

# HOW TO GET THINGS



Young Person's Toolkit For Responsible  
Project Management

First edition November 2025

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PORTSMOUTH



Responsible  
Project Management

THE 50  
PERCENT /

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## Notes from the contributors



Projects create the future. This new toolkit is intended to encourage and support young people around the world to act in creating a better future. Project management might seem rather technical, but it does not need to be. Here we share selected practical ideas that will help you to get things done. We hope the tools and techniques we have included will inspire those who have yet to discover the exciting world of projects to get involved and transform the world around them. Welcome aboard!

*Karen Thompson*

Co-founder, Responsible Project Management



Every project begins as a quiet spark, an idea that refuses to stay still. For me, this toolkit is about that moment when curiosity turns into action. Responsible Project Management isn't just about planning; it's about awareness, seeing how your choices ripple through people, systems and the planet. If this guide helps even one person pause, think differently and create with intention, then it's already a success. It has been

exciting to help create this toolkit and I hope the result will resonate with you.

*Krushang Mistry*

MSc Project Management, RPM Volunteer



If you are new to project management, then this is the guide for you. This is not a traditional textbook. Rather, it combines informal advice, selected techniques with examples and suggests how to use AI to help get something – we’ll call it a project - done. We hope you enjoy reading our work. Please reach out to the RPM community and share your stories. Good luck!

*Nigel Williams*

Professor of Responsible Systems and Projects  
University of Portsmouth

We have been delighted to collaborate with Matias Lara and his colleagues from **The 50 Percent**. On the next page, you can see what he has to say.



If there's one thing I've learned from working on systems change, it's that no one transforms a system alone. Collaboration isn't just a nice-to-have; it's the engine that keeps the whole thing moving. When we work together (mixing our ideas, our quirks and even our mistakes) something magical happens: we start to build real power and that's where transformation begins.

That's exactly what this guide is about. It's not a rulebook or a checklist; it's a companion for anyone brave enough to turn "what if" into "what's next." Inside, you'll find tools, stories and frameworks that make systems change feel less like an abstract theory and more like something you can actually do with your friends, your team, or your community.

Think of it as your project superpower: a way to bring people together, align efforts and make sure your brilliant ideas don't just stay ideas. This guide helps you connect the dots between dreams and action (because every system, no matter how complex, starts to shift when we act collectively and responsibly).

So, dive in, have fun and remember: the future isn't something we wait for: it's something we build together.

*Matias Lara*

Co-Director, The 50 Percent

# 1. Introduction

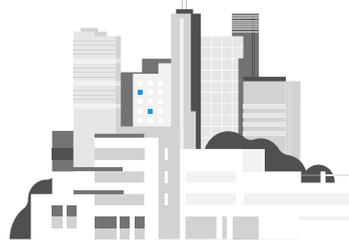
## Why Responsible Project Management?

Congratulations, fearless traveller of the systems universe! You’ve just stumbled into the control room of how the world works. If “systems” sounds mysterious, don’t panic. Think of it as the hidden wiring that makes everything tick. And if you haven’t yet discovered [The Young Person’s Guide to Systems Change](#), put this down, go read it and come back later.

Now, let’s talk about you. You’ve discovered a lever, a shiny switch you’d love to push to nudge the world in a better direction. You want to act, to change something, to make a dent in the universe. Fantastic. But here’s the plot twist: to pull that off, you don’t just need inspiration, you need a **project**. And to get that project across the finish line without losing your mind, you need this toolkit, which, trust us, is the secret guidebook you never knew you needed.



Projects are humanity’s favourite way of shaping the future. They’re how we go from “what if” to “ta-da!” But it’s not just us, nature’s been running projects since forever. Birds? Nest-builders extraordinaire. Rivers? Slow-motion sculptors carving ox-bow lakes over centuries. And humans? Well, we go big: skyscrapers, rail networks, mobile apps, space rockets, banking systems. Unfortunately, our projects also have a dark side. They’ve chewed up ecosystems, ignored communities and left people out of decisions that shaped their lives.



Enter [Responsible Project Management](#) (RPM): a new approach to managing projects. RPM isn’t about controlling nature or bossing people around. It’s about working **with** natural and human systems, not against them. It’s about relationships, with the planet, with people, with everything that makes a system tick. Use the tricks and tools in this guide and your project won’t just be better, you’ll also level up your learning, skills and worldview along the way.

