

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AUDIT

This list of project management questions is one of the tools used by Procept Associates Ltd to assess project management maturity and formality. It can be used “as is” in an informal assessment, or the questions can be crafted into various tools as part of a formal benchmarking.

Source documents are the following, although all of the questions have been filtered through the judgment and experience of Procept’s consultants.

- *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge*, 3rd edition, Project Management Institute, Oct 2004 (“PMBOK”). Most of the questions are based on this document.
- *Organizational Project Management Maturity Model*, Project Management Institute, 2003 (“OPM3”).
- *Best Practices of Project Management Groups in Large Functional Organizations*, Project Management Institute, 1999 (“BP”).

Keith Farndale is the author of this checklist. He and Procept Associates Ltd. use it to gauge the maturity and formality of an organization’s project management (PM) environment. This checklist is offered as an appendix in the manual for the course *The Comprehensive Project Management Seminar*.

Note that PM maturity and PM formality are not the same thing. An organization can be more mature and successful than another organization which is more formal. A “yes” answer to all of the attached questions is not necessary for a successful PM environment. (However, in the opinion of Keith Farndale and his Procept colleagues, an immature organization usually has to increase formality before it can proceed to maturity.)

“The organization” may refer to the whole organization, or just to a division or department. The “performing organization” refers to the part of the organization whose employees are the most involved in doing the work of the project.

As a suggestion, you can interpret the answer “yes we have a written process but it is inconsistently followed” as a “Substantially Yes”. You can interpret “Yes we have a written process but it is rarely if ever followed” as a “Substantially No”.

1. (BP p35) Is project management a career track? (Clear PM job descriptions, a progression from project co-coordinator to PM to program manager, etc.)

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

2. (PMBOK 1.6.4) Is there an organizational unit which centralizes and co-ordinates the project management function and processes

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

3. Which of the following describes that organizational unit:

Centre of excellence -- establishes and supports PM standards.

Project support office -- the above plus mentoring, internal consulting, monitoring and reporting on projects.

Project management office -- the above, plus is the home department for the project managers loaned to business units.

Accountable project office -- is fully responsible for the projects.

Comments:

4. (PMBOK 2.1) Is there (or are there) recognized project life cycle phasing, complete with deliverables, phase-end acceptance, and formal authorization to start the next phase?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

5. (PMBOK 2.2) Does the project manager and the project management team try, early in the project, to identify a wide range of stakeholders and their requirements, including negative stakeholders (“those who see negative outcomes from the project success”).

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

6. (PMBOK 2.2) Is there clearly one person responsible for a managing a project?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

7. (PMBOK 2.2 and 9) Is there clearly identified project sponsor – “a person or group that provides the financial resources for the project”?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

8. (PMBOK 2.3.3) Which of the following describes how the project team fits into the organization (We are not being judgmental. Any type may be an appropriate one, depending upon the project, and upon the environment of the organization.)

Functional -- The project is entirely within the department. There might be some involvement by other departments, but there is NOT a cross functional team.

Weak matrix – there is a project coordinator. There are functional managers who provide people resources to the project, and who have most of the authority on the project.

Strong matrix – the project manager has most of the authority on the project, and there are functional managers who provide people resources to the project.

Strong matrix – the project manager has most of the authority on the project, and there are functional managers who provide people resources to the project.

Projectized – most of the people on the project report only to the project manager. They are not a part of other functional departments, and the functional managers have very little if any authority.

Comments:

9. (PMBOK 3) Does the project manager (in collaboration with others) determine which project management processes are appropriate for any given project? In other words, can the project management process be customized somewhat to suit the project?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

10. (PMBOK 4.1) Is there a document (maybe called a project charter) which authorizes the start of a project, and authorizes the project manager to expend resources on the project? Does it include a purpose or justification, the business needs, a summary schedule and budget (possibly just preliminary), mention of the expectations of other stakeholders, and some assumptions and constraints? (The Project Charter may be issued before, or may be issued after, a feasibility study or needs statement. Except in the smallest projects, the Project Charter is NOT the same as the later and more detailed Scope Statement or Project Management Plan.)

