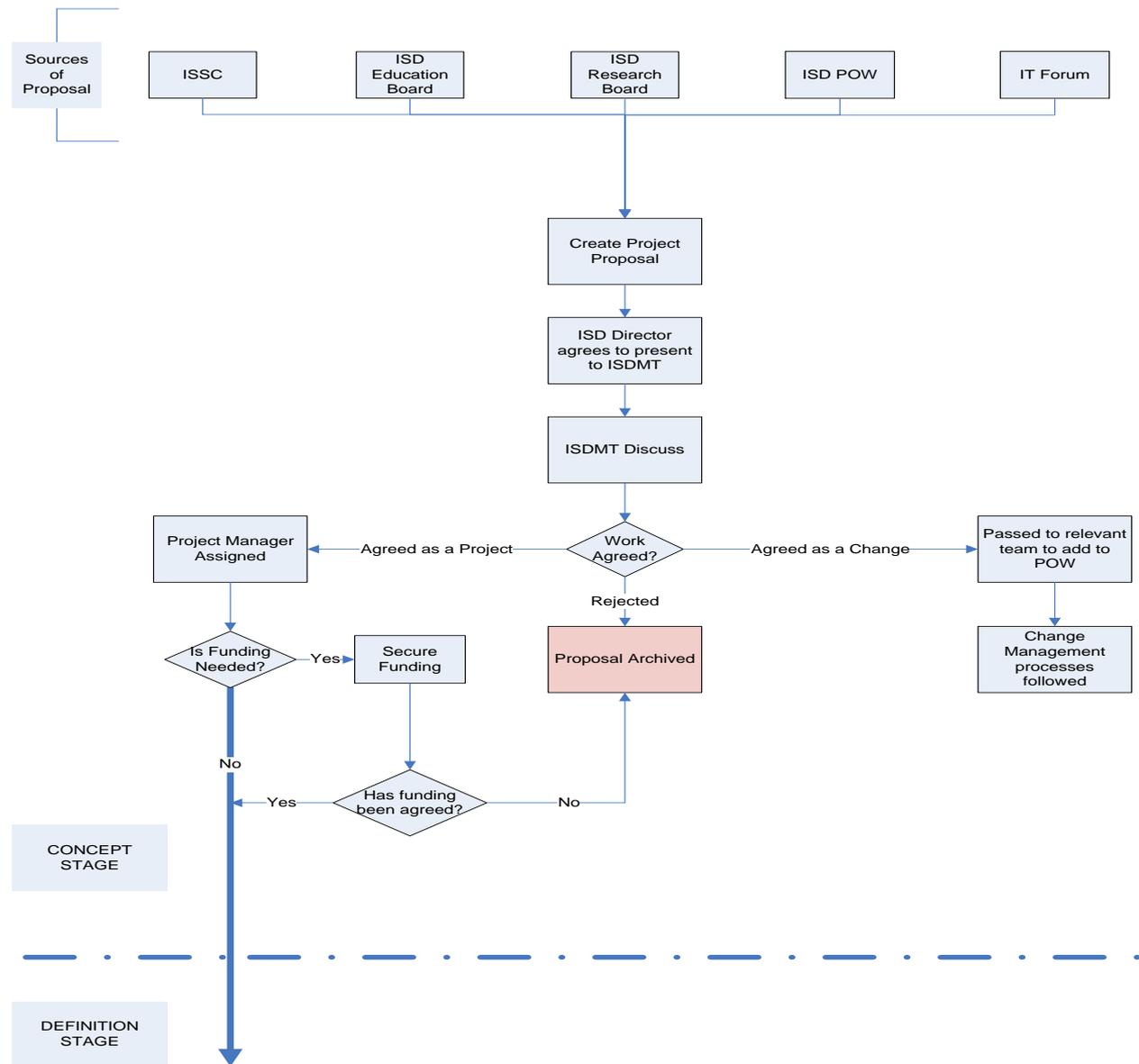# 2. Process for starting and managing a project

The process described in this section is guidance on how projects are started and then managed on an on-going basis. These are not hard and fast rules as every project is unique but should be considered when managing your own project.

2.1 Concept Stage

The initial stage is to define the concept for a proposed piece of work, setting out what you want to do. Anyone is able to develop a proposal, passing it to their manager for consideration. The manager decides whether the piece of work should be escalated to the relevant Director or Assistant Director for presentation as a project proposal.

- Project proposals are presented by ISD Directors and Assistant Directors for consideration by ISDMT as a result of deciding that a piece of work which has arisen from team planning or from a committee or board should be considered for management using the project management methodology.

- Where a proposed project requires a bid to CUBS for funding, the project proposal will need to have been approved by ISDMT in time for submission to ISSC in November of the year preceding the CUBS decision making process. ISSC should endorse all CUBS bids being made by ISD.

