



PRINCE2[®] and the National and International Standards

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White Paper
December 2012

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	How PRINCE2 meets the British Standard	4
3	How PRINCE2 meets the international standard	5
4	Conclusion	6
5	References	7
	Appendix A Comparative glossary	7
	Appendix B Comparison with BS6079 Part 1	8
	Appendix C Comparison with ISO21500	10
	Acknowledgements	13
	Trademarks and statements	13

1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this document

This white paper is intended to show how PRINCE2® can be used to help organizations ensure their project management approach meets the requirements of the British Standard BS6079 Part 1¹ and the international standard ISO21500.²

1.2 Why standards help improve project management effectiveness

Standards can improve the effectiveness of project management by drawing attention to the key principles and activities required. This happens in two ways:

- The content of the standard becomes a 'checklist' against which an organization can assess the completeness of its own approaches in terms of both principles and activities. This leads to fewer organizations missing activities which national (or international) consensus deems vital for project effectiveness.
- Management fundamentally relies on good communication, and at the heart of communication are 'words'. By standardizing the use of words in a particular context, people are able to work together more easily and with fewer misunderstandings.

Once established, standards can promote continuous improvement by being periodically reviewed and updated to ensure the latest consensus on best practice is included and any omissions or clarifications are dealt with. In this way, all users of standards benefit from the collective experience of all other users.

1.3 PRINCE2 as an emerging *de facto* standard

Since 1996, when it was first published, PRINCE2 has grown to become a *de facto* 'standard' as a project management method – not just in the UK but in more than 150 countries worldwide. PRINCE2 comprises two documents:

- Directing successful projects with PRINCE2³
- Managing successful projects with PRINCE2⁴

This growth in use is the result of a number of factors:

- Expectations have been set by successive UK governments, which have an interest in seeing that project performance in both the public and private sectors improves to benefit the country as a whole.
- Very little alternative 'open copyright' material is available for organizations to draw on; there has been no international standard or accepted 'method' to date.
- PRINCE2's scope covers all the roles and processes needed to direct, manage and undertake a project.
- The principles and content are of high quality, reflecting good practice generally.
- Training in the method can be sourced easily.
- There is a growing requirement for 'accreditation' to be proven in a supplier/contractor context.

1.4 The international and national standards

Standards seek to provide their readers with a concise summary of the topic covered. Both the latest British Standard and the new international standard seek to do this by summarising the key concepts and activities which need to be undertaken in order to increase the likelihood of project success. Neither standard defines any particular techniques to be used; both standards stress that it is for the project manager to select techniques to suit the project's needs. This is where the standards differ from PRINCE2, which does recommend certain techniques. Both standards are described as 'guides' or 'guidance' and are therefore not intended for formal compliance or assessment (except in the case of the international standard, the use of which is prescribed in the national legislation of certain territories).

The latest edition of the British Standard on project management is a major rewrite of the previous version, taking into account the growing consensus on project management both in the UK and internationally – and, in particular, the Body of Knowledge from the UK's Association for Project Management.⁵ Whilst losing none of its previous core content, it now takes a more systematic view of the key project management roles and activities, such that it provides a set of practices which can be tailored to suit a particular organization or project. This standard treats 'project management' in an holistic way, including activities undertaken by the sponsor and the project team as well as those undertaken by the project manager.

The international standard covers the key concepts and activities for managing projects. Its content mirrors the approach taken in the PMI Body of Knowledge,⁶ but amended in accordance with international consensus. This standard, unlike the British Standard, focuses on the activities undertaken by the *project manager only* and does not cover the sponsor or the delivery team manager and member roles which comprise the wider project team. Sponsor and team roles are mentioned only to provide context.

1.5 Standards and methods serve different purposes

There is scope for confusion regarding the respective uses of standards and methods, and how they are applied in organizations. In simple terms:

- A standard defines what needs to be done and by whom, but not how activities are done.
- A method, such as PRINCE2, provides not only a set of activities to be done, together with roles, but also techniques for undertaking these activities.

