1

Starting the Project

There is no doubt that starting a project off right is the first step in delivering a successful project. Because projects vary greatly in size, methodology, criticality, and stakeholders, there are several ways you can compile and document the initial project information.

The templates in this section document high-level information that is later elaborated in project plans and project documents. Templates that are commonly used to document the initial project information include

- Project proposal
- Business case
- Project startup canvas
- Vision statement
- Project charter
- Project brief
- Project roadmap

The project proposal, business case, and project startup canvas are usually developed prior to a project being formally approved. They have information that helps relevant stakeholders determine if the need for and benefits of the project justify the investment of time, budget, and resources. These templates may be developed by a project sponsor because the project has not yet been approved and a project manager has not been identified.

The vision statement, project charter, and project brief templates are typically completed once a project has been approved. They provide a high-level view of the project. They may be developed by the project sponsor, the project manager, or by both of them working together.

A project roadmap takes information from the previous documents and creates a summary level graphic display of information. It is developed by the project manager.

Most projects are good with using two or three of these templates to get the project started. Much of the information in these templates is found in multiple templates. Therefore, you should determine the best template for your project and then tailor it to meet the needs of your project by editing, combining, or revising the template.

Project startup templates are usually developed once, before, or shortly after the project is authorized. They provide information on the business environment, justification for the project, financial expectations, and high-level information about the project. If there is a significant change in the environment or the project, the need for the project may be revisited and these documents may be updated.

1.1 PROJECT PROPOSAL

The project proposal is a proposition that describes an opportunity, a solution to a problem, or an approach for undertaking a mandatory project. Ideally, it is no more than one or two pages. A project proposal provides information about the environment, why a project is needed, and presents the proposed response and approach for the project. It is used to provide high-level information so decision makers can determine if the project should be undertaken.

Typical information includes

- Executive summary
- Project background
- Solutions and approach
- Financial information
- Resource requirements
- Conclusion

It may provide information to

- Business plan
- Project startup canvas
- Project charter
- Project brief
- Project roadmap

It is developed once, and then only changed if there are significant changes in the market, the environment, or the need.

Tailoring Tips

Consider the following tips to help tailor the project brief to meet your needs:

- For new product development projects, you can combine the vision statement with the project proposal.
- For smaller projects, the project proposal and business case may be combined.
- If there is relevant research or studies, this information can be included in an appendix.

For hybrid projects, you may include information on methodologies that will be used to deliver effectively.

Alignment

The project brief should be aligned and consistent with the following documents:

- Business case
- Vision statement
- Project startup canvas
- Project charter
- Project brief
- Project roadmap

Description

You can use the element descriptions in Table 1.1 to assist you in developing a project proposal.

TABLE 1.1 Elements of a Project Proposal

Document Element	Description
Executive summary	A succinct overview of the problem or opportunity the proposed project will address along with the ways it will address it. Includes a synopsis of the background, project objectives, and deliverables.
Project background	Information that provides context for the project. May include history, environmental considerations, market conditions, significant events, or other information that shows a compelling need for the project.
Solutions and approach	A summary of the goals and scope of the project, the expected timeline for delivery and a brief description of the methodology that will be used to deliver the project.
Financial information	High-level project funding requirements. May include financial metrics.
Resource requirements	Brief description of the physical resources required, including material, equipment, and sites. A summary of the skill sets and number of team members required.
Conclusion	A summary of the key points.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Proposed Project Title: ____________________________ Date: ______________________________

Executive Summary:

Project Background:

Solution and Approach:

Goals	Scope

Financial Information

Resource Requirements

Physical Resources	Team Resources

Conclusion

1.2 BUSINESS CASE

The business case describes the business rationale for undertaking a project. It describes the current situation, future vision, threats, opportunities, costs, and benefits. A business case contains market information, financial metrics, and alternatives to consider.

