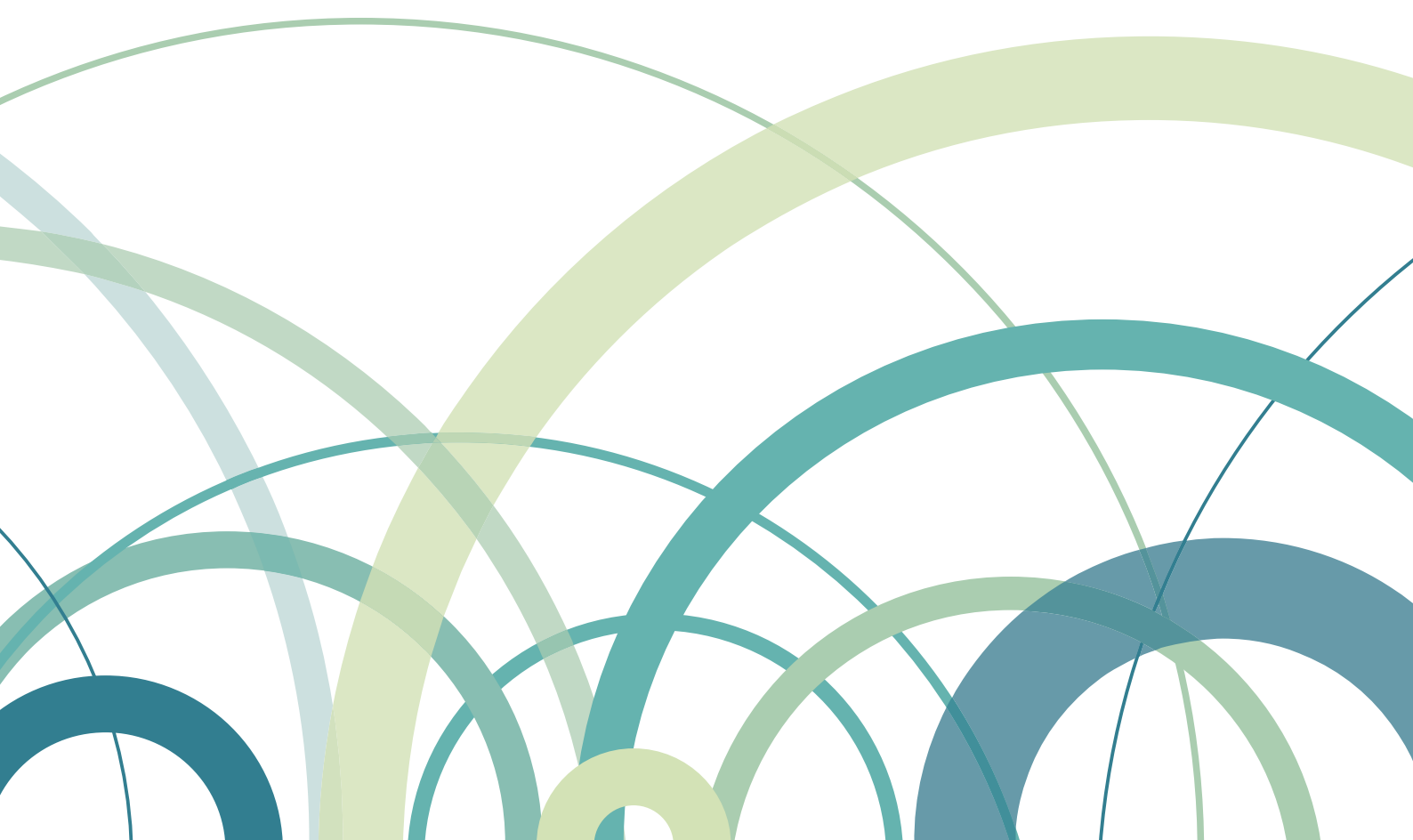


Building capability through maturity assessments

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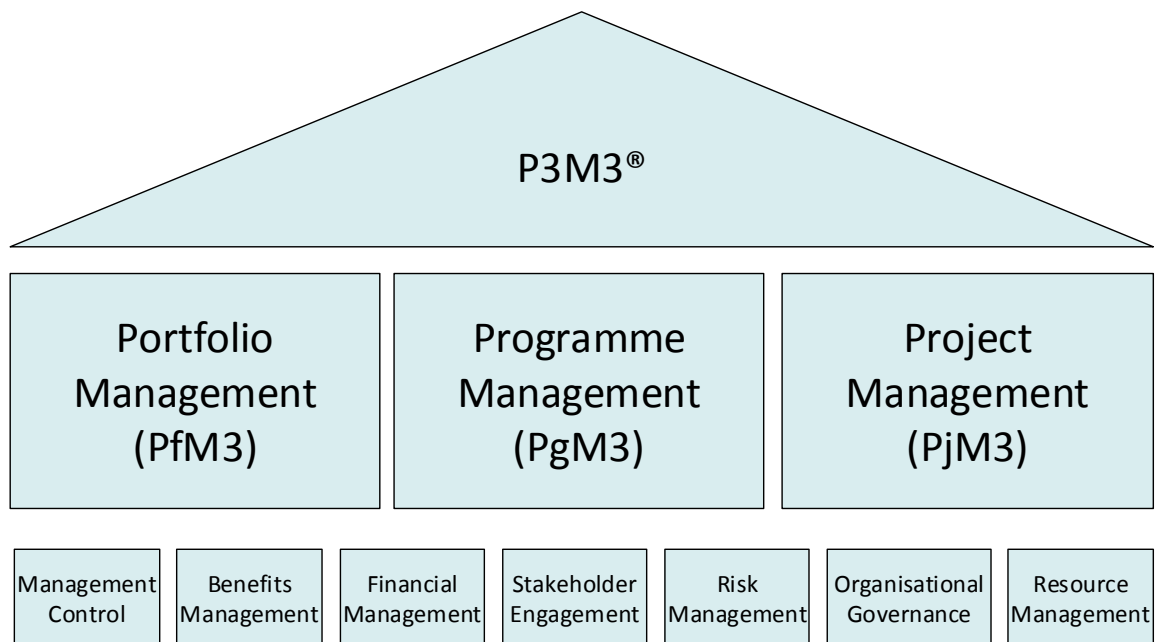
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Organisations must continually adapt to meet the challenges of changing economic conditions and deliver their strategic objectives. A maturity assessment is a technique for identifying the current capability and consistency of organisational behaviour.

The results of the assessment will provide a roadmap for ongoing improvement and progression towards realistic and achievable goals that meet the strategic goals of the organisation. The results contribute to a virtuous circle of learning and