

# Avoid PINO syndrome by adopting a tailor-made approach to PRINCE2

By **Henny Portman**, Regional PMO Head ING Insurance Central Europe

Many organizations encounter problems when introducing PRINCE2 and often ending up with PINO (PRINCE2 In Name Only). What makes it so difficult to implement this popular project management methodology? In this article Henny Portman focuses on the possibilities of tailoring the method to your project and embedding it into any organization. PINO happens because PRINCE2 has been insufficiently adapted to the specific situation in the organization. Having standard templates for the Project Initiation Documentation doesn't automatically mean you work according to PRINCE2.

**P** RINCE2 describes Principles, Themes and Processes and introduces a complete set of management products. As a project manager, you must combine all these elements in order to have controlled projects that end up satisfying executives and stakeholders. The PRINCE2 method can be applied for all kinds of projects, irrespective of their scale, complexity, geography or the company's culture.

## A holistic organizational approach

Many project management methodologies are based on the starting point that it's the project manager who makes the project successful. Not so with PRINCE2. At the heart of PRINCE2 is what an organization has to do to achieve successful projects. In many organizations, only the project managers are trained in PRINCE2 while the rest of the organization is neglected. This is a mistake.

Tailoring of PRINCE2 to the needs of your organization means integrating environmental factors, such as corporate standards and culture,

into the methodology. Wherever possible, the methodology should be adjusted with existing terms and definitions. The responsibility for project management processes will be managed, controlled and assured just like all other processes in the organization. Project management processes will even be integrated with all other business processes.

Skipping the step of tailoring PRINCE2 to your organization and performing a sufficient adaptation is one of the main reasons why organizations end with PINO.

Training, developing and coaching only project managers are not enough. All other stakeholders of projects, like executives or other members of project boards must also receive training, workshops and coaching. This last group, the Project Board, is one of the most important factors to finish projects successfully and a very important group to fight PINO.

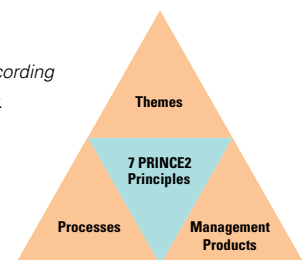
Figure 1 shows, very simplified, the PRINCE2 method as an interplay between principles, themes, processes and management products. Tailoring means adapting or skipping



Henny Portman is, Regional PMO Head ING Insurance Central Europe. (henny.portman@planet.nl)

parts of themes, processes and management products for your project.

Figure 1:  
PRINCE2 according  
to the theory.



## Principles

PRINCE2 is based on seven principles a project must comply to and not on a pre-described set of specific rules or requirements. These principles give users the possibility to tailor the methodology to their project. Using the principles is not 'optional'. The method states that all seven principles are mandatory. If you do not run a project according these seven principles, you cannot claim to have a PRINCE2 project.

**The seven Principles:**

- 1 Continued business justification
- 2 Learn from experience
- 3 Defined roles and responsibilities
- 4 Manage by stages
- 5 Manage by exception
- 6 Focus on products
- 7 Tailor to suit the project environment

The last principle does not pose any problems. But if we want to work according to PRINCE2 and not end up with PINO, we have to respect all other principles as well. Without continued business justification, there is no PRINCE2 project. Roles and responsibilities must be clear. Every project must have at least two management stages (initiation and execution). Having tolerances set on all management levels (corporate or programme, Project Board, project manager, team manager) makes 'managing by exception' possible. The approach must be based on products, and not activities.

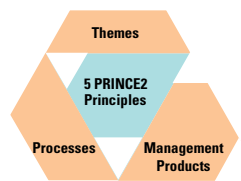


Figure 2:  
Does your project reflect PRINCE2 or PINO?

Figure 2 visualizes a project with adjusted principles, themes, processes and management products. Taking the previous remarks into account, we can argue that the result has become PINO. It is, as stated, impossible, to adjust or skip one or more principles.

