

## White Paper 2016-13

### Project Start-Up Essentials

*A proper Project Start-Up is essential to the success of a Project. It is an investment which will redeem itself many times over the course of Project execution. However it is always a hurried phase which too often leads Project Managers to not spending enough time on key set-up areas, or even by-passing them. In this White Paper we discuss some key steps of Project Start-Up and present Project Value Delivery's roadmap to Project start.*

#### Objectives of Proper Project Start-Up

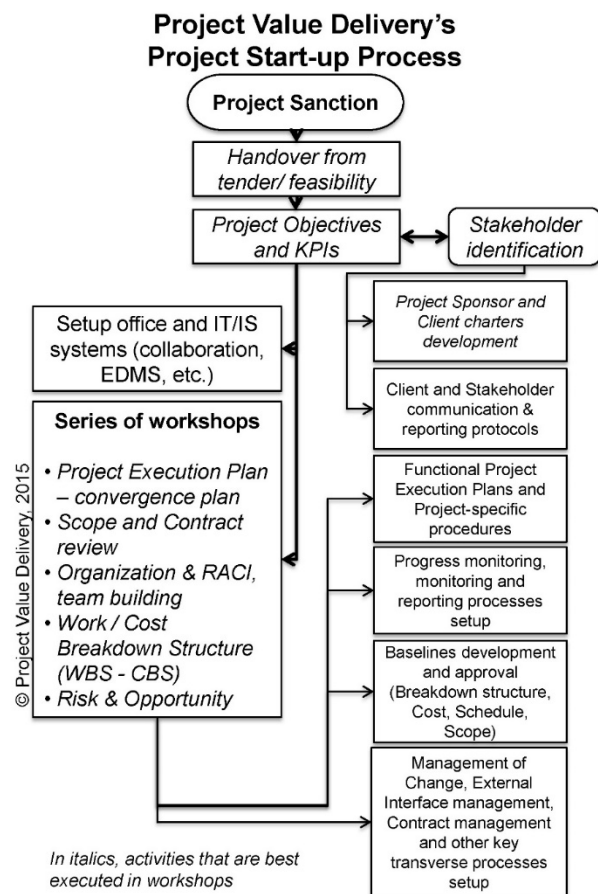
The objectives of Project start-up should, in general, be the following (in that order):

1. Recovering all relevant data and knowledge from the feasibility study / tender phase – this includes a comprehensive set of data together with softer knowledge about the Project and Client context,
2. Formalizing the Project Objectives and related KPIs,
3. Establishing an effective Project core team, which includes:
  - o Mobilizing relevant personnel,
  - o Defining organization, roles and responsibilities,
  - o Organizing a proper working space (Project Office) in a format that enhances collaboration,
  - o Establishing adequate processes for information management and decision-making,
  - o Ensuring that the team reaches an effective team performance level as quickly as possible,
4. Detailing and confirming the Project execution plan and strategy, and establish the relevant baseline (Scope, Cost, Schedule, Master Document Register, Procurement Plan, manpower plan). The baseline also includes a consistent breakdown structure used throughout the Project for all data gathering and processing,
5. Establishing clear accountabilities in terms of cost and schedule according to the Project breakdown structure,
6. Establishing adequate communication and information protocols within the Project and with the key Project stakeholders (which will include Senior Management, Project sponsor, Discipline Managers in the organization as well as Client/Owner and main vendors and contractors). This involves in particular the implementation of:
  - o A consistent data structure across all functions to allow for proper data exchange and comparison consistent with the baseline setup,
  - o Relevant periodic reporting protocols and forms, as well as the development of a relevant stakeholder management strategy.

**Clear and Detailed Project Objectives are a must for a successful Project Start-Up**

#### Overall Project Start-up

The following figure summarizes our recommended overall Project start-up process.



Key to the success of the process is that it needs to be shaped by the Project Management Team itself (hence be performed when the Project Manager's direct reports will have been designated). The best format is a series of short and effective workshops.

In addition there needs to be some sense of urgency in the Project start-up to make sure the necessary infrastructure and data gathering frameworks are in place in time to support Project activity. This was developed in our White Paper [2012-23](#) 'The Urgency of Project Startup: How to Ensure Success of your Project by Creating the Space to Lead'.

## The Importance of Clear and Detailed Project Objectives

Detailed Project Objectives are essential for Project success. Our experience is that Project Managers are rarely entirely clear about their Project Objectives, beyond the boilerplate expectation to deliver 'on time, schedule, budget and with the expected quality'. The role of the Project Sponsor is here absolutely essential in terms of expressing his own objectives, and helping identify the objectives of other key stakeholders. Unfortunately a proper Project Objective setting process is often skipped at the start of Project execution because of the pressure of operational issues. It is essential that Project Managers take the time to formalize these Projects objectives in detail, in particular because those will inform how to respond to inevitable changes and unexpected events during Project execution. This subject has been developed in White Paper [2012-13](#) *'Define Clearly your Project Objectives! Why is this Key Project Step so Often Skipped?'*

Should a proper objective setting process not happen due to the pressure of events, the Project Control Manager must insist that such a process be implemented as it is an absolutely essential prerequisite to the proper subsequent Project setup.

## Conclusion

This White Paper describes the essential steps that need to be followed for Project start-up in general. They are all meaningless without a proper definition of robust Project Objectives that meet the expectations of the Project Sponsor and of the other essential stakeholders of the

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Project. Establishing clear Objectives sometimes requires asking tough questions to obtain clarity.

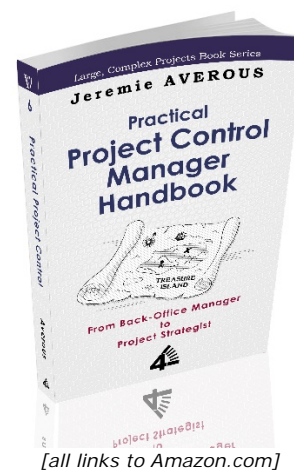
The contribution of the Project Control Manager to a structured and comprehensive Project start-up process is absolutely essential, in particular because the Project

Manager will often be overwhelmed by other demands.

**Find all these principles of Project Control Management exposed in a comprehensive manner in our new Handbook,**

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