

Project governance

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR PROJECT MANAGERS

How to add governance to a project in eight easy steps.

1

Define who is on your team

Map out your sponsor, product owner, and key stakeholders. Who is on the development and production team. Their strengths and weaknesses, any conflicts (personal or project-wise) and availability.

2

Create your RAID Log

This will include: Risks, Issues, Assumptions and Dependencies. The RAID log starts at discovery stage and is regularly reviewed until project completion.

3

Build your RACI

Define who is Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed. Update it when the team or scope changes. This is the first point of call when determining who is responsible or accountable for what.

4

Project Ceremonies

Whether that's stand-ups, sprint planning, reviews or retrospectives, the PM's job is to ensure these ceremonies are happening successfully, decisions are captured and risks are being flagged.

5

Governance Plan

Define what the escalation path is and how risks or issues will be reported. Set up frequent reviews to discuss project health. Determine who the key stakeholders are that need to be involved in these reviews.

6

Reporting

Agree upfront with key stakeholders and clients, what they need to know and how often. Consistency matters.

7

Change Control Process

Ensure there is a clear process for scope, budget and timeline changes. Everyone involved in the project should be aware of and understand these processes before any work starts.

8

Review

It's always a good idea to review the governance process at key points throughout the project. In Agile, it could be at the end of each sprint, in a more traditional approach it could be every two weeks or monthly depending on project duration.

What is Project Governance?

Project governance is the framework within which a project is overseen and decisions are made. It defines who has authority over what, how progress is tracked, how risks are managed, and how the project stays aligned with business goals.

The Governance Toolkit

Below are the core artefacts for a well-governed project. Not all projects need require the full list, as a PM you can choose which ones apply based on the size and scope of your project:

- Project Plan or Business Case
- RACI Matrix
- RAID Log
- Product Backlog
- Prioritisation List
- Budget Tracker & Forecast
- Resource Tracker
- Change Process and Log
- RAG Status
- Decision Log
- Sprint / Iteration Record
- Retrospective Actions Log