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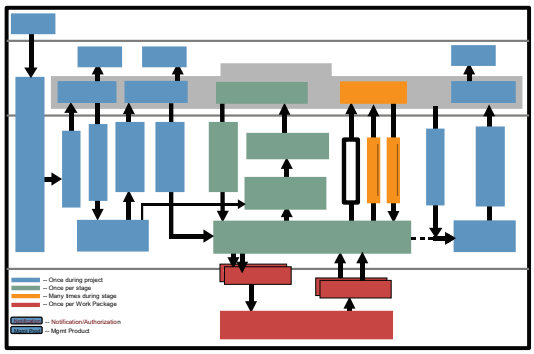
The PRINCE2® Process Model

A wonderful introduction to PRINCE2

By Frank Turley
Bizness Academy



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About this book

The main objective of this course is to provide an introduction to PRINCE2® using the PRINCE2 Process Model. The idea for this book came from the questions I received from people trying to learn PRINCE2.

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About US

We do hope you enjoy this overview of the PRINCE2 Process Model from Bizness Academy.

Our objective is to promote the learning, use and practice of PRINCE2 around the world.

ezyBAO stands for easy Bizness Academy Online and is the community site from Bizness Académie SAS which is an Accredited Training Organization (ATO) and is as such authorized by the APM Group Ltd (in the UK) to organise and deliver accredited PRINCE2 trainings and examinations.

We provide an easy-to-use training which simplifies access to knowledge and its application in a real project environment.

PRINCE2 is used by numerous organisations of all sizes around the world from the Public and Private sectors alike. There are many providers for both training and consultancy on the subject and it is supported by a community of thousands of users.

Bizness Académie SAS operates a series of websites which you can use to find further information about the subject covered in this Book.

The PRINCE2 Process Model

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1 The PRINCE2 Process Model

1.1 Course Objectives – Classroom Preparation Course

The main objective of this course is to provide an overview of the PRINCE2 Process Model. The PRINCE2 manual is excellent and describes each element of PRINCE2 in great detail. It is easy to read and it is also a very good reference manual, also the PDF version is easier to search for desired subjects.

The majority of people who start to study PRINCE2 by first reading the PRINCE2 manual have the following feedback,

- They would like to understand the normal path of a project
- How a project begins and the steps until the project closes
- How all the processes fit together and how the outputs from one process are the inputs to another.

This course therefore provides a high-level overview of PRINCE2 using the Process Model. It is possibly the best introduction to PRINCE2 as you will be able to follow the path of a typical project and revise your knowledge of PRINCE2 : for example by drawing the Process Model diagram and explaining it in your own words.

I have included some exercise sheets (see our website), so you can practice drawing the PRINCE2 Process Model and filling in the missing information. Once you are able to draw the complete model, then you will have an excellent grounding in PRINCE2 and will find it much easier to take the Foundation or Practitioner courses.

1.2 Course Contents

This book is also available in a podcast format and the podcast version takes about 60 minutes. This book covers the following points :

- the trigger to start a project
- the steps when starting a project and who does what
- which documents are required
- when certain documents are created and by whom
- an overview of the major roles in the project
- how the project moves from startup, to initiation, to stages until the project is closed
- the typical inputs and outputs for each process
- how the project board controls the project
- etc…

2 Organization

2.1 Project Organization Introduction

Before we start the Process Model Introduction, it is necessary to take a brief look at the Project Organization as these terms are used during the rest of this course.

This is a very simple overview and the diagram shows the four levels of a **Project Management Structure** (also called Project Organization).

The **Project Management Team** has just three levels, the top level is the Project Board level and the lower level is the Team Manager level. The project team is a a temporary structure, it is created for the project and is disbanded once the project is completed.

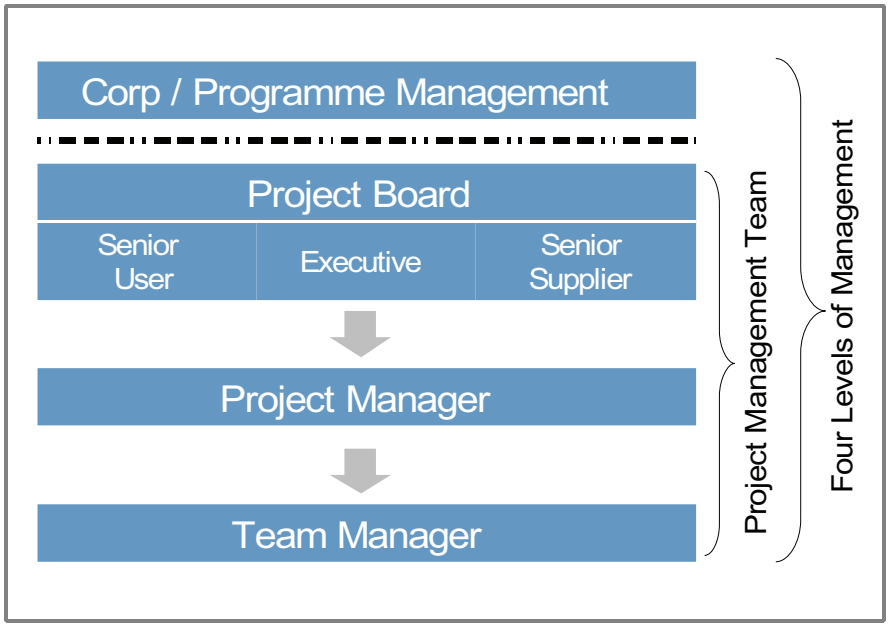

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Fig 2.1 Project Management Structure / Project Organization

At the top of the Project Management Structure, you have the Corporate or Programme Management Level, this level is outside the project, so they do not participate in the project and therefore is not part of the project team. More and more companies now have PMO's which stands for Programme Management Office and can also have other names like Program Office, Project Office, etc...

The Project Board is responsible for the success of the project and have the necessary authority to take decisions and approve all major plans for the project. They approve the completion of each stage and authorize the start of the next. We refer to this as **Directing a Project.**

2.1.1 What is a Programme?

A programme is a temporary flexible organization structure created to coordinate, direct and oversee the implementation of a set of **related projects and activities** in order to deliver outcomes and benefits related to the organization's strategic objectives.

That is what you call a long definition, so a simpler way to think of this is:

"a programme is a group of related projects in an organization"

If there is no programme in place, Corporate Management will be the top layer. This is the term that PRINCE2 uses to refer to a higher level of management in a company.

2.2 Organization Roles

The Project Board has three Roles, which are:

- The Executive, The Senior User & The Senior Supplier

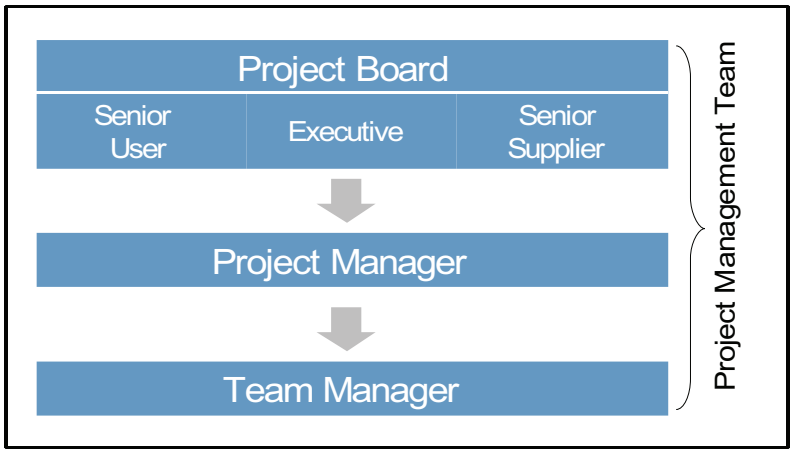

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Fig 2.2 The Project Management Team

2.2.1 The Executive Role

The Executive is the main responsible for the project and is supported by Senior User and Senior Supplier. The Executive represents the business interests of the project and owns the Business Case and the role of the Executive gives a single point of accountability for the project.