As such:

- A method is designed for practical use.
- A standard is designed to help assess the completeness of any method.

Organizational approaches normally fit within the description of a 'method', as they are designed for practical use within the organization for which they are designed. They may be derived directly from a standard, or from a method like PRINCE2. By including techniques, a method is far more prescriptive about the way a particular activity is undertaken; for that reason, methods tend to be far longer and more detailed.

1.6 Comparing the standards with PRINCE2

Due to the different purposes and origins of the various standards and methods, it is not possible to provide a clear line of comparison across them. For this reason, in the sections that follow, PRINCE2 is assessed against the British and international standards separately. The fact that PRINCE2 does not fully cover the scope of the standards is not in itself a problem, as there is no requirement in the standards that their scope should be covered by a single method or process. In many cases, aspects of the standards may be covered by other corporate processes or methods. This is especially the case for commercial activities such as document management, configuration management, procurement, supplier management and financial management.

Despite this, a core of common principles and practices runs through all three documents. This includes the following:

- Projects are vehicles for bridging the gap between the strategic needs of an enterprise and the realization of benefits by putting in place specific capabilities and generating specific outcomes.
- The positioning of a project with respect to a programme and the positioning of a project with respect to a portfolio are similar.
- All three documents include the concept of tailoring, on the basis that, as projects are unique, the approach may be adapted to suit the particular circumstances.
- The project lifecycle is key in all approaches.
- Many of the core activities are held in common, both in terms of principle and often in their actual naming.
- Both PRINCE2 and BS6079 Part 1 use the term 'planning' in the widest context, to include benefits, schedule, costs, resources and scope.
- All three documents include the concept of a 'breakdown structure' as a critical aspect of planning. With respect to planning, PRINCE2 prescribes a product breakdown and ISO21500 a work breakdown. BS6079 Part 1 leaves it open for the planner to decide which type of breakdown to use.

PRINCE2 has a glossary which is used consistently throughout, so that particular words are used in a particular way. Whilst the standards also use language consistently, they are not necessarily prescriptive in the use of this language, allowing and often providing acceptable or common alternatives. For example:

- In BS6079, a 'phase' may be called a 'stage'.
- In ISO21500, a 'project steering committee' may be called a 'project board'.

Indeed, BS6079 has a specific section (7.1.4.5) under 'Initiating a project' which says that the project manager should define the terms to be used on the project or use those prescribed in any organizational approach.

Appendix A contains a comparative glossary of the key terms, showing where they differ.

2 How PRINCE2 meets the British Standard

This section demonstrates where PRINCE2 meets the needs of the British Standard. As PRINCE2 and the British Standard have different structures, it is not always possible to make direct comparisons clause by clause. Appendix B includes a clause-by-clause analysis.

PRINCE2 and the British Standard share a core of common practice and both cover 'project management' in its widest sense, including:

- The role of the executive/project sponsor in directing the project
- The role of the project manager in managing the project
- The role of the team manager and team members in delivering the project's outputs and deliverables.

The roles used map exactly, except that PRINCE2 calls BS6079's 'project sponsor' the 'executive' and is more prescriptive about the use and constituency of a project board.

In terms of project lifecycle, PRINCE2 and the British Standard follow the same concept of phases/stages, with a project having at least two phases/stages. The British Standard concentrates very much on 'gates', which are decision points to *start* the next phase/stage of the project, independent of when a stage actually ends. By contrast, PRINCE2's gates, which are called 'stage boundaries', are triggered by the end of a 'management stage' (section 10.3.2). In PRINCE2, stages are assumed to be consecutive. The British Standard does not have this constraint and allows stages to overlap. Gating in PRINCE2 is dealt with in the 'Directing a Project' process. PRINCE2 also introduces the concept of 'technical stages' in addition to 'management stages', which are not a part of the British Standard.

