

QA Guidelines for Project Definition Documents

This job aid supports managers who have been asked to review or approve a Project Definition Document (PDD). For each section of the PDD, it suggests quality considerations and key questions to pose to the authors.

| Section | Questions | Your Notes |
|---|---|------------|
| <p>Purpose</p> <p>This section provides the purpose of the document.</p> <p>The purpose of a Project Definition Document is to provide a brief overview of a project to promote a shared understanding of it before a more detailed Plan, Schedule, and Budget is prepared.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the purpose statement match the expected purpose of a Project Definition Document? • Does the Project Definition Document overall meet the purpose described in this section? | |
| <p>Problem/Opportunity</p> <p>This section describes the problem or opportunity the project seeks to address using factual information. Examples of the types of factual information relevant to problems or opportunities are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in legislation requires action. • Current technology is outdated and not meeting needs. • Service levels are low, resulting in frequent customer complaints. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this section make it clear why this project is important? • What would happen if this project was not undertaken? • Is there anyone else in Qatar who is better positioned to do this project? | |
| <p>Goal</p> <p>This section provides a clear, concise statement of the project's purpose and intended results. The project goal statement is typically quite brief (one sentence).</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project will reduce the waiting time for heart surgery by 50%. • The project will improve customer satisfaction with government services. • The project will reduce the cost of a program. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the goal statement clear? • Is the goal aligned with the agency's strategy? | |

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| <p>Objectives</p> <p>This section provides a list of what must be achieved in the project to realize the overall goal – they are considered as “subgoals.” Example: The project goal of reducing traffic accidents will be achieved if the following three objectives are achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase public awareness and knowledge of how to drive safely. • Pass new stricter laws for speeding and seatbelts. • Assign more police to enforce new stricter laws. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the objectives have a clear logical connection to the goal statement? • Are you convinced that the goal will be achieved if the objectives are achieved, or is something missing? | |
| <p>Project Scope</p> <p>This section provides a high level list of the major activities the team will undertake and, if known, the major deliverables.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it clear to you what work the project team will be doing? • If deliverables are named, is it clear what they are? “Reports” can be 100 page word documents or 10 slide PowerPoint decks. Do you know what the team will be producing? • If the team is making recommendations, are they also implementing those recommendations, or will that require another project? If they are not implementing recommendations, will they be providing an Implementation Plan as one of their deliverables? • Does the agency have the capability to do the work described? If not, are qualified vendors readily available? | |
| <p>Stakeholders</p> <p>This section provides a list of the people with the strongest interest in or influence over project work and results. Examples of key stakeholders are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-makers: People with authority and decision-making power over the project. • Influencers: People with power to influence the project. • End users: People who will use the end product of the project. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are any key stakeholder groups missing from the listing provided? | |

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| <p>Outcomes / Success Measures</p> <p>This section provides statements about the impact the project must have on those outside the project to be considered successful. These statements should be consistent with the project goal and provide more information on measurable project outcomes. Examples are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced number of traffic accidents. • Lower program costs. • Higher levels of customer satisfaction. • Improved literacy rates. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the outcomes listed clearly linked to the goal and objectives? • Are the outcomes listed clearly linked to the organizational strategy? • Is there a description of a precise or specific outcome / behavior linked to rate, number, percentage, or frequency? • Are activities planned to measure the progress toward achieving the objectives and outcomes (see scope section, which should include evaluation activities) • Can the objectives and outcomes realistically be achieved within the resources and time limits of the project? • When will the outcomes be achieved? | |
| <p>Assumptions and Constraints</p> <p>Assumptions are factors outside the scope of the project that could affect its success, and which the authors of this document believe to be true. Examples are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another project will be completed on time. • Appropriate resources will be available to work on the project. <p>Constraints are factors that restrict the project team's options. Examples are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time or budget restrictions. • Required adherence to specific standards. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you confirm that the assumptions and constraints are accurate? • Are there other assumptions and constraints you can identify? | |
| <p>Risks</p> <p>This section lists project risks. Risks are something that may or may not happen in the future that could have an impact on the project.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider if the top causes of project failure are taken into account:: executive support, organizational support. user involvement , available resources, experienced project manager, formal methodologies available to follow, reliable estimates for time and cost. | |
| <p>Estimated Cost</p> <p>This section is optional and may not appear in the document you are reviewing.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the cost appear in line with what work normally costs in your organization? • Does it include the cost of the time of agency staff? • What are the assumptions in the cost amounts given? • How precise is this estimate? +25%. +50%? • Is any contingency built into this budget? | |

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| <p>Estimated Timeline</p> <p>This section is optional and may not appear in the document you are reviewing.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the timeline appear in line with the time work normally takes in your organization? • What are the assumptions in the timeline given? • How precise is this estimate? +-25%, +-50%? • Is any contingency built into this timeline? • Does the timeline take into account breaks for summer holidays, Ramadan, or other predictable periods that would slow work? | |