So, whatever it is you’re dreaming of, let’s call it what it is: a project. And before we dive in headfirst, let’s hit pause for a quick pit stop. Time to ask the million-dollar question: what actually counts as a project?

## 2. What is a project?



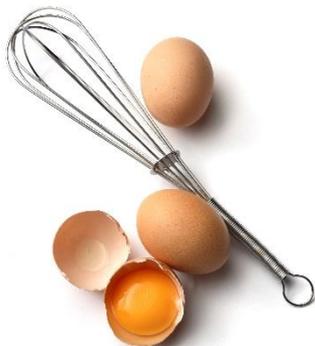
Projects are literally everywhere, hiding in plain sight like Easter eggs in the game of life. Some are colossal, mega-scale undertakings that shape entire landscapes: think solar farms stretching across deserts, motorways weaving cities together, or airports that buzz like global beehives. Then you've got your mid-sized projects, writing a book, launching a start-up, throwing a festival that people will talk about for years. And don't underestimate the tiny ones either: making a short promo video for your village or gathering your friends for a community beach clean-up. No matter the size, here's the golden truth: **every project uses resources and leaves footprints.** Environmental, social, cultural, the ripple effects are always there, even when you're not thinking about them.

Now, here's where humans sometimes miss the point. In today's hyper-busy world, projects often get boiled down to two things: money and deadlines. We obsess over budgets and panic about overruns. You'll see headlines screaming about projects delayed for years or costing millions more than planned. But here's a secret: not every project needs money. Small, grassroots projects often run on passion, borrowed equipment and sheer human determination. What *all* projects do need is time, because every single activity, from discussions to building, happens within the clock's relentless tick-tock.

Project management often gets stuck in this narrow lens of “costs and schedules”. But if you want to make a real impact in the world, it’s time to think differently. Projects aren’t just calendars with price tags attached: they’re living, breathing **systems**. A project has elements (your people, tools and ideas), interactions (how those parts talk and clash with each other), a purpose (your North Star), feedback loops (signals telling you what’s working and what’s not), delays (oh yes, they always show up) and unintended consequences (the “oops” factor).

What makes a project different from all other systems, though, is the **intention** baked into it. A project exists because someone, that’s you, wants to make a specific change, within a certain time and space. It’s deliberate. It’s purposeful. It’s your way of saying: “Let’s bend reality in this direction.”

And that brings us to the juicy part: the anatomy of a project. Let’s crack it open and see what makes it tick.



## Anatomy of a Project: purpose, elements, interactions, limits and risks

A project is basically your golden ticket to helping the future look brighter. Projects are the bridges we build between “what is” and “what could be”. Or, as Mark Enzer wisely put it, “a project is a set of interventions into pre-existing systems whose purpose is to enable people and nature to flourish together for generations.” And every project has five delicious ingredients in its recipe.

**1. Purpose** – This is the big WHY (and a sprinkle of HOW). It’s the beating heart of your project. Maybe you’re making a short film to shout about plastic waste in your local park: Why? to raise awareness. How? by creating and sharing a video. Or you’re organising a beach clean-up: Why? to protect wildlife and children from hazards. How? by rallying your neighbours with gloves, bins and community spirit. Your purpose is the compass that keeps you from getting lost in the weeds.

**2. Elements** – These are your ingredients, the “stuff” you need to whip up change. They include natural resources, human resources, ideas, tools and information. A film project? You’ll need scriptwriters, storyboards, actors, cameras, lights, editors, sets and yes, an audience. A beach clean-up? Gather participants, protective gloves, bin bags, recycling info and maybe a snack or two to fuel the team. Without the right elements, your project is basically a recipe without flour.

**3. Interactions** – Here’s where the magic happens. Elements don’t just sit there; they dance together. Directors guide actors, editors polish scenes, audiences binge-watch your video on their phones. For a beach clean, participants coordinate, split the sand into zones and maybe keep an eye out for a crab scuttling past. The smoother the interactions, the smoother the project, think of this as the choreography of your project’s dance.

