



CASE STUDY

Jerusalem Country Office

› USING PRINCE2 P3M3 AT UNOPS JERUSALEM COUNTRY OFFICE



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE ORGANIZATION

As an operational arm of the United Nations (UN), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) helps partners deliver around \$1 billion worth of aid and development projects every year. The UNOPS mission is to help people build better lives and countries to achieve sustainable development. UNOPS always aims to satisfy or surpass partner expectations by advancing sustainable implementation practices within the development, humanitarian and peacebuilding context.

UNOPS has over 20 years of experience in providing project management, procurement and infrastructure services to governments, donors and UN organizations. Within those areas, UNOPS focuses on supplementing partner capacities, improving speed, reducing risks, boosting cost-effectiveness and increasing quality. UNOPS operates across 80 countries with over seven thousand personnel, most of whom work in some of the world's most challenging places.

UNOPS is a self-financing organization with a business model that is unique to other entities in the UN system. The UNOPS Jerusalem Office (JRS) has been active in Palestine (State of) since 2006 and currently operates within Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. JRS offers project management, infrastructure, procurement, human resources and advisory services, with a focus on sustainability, capacity development, national ownership, gender empowerment and transparency at all stages of project design and implementation.

JRS works with the Palestinian Authority (PA), the donor community and the UN in a variety of strategic schemes developed for the Palestinian context. UNOPS helps improve Palestinian rule of law, justice and human rights by supporting the national government and civil society's efforts to strengthen capacities in people, systems, policies and ensures a holistic approach to institutional capacity development. UNOPS initiatives also support the Government of the State of Palestine and other partners in realizing successful projects in the areas of water and sanitation, energy, public building, road rehabilitation and construction.

Some of the main issues impacting the work of JRS project managers in Palestine include the highly uncertain political context, obstruction and restrictions to access the Palestinian territories, and a high-security risk due to the armed conflict. These issues significantly impede the effective provision of humanitarian and development assistance and protection of civilians.

1.2 THE PROJECT TEAM

The team that worked on the project comprised:

Nicholas O'Regan, JRS Director.
Geoff Wilson, Head of Programme
Fatima Abbasi, Head of Support Services
Maria Wowro, Programme Management Office Team Leader
Sama Khalil, Programme Management Office Deputy Team Leader
Ala Arman, Senior Infrastructure Project Manager
Magda Wos, Project Management Office Team Leader
Yazan Eideh, Programme Specialist

The project team was supported by an APM Group assessor and two personnel from the UNOPS Infrastructure and Project Management Group (IPMG).

1.3 CHALLENGE UNOPS FACED

In early 2013, JRS project managers were experts in delivering projects in conflict-affected environments, yet they were working in silos. These silos meant that no knowledge-sharing culture existed, there was no standard governance and management process, and most importantly there was no real desire to change this office culture.

Projects were not consistently successfully delivered since success depended on the project manager's motivation to perform and they did not have solid support for their projects from the office. Additionally, the JRS Director was unable to see the aggregated risk of its projects and therefore when issues occurred most of the times it was too late for it to implement effective risk responses.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Therefore, when the UNOPS strategic plan, 2013-2017 was announced and communicated, which emphasized achieving excellence in project management through a defined project management methodology, the JRS Senior Management decided to take action.

To contribute to UNOPS' Strategic Plan, the JRS senior management chose to adopt and embed PRINCE2® (Projects IN Controlled Environments) and MSP® (Managing Successful Programmes) as the standard project and programme management methodology to be used throughout the office. This objective was included in the JRS Business Plan for 2014, and the newly established Project Management Office (PMO) was assigned to achieve the task.

2.2 PRINCE2 P3M3 ASSESSMENT

To achieve this mission, JRS decided to undertake an internal assessment of the projects through a maturity assessment based on PRINCE2 P3M3® (Project, Programme and Portfolio Maturity Management Model). See section 5 for an overview of PRINCE2 P3M3.

Table 2.1 shows the projects in progress at the time of the assessment.