Usually the Executive is responsible for designing and appointing the project management team, including the rest of the Project Board and Project Manager.

2.2.2 The Senior User Role

The Senior User represents the user interests and is responsible for the specification. They specify the needs of the users and check that the final products meet the required specification and their main concern throughout the project is "**Will it work?**"

The Senior User also specifies the expected benefits at the start of the project and reports to the Project Board on the benefits that are being realized during the project.

2.2.3 The Senior Supplier Role

The Senior Supplier represents the interests of those designing, developing, facilitating and implementing the project's products. Their main concern throughout the project is "**Can it be done**?" and whether it can be done within the agreed time, cost and quality requirements.

2.2.4 The Project Manager Role

The Project Manager is appointed by the Executive with approval from Corporate or Programme Management. The Project Manager runs the project on behalf of the Project Board on a day to day basis and has the responsibility to produce the required products to the required quality within the specified time and costs.

There are many different facets to the role of Project Manager, such as Communication – in fact it is estimated that more than 70% of a Project Manager's time is spent on Communication, but also Cost Management, Quality, Product Status, Changes, User Needs, Monitoring, Planning, etc...

2.2.5 The Team Manager Role

The Team Manager has the responsibility to produce the products that were assigned in Work Packages by the Project Manager and provide regular status reports on their progress, this allows the Project Manager to monitor their work. Team Managers create their own team plans to manage the development of the assigned products.

For small projects, Team Managers may not be required, so the team members will report directly to the Project Manager.

3 The PRINCE2 Process Model Diagram

3.1 Process Model Diagram Introduction

I presume you are looking at the Process Model diagram in color: At first the Process Model diagram might seem like a bit too much information all at once, But not to worry. This course will explain the different parts of the model and guide you through it step by step, starting with the project mandate document and ending with the “Closing a Project” process.

I suggest that you print out the full PRINCE2 Process Model diagram in color (A4 landscape) and refer to it while reading this book. You can download the PRINCE2 Process Model diagram from our website.

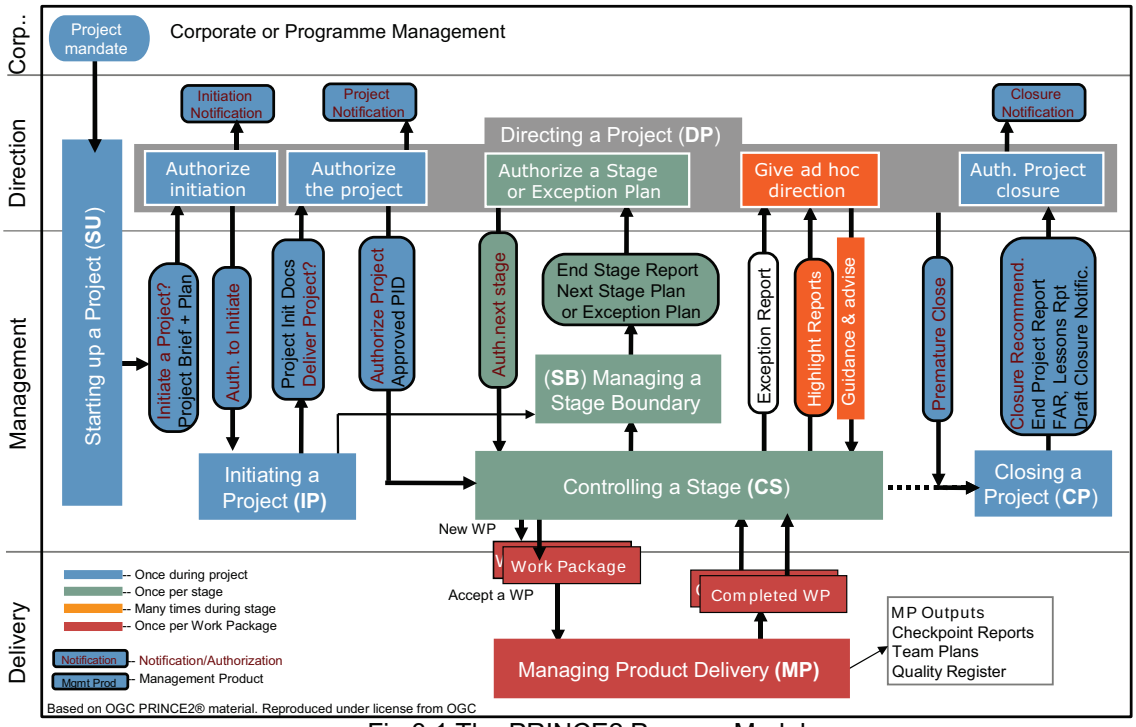

Fig 3.1 The PRINCE2 Process Model

3.2 Process Model Using Color

Due to the way the Process Model is normally shown, it is difficult to see that some processes are executed more than once. This just makes learning PRINCE2 more difficult as you try to identify the relationship between the processes.

I have therefore used colors to make this easier to understand:

Blue items

- All blue items are executed once in a project
- eg: Starting up the Project, Initiating a Project, create the Project Initiation Documentation, creating a Project Plan and Closing the Project

Green items

- All green items are executed once for each stage
- You can the see from the diagram that Controlling a Stage and Managing a Stage Boundary work together
- So if a project has four stages after start-up, then the items in green are executed four times.
- There is just one exception that happens at the end of the final stage after all products have been delivered. The Closing a Project process follows the Controlling a Stage process, so Managing a Stage Boundary is not done at the very end of the final stage of a project.

Orange items:

- Orange items can be executed multiple times in a stage
- eg: A highlight report can be sent each week during a stage by the Project Manager to the Project Board
- And the Project Board can give Guidance and Instructions to the Project Manager at any time

Dark Red items

- Dark Red items can happen multiple times during a stage as the Project Manager can give Work Packages to a number of Team Managers
- A Team Plan can be created for each Work Package

Don't worry if you don't understand all these terms now, they will be explained in detail later in this book.

3.3 Four Management Levels

The Process Model shows four Management Levels.

Level 1: Corporate or Programme Management
The top level is the Corporate or Programme Management Level. You can see from the diagram that the only thing created in this level is the project mandate.

Level 2: Direction
The Direction or Directing Level is where the Project Board work. They interface often with the Management Level and provide the above level with a number of notifications. There are three notifications shown in the process model diagram.

Level 3: Management
The next level is "Management" and it is where the Project Manager works. It contains most of the activities and processes such as Initiating a Project, Controlling a Stage etc... So you can see from this diagram that most of the management activities for a project are done by the Project Manager.

