

Course: Software Project Management

Week 13: Project Closure

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Contents



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- Project closure
- Closure plan
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- Lessons Learned
- Service Level Agreement (SLA)

Learning Outcomes

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Define a project closure and explain its importance.
- Identify the key activities involved in closing a software project.
- Prepare essential closure documents like the final report and lessons learned.
- Recognize the challenges and best practices associated with project closure



Introduction

- While finalizing the deliverables marks a significant milestone in any project
 - Conducting a thorough and structured closure process is equally vital to its overall success.
- Project closure is the last phase of project management lifecycle.

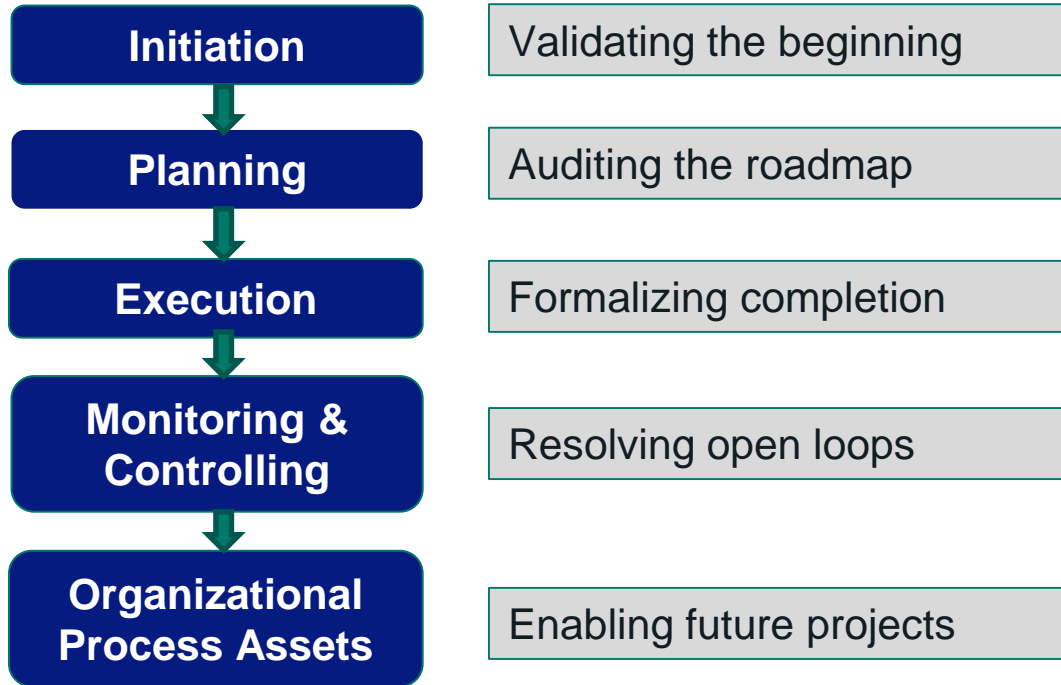
What is Project Closure?



- Project closure is the formal end of project activities.
- Closure involves finalizing all **activities across all process groups** to formally complete the project or phase (PMI, 2013).
 - It emphasizes integration, documentation, and stakeholder communication.
 - Following these guidelines ensures industry-standard project delivery.

What is Project Closure?

The role of closure in each process group



What is Project Closure?

- Closing a project ensures that all aspects of the project are:
 - **Finalized, documented, and handed over appropriately.**
- Project closure includes
 - The execution of the closure plan
 - Preparation of the final project report
 - Documentation of lessons learned, and
 - Establishing or reviewing of SLAs for post-project support.

Closure Plan

- A formal document or process that outlines the steps required to officially close a project in a structured and organized way.
- A roadmap used at the end of a project to ensure that all aspects of the work are completed, documented, and approved.
- It confirms that the project has met its goals, deliverables have been accepted, and all administrative, financial, and legal activities are finalized.

Closure Plan

- **Purpose:**

- Ensure the project is completed and signed off
- Confirm all deliverables were delivered and accepted
- Release project resources (people, tools, budget)
- Finalize contracts and payments
- Document lessons learned
- Provide closure for stakeholders and team members
- Archive documents for future reference or audits

Closure Plan

- **Components:**

- Project Overview
- Deliverables Completion
- Performance Summary
- Contract & Procurement Closure
- Resource Release
- Lessons Learned
- Final Reporting & Documentation
- Stakeholder Sign-Off



Closure Plan

- **Closure Checklist:**

- Deliverable completion and verification
- Stakeholder sign-off
- Resource release
- Knowledge transfer and documentation
- Post implementation review (lessons Learned)

