DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ENTERPRISE PERFORMANCE LIFE CYCLE FRAMEWORK

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PRACTICES GUIDE
PROJECT PROCESS AGREEMENT

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Document Purpose

This Practices Guide is a brief document that provides an overview describing the best practices, activities, attributes, and related templates, tools, information, and key terminology of industry-leading project management practices and their accompanying project management templates. This particular guide defines the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Enterprise Performance Life Cycle (EPLC) minimum requirements for documenting and approving project tailoring activities.

Practice Overview

HHS' EPLC is a framework to enhance Information Technology (IT) governance through rigorous application of sound investment and project management principles and industry's best practices. The EPLC provides the context for the governance process and describes interdependencies between its project management, investment management, and capital planning components. The EPLC framework establishes an environment in which HHS IT investments and projects consistently achieve successful outcomes that align with Department and Operating Division goals and objectives.

A Project Process Agreement (PPA) is used to authorize and document the justifications for using, not using, or combining specific EPLC stage gate reviews and the selection of specific deliverables applicable to the project, including the expected level of detail to be provided. Completion of a PPA takes place in the planning phases of the project life cycle and may be included as part of the Project Management Plan (PMP). Whether part of the PMP or a stand alone document, the completed PPA should be signed by the project manager/sponsor. Once approved by an IT governance organization this document authorizes the project to proceed according to agreed upon EPLC approach documented within the PPA document.

Project risk, complexity, and dollars may be used as inputs to determine the appropriate levels of project management and documentation rigor required. The greater a project's risk, complexity, or dollar/budget value, the greater degree of project management and documentation rigor will be necessary. In such a case, the full EPLC may be most appropriate. However, the project manager, in collaboration with the project team, is always responsible for determining the appropriate level of project management and documentation rigor necessary for effective project management and project success.

Best Practices

- **Analyze the Impact of Tailoring Your Project** –Consider your project's goals, mission impact, size, and risk exposure when making tailoring decisions.   EPLC minimum best practices aim to improve your project's chances of success and it is important to carefully consider the impacts of deviating from best practices.
- **Justify Tailoring** – Document justification for your tailoring decisions and be prepared to present your case for tailoring to an IT governance organization.   Documentation should clearly identify planned deviation from EPLC practice requirements and present strategies for addressing risks that may result from this deviation.
- **Monitor Tailoring Impacts** – Closely monitor and manage risk especially around the specific tailored areas. Anticipate additional oversight from stage gate reviewers around these areas as well.

Practice Activities

- Determine the appropriate level of project and documentation rigor required for success and adequate risk management.
- Document justification for using, not using, or combining specific EPLC stage gate reviews and the selection of specific deliverables in the form of a PPA.
- Submit your PPA for Business Owner and IT governance organization authorization.
- Once authorized, proceed according to the agreement.

- Changes/modifications to approved project process agreements are subject to EPLC change management practice and must be authorized at the appropriate project oversight/governance level before the project manager initiates a new approach. The Project Manager should report any anticipated deviation from an approved process agreement prior to reaching a stage gate review.