

Public Sector Project Management

Guidelines



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Foreword

Starting in 2016, PMIRS identified the need to know more about public sector project management specificities, especially from projects developed at the State and at the Municipality level. Our purpose was also to involve civil servants who work in these sectors, eager to use best practices to ensure the success of those projects. The inspiration for those actions came, in part, from several PMI studies and publications over the last few years, including the White Paper produced by the National Academy of Public Administration, “Improving Program Management in the Federal Government”, main guideline for Law 114-264, from December 2016, enacted by American President Barak Obama. That law regulated several topics to be followed on project management in that Country at Federal level (PMIAA - Program Management Improvement and Accountability Act of 2015).

PMIRS’s studies and thoughts were synthesized in the publication “Project Management in the Public Sector - Recommended Minimum Standards”*.

We also organized in 2016, 2017 and 2018 an annual meeting called PMDay Public Sector to discuss those topics and to present some valuable experiences from invited experts.

In 2018, PMIRS got together a new working group of volunteers from various areas, to strengthen our previous studies and to offer a new contribution for improving the success of public sector projects. The new document presented here is not supposed to be a final or a comprehensive one, but a source of new thoughts over the previous studies, to be discussed, amended if necessary and tailored, for sure, to the realities of each public sector project.

Comments and feedback from each reader of this document will help us to get a better knowledge of that area.

* www.pmirs.org.br/projetospublicos



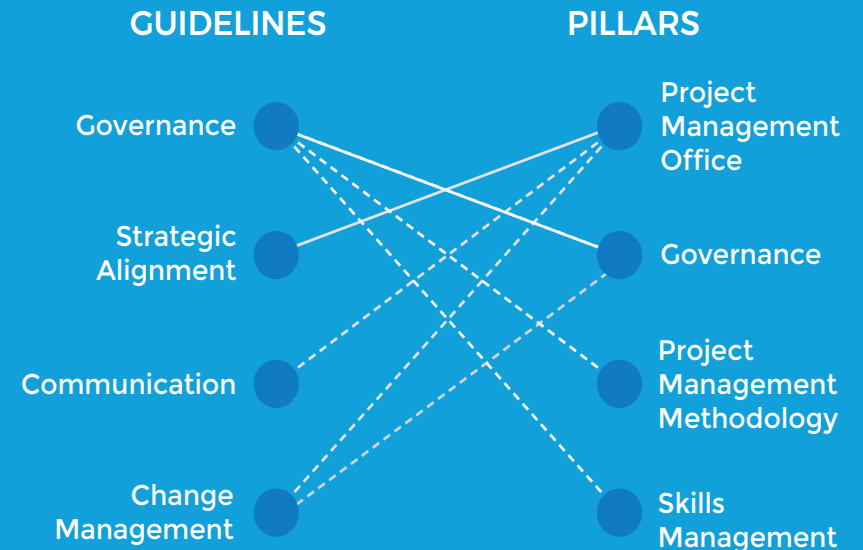
Guidelines for Public Project Management

The success of any improvement for the citizens of a community - a new technology, a new service or a new building, for example - relies on a good project and good project management.

A basic and worldwide accepted reference for the best practices on project management is the PMBOK® - A Guide to The Project Management Body of Knowledge, published by PMI® - Project Management Institute. Many complementary studies and reports for public sector projects have been also published by PMI. In line with such initiatives, and after publishing the “Recommended Minimum Practices”, we offer now a further set of topics for consideration, what we call “Guidelines”.

At our previous study we defined four pillars to be considered in such environment.

The diagram below shows the main relations among our pillars and our guidelines.



At the present study we focus on some complementary guidelines to help a better understanding on how to implement or how to improve existing practices, considering our proposed pillars. We focus now on four guidelines:

To achieve a better understanding and better results on application of those concepts, we strongly recommend a simultaneous reading of both documents.



Guideline for Governance

Governance can be defined as a system of integration and connection of stakeholders for services and projects control that must be delivered by public management, establishing goals and monitoring results, integrating the entire structure of the organization, work processes and all parties involved in those proceedings

Governance makes public management more efficient, through transparency, efficiency in resources use and accountability.

