

# **Expanding from conventional project management into broader types of services in an organisational strategic management context <sup>1</sup>**

*By Alan Stretton*

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the last issue of this journal (Stretton 2020f) I identified and discussed four domains in which project/program management has been involved in helping choose the “right” projects, some of them over several decades – namely:

- Early internal PM appointments as dedicated Strategic Initiative Managers;
- Early internal OGC-type program management appointments in a similar role.
- C&C-type external provider services, with Client Needs Determination (CND);
- EPC-type external provider services, as part of Front End Loading (FEL);

I also pointed out that, in addition to facilitating involvement in choosing the “right” projects, the external services and the internal appointments associated with these four domains cover a much broader range of support and responsibilities. I also suggested that the latter suggest that there may be further opportunities for a broader expansion of the scope of project/ program management at large, and signalled an intention to further pursue these discussions.

This article picks up on that previous article, but reviews the domain of expanding from conventional project management into broader types of services in a somewhat different way. For example, it acknowledges that we live in a Covid-19 environment, and suggests how this may influence such opportunities for expansion. With this in mind, we first look at conventional project management in this context.

We will then discuss the first two bullet-pointed topics above in rather more detail, under the heading of expanding project/project management into internal strategic initiative management. We move on to discuss the second two bullet-pointed topics, this time under the heading of external strategic initiative management support services. The latter are often part of an even broader range of external strategic planning support services, which is discussed under this heading.

We will be using an extended summary to pull together many of the issues that emerge from this short coverage of a such a broad topic. It is concluded that demands for these types of expanded services are likely to grow, albeit sometimes in

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unexpected ways, representing opportunities for further expansion for those already providing such services, and for new entrants into these domains.

## **CONVENTIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT & PROJECT LIFE CYCLES (PLCs)**

### **The importance of project life cycles in project management**

The project life cycle plays a prominent role in project management literature and practice. As Morris 2013:150 puts it.

*The life-cycle is fundamental to the management of projects. The only thing that distinguishes projects from non-projects is their project life-cycle.*

Dalcher 2019 expands on Morris' first sentence above, as follows.

The notion of the project life cycle has become a ubiquitous part of the theory and practice of project management to the extent that it often defines and delineates the process, flow, rhythm, dynamics and boundaries of projects. In doing so, it also shapes the discipline and the way we think about projects, organising work and temporary structures.

Dalcher then goes on to discuss and list a large number of benefits associated with using a life cycle approach, which I will not reproduce here. But he also goes on to reflect on the shape, efficacy, and purpose of life cycles, as now broadly discussed.

### **Some semantic concerns with the descriptor “project life cycle” (PLC)**

Many writers, including Dalcher 2019, have questioned the use of the word “cycle”.

There is no cycle in the prevailing models as applied within project management – so why don't we rename it as the project life sequence?

Morris 2013:150 agrees, but prefers the label “product development sequence”:

Most people use the term ‘the project life-cycle’ but really it is the product development life-cycle, that is, the product development sequence, ... In fact, it could be argued that it is often not really a cycle at all, since there is rarely an expectation that once completed, it or the project team will recycle to the front and repeat the process.

Dalcher 2019 also has some issues with the “life” part of the label.

If life implies full life, the traditional project life cycle is a misnomer, as it does not encompass the full life of a project. ....

I have some sympathies with these arguments, for the simple reason that I believe descriptors should give as accurate a picture as possible of what they actually cover – which PLC evidently does not. For reasons that will become more apparent shortly, I prefer the descriptor *Project development and delivery sequence* to PLC.

It will be seen later that I have followed this approach to descriptors with some other alternatives to certain internal project management jargon.

## **TWO PERSPECTIVES ON THE SCOPE OF CONVENTIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

I will be describing these two primary perspective on – and indeed practices of – the scope of conventional project management as *Project execution/delivery* only, and *Project development and delivery*, as now discussed.

### **Project execution/delivery**

The main focus in the project management literature has remained largely on project execution/delivery. As Zwikael & Smyrk 2009 observed

...most of project management research and practice is focused on the delivery of project outputs with agreed quality on time and within budget.