The integrative activities in the British Standard are very closely aligned with the PRINCE2 processes, with slight changes in terminology. The main difference is that the British Standard has

an activity for managing a project as a whole ('Managing a project'), whereas PRINCE2 has this at stage level ('Controlling a Stage'), on the assumption that only one stage of the project is happening at any one time, in line with its approach of consecutive management stages. The British Standard allows stages/phases to overlap and so more than one stage may be happening at any point in time.

The support processes in the British Standard are, on the whole, mirrored in the 'themes' in PRINCE2, which provide more detail on the actual techniques to be used.

Being a method, PRINCE2 has details of techniques and approaches which are not in the British Standard. The main ones are:

- Business case – looked at in detail in PRINCE2, but the use of the document and its development through the project lifecycle are identical in BS6079.
- Exception management – as a technique, this is not prescribed in the British Standard.
- Product-based planning – the British Standard is non-prescriptive, but both documents end up with the same planning components, covering benefits, cost, resources, schedule and scope.
- Health checks – not included in the British Standard.

As such, if someone is using PRINCE2, they could be said to comply with BS6079 Part 1 provided that those aspects explicitly beyond the scope of PRINCE2 are covered either by their enterprise method or by other corporate processes and methods. This applies, in particular, to document management, procurement, and skills and competencies.

3 How PRINCE2 meets the international standard

This section demonstrates where PRINCE2 meets the needs of the international standard. As PRINCE2 and the international standard have different structures and scopes, it is not always possible to make direct comparisons clause by clause. Appendix C includes a clause-by-clause analysis.

The international standard does not cover, in its processes, the role of what PRINCE2 terms the executive (project sponsor) in 'Directing a Project' or the role of team manager in 'Managing Product Delivery'. However, PRINCE2 and the international standard do share a core of common practice relating to the role and activities of the project manager.

The roles as defined in the two documents are similar, except that (as noted) PRINCE2 is more prescriptive about the use and constituency of a project board. The international standard does not define the roles of team manager or team member in any detail because they, like the project sponsor, are outside the standard's scope.

In terms of project lifecycle, PRINCE2 and the international standard have the same concept of phases/stages, with decision points where each phase/stage of the project starts. The international standard provides no detail on best practice relating to such decisions, which are deemed 'out of scope' because they are not taken by the project manager but by a project sponsor or higher authority. The international standard covers this by using the same process group for initiating a new phase as it does for initiating a new project.

The actual structure of ISO21500 in its logical form is very different from that of PRINCE2. In PRINCE2, the stages of a project are explicit and defined within the processes, such that the initiating and closing of a project is done in a different way from the initiating and closing of a phase/stage. ISO21500 treats a project and a phase/stage within a project identically and has no explicit procedure for starting new stages within a project. How this is done is left to the user of the standard to determine. PRINCE2 provides detail on this in its 'Managing a Stage Boundary' and 'Directing a Project' processes.

Communications is another area of difference. In the international standard, 'communications' relates to communications *within* the project team. In PRINCE2, this is covered by the 'Progress' theme and 'communications' relates to communicating with stakeholders *outside* the project team (in the same way as is done in BS6079 Part 1).

Being a method, PRINCE2 has details of techniques and approaches which are not in the international standard. The main ones are:

- Explicit project lifecycle management – particularly at stage boundaries.
- Business case – looked at in detail in PRINCE2, the business case is outside the scope of the international standard.
- Exception management – as a technique, this is not prescribed in the international standard.
- Product-based planning – the international standard is non-prescriptive, but both documents end up with the same planning components, covering cost, resources, schedule and scope.
- Health checks – not included in the international standard.

Bearing in mind the above, if someone is using PRINCE2, they could be said to comply with the international standard provided that those aspects explicitly beyond the scope of PRINCE2 are covered either by their enterprise method or by other corporate processes and methods. This applies, in particular, to procurement and to skills and competencies.