If customization (ie, tailoring PRINCE2 to suit the project environment) is one of the seven principles, you should ask yourself the following: looking at the different themes, processes and management products in your project, what can I customize? In short, how far can you go and what changes are allowed without ending up with PINO (see figure 3)?

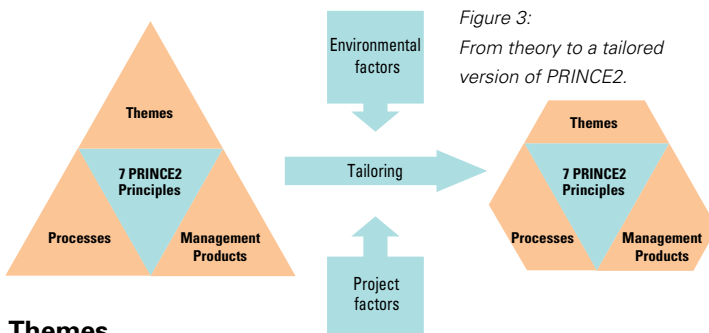


Figure 3:  
From theory to a tailored version of PRINCE2.

**Themes**

The PRINCE2 themes describe aspects of project management that must be addressed continually during the project life cycle and that require specific treatment for the different PRINCE processes. The following themes need to be used, but can be tailored according to the scale, nature and complexity of the project:

- 1 Business Case (Why?)
- 2 Organization (Who?)
- 3 Quality (What?)
- 4 Plans (How, How much, when?)
- 5 Risk (What if?)
- 6 Change (What's the impact?)
- 7 Progress (Where are we now? Where are we going? Should we carry on?)

Adaptation is possible within all seven themes.

The purpose of the **Business Case** theme is to establish mechanisms to judge whether the project is or remains desirable, viable and achievable to start or continue with the project. The management document Business Case is mandatory, but the level of detail has a one-to-one relationship with the size and complexity of the project.

The purpose of the **Organization** theme is to define and establish roles and responsibilities. PRINCE2 describes the set-up of the project management team and explains all roles the tasks and responsibilities. The Project Board comprises the roles Executive, Senior User and Senior Supplier. It's possible that in unusual cases, some roles may be combined. For example, the Executive may also take on the role of Senior User or Senior Supplier. It is also possible to have more than one Senior User or Senior Supplier. But be careful that the Project Board does not become too big. It needs to





stay small enough in order to make decisions effectively and quickly.

Project Assurance provides reassurance to the Project Board that what has been agreed to be delivered is being conducted appropriately. For smaller, simpler projects, the individual Project Board members can do this by themselves. For larger, more complex projects this can be delegated to a separate entity outside the Project Board. The same applies for the Change Authority. This can be delegated or executed by the Project Board or the Senior User within the Project Board.

To manage the individual team plans, and deliver the specialist products, you need team managers. For small or simple projects, the project manager can be the team manager as well and manage the individual team members. Project support is the responsibility of the project manager, but it can be delegated to a separate entity for larger or complex projects.

The purpose of the **Quality theme** is to define and implement the resources with which the project will be able to produce and assess products fit for their purpose. Tailoring is visible by using the existing organization's quality system. The Quality Management Strategy describes the quality standards, techniques and responsibilities that need to be met in order to deliver the requested product's quality. If specific quality Management Products are needed, these can be separate and independent documents or can be combined as integrated documents; this will be described in this strategy too.

The purpose of the **Planning theme** is to facilitate the implementation, communication and management of achieving a specific goal or set of goals by defining the required resources like people, budget or tools.

Each PRINCE2 project (initiation) has a Stage Plan, Project Plan, Stage Plans (delivery), Team Plans and if needed Exception Plans. For smaller, less complex projects the processes 'Starting up a Project' and Initiating a Project' can be integrated. By doing so, a (Initiation) Stage Plan is not needed. If the project contains only two management stages (initiation stage and implementation stage) there is no need for a separate Stage Plan. This can be integrated with the Project Plan. If the project manager fulfils the team manager's role, the Project Plan can also replace the Team Plan.