The project proposal form is a short, simple document, requiring the following information:

- *Project Title:* name of the proposed project
- *Rationale:* why the work is required
- *Proposed Project Board:* names of people who will be on the project board.
- *Proposed Project Team:* names of people who will be included within the project team.
- *Key Stakeholders:* people affected by the work with brief on the level of interest / power they may have on the project.
- *Target Completion Date:* this may not be know at this stage, but if there are limitations or drivers for completing the work there may be a pre-defined date by which the project must be completed by.
- *Business Case:* identification of costs, benefits and opportunity costs if the work is not done.
- *Other resources required:* identification of teams needing to be involved in the project (consider those needed in other departments).
- *Outline Schedule:* identify key milestones and high level deliverables / tasks that may need to be completed with any constraining dates.
- *Spending Profile:* provide an outline of when costs are expected to be incurred (if necessary).

> The project proposal template which contains guidance on how to complete it and any relevant tools you can use can be found in Appendix C (document 1). Occasionally a more detailed business case is required to secure funding and justification of a project. A template with guidance has been provided in appendix C (document 2).

When the project proposal is considered by ISDMT, a decision is taken by them on whether the work should take place or not. In some cases, this will be dependent on approval or endorsement from ISSC, ET, the ISD Education or Research boards, or from CUBS. At this stage, the holder of the key posts of project sponsor and project manager should be identified.

Report sections that do not appear to be relevant to the project should **not** be deleted, but simply marked as n/a, giving ISDMT the opportunity to challenge whether something should actually be included or not.

A decision can be made as follows by ISDMT:

- *Rejection:* the work proposed may not bring benefits suitable to the direction the University is moving in or the work does not offer value for money to the University and it is deemed that this work should not go ahead.

- *Accepted as a Change:* It's accepted that the work should go ahead and is beneficial to the University. A decision is made that the work should be performed using change management rather than as a project due to the nature and characteristics of the work. This will be passed back to the relevant team for them to action. Further information on change management can be found at [\\Central-vfs\central-div-share1\ISD\Service-Catalogue\Documents\Templates\Change-Management.](\\Central-vfs\central-div-share1\ISD\Service-Catalogue\Documents\Templates\Change-Management.)
- *Accepted as a Project:* It's accepted that the work should go ahead but due to the nature and characteristics of the work a project management methodology should be adopted. ISDMT will appoint a project manager.

If the work has been agreed in principle as a project and funding is required then this funding will need to be sought and approved before the project can continue. It may be that funds can be obtained from existing budgets or it may require agreement for CUBS funding. If funding is approved then the project can move into the next stage (definition). If funding is not approved then the project proposal will be archived.

2.2 Definition Stage
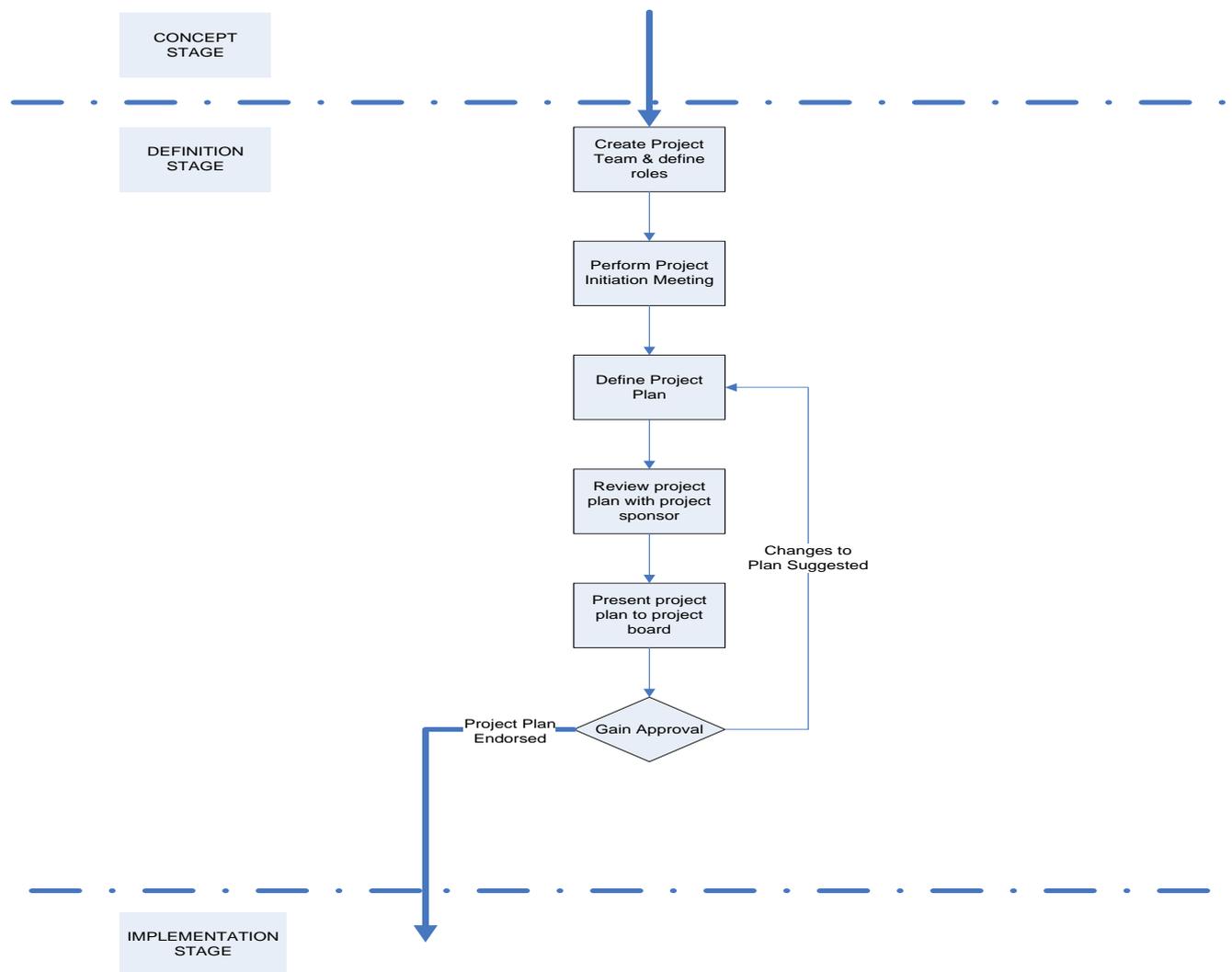
If the project proposal has been *"Accepted as a Project",* then a project manager will have been appointed by ISDMT and a full project plan will need to be created by