improvement as the assessment identifies strengths that can be exploited as well as weaknesses that must be addressed.

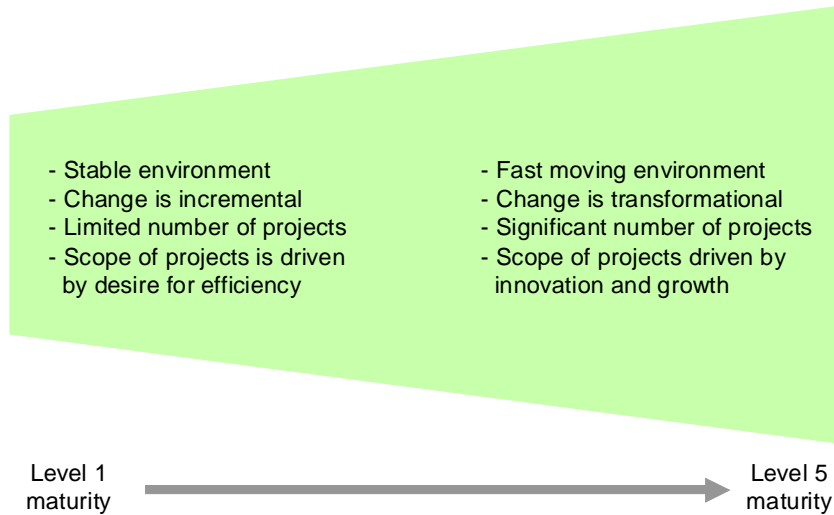
To support the development of organisational capability, assessments completed by Maven use the P3M3[®] from the U.K. Office of Government Commerce. This has been specifically created to examine the processes, resources and controls required to deliver strategic change via project, programme or portfolio management. Strategic change can be delivered via individual projects, programmes of inter-related projects or through a mixture of projects, programmes and business initiatives grouped as a portfolio of work. The model examines seven areas, shown at the foot of the diagram.