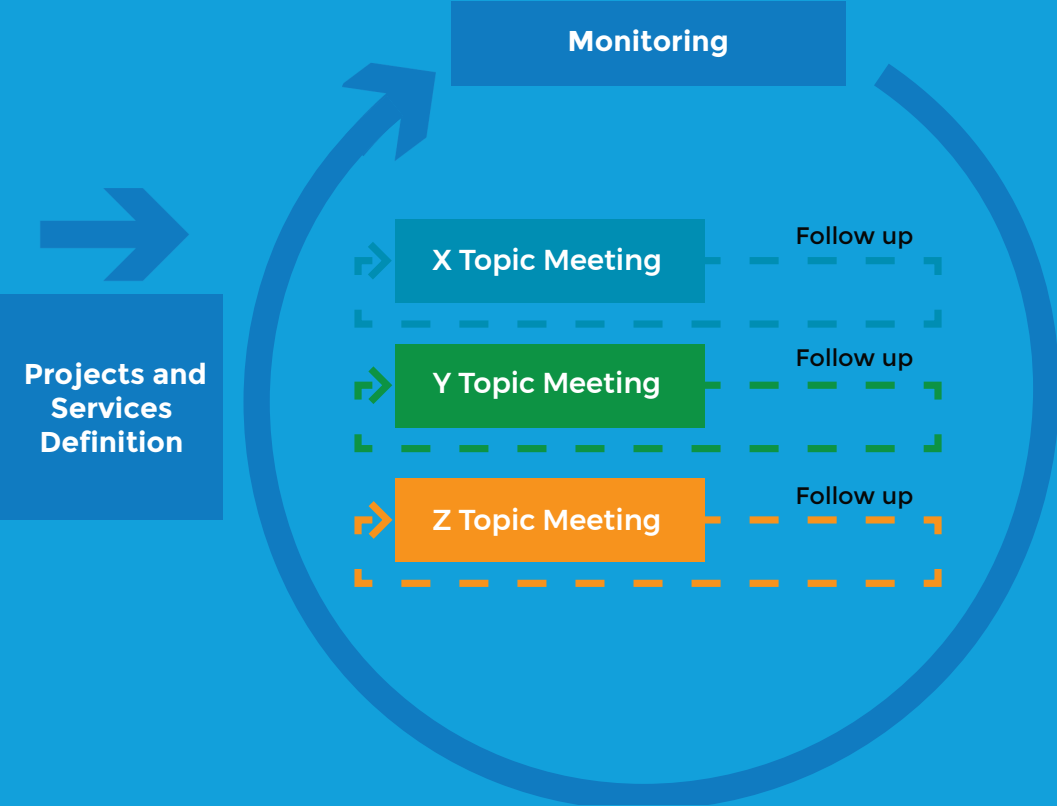
Good governance in the public sector allows the administration to deliver more efficient and effective services, as well as products of better quality to citizens, in social, economic, environmental and infrastructure areas. In addition, good governance allows better and clearer control over all key sectors for the maintenance of government.

To obtain these results it is necessary to establish a governance network, organized in Senior Management Governance Network (high administration that can include the Governor, the Mayor and/or Secretaries) and Technical Governance Network (composed by Secretaries and civil servants).



After defining the projects and services to be delivered by the government, the governance network must assure proper deployment and monitoring of such execution, considering its comprehensiveness, its social and economic impacts, its complexities and its budgetary resources.

