Should additional Project Management Knowledge Areas and related project management processes be considered for inclusion in the *PMBOK® Guide* Seventh Edition?[1]

By Martin J Smit, PhD, PMP®

BACKGROUND

The author is now in a new phase of his life after he had to exit employment with his employer when he reached the age of 65. It is thus an opportune time for the author to do some reflection after having had the privilege to gain excellent experience in organisational project management during a working career of some 45 years. The author obtained his PMP® in 1992 (#1071). At that time the *PMBOK® Guide* (i.e. A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge) had eight Project Management Knowledge Areas (Project Integration Management and Project Stakeholder Management were added later). In this opinion piece the author suggests that the Project Management Institute (PMI) Development and Review Team for the *PMBOK® Guide*-Seventh Edition should consider the possible inclusion of additional Project Management Knowledge Areas with their associated project management processes.

Keywords: project management knowledge areas; project management processes.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROCESSES AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT KNOWLEDGE AREAS

Project management processes

According to PMI (2017) project management is accomplished through the appropriate application and integration of logically grouped project management processes. PMI (2017) briefly describes a **project management process** as *a systematic series of activities directed towards causing an end result where one or more inputs will be acted upon to create one or more outputs*. PMI (2017) states that the project life cycle is managed by executing a series of project management activities known as project management processes. Every project management process produces one or more outputs from one or more inputs by using appropriate project management tools and techniques. The output can be a deliverable or an outcome which is an end result of a process. PMI (2017) mentions that these project management processes apply globally across industries and categorizes them by Project Management Knowledge Areas.

Project Management Knowledge Areas

PMI (2017) describes a **Project Management Knowledge Area** as *an identified area of project management defined by its knowledge requirements and described in terms of its component*

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processes, practices, inputs, outputs, tools and techniques. PMI (2017) clarifies that Project Management Knowledge Areas are fields or areas of specialization that are commonly employed when managing projects and that each Knowledge Area is a set of processes associated with a particular topic in project management. PMI (2017) mentions that the following ten Knowledge Areas are used on most projects most of the time:

- Project Integration Management.
- Project Scope Management.
- Project Schedule Management.
- Project Cost Management.
- Project Quality Management.
- Project Resource Management.
- Project Communication Management.
- Project Procurement Management.
- Project Stakeholder Management.

POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT KNOWLEDGE AREAS

PMI (2017) clarifies that the needs of a specific project may require additional Knowledge Areas. The author is of the opinion that consideration should be given for the inclusion of additional Project Management Knowledge Areas during the development and review of the *PMBOK® Guide*Seventh Edition as these Knowledge Areas are commonly used on most of the projects most of the time, for example:

- Project Benefits Realization Management.
- Project Knowledge Management.
- Project Documentation and Records Management.
- Project Issue Management.
- Project Organizational Change Management.

Project Benefits Realisation Management

During the last five years or so the author has seen several articles highlighting the importance of projects and programs to implement organizational strategies in order to deliver sustainable business value for organizations.

A report from the Association of Project Management (APM) Benefits Management Special Interest Group (SIG) (2012) states that the uncertainty in financial markets and public sector spending cuts means that organizations can no longer continue to invest in change without a greater level of certainty that the benefits will be realized. Organizations that do not invest adequate effort in benefits management activities run the risk of not achieving adequate value from their investments in projects and programs.

The PMI Pulse of the Profession In-depth Report: The Strategic Impact of Projects: Identify Benefits to Drive Business Results (2016) confirms that if benefits are managed well, organizations realize the greatest possible return on their investments. Benefits ultimately justify

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the expenditure on projects and therefore organizations must focus on truly embedding benefits management across their entire organization so that it becomes part of the everyday business activity. Benefits management is not optional; it is an absolute necessity for organizations to survive.

According to the PMI Standard for Program Management (2017a), Program Benefits Management is a Program Management Performance Domain. However, not all projects are linked to programs as some projects are directly linked to portfolios. Therefore, the author is of the opinion that each project should ensure that the benefits that a project is intended to deliver should be managed during the life cycle of the project.

According to the PMI Benefits Realization Management Practice Guide (2019) portfolios, programs and projects delivers value through benefits realization management. The following possible processes for the Project Benefits Realization Management Knowledge Area were deduced from the PMI Benefits Realization Management Practice Guide (2019):

- Identify and quantify benefits (this process should possibly be included in portfolio management).
- Value and appraise benefits (this process should possibly be included in portfolio management).
- Plan benefits realization.
- Monitor benefits realization.
- Transfer benefits ownership.
- Review realization of benefits (as benefits are mostly realized during operations this process should possibly be included in portfolio management).