Closure Plan

- **Roles and Responsibilities:**

| Role | Responsibility |
|--------------------|---|
| Project Manager | Oversee closure process, obtain sign-offs, archive documents. |
| Development Team | Confirm code handover, assist in knowledge transfer. |
| QA Team | Ensure test closure reports are finalized. |
| Client/Sponsor | Approve final deliverables and provide formal acceptance. |
| Operations/Support | Confirm readiness for maintenance. |

Closure Plan

- **Timeline for closure activities**

| Activity | Target Date | Responsible Party |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Final UAT Completion | [Date] | QA Team |
| Stakeholder Sign-Off | [Date] | Project Manager |
| Resource Release | [Date] | PM & HR/IT |
| Post-Mortem Meeting | [Date] | Entire Team |
| Project Archive | [Date] | PM/Admin |

Activity: When to prepare the closure plan?

- During project planning
- Finalized and update at the beginning of the closure phase
- Should be reviewed and approved by key stakeholders

Closure Plan

Activity: Why does a project closure plan even matter?

- Without a closure plan, projects may end with loose ends:
 - Unclosed contracts
 - Unarchived data
 - No feedback or improvement for the future
 - Unreleased team members still assumed to be on the project.

Go-Live and Handover

- Go-live marks the moment when the software system becomes operational and accessible to end users.
- Pre-Go-live Checklist
 - Successful UAT completion
 - Data migration verified
 - Training completed
 - Support readiness established

Go-Live and Handover

- Go-live Activities
 - Final deployment to production environment
 - Monitoring system behavior and performance
 - Immediate user support during initial usage
 - Issue tracking and hotfix preparation

Go-Live and Handover

- Handover to operations/support team
 - The purpose is to transfer system ownership from the project team to the operations, maintenance, or support team.
- Knowledge Transfer Sessions
 - Conduct walkthroughs, training sessions, and Q&A sessions with the operations team.

Go-Live and Handover

- Handover Package
 - Finalized code and documentation
 - Configuration and deployment guides
 - Administrator credentials and access controls
 - Training materials for support team
 - Known issues and workaround documents

Closure Report

- A formal document summarizing the entire project, its outcomes, and closure activities (Malsam, 2024).
 - It's a record of the project's performance,
 - Captures lessons learned
 - Provides a final assessment of whether the project met its objectives.
- Importance
 - Serves as a formal project archive
 - Supports audits and future project planning

Closure Report

- Components
 - Executive summary
 - Project objectives and achievements
 - Final deliverables and status
 - Budget and schedule summary
 - Risk and issue resolutions
 - Stakeholder sign-off
 - Lessons learned summary

Lessons Learned

- Every project gives the team an opportunity to learn and improve (MacNeil, 2025).
 - It is documented insights gained during the project that can help improve future performance.
- How to collect
 - Conduct retrospective meetings or post-mortems
 - Encourage team members to reflect on challenges and successes.
 - Use surveys or interviews to gather feedback

Lessons Learned

Key Focus Areas



Planning

Project
planning and
time estimation



Requirements

Gathering
project
requirements &
specifications



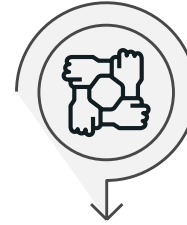
Communication

Communication
with
stakeholders
and team



Technical challenges

Overcoming
technical difficulties
and obstacles



Team collaboration

Working together
effectively as a team

Lessons Learned

Documentation Format



Problem/Situation

Describe the problem or situation encountered.



Project Impact

Explain the impact of the problem on project.



Resolution/Workaround

Describe the resolution or workaround implemented.



Future Recommendation

Suggest recommendations for future projects.

SLA

- SLAs define agreed-upon performance and support levels after the project (e.g., uptime, response times) is closed.
- Activities
 - Ensure the support/operations team is aware of agreed SLAs.
 - Validate that all support processes are in place before the project ends.

SLA

Handover should include the following



Clear documentation of the Service Level Agreement terms.

Defined escalation paths and points of contact.

