

# Project Management and Grant Writing

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# Lesson 1.

## Theoretical Framework

You will learn about four main topics in this lesson.

1. What project management is?
2. What are the characteristics of a project?
3. How can a project be successful?
4. Introduction to mind mapping

## What Project Management is?

In order to answer this question, let's see some definitions of the term *project*.

*„A project is temporary in that it has a defined beginning and end in time, and therefore defined scope and resources. And a project is unique in that it is not a routine operation, but a specific set of operations designed to accomplish a singular goal. ”<sup>1</sup>*

(Project Management Institute)

*„A piece of planned work or an activity that is finished over a period of time and intended to achieve a particular purpose. ”<sup>2</sup>*

(Cambridge Dictionary)

*„An individual or collaborative enterprise that is carefully planned to achieve a particular aim. ”<sup>3</sup>*

(Oxford Dictionary)

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<sup>1</sup> Project Management Institute, What is Project Management? URL: <https://www.pmi.org/about/learn-about-pmi/what-is-project-management>

<sup>2</sup> Project. In: Cambridge dictionary. URL: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/project>

<sup>3</sup> Project. In: Oxford dictionary. URL: <https://www.lexico.com/definition/project>

Based on these definitions, you can see the core elements of a project:

- **Temporary**
- **Unique/Planned**
- **It has a particular purpose.**

When someone talks about projects, people tend to think of tender projects. However, there are a lot of personal examples can be presented. A few of them are:

- Receiving a diploma
- Conducting a research
- Organizing a specific event or party
- Renovate your house
- Start a company
- etc.

## What Project Management Institute is?

*„Project Management Institute (PMI) is the world's leading association for those who consider project, program or portfolio management their profession.“*  
(<https://www.pmi.org/about>)

It is a global and nonprofit organization which ensure the following services: development of standards, research, education, publication, networking-opportunities in local chapters, hosting conferences, training seminars, providing accreditation in project management.

It was founded in 1969.

### >> Short Task <<

Browse a little on PMI's website: <https://www.pmi.org>

**Project management** is crucial to execute a project. It means „*the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements*”.<sup>4</sup> It contains the process of planning, organizing and managing the resources and the workflow of a project.

To learn more about project management and its importance, please watch the following video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk-JwtScIIw>

### >> Short Task <<

Write 3-4 examples of a project from your personal life!

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

<sup>4</sup> Project Management Institute. What is Project Management?. URL: <https://www.pmi.org/about/learn-about-pmi/what-is-project-management>

# The Characteristics of a Project

Based on Eric Verzuh's book<sup>5</sup>, two essential characteristics can be specified. You can find these characteristics in the different definitions, which we talked about in the previous chapter.

1. Every project has a beginning and an end, a starting and a finishing point.
2. Every project produces a unique product. For example, the serial production of cars can't be called a 'project', but serial production sometimes can be the next step after the project production finished. However, developing a new, environmentally friendly, ultra-high-tech car can be called a project.

## **>> Short Task <<**

Write 3-3 examples!

The following activities can be called serial production:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Examples for producing a unique product:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Erika Garaj added three more items to this list<sup>6</sup>. She says every project...

3. ...has a specific goal for which it was created. It means, that projects are focusing and try to solve one concrete issue. → E.g. The house has to be renovated because it has become uninhabitable.
4. ...is being completed through a series of activities. → E.g. you need to specify a lot of tasks and steps like shopping, finding professionals and mechanics, move out from the house, move back when it is finished, etc. in order to complete the renovation.
5. ...has limited resources. → E.g. money, time, human resources, etc.

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<sup>5</sup> Verzuh, Eric. The Fast Forward MBA in Project Management. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Garaj, Erika. Projektmenedzsment. Edutus Főiskola. 2012. URL:

[https://regi.tankonyvtar.hu/hu/tartalom/tamop412A/2010-0017\\_35\\_projektmenedzsment/index.html](https://regi.tankonyvtar.hu/hu/tartalom/tamop412A/2010-0017_35_projektmenedzsment/index.html)

## The Challenge of Managing Projects

As you can see, there are projects all around us. But managing them is not a piece of cake in a lot of cases - especially when it comes to bigger projects like building a freeway. Basically, project management activities can be divided into three main categories: Planning, Scheduling, and Controlling.<sup>7</sup> The element of uniqueness makes difficult to speak challenges, which *always* occur in *every* project. However, E. Verzuh made some categories of the possible challenges, which are more or less present in almost every project.

