

Programme Management Delivering success

Piran Partners LLP

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Project or programme?

Projects bring together resources, skills and technology to achieve the business objectives and deliver business benefits. Good project management helps to ensure that risks are identified and managed appropriately, objectives and benefits are achieved within budget, on time and to the required quality. Projects are finite in duration.

Programme management is concerned with the broader realisation of the organisation's strategy and the delivery of change. As such a programme is more than the sum of the individual project management activities and includes thinking through the end-to-end process to translate strategy into delivery plans and into desired outcomes managing accountability, communications, risks and benefits along the way.

In this white paper we discuss key aspects of the project and programme process in the context of how we help our clients. For example your challenge as an organisation may be to build, and thereafter sustain, a leadership position in your market (the strategic outcome) through launching a mobile virtual network operation and continually developing the business (through a set of projects).

Governance

One thing all successful projects and programmes share is effective governance. Key characteristics include:

- Clarity from the outset of the project or programme structure and associated roles and responsibilities.
- Clarity of each project's deliverables and how these will be measured.
- Identification and putting in place of the right individuals, resources, technology and tools.
- Good, timely and appropriate communications, including escalation processes.
- Standardised reporting of issues, risks, assumptions and contingency plans.

- Management of an overall schedule showing the sequencing of tasks, milestones and dependencies.
- Active reviews of progress and project accountability by being unafraid to ask 'hard questions'.
- Agreement on the quality management strategy.
- Defining the transition plan into business as usual.
- Visibility of the business case and associated budget, plus clarity on expenditure authority (delegated or otherwise).

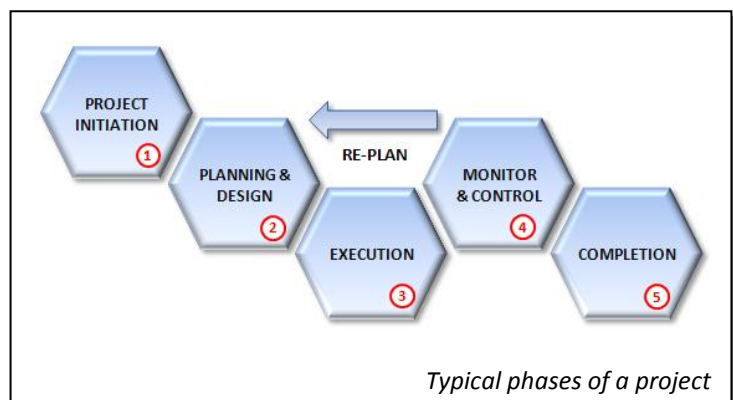
In our experience there is no single best structure or governance model. Rather much depends on the organisation's existing capabilities, structure, ability to execute and importantly culture.

A structure that runs counter to the organisation's culture will struggle to achieve momentum; likewise, a bureaucratic structure that stifles flexibility and introduces unnecessary overheads.

The project process

Whilst there are numerous approaches to project management, the traditional phased approach works well. Within this model there are 5 elements:

Initiation: Begins with the project mandate and concludes once a *Project Brief* has been prepared and a project manager assigned. The brief is a statement of what the project is expected to accomplish, how these will be measured, any constraints and assumptions, the key participants, together with an outline business case. Both the brief and business case will be refined and developed during the subsequent phase.



Planning & Design: This phase involves determining the set of discrete activities required to deliver the project. This should be conducted to an appropriate level of detail reflecting the scope of work through the *Work Breakdown Structure*.

Other areas to be addressed include the estimation and selection of resources, the development of the schedule, the refinement of the business case and associated budget plus risk planning.

A *Project Initiation Document* provides the baseline 'agreement' against which the project can be assessed and documents the: project objectives; outcomes; scope; plans; governance; project team(s); vendors; business model, and; identified constraints, risks and assumptions.

Execution: Consists of undertaking the work and co-ordinating resources to accomplish the project's objectives in accordance with the plan.

Monitor & Control: Provides essential feedback checking whether the project is on track. And if not, how it can be recovered or re-planned and how issues (immediate problems) and risks (potential issues that may arise) can be resolved or mitigated respectively.

The process must also monitor the key variables of time, cost, effort, quality and scope and report these, with the appropriate level of detail, to the project board, sponsors and team.