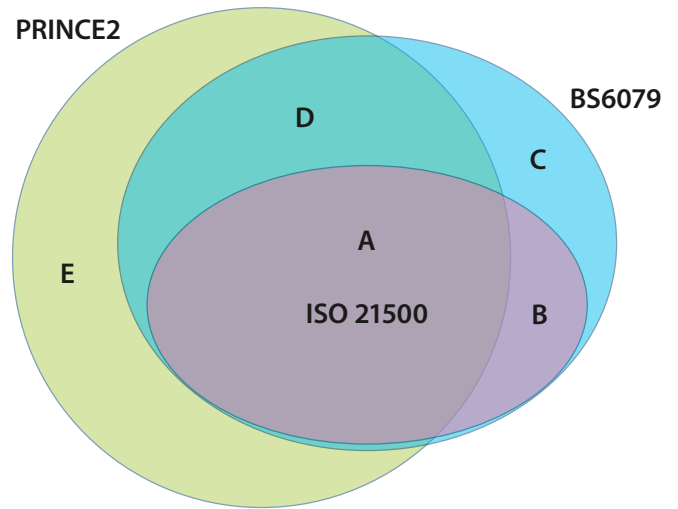
4 Conclusion

By using PRINCE2, a person is meeting the requirements of both BS6079 Part 1 and ISO21500, provided the following elements are covered by other organizational processes:

- Document management
- Procurement
- Skills and competencies.

The scope of ISO21500 (A+B) is totally contained within the scope of BS6079 Part 1 (A+B+C+D). However, BS6079 Part 1 includes activities relating to: the executive/project sponsor role and the team manager/team member roles (D); procurement, and skills and competencies (B); and document management (C).

The scope of PRINCE2 (A+D+E) and the scope of BS6079 Part 1 (A+B+C+D) are more closely aligned. BS6079 Part 1 includes skills and competencies (B) and document and configuration management (C). PRINCE2 includes detailed techniques for undertaking certain processes (E); the standards have no prescriptive techniques for these and allow the user to determine their own.



5 References

The following references to other publications are relevant to this document.

Ref	Description
1	<i>BS6079 Part 1: 2010: Project management – Principles and guidelines for the management of projects</i> , BSI, 2010
2	<i>ISO21500: Guidance on project management</i> , ISO, 2012
3	<i>Directing Successful Projects with PRINCE2</i> , TSO, Office of Government Commerce, 2009
4	<i>Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2</i> , TSO, Office of Government Commerce, 2009
5	<i>APM Body of Knowledge</i> , 6th edition, APM, 2012
6	<i>A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge, PMBoK</i> , 4th edition, PMI, 2009

Appendix A Comparative glossary

The following key terms are equivalent in the three documents and are provided in order to improve understanding.

BS6079 Part 1	PRINCE2	ISO21500
Project	Project	Project
Phase	Stage	Phase
Work package	Work package	–
Gate	Stage boundary	–
Roles		
Project sponsor	Executive	Project sponsor
Deliverables		
Project brief	Project brief	Project charter
Project management plan	Project initiation documentation	Project management plan
–	End stage report	Phase closure report
Issues log	Issue register	Issues log
Risk log	Risk register	Risk register
Change log	Issue register	Change register
Project closure report	End project report	Project closure report
Planning		
Project plan	Project plan	Project plan
Schedule	Schedule	Schedule
Resource profile	Resources	Resource plan
Cost plan	Costs	Budget
Reporting		
Reporting	Progress	Communications
Project report	Highlight report	Progress report
Communications	Communications	–

Appendix B Comparison with BS6079 Part 1

Note that PRINCE2 references refer to *Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2*.⁴

BS6079 Part 1, principles

BS6079 Part 1 clause	PRINCE2 equivalent
5.1.1 Be needs and benefit driven	2.1 Continued business justification
5.1.2 Engage stakeholders throughout the project	5.3.5 Working with stakeholders
5.1.3 Ensure single point accountability	Whilst it does not explicitly cover this as a principle, PRINCE2 follows the same concept in its 'executive' role definitions.
5.1.4 Practise cross-functional working	5.3.4.1 Line management/functional management
5.5.5 Allow tailoring of any standard processes and methods	2.7 Tailor to suit the project environment

