

Scope based model for project planning¹

We define the Project Plan as the document which presents, in a complete and organized manner, the whole conception of the project (the scope), the action plan and the resources for monitoring and evaluating the project. The Project Plan is the basic reference for the implementation of the project. In this section we outline a planning model based on the scope of the Project.

Our model is built on three basic components: The *Scope*, the *Action Plan* and the *Monitoring and Evaluation Plan*. In this model, the scope is taken as reference for the development of the Action Plan and the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. Therefore, this model is named *Scope based model for project planning* and will be referenced by the term "SKOPOS" (Greek origin of the word "scope").

SKOPOS MODEL

PROJECT PLAN = SCOPE + ACTION PLAN + MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

Next, we describe the three basic components of the SKOPOS model for project planning

THE SCOPE

We choose the word "scope" to express all the accomplishment that are expected to be arranged in the form of a project.

In this context, the "scope" expresses the "extension" or "amplitude" of the project, in terms of what we expect to accomplish or comprise. The scope establishes the "radius of action" or "coverage", defining, therefore, the "boundaries" of the project. The "scope" is, in synthesis, the soul of the project, because it expresses its *essence* and *identity*, defining *what the project intends to accomplish*, for *what reasons* and in *what context*.

In this model, the complete definition of the scope and its components becomes a key point to develop properly the other two parts of the Project Plan - the *Action Plan* and the *Monitoring and Evaluation Plan*. The practice on planning and executing projects has put in evidence the importance of clearly defining a *generating situation* (or *problem definition*); a well-founded *justification* for the project; a well-designed *objectives*; a clear definition for the *expected outcomes* (or *results*); and the *coverage* of the project. The elements that define the scope are shown in next page.

¹ Moura, D. G., Barbosa, E. F. *Trabalhando com Projetos – Planejamento e gestão de projetos educacionais*, Editora Vozes, 6ª. Ed., Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro, 2011 (Pages 45 to 52)

<p style="text-align: center;">SCOPE ELEMENTS</p> <p><i>(Detailed in Chapter 3)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Problem definition or generating situation of the project (problems, needs, challenges, opportunities); ❑ Justification (the <i>why</i>) of the Project (may include an initial situational diagnosis, known as <i>project baseline</i>); ❑ General and specific objectives for the project (the <i>why</i> and the <i>what for</i> of the project); ❑ Expected outcomes or results of the project (which are directly related to the specific objectives); ❑ Target audience of the project (people which should be affected by the Project and other data that define the area of influence of the project);
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The scope is a component of the Project Plan which should answer questions such as:

- What is this project all about? What is the situation, problem or need that originated the project?
- Why is it worth investing resources in developing this project?
- For what purposes will the project be guided? What outcomes may we expect from this project? What do we intend to accomplish by implementing the project?
- What benefits are expected? Who will be the beneficiaries of the project?
- What is the area of activity covered by the project? What is the size of the target audience? What volume of resources should be invested?

In the scope based model for project planning - SKOPOS, the Action Plan and the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan should only be developed after having a complete definition of the project scope. This aspect is discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 (Action Plan) and 5 (Monitoring and Evaluation Plan).

The Action Plan

This component of the Project Plan is a document that presents in a structured format, all the procedures and resources to be mobilized for the implementation of what was expressed in the project scope. The Action Plan specifies the project actions, activities, tasks and resources, linked in time and space in order to maximize efficiency in achieving the project objectives. In our model, the Action Plan contains the following structure:

<p style="text-align: center;">ACTION PLAN ELEMENTS</p> <p><i>(Detailed in Chapter 4)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Breakdown of actions, activities and tasks (transform major actions in small work packages); ❑ Time estimation (estimate of time needed by actions, activities and tasks); ❑ Costs and resources estimation (estimate of physical and human resources required to implement the various tasks); ❑ Network Diagram (or "project map" – containing the sequence and interdependence of all tasks, identifying the critical tasks); ❑ Gantt Chart (or chronogram, shows the project timeline with details of start and end of activities and tasks, assigning responsibility, etc.)
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The Action Plan is a structured document that should answer questions such as:

- How will this project be carried out?
- What actions, activities and tasks will be performed?
- What resources will be employed?
- How much time is required for each action, activity and task?
- Who will be responsible for its execution? (In a global and specific context)
- How much will the project cost?
- What/who are the resources providers?

The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

This component of the Project Plan is a document that presents all necessary procedures for systematic monitoring and evaluation of the project implementation and its outcomes. The term "control" is associated with "monitoring", that is, the systematic and detailed monitoring of processes and the corresponding products and services.

