WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Project management

What is project management?

Projects are unique and temporary. They create products and new services, or deliver change. Projects help achieve outcomes. They have agreed objectives, plans, budgets, timescales, deliverables, and tasks. Investing in projects is justified based on benefits outweighing costs. Project management is made up of the processes, tools, and knowledge needed to complete projects on time, within budget, and to quality standards.[1]

Why does good project management matter?

Effective project management helps achieve strategic intent by:

· delivering desired business outcomes and benefits;

· ensuring that the investment in projects is justified;

· delivering change initiatives outside business as usual that need input from across the organisation; and

· applying consistent, repeatable processes to help projects deliver on time, on budget, and to quality standards.

About this guide

This guide is for governors and senior managers. It poses questions and provides some of the indicators of whether your organisation meets our definition of what good looks like. It can help you work out whether you are managing projects effectively.

Effective project management

A good approach to project management includes:

· a **framework** – policies, a project management framework, procedures, tools, and templates;

· the right **infrastructure** to put the framework into practice – clear project governance and management roles, the right number of staff with the right skills, knowledge, and experience, and access to the right information;

· **applying** your policies consistently and well through a structured approach to planning and delivering projects; and

· ensuring that projects are well governed, **monitored**, and **reviewed**.

Where to find out more

Audit New Zealand's assurance services

Axelos best practice guidance

The Project Management Institute

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1 AXELOS: PRojects IN a Controlled Environment (PRINCE2).

	10 questions	Indicators of what good looks like
Framework	**1.** **Do you have a clear project management policy?**	· Definition of what constitutes a project. · Clear position on what methodology, tools, and techniques apply to specific types of project.
	2. **Do you have an up-to-date project management framework?**	· Formal industry standard project management methodology (for example, PRINCE2 or PMBOK). · Methodology supported by guidance, procedures, and templates. · Approach tailored to project size, complexity, and risk.
Infrastructure	**3.** **Have you got enough staff, with the necessary expertise, in the right structure?**	· Centre of excellence (Project Management Office) with oversight of all significant projects. · Good co-ordination and support to staff managing projects. · Appropriate governance and clear project roles.
	4. **Do you have a project management system that enables you to manage, monitor, and report project activities?**	· Centralised record of projects in progress with good documentation of business cases, plans, resources, costs, risks, and issues. · System complexity matches the number and size of projects.
Application	**5.** **Is there a good approach for establishing project mandate, business case, and start-ups?**	· All projects have a clear mandate from senior management or governing body. · Outline business cases justify projects and define the approach, and detailed business cases developed once projects are approved. · Business cases reviewed and updated as projects are under way.
	6. **Are good project management processes being applied to projects in progress?**	· Active management helps deliver on time, within budget, and to quality standards with few time or cost over-runs. · Independent Quality Assurance (IQA) confirms projects follow approved methodology, appropriately escalate issues, and remain within scope and on-track towards achieving expected benefits.
	7. **Is there good reporting of projects in progress?**	· Structured reporting against milestones, budgets, and risk. · Where tolerances are breached, exception reporting presents decision-makers with clear options and supporting rationale.
	8. **Is there a structured approach to project handover and benefits realisation?**	· Effective handover to business as usual at project completion. · User acceptance testing ensures deliverables meet quality measures and satisfy expectations. · Completed projects have benefits realisation plans.
Monitor and review	**9.** **Do you review your approach and what you have learned?**	· Post-implementation reviews provide confidence that projects have delivered the expected outcomes. · Lessons learned are captured.
	10. **Are governors informed enough to assess whether project management is effective?**	· Senior managers and governors set clear expectations that projects are well managed and governed. · Governors are provided with regular reporting on projects to facilitate effective monitoring of risks, delivery against time, cost, and quality, and benefits realisation.