This observation still appears to reflect the dominant position both in the project management literature, and in practice, where vast numbers of projects are still undertaken in an execution/delivery mode. As Dalcher 2016 records,

Indeed, project management is regarded as an execution discipline concerned with realising plans. In the UK, especially in government circles, there is currently a growing emphasis on strengthening the profession of *project delivery*, implying that project management as practiced is an implementation-focused approach.

It is interesting that Dalcher should point to an increasing use of a descriptor like *Project delivery professional* to describe the project execution/delivery perspective. This says a lot about external perceptions of the nature of project management.

Whilst, in the eyes of very many within the avocation, project management includes much more than just execution/delivery, the latter is still very prominent in practice. This appears set to remain the case, particularly in the Covid-19 era, when many governments are likely to accelerate infrastructure projects to help overcome some of the economic consequences shut-downs due to the pandemic – and are likely to continue using the execution/delivery method of implementing these.

Figure 1 illustrates project execution/delivery in relation to an organisational strategic management sequence which I have been using for some time.

ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT SEQUENCE				
1. Establish and shape strategic objectives	2. Develop strategic initiative options, evaluate, choose best	3. Elaborate/consolidate strategic initiatives	4. Execute strategic initiatives	5. Achieve strategic objectives.
Establish and shape both deliberate and emergent strategic objectives; Confirm desired outcomes/ benefits	Develop alternative strategic initiatives to achieve strategic outcomes / benefits; Evaluate alternatives; Choose the best	Elaborate and define chosen strategic initiatives; Confirm feasibilities; Prioritise and consolidate	Execute strategic initiative component projects/programs and other strategic work	Achieve strategic outcomes and realise benefits
			PROJECT EXECUTION/ DELIVERY	

Figure 1: Project execution/delivery in the context of an organisational strategic mgt. sequence

### Project development and delivery

(Adding “front-end” project development components – e.g. MOP)

Morris has long described the extended scope of project management (PM) into the definition and development of projects, or managing the “front end”, as the “Management of Projects” (MOP). In his words (Morris 2013:235),

*The Management of Projects* is as concerned with management of the front-end as with down-stream execution.

I have written extensively about this in the past, most recently in Stretton 2019c and 2019d. Project management has much to offer in adding value to projects by being involved in developing and defining project requirements. As Morris 2013:283 says,

The front end is the most important part of the project offering the greatest opportunities to add, or destroy, value.

Yet, the main focus in the literature has tended to remain on project execution/delivery in many application areas. As Dalcher 2019 put it,

...the early stages play a key part in defining, constraining and shaping the project, and yet our life cycles pay little attention to early decisions and their impacts.

However, the increased use of Agile in software development and other contexts has modified this situation very substantially. These, and other types of iterative approaches, are likely to continue to grow as organisations and projects respond to ever-changing challenges and opportunities associated with Covid-19, and beyond.

Regarding descriptors, or labels, Morris’ descriptor “Management of Projects - MOP” has been around for over a quarter of a century, but still does not appear to have been widely adopted. I suspect that one reason may be that this descriptor does not really indicate the scope of work it covers. To overcome this, I have adopted the label *Project Development and Delivery* instead of MOP – a label which not only helps clarify terminology within the project management community, but also helps the latter communicate more effectively with potential clients, and the public at large.

I have also included the descriptor *Project development and delivery sequence* instead of *Project life cycle (PLC)*.

ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT SEQUENCE				
1. Establish and shape strategic objectives	2. Develop strategic initiative options, evaluate, choose best	3. Elaborate/consolidate strategic initiatives	4. Execute strategic initiatives	5. Achieve strategic objectives.
		+ Managing pre-execution 'front-end' project phases	PROJECT EXECUTION/ DELIVERY	
		PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY (aka MOP)		
		Project development & delivery sequence (aka PLC)		

**Figure 2: Adding project development phases to the organisational strategic mgt. sequence**

## EXTENDING PROJECT/PROGRAM MANAGEMENT (PPM) TO COVER INTERNAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVE MANAGEMENT

### Strategic initiatives and their management

Cooke-Davies 2016:259 quotes from a PMI *Pulse of the Profession In-Depth Report* in 2013, which defines strategic initiatives as follows.

