

Project Planning

Project planning is closely aligned with developing the project strategy¹. The differentiator is planning is focused on optimising the sequencing of the work as a precursor to scheduling, and is therefore, a key subset of developing the overall project strategy. At this stage in the project lifecycle, information is frequently limited therefore planning requires good knowledge of and experience in the work of the project.

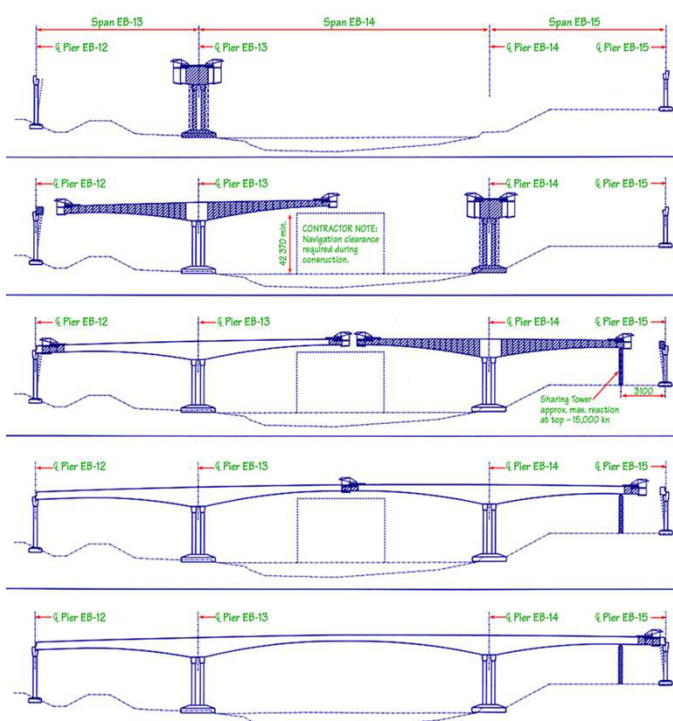
Planning should start early in the design phase, and involve all key stakeholders. The main benefits of planning are gained by engaging in the process – the process planning matters more than the plan; the planning process should be both participatory and evolutionary.

Since the future will always be uncertain, any plan should be viewed as a common starting point from which to adapt as the situation requires and not as a script which must be followed. The plan must be flexible and adaptable, allowing the opportunity to pursue a variety of options as the more detailed working schedule is developed².

Planning is the early process of determining how the work will be accomplished; it involves analysing alternatives and developing method statements.

Planning decisions will influence:

- The overall strategy of how the work is to be broken down for control
- How the control is to be managed (staff resources)
- Design, and sub-contract packages, including what methods are to be used for design, procurement and executing the work
- The interface between the various participants, their work methods and safety
- Costs and quality issues
- Time to complete and sequencing including the zones of operation and their interfaces.



Effective planning involves an appreciation of time horizons. We must project far enough into the future so that we can maintain the initiative and prepare adequately for upcoming project phases, but not so far into the future that plans will have little in common with actual developments. As the work front approaches and our ability to influence it grows, planning should have helped us develop an appreciation for the situation and get into a position to exploit it. In this respect, project planning directly integrates with risk management, with a particular focus on opportunity. The objective of maximizing the efficiency of the project strategy with respect to cost and time has to be balanced against the risks associated with new methods of working and the overall quality of the finished deliverables.

¹ See **Project Strategy**: https://www.mosaicprojects.com.au/WhitePapers/WP1038_Strategy.pdf

² As Dwight D. Eisenhower famously said '**planning is everything, the plan is nothing**'.

Project planning should be completed before any attempt a developing the project schedule starts! A key output from planning is an overall method statement describing how the work of the project will be accomplished and managed. This method statement will be expanded into more detail as the overall project planning and scheduling progresses. The table below outlines the key elements of each process:

Planning	Scheduling
Deals with <i>why</i> (project objectives), <i>what</i> (scope of work or basis of design), <i>how</i> (project execution strategy & plan) and <i>who</i> (project organisation structure & contracting strategy).	Deals with <i>when</i> .
Provides the basis for time and resource estimation.	Is a reflection of the plan.
Involves the setting of goals and objectives.	Involves the mechanics of converting the plan into a time table.
Defines the activities to accomplish goals and objectives.	Involves the timing of activities with estimation of durations and relationships.
Defines what resources are needed to undertake activities.	Involves allocation of resources to activities.
Involves review of safety, constructability, maintainability and operability of the plant.	Involves undertaking of Critical Path Method (CPM) & resources analyses including determining the critical path and producing resource histograms.
Deals with the development of progress measurement system.	Deals with implementation and operation of progress measurement system.

For more on project planning and scheduling see:
https://www.mosaicprojects.com.au/PDF-Gen/Good_Scheduling_Practice.pdf

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