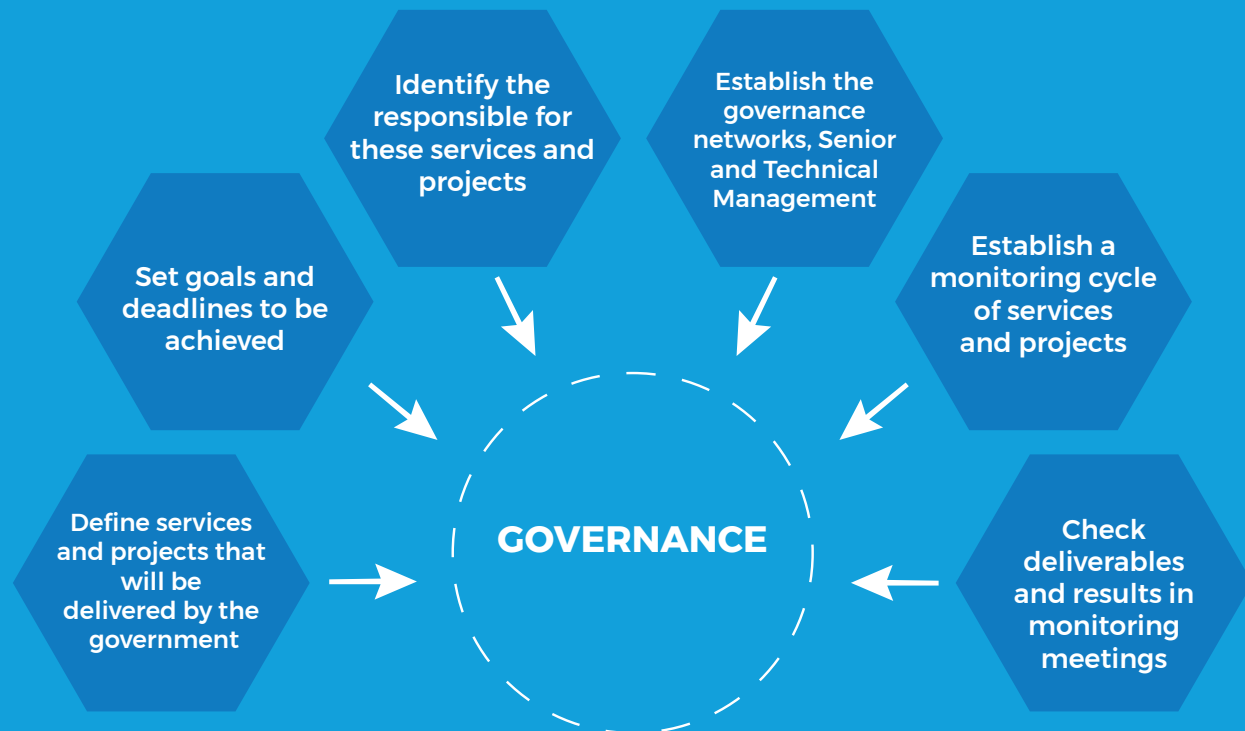
Monitoring should be periodic and systematic, with a well-defined agenda and widely publicized, so that all involved stakeholders can participate. Monitoring meetings should be focused on services and priority projects and should be handled by each Secretary responsible for the Project or by the group of Secretaries and/or Agencies involved. These meetings are essential for the decision process, follow up of project progress, issues and problems, and especially accountability assessment.





To achieve the best results with a Governance System, it is fundamental that each project or action has a well identified responsible. The head of executive power (Governor, Mayor or high level administrator) is accountable for the government as a whole, and responsible for settling issues involving more than one Agency; Secretaries are responsible for settling issues involving more than one State Secretary or Agency; Project Managers are accountable for the project results (scope, schedule, budget, quality and others), and with the necessary empowerment needed to deal with all departments involved with the project; and finally the civil servants, accountable for each action to be carried out in the project.

For a better understanding, we can organize the necessary steps for the implementation of an efficient Governance in the following way:



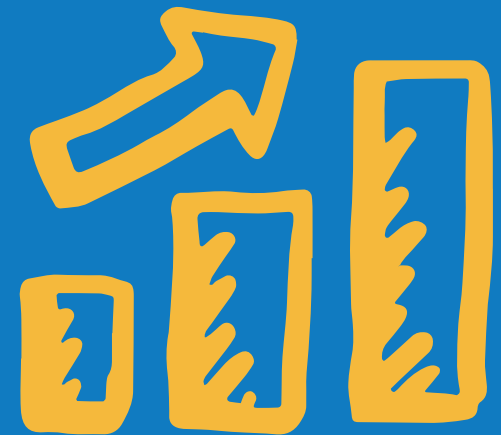
Governance brings many advantages, not only for society, but also for those who execute it.

Among the advantages and benefits of Governance for the public manager we can highlight:

- Agility on services delivery;
- Transparency, making clear for the society the deliverables of each Agency;
- Government with more efficiency, effectiveness and improved quality services for citizens;
- Clear knowledge of the progress of services and projects developed within the government;
- Better control over the results of goals;
- Continuous improvement of the public administration working processes.

For civil servants, we can highlight:

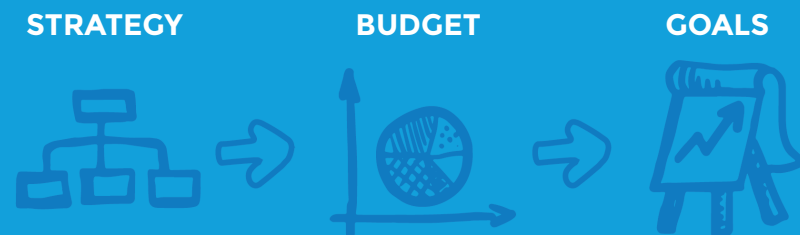
- Visibility of its technical performance;
- Transparency for the progress of services and projects provided by the government;
- Better understanding for the society on the deliverables of each Agency;
- Belonging feeling;
- Personal development.