These seven areas are examined against five possible levels of maturity:

- Level 1: Awareness of process
 - There is individual rather than organisational capability
- Level 2: Repeatable process
 - Processes exist but they are inconsistent
- Level 3: Defined process
 - Processes exist and are centrally defined and managed
- Level 4: Managed process
 - Processes are aligned with broader organisational governance structures
- Level 5: Optimized process
 - There is evidence of continual improvement

The ideal level of maturity for an organisation will depend on its strategic objectives, including expected level of growth and change.



Most organisations operate at level one or two of maturity and a reasonable goal would be to achieve level three to four over a period of two to five years. An organisation that has high levels of maturity has a defined set of processes for undertaking all project related initiatives which are understood by all those involved in the management and authorisation of these initiatives. The management team demonstrate commitment to these processes by ensuring that they are universally applied and that they are not ignored when under pressure to deliver to set timescales.

A mature organisation takes a proactive stance in evaluating the potential contribution and the continued need for projects and programmes prior to their initial authorisation and throughout their lifecycle. This evaluation considers the anticipated contribution to strategic objectives, the value of the business case against other competing initiatives and the ability to deliver products and services that remain fit for purpose against a background of ever changing customer needs.

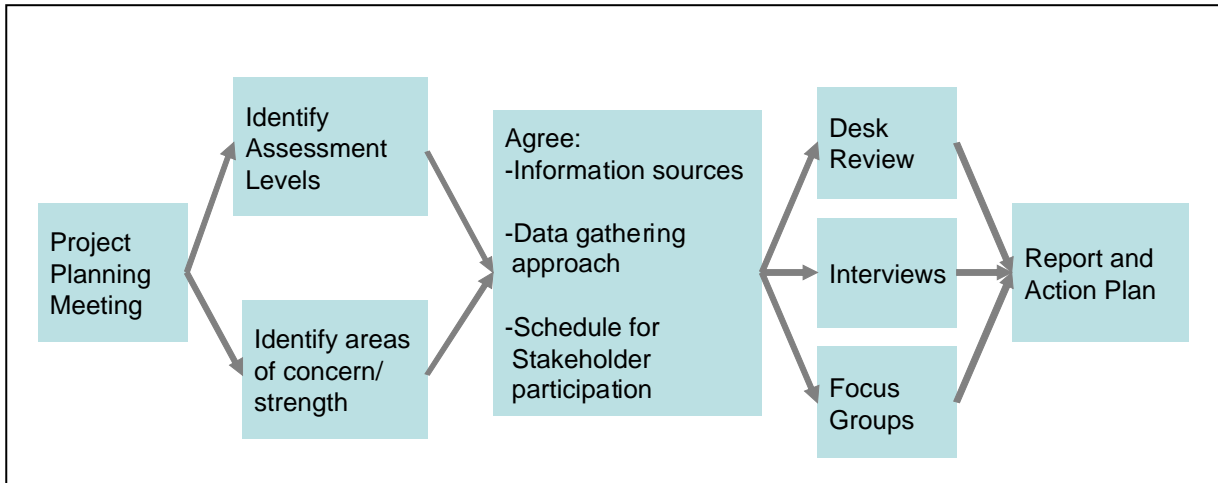
The processes are flexibly applied depending on the size and complexity of the initiative and are continually reviewed and amended to reflect lessons learned and changes in organisational structure. The roles performed by all those involved in project and programme management are clearly defined and understood, and sufficient time is allocated to enable staff to perform these roles.