Project	Start date	Estimated end date	Costs to date
Materials Monitoring Unit Project	31/10/2014	Ongoing	\$14,503,897
Tulkarem Court House	01/10/2010	31/12/2016	\$18,374,726
Jenin Correctional Facility (figure 2.1)	04/03/2013	31/11/2016	\$11,500,000
Palestinian Maturity Programme	05/11/2014	31/03/2018	\$8,771,502



THE PRINCE2 P3M3® MODEL IS USED TO:

- › gain a better understanding of the overall programme and project management effectiveness and;
- › is designed to facilitate and assess capabilities on programme and project management best practices and;
- › to identify current strengths and weaknesses, so that a roadmap for improvement to realize change can be mapped out, thus assisting the improvement of the delivery performance to increase customer and client satisfaction and programme and project success rates.

The PMO led this maturity assessment exercise in preparation for a formal maturity review by APM Group. JRS focused on project management maturity improvements across the seven process perspectives: management control, benefits management, finance management, stakeholder management, risk management, organizational governance, and resource management. The results at the completion of this informal assessment were very encouraging since it showed that JRS could achieve a level 3 maturity as long as the gaps indicated by the PRINCE2 P3M3® guidance across the process perspectives were addressed.

The first capacity assessment based on the PRINCE2 P3M3® standard was conducted in September 2014 by UNOPS sustainable project management practice experts. The primary objective of the assessment was to verify JRS's current maturity level, share recommendations for improvement and to obtain best practices from JRS to share with the wider organization. The internal capacity assessment also showed that JRS could be among the first non-profit organizations in the region to achieve Level 3 Maturity officially.

The biggest obstacle to achieving the Level 3 maturity was determining how to develop the office culture change necessary to address the gaps identified in the assessments. The PMO had first to identify and then clearly communicate the benefits of using one standard project management methodology because changing the usual way of working was perceived as an unnecessary hassle.

1. Communicated the worldwide success of the PRINCE2 P3M3® Maturity Framework and how it has helped other organizations around the world to improve their results
2. Exhibited cases where the PRINCE2 P3M3® Maturity Framework had already been applied at UNOPS which showed that the maturity framework is also successful within the organization
3. The PMO obtained further buy-in through highlighting the benefits of JRS's already existing processes, tools and capacity building activities, which were then extended and optimized during the PRINCE2 P3M3® Maturity process

Next, it was critical to identify and engage the right personnel to champion and lead the change. The PMO focused on helping those identified see the need for change and inspiring the senior management and project managers to be part of the change. Sponsorship was of crucial importance; the JRS PMO and IPMG needed to be able to engage these key stakeholders by showing them how project management maturity can help them achieve the results that are important for them through implementing certain changes to increase the maturity of the office.

By focusing on effective communication, attaining a few quick wins to get the motivation going, being persistent and having the patience not to give up, the PMO successfully led the office culture change.

2.3 JOURNEY TO MATURITY LEVEL 4

When the time arrived for the formal review in late August 2015, three APM Group assessors visited the office to conduct an evidence and documentation review of projects they selected. They also interviewed all the project managers, the Head of Programme, the Head of the PMO and finally, the JRS Director. The PMO had focused on not just embedding these standard processes for compliance reasons, but to also ensure that they were fit for purpose so the project managers could see the value and obtain the benefits from the processes.

The assessment team found that JRS had placed such immense amount of effort in achieving Level 3 that JRS had not only defined their processes but was also managing them. Thereby the reviewers concluded by awarding JRS with the PRINCE2 P3M3® Maturity Level 4.



3. BENEFITS ACHIEVED

The UNOPS 2013-2017 Strategy triggered the biggest question faced by JRS at the start of the process, “Is it worth for a nonprofit organization that operates in a challenging violent or war environment to implement a standard project management methodology?” The following benefits achieved through this process prove that it is, in fact, worth it.