The report defined a strategic initiative as ‘a project, portfolio of projects, other discrete programme or series of actions undertaken to implement or continue the execution of a strategy, or that is otherwise essential for the successful implementation or execution of a strategy’.

Stretton 2020f noted that, in Stretton 2020d, I advocated early appointments of internal dedicated Strategic Initiative Managers, in the context of helping Owner Organisations (OOs) overcome what appear to be wide-spread difficulties in bridging the gap between choosing the “right” strategic initiatives, and doing them “right”. The range of responsibilities for these managers was illustrated as shown in Figure 4 – and, as just implied, they were appointed early enough to be actively involved in choosing the “right” project(s), which was the primary concern of Stretton 2020f.

ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT SEQUENCE				
1. Establish and shape strategic objectives	2. Develop strategic initiative options, evaluate, choose best	3. Elaborate/consolidate strategic initiatives	4. Execute strategic initiatives	5. Achieve strategic objectives.
Internal OO management		Strategic initiative manager responsible for each strategic initiative from inception to completion		

**Figure 3: Illustrating the range of responsibilities of a Strategic Initiative Manager**

There are several other types of situations where actual or de facto strategic initiative managers are appointed early in Stage 2. These are:

- Early internal appointments of project managers in some project-based organisations as dedicated strategic initiative managers, from inception to

completion. In Civil & Civic we did as a matter of course for both internal and external strategic initiatives (although we didn't actually describe them as strategic initiative managers);

- Early internal appointments of program managers to essentially the same basic strategic initiative management role, as exemplified in OGC 2007 – in their case for managing the procurement and acquisition processes of public sector organisations in the UK.
- The early appointment of internal strategic initiative managers to ensure that external provision of Stage 2 services (to be discussed shortly) is integrated with corresponding activities within the Owner Organisation.

These three types of situations are illustrated in the context of the organisational strategic management sequence in Figure 4.

ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT SEQUENCE				
1. Establish and shape strategic objectives	2. Develop strategic initiative options, evaluate, choose best	3. Elaborate/consolidate strategic initiatives	4. Execute strategic initiatives	5. Achieve strategic objectives.
	+ Early appointments of PPMs to manage strategic initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPMs in project-based org's</li> <li>• PgMs in OGC-type org's</li> <li>• External providers liaison</li> </ul>	+ Managing pre-execution 'front-end' project phases PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY (aka MOP)	PROJECT EXECUTION/ DELIVERY	
INTERNAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVE MANAGEMENT (Dedicated or de facto)				

**Figure 4: Adding internal strategic initiative management to Figure 2**

**Early internal appointments of project managers in some project-based organisations as dedicated strategic initiative managers**

As noted above, some project-based organisations, including Civil & Civic, habitually made early appointments of project managers to roles which were virtually identical to those of *strategic initiative managers* as described above. The reason for doing so was to ensure undivided responsibility for prosecuting the strategic initiatives from their inception right through to completion. However we did not actually name them as such, but as “*Manager of (say healthcare) sector*”, or in some cases “*Director....*”.

This extension from conventional project management focused on the broader strategic needs and benefits, rather than on the projects per se. Securing such undivided responsibility could help cope with unexpected changes due to Covid-19.

**Early internal appointments of program managers to essentially the same basic strategic initiative management role, as exemplified in OGC 2007**

The OGC 2007 publication “*Managing Successful Programmes*” (MSP) advocates the very early appointment of program managers in undertaking a role which is essentially



the same as that described earlier for strategic initiative managers. This is described in OGC 2007:6 as follows.

The organisation's corporate strategies, initiatives and policies are influenced and shaped from both the internal and external environment. Programmes are then defined, scoped and prioritised to implement and deliver the outcomes required. Programmes in turn initiate, monitor and align the projects and related activities that are needed to create new products or service capabilities or to effect changes in business operations. The projects will deliver and implement the required outputs into operations, until finally, the full benefits of the programme can be realised.