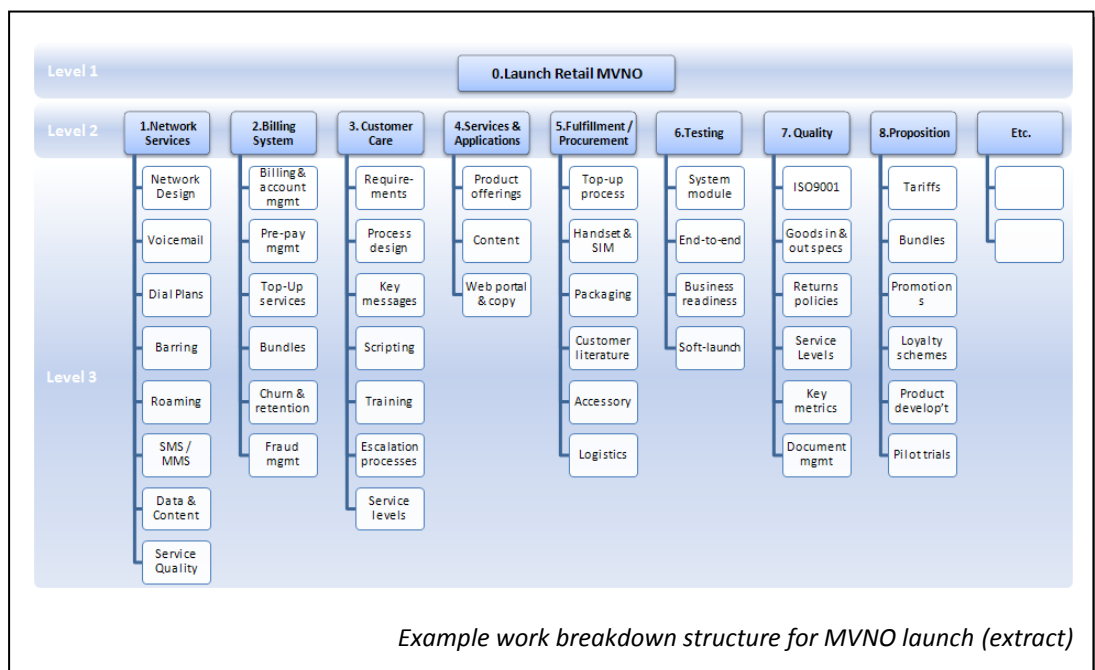
For larger projects, especially those involving the public-sector or where contractors are involved, a formal change management process may need to be followed to agree and document any changes. Such a process is usually formalised as part of the commercial agreement between the parties.

Completion: Includes the formal acceptance of the project, against the defined criteria, together with an end-of-project report including lessons learned.

One area that is often neglected is the actual process of transitioning the project into 'life' or business as usual: in many respects a project in its own right. This means ensuring that the tools, processes, skills and resources are in place together with appropriate documentation, particularly around any outstanding issues. Nothing is more annoying for a client than issues that never get resolved, or even for the in-life team who have to attempt to resolve them.

Work breakdown structure

The *Work Breakdown Structure* (WBS) is a hierarchical breakdown of the set of activities required to achieve the project objectives. It is developed by the project team who have to undertake the work, co-ordinated by the project manager.



The team progressively define the tasks and sub-tasks that need to be undertaken to meet the deliverable (top-down approach). A peer review then ensures that the set of tasks has been fully detailed and that the team has not strayed from the project scope.

The level of detail is again dependent on the scale and complexity of the project and that each task can be executed, monitored and completed unambiguously. Items at the lowest level of the WBS are referred to as *Work Packages*.

Often a 'rolling wave' planning approach is adopted where near term activities are identified in detail, whereas future tasks are refined as they approach.

Finally a WBS is not a schedule. The schedule uses the WBS to indicate what must be done, by when, in what order and by whom.

Project initiation document

A *Project Initiation Document* is an essential element of a successful project. As noted it forms the basis of the 'agreement' between the project manager and the programme board, ensuring the project has a sound basis before asking for approval to proceed.

Furthermore it acts as the baseline against which actual progress and risks and issues can be assessed, and provides a single source of reference about the project, especially for new people joining the project.

As a minimum the document should answer the following fundamental questions:

- What is the project aiming to achieve?
- Why is it important to achieve?
- When, how and where the project will be undertaken?
- Who will be involved in managing the process and what are their responsibilities?

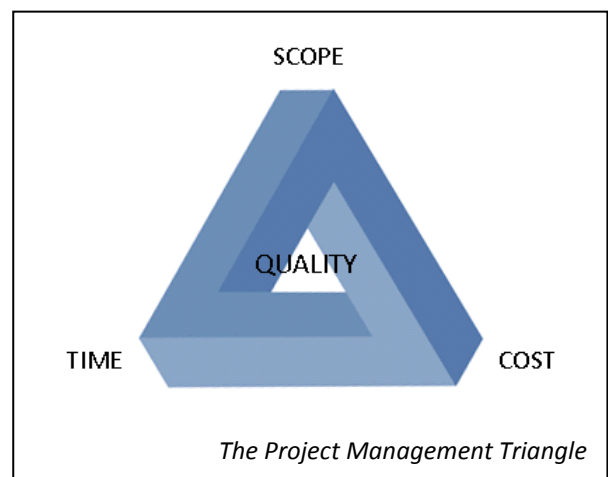
Elements of this information will have been taken from the initial *Project Brief* and expanded appropriately. Altogether the document sets out the:

- Project definition including project objectives; desired outcomes; scope; constraints and assumptions including key demarcation points.
- Project approach defining the choice of solution.
- Business case including details of the costs, risks and benefits.
- Team structure together with role descriptions and details of contractors as appropriate.
- Quality and risk management strategies describing the techniques and standards to be adopted and who is responsible.
- Configuration management strategy describing how the project's 'products' will be controlled.
- Communications plan.
- Test and acceptance process describing the set of activities that need to be undertaken to formally close the project.
- Project plan showing key deliverables ('products'), activities and resources.