Firstly, project managers feel more comfortable with escalating issues and risks to their project boards which mean these issues and risks are being effectively escalated and managed. The PMO is no longer seen by the Project managers as a source of scrutiny but instead as a forum for decision making, project planning and other support for their projects. Projects and risks are now managed proactively and therefore much less time is spent on solving issues. The reduction of “fire-fighting” has not only improved personnel morale and satisfaction but also proves that JRS project managers are better able to deliver high-quality projects successfully despite the volatile and insecure environment.

Embedding management by exception within JRS has saved senior management from spending too much on the day-to-day operations and has allowed them to focus their time and energy instead on solving issues or exploiting opportunities when they occur. Those serving on internal project boards can rely on the controls in addition to regular, robust and high-quality reports. That allows them to take well-informed decisions and reassures that projects are successful.

One of the biggest achievements of the entire process is the culture change achieved within JRS which now consistently drives for excellence in project management. Project managers no longer see using a standard project management methodology as an unnecessary hassle. Instead, they understand and see the benefits of having a standardized project management methodology and are now excited to participate in extra work activities such as training and workshops. JRS now speak the same project management language which allows all project managers to be on the same page and share their knowledge and expertise with each other. That exhibits the organization’s expertise and professionalism to external partners, which in turn increases their satisfaction and trust in UNOPS, resulting in gaining new projects.

4. CONCLUSIONS

UNOPS has made it part of its Strategic Plan to use project and programme management best practices as a way to ensure its mission to build better lives. Thanks to this, the JRS senior management’s vision, the PMO’s extensive efforts and the gradual endorsement from the project managers, JRS is effectively the first UN entity to be certified at PRINCE2 P3M3® Maturity Level 4.

The United Nations comes under much scrutiny when it comes to its ability to deliver successful results consistently. Sound project and programme management can be a game changer if the value of embedding these processes within an organization is recognized since it provides the tools to consistently deliver successful projects. Therefore, this case study exhibits how embedding standardized project and programme management processes within a UN office can significantly reduce inefficiency and ineffectiveness and instead enable the proactive delivery of its mission.

JRS has proven the benefits attained from aiming for a high maturity are well worth the effort to achieve them. Due to the constant changes JRS encounters, in the future it plans to retain the PRINCE2 P3M3 Maturity Level 4 by continuing to improve their processes and gaining buy-in from new project managers. This has inspired other UNOPS country offices to undergo the process to raise their maturity level, and several of these offices are currently undergoing the UNOPS internal reviews.

Nick O’Regan, the Director of the Jerusalem Office, clearly states the incentives and benefits for a non-profit and self-funded organization such as UNOPS to strive to achieve a high PRINCE2 P3M3® Maturity:

“The unpredictability of operating in Palestine is a daily reality for the JRS team, achieving PRINCE2 P3M3® Level 4 creates an environment of predictability wherever UNOPS can influence so that teams can focus on real issues and not ones created from inferior project management. This is not about having a certificate on a wall, it is about enabling project teams to work in a uniform approach and to a consistently high standard in delivering our partner’s projects to serve people in need. It is about providing access to information for management to make the timely and informed decisions that teams need to deliver effective projects. It is about providing confidence to corporate and our partners that risks are managed well, and liabilities are minimized so that teams are empowered through greater responsibilities. It is about passing on expert knowledge and experience to our national counterparts as part of our state building commitments. Most importantly, it is about delivering truly sustainable solutions for the most important people in our work, the beneficiaries.”

5. AN OVERVIEW OF PRINCE2 P3M3

PRINCE2 P3M3 comprises three models covering portfolio, programme and project management. There are seven common perspectives that run through all the models. This structure is illustrated in figure 5.1.

