

Project Management

PMI Practice Standard for Work Breakdown Structure

In October 2006, the CDC Unified Process (UP) published a Practices Guide, Template, and Checklist on Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) that is consistent with the newly released WBS practice standard from PMI. Eric Norman, PMP, the Chair of the WBS 2nd edition core team also presented the PMI WBS Practice Standard to the CDC Project Management Community of Practice (PMCoP) soon after its initial release.

A Project Management Institute (PMI) Practice Standard is a document created by an appropriately diverse group, through an open consensus-building process covering commonly accepted knowledge and/or practice on a particular topic. The document must be consistent with the PMI Standards Program vision, mission, purpose and standards setting process. A standard is not a rule or law nor is it a textbook that describes how practices should be performed.

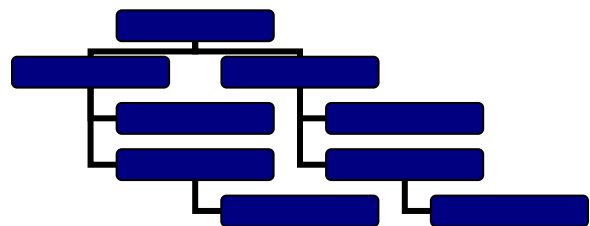
The WBS Practice Standard project was initiated in 1998 under the volunteer leadership of George Belev. A draft was ready for initial review by the end of 1998. The PMI Project Management Standards Program Member Advisory Group (MAG) reviewed the document and recommended some modifications as well as the addition of more examples in the body of the document. The project was restarted in mid-1999 under the volunteer leadership of Kim Colenso, and a volunteer project team assembled by August 1999.

In October 2006, the PMI released the 2nd edition of the practice standard for WBS. This PMI standard provides an introduction to the WBS concept, defines the WBS and its characteristics, discusses the benefits of using a WBS, and demonstrates how to build a WBS and determine if it is sufficient for subsequent planning and control. The primary objectives of the PMI Practice Standard for WBS were to provide a common ground for understanding the concepts and benefits of the WBS, and to present a standard application of the WBS as a

project management tool. The intent is to encourage the consistent development of the WBS as a project management tool and, as a result, improve the planning and control of projects. It provides guidance and universal principles for the initial generation, subsequent development, and application of the WBS using recognized best practice approaches.

According to PMI a WBS is:

- A definition of a project in terms of its work
- An outline of the project's work, not the work itself
- An articulation of the project's scope
- A deliverable-oriented, hierarchical grouping of the work to be executed by the project team to accomplish the project objectives and create the required deliverables. It organizes and defines the total scope of the project. Each descending level represents an increasingly detailed definition of the project's work [PMI Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK), Third Edition]



Key attributes of a WBS from Eric's presentation:

- A WBS uses nouns and adjectives to define the work not verbs
- A WBS contains no dependencies
- A WBS contains no durations
- A WBS contains no activities
- A WBS contains no resource assignments

More information regarding the PMI WBS Practice Standard can be found at <http://www.pmi.org>. Additional information regarding the CDC UP WBS Practices Guide, Templates, and Checklists or the CDC Unified Process itself visit the CDC UP website at <http://www.cdc.gov/cdcup/>. ■

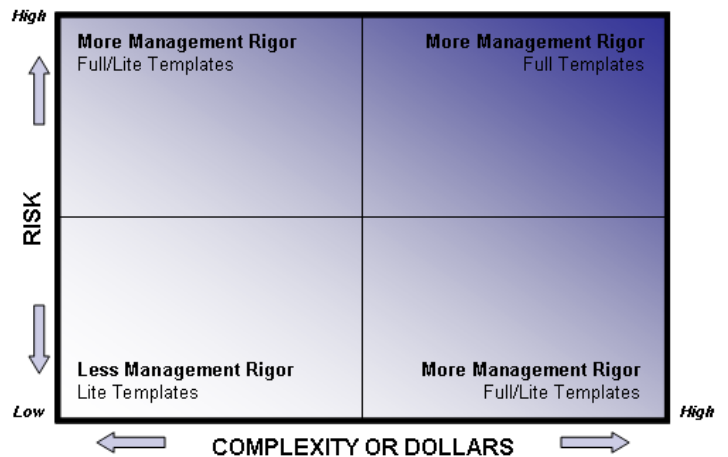
How Much Project Management Is Needed?

One of the more difficult challenges a project manager faces is to determine how much project management and project documentation rigor needs to be applied to their project for it to succeed without expending unnecessary resources and effort.

The Project Management Institute (PMI) Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) states "good practice does not mean that knowledge described (in PMBOK) should always be applied uniformly on all projects; the project management team is responsible for determining what is appropriate for any given project.

The CDC UP assists project managers in determining the appropriate level of rigor through the use of a project classification schema. In its simplest form, the UP Project Classification Schema identifies that the greater the project's risk, complexity, or cost/budget, the greater the degree of project management and documentation rigor that needs to be applied. This schema guides project managers in applying rigor using a simple step-by-step process:

1. Identify the project's risk level
2. Identify the project's complexity level OR dollar size of the project's budget
3. Using the data identified above, estimate where on the project classification diagram the project falls
4. Based on where the project falls on the diagram indicates the degree of project management rigor and documentation rigor that may need to be applied to the project
5. When in doubt as to how much rigor to apply, in most cases, more is better than less



Some Characteristics of high risk projects:

- A similar project has not yet been completed successfully
- The project is under strict time or budget constraints
- The project is utilizing or implementing new technology

Some characteristics of high complexity projects:

- The project is large in scope, size, or timeframe
- The project crosses multiple National Centers or is external to the CDC
- The project has a large number of stakeholders

More information on the CDC UP Project Classification Schema, how to apply it to a project, and other relevant project management tools can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/cdcup/>

Upcoming Project Management Community of Practice Meetings and Topics

- **Friday, July 27**
Managing Expectations
- **Friday, August 24**
Business Analysis
- **Friday, September 28**
Project Management Tips for Delivering on Schedule
- **Friday, October 26**
Effective Project Management for Public Health IT Initiatives
- **Friday, December 7**
The Inadvertent Project Manager

Contact the CDC Unified Process Team

The *CDC Unified Process Project Management Newsletter* is authored by Daniel Vitek MBA, PMP and published by the National Center for Public Health Informatics.

For questions about the CDC UP, comments regarding this newsletter, suggestions for future newsletter topics, or to subscribe to the CDC UP Project Management Newsletter please contact the CDC UP Team at cdcup@cdc.gov

<http://www.cdc.gov/cdcup/>