of Project (Start of Benefits)

"What next" is either another delivery stage during which specialist's continue production of the products required to deliver the project's benefits or "what next" is end of project.

In the case of "another delivery stage" guidance from Managing a Stage Boundary (SB) is followed to refresh the business case, risk summary, high-level project plan, project controls and replace the day-to-day stage-plan for new activities.

When "what next" is "project end" then "what-next?" is really "start of benefits realisation". In this case the project manager checks the acceptance of the products and their handover into use, summarises the project's performance in an End Project Report and passes a Benefits Review Plan to Corporate or Programme Management to measure benefits at some future time.

Overview complete: obviously 327 pages adds just a little more detail and I omitted any discussion of how to handle concerns about off-plan situations." ← That is 666 words.

About the Author

Simon Harris, PMP, CGEIT speaks, consults, mentors and trains on governance of change.

Simon helps client's boards with ownership of benefits enablement from "light-bulb" to harvesting.

Simon helps PMs match controls to project uncertainty, complexity and board risk appetite.

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Editor's note: Simon is also nearing completion of a book, **PRINCE2 For Real**, to be published soon. Written with the same combination of deep insights and freewheeling irreverence as this article, a quick look at the draft shows this to be a good one!



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Activities in Levels & Processes

CoPM	12.4.1 Appoint the Executive and the Project Manager	13.4.1 Authorize initiation	13.4.2 Authorize the project	13.4.4 Give ad hoc direction
Project Board			13.4.3 Authorize a Stage or Exception Plan	13.4.5 Authorize project closure
Project Manager	12.4.2 Capture previous lessons 12.4.3 Design and appoint the project management team 12.4.4 Prepare the outline Business Case 12.4.5 Select the project approach and assemble the Project Brief 12.4.6 Plan the initiation stage	14.4.1 Prepare the Risk Management Strategy 14.4.2 Prepare the Configuration Management Strategy 14.4.3 Prepare the Quality Management Strategy 14.4.4 Prepare the Communication Management Strategy 14.4.5 Set up the project controls 14.4.6 Create the Project Plan 14.4.7 Refine the Business Case 14.4.8 Assemble the Project Initiation Documentation 17.4.1-4 Manage Stage Boundaries	15.4.7 Escalate issues & risks 15.4.6 Capture and examine issues and risks 15.4.5 Report highlights 15.4.8 Take corrective action 15.4.4 Review stage status 15.4.1 Authorize a Work Package 15.4.2 Review Work Package status 15.4.3 Receive completed Work Packages	17.4.1 Plan the next stage 17.4.2 Update the Project Plan 17.4.3 Update the Business Case 17.4.4 Report Stage End 17.4.5 Produce an Exception Plan
Team Manager		17.4.1 May include Team Planning	16.4.1 Accept a Work Package	16.4.3 Deliver a Work Package
Team Member			16.4.2 Execute a Work Package	