Guidelines for Strategic Alignment

The environment of public organizations presents a high degree of complexity because they perform numerous processes, with quite different kinds of deliverables. This scenario requires the adoption of methodologies that organize public policies, communicate priorities and speed up execution. Such particularities demand a high degree of alignment in order to guarantee the success of programs and projects and the achievement of the desired outcomes for the outlined strategy.

A good strategy should have clear objectives, programs, projects and actions, and related outputs and outcomes. It is essential that they are aligned with laws that regulate the overall budget system. In our Brazilian system we have three clear stages linking long term strategy with final annual execution: Pluriannual Plan (“Plano Plurianual” – PPA), Budget Guidelines Law (“Lei de Diretrizes Orçamentárias” – LDO) and Annual Budget Law (“Lei Orçamentária Annual” – LOA). To guarantee the necessary resources to achieve the desired results and benefits, the alignment of those three documents is essential. On the other hand, there is no justification for any government action outside such alignment.



Equally important, in order to be successful in the execution of the strategy, is the use of a system of standard practices, techniques and procedures, generally accepted as best practices for portfolio, program and project management.

Such standards must be tailored for each government environment and must consider a phased implementation, according to each level of maturity in the organization. An Enterprise Project Management Office – EPMO, is essential to carry out all those activities and ensure an adequate level of governance.

At the PPA, we have the strategic planning process for four years with a broad definition of programs and projects. At the LDO, we define exactly what will be executed at the next fiscal year, according with the defined priorities and with a better approach for the budget and schedule of each project. All deliverables and milestones are defined for monitoring the progress of the projects. With such inputs, the LOA is established, where there is a clear and final budget allocation for the approved projects and regular activities for the fiscal year.

Guidelines for Communication

There are some activities that are directly linked to good communication processes: properly transmitting the Strategic Plan, engaging teams, assigning responsibilities and managing the governance process.

It is important to plan communication so that it is effectively balanced, avoiding the pitfalls of extremes, that is, communicating “too little” or communicating “too much”..

Basically, communication planning involves defining:

- communication events;
- accountability;
- audience (for whom the communication is);
- channel to be used;
- frequency (how often the information will be shared).
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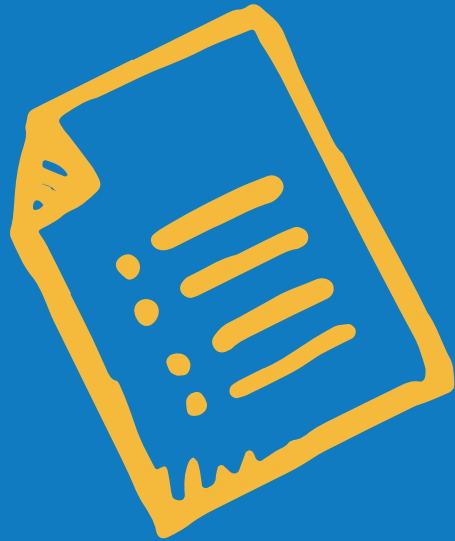
Planning failures will lead to implementation problems, with direct impact on projects success..



Communication should be designed for the different audiences that will be impacted by the project; therefore, its planning begins with the identification of key stakeholders, their needs and characteristics. In public sector projects, internal communication (internal marketing), important for the engagement of project teams, is as important as the publicity (transparency) of the goals or milestones of the project for the external public. Many projects fail because they disregard any of these dimensions.

In general, public sector structures are hierarchical and vertical, while in the private sector it is easier to create projectized, more agile and less bureaucratic structures. This division of tasks among many people can turn accountability more difficult, with direct impact on the execution of project activities.

Communicating is also very important in order to make the duties and responsibilities of teams and individuals clear, as well as to generate a sense of accountability for managers and staff.



Here are some useful tips:

- Make standard Progress Reports with fundamental information for key identified stakeholders;
- Use tools such as the Responsibility Matrix for better establishing the roles and responsibilities of the tasks or activities;
- Enhance leadership for a better understanding of communication and its role as a leader.

And try to avoid some pitfalls, in order to guarantee a good quality of communication:

- Avoid excessive communication as it becomes inefficient. Too frequent communication can decrease stakeholder engagement and attention.
- Plan meetings so that they occur only when really necessary, and carry them out with agenda and formal registration;
- Clearly define action items with responsibilities and deadlines agreed upon.