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

11. (PMBOK 4.1.1.4 and 4.1.2.2) Does the organization have a project management methodology – standard (but customizable) processes and templates? (*More detailed questions will follow*)

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

12. (PMBOK 4.1.2.3) Is there a project management information system, “a standardized set of automated tools available within the organization and integrated into a system”?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

13. (PMBOK 4.3) Does the organization prepare a documented Project Management Plan (may be other names, and may be more than one document), describing how the project will be executed, monitored, and controlled. *(This may include the following “management plans” as appropriate: scope, schedule, cost, quality, process improvement, staffing, communication, risk, and procurement.)*

13. (PMBOK 4.6) Is there a system to handle, document and approve, proposed or required changes to the cost baseline, schedule baseline, and scope baseline; and then to communicate those changes?

(a) (PMBOK 7.3) Cost baseline:

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

(b) (PMBOK 6.6) Schedule baseline:

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

(c) (PMBOK 5.5) Scope baseline:

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

14. (PMBOK 4.6, 4.3.2.2.2, and 5.5.2) Is there a system (often called Configuration Management) to control the physical and functional characteristics of the project products, control changes to such characteristics, record and report each change, and enable auditing of the products to verify conformance? *(This is a more rigorous answer than the answer to the preceding question.)*

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

15. (PMBOK 4.7.3) Are projects formally accepted by the customer or Sponsor, and documented accordingly?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

16. (PMBOK 4.7.3) Are projects formally closed, and documented accordingly?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

17. (PMBOK 4.7.3 and 8.3.3.8) Are lessons learned from the project formally recorded, added to some form of database or repository, and distributed, for the benefit of other projects?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

18. (PMBOK 4.7.3) Are the scope changes, the actual costs, and the actual schedule recorded and available for the benefit of other projects?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

19. (PMBOK 5.2) Does project planning produce documents (which may be called a Scope Statement) detailing project objectives, product description, what is in and out of scope, acceptance criteria, constraints and assumptions, organization structure with identified team members and stakeholders, schedule milestones, approval requirements, and at least an order-of magnitude cost estimate?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

20. (PMBOK 5.3) Is a Work Breakdown Structure created, which provides the structure for the budget and the schedule? (It need not be graphical. It can be just an indented list in a scheduling software, for example.)

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

21. (PMBOK 5.4) is there a process (Scope Verification) to obtain appropriate stakeholders' formal acceptance of the completed project scope? (This may be different from Quality Control.)

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

22. (PMBOK 6.5) Are schedules produced for substantially all work on the project, and distributed to team members (for example in bar chart form), and are "critical" tasks indicated? (Note that we are not specifically asking for project management software, although to achieve a "yes" answer on large or complex projects, the use of software may be required.)

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

23. (PMBOK 6.5) Does the scheduling consider the internal people resources required, and is the schedule reconciled against the resources available?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

24. (PMBOK 6.6) Are the schedules updated regularly to show actual and forecast, and then published with a comparison to a schedule baseline?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

25. (PMBOK 6.7) Is appropriate corrective action taken if the project is falling behind schedule? (Such action can include schedule compression, agreed scope reduction, or simply an agreed schedule extension.)

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

26. (PMBOK 7) Is a cost estimate, broken into work packages, produced for substantially all work on the project?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

27. (PMBOK 7.3) Is the cost estimate / budget updated regularly to show actual costs to date, and to show estimates to complete, and then published with a comparison to the approved budget?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

28. (PMBOK 7.3) Is the “earned value” technique used?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

29. (PMBOK 7.3) Is corrective action taken at the appropriate time, if the project is trending over budget?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

30. (PMBOK 7) Do project decisions include considering the cost of using or owning the product, (known as life-cycle costing or total cost of ownership)?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

31. (PMBOK 8.1 and 8.2) Does the organization use some of the tools of project management process improvement (such as benchmarking against other organizations, independent audits/reviews, other quality planning tools)?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

32. (PMBOK 8.2 and 8.3) Does the organization consistently take action on non-conformances (defects or problems) within projects (both the project process and the project product) to discover the cause and to initiate preventive action and corrective actions?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

33. (PMBOK 9) Do the cross-functional team members join the project early, and therefore participate in the project planning and decision-making?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

34. (PMBOK 9.1.2.1) Do all team members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and does each current package of work has an unambiguous owner?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

35. (PMBOK 9.1.3.1) Do team members' authority (the right to apply resources and to make decisions) reasonably match their responsibilities?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