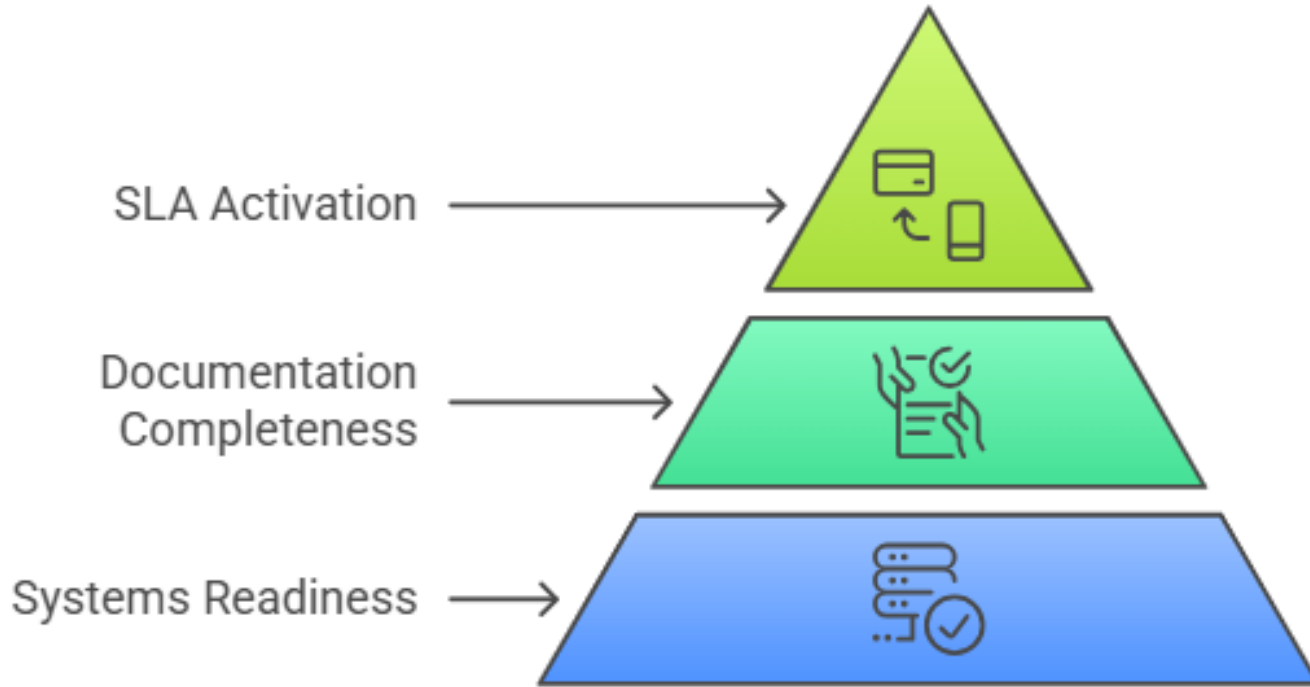
Escalation paths



Monitoring tools

Tools for uptime and issue tracking.

Closure Activities related to SLA



Closure Activity Example

- **OLMS for a University**

- **Closure Plan** prepared and approved
- **Go-live** happened after successful UAT
- **Handover** included training and documentation for IT support
- A detailed **Closure Report** was submitted to university management
- **Lessons Learned:** Clear scope definition avoided major changes
- **SLA:** 99.9% uptime and 24/7 helpdesk transitioned to university IT

Closure in Agile Project



Activity: How to close agile project?

Steps to Close a Software Project

Finalize Deliverables



Obtain Stakeholder Approval



Release Resources



Celebrate Success



Conduct Final Review



Document Lessons Learned



Archive Project Artifacts



Conduct Post-Mortem



Documentations in Software Project Closure



- Final Project Report
- Final Technical Documentation
- User & Administrator Manuals
- Test documentations
- Lessons Learned Document
- Maintenance & Support Handover Document
- Contract ad Financial Closure Report
- Repository & Knowledge Base Updates
- Acceptance Sign-off

Closure Challenges and Best practices

- Common Challenges
 - Incomplete documentation
 - Lack of user acceptance
 - Poor transition to support
 - Unfinished financial or contractual obligations

Closure Challenges and Best practices

- Best Practices
 - Start planning closure early
 - Use standardized templates
 - Engage operations team early
 - Ensure SLAs are clearly transitioned
 - Make lessons learned actionable

Summary

- Project closure marks the formal conclusion of a software project.
 - **Closure Planning:**
 - Establishes how and when the project will be finalized.
 - **Go-Live:**
 - Represents the point at which the system is launched for end-users.
 - **Handover:**
 - Involves transferring ownership to the operational team.

Summary

- **Closure Report:**
 - A formal document that summarizes project objectives, actual outcomes, costs, timelines, and remaining risks or open issues.
- **Lessons Learned:**
 - Captures insights on what worked well and what didn't
- **Service Level Agreement (SLA):**
 - Signed post-closure,
 - this defines how the vendor will support the system during its operational life



References

1. *PMI. (2013). A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (5th ed.). PMI, Inc.*
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3. MacNeil, C. (2025, March 8). Project closure: 8 steps to finish projects confidently. Retrieved May 15, 2025, from Asana.com: <https://asana.com/resources/project-closure>