Typical information includes

- Executive summary
- Background information
- Project objectives
- Project benefits
- Project definition
- Market assessment
- Alternatives analysis
- Financial analysis
- Risk overview
- Appendices

The project business case can receive information from

- Project proposal
- Vision statement

It may provide information to

- Project charter
- Project startup canvas
- Project brief
- Project management plan

It is developed once, and then only changed if there are significant changes to the market, financial analysis, or project definition.

Tailoring Tips

Consider the following tips to help tailor the business case to meet your needs:

- For large projects, the alternatives analysis may be a separate document.
- You can include information on project governance for large projects.
- Projects that will use a hybrid approach may want to include a section on project approach to define which aspects of the project will use a predictive approach, which will use an adaptive approach, and how they will integrate.

Alignment

The business case should be aligned and consistent with the following documents:

- Project proposal
- Project charter
- Project management plan

Description

You can use the element descriptions in Table 1.2 to assist you in developing a project business case.

TABLE 1.2 Elements of a Project Business Case

Document Element	Description
Executive summary	Provide a summary description of the business case. Give stakeholders a brief overview of the project.
Background information	Describe the environment and business context for the project. Identify the problem or opportunity. Document how the project aligns with the organization's strategic plan.
Project objectives	The measurable objectives that project intends to achieve.
Project benefits	Describe the intended benefits, such as gaining efficiencies, improving quality, increasing revenue, etc.
Project definition	Describe the key deliverables and the project boundaries. As appropriate, describe the approach to achieve the deliverables.
Market assessment	Provide an overview of the marketplace, including technology availability and legal, environmental, and competitor information.
Alternatives analysis	Describe the alternatives that have been considered and your recommended alternative. For each alternative, provide benefits, costs, and risks. Document how each alternative meets the need or solves the problem. If appropriate, include a feasibility analysis for each alternative.
Financial analysis	Calculate key financial indicators, such as net present value, return on Investment, cash flow, and life cycle cost.
Risk overview	Describe high-level project threats and opportunities along with the potential impacts.
Appendices	Attach supporting information such as spreadsheets, research, and references.

PROJECT BUSINESS CASE

Project Title: ________________________________ Date: ____________________________

Executive Summary

Background Information

Objectives	Success Criteria

Benefits

Project Definition

PROJECT BUSINESS CASE

Market Assessment

Technology availability
Legal and regulatory
Environmental
Competitors

Alternatives Analysis

Alternative	Benefits	Costs	Risks
1.			
2.			
3.			

Financial Analysis

Alternative	NPV	ROI	Cash Flow	Life Cycle Cost
1.				
2.				
3.				

Risk Overview

Appendices

1.3 PROJECT STARTUP CANVAS

The project startup canvas is a high-level visual summary of a project. It is a framework that allows you to capture new project information quickly and succinctly. It is modeled after the business startup canvas and the lean startup canvas. Like those models, the project startup canvas is one page. However, the project startup canvas focuses on key project information rather than market, competitor, and distribution information. The project startup canvas can include information on

- Problem or opportunity
- Solution or scope
- Key deliverables
- Value proposition
- Stakeholders
- Resources
- Costs
- Milestones
- Threats and constraints

The project startup canvas can receive information from

- Project proposal
- Vision statement

It may provide information to

- Project charter
- Project brief
- Work breakdown structure
- Backlog
- Resource requirements
- Cost estimates
- Schedule
- Risk register

The project startup canvas is developed once and is not usually changed unless there is a significant change in the environment, scope, schedule, budget, or resources.

Tailoring Tips

Consider the following tip to help you tailor the project startup canvas to meet your needs:

- If your project is for new product development, consider focusing on distribution channels, customer segments, and revenue streams rather than deliverables, resources, and milestones. While these elements are more business oriented, documenting that information at the start helps keep the project focused on the end users and the market.

