

Information Management Advice 3 | Managing Records of Projects

Classification of Project Management Records

Project Management is a controlled approach to managing projects. Part of that control involves preparing detailed documentation relating to the planning, monitoring, ongoing management and closure of a project.

It can be challenging to determine how to appropriately and effectively classify these records using a functional business classification scheme. A functional business classification scheme divides records into categories based on functions, activities and transactions. In contrast, project managers often like to group records according to phases of a project or the project management task they relate to.

This document outlines some options for the classification of project management records and issues to consider when selecting a suitable approach.

Factors influencing the classification approach

When deciding on which approach to use for the classification of project management records, it is important to consider the:

- Types of projects being undertaken by the organisation, for example their size, complexity and level of risk. For example, high risk projects will require more detailed records, and more rigorous control over the records, than low risk projects.
- Scope of projects, for example whether they cut across many functions or only relate to a single function.
- Functionality of the electronic document and records management system
- Extent to which project management methodologies are adopted across the organisation, or just in particular business units. For example, if the entire organisation uses strict project management methodology it may suggest greater scope for aligning classification of records to project management steps.
- Organisational culture. An organisation already accustomed to following defined processes and procedures may adapt more readily to strong controls on classification.

As with developing a business classification scheme, consultation and negotiation with users is essential to ensure the selected approach meets their needs.

The table below outlines the strengths and weakness of some possible options.

Table 1: Options for Managing Project Records

Option	Example	Strengths	Weaknesses
Enforce use of the business classification scheme and educate users	Project Budget Records would be classified under; Financial Management-Budgeting Project Governance Records would be classified under; Strategic Management – Policy The Project Plan would be classified under; Strategic Management – Planning	Ensures a consistent and uniform approach to the classification of records across the organisation.	Records may be fragmented across multiple functions and activities. This can be frustrating for end users, particularly if a primary interface is through a hierarchical file plan view.
As for above, but add a different metadata field to capture project name.	Metadata field on the record registration form to record project name, would allow user to search all records with that project name. For example the Project Plan would be classified under; Strategic Management – Planning – ECM Project	As above Identified field allows for a simple search to identify all relevant files or documents	As above
Map the project phases and activities to activities in the business classification scheme	Project plans would fit in planning, implementation schedules under implementation, checkpoint and exception reports under reporting, etc. This option is based on examples in National Archives of Australia (2003) Overview of Classification Tools. ¹	Ensures a consistent and uniform approach to the classification of records across the organisation. Aids users in understanding where project documentation belongs.	Assumes projects relate to a single function. Key documents, such as contracts, may get lost in general or 'bag' files relating to each phase.

¹ http://www.naa.gov.au/Images/classification%20tools_tcm16-49550.pdf

Option	Example	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Include a specific 'project management' function and related activities in the business classification scheme.</p>	<p>Governance records would be classified under; Project Management– Governance – Steering Committee</p>	<p>Provides a clear and obvious location in the business classification scheme for project management files and documents</p>	<p>All projects, regardless of function, end up grouped together. Does not provide any business context for the function and therefore makes it more difficult to link to retention and disposal requirements.</p>
<p>Insert a free text level for project name between the function and activity levels of the business classification scheme</p>	<p>Project budget records would be classified under Financial Management – ECM Project – Budgeting</p>	<p>When using a hierarchical interface, this option means that all project files are visibly grouped together without any major impact on the standard functional approach</p>	<p>Assumes project relates to only one function. May not work in some EDRMS systems.</p>
<p>Add the name of the project as a top level, followed by function and activity</p>	<p>Project budget records would be classified under; ECM Project – Financial Management – Budgeting</p>	<p>All files relating to a project are visibly grouped under the project name. Suitable for projects that involve many functions</p>	<p>May only be appropriate if the entire organisation has commitment to project management. May require having different file / classification structures for 'project' and 'non-project' parts of the organisation, which may be difficult to implement in certain eDRMS systems.</p>

Managing Project Records

Step 1 Create Project Files

Approach your records area early in the formation of the project so you can discuss the organisational approach to project management records and decide on the approach.

(Appendix 1, 2 & 3 contain examples of possible classification schemes.)

Once you decide upon the approach you must ensure that it is consistent across the agency.

Negotiate with stakeholders to develop templates to assist users and records staff (see Appendix 1-3)

Have the suite of files created for the project. Get the records area to create all of the files required, that way they are there when you need them – don't worry if you don't use particular files the records area can delete them!

Ensure that all project officers are trained in how to use the records system and are familiar with their suite of files.

If consultants and contractors are used on the project make sure they either have access to the records system and are familiar with the suite of files for the project OR the records they create are regularly saved into the files in the records system by other project staff.

Step 2 File Project Records

Make sure that records are saved into the recordkeeping system regularly and promptly. The records area can do this by regularly reporting on documents saved into project files.

This is important because projects by their very nature are transient. A project is a management approach designed to bring about a change. It provides a framework bridging the current state of affairs and a planned future. Once achieved, the framework has served its purpose. All projects are finite; they are defined by the fact that they have an identifiable start and finish. Often the records that they produce are of minimal business use afterwards.

Step 3 Archive and destroy project records

When the project is drawing to a close then it is time to ensure that all the project documents and relevant data have been filed in the Agencies' records management system. It is particularly important to ensure that any records created by consultants and contractors are managed correctly.

