Natural England Standard
Programme and Project Management

1:0 About this standard

Introduction

Much of our work is delivered through programmes and projects so it is essential that we manage and deliver these effectively.

A programme or project management approach ensures that:

 i. everyone involved in a piece of work knows what is expected of them;
 ii. we reduce and manage risk;
 iii. we keep cost, time and quality under control and,
 iv. we get better outcomes.

A consistent approach is needed to show government and the public we are a well-managed organisation and meet the requirements for all public sector organisations set out in a range of guidance, including:

- **Treasury Green Book**: which requires programmes and projects to be set up, managed and delivered with comprehensive and proportionate governance arrangements, appraisal and evaluation.

- **Cabinet Office guidance**: which states programme and project management should be based on industry recognised frameworks - Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) and PRINCE2 and Cabinet Office recommendations.

- **Natural England's Management Statement (August 2007):** which states that 'we ensure that an effective system of programme and project management and contract management is maintained'.

- **Natural England's Financial Scheme of Delegation**: which covers the levels at which delegated approval for authorisation are required.

All Natural England staff must be able to demonstrate they have followed the approach and principles when commissioning, starting up, delivering and closing programmes and projects.

What does this standard cover?

This standard provides the definitions of both programme and project management (see Glossary); the principles which must underpin all programmes and projects in Natural England; and explains the responsibilities of those involved in programme and project management.

This standard covers:

- Management of all internal programmes and projects (see 2.3 glossary)

- Management of all external programmes and projects where Natural England is the lead partner.

The standard does not explicitly cover programmes and projects where Natural England is not the lead (as decisions on detailed process would be for others to make), our assumption is that the basic principles set out and the core guidance would still be broadly followed, as they are based on accepted common approaches, recommended across the public sector.

Who is this standard for?

The Programme and Project Management standard applies to all staff in Natural England involved in delivering programmes and projects.

2:0 The Standard

This standard provides:
set up a board or steering group with representation
2.1 A set of principles for Programme and Project Management.

2.2 A list of mandatory requirements that all staff must follow including links to supporting guidance.

2.3 A glossary of terms.

2.1 Principles for Programme and Project Management	
Business justification	For much of the work Natural England delivers, the structures across the organisation and within teams, for setting objectives, assigning tasks, managing risks and driving delivery, are appropriate and sufficient.
	In some instances, the combination of the scale, level of complexity/investment and risk involved in an activity or set

	of activities will mean that the responsible person (whether an ED, Director, Manager, Team Leader, Advisor) will want to consider the case for establishing a distinct, time-limited programme or project to give greater assurance of successful delivery. In making this decision, the responsible person will need to be clear that the added assurance / delivery quality will justify the additional business cost associated with a new programme or project.
Clarity of responsibility	Having decided to establish a programme or project, it is then important to make a clear decision about who will operate as the senior responsible owner.
Clear measures of success	We will clearly document a programme or projects purpose, expected benefits and governance arrangements and kept this record up to date throughout its delivery.
Appropriate and proportionate management processes	As each programme or project is different with differing levels of complexity. It is natural to assume the processes to be applied in managing delivery will also be different. It is then important to identify the activities to be managed in the early stages of planning. In doing so the senior responsible owner will need to establish the processes to be used and ensure these are proportionate to the scale, level of complexity/investment and risk involved.
Focus on delivery	Through delivery we will maintain focus on delivering to time, cost and quality through proportionate monitoring and reporting, while seeking assurance that identified benefits will be maximised.
Timely closure	As the success of a programme or project will depend on whether it has been delivered to time, cost and quality. Continued assessment should be made asking whether current activity has delivered sufficiently against the agreed remit and whether a programme or project should be closed (e.g. if achieving the last 5% of benefits will take another 100% of effort). In doing so we need to ensure activity is brought to a controlled close, handing over ownership and management of any outstanding benefits or actions to an appropriate continuing authority.

2.2 Mandatory requirements		
	What	**How**
2.2.1	**Business justification** For all new work Directors, Managers or Team Leaders must: • decide if the work needs a project or programme management approach based on the definitions set out above and the level of complexity and risk • make a judgment on the need to consult with, and make recommendations to the relevant governance group (or Executive Board for larger, more complex, higher risk or more challenging work with cross function engagement or involvement of external organisations) • decide if the project is 'standalone' or part of a larger programme For the definitions of a project see the glossary (section 2.3) The Executive Board will usually take the decision to set up a major change programme.	➢ Records Management Standard ➢ Risk & Issues Management Standard ➢ Quality Management Standard
2.2.2	**Clarity of responsibility** Those involved in programmes and projects should: • be clear on which area of the business should lead • decide and record who will act as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) and project or programme manager (anyone can take these roles provided that they meet the approval limits and delegated authority for the work that the project covers)	➢ Records Management Standard ➢ Risk & Issues Management Standard ➢ Quality Management Standard