Project Knowledge Management

PMI (2017) has included Manage Project Knowledge as a project management process under the Project Integration Management Knowledge Area and defines it as *the process of using existing knowledge and creating new knowledge to achieve the project's objectives and contribute to organizational learning*. Lessons learned are used as a method during a project to show how project events were addressed or should be addressed in the future for the purpose of improving future performance. The author is of the view that Project Knowledge Management should rather be a Knowledge Area. The author has observed that some organizations are employing knowledge management specialists during projects to ensure that lessons learned during the project life cycle are identified, analyzed and captured as project knowledge to improve organizational processes. The following processes are proposed for consideration:

- Plan project knowledge management.
- Collect project lessons learned.
- Analyze project lessons learned.
- Implement project improvements.
- Monitor project improvements.
- Record project knowledge.
- Disseminate project knowledge.

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Project Documentation and Records Management

During his career the author has witnessed that project documents and records are not always well managed. As a result, during the close-out of some projects, project teams are not always able to provide the clients/customers with adequate project documentation and records. Project documents are inputs and outputs to most of the project management processes and therefore must be well managed. The author is also of the view that project documentation and records management are not adequately covered in the *PMBOK® Guide*. The following processes are proposed for consideration:

- Plan project documentation and records management.
- Initiate and register project documents and records.
- Create/update and review project documents and records.
- Authorize, publish and store project documents and records.
- Control project documents and records.
- Archive project documents and records.

Configuration management could possibly be included in the Project and Records Management Knowledge Area as the management of documentation and records can be supported by configuration management tools and procedures.

Project Issue Management

PMI (2017) defines an **issue** as *a current condition or situation that may impact on the project objectives*. PMI (2017) mentions that throughout the life cycle of a project, the project manager will normally face problems, gaps, inconsistencies, or conflicts that occur unexpectedly that require some action so that they do not impact the project performance. Unmanaged issues may result in problems such as delays, cost overruns, performance shortfalls, loss of reputation, etc. and therefore must be managed. The following processes are proposed for consideration:

- Plan issue management.
- Identify and capture issues.
- Assess impact of issues and identify resolutions.
- Resolve issues.
- Control issues.
- Close out issues.

Project Organisational Change Management

Many projects result in major organizational changes that have a huge impact in how organizations operate (e.g. implementation of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system). If the organizational change is not properly managed it can result in resistance from the current workforce to adopt these new changes, which in turn can affect the realization of value for the organization. During his career the author has witnessed the trend and benefits of employing organizational change management specialists in project teams to assist their organizations to

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manage the transition towards adoption of the changes (i.e. awareness, understanding, buy-in and ownership).

While there could be some arguments that Project Organizational Change Management should be part of the Project Stakeholder Management Knowledge Area, the author is of the opinion that this is a very specialized area that should rather be a Knowledge Area on its own. The following processes for Project Organizational Change Management were deduced from the PMI Managing Change in Organizations: A Practice Guide (2013):

- Formulate change.
- Plan change.
- Implement change process.
- Manage transition.
- Sustain change.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The relationship between a **Project Management Knowledge Area**, a **project management process** and a **project management activity** must be clarified to clearly distinguish the differences between these terms. The definitions of these terms should be included in the Glossary of the *PMBOK® Guide* Seventh Edition. The contributors and reviewers of the *PMBOK® Guide*-Seventh Edition should give consideration if more Knowledge Areas (or topics) should be included in the *PMBOK® Guide*.

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Martin Smit is semi-retired and is the owner of a sole proprietorship, OrgPM-Value, that provides portfolio-, program- and project management consulting, education and training services and products to help organizations to create sustainable business value. His career spanned some 45 years. He worked for Eskom, the electricity utility in South Africa, for 39 years where he held various management positions in construction-, outage-, maintenance-, and project/program-management. During the latter years Martin worked in the Eskom Project Management Office (EPMO) as a Project Management Specialist/Consultant/Advisor. He has extensive experience in the development and application of project-, program- and portfolio- management methodologies, processes and best practices. Martin is certified as a facilitator to conduct project definition readiness assessments. He is also certified to facilitate learning, conduct outcomes-based assessments and moderation. Martin has developed and presented various project- and outage-management training courses.

Martin holds a MSc (Management of Technology and Innovation) from the Da Vinci Institute in the domain of Project Management and a PhD in Engineering from the North-West University in the field of Development and Management Engineering. The title of his thesis was: "*Development of a project portfolio management model for execution organizational strategies: A normative case study.*" He also has qualifications in civil and mechanical engineering, information management, management, and maintenance practice. Martin is registered as a Project Management Professional (PMP®).

During his career Martin has presented at various national and international conferences and he has also published articles in international journals.

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