Thiry 2016 notes a similarity between MSP and Japan's PMAJ 2015, which, he says,

... sees program management as an extension of the strategy where: "After the program mission is gained from the business strategy as a concept, a program is created to carry out the program strategy

Thiry also quotes from PMI's Standard for Program Management (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.), which

... defines programs as: "a means of executing corporate strategies and achieving business or organizational goals and objectives." (PMI 2013, p.4)

This type of extension from traditional project management, via programs, into effectively strategic initiative management roles, has been in place for a long time in the procurement and acquisition processes of public sector organisations in the UK. In government agencies in the USA, and especially defense, energy and transportation, the use of *programs* in much the same context also appears to have been entrenched for a long time.

However, although it has been so widely adopted within the project/program management community, it is still internal jargon. As Wagner & Lock 2016 observe,

However, most information is best communicated in plain English that could be understood by the average person in the street. Unfortunately our beautiful English language is occasionally distorted by some people who use the jargon that is commonly known as 'management speak'. Programme management has not escaped this infection.

The relevance of this quotation is that this article is concerned with expanding into broader types of services, which would be offered into new markets (as well as existing ones). This would then involve communicating with potential customers in wider markets, in terminologies they can readily understand. This is the main reason I strongly prefer the descriptor *Strategic initiative manager* to *program manager*. The former describes its function in a way most people, including potential customers, should be able to readily understand. However, for outsiders, *program* is simply a common usage word, which gives no hint about its project management jargon meaning.

In any event, *strategic initiative manager* is the more literal descriptor for both internal and external communications, and I will continue to use it in this article.

**Early internal appointments of strategic initiative managers to liaise with external providers of support services**

When external strategic initiative support services have been engaged, the owner organisation will need to appoint internal strategic initiative managers (if they are not already in place) to ensure that external provisions of Stage 2 services are integrated with corresponding activities within the organisation.

We now move on to discuss such external strategic initiative support services.

**EXTERNAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

Stretton 2020f discussed two types of external provider services that are particular relevant to Stage 2 of the organisational strategic management sequence, namely:

- CND-type strategic initiative management external support services, and
- FEL-type strategic initiative management external support services

Both help develop strategic initiative options, evaluate them, and choose the best options, and thence their best component projects. They occupy the same basic ground as that of internal strategic initiative management, as illustrated in Figure 5.

1. Establish and shape . strategic objectives	2. Develop strategic initiative options, evaluate, choose best	3. Elaborate/consolidate strategic initiatives	4. Execute strategic initiatives	5. Achieve strategic objectives.
	+ Early appointments of PPMs to manage strategic initiatives	+ Managing pre-execution 'front-end' project phases	PROJECT EXECUTION/ DELIVERY	
	+ CND/FEL-type external support services, to help develop options & choose best strategic initiatives	PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY (aka MOP)		
INTERNAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVE MANAGEMENT (Dedicated or de facto)				
EXTERNAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVE MGT. SUPPORT SERVICES (e.g. CND, FEL)				

*Figure 5: Adding external strategic initiative management support services to Figure 3*

**CND (Client Needs Determination)-type strategic initiative management external support services**

I have discussed Client Needs Determination (CND) as practiced in Civil & Civic in many previous articles in this journal, starting with Stretton 2013e. I noted that this extended project-related service was actually a dual process of first, helping client organisations clarify their strategic business needs, and then helping them develop the most appropriate strategic initiatives – and thence projects – to best help satisfy



these needs. The earlier process overlaps Stages 1 and 2 of the organisational strategic sequence, whilst the later process relates directly to Stage 2.

Regarding the appropriateness of descriptors, although Client Need Determination was an internal jargon label we gave this process, it describes it well enough to make sense to clients and others in the marketplace, and does not appear to warrant changing on that account. Therefore CND-type strategic initiative management support service appears to be adequate to describe its nature.

In Civil & Civic, we saw CND as a natural extension of our services. This was greatly facilitated by the fact that we did not have the constraint of defining our organisation as being in the project business, or in the building business, or similar (although we were very active in these fields). Our position regarding how we defined our business is well described in Clark 2002:92, who quotes from the CEO of our parent company, Lend Lease (G. J. Dusseldorp) as follows.

