

PSO / PMO / P30 Assessment

Context

The types of activities and expectations that organisations or groups have of a PSO / PMO / P30 help determine how it should be structured and staffed. The questions you have been given below offer a quick and reasonably reliable way of assessing or categorising a PSO. If you have a PSO use the questions as is. If you are aspiring to build or create a PSO change the verb to “will” or “should”.

In the column to the left, indicate when the answer to the question is a YES. A tick (✓) or an X works well; if the answer to the question is NO, UNSURE, DON'T KNOW or NOT APPLICABLE leave the box empty. **Think about the answers! If you were having a discussion with your sponsor, how would you both, or the group answer?**

A Questions

	Do projects have plans that are reviewed and approved by stakeholders inside the organisation and by customers?
	Are variances from the plan in terms of schedule, cost and performance analysed and tracked?
	Are changes identified, analysed, tracked and managed?
	Do the projects have an approved charter that states the project's objectives, scope, assumptions and constraints?
	Is a profile of activities prepared and approved for the project before project execution begins?
	Are baselines established to monitor performance?
	Are cost estimates prepared prior to establishing a project budget?
	Is the level of rework monitored?
	Is support available for project teams on project management activities?
	Is project management training available for project professionals throughout the organisation?
	Are project status reports routinely prepared?
	Are regular project reviews held?
	Are issues and action items identified and tracked?
	Are project records maintained in an organised way and archived for use in future projects?
	Are project risks identified, analysed, tracked and monitored?
	Is an overall risk rating for each project prepared?
	Are project initiation meetings held?

B Questions

	Are reviews conducted to determine whether the project plans comply with organisational procedures?
	Are templates and forms available to assist in the development of project plans? Are these templates reviewed periodically to determine necessary enhancements?
	Are documented procedures followed for managing projects?
	Is oversight of multiple, related projects co-ordinated?
	Are procedures for integrated change control available and followed?
	Is documentation prepared to show that the customer, or sponsor, has accepted completion of the product or project phase?
	Are standard metrics collected and analysed to assess performance on projects?
	Is there a process in place to resolve conflicts and contentions for scarce and expensive resources?
	Is a quality policy available for the organisation and for use on projects?
	Are project audits conducted and is corrective action performed as a result of action items from these audits?
	Are qualifications and criteria established to recruit and assign project managers?
	Are there procedures that can be followed to collect, categorise, disseminate and archive various types of project information?
	Is a final project review conducted (sometimes called a Post Implementation Review (PIR))?
	Are risks analysed to assess the range of possible project outcomes?
	Are periodic project risk reviews held?
	Are procurement audits conducted?

C Questions

	Is overall customer satisfaction with project deliverables assessed at the end of each project?
	Is a project selection and prioritisation process in place?
	Is there a process for ensuring on-going alignment of projects and programmes to strategic objectives and / or targets?

	Are periodic reviews held to assess the effectiveness of project management procedures used throughout the organisation?
	Is a repository of best practice maintained and available for access by project professionals?
	Are quantitative objectives defined to improve performance in project management?
	Is information collected and reported on the cost and benefits of projects?
	Are resource utilisation and productivity factors available for resource planning and allocation on projects?
	Is information collected to assess the overall quality of each project?
	Are causes of non-conformance identified and classified?
	Does the organisation have a project management career path?
	Does the organisation have a certification programme for its project professionals?
	Is a mentoring programme in place and is this co-ordinated across the organisation?
	Does each project manager participate in an organisational project management improvement programme?
	Is resource use co-ordinated by the PSO through the integrated management of projects?
	When a new project begins, is it reviewed to decide if a scaled version of the organisations project management methodology should be followed?
	Is a project management information system in use that supports scope, schedule, costs, resource planning and allocation, risks and change management? Does it interface with the organisation's accounting, financial and human resource systems?
	Is a periodic review of project management information system held?
	Is there a process for identifying and managing dependencies / interdependencies amongst projects and programmes?
	Does the organisation have a project management improvement programme with quantitative objectives that identifies resource requirements and training needs?
	Is external benchmarking conducted to provide a standard for measuring performance?
	Is the PSO reviewed periodically to assess its effectiveness?
	Is there a process in place for the optimisation of organisational investment?
	Is there a method of establishing the real impact of aggregated project and programme risk?

Next

Count the number of YES (marked) answers in each group - A, B & C, and put the numbers in the boxes below.

YES to A Questions	YES to B Questions	YES to C Questions

The type of PSO that exists, or is to be established is, in part, determined by the reasons that led to its formation, in part by the expectations of the stakeholders, the experience and attitudes of the senior managers that sponsored it and in part by the experience and attitudes of the PSO manager and staff. How successful it is, is affected by how well it carries out its tasks AND how well it fits with the ‘culture’ of the organisation.

To do

Examine the model below, and decide which category of PSO you are (or want to be). This should be based on the analysis you performed with the questions on the preceding pages.

Mark the type of PSO you believe you are (or want to be) by comparing your results from the exercise with the benchmark values in the table below.

Number of ‘A’s	Number of ‘B’s	Number of ‘C’s	Types of PSO
< 9	< 3	< 3	Administrative (A)
> 8	< 7	< 6	Discipline (D)
> 11	> 6 < 12	< 7	Guidance (G)
> 8	> 6	> 8	Partner (P)

There will not be a ‘perfect’ fit, there never has been! So, identify the ‘best’ fit. Your analysis and subsequent discussion provides the foundation for a very thought provoking discussion with your stakeholders and your organisation. Save the questions, and use them with various stakeholders to establish or confirm the charter or requirements the PSO should work to satisfy.

The benchmark values have come from a number of sources, not least of them knowledge and experience. The idea for the exercise stemmed from HOW TO ESTABLISH A PROJECT SUPPORT OFFICE: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO ITS ESTABLISHMENT, GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, by Dr Robert W Wysocki - 2006.

Most of the questions have been created by John Zachar, of Zachar Associates.