Level 4: Delivery
The bottom level "Delivery" is where the projects products are created. Remember all the products created above the delivery level are created just to manage the project, eg: Project Plan, Project Brief, etc... These are also known as **management products**.
All the products created in the delivery level by the teams are the products users want from the project, these products are the reason why the project was started. These are known as **specialist products.**

3.4 Process Model – Processes

This is a simpler view of the Process Model diagram from the point of view of the 7 processes :

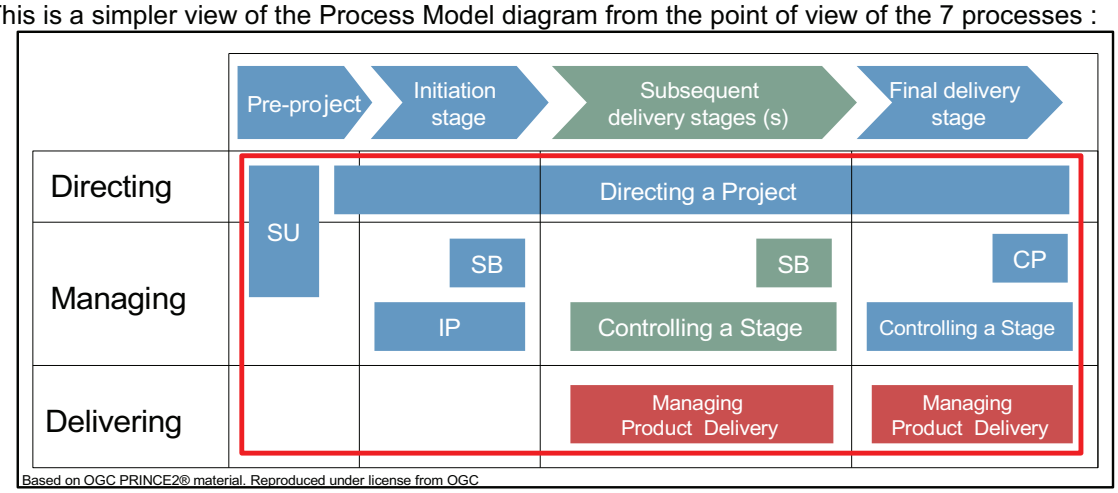

Fig 3.2 PRINCE2 Processes

Directing a Project (DP)

- This process is for Senior Management and this course will show how the senior management controls the project.

Starting Up a Project (SU)

- This is a very short pre-project process that gathers the necessary data to start the project.

Initiating a Project (IP)

- This process examines the justification of the project and creates the Project Initiation Documentation which includes the Project Plan.

Controlling a Stage (CS)

- This process describes the Project Manager's day to day monitoring and control activities. This is where the Project Manager spends most of their time during a project.

Managing a Stage Boundary (SB)

- This process provides a controlled way to complete a stage and plan the next one.

Managing Product Delivery (MP)

- This process delivers the products. It is where the products (specialist products) that the users will use get produced by the team members.

Closing a Project (CP)

- This process confirms delivery of the products and the Project Manager prepares the closure of the project.

3.5 Exercise Diagram

This book provides information on a number of exercise sheets (see Appendix A for more information) that you can use to test your knowledge during and at the end of the course. You can download these exercise sheets separately from our web site. Our objective with these exercises is to get you to draw the Process Model diagram.

If you can draw this diagram and are able to fill in both the notifications and products, then you will be able to answer many of questions in both the Foundation and Practitioner Exam.

This is also a good exercise to do before an exam or at anytime when to want to refresh your knowledge of PRINCE2.

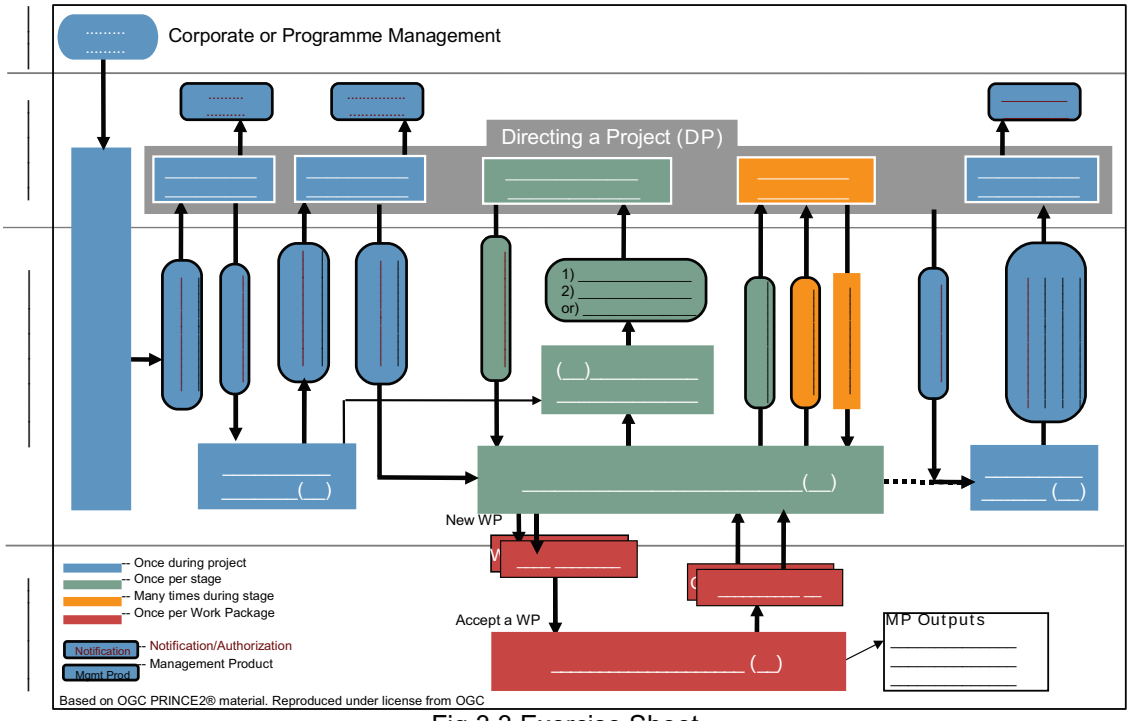

Fig 3.3 Exercise Sheet

4 The PRINCE2 Process Model

4.1 Pre-Project / project mandate

We will start by looking at what happens before the project begins.

A project mandate comes from a senior person in the organization. It may be referred to as a Project Request or a Project Proposal but the PRINCE2 name is project mandate.

As you can see from the diagram, the project mandate provides the input to the process "**Starting up a Project**" and is created before the project starts. In fact, the project mandate provides the trigger to **Starting up a Project**.

Sometimes a project mandate can be just a command, email or a memo but should eventually become a structured document and should contain the necessary information to help start the Project.

If the project is part of a **programme**, then the majority of the preparation work that would be normally done in the Starting up a Project process will most likely be supplied by the programme. So the Starting Up a Project process would be even shorter in a programme environment.

