GAPPS Program Typology

The purpose of this document is to characterise qualitatively different types of programs in order to provide insight into the development of role definitions for Program Managers. This document does *not* address program size, complexity, or other quantitative factors.

Although most programs in most application areas should fit clearly into one category, some programs may have characteristics from multiple categories. To emphasize the potential for overlap, the following tables have been drawn with dotted lines separating the four program types.

The four types of programs are derived from definitions proposed by Sergio Peregrinelli in an International Journal of Project Management (IJPM) article.

This typology is designed to be INDICATIVE, and the categorization of a program may well be dependent upon the perspective the program is being viewed from. (i.e a Strategic Program from the Owners perspective may well be a Very Large Project from the Contractors perspective or Operational from the perspective of the Financiers.) As noted above, the purpose is not to create an all inclusive, comprehensive definition of Program, but to serve as the foundation from which to further refine the roles of Program Managers, with the understanding that the roles of a program manager most likely will be different for the Owner, Contractors or Financiers Program Manager.

	Very Large Projects	Multi-Project Programs	Strategic Programs	Operational Programs
Key distinguishing feature	*Sheer size makes them fundamentally different from relatively smaller projects performed by the same organization.*	*Relative independence of component projects.*	*Link to a specific business goal or strategic initiative.*	*Bounded by the organization's fiscal year.*
Illustrative Examples (representative, not comprehensive)	• Large Design-Build or Turn-Key engineering and construction project (e.g., nuclear power plant) • Design of new aircraft • Design of manufacturing systems and process for new aircraft • Prime contractor on governmental strategic program (e.g., major weapons systems acquisition, environmental clean-up)	• IT unit supporting functional group • Version 2.0 or later of high tech product (e.g., software, electronics, medical devices, pharmaceuticals) • Consulting engineer with client-based organization • Disaster or crisis response	• Major weapons system acquisition • Version 1.0 of high tech product (e.g., software, electronics, medical devices, pharmaceuticals) • Major transportation system (subway, urban highway) • Organizational culture change • ERP implementation • Development and release of new aircraft • Olympic games • Basic research • Long term disaster recovery • First season of TV show	• Mine or oil field operations improvement • TV show production (one season at a time) • Railway or utility company maintenance • Plant operations and maintenance
Possible job titles	• Program Manager • Project Manager	• Program Manager • Client Manager • Customer Account Manager • Projects Director	• Program Manager • Vice President • Projects Director • Product Manager • Acquisition Manager	• Vice President • Division Manager • Operations Manager • Operations Director • Program Manager

(continued)	Very Large Projects	Multi-Project Programs	Strategic Programs	Operational Programs
Primary reason to group projects	Single project — no projects to group	Benefits expected from coordinated support for business theme: resources, client, market, etc.	Early outputs and outcomes influence decisions about later projects; program is a "learning organization"	Minimize negative impact on ongoing business
Assessment/ evaluation of program manager	Cost and schedule performance; compliance with specifications	Support for business theme through coordination of individual projects and shared resources	Ultimately, business outcomes; on an interim basis, perceived progress toward those results	Budget vs. actual; impact on operations
Number of projects	One	Several running in parallel	Many running both sequentially and in parallel	Many running both sequentially and in parallel
Program Manager's authority to originate or terminate projects	Single project — no projects to originate or terminate	Limited or absent — project origination and termination generally external to the program	Extensive to total — project origination and termination generally internal to the program	Limited — project origination and termination generally external to the program
Interdependence of projects	None — single project	Generally limited — often possible to kill one project without affecting others	Significant, particularly in terms of knowledge development	Highly variable — a mixture of independent and interdependent projects
Technical disciplines	Closely related	Closely related	Generally divergent	Closely related
Expected termination	When deliverable finished	None; ongoing as long as benefits expected	Indefinite (driven by business outcomes)	Fiscal year