the project manager. The project plan document should expand on the project proposal by setting out clearly the requirements of the project. The project plan should not be created in isolation by the project manager. The project team will have been identified in the project proposal and should be formed together as a group and consulted when constructing the plan. Gathering the project team together in the initiation meeting will allow people from different areas of the University to input their thoughts and expertise into the project plan.

> *Project file structure:* To aid project managers a standard file structure has been defined for use with projects, aiming to ensure that all project documentation is held centrally in a consistent manner. **It is the responsibility of project managers to ensure that their documentation is filed within this structure, so that it can be easily retrieved by any authorised interested party.**
>
> - **Action List:** Contains your actions/issues/risk logs
> - **Budget:** Contains information relating to the project budget including the main budget spreadsheet
> - **Communications:** if appropriate this will contain a more detailed communications plan and / or a contacts list
> - **Deliverables:** this may contain documents and information relating to each individual deliverable defined in your project plan
> - **Meeting Notes:** can be used to store highlight reports, project board papers (agenda, minutes etc.).
> - **Project Plan:** will contain the main project plan and each relevant version
> - **Project proposal:** will contain the project proposal and each relevant version
> - **Schedule:** will contain the project schedule (excel, MS project etc.)
>
> Arising from the approval of a piece of work as a project, the project manager will set up the file structure in the Divisional file share: \\central-vfs\central-div-share1\ISD\Projects\. The template file structure and documentation should be copied into a new folder for the new project, and can be found in the templates section called "File-Structure". Project managers are at liberty to create further folders, but this minimum structure should be retained.
>
> In addition to using the filestore project managers may want to publish project documents to the ISD website to allow for sharing of information. An area has been created for this purpose in the ISD Programme of Work area (http://www.uea.ac.uk/is/isdpow).

Initiation Meeting: The project can be scoped in the first project team meeting, or sometimes in a special initiation meeting involving the key stakeholders. The project manager will have a key role to play to lead the initiation meeting, write the resulting project plan and then present the plan to the Project Board for their formal approval.

The project manager, as the person leading the initiation meeting, should ensure that the meeting retains focus on the requirements of the project, bearing in mind that the outcome will be the key information required for the writing of a project plan. It is helpful to go into the meeting with a clear agenda of areas that need to be covered: this may vary from project to project, but is likely to include:

- Objectives
- Assumptions
- Inclusions and deliverables. (These may be loosely defined at this stage; finer definition can wait until the plan is written.)
- Exclusions
- Problems to bear in mind
- Risks
- Define deliverables / tasks to be completed and estimate timescales for completion.
- Resource requirements for the project team
- How the project will be conducted: frequency of board meetings, use of expert groups, consultation arrangements, etc.

The Project Plan: Following the initiation meeting, and very much informed by it, the first task for the project manager is to develop the project proposal into a fully worked up Project Plan, which must be approved by the Project Board.

The Plan is, in effect, the contract between the Project Manager and the organisation and therefore sets out her/his brief. After agreement, it comprises a record, and therefore should be subject to strict document control disciplines.

The development of the Plan is an important step in carrying out the project, in that it ensures that vital thinking about the objectives of the project is carried out. It is therefore essential that the project manager, key stakeholders and the project team members are closely involved at this crucial stage, so that the full implications of the scope of the project are fully understood, and are fully supported.

