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PMO in Public Services

The multiple projects dilemma!

The Public Sector undertakes significant change in terms of criticality, size and number of projects. Often these projects are being replicated at the same time across different parts of the Sector. This is a significant drain on resources and if we all look at it logically a real waste of money that could be better applied elsewhere.

But the problem doesn't just stop at the number of duplicate projects, it extends to multiple procurement exercises for the same service or product and the deployment of many Programme Management Offices across the Sector.

In our opinion many of these projects could be combined to achieve economies of scale, many of these procurements could be combined to achieve a better bargaining position and many of the Programme Management Offices could be combined to deliver independence and efficiency.

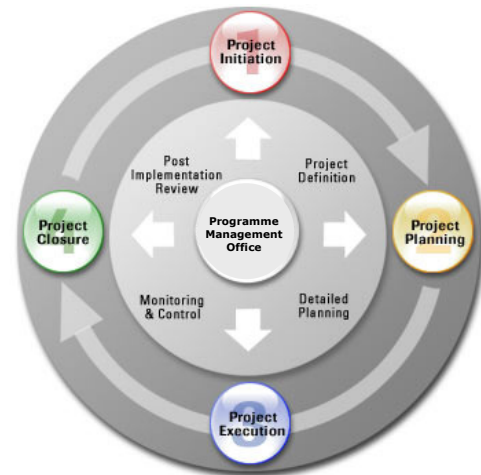
The PMO solution

To genuinely achieve efficiencies and improved citizen services, a holistic view of change is required rather than a silo approach to projects and individual benefits.

To achieve this, successful organisations deploy a portfolio approach to change. Out with the IT projects list, the separate customer services list and the separate environmental services list and in with a portfolio of all projects that ties in cross service benefits.

Reliable management information is the key to success but independent assessment ensures executives are better placed to make effective decisions on resources, budgets, risks and benefits across the portfolio. An effective programme management office (PMO) is essential to achieving this.

Once a strong PMO is established the next step is to create an independent shared service that can service multiple Public Sector bodies ensuring consistency and real efficiencies for those participating.



What do you need to consider?

Consistency

In our experience many organisations operate with multiple planning tools, bespoke reporting templates and processes, including informal and infrequent updates. PMO reduces overheads significantly by using one set of standards. Standards are not a constraint! PMO is flexible and pragmatic, facilitating local variations on approaches, systems and control mechanisms.

Dashboard visibility for senior management

PMO removes wasted time and effort by consolidating all aspects of project planning and reporting efficiently to a portfolio level dashboard, enabling project and senior management review based on facts.

The dashboard summary will incorporate portfolio status, risks, issues and counter-measures. It will highlight actions required, demanding less time from expensive senior resources analysing the current state, and enable more time for taking action if necessary.

Independent review

Implementation of a PMO inevitably requires some administration activity: achieving real value from it requires that programme management experience is embedded in its running so that independent review of projects is undertaken on a regular but pragmatic basis. The aim is not to undertake expensive reviews every reporting period, but to apply common sense and project management expertise. Consider:

- Is an under spending project planning to increase spending to achieve delivery or is it over-achieving against its budget?
- Is one project overspend offset by another under spend?

- Are all projects constrained by a particular resource or skillset?
- What are the top 5 issues across the portfolio that can be resolved?
- Is there a pattern of failure at particular project phases causing all projects difficulties?

Pragmatic vs. Bureaucracy

Often we find programmes where production of reports, imposition of huge standard templates and frequently altered reporting demands have ground project progress and decision-making to a halt and created a bureaucratic cottage industry in its own right. It really doesn't have to be that way!

An effective PMO will reduce programme overheads, increase visibility of important issues and empower local project managers to make decisions within their remit, encourage structured methods and provide constructive support. It will make lives easier for those tasked with delivery.

What should you do now?

- Review your PMO capability: test whether you are getting value from it or just increasing paper shuffling
- Implement an experienced and pragmatic PMO function to start delivering cost-effective controls and senior management visibility on your portfolio of projects
- Ensure your consolidated programme position reflects the reality of individual projects progress and liability.

How can assiso help?

We are experts in managing projects, programmes and project portfolios. We have the 'war stories' from years of experience delivering large, complex and challenging work-packages under a variety of commercial structures and with various partners.

We understand the importance of balancing delivery at any cost with audit & compliance, of structure and standardised processes against local empowerment, of consistency with constraint.

As experienced managers, we can review, setup and deliver an outstanding PMO capability to add value to programmes of work and improve your bottom line and/or reduce your organisations risk profile.

We will support your business delivering effective performance through change.

Specifically we will review and implement as necessary:

- *PMO structure, roles and responsibilities* – we will identify any areas of ambiguity, inefficiency and/or competency and recommend a revised function to be more cost-effective
- *Use of standardised tools and templates* – we will review levels of consistency to allow consolidation and common understanding. We will bring with us alternatives if necessary and required, but by default will work with your methodology & standards

- *Pragmatic PMO processes* – we will review and implement existing PMO processes for effectiveness: remove where bureaucracy is increased with no benefit, revise where cost-benefit warrants and leave where already effective. Review will include all levels of the organisation, including senior management
- *Effective risk management* – we will evaluate the effectiveness of your processes to identify and rate risks in the light of your current mitigating action plans. We will design and deliver additional approaches to ensure that risk assessment meets your senior management's expectations.

What outcomes can you achieve?

Fundamentally, you can achieve a balanced approach to your portfolio with maximum visibility to executives resulting in improved business performance through our services.

We will ensure:

Set up of an industrial-strength PMO function

- establish PMO structure and processes
- implement standards and templates appropriate to the size and complexity of your programme/portfolio
- establish dashboard for senior management
- establish benefits realisation procedures
- work with project managers to get the right balance between pragmatism and procedure.

Adjustment of existing PMO capability

- review and adjust structure, capability, standards and effectiveness
- review and adjust effectiveness of senior management reporting and dashboard requirements
- review and resolve known problem areas through change.

Provision of a PMO service to match your size and complexity of programme/portfolio

- option of a remote or on-site PMO service
- size and cost tailored to match size and complexity of your risk profile and senior management requirements
- senior management dashboard tailored to suit executive requirements in terms of risk, alerting and KPIs.

The assiso way

We are a collaborative organisation and believe that we can truly help you by working closely with your team. We know how to put staff at ease as we gather essential information on your processes and practices.

Our approach will provide robust analysis, hard facts and information on cost-effective changes that will improve your business.

Ultimately we will help you and your senior managers make informed decisions by improving visibility, information quality and capability through our PMO experience.

Contact Scott Lee at slee@assiso.co.uk to discuss your PMO needs further.