Portfolio and Programme Management: Prioritisation, Alignment and Delivery

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Technical depth: Practitioner · **Practical mode:** Case study

Introduction

Organisations rarely fail for lack of projects; they fail because they run too many, of the wrong kind, without the programme structures that turn them into strategic outcomes. Portfolios grow by accumulation rather than selection, and programmes are treated as large projects, so interdependencies, capacity limits and benefits fall through the gaps. This Core Concept course equips managers to select and balance portfolios and to direct programmes using recognised international standards and methods. Participants apply each method to case material from several sectors and leave with a Portfolio and Programme Direction Pack for an initiative set in their own organisation.

Course Objectives

- Distinguish portfolio, programme and project responsibilities and structure a change portfolio against strategic objectives
- Prioritise and balance a portfolio using weighted scoring, capacity constraints and risk-return analysis
- Define a programme through its vision, blueprint, tranches and outcome map using PRINCE2 Programme Management MSP and the PMI Standard for Program Management
- Manage programme interdependencies, stakeholders, resources and risk across component projects
- Direct portfolio and programme governance, including reviews, rebalancing and stop decisions
- Produce a Portfolio and Programme Direction Pack ready for executive review

Target Audience

- Portfolio managers responsible for selecting and balancing investments in change
- Programme managers directing groups of related projects towards shared outcomes
- Senior responsible owners and business change managers accountable for programme results
- PMO and portfolio office managers supporting prioritisation and portfolio reporting
- Strategy and planning managers translating organisational objectives into initiatives
- Senior project managers preparing to lead programmes

Course Outline

Day 1: Portfolio and Programme Foundations

- Project, Programme and Portfolio Distinctions in ISO 21500
- Strategy-to-Portfolio Alignment Using Objective Cascades and Strategy Maps
- Portfolio Inventory and Categorisation: Run, Grow and Transform
- Programme Types: Vision-Led, Emergent and Compliance Programmes
- Current-State Portfolio Health Check Using Delivery and Spend Data

Day 2: Portfolio and Programme Standards

- ISO 21504 Portfolio Management Guidance
- PRINCE2 Portfolio Management MoP Definition and Delivery Cycles
- ISO 21503 Programme Management Guidance
- PRINCE2 Programme Management MSP Principles, Themes and Processes
- PMI Standard for Program Management Performance Domains

Day 3: Portfolio Selection and Programme Definition

- Weighted Scoring Model and Pairwise Comparison for Project Prioritisation
- Portfolio Balancing with Risk-Return Bubble Charts
- Resource Capacity Constraints and Portfolio Scenario Planning
- Programme Vision Statement, Blueprint and Outcome Map
- Tranche Planning and the Programme Roadmap

Day 4: Interdependencies, Risk and Portfolio Control

- Programme Interdependency Mapping with a Dependency Structure Matrix
- Programme Stakeholder Engagement Using the Salience Model
- Aggregated Portfolio Risk Profile Aligned to ISO 31000
- Portfolio Rebalancing and Stop-Continue Decision Criteria
- ISO 21505 Governance Roles: Portfolio Board and Programme Board

Day 5: Case Work and the Portfolio and Programme Direction Pack

- Infrastructure Investment Portfolio Case Study: Prioritising Under a Budget Cut
- Digital Transformation Programme Case Study: Recovering Tranche Two
- Portfolio Prioritisation Model Build for an Own Initiative Set
- Portfolio and Programme Direction Pack Drafting
- Peer Portfolio Board Review Session

Skills You Will Gain

- Strategic Portfolio Alignment
- Investment Prioritisation
- Portfolio Balancing
- Programme Blueprint Design
- Tranche Planning
- Interdependency Management
- Programme Governance

Why Attend This Course

- Return to work with a Portfolio and Programme Direction Pack for your own initiatives, already reviewed by a peer portfolio board
- Argue for stopping or deferring low-value work using evidence executives accept
- Lead a programme as a set of outcomes rather than as a very large project
- Compare portfolio and programme practice with managers from other sectors and countries

Conclusion

Strategy is delivered through the portfolio an organisation chooses and the programmes that turn it into outcomes. This course moves from the distinctions between projects, programmes and portfolios, through the principal international standards and methods, to prioritisation, programme definition, interdependencies and rebalancing decisions. The final day turns that material into a Portfolio and Programme Direction Pack that participants take back to their executives, giving them a structured and defensible approach to deciding what to deliver and how to deliver it.