‘On the business side, I suppose what has made [the Lend Lease group] different (and very successful)’ he told an interviewer in the early 1980s, ‘is that our approach has always been to seek out what the marketplace wants. Most companies tend to be product-oriented. We are not like this. We seek the marketplace needs and then design a product to suit this need.’

In the context of these discussions, “product-oriented” means focused on the production of projects per se, rather than on marketplace and customer needs. As the above quotation indicates, we focused on the latter – which led rather naturally to developing the CND service. I believe that this type of strong customer orientation will be even more essential for service organisations to survive and prosper in the changing time of the Covid-19 era and beyond.

### **FEL (Front End Loading)-type strategic initiative management external support services**

As I noted in Stretton 2020a, for some decades, many EPC (Engineering, Procurement, Construction) organisations have been helping customers achieve their strategic objectives via particular focus on relevant Front End Loading (FEL) activities, notably in the field of large complex projects. Morris 2013:60 describes FEL as follows:

IPA [Independent Project Analysis], the oil, gas and minerals project benchmarking company, coined the useful term ‘Front-End Loading’: ... (FEL) is a tool for determining which is the “right” project to meet the needs of business. The FEL tool assesses the level of definition of a number of critical items that are used to determine what, if any, asset should be built to meet a particular business need.

Prieto (in Archibald et al 2012) notes that FEL terminology varies widely, in both owner and EPC organisations. In spite of this, its use is well established in the major projects domain, in which the various parties seem to be able to sort out its usage in

each individual case. So, it seems reasonable to stay with the above descriptor of this type of strategic initiative management external support service.

I have used materials from a table by Prieto (in Archibald et al 2012) to assemble the following example of an EPC-type external support service sequence, with its component FEL phases.

ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT SEQUENCE						
1. Establish and shape strategic objectives		2. Develop strategic initiative options, evaluate, choose best		3. Elaborate/consolidate strategic initiatives	4. Execute strategic initiatives	5. Achieve strategic objectives.
Owner A Definition		Appraise	Select	Define	Execute	Operate
Establish SBOs	Studies & shaping	FEL Phase 1	FEL Phase 2	FEL Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
EXAMPLE OF A "FRONT-END" EPC-TYPE EXTERNAL SUPPORT SERVICE SEQUENCE						

Figure 6: An example EPC-type external support service sequence

The components of the EPC-type sequence which are most relevant to Stage 2 of the organisational strategic sequence are of course FEL Phases 1 and 2. These also correspond with the *Appraise* and *Select* stages of what Prieto labelled as the way *Owner A* might describe the sequencing. I also note that Prieto coined the descriptor “optioneering” to describe processes of developing strategic options in FEL Phase 1.

The overall EPC-type sequence in Figure 3 also covers Stage 1 of the organisational strategic sequence, as will be discussed in a moment. We simply note here that the scale of the extension of this EPC-type sequence from that of conventional project management is striking. These EPC organisations are obviously a very long way from being product-oriented, having developed a greatly expanded range of capabilities beyond conventional project management to enable them to respond appropriately to a wider range of needs in the marketplace, and their customers. They appear to be well placed to continue prospering in the Covid-19 era.

**EXTERNAL STRATEGIC PLANNING SUPPORT SERVICES**  
(*Helping establish and/or shape organisational strategic objectives*)

The services of both EPC-type organisations (via FEL) and C&C-type organisations (via CND) quite often extend back to helping organisations actually establish their strategic objectives, and/or to helping them shape their objectives, in the sense of being preparation to facilitate the next stage of developing, evaluating and choosing specific strategic initiatives.

In the EPC-type sequence shown in Figure 6 above, *SBOs* is shorthand for *Strategic Business Objectives*. In some contexts Prieto 2009 says that owners need partners to help them translate their “programmatic vision and broad objectives into a well defined set of specific business objectives “.

Civil & Civic also occasionally became involved in helping clients establish SBOs. In an earlier article I quoted from Clark 2002:93, where we helped an educational institution in Sydney, Loreto Convent, Kirribilli, “....come up with an integrated business plan for the school’s complete rebuilding and expansion – supported by the first structured finance plan in the Catholic education sector”.