Alignment

The project startup canvas should be aligned and consistent with the following documents:

- Project vision statement
- Project scope statement
- Work breakdown structure
- Stakeholder register
- Milestone schedule
- Cost estimates
- Risk register

Description

You can use the element descriptions in Table 1.3 to assist you in developing a project startup canvas.

TABLE 1.3 Elements of a Project Startup Canvas

Document Element	Description
Problem/Opportunity	Identify the problems the project will solve or the opportunities it will meet. Include contextual information if it provides insightful value.
Solution/Scope	Describe the suggested solution to the problems. Note the scope boundaries (what is in scope and what is out of scope).
Deliverables	List key project and product deliverables.
Value proposition	Describe why the project is needed and the value it will provide.
Stakeholders	List the key stakeholders including the customer and end user.
Resources	Identify the key physical resources and important skill sets needed.
Costs	Provide an initial cost estimate. Include fixed and variable costs, and project and maintenance costs.
Milestones	List the key milestones.
Threats/Constraints	Identify significant threats and constraints to the project.

PROJECT STARTUP CANVAS

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Problem/Opportunity</td><td>Solution/Scope</td><td rowspan="2">Value Proposition</td><td>Customers</td><td rowspan="2">Costs</td></tr>
<tr><td>Deliverables</td><td>Resources</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Milestones</td><td colspan="3">Threats/Constraints</td></tr>
</table>

1.4 PROJECT VISION STATEMENT

The project vision statement provides the future view of a product or service being developed. The project vision statement should be aspirational, yet achievable and realistic. It is developed at the very beginning of a project and is often an input to the business case.

The project vision includes at least

- Target customers
- Needs addressed
- Product or service attributes
- Key benefits

The project vision statement can receive information from

- Project proposal
- Project startup canvas

It may provide information to

- Project charter
- Project brief

The project vision statement is often used for projects that use an Agile methodology to develop digital products. It is developed once, at the beginning of the project.

Tailoring Tips

The following tips can help you tailor the project vision statement to meet your needs:

- Document the business goals that the product is aligned to.
- Identify key competitors and how this product will be better.
- Describe what differentiates this product from similar products in the market.
- You can combine all the information into a sentence or two, or you can follow a formula like the one shown in the sample template.

For hybrid projects, the vision statement can be combined with the project charter (see Section 1.5).

Alignment

The product vision should be aligned and consistent with the following documents:

- Business proposal
- Project startup canvas
- Project charter
- Project brief

Description

You can use the descriptions in Table 1.4 to assist you in developing the vision statement.

TABLE 1.4 Elements of a Project Vision Statement

Document Element	Description
Product or service	Identify the product or service being developed.
Target customer	The person or group who will buy or use the product.
Needs	The needs or requirements that the product will address.
Key attributes	A brief description of important features or functions.
Key benefit	Describe why the customer would buy the product or service.

VISION STATEMENT

Project Title: **Date Prepared:**

We are developing ____________________ for ______________________.

To respond to the following need(s):

-
-
-

This product responds to those needs by providing the following key attributes:

-
-
-
-

Customers will buy this product because of these benefits:

-
-
-
-

1.5 PROJECT CHARTER

The project charter is a document that formally authorizes a project. The project charter defines the reason for the project and assigns a project manager and his or her authority level for the project. The contents of the charter describe the project in high-level terms, such as

- Project purpose
- High-level project description
- Project boundaries
- Key deliverables
- High-level requirements
- Overall project risk
- Project objectives and related success criteria
- Summary milestone schedule
- Project budget
- Key stakeholders
- Project exit criteria
- Assigned project manager, responsibility, and authority level
- Project sponsor or other person(s) authorizing the project

The project charter can receive information from

- Project proposal
- Project startup canvas
- Business case

It provides information to

- Stakeholder register
- All elements of the project management plan
- Requirements documentation
- Requirements traceability matrix
- Project scope statement
- Stakeholder engagement plan

The project charter is developed once and is not usually changed unless there is a significant change in the environment, scope, schedule, resources, budget, or stakeholders.