BS6079 Part 1, clause by clause

BS6079 Part 1 clause	PRINCE2 equivalent
4 Project management context	The British Standard and PRINCE2 apply very similar contexts for project management, in that both are business or 'benefit' driven and may be applied to any type of project in any sector.
5 Key aspects of project management	
5.1 Principles of project management	See separate comparison.
5.2 People and roles on projects	5 Organization (theme) Appendix C, Roles and responsibilities
5.3 Project lifecycle	2.4 Manage by stages (principle)
5.4 Project management activities	Generally, the 'integration' activities are reflected in the PRINCE2 'processes' and some of the 'support' activities are covered by the PRINCE2 themes. See separate comparison.
6 The project lifecycle	2.4 Manage by stages (principle). PRINCE2 covers this at a high level but not in detail.
7 Managing the project	
7.1 Project integration activities	Sections 11 to 18 mirror these closely. See separate comparison.
7.2 Project support activities	Sections 4 to 10 partially reflect these. See separate comparison.
8 Skills and competencies for project management	PRINCE2 covers this in summary, within each role description. Section 5.3.3.2 covers the need to have trained team members.

BS6079 Part 1, integration activities

BS6079 Part 1 clause	PRINCE2 equivalent
7.1.2 Preparing to start a project	12 Starting up a Project
7.1.3 Approving a project or phase (including termination, suspension and reinstating a project)	17 Managing a Stage Boundary (for preparation) 13 Directing a Project (for a decision and for premature closure)
7.1.4 Initiating a project	14 Initiating a Project
7.1.5 Directing a project	13 Directing a Project
7.1.6 Managing a project	15 Controlling a Stage
7.1.7 Managing delivery	16 Managing Product Delivery
7.1.8 Closing a project	18 Closing a Project
7.1.9 Reviewing project outcome (can be independent of project closure)	Section 17.4.3 covers ongoing benefits reviews 18 Closing a Project

BS6079 Part 1, support activities

BS6079 Part 1 clause	PRINCE2 equivalent
7.2.2 Managing planning	7 Plans (theme)
7.2.3 Managing scope	7.3.3 Define and analyse the products. Covered as part of product-based planning.
7.2.4 Managing benefits	4 Business Case
7.2.5 Managing schedule	7.3.4, 7.3.5, 7.3.6
7.2.6 Managing resources	7.3.5, 7.3.6
7.2.7 Managing costs	7.3.5, 7.3.6
7.2.8 Managing risk	8 Risk (theme)
7.2.9 Managing issues	9 Change (theme)
7.2.10 Controlling change	9 Change (theme)
7.2.11 Managing configuration	9 Change (theme); 9.3.2
7.2.12 Managing documentation	Not explicitly covered, although PRINCE2 is controlled through documentation.
7.2.13 Managing procurement	Not explicitly covered, but the role and context of a supplier are referred to.
7.2.14 Managing quality	6 Quality (theme)
7.2.15 Managing reporting	10 Progress (theme); 10.3.3.2
7.2.16 Managing stakeholders and communication	5.3.5 Working with stakeholders

Appendix C Comparison with ISO21500

Note that PRINCE2 references refer to *Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2*.⁴

ISO21500, concepts

ISO21500 clause	PRINCE2 equivalent
3.1 General	The British Standard and PRINCE2 apply very similar contexts for project management, in that both are business or 'benefit' driven and may be applied to any type of project in any sector.
3.2 Project	2.7 Tailor to suit the project environment
3.3 Project management	Whilst not explicit in an individual paragraph, the project management aspects mentioned in the international standard (except for competencies) are included within PRINCE2.
3.4 Organizational strategy and projects	5 Organization (theme) Appendix C, Roles and responsibilities
3.5 Project environment	5.3.4.1 Line management/functional management
3.6 Project governance	14 Initiating a Project, includes project initiation documentation, which defines governance.
3.7 Projects and operations	19 Tailoring PRINCE2 to the project environment – covers the essential aspects of this clause.
3.8 Stakeholders and project organization	5 Organization (theme) Appendix C, Roles and responsibilities 5.3.5 Working with stakeholders
3.9 Competencies of project personnel	PRINCE2 covers this in summary, within each role description. Section 5.3.3.2 covers the need to have trained team members.
3.10 Project lifecycle	2.4 Manage by stages (principle). PRINCE2 covers this at a high level but not in detail.
3.11 Project constraints	Not dealt with explicitly but covered in Section 7, Plans (theme)
3.12 Relationship between project management concepts and processes	Sections 11 to 18 mirror these closely. See separate comparison. Sections 4 to 10 partially reflect these. See separate comparison.

