

Leveraging the Science and Art of  
PROJECT MANAGEMENT to realize *Make in India*  
Summary of FICCI-PMI Recommendations



# Acknowledgements

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# Summary of FICCI-PMI Recommendations for Leveraging the Science and Art of Project Management to realize Make in India

## Introduction

A very significant part of the project management field requires logic and structure, whether it is to make task lists or manage project dependencies. As a discipline amenable to scientific management practices, project management best practices have been encapsulated in Gantt charts, PERT charts, earned value calculations, risk management techniques, contingency planning, etc. Factual data enables measurement of project progress, estimation of time to completion and calculation of costs.

There is also something about projects that enforces the value of relationships, diversity in approach, and communication effectiveness. The art of project management revolves around inspiration, communication, team building, leadership and empathy. A project falling behind schedule needs improvisation fuelled by on-your-feet thinking. As priorities shift or situations change, the skill to discern through multiple courses of action comes into play, as does the ability to determine which information to communicate when and to whom.

Projects are considered successful if they are completed on budget, as per scope, on schedule, and more importantly when desired objectives are met, and project outcomes are satisfying for stakeholders. This is not easy, but neither is it impossible. It all comes together with the art and science of project management combined with a supporting eco-system within which projects are conceived, nurtured and brought to fruition.





# Recommendation I: Stakeholder Engagement



There seems to be a universal acknowledgement amongst project management practitioners that stakeholders need to be engaged and managed. But there also seems to be a universal situation of projects running into problems because of inadequate stakeholder engagement. Why does this happen? Is it because stakeholder engagement is treated as a routine, mechanical task rather than a critical activity which requires creative thinking and genuine openness to achieve results. Stakeholder engagement is a make or break activity that determines the final quality of the outcome.

Stakeholders are real people, and there is no one size fits all approach when it comes to strategizing to engage stakeholders and develop a true collaboration with them. Therefore no amount of knowledge transfer can provide answers to specific situation based questions. However, the topic of stakeholder engagement has been extensively researched and frameworks are available to help practitioners find the answers for themselves.

As a matter of principle, effective stakeholder engagement requires genuine and sincere effort. If the idea is to undertake a perfunctory exercise for the sake of ticking of an activity box, no framework can be of help. Stakeholder engagement must be done with a strategic eye on the ultimate results which the project is intended to achieve, not with the tactical purpose of handling an immediate issue. Once this basic world view is imbibed and stakeholder engagement activities have been identified, the following questions must be addressed:

Do the activities include an external scan to identify the forces that could impede and those that could support the program/project?

- Those who would benefit?
- Those who would be adversely affected?
- Those likely to support and those likely to oppose?

Were the needs of these stakeholders understood and mapped?

How will this initiative affect these stakeholders and what is the strategy to obtain their support?

Has a system been installed for periodic feedback from stakeholders and its consideration for designing project activities?

There are several frameworks / tool sets available in management literature which can be used as formats to use answers to the above questions and populate a generic stakeholder analysis table with project-specific information and develop stakeholder engagement activities. Such tool sets typically consist of *Stakeholder Diagnostic*, *Power/Influence Map*, *Leverage Matrix* that help develop an Action Plan. Stakeholder engagement, however, should not be considered as a one time activity. It is often required throughout the project lifecycle and may even be required after project completion.

While all project plans contain a section on stakeholders, the real issue is about quality of stakeholder engagement. Recommended parameters to assess quality are: range of stakeholder groups analysed and range of activities undertaken beyond exchange of information.

## Recommendation 2: Nodal Agency

An empowered nodal agency is an essential part of the project management eco-system. The agency does not manage projects itself, but supports other Project Management and Monitoring Units in solving problems that are beyond the control of these Units. The Project Monitoring Group (PMG) set up by the central government in the Cabinet Secretariat is an example of such an agency. Considering the large number of mega projects getting held up, PMG was formally set up in June 2013 as an institutional mechanism to track stalled investment projects, both in the public and private sectors and to remove implementation bottlenecks in these projects on a fast-track basis. Only projects with issues or problems are considered for fast tracking by PMG. Since then, PMG has accepted 507 projects for consideration and successfully facilitated resolution of all issues in 207 stalled projects with an investment of around ₹ 7.4 lakh crores till date.\*

The need for an institutional mechanism to fast-track projects, especially large and complex ones is well-recognized in the project management discipline. This mechanism is required because success of such projects is invariably dependent on clearances from or actions of other independent agencies for whom each project is only one piece and not always a key priority. Therefore, an institutional mechanism that can exercise influence over these independent agencies is required.