The Plan should include:
- *Introduction: Summary of what is being achieved and why*
- *Project Details*
  - *Project Aim and Strategic Fit: What you are trying to achieve and how this meets the goals of the University*
  - *Business Case: level of investment and the resulting benefits gained*
  - *Assumptions: define what you think to be the true situation about the project and environment*
  - *Project Scope: objectives; inclusions; exclusions; deliverables (with acceptance criteria)*
  - *Key Performance Indicators: how to measure success of the project*
  - *Project Organisation, Structure and Controls: Who is adopting each of the project roles and their responsibilities?*
  - *Project Approach: How the project will be structured and managed*
  - *Project Communications: provide stakeholder analysis and means of handling & communicating with them*
  - *Training Arrangements: Provide details of any training needs (including stakeholders)*
  - *Quality Assurance: What level of quality is achievable and how can you measure it? When, where and how quality will be checked. Linked to KPIs and User Expectations*
  - *Project Closure: Actions to be completed at the end of the project (see checklist for help)*
- *Appendix A – Project schedule and income / spend profile*
- *Appendix B – Issue and Risk Log*

> The project plan template and more detailed guidance and tools that can be used to complete the template can be found in appendix C (document 3). It is also useful to look at previous project plans to see how others have completed the project plan. See appendix C (document 4) for examples. A risk log checklist has also been provided (appendix C, document 5) to help project managers think about the types of risks that may occur in different areas of a project. This will assist in completing appendix B of the project plan.

Approval: The project sponsor is accountable for the benefits, effectiveness and value for money being offered by the project. It is therefore essential that the project sponsor agrees and approves the draft project plan. The project plan should then be formally approved and endorsed by the Project Board. This should be achieved at the first project board meeting and should be recorded in the board minutes and at the end of the plan. ***The project manager is responsible for arranging the board meetings and acting as the board's secretary.***

The Project Board should comprise of the Project Sponsor (who acts as Chair), Project Manager (who acts as the secretary), senior users (who are the main beneficiaries from the project) and optionally senior suppliers (such as software supplier).

2.3 Implementation Stage
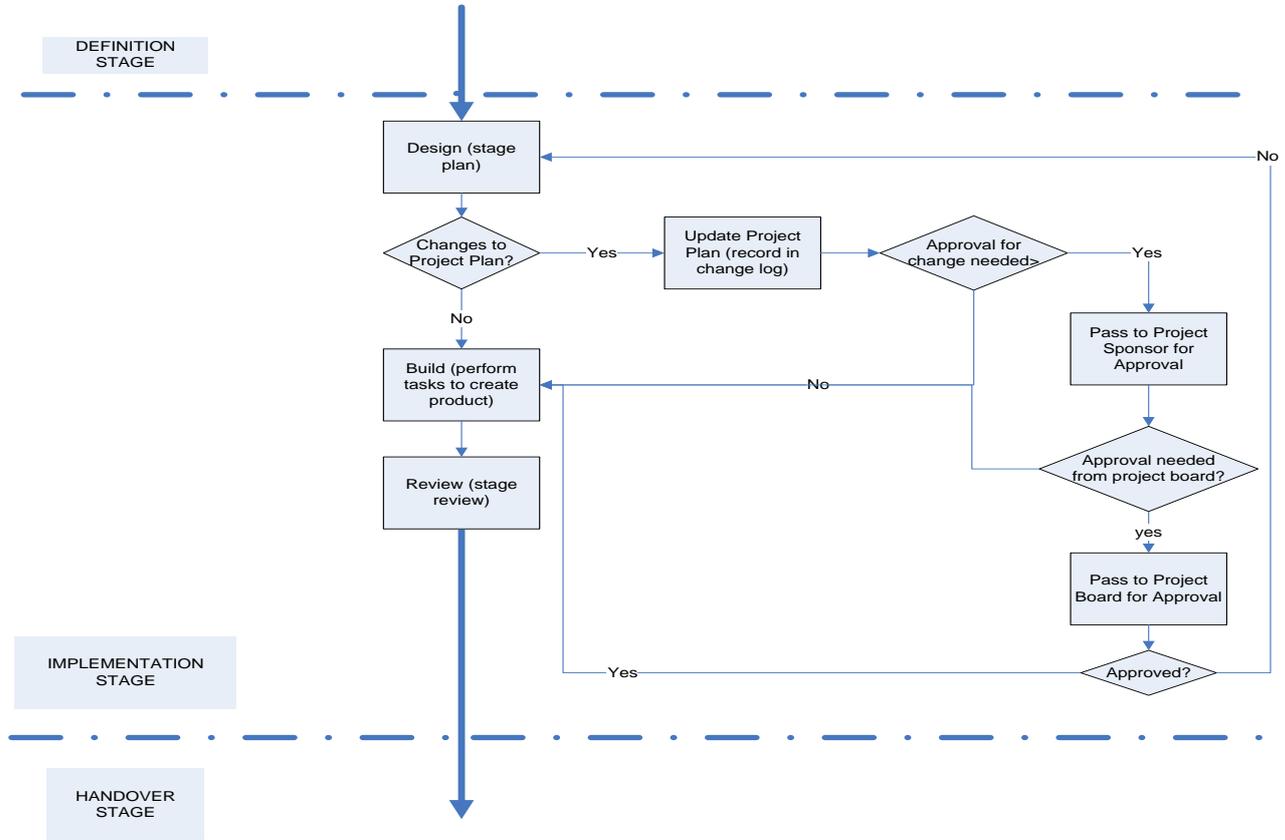
Design: The project manager should with the project team create a breakdown of the work to be undertaken into a schedule for each stage (Network Diagrams: tasks,