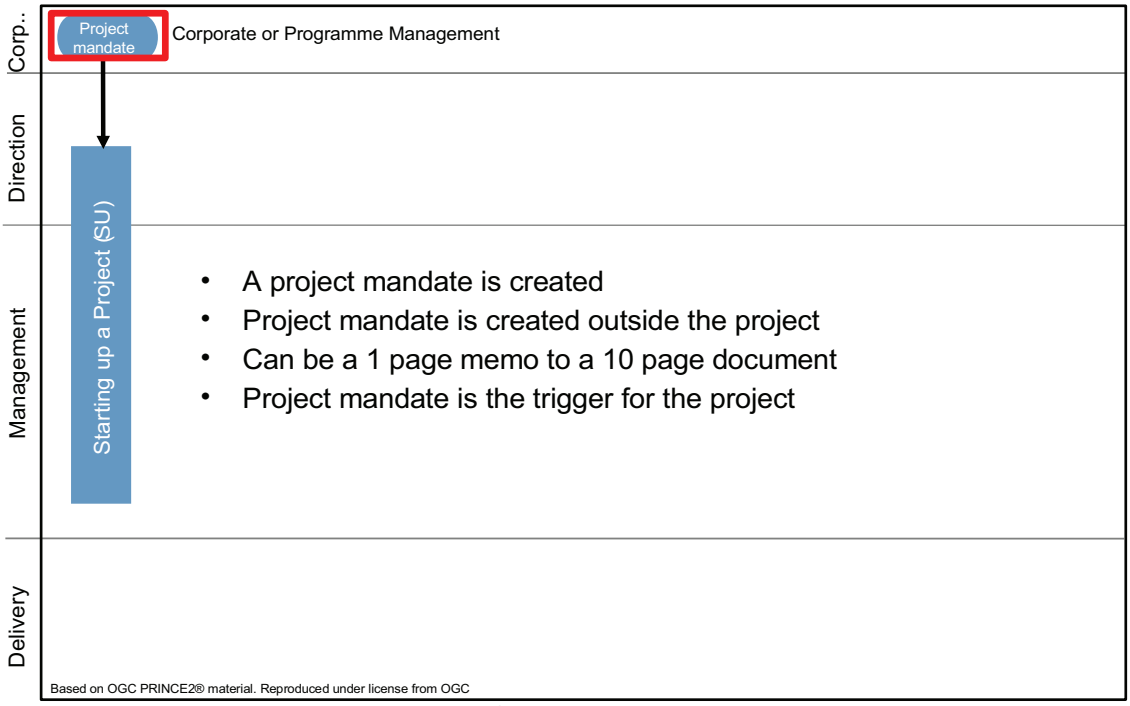

Fig 4.1 Project mandate

4.2 Project Mandate Contents

The project mandate can have a number of formats, it can be just a command or a one page memo or ten page document. The PRINCE2 manual states that the project mandate should identify the Executive and Project Manager and the project mandate may not necessary be a document.

Other information that may be included in a project mandate:

- The Main Objective of the Project
- The Business Case which describe the reasons for the project
- Project Scope in high level terms
- Customers quality expectations
- Information about the customer, eg: best practice for documenting requirements
- Information on related projects that may provide important feedback

The Starting up a Project (SU) process is ready to begin once the project mandate document is ready.

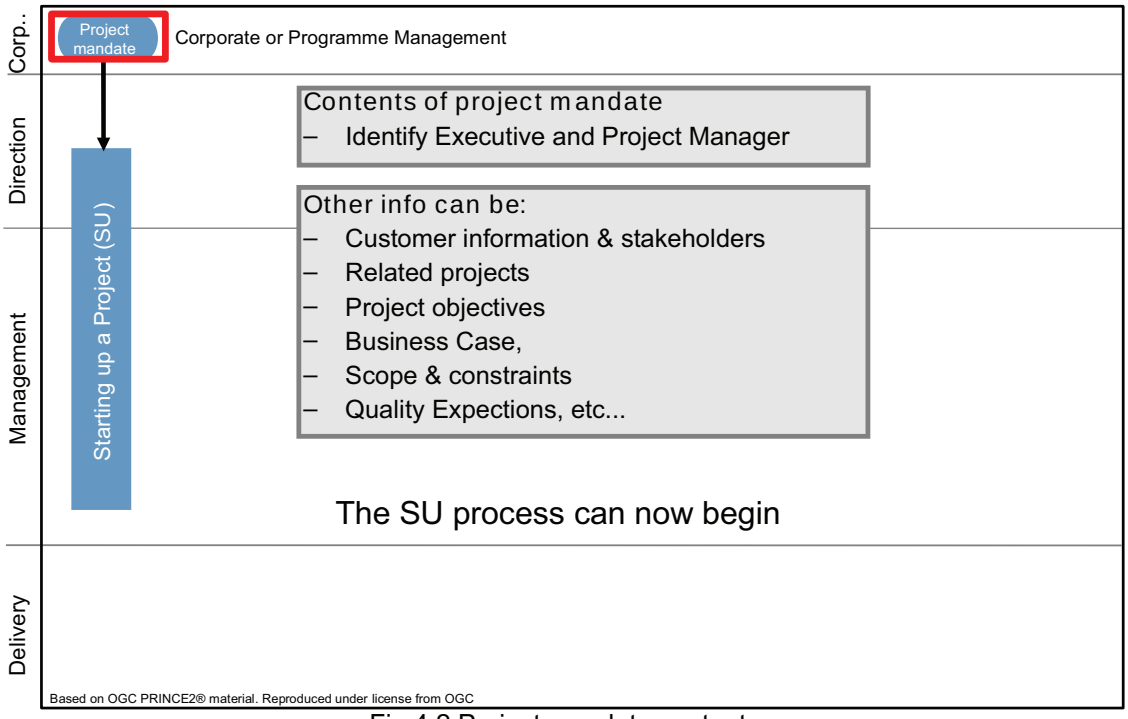

Fig 4.2 Project mandate contents

4.3 SU: Starting Up a Project

4.3.1 Starting Up a Project: Three main deliverables

The Starting up a Project process has three main deliverables:

1. The Project Brief which includes an outline of the Business Case
2. The Design and Appointing of the Project Management Team
3. The Initiation Stage Plan

The Starting up a Project process can be short. Its goal is to provide a structure to get the project off to a good start and it is made up of six activities:

1. Appoint the Executive and Project Manager
2. Capture Previous Lessons ie: from other projects
3. Appoint a Project Management Team
4. Create an Outline of the Business Case
5. Select the Project Approach and assemble Project Brief
6. Create a plan for the Initiation Stage

4.3.2 Starting Up a Project activities

1st Activity: Appoint the Executive and Project Manager

This is done by the Corporate or Programme Management. It makes sure that the best possible persons are selected and all sides have agreed on related responsibilities and job descriptions. The Executive and Project Manager will take immediate ownership of the project.

2nd Activity: Capture Previous Lessons

The project must learn from previous projects, other people and other sources. This is a very important point in PRINCE2 and its even one of the seven principles. The Project Manager will add useful lessons / advise to the Lessons Log for use in this project.

3rd Activity: Appoint a Project Management Team

The Project Manager will create the Roles and Responsibility descriptions including the estimated effort required for each role. The Executive will appoint the persons.

4th Activity: Outline the Business Case

The Executive creates an Outline of the Business Case. The Business Case is a very high level document and will be expanded later into a full Business Case.

For now, it addresses value for the business, company objectives, funding and risk information.
Also in this activity, the Project Manager creates the **Project Product Description**, to describe the main output of the project.

5th Activity: Select the project approach and assemble Project Brief

The Project Manager examines how best to approach the project using all available knowledge and also assembles the **Project Brief** document. There will be more about this later.

6th Activity: Planning an Initiation Stage

The Project Manager creates a plan for the **Initiation Stage** which will be the first stage of the project. This plan will be detailed enough to be used as a day to day plan by the Project Manager.
It will include such information as, objectives, deliverables, costs, time, etc...

4.4 SU: project approach

The objective of the **project approach** is to gather the necessary data which will allow the Project Manager to determine such things as the timescale, the cost of the project, how the project can be controlled and how to manage quality.

This will be done by the Project Manager with **a lot of assistance** from other people, such as experts (also known as subject matter experts) who may or may not have been assigned to the project and who have the necessary knowledge.

