

## PRINCE2 2009 - What are the Changes?

PRINCE2, the UK's most widely used project management framework is being refreshed. The name remains the same - i.e. it will not be called PRINCE3 - but there will be some fundamental enhancements. The refresh is being led by the UK's Office of Government Commerce (OGC) and also involves OGC's two main partners for its Best Practice portfolio: TSO, the official publisher, and the APM Group, the official accrediting organisation.

PRINCE2 has gone through two major updates since its launch in 1996 - in 2002 and 2005. These updates were mainly corrections to the manual with a few incremental improvements, whilst the method remained largely unchanged.

However, the pace of change today and the level of communication mean that projects now face challenges that didn't exist when PRINCE2 was introduced in 1996.

The OGC will officially launch the updated PRINCE2 method on 16<sup>th</sup> June. They will also launch two publications which explain the method in detail.

So, what has changed in the updated version? The new method is simpler. This was a key requirement from users when the authoring team tried to identify what PRINCE2 users required from the new version.

The new method will introduce seven basic principles which do not exist in the current version. These seven principles are universal and self-validating, in that they have been shown in the past to be true - i.e. empirical evidence suggests these do contribute to successful projects. In other words, principles can be thought of as a guide to good project management best practices, such as business justification and management of risk. The principles are universal in that they can be applied in any language, culture or geography and are designed to empower those people who direct and manage projects to exercise control over what happens on the project.

The process model which currently describes the activities to be performed throughout the project has been simplified. The existing eight processes have been reduced to seven. Sub-processes have been removed from the process model and have been replaced by activities describing what needs to be done, when and by whom. The complex sub-process diagrams which students of the current method found particularly confusing have been removed.

The eight existing components have been replaced by seven 'key themes'. Key themes are aspects of project management that need to be continually addressed. They are not one-off activities. The key themes are: Business Case, Organisation, Plans, Risk, Progress, Quality, and Issues & Changes. Practitioners familiar with the current method will notice that Configuration Management is the one component that is missing from the new set of themes. This is because it has been incorporated into 'Issues & Changes'.

There will be a set of two core texts to accompany the method. The 'PRINCE2 in Practice: Managing a Project' text will be the sole source of information for the PRINCE2 Foundation and Practitioner syllabuses. This will describe the principles, process model, key themes and management products and will give guidance on how to tailor the method depending on the project context. The text also contains some cross-references to techniques that may be applied within the PRINCE2 framework.

The 'PRINCE2 in Practice: Directing a Project' text is aimed at senior managers and project board members and will provide a role specific guidance on how to oversee projects being managed using PRINCE2.

The terminology in the updated version will also be aligned with other OGC products such as Managing Successful Programmes (MSP), Management of Risk (M\_o\_R), and the OGC Gateway Review process.

In summary, the updated PRINCE2 will provide a simpler, slimmer method, more easily customisable to different project contexts. By separating the texts into those aimed at project and team managers, and those aimed at senior managers, it simplifies and clarifies the specific roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

The language in the new manuals is easier to understand, and many of the irritating contradictions in the current manual have been eliminated. All in all, the new method should provide those managing and directing projects with a better set of tools with which to deliver projects on time, within budget and within the quality constraints required.

*This article was submitted by Simon Buehring, Managing Director of Knowledge Train Limited, providers of PRINCE2 Training.*

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