Guidelines for Change Management

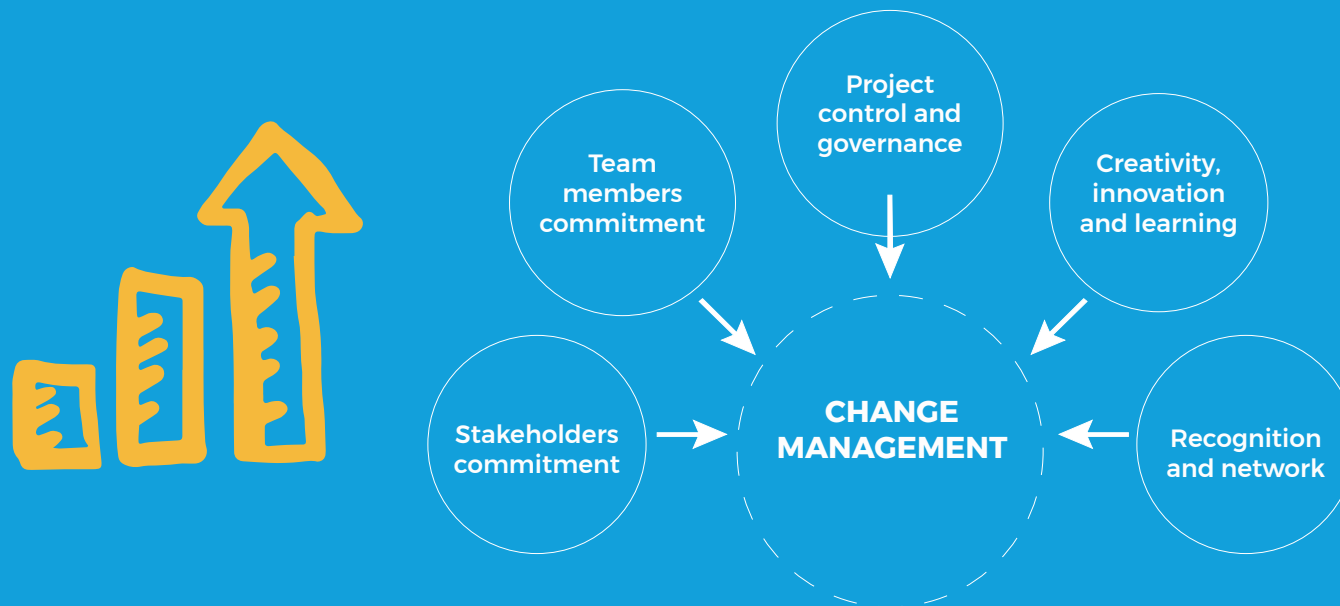
Best practices in Project management are more than techniques, management tools, templates and control systems. It is also about organizational and management culture transformation and an understanding that public employees are a very important part of these efforts.

When people understand and trust in a purpose, either of the Project or the Organization, they find their own motivations from this. Personal project engagement is more than just following the Project Management Body of Knowledge Guide; projects should have a meaning for people.

This understanding drives us to face the fact that a project doesn't really finish with the Closing Statement, but only when the desired benefits, the desired change and the lasting value to the enterprise or organization is assured. Such approach is also focus of the Benefits Realization Management Practice Guide, recently published by PMI®.

Thus, we can say that a key factor for a team commitment to the desired results and outcomes is the understanding that the project environment includes a set of good practices and also a very strong human factor.

In that sense, a few tips to lead an effective change management could include:



Project management with a strong concern on such approach of change management could produce, among other benefits, the following:



For team members:

- Clear expected results
- Purpose sharing
- Opportunities to collaborate and work at key projects
- Learning and growth opportunities
- Recognition and network

For leaders and managers:

- Agility and quick results;
- Team commitment
- Priority focus
- Optimized use of resources

Final Remarks

Our Working Group on Public Sector Projects aims to increase the awareness of the benefits on using recommended and best practices for project management in that area. To achieve such purpose, it is absolutely necessary to fully understand the public sector environment, its constraints and its challenges, many times quite different from projects on the private sector.

The success of this process involves a continuous interaction of civil servants and project management practitioners in other areas. Our Chapter, taking for reference our Municipal and State level governments, is strongly committed with that goal.

Learn more visiting:

www.pmir.org.br/projetospublicos