- **Personnel** challenges mean the number of people needed, their skillsets, their cultural background, mindset, working culture, and experiences. Even the issue of their employment when the project is done goes under this category.
- **Estimating** challenges. Estimate the costs, schedules, potential risks, and necessary sources are always a key step in every project. However, because every project is different and unique, it can be challenging to make enough and right estimations based on facts instead of assumptions.
- **Authority**. It is a frequent scenario, that projects cross organizational boundaries. For example, my boss at the company becomes my subordinate or my co-worker within the framework of the project. This can lead to a lot of conflict and issues if a project is not well-managed.
- **Controls**. Keeping everything in order is always a big challenge. In the case of a project, it means keep tracking the costs in order to control the budget, for instance. Another good example is tracking the (finished or undergoing) tasks and work phases in order to follow the schedule of the project.

*„This list of difficulties and challenges could go on, but it should be clear by now that managing projects is not the same as managing ongoing operations. Notice that this does not mean project management is more difficult than managing ongoing operations—only that managing projects presents a different set of challenges.”<sup>8</sup>*

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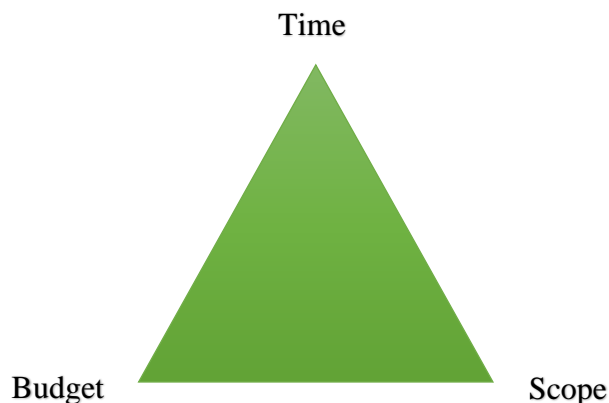
<sup>7</sup> Management Study Guide. What is Project Management?. URL:  
<https://www.managementstudyguide.com/what-is-project-management.htm>

<sup>8</sup> Verzuh, Eric. The Fast Forward MBA in Project Management. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2016. 14. p.

# How can a project be successful?

The **limits of a project** always define the successfulness of it. What are these limits exactly?<sup>9</sup>

1. **Time.** As it had been said earlier, a project is always temporary. On the one side, it is an advantage: this is how uniqueness can be achieved fully. But it is also a limiting factor because we always have a predetermined amount of time to finish the project.
2. **Budget.** Money and other resources are always a critical factor in a project. Our max. budget always has to be kept in mind during the project.
3. **Scope.** It limits the project to concrete and specified goals and issues. The scope of a project is always narrow and pre-defined. You can't build new roads under an educational development project.



The triangle shows well the balance between these three elements. If one side changes, it affects the other sides too. A good example in the context of project management: if the financial support has been cut, the time to finish the project will be longer and the scope will decrease.

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<sup>9</sup> You can find the original list of the limits in Garaj, Erika. Projektmenedzsment. Edutus Főiskola. 2012. URL: [https://regi.tankonyvtar.hu/hu/tartalom/tamop412A/2010-0017\\_35\\_projektmenedzsment/index.html](https://regi.tankonyvtar.hu/hu/tartalom/tamop412A/2010-0017_35_projektmenedzsment/index.html)

When someone develops a project, there is a need to meet some expectations.

### **A good project...**

- ...is relevant. It tries to adapt to the current market demand, not to the market supply. Hence, its goal is relevant.
- ...can be executed. Consistently built and well thought out. Potential risks are properly measured and presented in a draft. The budget plan is realistic and well-structured. The organizational structure, the tasks/steps and the division of labor are clear to everyone. Its results can be measured.
- ...is sustainable. After the end of the project, the results achieved by the project can still be maintained or supplied to the target group.

A good project doesn't equal to a successful project.

### **A successful project...<sup>10</sup>**

- ...is on time. It's delivered according to the project's schedule.
- ...is on budget.
- ...represents high quality. It meets with the requirements and functioning/performing well.

Let me show two short examples of this.

The first one is a software or platform development project. Nowadays e-learning platforms and software are in their heyday. You can find several websites like Coursera, edX, Udemy, etc. which offer courses for college students and adults. So, developing another e-learning website for adults, which can't present any new and unique feature would be irrelevant.