This work also overlapped what is described in Figure 6 as *Studies & shaping*. The former descriptor derives from Prieto in EPC-type contexts, and the latter from Dalcher 2016 in the context of helping find the best balance between the various, and often conflicting, components involved in establishing and confirming SBOs.

Both of these sub-stages are well beyond the range of conventional project management. Yet many project-based organisations have moved into these fields, and very substantially, evidently to help fill gaps in some client organisations’ abilities to effectively undertake all the stages in their overall organisational strategic sequences. This indicates, once again, that the former have a strong customer/ market-orientation, as opposed to a product-orientation.

Finally, these services, and all other the sequences and extensions from conventional project management, are broadly represented in Figure 7.

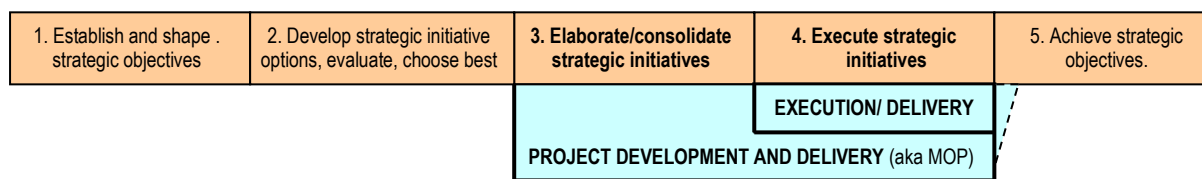
ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT SEQUENCE				
1. Establish and shape . strategic objectives	2. Develop strategic initiative options, evaluate, choose best	3. Elaborate/consolidate strategic initiatives	4. Execute strategic initiatives	5. Achieve strategic objectives.
+ Helping to Establish organisation's Strategic Business Objectives (SBOs) + Studies to help shape organisation's strategic undertakings	+ Early appointments of PPMs to manage strategic initiatives	+ Managing pre-execution 'front-end' project phases	<b>PROJECT EXECUTION/ DELIVERY</b>	
	+ CND/FEL-type external support services, to help develop options & choose best strategic initiatives	<b>PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY (aka MOP)</b>		
	<b>INTERNAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVE MANAGEMENT (Dedicated or de facto)</b>			
	<b>EXTERNAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVE MGT. SUPPORT SERVICES (e.g. CND, FEL)</b>			
<b>EXTERNAL STRATEGIC PLANNING SUPPORT SERVICES (Helping establish and/or shape org. strategic objectives)</b>				

**Figure 7: Adding external strategic planning support services to Figure 5**

## AN EXTENDED SUMMARY

This article has attempted to cover so much ground that an extended summary would appear to be in order. We started these discussions on expanding from conventional project management into broader types of services (in an organisational strategic management context) by first looking at conventional project management itself. We discussed two perspectives of its scope.

## Conventional project management: Two perspectives of its scope



### Project execution/delivery

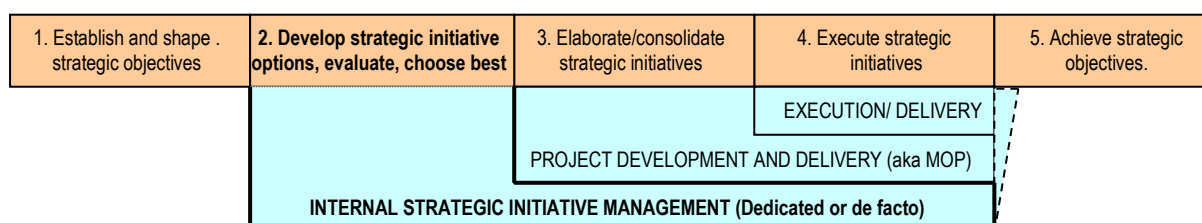
- This perspective is still very prominent in both the literature, and in practice;
- It looks set to remain prominent, particularly in the Covid-19 era, with a likely acceleration of government-initiated infrastructure projects, using this approach;
- The practice of this perspective has been labelled the *project delivery profession*

### Project development and delivery

- This perspective adds management of project “front-ends”. Project management has becoming more widely involved in this, particularly with Agile and similar iterative approaches;
- These are likely to continue to grow as organisations and projects respond to ever-changing challenges and opportunities associated with Covid-19;
- I noted a preference for the above descriptor, rather than Morris’ *Management of Projects (MOP)*, because the former actually describes what is involved.