Understanding the current maturity of an organisation:

- Provides a baseline against which all improvements can be measured
- Enables focussed and targeted structural improvements to the organisation
- Clarifies what is required across the whole organisation

Thereby enabling:

- A higher rate of return on investment
- Greater production efficiency
- Lower production costs
- Better quality outcomes
- Improved customer satisfaction
- Enhanced employee morale



Project planning meeting

A maturity assessment is run as a project, using the processes set out in the PRINCE2® project management methodology. The purpose of the planning meeting is to accelerate the creation of the project management documentation for the Maturity Assessment project.

The meeting will reconfirm the scope and objectives of the project which are likely to have been stated during the procurement process. The sponsor of the Maturity Assessment will probably have strategic and operational reasons for undertaking the assessment and these reasons will be captured as part of this objective exercise.

The acceptance criteria for the project will be identified and the project and communications plans defined. This meeting will seek to clarify the project responsibilities between the client and Maven and the impact of these agreed responsibilities on the resourcing for the plans.

Identify assessment levels

Examining each aspect of organisational maturity against all five levels of the maturity model is repetitive, time consuming and unnecessary. The sponsor of the Maturity Assessment will already have a clear idea of the two levels between which their organisation is currently operating. This will be based on a number of factors including past experience, assumptions about the ability of individuals or the accuracy and ease of use of processes. These factors will be recorded to explain the selection of the two levels of maturity that are to be assessed. Questions relevant to these two levels will form the basis of all interviews and focus groups, which gives a targeted approach to the investigation.

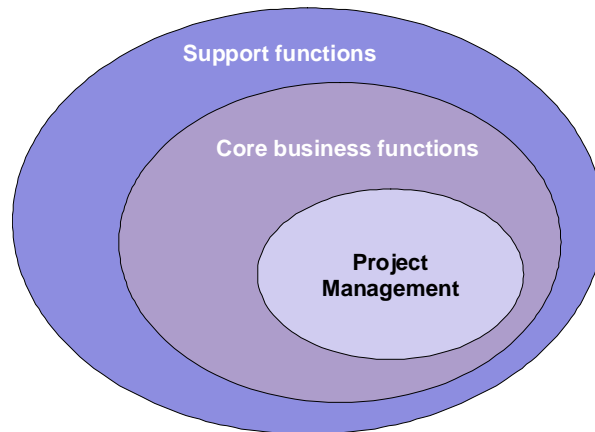
Identify areas of concern/strength

As part of identifying the baseline maturity, the sponsor and other key stakeholders may identify areas of concern that they feel must be reviewed as part of the maturity assessment.

Supplementary questions and additions to the list of those to be interviewed can be added at this point to take account of these issues.

Agree information sources

Stakeholder analysis will be used to identify an appropriate group of interviewees. Stakeholders are usually drawn from those directly involved in providing project management services, core business functions that utilise what the projects deliver and other functions that provide support across the organisation.



A suggested interview group will include representatives from:

- Project sponsors
- Project managers
- Project team members
- Operational managers who are sponsoring the changes and are responsible for their use after project implementation
- Staff working for these operational managers
- Other functional managers participating in project management processes

The number of interviews will be dependent upon the scale of the project activity of the organisation being reviewed. A minimum of two interviewees will be required from each of the roles listed above, split between those who have had a positive experience of project management (involved with a project which delivered or was perceived as delivering successfully) and a project that was commonly regarded as having failed to deliver within agreed timescale, budget or to required quality standards. Ideally three to four interviewees are made available for each role, making a core group of eighteen to twenty four interviewees.

Additional resources can be brought in during the focus group phase and further views can be sought if health checks of specific projects are included in the project.

Agree data gathering approach

Gathering and collating the data is the most time consuming aspect of the maturity assessment so the aim of this step is to ensure that the process reflects the need of those assessing the maturity and the operational needs of those in the business. If there are issues with releasing staff for interviews or difficulties in arranging access to specific project or operational locations they can be identified and mitigating actions agreed.