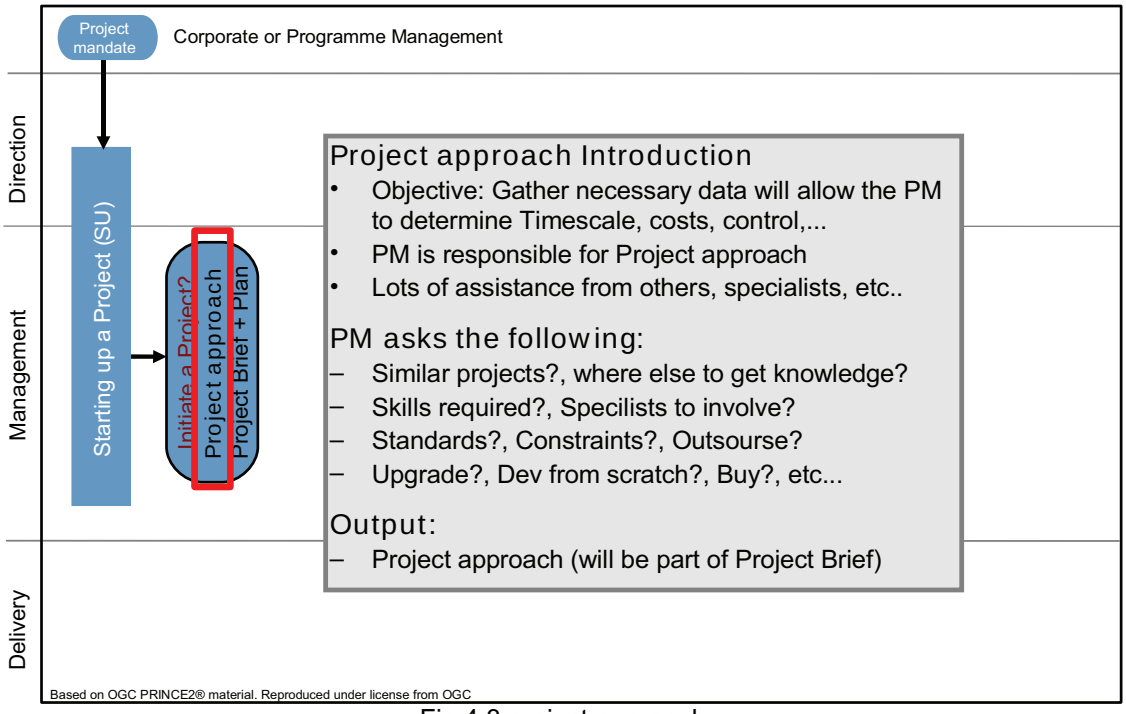

Fig 4.3 project approach

Project approach Actions

- The project approach will examine how to go about the project by looking at existing information by asking the following questions:
  - Are there similar projects to learn from?
  - What other knowledge and skills are required for the project?
  - What standards to be used?
  - What are the constraints?
  - What training is required?
  - Should parts of the project be developed in house or outsourced?
  - Should we build from scratch or update an existing product?

- How will maintenance be done in the future?, etc…

- The Project Manager decides on the best approach for the project by looking at all available knowledge
- The output of the project approach will become part of the **Project Brief**

4.5 SU: Assemble Project Brief

The Project Brief document is used to provide the necessary information to the Project Board, it is used to decide if the project will proceed to the next stage which is the **Initiation Stage**. The Project Manager assembles the Project Brief using the information already gathered during the Starting up a Project process.

The information in the project mandate document provides the main guidance and direction for the Project Brief.

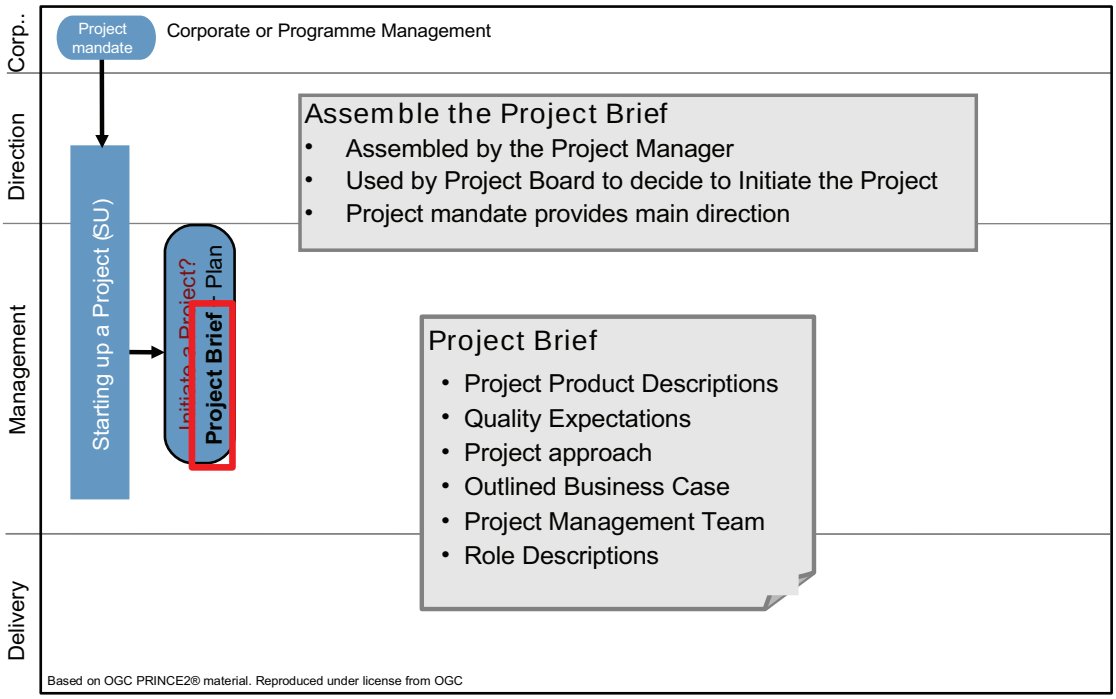

Fig 4.4 Project Brief

Project Brief Contents

The Project Brief contains the following information:

1. **Project definition** which includes:
   - the background, project objectives, project scope, tolerances, risks, desired outcomes, users who have interests in the project.
   - The project objectives (which is the desired outcome) and the project scope is taken from the project mandate document and updated
2. A detailed Project Product description which includes quality expectations
3. Outline of the Business Case which includes a summary of the known risks
4. The project approach
5. Overview of Team Structure and Role Descriptions

As you can see the Project Board will already have quite a significant amount of information about the project when they receive a copy of the Project Brief.

4.6 SU: Plan the Initiation Stage

4.6.1 Plan the Initiation Stage Tasks

Plan the Initiation Stage is the last activity in the Starting up a Project processes. It is time for a first question: What do you think is the main difference between the Starting Up a Project Process and the Initiation Process?

The Starting Up a Project process is the first check to see if there is a business reason to do the project while the Initiation Stage will plan the project.

PRINCE2 recommends the following tasks in this activity “Plan the Initiation Stage”:

1. Define Reporting and Control Arrangements for the Initiation stage
2. Produce **Stage Plan** and include time and cost data
3. Review the Risks in the Daily Log to asses their impact on the Initiation Stage

The **Stage Plan** is created by the Project Manager, is reviewed by the Senior User and approved by the Executive.