The purpose of the **Risk theme** is to identify, assess and control uncertainties, thereby improving the potential for a project's success. The PRINCE2 Risk Management Strategy product has to describe how to establish an effective risk management procedure and embed risk management within the project management work. If specific risk management products are needed these can be separate and independent documents or can be combined as integrated documents; this will be described in this strategy too.

The purpose of the **Change theme** is to identify, assess and control any potential and approved change to the baseline scenario. In the Configuration Management Strategy, you have to describe how the configuration management and the issue and change control procedure will look like. The configuration management procedure shows how the project will act on planning, identification, control, status accounting, verification and audit of the Configuration Items. The issue and change control procedure explains how to capture and examine the issues as well as how to propose, decide and implement corrective actions.

The purpose of the **Progress theme** is to establish mechanisms that enable you to monitor and compare actual achievements against those planned, so that a forecast can be provided on the project objectives to be fulfilled (including the continued viability of the project) and to enable any unacceptable deviations to be controlled. As project manager, you have to choose how many management stages you will have. The duration of those management stages is related to the planning horizon for which it's feasible to create a detailed plan, the technical stages and the relationship with the corporate or programme plan. If the team manager and the project manager are the same person, there is no need to have a Checkpoint Report. The project manager has the information to write the highlight report.

## Processes

Seven processes are needed in order to manage a project according to PRINCE2. Every process aims for a specific goal via a structured set of activities:

- 1 Starting up a Project
- 2 Initiating a Project
- 3 Directing a Project
- 4 Controlling a Stage
- 5 Managing Product Delivery
- 6 Managing a Stage Boundary
- 7 Closing a Project

As described in the previous paragraphs, it is possible for smaller, less complex projects to combine the processes 'Starting up a Project' and 'Initiating a Project'. Specific activities like 'Plan initiation stage' and 'Request to initiate a project' are not needed anymore.

If the project only consists of two management stages, the process 'Managing a Stage Boundary' is only needed if you have to produce an Exception Plan. There is no need to create a Stage Plan. The Project Plan also contains the detailed Stage Plan. Closing the second stage will be handled via the process 'Closing a Project'.

The processes 'Controlling a Stage' and 'managing product delivery' can be integrated if the project manager and the team manager are the same person. Activities like 'Authorize work package', 'Accept a work package', 'Deliver a work package', and 'Receive completed work packages' will become due.

## Management products

PRINCE2 management products are differentiated in terms of baseline products, records and reports. PRINCE2 doesn't say anything about the layout or form. In most organizations, a set of standard templates will be created using a text document, a spreadsheet or presentation. Reports can also be made verbally during a meeting or phone-call.

Depending on the project and as a result of tailoring the themes and processes, specific management products may not be needed anymore. Examples include the Project Brief, the Work Package, a Stage Plan, an End Stage Report and a Checkpoint Report. It's also possible to combine some management products, such as the Project Initiation Documentation (PID) or an End Project Report. These can be combined with the Lessons Report. The different logs and registers can also be combined.

Finally, an integrated status report can combine the Highlight report, the Issue Report and the Product Status Account. Creativity gives you many opportunities as long as the needed information is available at the right moment and for the right people involved.

## Conclusion

PRINCE2 gives you enough possibilities to tailor the method to your project without ending up with PINO. The so-called 'bureaucratic quality' of PRINCE2 is, in my opinion, not fair. There are enough opportunities to define usable and readable Management Products and set up a 'lean and mean' project management organization structure.

## Literature:

- Bert Hedeman, Hans Fredriksz, Gabor Vis van Heemst, 'Project Management Based on PRINCE2, 2009 Edition', Van Haren Publishing, 2009.
- Henny Portman, 'PRINCE2 in practice', Van Haren Publishing, 2009.
- Henny Portman, 'PRINCE2 Edition 2009 Quick Reference Card', Van Haren Publishing, 2010.