A common scenario is to use one to one interviews of between 30 and 60 minutes per participant, with 30 minute breaks per session for updating and reviewing of notes. Key themes that arise out of the interviews are pursued in carefully structured focus groups where more probing questions can be asked about the origins of the issues, the impact that they have on the business and suggestions

for how they can be overcome. Whilst Maturity Assessments themselves are to ascertain the 'state of play' it is important that participants have an opportunity to suggest improvements and that these are captured. An ability to participate in growing the maturity of the organisation is the motivation for many in taking part and is a critical factor in their judgement of whether the assessment was a successful project.

Agree schedule for stakeholder participation

Whilst the high level timelines will have already been agreed in the project plan, this schedule specifies the involvement of each stakeholder/interviewee and can be made available to all participants as part of the project communication plan.

Gather evidence: desk review

Prior to interviews, the consultants will review key project documentation. The factors that they will be examining include but are not limited to:

- Use of project management methods/best practice
- Participation of operational staff in critical aspects of the project: requirements gathering; testing; progress reviews; transition planning; decision making
- Level of effectiveness of the project boards, including clear documentation of decisions; appropriate level of scrutiny of documentation/information; time required to prepare for project board reviews by project managers and project team members
- Application of risk analysis, stakeholder analysis and change control procedures
- Identification and application of lessons learned throughout the project lifecycle

Gather evidence: conduct interviews

These will be in accordance with the plans set out above. It is good practice to informally review the contents of interviews with the project sponsor during the schedule, as amendments/additions can be made to the list of interviewees depending on the feedback.

The interviews will examine seven factors¹ of organisational development that taken together deliver effective project management:

- Management Control - There is a centrally defined and documented approach to a project management life cycle and controls and it is applied in all projects by capable staff who support project teams
- Benefits Management - There is a centrally managed and consistent framework for defining and tracking the realization of benefits from project outputs
- Financial Management - There are centrally established standards for the preparation of business cases and processes for their management throughout the project life cycle. Project managers monitor costs and expenditure in accordance with organisational guidelines and procedures, with defined interfaces with other financial functions within the organisation
- Stakeholder Engagement - There is a centrally managed and consistent approach to stakeholder engagement and communications used by all projects
- Risk Management - Project risk management is based on a centrally defined process that is cognizant of the organisation's policy for the management of risks and is used consistently

¹ For ease of use, these definitions are from level three of the maturity model, representing a 'mid point' of capability.

- Organisational Governance - Centrally defined organisational controls are applied consistently to all projects, with decision making structures in place and linked to organisational governance.
- Resource Management - The organisation has a centrally defined and adopted set of procedures and management processes for acquiring, planning and managing project resources.

Gather evidence: conduct focus groups

These focus groups will be presented with anonymised information from the interviews and asked to scale the impact of the issues, asked to identify causes and to take part in problem solving activities to generate innovative thinking on the best way to proceed. Information from these focus groups will be presented as part of the action plan.