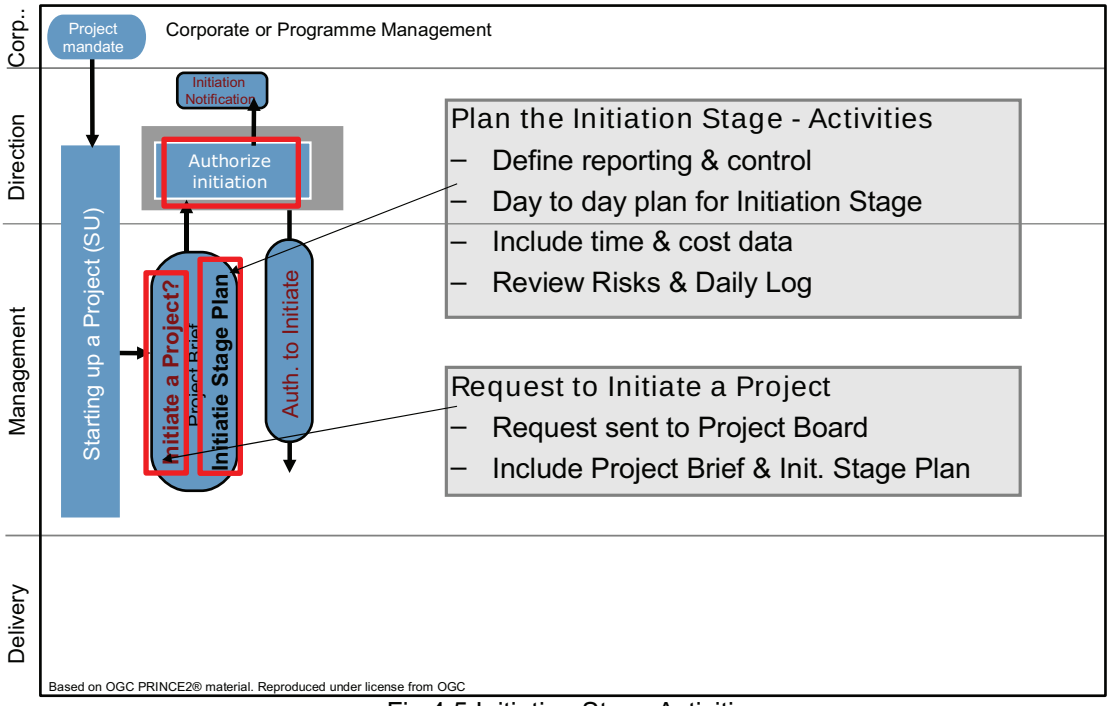

Fig 4.5 Initiation Stage Activities

4.6.2 Request to Initiate a Project

Once the Project Brief and Initiation Stage Plan are ready, the Project Manager will ask the Project Board if they can continue to the Initiation Stage. The name PRINCE2 gives to this request is “**Request to initiate a project**”.

A lot of activities are done here in this Starting up a Project process but if the command to start the project came from a programme, then most of the Project Brief information would already be provided by the programme. So the only activity to do in the Starting up a Project process would be to create the Initiation Stage Plan.

As you can see from the diagram (Fig 4.5 Initiation Stage Activities), all documents and the Request to proceed are sent to the Project Board activity “**Authorize initiation**”**.**

4.6.3 DP: Authorize initiation

The activity Authorize initiation is the first activity for the Project Board and is the first decision (also called a control point) they have to take.

The Project Board will review the **Project Brief** and the **Initiation Stage Plan**, they will check if there is a business case and if the project is worth doing for the organization. So they will look for the following information:

- Project objectives and the project scope
- The project product description (this is important for the Senior User)
- Outline of the Business Case

- Overview of known risks
- The project approach
- Overview of team structure and role descriptions
- Initiation Stage Plan (deliverables, cost, risks)

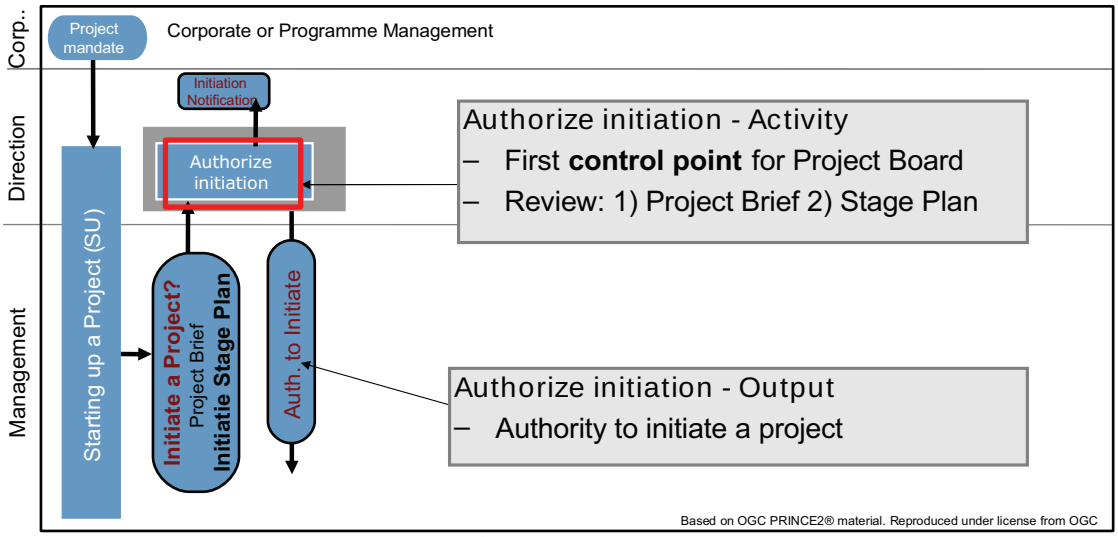

Fig 4.6 Authorize initiation

If all looks OK and they wish to continue, then they will issue an authorization, this is called "**Authority to Initiate a Project**" so the project can continue to the Initiation Stage.

4.7 IP: Initiation Stage

4.7.1 Initiating a Project Process introduction

In the above heading I have used the terms "Initiation Stage" and "Initiating a Project Process ". This can be a bit confusing so let me explain.

- Initiating a Project process refers just to the process Initiation a Project process
- Initiation Stage is bigger and refers to all the work that has to be done in the Initiation process and the first Managing a Stage Boundary process.

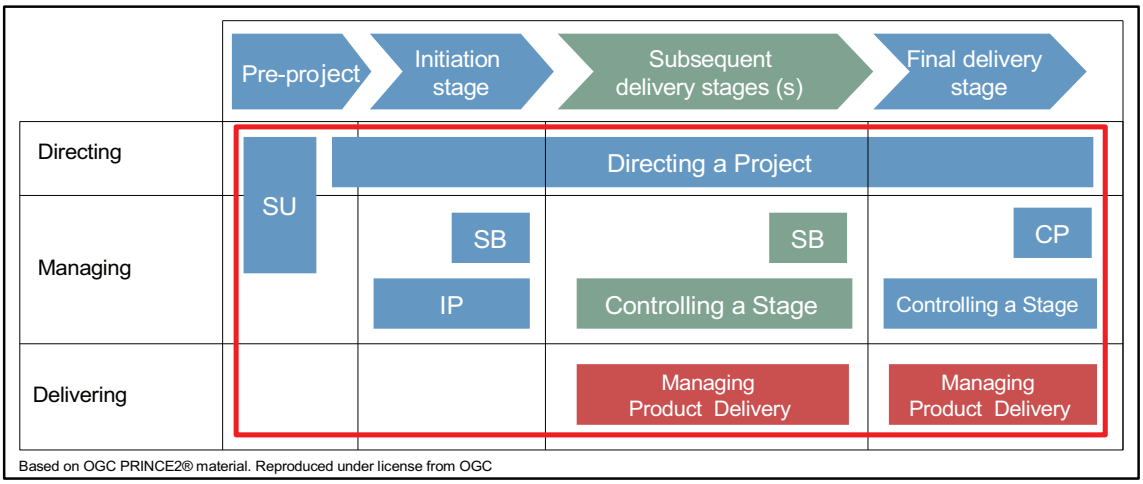

Fig 4.7 Initiation Stage

As you can see from the diagram (figure 4.6), the Initiating a Project (or IP) process is triggered by the Project Board. This IP process is usually short especially when compared to the rest of the project. But it is perhaps the most important stage as it describes what has to be done by the project and therefore should not be rushed.

