

## **Project Management Cycle**

The Project Management phases follow a cyclical approach throughout the life of the project. The cycle represents a continuous process in which each phase provides the foundation for the next. For example, during implementation the monitoring phase provides inputs and changes to the original design which then modifies the implementation plans. This cyclic nature among the design, implement and monitor phases is repeated throughout the life of the project.

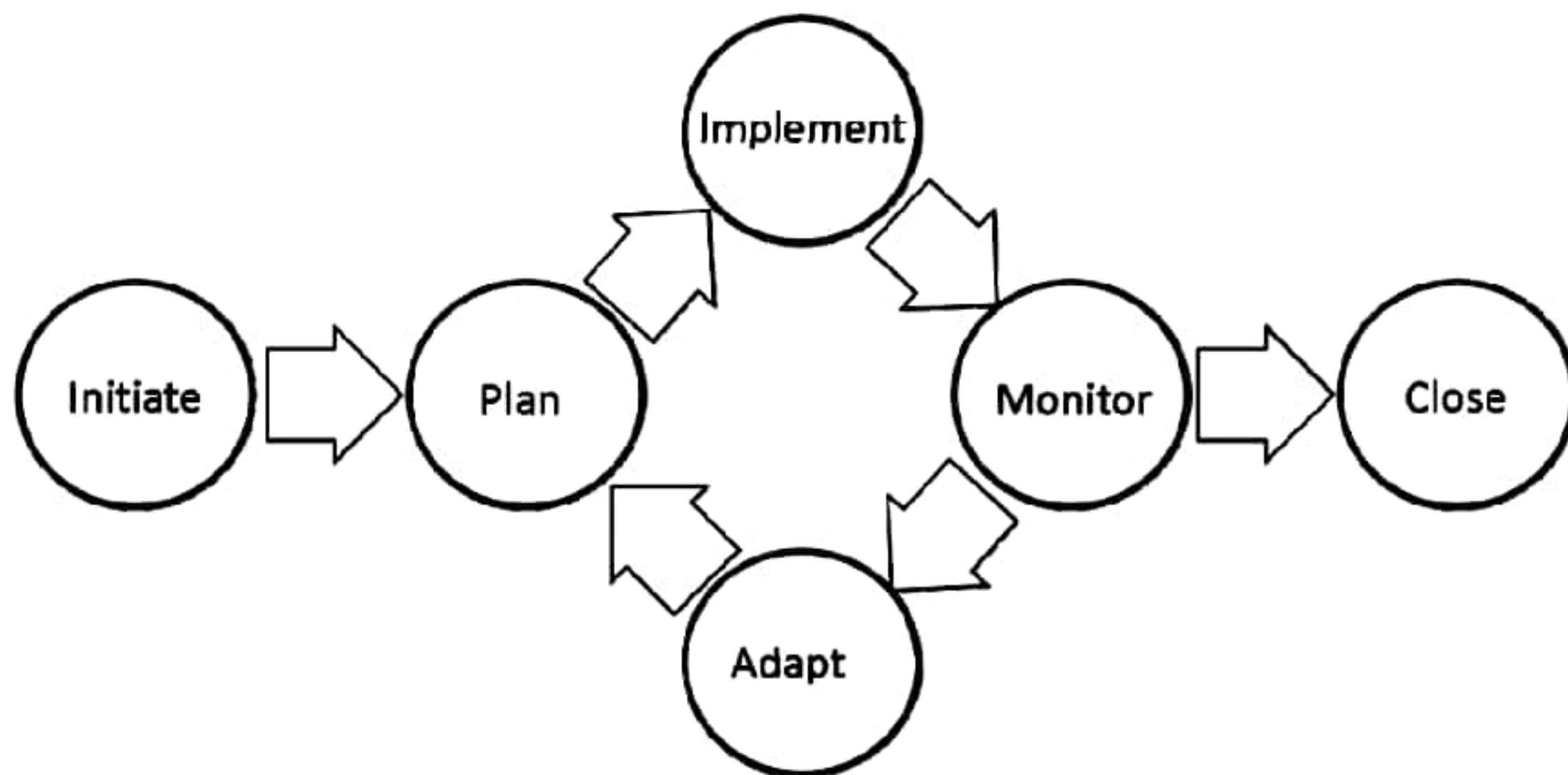


Figure 3.2 Project Management Cycle

The cycle allows for a constant, iterative process by which the project is constantly monitored and any required changes are reflected in the plans, this repetitive cycle continues until all project activities and objectives have been delivered. The cycle approach allows opportunities to review the original project assumptions and plans, as the project makes progress the initial conditions could have changed making necessary for the project to change course or readjust the original plans.

A project is not a linear process, it is cyclical with each phase receiving feedback from the preceding: for example, during the monitoring the projects may encounter that the original assumptions about a project activity have changed which leads to a proposed readjustment of the plans, either in schedule or in scope. Another example may be that some activities are no longer needed or desired by the beneficiaries which require the project to re-initiate some parts of the planning phase.