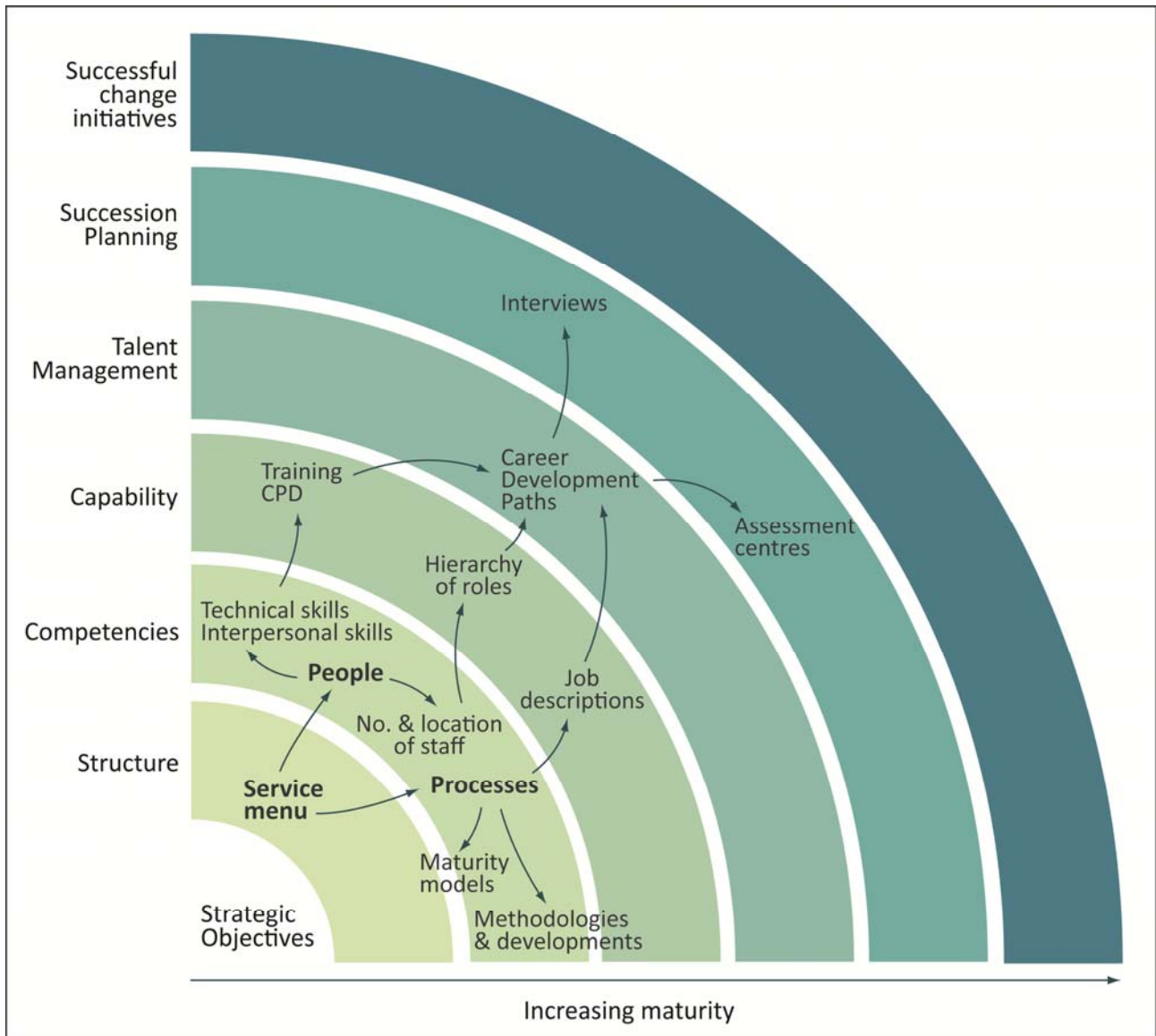
Produce draft baseline report

The report will summarise the results of the interviews and highlight action points that will require agreement prior to implementation. The report will document the participants, the questions asked, a summary of the feedback from the interviews and an assessment of the maturity of the organisation as it stands today. The report will then outline a range of possible actions to be taken to improve the maturity to the level defined by the project sponsor as acceptable. A recommendation of the critical actions and the resources required for their implementation will also be included.

Produce draft action plan

The action plan will identify all the initiatives required to 'transform' the organisation from its assessed maturity level to its desired maturity level. In reality the results of the assessment will identify areas where the organisation has already reached or exceeded its desired maturity level, as well as areas for development. The plan will therefore include activities to maintain, enhance or disseminate mature processes, and corrective actions.

The action plan will identify 'work packages' that can be assigned to individual resources and/or specific teams. Whilst the assessment examined project management maturity, actions will involve a wide range of internal resources to address all seven areas of the maturity assessment. These internal resources will be drawn from a wide range of business functions as the improvement actions address specific project management processes and human resource issues. An example resource plan is provided in the appendix 1.



Structure:

These activities provide the foundation for project management and are enablers to the identification of required skills and skill levels and learning and development activities:

- Definition of the portfolio and its alignment to the strategic objectives of the organisation
- Entry criteria for the portfolio (business justification/project viability)
- Establishment of a support structure (P3O®)
- Clarity of service menu for programme, project, and change management
- Agreement on methodology for programme, project and change management
- Development of tailored documentation to meet needs/culture/terminology of business

Competencies:

'Competencies' are the behaviours that employees must have, or must acquire, to input into a situation in order to achieve high levels of performance. They are best expressed in the context of the role that an individual is expected to fulfill:

- Define job roles
- Identify hierarchy of responsibilities
- Develop career paths

- Assess individual competencies
- Assign individuals to relevant job roles/career paths

Capability building:

Training – this can include formal qualifications based training or tailored events specific to the context of the projects that the group are responsible for.