The purpose of the IP process is to understand the work that needs to be done to deliver the required products and to produce the project plan. So there are a number of good questions to ask about the project and these are the most common:

- What are the **reasons** for doing the project, the **benefits** and **risks**?
- The **scope** – what is to be done and not to be done?
- When can products be delivered?
- How to ensure that quality will be achieved?
- How risks, issues and changes will be identified and followed up?
- How PRINCE2 will be tailored to suit the project?, etc...

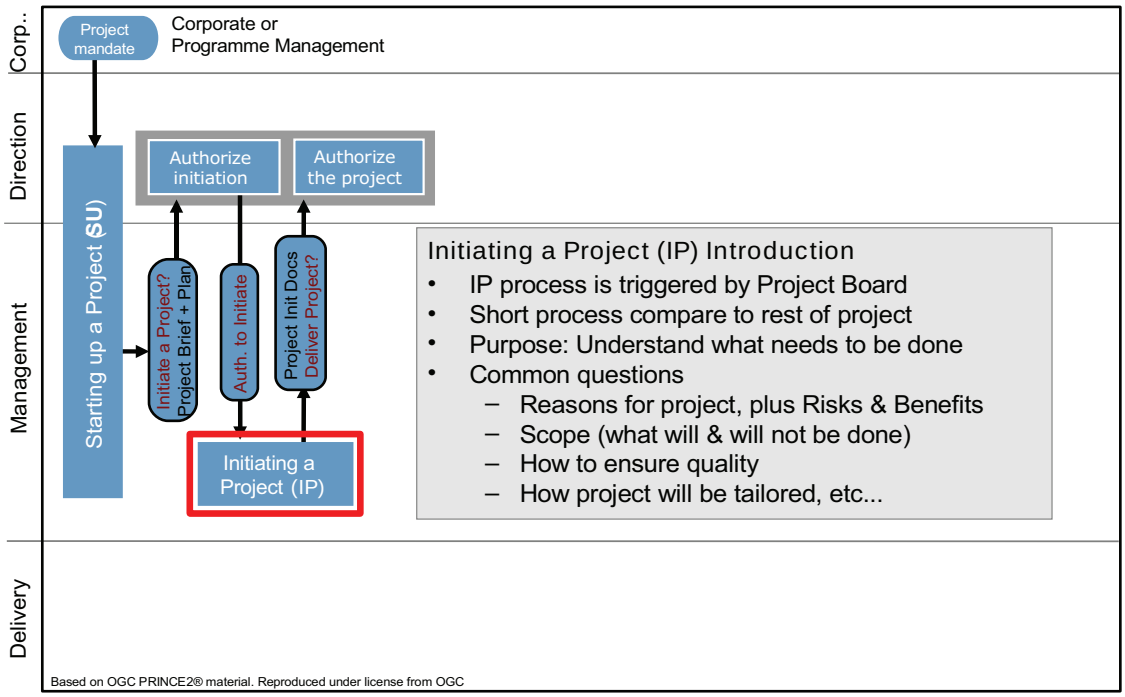

Fig 4.7 Initiating a Project

4.7.2 Initiating a Project Process – 8 Activities

What do you think the eight activities are?
Here is a good way to remember: First the creation of the four strategy documents, the Project Control, Project Plan and Business Case and lastly assemble the PID. I will list the activities and comment on each of these.

1. Prepare the Risk Management Strategy
   - this will define how to manage risk during the project
2. Prepare the Configuration Management Strategy
   - this will define how to manage the products produced during the project
3. Prepare the Quality Management Strategy
   - this will define how to ensure quality during the project
4. Prepare the Communication Management Strategy
   - this will define how and when the project will communicate to stakeholders
5. Set up Project Controls
   - this will define how the Project Board can control the project and how the Project Manager can control the work done by the teams, etc…
6. Create the Project Plan
   - which covers costs; time scales, risks, quality plan, deliverables, etc…
7. Refine the Business Case
   - which means to complete the Business Case document
8. Assemble the Project Initiation Documentation
   - which is to collect and assemble documents and information from the documents created so far in the SU and IP processes.

The very last thing a Project Manager will do in the Initiation process is to send a request to the Project Board, this is a request to **Deliver the Project.**

4.8 IP: Project Initiation Documentation (PID)

4.8.1 Project Initiation Documentation

The Project Initiation Documentation becomes a common understanding for all points related to the project. It provides a solid base for the project, makes all parties clear about what the project is intended to achieve and their responsibilities. So this provides the what, why, who, how, when and cost of the project.

The documentation provides the necessary information for the Project Board to decide to continue with the project. If the project proceeds then the Project Initiation Documentation will be baselined meaning that it will be dated (time stamped) so it can be used in the future to check project performance compared to the original forecasts.

The last task done by the Project Manager in the Initiation Stage is to request to **Deliver a Project**, this request is sent to the Project Board.

4.8.2 Project Initiation Documentation Contents

The Project Initiation Documentation is a collection of most of the documents produced so far in both the SU and IP processes.

- First of all we have the project approach and project definition which contains a lot of information about the project and is extracted from the Project Brief
- The Project Management Team Structure which includes the Roles Descriptions
- The Business Case which includes the time and cost information from the project plan
- The four management strategy documents which are Quality, Configuration Management, Risk and Communications
- The Project Plan which contains information on time scale, costs, resource requirements, products that will be produced, risks, tolerances, controls, quality, etc…
- The Project Controls document which describes how the project will be monitored and controlled, tolerances between the different management levels, number of stages, ..
- And how PRINCE2 was tailored to suit the project

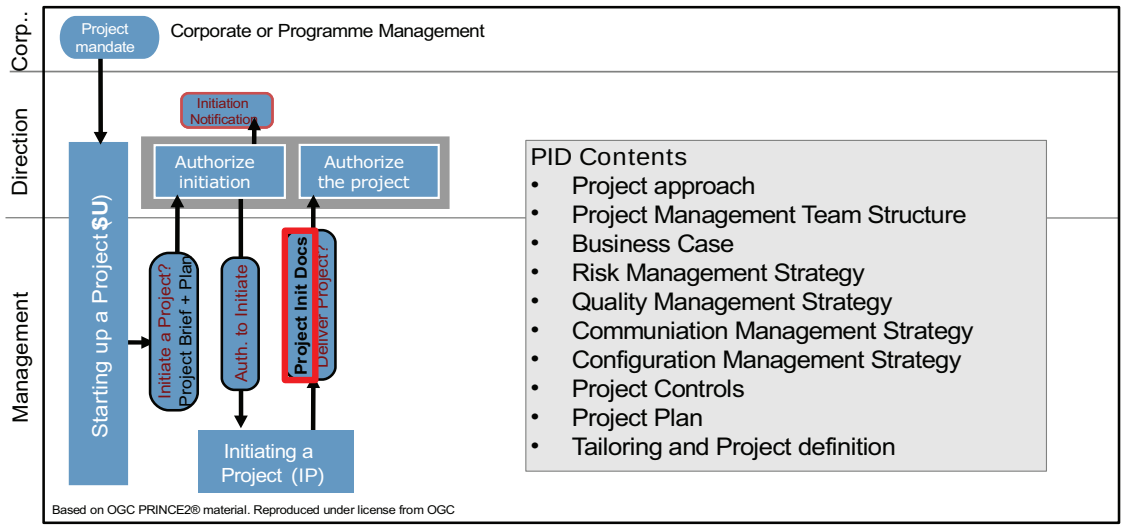

Fig 4.8 PID Contents

4.9 SB: Managing a Stage Boundary after the Initiation Stage

This is the first Managing a Stage Boundary process and this process normally happens after each Controlling a Stage process or each stage.