timescales, dependencies, float / free float and critical path). Gain agreement from all of those involved that they are available to complete the tasks as defined in the project schedule.

Build: Start implementation following the project schedule that has been created. At the end of each stage a review should be undertaken to establish its successes, failures, issues, benefits are still being realised and any lessons learned. This report should be created by the project manager and presented to the project board and project sponsor so as to gain approval for the project to continue to the next stage. At the beginning of the next stage the process of design and build starts all over again (if appropriate).

> A template and guidance on stage reviews can be found in appendix C (document 6).

Changes to Project Plan: Design and build may introduce a change or revision to the project scope or objectives. The Project Manager will have authorisation to make changes that do not impact significantly on the objectives of the project. However, if significant change is encountered this should be reported to the project sponsor and project board to gain guidance and approval of any changes. This is to ensure that the project benefits are still achievable and the project still provides effective value for money.

> Any changes made to the project plan can be recorded in a change log. A template and guidance can be found in appendix C (document 7).

Monitoring and Controlling the Project: throughout the lifecycle of a project it is essential that the project manager is aware of current progress, potential risks and issues and has the tools to be able to control and manage the project. This is especially true for the implementation stage.

- **Monitor Schedule:** No matter how much effort went into its creation, a schedule almost immediately becomes history, and so needs regular monitoring and revision. You should review and update the schedule frequently with the project team to establish the current state of play. Where schedules are complicated, it is worth considering using software such as Microsoft Project to run reports to more easily identify tasks which are due for completion, and who is responsible for carrying them out. If more detail is required, then the project manager could use an action list.

  > A combined action / issue and risk log template with guidance is available in appendix C (document 8).

- **Monitor Issues:** Within the regular team meetings it is essential to understand if there are any issues that are affecting how the project is progressing. "*Issue management is the process by which concerns that threaten the project objectives and cannot be resolved by the project manager are identified and addressed to remove the threats they pose".* All issues should be recorded in the action / issue / risk log. Issues should be evaluated and mitigation put in place to resolve the issue. If you have identified an issue that cannot be resolved advice and guidance should be sought by adding the issue for discussion in the highlight report which is sent to the project board / sponsor / ISDMT.

- *Monitor Risks:* Within the regular team meetings, it is essential to understand if there are any risks that could affect the project. "*Project risk management is a structured process that allows risks to be understood and managed proactively, optimising project success by minimising threats and maximising opportunities*". Risks are recorded at the beginning of the project process. These are prioritised and should be mitigated against. Constant monitoring of these risks and any emerging new risks should take place. If you have identified a risk advice and guidance should be sought by adding the risk for discussion in the highlight report which is sent to the project board / sponsor / ISDMT.

- *Monitor Costs:* If your project has a budget and a defined set of costs, these should be recorded, monitored and reported on.

  > A template budget spreadsheet has been provided in appendix C (document 9).

- *Monitor Resource:* One area that can be difficult to manage is the resource needed to complete the project tasks. When the schedule has been constructed and resource allocated it is essential to gain agreement from the appropriate line manager / Head of department that the resource is available to participate in the project. Agreement and assurance should be made dedicating the resource to the project. Existing annual leave of resources should be incorporated into the schedule; any further requests for leave should be agreed between the line manager and the project manager to ensure that this does not impact on the schedule. There may be times when resource is diverted to other work by their line manager / head of department. This should only happen with the agreement by the project manager to ensure that it does not impact the project delivery date. An assessment of the impact of this on the schedule should be made and negotiation may be needed to ensure your project remains on track.

- *Communicate Progress:* In addition to constant monitoring and updating it's important to communicate to others the state of the project. To formalise this, Project Managers are required to complete a highlight report which should be sent to the project board at appropriate stages, to ISDMT once a month and to the project sponsor at an appropriate time as agreed in the project plan. The highlight report follows a simple format that helps the Project Manager to make a regular appraisal of progress against milestones and deliverables, emerging issues and risks that could affect the project and to identify tasks due in the next month.

