

# PROJECT GOVERNANCE

## Initiation



### Project governance

Project governance is the decision making structure for the project, and may differ from usual reporting lines if a number of services are involved.

### Initiation

The purpose of this phase is to develop a clear understanding of what your project is, what you want to achieve and how you plan to get there.

## Key points

### 1. Identify and document

Project governance should be documented in the project plan, including the names and roles of the sponsor/s, steering committee, clinical champion/s, advisory group (if needed) and the project team. The roles and responsibilities of committees and key individuals are listed and agreed. It also includes the schedule of meetings. The documentation and management of risks and issues is also part of project governance.

### 2. Involve sponsors and steering committees

Sponsors and steering committees are the usual decision makers in a project. Large projects involving many stakeholders require steering committees with senior representation. The executive sponsor of the project will chair this committee and drive decision making to keep the project moving in the right direction. If a new steering committee is developed, it will need new agreed terms of reference as part of governance.

### 3. Engage clinical and consumer leads

The clinical lead is usually a senior medical practitioner who has knowledge, credibility and influence in the area of your project focus. Medical leads are key to engaging medical staff and bring an important perspective to the steering committee. Consumer leads may be invited to participate as steering committee members. It is important that everyone have the requisite skills and have been briefed so they are able to fully participate.

### 4. Be alert to warning signs

Watch for signs that the project governance is not working. Are decisions not being made or severely delayed? Are agreed resources unavailable? Are meetings cancelled or poorly attended? Is the schedule slipping? If the warning signs are ignored, the project is at risk of failing. Good documentation will make it easier to raise concerns promptly with the sponsor or steering committee, set actions to resolve it and monitor it closely.

## Considerations and tips

Effective governance is the key to achieving project success.

### Governance model

It is important to select the correct governance model for your project. The model should align to the size, budget and importance of the organisation. An overcomplicated or top-heavy model for a small project will likely lead to slow progress and low stakeholder engagement.

### Who is accountable?

The composition of the governance team depends on the project size, complexity and cost; where in the organisation the change is occurring; and what the change will entail. Ensuring the terms of reference align to the members is an excellent way to start.

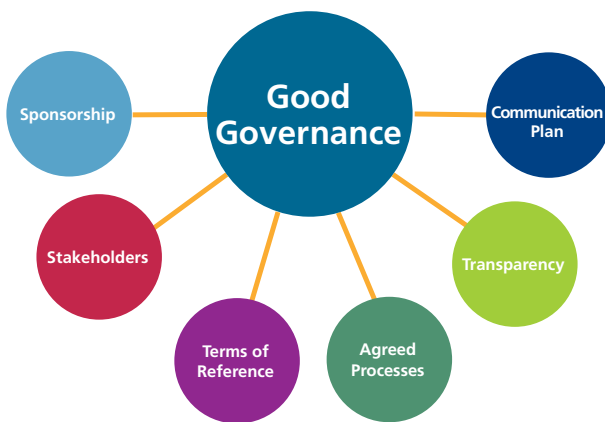
### Information to govern

The ability of sponsors and steering committees to make good decisions is dependent on having credible information and data to base them on. Always ensure information is reliable, valid, and factual (not subjective). Be honest if there is unknown information or potential errors in the data.

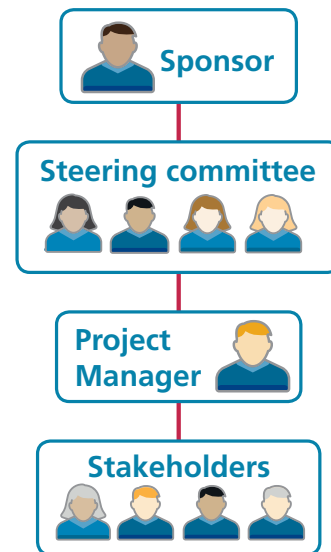
### Keep the project in check

In theory, keeping track of the project should be relatively straightforward, but often this is the most challenging part. Engaged and functional project governance is non negotiable – it provides appropriate decision making to support successful management of timelines and resources.

## Good governance



## Governance structure



## Further information

[My Health Learning Log in Form](#) – Redesign Initiation (202464923): Introduction to Project Initiation

## Next Steps

If the project governance is not working after several attempts to bring it on track, senior organisational leaders need to decide whether to delay, re-scope or suspend the project to avoid failure.