## Extending PPM to cover internal strategic initiative management

We went on to discuss two forms of extensions of project/program management (PPM) which actually cover what I have described as internal strategic initiative management. In this respect the two approaches are quite similar, but they were originated in different ways, in different contexts.



### Early appointment of project managers in some project-based organisations

- This extension to conventional project management has been made by some project-based companies (such as Civil & Civic) to help ensure undivided responsibility for processing all strategic initiatives from initiation to completion;

- This extension focused on the broader organisational strategic needs and benefits, rather than on the projects per se;
- Ensuring undivided responsibility is likely to be important in helping cope with accelerated changes in the Covid-19 era.

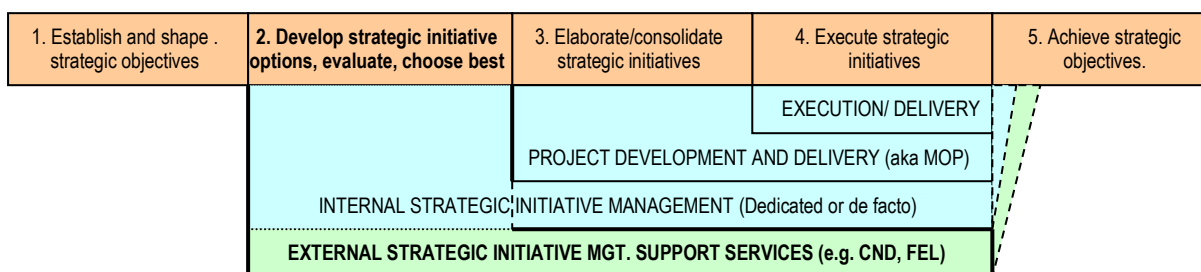
**Early appointments of program managers in OGC-type situations**

- This type of extension from traditional project management, via programs, into effectively strategic initiative management roles, has been in place for a long time, notably in public sector organisations in the UK, and in many government agencies in the USA.
- However, although this understanding of *program* has been so widely adopted, it is still internal jargon, which gives no indication of its actual nature to those who are not “in the know”.
- This article has been concerned with expanding into broader types of services, and into new markets (as well as existing ones). This involves communicating with potential customers in terminologies they can readily understand – which is one reason I strongly prefer the descriptor *Strategic initiative manager*.
- In any event, *strategic initiative manager* is the more literal descriptor for both internal and external communications, and was therefore adopted for this article.

**Early appointments to liaise with external providers of support services**

- When external strategic initiative support services have been engaged, the owner organisation needs to appoint internal strategic initiative managers (if they are not already in place) to ensure that external provisions of Stage 2 services are integrated with corresponding activities within the organisation.

**External strategic initiative management support services**



**CND-type strategic initiative management support services**

- These types of extended services developed naturally in Civil & Civic through recognising that many client organisations needed help in establishing or clarifying

their strategic business needs, and/or appropriate strategic initiatives to best help satisfy these needs.

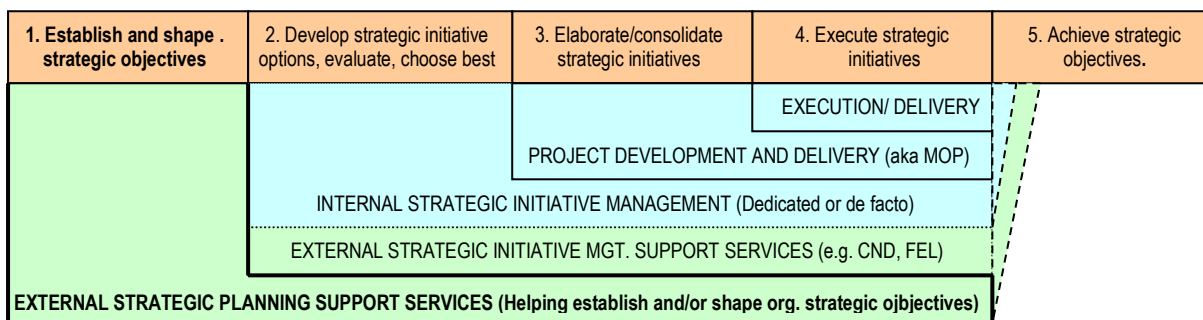
- In extending the range of our services, we were not constrained by defining ourselves as project managers, but were focused on the needs of the client. In other words, we were customer/market oriented rather than product (project) oriented.
- I believe that this type of orientation will be even more essential for such service organisations to survive and prosper in the Covid-19 era, and beyond.