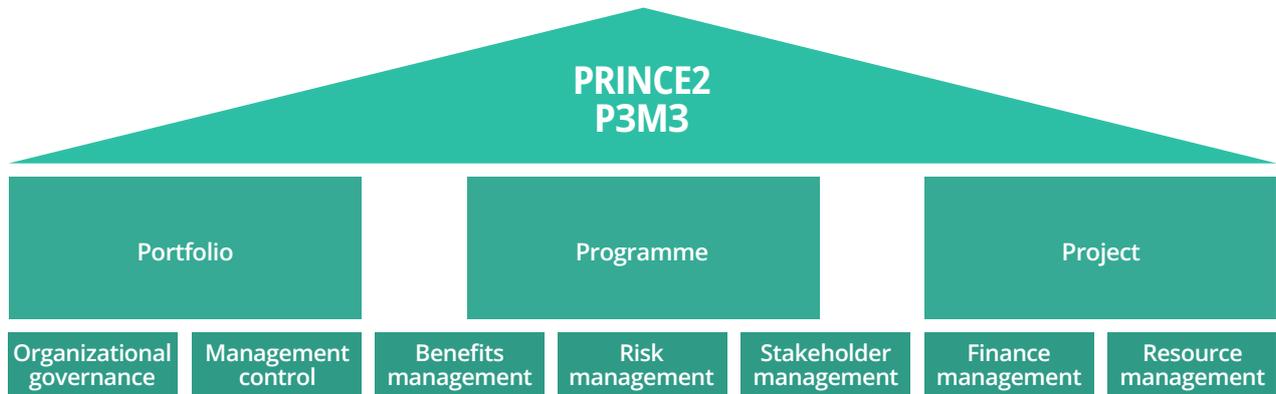


Figure 5.1 The structure of PRINCE2 P3M3

A PRINCE2 P3M3 assessment focuses on the perspectives which are assessed at five maturity levels. The perspectives group together one or more processes, and are:

- *organizational governance*
- *management control*
- *benefits management*
- *risk management*
- *stakeholder management*
- *finance management*
- *resource management*

For each of the perspectives there are a number of attributes defined at each level of maturity. During an assessment these attributes are the basis on which organizations should assess their current maturity and make plans for improvement.

When using PRINCE2 P3M3, an organization may choose to review only one of the perspectives if its interest is in a particular issue (for example, risk management). However, in order to gain a better understanding of the organization's overall effectiveness in a particular model, it is better to assess all the perspectives. An organization may also do this for any one of the three models if it so chooses.

A PRINCE2 P3M3 assessment is described by a five level maturity framework. These levels constitute the structural components that comprise PRINCE2 P3M3.

- › Level 1: Awareness of process
- › Level 2: Repeatable process
- › Level 3: Defined process
- › Level 4: Managed process
- › Level 5: Optimized process

For more information, see <https://www.peoplecert.org/Organisations/Services/Drive-Organisational-Growth-P3M3>

DISCLAIMER

Copyright © 2017-2025 PeopleCert International Limited and its affiliates including Axelos Limited ("PeopleCert")

All rights reserved. No part of this document or the information in it may be copied, distributed, disclosed or used other than as authorized by PeopleCert. Information identified as being under a Creative Commons license may be used in accordance with that license. ITIL®, PRINCE2®, and the Swirl logo are registered trademarks of PeopleCert.

This publication is designed to provide helpful information to the recipient. Although care has been taken by PeopleCert in preparation of this publication, no representation or warranty (either express or implied) is given by PeopleCert with respect to the completeness, accuracy or suitability of the information or advice contained within it, and PeopleCert shall not be held responsible for any loss or damage whatsoever relating to such information or advice.

Content, diagrams, and logos are correct at the time of each Case Study creation but may be subject to change without notice.

This case study was created in January 2017.

Become the next success case!

Connect with us to share your journey and challenges. Together, we can craft a solution that propels your organisation forward. Your story could inspire our next success case study.

peoplecert.org



PeopleCert is the global leader in the certification industry, with a product portfolio of global best practice frameworks and certifications including ITIL® and DevOps Institute for IT & Digital Transformation, and PRINCE2® for Project, Programme & Portfolio Management, as well as language qualifications through LanguageCert. Our certifications are delivered across the globe, empowering people and organisations to achieve what they are capable of, improving organisational efficiency and realising their life ambitions through learning.