

PRINCE2

PRINCE (Projects IN Controlled Environments) is a project management methodology first developed in 1989 by CCTA (The Central Computer and telecommunications Agency), PRINCE2 was later developed in 1996 by CCTA (now part of the OGC, Office of Government Commerce) to cover all projects and not just those that relate to information systems. PRINCE2 is the standard used in UK government, but is now more widely used in private and public sectors in the UK and internationally.

PRINCE was originally developed for IT Projects but the method it uses is just as applicable for non-IT projects. The latest version, PRINCE2, enhanced the original method creating a generic, good practice approach for managing all types of project including procurement projects.

PRINCE2 is a process based approach to project management with 45 separate sub-processes organised into eight easily tailored and scaleable processes as listed below. Every project will have to address these processes to some degree, however, project managers should assess to what degree they are followed according to the nature of the project.

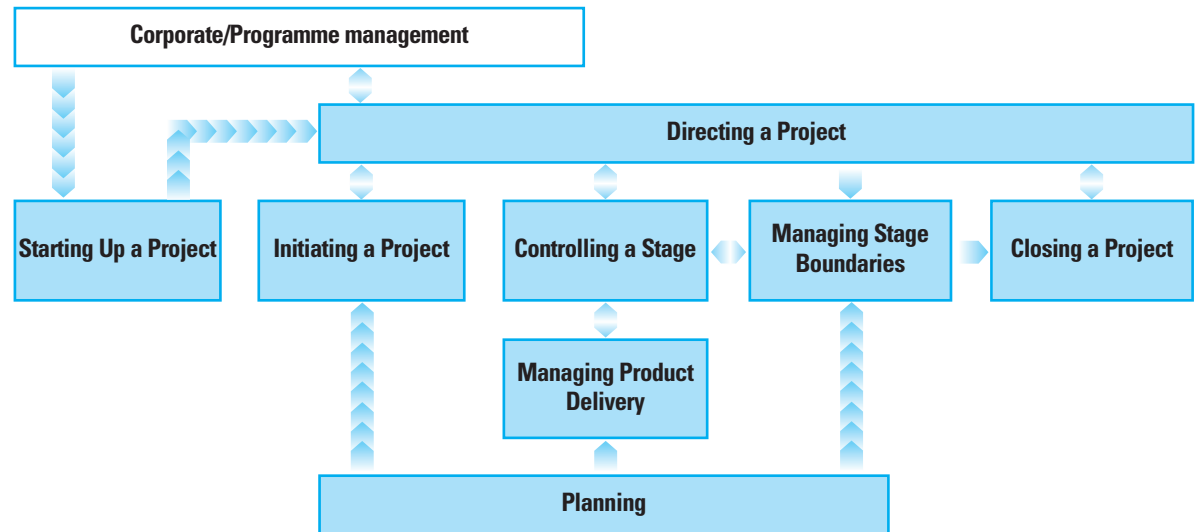
- Starting Up a Project (SU)
- Planning (PL)
- Initiating a Project (IP)
- Directing a Project (DP)
- Controlling a Stage (CS)
- Managing Product Delivery (MP)
- Managing Stage Boundaries (SB)
- Closing a Project (CP)

¹ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound

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The diagram below outlines the PRINCE2 process model.



Each of these processes are defined with key inputs and outputs together with the SMART¹ objectives to be achieved and the activities to be undertaken. PRINCE2 also outlines the components required to successfully manage a project. These include;

- A Business case- The project is driven by the business case which defines and describes the rationale behind the project deliverables.
- Organisation of teams with definitions, responsibilities and relationships. PRINCE2 provides a common language which can be used by all stakeholders.

- Plans tailored to the needs of the project and based on products rather than activities
- Controls to help preempt problems and aid problem resolution
- Management of risk throughout the project with key stages identified for defining and reviewing risk
- Quality in a project environment, with key stages and methods for inspection
- Configuration management - tracking the final product and it's version for release
- Change Control through recommended techniques

Is PRINCE2 suitable for my project?

PRINCE2 is a generic methodology that can be tailored to your projects' requirements. There are however several characteristics that define a PRINCE2 project.

- A finite and defined life cycle – Controlled and organised
- Defined and measurable business products
- A corresponding set of activities to achieve the business products – Includes flexible decision points allowing for go/no go decisions to be made appropriately.
- A defined amount of resources
- An organisation structure, with defined responsibilities, to manage the project including management controls of deviations from the plan.

Why use PRINCE2?

PRINCE2 provides a process approach to project management, providing a framework for sequential process that are required throughout the project. Key roles and responsibilities are also identified along with a set of processes and controls to guide team members along a common pathway providing structure and key milestones. The milestones are broken down into manageable chunks to provide clarity and a uniformed approach.

A sense of unity and commonality is achieved by using the PRINCE2 methodology; all team members and stakeholders both internally and externally are able to follow the set structure with the common language and terminology used.

Most important of all, PRINCE2 allows your business to focus on doing the right projects, at the right time, for the right reasons, by making the start of a project and its continued existence dependent on a valid ongoing business case.

Summary

PRINCE2 requires considerable training in order to implement. Although it provides a systematic approach it neglects to account for the softer skills required for project management such as leadership, and managing different skills and personality types. It is argued that the generic and abstract structure is difficult to grasp and that the rigid approach to sequential tasks is not often the case in a real life project. As with any methodology project managers should pick out the elements that best fit their project to develop a signature working practice for project management.