Each project is different and will have different cycles during its life; the project manager's role is to ensure that the cycles are opportunities that give rise to adjustments in the project and contribute to learning. No situation in which a project intervenes is static, project management is a cycle that is continually repeated to adapt to a changing context. The project management cycle continues in a spiral fashion until the project is completed and closed. For larger



projects the phases may be broken down in smaller manageable phase, each with its own project management cycle, where the closure on the first phase of a project leads to the initiation of the second phase.

The application of project management is an iterative process. For example, within the planning process group, several iterations of planning may occur as the team develops the best approach and methodologies to implement the project. This process requires additional refinements to the schedule, budget estimates, quality requirements and risk plans. As improvements start to occur, the impact to other project management areas must be determined. Over time, the iterations should become smaller in magnitude and more defined as more detailed information about the project is developed. Each project's management cycle is a knowledge cycle in itself that shapes each initial design and is fed by experience from each cycle.

Once the planning management processes have been completed, feedback from the implementing management processes - identified through the monitoring management processes - may result in adjustments to the Project Management Plan. Adjustments are caused by changes in the project environment conditions that were not present (or information available) at the time of planning. Project Management is a dynamic effort and requires a continual process of monitoring and evaluation. Evaluation activities, such as oversight, quality control, and management review are ongoing activities and affect every phase of the project.

A static, linear project management cycle can lead to project failure, a rigid project management approach, hampers the ability of project staff to make the necessary mid-course corrections during project implementation. It also fosters an environment that discourages risk-taking and the use of creative problem-solving strategies.



# Chapter 7: The Project Life Cycle

The project manager and project team have one shared goal: to carry out the work of the project for the purpose of meeting the project's objectives. Every project has beginnings, a middle period during which activities move the project toward completion, and an ending (either successful or unsuccessful). A standard project typically has the following four major phases (each with its own agenda of tasks and issues): initiation, planning, implementation, and closure. Taken together, these phases represent the path a project takes from the beginning to its end and are generally referred to as the project life cycle .

## **7.1 Initiation Phase**

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During the first of these phases, the initiation phase, the project objective or need is identified; this can be a business problem or opportunity. An appropriate response to the need is documented in a business case with recommended solution options. A feasibility study is conducted to investigate whether each option addresses the project objective and a final recommended solution is determined. Issues of feasibility ("can we do the project?") and justification ("should we do the project?") are addressed.

Once the recommended solution is approved, a project is initiated to deliver the approved solution and a project manager is appointed. The major deliverables and the participating work groups are identified and the project team begins to take shape. Approval is then sought by the project manager to move on the detailed planning phase.

## **7.2 Planning Phase**

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The next phase, the planning phase, is where the project solution is further developed in as much detail as possible and you plan the steps necessary to meet the project's objective. In this step, the team identifies all of the work to be done. The project's tasks and resource requirements are identified, along with the strategy for producing them. This is also referred to as scope management. A project plan is created outlining the activities, tasks, dependencies and timeframes. The project manager coordinates the preparation of a project budget; by providing cost estimates for the labor, equipment and materials costs. The budget is used to monitor and control cost expenditures during project implementation.

Once the project team has identified the work, prepared the schedule and estimated the costs, the three fundamental components of the planning process are complete. This is an excellent time to identify and try to deal with anything that might pose a threat to the successful completion of the project. This is called risk management. In risk management, "high-threat" potential problems are identified along with the action that is to be taken on each high threat potential problem, either to reduce the probability that the problem will occur or to reduce the impact on the project if it does occur. This is also a good time to identify all project stakeholders, and to establish a communication plan describing the information needed and the delivery method to be used to keep the stakeholders informed.

Finally, you will want to document a quality plan; providing quality targets, assurance, and control measures along with an acceptance plan; listing the criteria to be met to gain



customer acceptance. At this point, the project would have been planned in detail and is ready to be executed.

### **7.3 Implementation Phase**

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During the third phase, the implementation phase, the project plan is put into motion and performs the work of the project. It is important to maintain control and communicate as needed during implementation. Progress is continuously monitored and appropriate adjustments are made and recorded as variances from the original plan. In any project a project manager will spend most of their time in this step. During project implementation, people are carrying out the tasks and progress information is being reported through regular team meetings. The project manager uses this information to maintain control over the direction of the project by measuring the performance of the project activities comparing the results with the project plan and takes corrective action as needed. The first course of action should always be to bring the project back on course, i.e., to return it to the original plan. If that cannot happen, the team should record variations from the original plan and record and publish modifications to the plan. Throughout this step, project sponsors and other key stakeholders should be kept informed of project status according to the agreed upon frequency and format. The plan should be updated and published on a regular basis.

Status reports should always emphasize the anticipated end point in terms of cost, schedule and quality of deliverables. Each project deliverable produced should be reviewed for quality and measured against the acceptance criteria. Once all of the deliverables have been produced and the customer has accepted the final solution, the project is ready for closure.

### **7.4 Closing phase**

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During the final closure, or completion phase, the emphasis is on releasing the final deliverables to the customer, handing over project documentation to the business, terminating supplier contracts, releasing project resources and communicating the closure of the project to all stakeholders. The last remaining step is to conduct lessons learned studies; to examine what went well and what didn't. Through this type of analysis the wisdom of experience is transferred back to the project organization, which will help future project teams.