**FEL-type strategic initiative management support services**

- Front End Loading (FEL) services are widely deployed in large complex projects, notably by EPC (Engineering, Procurement, Construction) organisations.
- In developing such an extended range of services, evidently they have not been self-constrained by defining themselves as project managers. As with CND services, they have been markedly customer/market oriented rather than product (project) oriented.

**External strategic planning support services**

The services of both EPC-type organisations (via FEL) and C&C-type organisations (via CND) quite often extend back to helping organisations actually establish their strategic objectives, and/or to helping them shape their objectives.



- Both types of organisations which expended their operations to provide such external strategic planning support services were evidently responding to unfulfilled needs in their market places, and their customers.
- These supply organisations are obviously a very long way from being product-oriented, having developed such a greatly expanded range of capabilities beyond conventional project management.



- It would appear likely that disruptions due to Covid-19 will produce even greater needs for help in establishing and/or shaping organisational strategic objectives.

## **CONCLUDING**

Several themes have emerged from the above discussions.

The main theme is that we have identified quite a few areas in which project-related services, both within and external to the organisation involved, have expanded their roles from conventional project management into broader types of services. These are not isolated instances, as their overall scope has been quite substantial.

These expansions have greatly facilitated organisational strategic management processes, particularly those at the front end, which establish the strategic objectives, the strategic initiatives to be undertaken, and the pattern of ensuing processes.

It would appear that demands for such expanded services are likely to grow in the Covid-19 era. If so, this would represent an additional opportunity area for further expansion of the above types of services. However, successful expansion into this area requires a real shift from a product (project) orientation to a customer/market orientation for those who have not already made this move.

So, it seems that we may actually be looking at possibilities for developing a new type of avocation to cover such emergent opportunities. This would be probably be additional to, but separated from, conventional project management, which will also need to continue operating effectively in its own traditional domains.

I hope to expand on the above types of possibilities in a future article.

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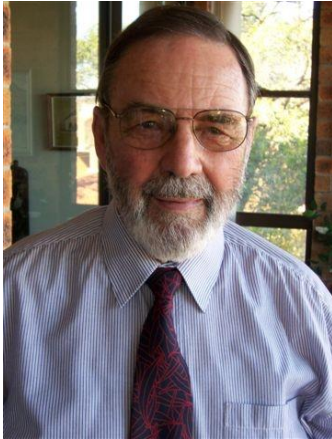
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**Alan Stretton** is one of the pioneers of modern project management. He is currently a member of the Faculty Corps for the University of Management & Technology (UMT), USA. In 2006 he retired from a position as Adjunct Professor of Project Management in the Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), Australia, which he joined in 1988 to develop and deliver a Master of Project Management program. Prior to joining UTS, Mr. Stretton worked in the building and construction industries in Australia, New Zealand and the USA for some 38 years, which included the project management of construction, R&D, introduction of information and control systems, internal management education programs and organizational change projects. He has degrees in Civil Engineering (BE, Tasmania) and Mathematics (MA, Oxford), and an honorary PhD in strategy, programme and project management (ESC, Lille, France). Alan was Chairman of the Standards (PMBOK) Committee of the Project Management Institute (PMI®) from late 1989 to early 1992. He held a similar position with the Australian Institute of Project Management (AIPM), and was elected a Life Fellow of AIPM in 1996. He was a member of the Core Working Group in the development of the Australian National Competency Standards for Project Management. He has published over 200 professional articles and papers. Alan can be contacted at [alanailene@bigpond.com.au](mailto:alanailene@bigpond.com.au).

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