

A GUIDE TO THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

PMI Standards Committee

William R. Duncan, Director of Standards

Project Management Institute
130 South State Road
Upper Darby, PA 19082 USA

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PREFACE TO THE 1996 EDITION



This document supersedes PMI's *Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK)* document that was published in 1987. To assist users of this document who may be familiar with its predecessor, we have summarized the major differences here.

1. *We changed the title to emphasize that this document is not the PMBOK.* The 1987 document defined the PMBOK as "all those topics, subject areas and intellectual processes which are involved in the application of sound management principles to ... projects." Clearly, one document will never contain the entire PMBOK.
2. *We have completely rewritten the Framework section.* The new section consists of three chapters:
 - *Introduction*, which sets out the purpose of the document and defines at length the terms "project" and "project management."
 - *The Project Management Context*, which covers the context in which projects operate—the project life cycle, stakeholder perspectives, external influences, and key general management skills.
 - *Project Management Processes*, which describes how the various elements of project management interrelate.
3. *We have developed a revised definition of "project."* We wanted a definition that was both inclusive (it should not be possible to identify any undertaking generally thought of as a project that does not fit the definition) and exclusive (it should not be possible to describe any undertaking which satisfies the definition and is not generally thought of as a project). We reviewed many of the definitions of project in the existing literature and found all of them unsatisfactory in some way. The new definition is driven by the unique characteristics of a project: *a project is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or service.*
4. *We have developed a revised view of the project life cycle.* The 1987 document defined project phases as subdivisions of the project life cycle. We have reordered this relationship and defined the project life cycle as a collection of phases whose number and names are determined by the control needs of the performing organization.
5. *We have changed the name of the major sections from "function" to "knowledge area."* The term "function" had been frequently misunderstood to mean an element of a functional organization. The name change should eliminate this misunderstanding.
6. *We formally recognized the existence of a ninth knowledge area.* There has been widespread consensus for some time that project management is an integrative process. Chapter 4, Project Integration Management, recognizes the importance of this subject.
7. *We have added the word "project" to the title of each knowledge area.* Although this may seem redundant, it helps to clarify the scope of the document. For example, Project Human Resource Management covers only those aspects of managing human resources that are unique or nearly unique to the project context.

8. *We have chosen to describe the knowledge areas in terms of their component processes.* The search for a consistent method of presentation led us to completely restructure the 1987 document into 37 “project management processes.” Each process is described in terms of its inputs, outputs, and tools and techniques. Inputs and outputs are documents (e.g., a scope statement) or documentable items (e.g., activity dependencies). Tools and techniques are the mechanisms applied to the inputs to create the outputs. In addition to its fundamental simplicity, this approach offers several other benefits:
- It emphasizes the interactions among the knowledge areas. Outputs from one process become inputs to another.
 - The structure is flexible and robust. Changes in knowledge and practice can be accommodated by adding a new process, by resequencing processes, by subdividing processes, or by adding descriptive material within a process.
 - Processes are at the core of other standards. For example, the International Organization for Standardization’s quality standards (the ISO 9000 series) are based on identification of business processes.
9. *We added some illustrations.* When it comes to work breakdown structures, network diagrams, and S-curves, a picture is worth a thousand words.
10. *We have significantly reorganized the document.* The following table provides a comparison of the major headings of the 1987 document and this one:

1987 Number and Name	1996 Number and Name
0. PMBOK Standards	B. Evolution of PMI’s <i>A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge</i>
1. Framework: The Rationale	1. Introduction (basic definitions)
2. Framework: An Overview	2. The Project Context (life cycles)
	1. Various portions
	2. Various portions
	3. Various portions
3. Framework: An Integrative Model	3. Project Management Processes
	4. Project Integration Management
4. Glossary of General Terms	IV. Glossary
A. Scope Management	5. Project Scope Management
B. Quality Management	8. Project Quality Management
C. Time Management	6. Project Time Management
D. Cost Management	7. Project Cost Management
E. Risk Management	11. Project Risk Management
F. Human Resource Management	9. Project Human Resource Management
G. Contract/Procurement Management	12. Project Procurement Management
H. Communications Management	10. Project Communications Management

11. *“To classify” has been removed from the list of purposes.* Both this document and the 1987 version provide a structure for organizing project management knowledge, but neither is particularly effective as a classification tool. First, the topics included are not comprehensive—they do not include innovative or unusual practices. Second, many elements have relevance in more than one knowledge area or process such that the categories are not unique.

We plan to update this document regularly. Your comments are both welcome and requested. Please send them to:

PMI Standards Committee	Phone: 610/734-3330
130 South State Road	Fax: 610/734-3266
Upper Darby, PA 19082	E-mail: pmieo@ix.netcom.com
USA	World Wide Web: http://www.pmi.org