

# PM World Journal

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Summary for webpage

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## ***On the subject of project governance***

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

21 August 2017

Dear David,

The two interesting papers focused on project governance in your last issue; [\*Is it time for good enough governance?\*](#) by Prof Darren Dalcher and [\*Project Governance\*](#) by Martin Samphire both omitted to mention two important ISO Standards focused on this specific area.

ISO/IEC 38500:2015 *Information technology -- Governance of IT for the organization*, applies to the governance of the organization's current and future use of IT including management processes and decisions. These processes can be controlled by IT specialists within the organization, external service providers, or business units within the organization and is applicable to organizations of all sizes from the smallest to the largest, regardless of the extent of their use of IT. As we all know IT projects are a key point of contention.

More important is ISO 21505:2017 *Project, programme and portfolio management -- Guidance on governance*. This standard describes the context in which the governance of projects, programmes and portfolios is conducted and provides guidance for the governance of projects, programmes and portfolios. It can be used for assessment, assurance or verification of the governance function for projects, programmes or portfolios.

Both standards define the governance of their respective disciplines as a subset or domain of organizational governance, or in the case of a corporation corporate governance, and have a similar view of the difference between governance and management; in essence the governing body sets the objectives and rules for the organisation, management's job is to achieve the objectives while working within the 'rules'.

Many of the other documents mentioned in the papers were used as source references in the development of ISO 21505 and are generally compatible with the Standard. However, if we are ever going to get the governance of project, program and portfolio management taken seriously, we need the authority of an International Standard as a starting point, supported by more practical implementation guides such as those developed by the APM in the UK.

Having spent many years working on the ISO committee developing 21505, I know I'm biased, but I strongly believe this standard can be a catalyst for engaging senior executive and company directors to start the journey towards the effective use of project management in organisations.

Regards,

Patrick Weaver  
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