Tailoring Tips

Consider the following tips to help you tailor the project charter to meet your needs:

- Combine the project charter with the project scope statement, especially if your project is small.
- If you are doing the project under contract, you can use the statement of work as the project charter in some cases.

For hybrid projects, you can combine the project vision statement and the project charter.

Alignment

The project charter should be aligned and consistent with the following documents:

- Business case
- Project scope statement
- Milestone schedule
- Budget
- Stakeholder register
- Risk register

Description

You can use the element descriptions in Table 1.5 to assist you in developing a project charter.

TABLE 1.5 Elements of a Project Charter

Document Element	Description
Project purpose	The reason the project is being undertaken. May refer to a business case, the organization's strategic plan, external factors, a contract agreement, or any other reason for performing the project.
High-level project description	A summary-level description of the project.
Project boundaries	Limits to the project scope. May include scope exclusions, or other limitations.
Key deliverables	The high-level project and product deliverables. These will be further elaborated in the project scope statement.
High-level requirements	The high-level conditions or capabilities that must be met to satisfy the purpose of the project. Describe the product features and functions that must be present to meet stakeholders' needs and expectations. These will be further elaborated in the requirements documentation.
Overall project risk	An assessment of the overall riskiness of the project. Overall risk can include the underlying political, social, economic, and technological volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. It pertains to the stakeholder exposure to variations in the project outcome.
Project objectives and related success criteria	Project objectives are usually established for at least scope, schedule, and cost. The success criteria identify the metrics or measurements that will be used to measure success. There may be additional objectives as well. Some organizations include quality, safety, and stakeholder satisfaction objectives.
Summary milestone schedule	Significant events in the project. Examples include the completion of key deliverables, the beginning or completion of a project phase, or product acceptance.
Preapproved financial resources	The amount of funding available for the project. May include sources of funding and annual funding limits.
Key stakeholder list	An initial, high-level list of people or groups that have influenced or can influence project success, as well as those who are influenced by its success. This can be further elaborated in the stakeholder register.
Project exit criteria	The performance, metrics, conditions, or other measurements that must be met to conclude the project.

Document Element	Description
Assigned project manager, responsibility, and authority level	The authority of the project manager with regard to staffing, budget management and variance, technical decisions, and conflict resolution.
	Examples of staffing authority include the power to hire, fire, discipline, accept, or not accept project staff.
	Budget management refers to the authority of the project manager to commit, manage, and control project funds. Variance refers to the variance level that requires escalation.
	Technical decisions describe the authority of the project manager to make technical decisions about deliverables or the project approach.
	Conflict resolution defines the degree to which the project manager can resolve conflict within the team, within the organization, and with external stakeholders.
Name and authority of the sponsor or other person(s) authorizing the project charter	The name, position, and authority of the person who oversees the project manager for the purposes of the project. Common types of authority include the ability to approve changes, determine acceptable variance limits, resolve inter-project conflicts, and champion the project at a senior management level.

PROJECT CHARTER

Project Title: ______________________________ Date Prepared: ______________________________

Project Sponsor: ___________________________ Project Manager: ___________________________

Project Purpose

High-Level Project Description

Project Boundaries

Key Deliverables

High-Level Requirements

Overall Project Risk

PROJECT CHARTER

	Project Objectives	Success Criteria
Scope		
Time		
Cost		
Other		

Summary Milestones	Due Date

Budget

Stakeholder(s)	Role

PROJECT CHARTER

Project Exit Criteria

Project Manager Authority Level

Staffing Decisions
Budget Management and Variance
Technical Decisions
Conflict Resolution

Approvals:

Project Manager Signature	Sponsor or Originator Signature
Project Manager Name	Sponsor or Originator Name
Date	Date

1.6 PROJECT BRIEF

The project brief is a short description that summarizes the key elements of the project. Ideally, it is one or two pages. A project brief is used to ensure that the project team and key stakeholders have a common understanding of the project.