Training – people skills:

- Leadership
- Team management
- Communication skills
- Negotiation and conflict resolution

Training – technical skills

- Commercial understanding
- Planning
- Risk management
- Change control

Workshops - these events enable teams to develop solutions and approaches to project-specific issues including:

- Project definition and PID creation
- Transition planning
- Benefits management
- Stakeholder engagement
- Lessons learned

Continual professional development - individuals can increase their effectiveness through the additional support offered by:

- Membership of professional bodies
- Subscriptions to professional journals
- Joining communities of practice
- Contributing their experiences to action learning sets
- Mentoring or coaching their colleagues

Produced final report and action plan

The results of maturity assessments are most useful when set against the strategic context of the organisation. When producing the final copy of the report and action plan, a degree of discussion and interpretation is necessary and this will involve the sponsor of the assessment and any key stakeholders nominated by them.

Implement action plan

Successful implementation requires that those who have been assessed buy into the results of the assessment and are motivated to make the changes that will increase maturity. At this point no external resource can take the actions as this would be imposing a structure rather than enabling those involved to 'own it' for themselves. The changes will involve amendments to existing processes and training and development activities to increase individual capability.

Review progress to date

Throughout the implementation, regular reviews can be scheduled to check progress against the plan and provide advice and guidance on handling resistance to change and increasing staff involvement in the maturity building activities.

Summarise results of action plan

This summary will refer back to the original assessment and how successful implementation of the action plan has enabled the organisation to move towards its required maturity level.



The objective of a health check is to gain an objective assessment of how well a project or programme is performing relative to its objectives and any relevant organisational processes or standards. The information gained via a health check can be a useful input to a maturity assessment in identifying specific areas of concern in project processes and approach. The health check can also provide examples of where a lack of organisational maturity is impacting the effectiveness of the project management approach.

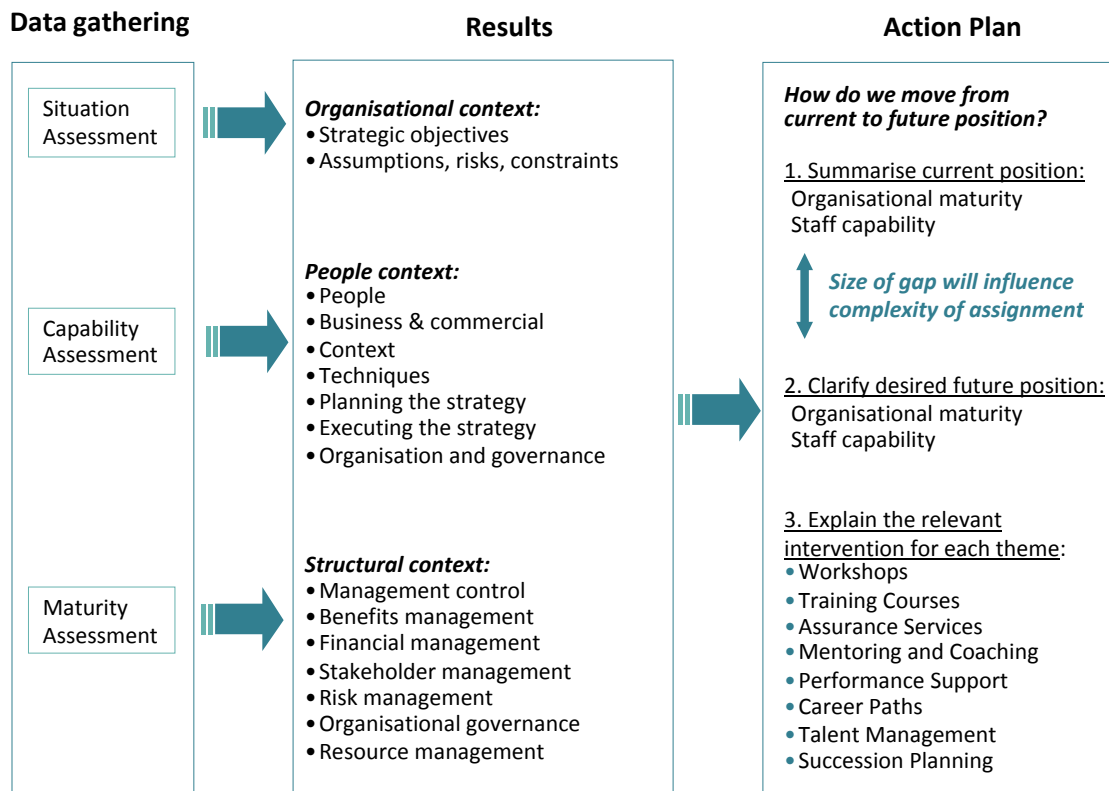
If health checks are to be carried out they will be completed prior to the maturity assessment. The results of the health checks will be reviewed with the relevant project teams, including the project sponsor. In addition the findings will be reviewed with the sponsor of the maturity assessment, as input to deciding on initial assessment levels and areas of concern/strength.