36. (PMBOK 9.1.3.1 and 9.2.1.4) Does the assignment of project team members reasonably take into account their competencies, interest, cost and availability?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

37. (PMBOK 9.3.1) Once the project planning is complete and project execution is underway, is each team member's duration on the project planned and therefore reasonably predictable?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

38. (PMBOK 9.2.3) Are there usually "feelings of trust and cohesiveness among project team members"?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

39. (PMBOK 9.3.2.1) Are skills such as empathy, influence, group facilitation, and encouragement of creativity apparent in the management of the project team?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

40. (PMBOK 9.4) Does the core project management team reasonably observe team behaviour, manage conflict, and resolve issues?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

41. (PMBOK 9.4) Does the project manager or the core project management team reasonably appraise team and team member performance, and provide feedback for improvement? (In the case of a team member from another department, this includes providing performance appraisal information to the functional manager.)

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

42. (PMBOK 10.1) As part of project planning, is attention given to planning the communications of the project? (This is defined as “determining the information and communications needs of the stakeholders, who they are, who needs what information, when they need it, how it will be provided to them, and by whom”. It includes planning for type and frequency of meetings.)

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

43. (PMBOK 10) Do appropriate project stakeholders including team members feel that communications technology and the communications themselves are reasonably sufficient?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

44. (PMBOK 10.3) Is there regular status reporting (work achieved compared to work scheduled, percentages complete, future forecast progress, issues and problems, recommended corrective action), to appropriate stakeholders?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

45. (PMBOK 10.4.3) Is there the use of issues log(s), documenting concerns and their resolutions?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

46. (PMBOK 11.1.3.1) During project planning, is attention paid to risk management planning, including methodology to be used, roles and responsibilities, how risks will be categorized and prioritized, etc? This excludes the identification and listing of risks, which is the focus the next question.

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

47. (PMBOK 11.2, 11.5) As part of project planning, does the project focus on identifying and documenting risk events (such as, but not necessarily including team brainstorming sessions, interviewing subject matter experts)? We are asking only about negative risks, not “opportunities”.

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

48. (PMBOK 11.2.3) Is there a document (such as a Risk Register) which keeps a list of the identified risks, their priorities or categories, and an “owner” for each risk?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

49. (PMBOK 11.3, 11.4) Are the probability and impact of each risk estimated (estimates can be simply Low – Medium - High, or they can be quantitative), which then leads to a priority or overall rating for the risk?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

50. (PMBOK 11.4) Are any quantitative methods used, such as expected monetary value, decision tree analysis, Monte Carlo or other simulations?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

51. (PMBOK 11.5) Having identified risks, are appropriate responses to them developed and documented?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

52. (PMBOK 11.5.2) As part of project planning, does the project focus on identifying and documenting “opportunities” (those uncertainties with potentially positive effects), and then on developing and documenting responses?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

53. (PMBOK 11.6) During project execution, does the project team monitor (and sometimes re-evaluate) the identified risks, and ensure or revise risk responses with the risk owner and appropriate stakeholders?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

54. (PMBOK 11.6) During project execution, does the project team continue to look for new risks, and then identify, analyze and develop responses to them?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

55. (PMBOK 11.6.2.5) Does the project use contingency reserves in the budget and the schedule, and consciously manage them during execution of the project?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

If the project does NOT procure goods or services from outside the organization, then you may skip any or all of the following questions.

56. (PMBOK 12.1, 12.2) Does the project plan its purchasing (make-or-buy decisions, contract payment types, procurement process, roles, approval limits, select standard procurement documents, etc) in advance of actually requesting major proposals or quotations?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

57. (PMBOK 12.2) If the organization requests proposals (when the seller's skills and approach are important, not just price and delivery), it develops written criteria for use in evaluating the proposals received.

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

58. (PMBOK 12.5) The projects are reasonably effective at administering contracts with its suppliers of goods and services. This includes assigning a person to be responsible for administering a contract, and ensuring that "the seller's performance meets contractual requirements, and that the buyer performs according to the terms of the contract."

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

59. (PMBOK 12.5) Are the projects reasonably effective at administering the contract with its customer?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

60. (PMBOK 12.6) Is there a conscious process to close the contracts, including a written acceptance of the deliverable and related documents?

Yes , Substantially Yes , Substantially No , No

Comments:

Keith Farndale, 25 September 2004 and 9 August 2005

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