Typical information includes

- Project overview
- Goals and objectives
- Success criteria
- Initial constraints and assumptions
- Scope description
- Budget
- Timeline and milestones
- Key stakeholders

The project brief can receive information from

- Project proposal
- Business case
- Project startup canvas
- Vision statement

It may provide information on

- Project management plan
- Scope statement
- Assumption log
- Project schedule
- Cost estimates
- Stakeholder engagement plan
- Stakeholder register

It is developed once, and then only changed if there are significant changes to scope, schedule, cost, or stakeholders.

Tailoring Tips

Consider the following tips to help tailor the project brief to meet your needs:

- If the project is being done for an external customer, include information on the customer and the target audience for the end product or service.
- For larger projects, the constraints and assumptions may be kept on an assumption log.

For hybrid projects, you may include information on methodologies that will be used and which deliverables will use adaptive methods and which will use predictive methods.

Alignment

The project brief should be aligned and consistent with the following documents:

- Project proposal
- Project charter
- Project roadmap
- Project management plan

Description

You can use the element descriptions in Table 1.6 to assist you in developing a project brief.

TABLE 1.6 Elements of a Project Brief

Document Element	Description
Project overview	A summary description of the project. This may include a short background on why the project is necessary.
Goals and objectives	The specific and measurable goals and objectives the project intends to achieve.
Success criteria	The measures or criteria that must be met for the goals and objectives for the project to be considered a success.
Initial constraints and assumptions	Project limitations (constraints) and expectations about the project.
Scope description	A short narrative of the scope.
Budget	The funds allocated to the project.
Timeline and milestones	The project duration and key milestone dates.
Key stakeholders	Significant stakeholders, including the customer and end user.

PROJECT BRIEF

Project Title: ______________________________ Date: ___________________________________

Project Overview

Goals	Success Criteria

Objectives	Success Criteria

Constraints	Assumptions

Scope Description

PROJECT BRIEF

Budget:	Timeline:

Milestones

Key Stakeholders

1.7 PROJECT ROADMAP

The project roadmap is a high-level visual summary of the life cycle phases, key deliverables, management reviews, and milestones. Typical information includes

- Project life cycle phases
- Major deliverables or events in each phase
- Significant milestones
- Timing and types of reviews

The project roadmap can receive information from

- Project charter
- Project management plan

It provides information on

- Project schedule
- Risk register
- Milestone list

It is developed once, and then only changed if dates of the key events, milestones, or deliverables change.

Tailoring Tips

Consider the following tips to help tailor the project roadmap to meet your needs:

- For large and complex projects, this will likely be a separate stand-alone document.
- For smaller projects, the project roadmap may serve as the project management plan.
- For hybrid projects, you may include information on the development approach and release dates.

Alignment

The project roadmap should be aligned and consistent with the following documents:

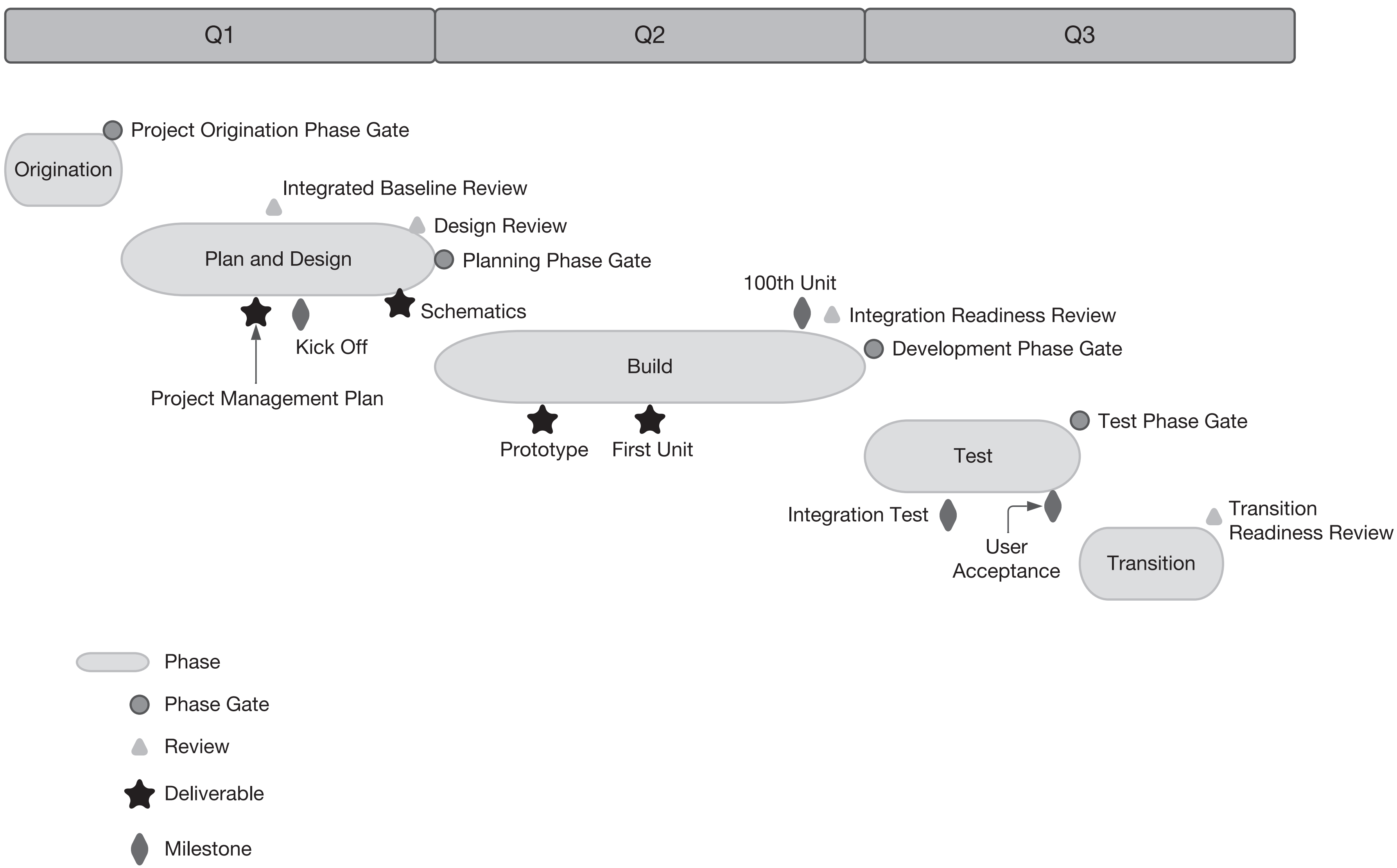
- Project charter
- Project management plan

Description

You can use the element descriptions in Table 1.7 to assist you in developing a project roadmap.

TABLE 1.7 Elements of a Project Roadmap

Document Element	Description
Project life cycle phases	The name of each life cycle phase.
Major deliverables or events	Key deliverables, phase gates, key approvals, external events, or other significant events in the project.
Significant milestones	Milestones in the project.
Timing and types of reviews	Management, customer, compliance, or other significant reviews.


Q1
Q2
Q3
Origination
Project Origination Phase Gate
Integrated Baseline Review
Design Review
Plan and Design
Planning Phase Gate
Schematics
Kick Off
Project Management Plan
100th Unit
Integration Readiness Review
Build
Development Phase Gate
Prototype
First Unit
Test Phase Gate
Test
Integration Test
User
Acceptance
Transition
Readiness Review
Transition
Phase
Phase Gate
Review
Deliverable
Milestone