This plan establishes procedures to conduct observations and inspections of the conditions and the "status" in which the project currently presents at strategic points along its execution. It also allows to assess in what extent the expected outcomes (or results) are being achieved. In the Skopos model, the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan contains the following structural elements:

<p>MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN ELEMENTS</p> <p><i>(Detailed in Chapter 5)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Expected outcomes and products spreadsheet (spreadsheet with a summary of outcomes and products expected during the project execution) ❑ Monitoring procedures spreadsheet (spreadsheet with performance indicators and data collection instruments related to monitoring actions) ❑ Evaluation procedure spreadsheet (spreadsheet with performance indicators and data collection instruments related to evaluation actions) ❑ Risk analysis (risk identification, risk quantification and risk response)
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The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan is a document that should answer questions such as:

- How will be verified if the project is being executed as planned?
- What observations and measurements must be obtained to evaluate the project outcomes?
- How will be obtained the data on the progress and outcomes of the project? What performance indicators will be used?
- What are the possible risk factors for the project and how to get around them?

Note that there is a direct relationship between the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (MEP) and the scope of the project. The scope defines the objectives and expected outcomes for the project, which is the basis for defining performance indicators, data collection instruments and other assessment procedures. In addition, the MEP is also directly related to the Action

Plan, from which we can obtain most of the monitoring indicators. Figure 2.7 illustrates the structure of the SKOPOS model for project planning with its components, as we have just described.

The model we present aims to address the reality and context of projects in the educational and social areas, for both small and large size projects. However, we emphasize that this model can also be applied to planning projects in several other areas, since it is coherently supported by concepts and methods related to general project management principles.

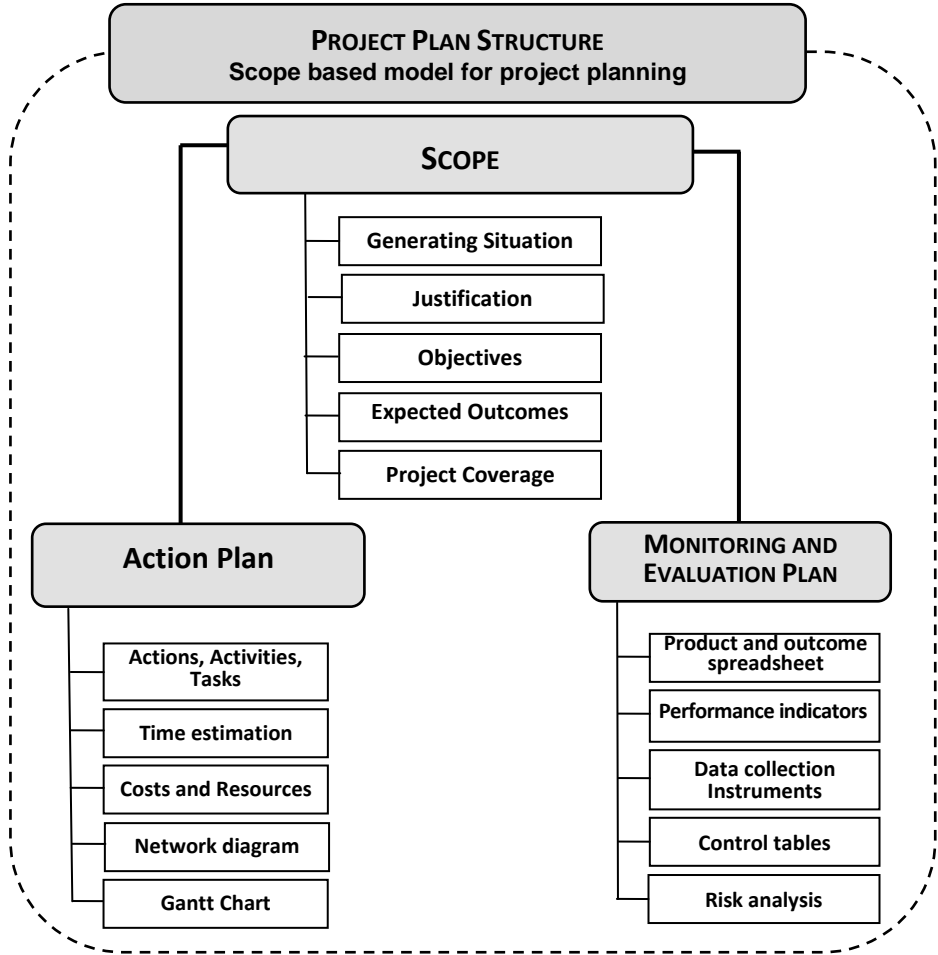


Figure 2.7 Components of the Scope based model for project planning

The application of this model is very flexible, since it contemplates the peculiarities of each type of project, its characteristics of size, complexity, context, resources, objectives, etc. In practice, some elements of the overall structure can be emphasized or minimized, depending on particular situations, adapting them according to specific needs, at the discretion of teams and institutions that develop projects. For example, the Figure 2.8 shows the different emphases that can be assigned to structural elements of the Project Plan, according to the types of projects focused. (See also the “Project Typology” - Chapter 1)

