

# AN INTRODUCTION TO PRINCE2

## What is PRINCE2?

There are six variables that need to be managed in any project. These are costs, timescales, quality, scope, risk and benefits. PRINCE is a well proven methodology for managing, controlling and organising a project to ensure a successful outcome. "PRINCE2" refers to the second major version of this method.

PRINCE2 supports project management by providing an integrated framework based on four integrated elements of: Principles, Themes, Processes and Project environment. This covers the processes and themes that address planning, delegation, monitoring and control of the six project variables.

## 1. The Principles

There are seven principles which form the basis of good practice and unless all of them are applied, it is not a PRINCE2 project. The principles are:

1. Continued Business Justification
2. Learn from Experience
3. Define Roles & Responsibilities
4. Manage by stages
5. Manage by Exception
6. Focus on Deliverables
7. Tailor to Suit Project Environment

## 2. The Themes

There are seven themes that must be continually reviewed in parallel throughout the project. They relate to issues such as change, progress, risk, quality and other dynamic parameters.

## 3. The Processes

These relate to discrete stages of progression through the project lifecycle and provide checklists of recommended activities, products and related responsibilities.

## 4. Tailoring PRINCE2 to the Project Environment

PRINCE2 is not a rigid framework and must be tailored to the project environment. Its inherent flexibility enables it to be readily moulded to any type or size of project.

## Benefits of PRINCE2

PRINCE2 embodies best practice and governance for project management. Although its origins were in the IT sector, it can be applied to any type of project and can be implemented alongside other industry models whether engineering or development lifecycles.

Its pervasive use has led to a widely understood common vocabulary that ensures reliable communication. This is held in a defined structure that also covers project responsibilities and roles, accountability, delegation, authority and communication. The key benefits are PRINCE2:

- Improves consistency of project work and enables project assets to be reused
- Enhances staff mobility and reduces the impact of personnel changes/handovers.
- Is an invaluable diagnostic tool for troubleshooting, assessing and auditing project work and safeguarding assurance.
- Meets the needs of everyone in the management team and so improves communication and control.
- Participants are able to monitor the project in relation to Business Case objectives rather than seeing completion as an end in itself.
- Provides a rigorous and economical structure of reports.
- Planning and decision making engages all stakeholders (including sponsors and resource providers).

By harnessing PRINCE2, organisations benefit from continued learning and improvement. It helps all parties to focus on deliverables and understand why and who is responsible for specific stage deliveries. PRINCE2 is based on a 'management by exception' framework and is designed to provide an efficient and economic use of management time at corporate, programme and project management levels).



Since PRINCE2 is supported worldwide by accredited training and consultancy organisations (ATOs and ACOs) its universal geographic usage within many industry sectors ensures its future success and expansion. In the UK PRINCE2 is part of a suite of guidance developed by the UK Office of Government Commerce (OGC), which is aimed at helping organisations and individuals manage their projects, programmes and services consistently and effectively.



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