2.2.3	**Clear measures of success**	➢ [Records Management Standard](#)
	Before committing any significant time developing and project or programme an SRO must ensure there is a record (for example a mandate or decision by the relevant governance group) which is detailed enough for the scale and complexity of the project or programme and shows that they have considered:	➢ [Risk & Issues Management Standard](#) ➢ [Quality Management Standard](#)
	• why it is needed (e.g. how Natural England or the natural environment will be improved (benefits) or the contribution to the Corporate Plan)	
	• timescales, costs and boundaries or constraints of the work	
	• risks and things we can do to avoid them; and	
	• possible dependencies	
2.2.4	**Appropriate and proportionate management processes**	➢ [Records Management Standard](#)
	Once SROs have approved the business case they must ensure that:	➢ [Risk & Issues Management Standard](#) ➢ [Quality Management Standard](#)
	• a **programme** has a plan that shows how the component projects fit together, what they will deliver at each programme stage, and the contribution they will make to the overall outcome and benefits	
	• a **Project** has a plan with enough detail so that everyone involved knows how activities will be coordinated and product descriptions that show who will deliver what and by when, and the contribution they will make to the overall outcome and benefits	
	Before going ahead with any work on the project or programme the SRO must:	
	• decide the level of external involvement (the Executive Board may decide that someone from Defra, another organisation in the Defra Network or another partner or stakeholder should join the programme board)	

- set up a board or steering group with representation

- from those commissioning the work, those supplying the resource and those who will use the products or be affected by the change

- ensure that spending and approval limits fit with Natural England's Financial and Non-Financial Schemes of Delegation

- make sure the resources needed are available

- ensure those working on the programme (including the SRO) have described their contribution in their Personal Performance Agreements

- decide the level of documentation and reporting their programme needs and follow the guidance and standards for Records Management in keeping records to explain the decisions made

And show they have considered and agreed with the relevant governance group:

- that the right people have been involved in developing the proposal;

- any options for delivery

- how benefits will be managed

- the need for an Equality Impact Assessment

- the need to follow any specific procurement processes or guidelines

- the project or programme manager follows the risk management standard and takes the right actions to avoid or deal with risk

	For **programmes** SROs must also make sure: • there is a sufficiently rigorous approach to benefits management and benefit profiling • the right project level risks are considered at the programme level so that the programme board concentrates on risks to achieving benefits For **projects** SROs must also: • decide if their project is large and complex enough for full benefit profiling where it is not already covered under a wider programme	
2.2.5	**Focus on delivery** For a **programme**. Once the SRO has agreed the plans for delivery they must: • choose an approach to reporting (regularity, documentation and processes) that fits the scale of their programme • ensure individual projects know what information is needed by the programme at each stage so the programme can keep control of the outcomes • decide in what way and what level programmes and projects are represented within the Corporate Performance Management System (CPMS) and ORION • ensure the delivery of their programme is divided into manageable stages which will coincide with key outputs or the introduction of organisational changes • ensure the programme board periodically assesses the programme to check if what is happening will still deliver the benefits in the light of any changed circumstances and if some projects or activities should be changed or stopped altogether. SROs need to make sure they record the outcome of such reviews For a **project**, Once the SRO has approved the business case, they are accountable for:	➢ Records Management Standard ➢ Risk & Issues Management Standard ➢ Quality Management Standard

	• ensuring delivery of the specific things (products or outputs) covered by the product descriptions • choosing an approach to reporting (regularity, documentation and processes) that fits the scale of their project and keeps the project on track • using the reports and information gathered to regularly review progress and escalate issues if needed • meeting any requirements of the mainstream performance management process at the appropriate level, e.g. reporting through the Corporate Performance Monitoring System (CPMS) and ORION	
2.2.6	**Timely closure** SROs must ensure a **programme's** parts have been completed satisfactorily and any remaining actions or benefits have been assigned to the relevant areas of the business. The **programme** manager (on behalf of the SRO) must produce an end of programme report to cover the following: • a summary on how well the programme performed against its objectives, including the original planned cost, schedule and limits, the business case and final version of the programme delivery plan; • handover actions and governance for any uncompleted work or unrealised benefits to be transferred to specific staff in the right areas of the business. This section should also include any outstanding programme risks, issues and dependencies that require monitoring and management after completion; and • lessons learned information to summarise what went well and what didn't. SROs must also make sure benefits are picked up by changes to the relevant corporate and delivery plans and guidance to staff, customers and stakeholders. When bringing a **project** to a close, handing over any outstanding benefits or actions. SROs are accountable for producing an appropriate record (such as an 'end of project	➢ [Records Management Standard](#) ➢ [Risk & Issues Management Standard](#) ➢ [Quality Management Standard](#)

report') to cover:

- how well the project performed against its agreed objectives, budget and timetable;

- any uncompleted work, risks, issues and dependencies that need monitoring and managing after completion; and

- lessons learned on what went well and what didn't.

2.3 Glossary	
Programme	We define a programme as a temporary set of management arrangements to co-ordinate, direct and oversee two or more projects to achieve strategic objectives or organisational changes. Programmes are typically large scale, longer term initiatives focused on delivery of strategy and benefits where there is more uncertainty at the start about the action needed to be successful.
Project	We define a project as an approach to managing 'one-off' tasks or groups of tasks which can be large or small but which have a set timescale, a budget and which deliver things (outputs or products) either as a 'stand-alone' piece of work or as part of a programme of wider business change.
Senior Responsible Owner (SRO)	A Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) is the individual responsible for ensuring that a Programme/Project meets its objectives and delivers the projected benefits.

Quick reference

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0.2	Refinements	Mike Smith	03/11/11
0.3	Refinements & removal of framework diagram	Dave White	07/11/11
0.4	Refinements following review by from Alison Tytherleigh	Mike Smith	11/11/11
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