The records area in the agency will need to pay particular attention to the closure phase of the project. It is important that project records are sentenced and archived promptly while the staff with the knowledge of the project records, are still employed by the agency.

If you decide on a hybrid approach (ie functional and subject classification with Project name on the top level) you will need to create a mapping document listing the file names and mapping them to their disposal class.

Close the project formally with a project review. It is also important that the agency capitalise on the experience of the project, which will be documented in its records by closing the project with a review to identify the lessons learned from the project. Processing and archiving records ensures that the records are retrievable for further projects.

Further Advice

For more detailed advice, please contact:

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Information Security Classification

This document has been security classified using the Tasmanian Government Information Security classification standard as PUBLIC and will be managed according to the requirements of the Tasmanian Government Information Security Policy.

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Amendments in this Release

Section Title	Section Number	Amendment Summary
All	All	Document imported into new template

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Appendix I Generic Project File Design

This structure is used for basic project files for capital works/engineering type projects. Note in these examples formal contract management is managed in a linked but separate structure and not within the project file itself.

Project Description (level 1)	Category (level 2)	Files (level 3 – docs saved here)
PR 07-01 (eg 07 being calendar year and 01 is project number allocated)	PR 07-01 Budget	PR 07-01 Consultant Fees
Barry St Glenorchy – Footpath repairs		PR 07-01 Estimates/Quotes/Tenders
		PR 07-01 Grants
		PR 07-01 Payments
		PR 07-01 Reports
	PR 07-01 Correspondence (all)	PR 07-01 Consultation (internal and external)
		PR 07-01 Correspondence (General)
		PR 07-01 DBYD and service relocations
		PR 07-01 Design Notes/Calculations/Technical
		PR 07-01 DIER Approvals
		PR 07-01 Drawings/Sketches
		PR 07-01 Pre Construction Photos
		PR 07-01 Project Management documents
		PR 07-01 Survey/Investigations
	PR 07-01 Construction	PR 07-01 Construction Notes/Instructions/Certificates
		PR 07-01 Handover Report
		PR 07-01 Post Construction Photos
		Safety, Records and Audits

Appendix 2: Agency Example of Project Management File Structure

This file structure is for high level strategic project. Note in these examples, formal contract management is managed in a linked but separate structure and not within the project file itself.

File No:

Project Name:

Project Manager:

Project Sponsor:

AGREEMENTS

	Generic/recommended files	Specific/Alternate title (if required)
	Partnership Agreements	
	Supply Agreements	
	Negotiations	

CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT

	Generic/recommended files	Specific/Alternate title (if required)
	Community Consultation Strategy	
	Community Survey	
	Legal Advice	
	Media Liaison	

GOVERNANCE

	Generic/recommended files	Specific/Alternate title (if required)
	Project Control Group	
	Project Reference Group	
	Steering Committee	
	Technical Advisory Group	

GRANTS

	Generic/recommended files	Specific/Alternate title (if required)
	Grant Applications	
	Grant Funding Agreements	
	Grant Reporting	

PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

	Generic/recommended files	Specific/Alternate title (if required)
	Budget & Finance	
	Progress Reports	
	Project Plan	
	Project Strategy	
	Risk Management	

SUPPLIERS – Non Contractual

	Generic/recommended files	Specific/Alternate title (if required)
	Project Consultants	
	Estimates & Quotes	
	Suppliers (Equipment & Products)	

Appendix 3 Agency Example of Classification for Project Files

Function: Projects (L1)/Project Name or Number	Folder name (L3)	Intention
AGREEMENTS (L2)		
	Partnership Agreements	MOUs, Partnership Agreements etc, NB Excludes contracts managed via Contracts Index
	Supply Agreements	Supply agreements
	Negotiations	Stakeholder negotiations specific to project
CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT		
	Community Consultation Strategy	Formal strategy including administration of consultation exercises including copies of letters/notices, arrangements for notifying residents, social media etc
	Community Survey	Copies of surveys, distribution lists, results, final report, etc
	Legal Advice	Legal opinions, advice sought, etc
	Media Liaison	Media releases, articles, etc
GOVERNANCE		
	Project Control Group	Terms of reference, membership meetings, minutes, agendas, etc stored here
	Project Reference Group	Terms of reference, membership meetings, minutes, agendas, etc stored here
	Steering Committee	Terms of reference, membership meetings, minutes, agendas, etc stored here
	Technical Advisory Group	Terms of reference, membership meetings, minutes, agendas, etc stored here
GRANTS		
	Grant Applications	Research material, formal grant application documentation & supporting material including confirmation advice
	Grant Funding Agreements	Formal grant agreement, variations, extensions, progress payments, etc
	Grant Reporting	Acquittal reports, progress reports, etc.

PROJECT DOCUMENTATION		
	Budget & Finance	Budget, Budget forecast/revisions, grant audits, Cash flow, financing
	Progress Reports	Various progress reporting (Steering Committee, Working Group etc)
	Project Plan	Business Plan, formal project plan including scope, milestones, outcomes, deliverables, calendar/timelines, schedules and revisions
	Project Strategy	Business Case, Implementation Plan, Feasibility studies, Procurement Strategy, etc
	Risk Management	Risk Register, Risk Management Plan, Issues Register, etc.
SUPPLIERS (Non Contractual)		
	Project Consultants	Reference information specific to the Project that may be useful (not formal contracts)
	Suppliers (Equipment & Products)	Reference information specific to the project that may be useful (not formal contracts)