  > A highlight report template with guidance is available in appendix c (document 10).

- *Stage Reviews:* One means of controlling a project is with the use of stage reviews. These occur at the end of each stage and are used to determine if the project should proceed or not. The project board and sponsor should assess the review to make this decision. The stage review should include the following:

  - Identify any concerns and corrective actions
  - Establish technical success of stage
  - Validate progress against time, cost, quality, scope and resources

- Stakeholders relationship and perceptions of the project
- Lessons learned and actions arising
- Has the current stage been completed
- Evaluate plan for next stage

The stage review should be completed with the project team and presented to the project board and project sponsor for discussion and approval. A template and guidance has been created and can be found in appendix C (document 6).

Governance: To be most effective, projects should only report to one Board, which should be dedicated to that project. Its membership should be limited to only the key roles required; wider input can be achieved by the inclusion of stakeholders and expert users / suppliers as fully contributing members of project teams. The optimum size for a project board is five members.
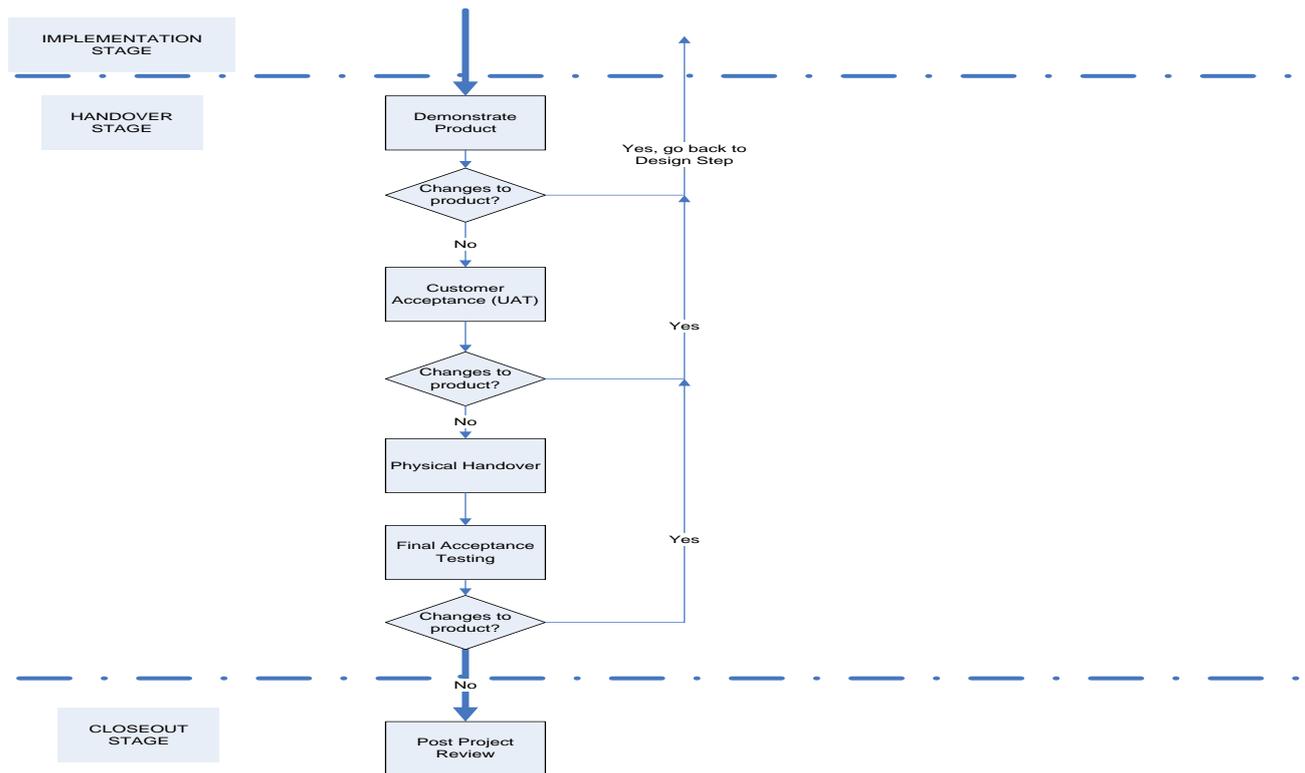
A major part of the Project Manager's role is the relationship with the Project Board. Meetings need to be arranged in good time, agendas agreed and papers written. All this needs to be done in close co-operation with the Project Sponsor. The meetings should be set at regular intervals and for the duration of the project schedule. It's best to try and get all of the meetings in peoples diaries at the beginning of the project and to add these into the project schedule. When assessing the timings of these meetings, look for key points in the project schedule when you will need advice, guidance or decisions to be made. Remember, setting up project meetings is one of the tasks the ISD Secretariat can help with.

