ENVIRONMENT CANADA ADOPTS PRINCE2

Implementing a Consistent Methodology for Project Success

APMG-US
Accrediting Professionals

Environment Canada is the department within the Canadian government responsible for all aspects of the nation's environment, from protecting and preserving natural resources to forecasting weather and environmental change. With a staff of over 6,000 professionals and a budget of over $500 million dollars, Environment Canada coordinates a broad spectrum of environmental policies and programs to enhance the quality of the Canadian environment.

As with most public sector organizations, Environment Canada strives for continuous improvement in all aspects of its operations, and works hard to use public funds judiciously. One area where Environment Canada was actively looking to improve their performance was in their management of IT projects. IT Projects undertaken by the Canadian Government are required to follow the guidelines established by the Treasury Board Secretariat, as outlined in the Management Accountability Framework (MAF). These guidelines set the performance requirements of senior public service managers for achieving acceptable management of projects. Part of the guidelines called for an explicit project management accountability framework which addresses decision making, oversight, effective monitoring, and ongoing review. It requires that projects be properly resourced with the right skilled individuals, including project managers.

However, Environment Canada did not have a uniform methodology for managing projects. Instead, individuals within IT exercised different approaches for project management. As a result, there was no common and consistent method of managing large IT projects within the Department.

A study by the CIO's office within Environment Canada identified a number of problem areas that resulted in adverse impacts including;

- an insufficient focus, during up front planning and execution, on project requirements, resources, and organizational roles and responsibilities
- insufficient ongoing engagement of the program (business) owner during the project lifecycle
- cost and schedule overruns on most projects
- unnecessary levels of coordination and governance
- a lack of clarity about when a project was ready to transfer from development to operations, and
- an inability for Project Managers to transition readily from project to project or to easily manage a suite of small projects, due to the variety of approaches being used

These challenges were waiting for Chuck Shawcross when he assumed his position of CIO of Environment Canada in 2008. Mr. Shawcross had served in the Canadian military for 20 years followed by 14 years of NATO and private sector experience, before entering government service as Chief Technology Officer for the Public Works and Government Services ministry, where he served for almost two years before being selected for his current position.

As part of his NATO experience, Chuck had been trained in PRINCE2 (Projects in a Controlled Environment), an internationally recognized standard for best practice in managing projects of all types. Chuck was aware that PRINCE2, with its emphasis on the business case, ongoing business owner engagement, well defined roles and responsibilities, scalability, and strong focus on delivery of products and integrated quality, mapped directly to the requirements set forth by the federal government for managing projects.

PRINCE2®

As CIO, Chuck began to implement PRINCE2 within Environment Canada CIO Branch as the standard for project management. Besides his own training in the method, Chuck knew that PRINCE2 has been used successfully by both private sector organizations and in the public sector to manage projects within allotted budgets and time frames. In addition, training was available to both the English and French speakers that comprised his team, which enabled Environment Canada staff to become proficient quickly. As a PRINCE2 practitioner himself, Chuck could serve as the champion within his organization, leading the way in the adoption and practice of the method on all projects under his management.

Fortunately, the project managers and developers within Environment Canada were ready to embrace a standard project methodology. So when it came time to begin training, there was an enthusiastic response. Initially, staff members were sent to publicly available courses, but now the Department is scheduling more customized classes for staff to better meet the demand for training. To date, over 110 people have been trained in PRINCE2, with over 70 having achieved certification at the Foundation or Practitioner level.

To support the implementation of PRINCE2, a Project Delivery Office (PDO) was established. The role of the PDO is to guide project teams with the preparation and review of project documentation, and provide advice on project management and PRINCE2 best practices. Marc Laroche, the Director of the PDO, commented that "we are attempting to make Project Management roles and responsibilities consistent across projects within the Chief Information Office Branch at Environment Canada. Compared with some other project management methodologies, PRINCE2 is more prescriptive in its defined roles and responsibilities. We believe that this will help our people perform better in their project roles and make our projects more successful." From Chuck's

perspective, the standardized definition of Roles & Responsibilities and governance considerably reduces churn, unproductive discussions, and arguments throughout the project life cycle; the standardized definitions bring a common clarity to all players.

While still in the early stages, interest and excitement in PRINCE2 remain high at Environment Canada. The IT staff sees how PRINCE2 can be applied to improve project management effectiveness and are starting to turn PRINCE2 theory into practice. There is growing awareness and positive interest from the program (business) areas as they become engaged in PRINCE2 run IT projects. And as more and more PRINCE2 projects get underway, Environment Canada CIO Branch has already begun implementation of a Project Office and is exploring other areas of best practice such as Managing Successful Programs (MSP). Implementation of automated tools to support the methodology is also underway with rollout scheduled for early 2010. The use of a consistent methodology, effective wide spread certification training, automated tools, and executive level support bode well for this initiative within Environment Canada and ultimately the Canadian tax payer.

> " . . . PRINCE2 is more prescriptive in its defined roles and responsibilities. We believe that this will help our people perform better in their project roles and make our projects more successful."
>
> *Marc Laroche*
> *Director, Project Delivery Office*

About APMG

APMG-US accredits Training Organizations, Trainers and Consultants across the Americas and administers exams for professional certification. We are a wholly owned subsidiary of The APMG Group, Ltd, the official accreditor for PRINCE2®, an internationally recognized standard for Project Management. PRINCE2 (Projects IN Controlled Environments), is a scalable and flexible project management method that navigates you through all the essentials for successfully running any type of project.

PRINCE2 underwent a full refresh in June, 2009 to more fully address today's project environment. More than 170

organizations contributed their experiences and ideas to the refresh process. PRINCE2 reflects the Best Practices of leading project management practitioners worldwide and can enhance the credentials and careers of project management professionals.

For more information on PRINCE2, or how to become an accredited PRINCE2 training organization, please contact APMG at 781.275.8604 or info-US@apmg-US.com

PRINCE2® is a Registered Trade Mark of The Office of Government Commerce