The objectives for the Managing a Stage Boundary process are:

- To assure the Project Board that all products in the Stage are produced and approved.
- If it is a large project you can create a Lessons Report from the lessons log. This is optional.
- Create the End Stage Report, to show what has been completed in the current stage compared to the Stage Plan
- Create the Next Stage Plan

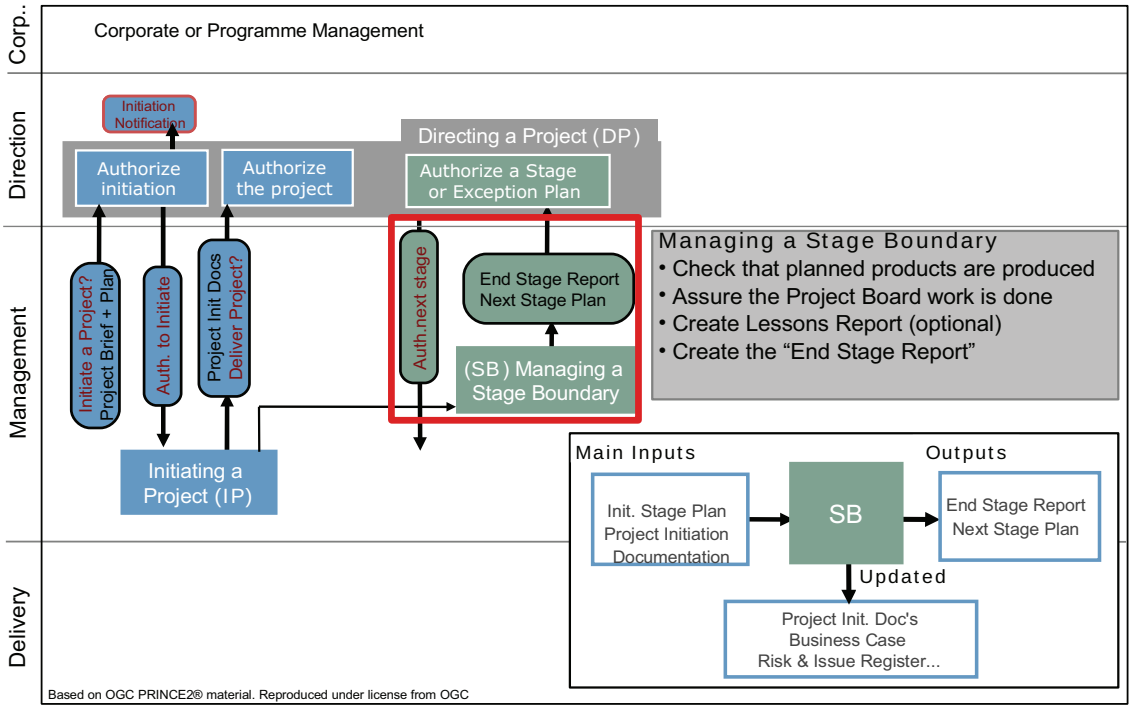

Fig 4.9 Managing a Stage Boundary process after IP

Inputs:
The main inputs are:
- the Project Initiation Documentation to compare with Initiation Stage Plan
- the Initiation Stage Plan
- and of course all the register files (Quality, Issue, Risk)

Outputs:
The Stage Boundaries outputs are:
- the End Stage Report (a report on the stage just completed, the Initiation Stage)
- the Next Stage Plan

4.10 DP: Authorize the project

Authorize the project is the 2nd control point and 2nd Activity for the Project Board. The end of the Initiation Stage is the trigger for the "Authorize the project" activity. The Project Board confirms the projects objectives and the scope is clearly defined and understood. They can decide to stop the project, ask for further information or give authorization for the project to continue.

The "Authorize the project" activity has the following input and outputs:

Inputs

- Project Initiation Documentation
- Request to Deliver a Project

Outputs:

As you can see in the diagram, there is one authorization, one approval and one notification

- Authorization: Authorize the Project so the project can start
- Approval: Approve the Project Initiation Documentation
- Notification: To the Corporate or Programme Management that the project has started

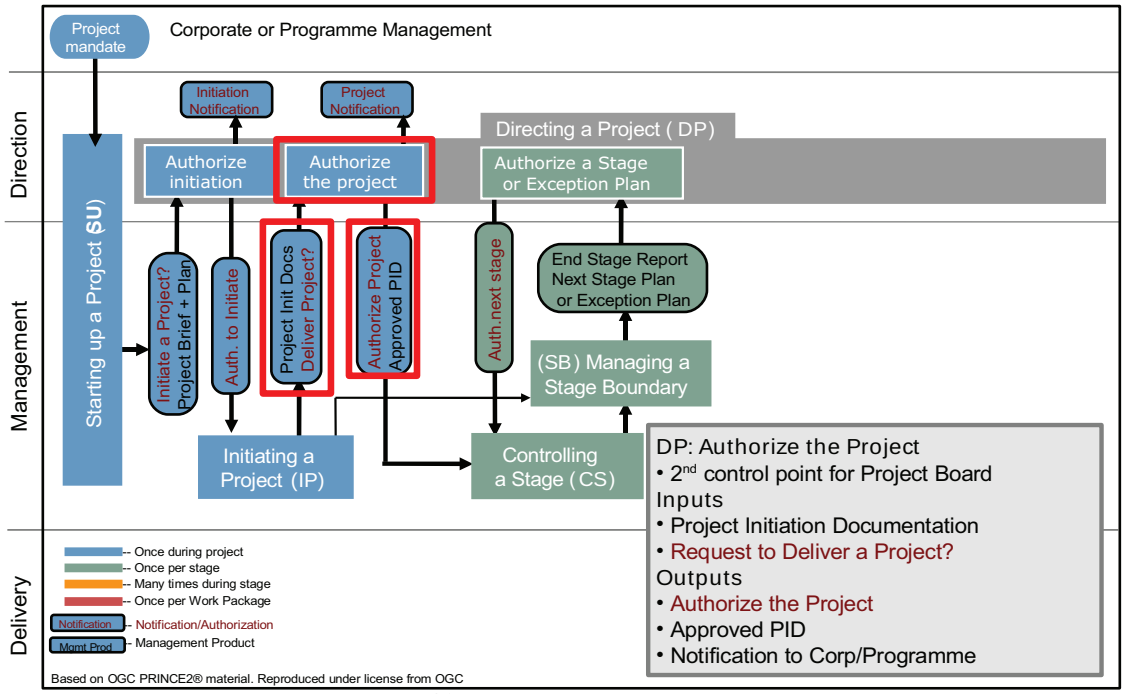

Fig 4.10 DP: Authorize the project