However, [the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#) (click on the link for more information) in 2020 made clear the necessity of similar e-learning tools within the framework of primary and secondary education in Hungary. Concentrate on this field would make your project relevant.

You also have to measure with different tools (we will learn about these tools later), that a development like this can be executed or not. Do you have enough money, time, skill, human resource, etc. to complete the project?

Your project will be sustainable when your software can work even after you finished the project. For example: let's say you have developed an online platform. If you can't host the servers and the platform can't be reached after the closure of the project, it is a bad concept.

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<sup>10</sup> Based on: Verzuh, Eric. The Fast Forward MBA in Project Management. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2016. 18-19; 46-48.p.

Your project will be successful if it's delivered in time, due to the schedule: it has been finished before the aforementioned problem is being solved by someone else. It is also important to not exceed your budget. It will represent high quality when your platform contains the right and necessary features, plus (!) every feature works well, without any error.

The other example is more relevant in the environment of a university. Let's say the project is your Ph.D. research. Its output will be your dissertation at the end of your program.

Relevant: It is crucial, to conduct a relevant research, even if it's a master's thesis or a dissertation. Always try to answer the question: What is my topic's uniqueness and novelty?

Can be executed: Make sure you will carry out your research in time and if there is any budget, don't exceed the limit of it. Make a well-grounded research plan which contains the necessary steps and risks. A rational and realistic schedule is also very important.

Sustainable: Can your results be used by future researchers? How your research will contribute to your academic field?

It is always a huge success when you finish your dissertation before the deadline. Here, high quality can be applied to the formal requirements and to the content as well.

In the world of project management, there are some constant characteristics which describe every successful project.<sup>11</sup>

**1. The project team, the customers and the management are in agreement about the goals of the project.**

Goals should be clear and understandable for everyone.

**2. There is an appropriate plan for the processes of the project.**

A good plan not only shows who is responsible and for what, but also shows what can possibly happen during the life of the project. A good plan also includes estimates of human resources, money, and materials required to complete the project.

**3. There is a continuous and effective communication between those people, who are involved in the project.**

Communication is crucial to make a project successful. Without proper communication, the team will be disintegrated or serious arguments can occur.

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<sup>11</sup> Garaj, Erika. Projektmenedzsment. Edutus Főiskola. 2012. URL: [https://regi.tankonyvtar.hu/hu/tartalom/tamop412A/2010-0017\\_35\\_projektmenedzsment/index.html](https://regi.tankonyvtar.hu/hu/tartalom/tamop412A/2010-0017_35_projektmenedzsment/index.html)



#### **4. Regulated scope.**

It is clear for everyone, what can they achieve with the given money and time during the project. In short: the framework and the focus of the project are clear for everyone.

#### **5. The support of the management.**

Generally, the project manager is responsible for the operation of the project. He rarely has the power to make every decision in the execution of the project. However, it is really important to get proper answers and support when employees have issues and questions. Without support, the engagement of the workers will decrease.

## Introduction to Mind Mapping

A project always answers to some kind of lack, or some kind of necessity. And these answers start with ideas. One way to develop good ideas is by making a mind map. To learn more about mind mapping, please watch the following videos in order.

1. **How to Mind Map with Tony Buzan**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5Y4pIsXTV0>
2. **Rules for Mind Mapping**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76Roy4E4ZbE>
3. How to Get Things Done with Mind Mapping  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9zTiyCuZ20>
4. Want to learn better? Start mind mapping | Hazel Wagner | TEDxNaperville  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nTuScU70As>

# Assignment

## Practice Quiz

- You can find the quiz here: <https://forms.gle/fYxJNyHf7XQSccl1y8>

## Assignments – **Please upload the completed documents to CooSpace!**

- Develop a project idea!
  - Write a short essay (min. 500, max. 2000 characters) about a project idea. Your essay should contain the topic of your project, why did you choose it, and what are the goals of this project. You will work with this project idea in the next lessons too.
    - Tips: Don't forget, your idea has to be unique, limited in time and focusing on a specific goal.
- Make a mind map of this idea!
  - You can make it by hand or use a software. If you make it by hand, please upload a clearly visible image/scan of it.
    - Tips: you can find a lot of useful online tools on Google, if you are searching for free mind mapping programs.