Maven can assist you to address project management in the wider context of organisational development. We cannot fix all of your problems – we are not, and do not claim to be, a management consultancy. We are however experts in capability building and can work with you to align programme, project, risk and change management with the organisation you wish to become. We have the expertise and experience to do the alignment for you but it is our ethos to transfer the skills into our clients so they become self-sufficient going forward. Our services are designed to tap into initiatives designated as ‘transformational change’ programmes, talent management strategies etc, in other words, to take our services outside of the narrower definitions of project management and of training.

We apply a staged, structured approach to capability building by addressing:

- **The situation:** we gather information on the objectives of the organisation and the goals and key performance indicators that need to be met
- **The people:** we use a best practice competence frameworks to assess current capability
- **The structure:** we conduct a maturity assessment to demonstrate where the organisation is currently in relation to running its projects and, equally importantly, how it can progress to the next level of maturity

The diagram below illustrates the approach in more detail:



This approach has been successfully applied with our clients and Maven will be pleased to discuss its applicability to your organisation in more detail.

Appendix 1

| Resource | Reason for involvement |
|---|--|
| Experienced project managers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in selecting/designing relevant methodologies • Incorporating project, change and programme management techniques into structure, documentation and governance structures • Specification of required competency levels aligned to complexity of projects • Participation in the provision of assurance services and project health checks • Information sharing with colleagues, suppliers and customers on how project management is conducted and the benefits it can offer |
| HR – Learning and Development specialist | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structuring of training pathways to support capability development. • Ensuring that training supports wider strategic objectives and that selection of qualifications-based training aligns with methodologies and governance structures across the organisation |
| HR – Organisational development specialist | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of career paths, job roles and required competencies • Collation of competency data and use of this data in development of career paths, talent management and succession planning |
| Audit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of interdependencies between project management and strategic objectives • Participation in the provision of assurance services and project health checks |
| Legal and compliance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny of procedures for compliance with organisational governance structures • Advice on development of methodologies / structures to achieve balance between scrutiny and project delivery |
| Strategy or Portfolio office representative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input to structures to assess project viability against strategic objectives and the identification and measurement of benefits across the organisation • Provision of specialist services through a P3O structure, or advice direct to project managers and project sponsors |

| Resource | Reason for involvement |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Finance specialist | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of mechanisms for effective financial reporting of project progress and the measurement of benefits across the organisation • Definition of appropriate financial analysis and value for money techniques • Provision of project budgeting structures, estimating techniques and forecasting mechanisms |
| Procurement or contracts specialist | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment of project methodologies and contract procurement process • Provision of specialist advice in contracting for services for project delivery |
| Information manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with building structures that assist with the sharing of project information (lessons learned, risk registers etc.) • Provision of mechanisms to support efficient stakeholder engagement |

For further information about Maven Training and its capability building services please contact:

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