ISO21500 processes, by subject group and clause

ISO21500 subject group and clause	PRINCE2 equivalent
Integration	PRINCE2 processes, sections 11 to 18
4.3.2 Develop project charter	12 Starting up a Project (for project)
4.3.3 Develop project plans	14 Initiating a Project 7 Plans (theme)
4.3.4 Direct project work	15 Controlling a Stage
4.3.5 Control project work	15 Controlling a Stage
4.3.6 Control changes	9 Change (theme)

ISO21500 subject group and clause	PRINCE2 equivalent
4.3.7 Close project or project phase	17 Managing a Stage Boundary (for phase) 18 Closing a Project (for project)
4.3.8 Collect lessons learned	A.14 Lessons Log is updated throughout the project as part of each PRINCE2 process.
Stakeholders	5.3.5 Working with stakeholders
4.3.9 Identify stakeholders	
4.3.10 Manage stakeholders	
Scope	7.3.3 Define and analyse the products. Covered in product-based planning.
4.3.11 Define scope	
4.3.12 Create work breakdown structure	
4.3.13 Define activities	
4.3.14 Control scope	15 Controlling a Stage
Resource	7.3.5, 7.3.6
4.3.15 Establish project team	
4.3.16 Estimate resources	
4.3.17 Define project organization	
4.3.18 Develop project team	Section 5.3.3.2 covers the need to have trained team members
4.3.19 Control resources	15 Controlling a Stage
4.3.20 Manage project team	
Time	7.3.4, 7.3.5, 7.3.6
4.3.21 Sequence activities	
4.3.22 Estimate activity durations	
4.3.23 Develop schedule	
4.3.24 Control schedule	15 Controlling a Stage
Costs	7.3.5, 7.3.6
4.3.25 Estimate costs	
4.3.26 Develop budget	
4.3.27 Control costs	15 Controlling a Stage
Risk	8 Risk (theme)
4.3.28 Identify risks	
4.3.29 Assess risks	
4.3.30 Treat risks	
4.3.31 Control risks	15 Controlling a Stage
Quality	6 Quality (theme)
4.3.32 Plan quality	

ISO21500 subject group and clause	PRINCE2 equivalent
4.3.33 Perform quality assurance	
4.3.34 Perform quality control	
Procurement	Partially covered
4.3.35 Plan procurements	Out of scope
4.3.36 Select suppliers	Out of scope
4.3.37 Administer procurements	Not explicitly covered, but the role and context of a supplier are referred to.
Communications	10 Progress, section 10.3.3.2
4.3.38 Plan communications	10 Progress (theme)
4.3.39 Distribute information	10 Progress (theme)

ISO21500, process groups

ISO21500 clause	PRINCE2 equivalent
Out of scope	12 Directing a Project
4.2.2.2 Initiating	13 Starting up a Project 14 Initiating a Project
4.2.2.3 Planning	14 Initiating a Project 7 Plans (theme) 17 Managing a Stage Boundary
4.2.2.5 Implementing	15 Controlling a Stage
4.2.2.6 Controlling	15 Controlling a Stage
Out of scope	16 Managing Product Delivery
4.2.2.6 Closing	17 Managing a Stage Boundary (for a phase) 18 Closing a Project (for a project)

Acknowledgements

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