Each board meeting should have an agenda and minutes. Templates for agendas and minutes can be found on the ISD committee office website (https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/committeeoffice/templates). The highlight report should always be on the agenda for discussion as with any other project review papers (e.g. stage reviews and post project reviews). The agenda and its papers should be created by the project manager (acting as the board secretary), reviewed by the chair (project sponsor) and sent out to board members at least one week in advance of the meeting. These will usually be in PDF format.
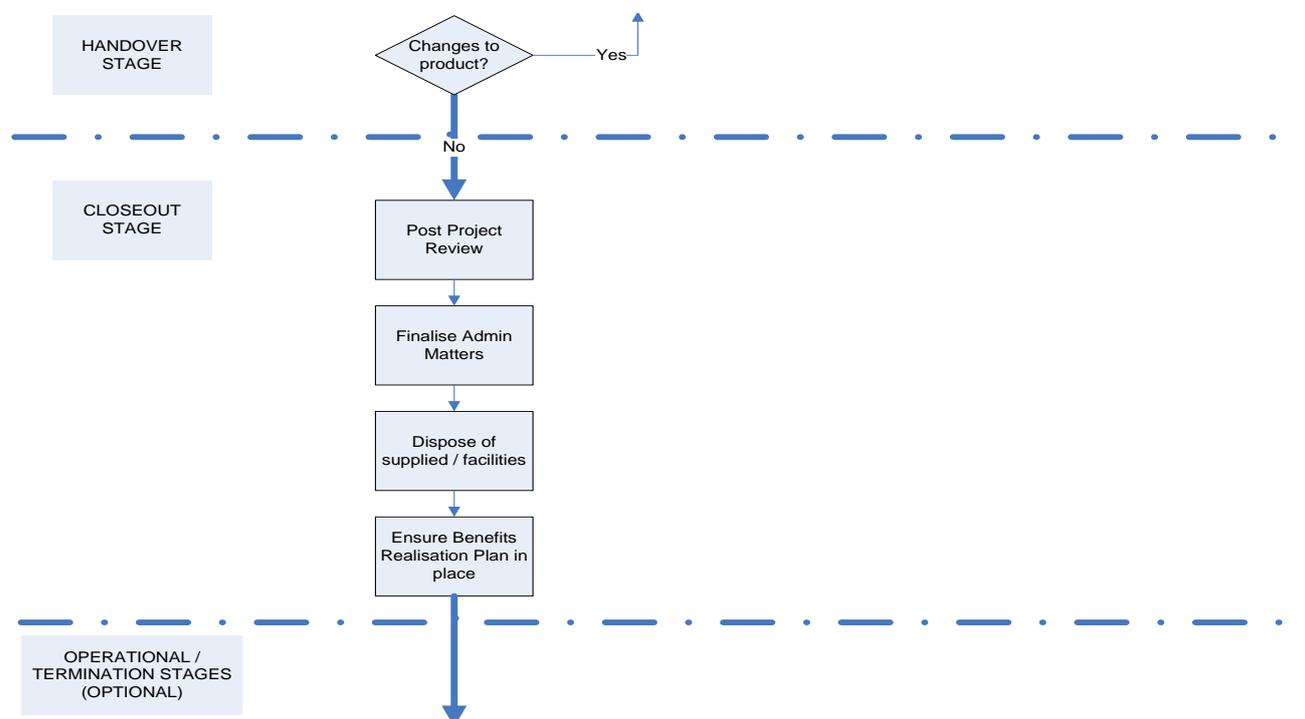
The project manager (acting as the board's secretary) should review the notes of the last meeting in good time, ensuring that all actions have been completed, or chased up. Any outstanding actions from last time should have been flagged in board actions, or else must be included in the next one.

2.4 Handover and Close-out

Project handover is where the project is completed to the satisfaction of the project sponsor and user. The project is ready to be handed over to the operational environment. Specific tasks should be planned for and completed to allow this to happen.

Flowchart 1

IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

HANDOVER STAGE

Demonstrate Product

Changes to product? → Yes, go back to Design Step

No

Customer Acceptance (UAT)

Changes to product? → Yes

No

Physical Handover

Final Acceptance Testing

Changes to product? → Yes

No

CLOSEOUT STAGE

Post Project Review

Close-out is the process of finalising all project matters such as post project reviews, archiving project information and redeploying project resource.

Flowchart 2

HANDOVER STAGE

Changes to product? → Yes

No

CLOSEOUT STAGE

Post Project Review

Finalise Admin Matters

Dispose of supplied / facilities

Ensure Benefits Realisation Plan in place

OPERATIONAL / TERMINATION STAGES (OPTIONAL)

An aspect of Project Management that is often overlooked is the transition from 'project' to 'service'. An effect of this can be that the Project Manager becomes by default the manager of the resulting service, or that no-one actually takes responsibility for it, and it is allowed to drift along.