As with all things, the scale of the project and also the client will determine the level of detail required and how formalised the project controls, and associated administrative overhead, must be.

The project management triangle

Most projects have a specific time limit, budget (cost) and scope. It is this combination of elements that restrict the decisions that can be made and act as project constraints. For example increasing a project's scope may result in the project taking longer, requiring an increase in resources and hence costs.



The classic *Project Management Triangle* offers a useful way of visualising these constraints. Like all simple models care must be exercised in its application, especially as 'quality' is often added as a fourth measure acting to further constrain the time, cost and scope aspects.

The experienced partner

Ultimately good programme and project management comes down to precision of direction, the right individuals, realistic plans, and effective controls.

Piran Partners offers dedicated programme and project management resources, with a successful track record of delivering multi-million Euro projects on-time and to budget.

Virtual Partner Programme (VPP™)

Having worked with mobile operators and MVNOs since the inception of the MVNO concept, we have seen the clear commercial need to help all parties create, execute and manage their MVNO offerings.

This may involve obtaining the MVNO agreement in the first place, or helping an operator select a strategic portfolio of MVNO partners, or ensuring that systems and processes are fully able to support the requirements.

Piran Partners' *Virtual Partner Programme™* provides this structured framework. It comprises of a number of distinct modules appropriate for MVNOs or mobile operators.

Each module has a clear set of deliverables and the completion of a module marks an important milestone.

VPP™ for Mobile Virtual Network Operators enables organisations to gain mobile operator agreements and launch services on time and on budget.

- **Scoping:** Development of the engagement strategy and supporting materials including business plans and interconnect modelling.

- **Operator Engagement:** Presentation of the business proposition and go-to-market and operational strategy.
- **Contract Negotiation:** Assuming interest from one or more mobile operators, detailed contract negotiations are entered into. The objective is to gain a written offer as quickly as possible and stimulate, if possible, competition.
- **Programme Delivery:** Implementation and programme management of the MVNO launch activities and co-ordination with the mobile operator partner. Piran Partners offers vendor / partner selection, contract negotiation and vendor management services plus programme management and governance.
- Post launch the **Business & Operational Process Improvement** module ensures that the MVNO continues to deliver a unique, differentiated and customer-centric service through continual focus on business processes and operational improvements whilst maintaining profitability.

VPP™ for Mobile Operators helps define or improve an operator's wholesale strategy and develop appropriate products and services. It identifies partners to target, and sets out clearly the commercial, operational and market impacts.

- **MVNO Strategic Decision Tool:** Piran Partners recognises that the wholesale business may not be right for every mobile operator. The tool is designed to provide Senior Executives and Board Members of the operator with the necessary information to evaluate whether to enter the wholesale market to support MVNOs.
- **Strategy Development:** Is the first step in the development and delivery of a commercially-focused wholesale strategy for MNOs. It provides the information and commercial justification required to implement a successful wholesale business.
- **Partner Selection:** Provides the framework and necessary tools to help manage the entire MVNO evaluation-to-offer process, including the financial

objectives and selection criteria that potential MVNOs must fulfil.

- **Business Process & Operational Improvements:** To effectively deliver the wholesale strategy, the organisation's business processes and operational capabilities must be fit for purpose. We carry out an in-depth review of all existing systems and processes, identifying capability gaps, making recommendations for change and implementing them.
- **Programme Delivery:** Deciding whether to outsource or in-source network elements, defining system requirements, running vendor tendering and selection processes, contract negotiation and programme management are all part and parcel of Piran Partners' delivery capabilities.

About Piran Partners

Piran Partners provides clear, practical and straightforward advice to clients in the Telecoms, Media and Technology sector. We approach challenges from a commercial perspective, aiming to add significant value to your business.

We work with MVNOs, mobile operators and organisations throughout the mobile value chain from retailers through to equipment suppliers.

Our Virtual Partner Programme has successfully delivered 15 mobile agreements on behalf of European clients in the last 7 years.

Piran Partners' founders are industry veterans with over 20 years experience each of the TMT industry. We pride ourselves that all our partners and associates are carefully selected based on their proven practical experience in the industry.

For more information on our services, please visit www.piranpartners.com or call +44 (0) 8708 799 300

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