The scores shown in Figure 2.8 is an exercise to illustrate the fact that each project has a special feature. This score should be pointed out by the project team according to each situation and may vary depending on the context. In the *Development* type project, (or *Product* type project), because we know the description for the expected results (something that should be produced by the project), the project objectives are replaced by the product

specification. This explains why the item “Objective” was given a low score of importance in this type of project. In *Research* type projects, the score shown must consider the nature and dimensions of the research².

STRUCTURE OF THE PROJECT PLAN RELATED TO PROJECT TYPES						
STRUCTURE COMPONENT	STRUCTURE ELEMENTS	PROJECT TYPE (See Chapter 1)				
		RESEARCH	INTERVENTIION	DEVELOPMENT	TEACHING	LEARNING
1 SCOPE	Generating Situation	••••	••••	••••	••••	••••
	Justification	••••	••••	•••	••••	••
	General Objective	••••	••••	•	••••	•
	Specific Objective	••••	••••	••	••••	•••
	Expected Outcomes	••	••••	•••	•••	••
	Project Coverage	•	••••	•••	•••	•
2 ACTION PLAN	Actions, Activities, Tasks	••••	••••	••••	••••	••••
	Cost estimation	•••	••••	••••	••	••
	Time estimation	•••	••••	••••	••	••
	Resources	•••	••••	••••	•••	•••
	Gantt Chart (Chronogram)	•••	••••	••••	•••	••••
3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN	Products/Outcomes	•	••••	••	••	•
	Performance Indicators	•	••••	•••	••	•
	Data collect Instruments	••••	••••	••	••	•
	Risk analysis	•	••••	••••	•	•

••••Very importante (essential) •••Important ••Desirable (but not essential) •Dispensable (optional)

Figure 2.8 Example of different emphases on items in the Project Plan

Figure 2.9 shows the relationships between the Project Plan and the phases of the life cycle. It is important to emphasize that the Project Plan is the main instrument for managerial action during project implementation (execution, control and closing phase). Even a good management can not compensate for the deficiencies or weakness of a Project Plan which is incomplete, poorly designed, inconsistent or unclear.

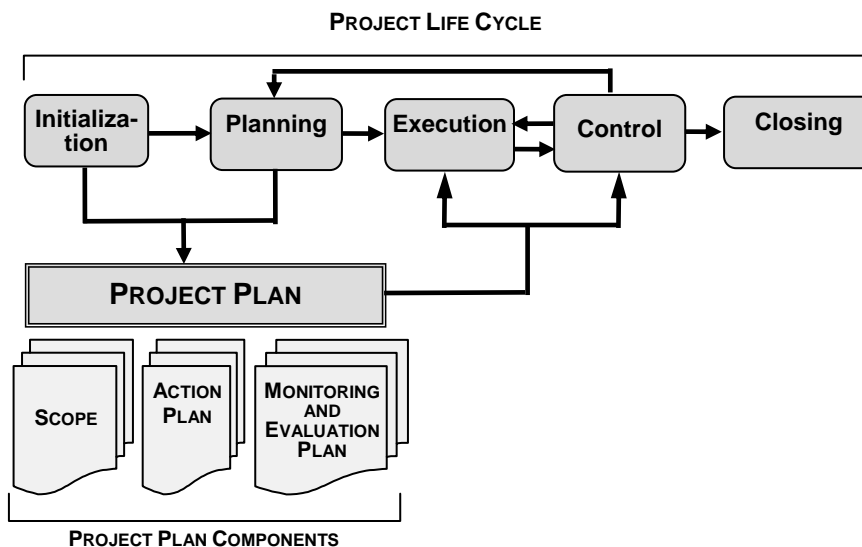


Figure 2.9 Relationship between the Project Plan and the project life cycle

² In Appendix A (Op.Cit.1) we present a model for Research Project Plan, more suitable for projects in the academic area