The Project Plan should therefore identify the project's exit strategy within the handover and close-out stage. It may be that the project is a discrete piece of work, such as might be the case when carrying out a review. In these circumstances, implementing changes resulting from such a review might form another project. Nonetheless, even if it appears obvious, it should be clearly stated that at the point the final milestone is reached (e.g. delivery of review report), the project is complete.

In other cases, project objectives will be the setting up of new services, installation of new systems, etc. Each project involves a number of discrete tasks and associated deliverables. There will be a point in the project, an identifiable milestone, where the objectives have been achieved, and continuing maintenance and development becomes part of someone's day to day job. This point must be identified in the Project Plan. ***The process of handover needs to be considered as something that has to be managed as part of the project, and therefore must be identified right at the Project Initiation Stage.***

Complete Implementation: Within this process, you should demonstrate the end product or service to the user (customer), running through how it works as a final product. The user (customer) should be involved in final testing of the product/service and should check that all of the acceptance criteria have been met. The criteria for acceptance of deliverables should be clearly laid out in the Project Plan. Depending on what is put in this section, the project board gives itself the ability to reject work that does not meet the objectives of the project. It is thus vital that the objectives and deliverables are clearly stated, backed up by unambiguous acceptance criteria which are tested by the user (customer). Note that the acceptance criteria will be subject to change by the project board if the objectives of the project change.

Physical Handover: As part of the handover process, it is necessary for the project to provide training and guidance material (inc FAQ, web pages, hints and tips and Helpsheets where appropriate), well-defined support mechanisms whose staff are given the appropriate information to allow them to troubleshoot problems, product documentation such as DR/BC plans, OOH operations and instructions (if necessary), operational manuals and to perform the final installation of the product / service. All of these processes and documentation requirements should be planned for and included within the project schedule.

The final installation or delivery of the product may be broken down into pilots and / or phased roll outs to minimise impact should there be a problem.

Final Acceptance: This should be used to formalise the handover of the project to the customer. You should transfer responsibility and ownership of the service / product to those using and supporting it. A final acceptance test may need to be undertaken including the handover processes of training / help & support material, support mechanisms and DR/BC.

Post Project Review: After the project has been handed over and some time has passed to allow the product / service to become embedded (3-6 months), a review should be undertaken to assess if the project was a success and if it was conducted in the right way. The aim is to evaluate the following:

- Assess success criteria
- Determine what went well, what didn't go well and what could be done differently (separating cause from effect)

Information Services

- Recognise team and individual performance
- Evaluate project processes and any tools / techniques used
- Establish if benefits have been realised and identify any unexpected benefits
- Put in place any corrective actions if benefits have not been realised
- Identify any problems that have been caused by the introduction of the product/service
- Identify lessons learned
- Did the project deliver all objectives, goals and outputs defined in the plan?

The review should be undertaken by the Project Manager and include opinions from the Project Sponsor, the project board, and key stakeholders.

> Further guidance and a template for post-project review is available in appendix C (document 11).

The final post project review document should be presented to ISSC for comment as well as to the project board. The Project Board will need to review the post-project review against the original objectives, and consider whether these have been met. Where Key Performance Indicators were set for the project, an assessment will also be needed on whether the extent to which they have been met is acceptable. The minutes of the project board will document the decision to close the project.

Finalise Admin: On completion of the project relevant data will need to be archived and other information can be disposed of. An assessment of what should be kept, for how long and what should be deleted will need to be made. Guidance is provided within the records retention policy which can be found on the ISD web site https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/is/strategies/infregs/Records+management/ISD+RRS.

> The minimum requirements should be to keep the original project plan (Inc schedule), the final schedule, stage reviews and post-project review. All lessons learned should be transferred to the lessons learned log (located in the ISD Share projects folder.

After closing the project other actions should include; paying any final bills, closing budgets, notifying the community of the new product / service and assessing team performance. Lessons Learned should be recorded in the main spreadsheet provided in the ISD Project share (\\central-vfs\central-div-share1\ISD\Projects\Project-Management).

Disposal: Now the project has finished, you should be in a position to dispose of any surplus materials or infrastructure / facilities you have provided. For example if you have implemented a new system on its own infrastructure, the old system and the old set of servers will need to be disposed of safely and securely.

2.5 Operations Stage (Optional – part of extended lifecycle)

The majority of projects will not move into this stage. This is normally reserved for projects that are highly innovative and require a high level of oversight and continuing development in order to allow the organisation to meet changing needs and to realise the benefits of the project. This will need careful planning and assessment of the

responsibilities that the project will undertake. An example of the project that is using this stage is the SITS project.

2.6 Termination Stage (Optional – part of extended lifecycle)

This stage may happen long after the rest of the project has been completed. It is invoked in cases where the system delivered by the project has run its course and reached the end of its life, requiring it to be shut down and replaced by a new one.

Analysis of the project's KPIs may indicate that it is no longer realising the required benefits, and so should be shut down. Processes may include disposal of the old product / service and a final project review.