The efficacy of such an institutional mechanism flows from the government's strategic priorities. With this strategic alignment firmly in place, the following project management principles should be applied to maximize effectiveness of the institutional mechanism:

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\* <http://cabsecpmg.gov.in/cabsec/index.php> March 9, 2015

## Crisis Management

Saving a ship that has hit an iceberg requires a skill set different from the one needed to steer a ship out of troubled waters. An institutional mechanism that takes up only those projects which have reported issues or problems must specialize in distinguishing between the kinds of problems that are likely to be encountered and deal with them accordingly. Crisis Management, for example, encompasses different stages: pre-crisis, warning, crisis, recovery, post-crisis, which require appropriate responses.

## Alert Generation

Very often issues that are not recognized, evaluated and correctly managed turn into crisis. While it is important to build expertise in managing crisis and coming out of them, it is also important to build expertise in sensing and preventing them. For example, use of past experience to generate alerts in respect of projects most likely to get stalled could reduce resolution time and effort. Maintaining a knowledge repository with well-designed entry and search criteria to enable efficient knowledge transfer for problem resolution is also critical.

## Benefits Realization

The ultimate objective of resolving issues in stalled projects is to see that the project is finally completed and delivering the desired results. Thus retaining on the radar projects for which a particular issue has been resolved may be needed to ensure that the project is successfully completed and it does not move from one problem to another.



# Recommendation 3: Formal Training on Project Management

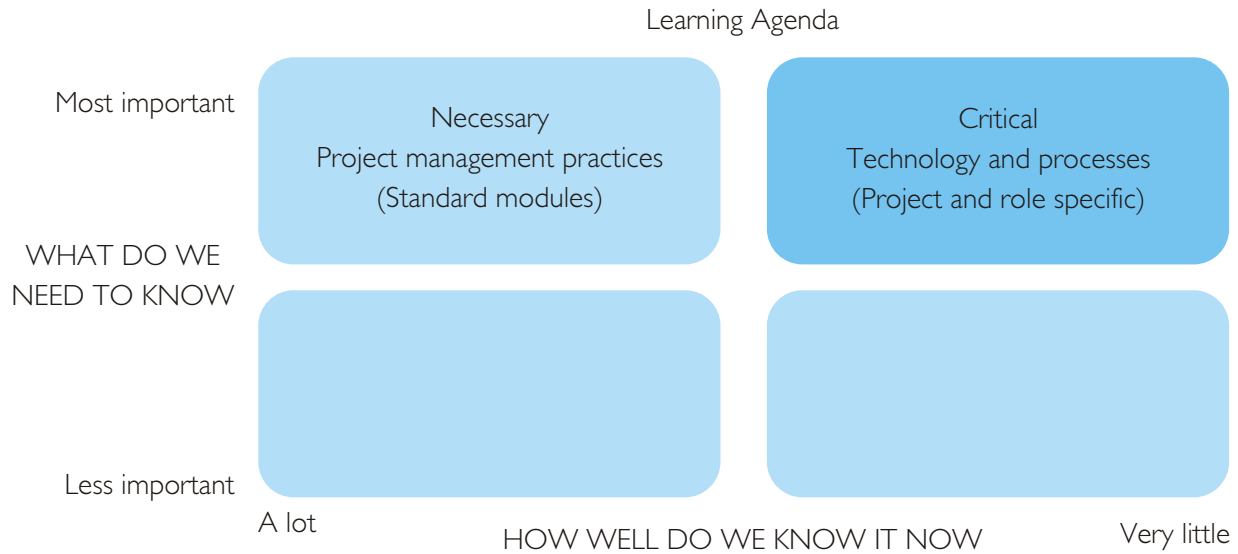
Like stakeholder engagement, training is universally acknowledged as a critical need for successful project management. Department of Personnel and Training and Department of Public Enterprises, Government of India have both recognized the importance of Project Management training as is evident from the circulars on such trainings to be made mandatory.

Our recommendations focus on the twin questions on what is the *right* kind of project management training, and how does *effective knowledge transfer* take place for organizational rather than individual capability? In this respect, the following five principles deserve consideration:

- Each project is unique and therefore training needs are also unique to projects; training needs assessment is therefore a critical component for each project
- Capacity building interventions are not one time activities; they are needed at different stages of the project with content suited to each stage
- For best results, a mix of standard project management practices on a regular basis coupled with need-based project-specific technology and process training is recommended
- Formal process for assessing organizational capability in project management is required to enable effective transfer of individual learning into organizational learning; this includes learning for not only the project teams, but also project owners and sponsors
- Project management know how of our times also includes knowledge of project management tools and their use



The first principle implies that for every project training needs must be assessed and training interventions designed accordingly. The following structure illustrates how to arrive at the critical learning agenda at the project level.



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To carry forward our initiatives in support of rapid, inclusive and sustainable growth that encompass health, education, livelihood, governance and skill development.

To enhance efficiency and global competitiveness of Indian industry and to expand business opportunities both in domestic and foreign markets through a range of specialised services and global linkages.

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