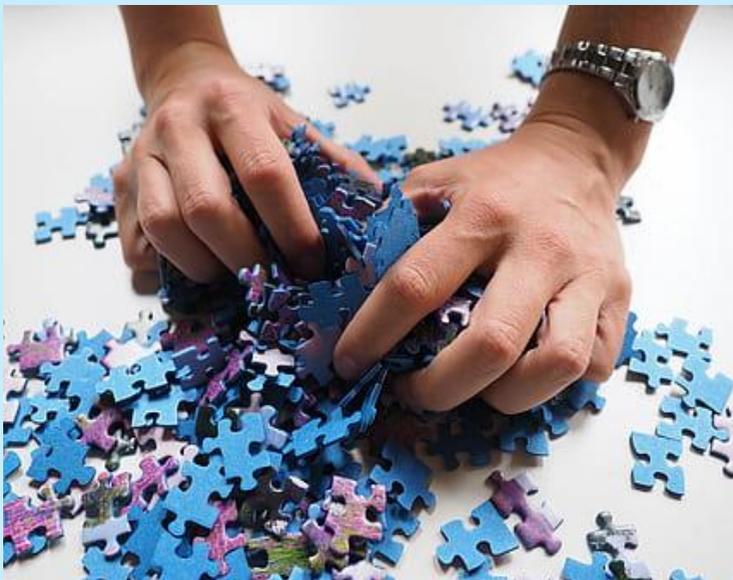


**4. Limits** – Every project has boundaries, whether you like it or not. Timeframes, deadlines, regulations, even people’s patience, these are the fences around your playground. Sometimes they’re rigid (like a course deadline with specific requirements), other times they’re flexible (like a community choosing to focus on one stretch of beach instead of the entire coastline). Limits aren’t roadblocks; they’re the shape of the sandbox you get to play in.

**5. Risks** – Ah, the plot thickens. Risks can be villains or secret allies. They're the things that can derail you or give you an unexpected boost. Success isn't a one-size-fits-all deal (spoiler: defining it is complicated and everyone has their own definition). For your film, risks include dead batteries, sick actors, or a social media platform going down. But what if a celebrity stumbles on your video and shares it? Boom - opportunity! For a beach clean, storms might cancel your plans, or sunshine might double your turnout. Risks are what keep your project from being boring.



So, that's the anatomy of a project. And here's the kicker: by the time you realise you've got a project on your hands, it's already alive. People (including you) have opinions, emotions and expectations wrapped around it. Which means your project has already begun its story. So, let's get started and begin putting the puzzle together.



### 3. Getting started

So, this brilliant idea for change is yours, right? Well... yes and no. Ideas don't exist in a vacuum, they're like ping-pong balls, bouncing around and colliding with everyone else's thoughts the second they meet. Systems interactions are sneaky like that: the moment you try to change something, ripples start spreading and suddenly your "little idea" is rubbing shoulders with everyone else's hopes, fears and opinions.

But brace yourself, because here comes the human turn: people who didn't dream up your idea, in other words, everyone else, will only latch onto the parts that affect them.

#### **Fun fact**

People are world-class complainers. It's way easier to criticise, protest, or poke holes in an idea than it is to stand up and support. Keep that in mind, because resistance will shadow you through every phase of your project. The trick is to expect it and keep going anyway.

And here's the truth bomb: you can't do this solo. Every project worth its salt needs other people. Not just because teamwork makes the dream work (though it does) but because talking to yourself gets old fast.



You'll need allies, supporters, challengers, doers, basically, a carefully chosen squad who can help shape your idea into something real and resilient. Think of it like assembling a band: sure, you could strum a guitar alone, but the real magic happens when the drums, bass and vocals kick in.



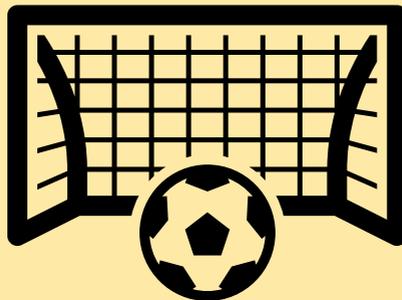
## What does success look like?

Now, let's talk about that slippery word we keep tossing around: **success**. What does it even mean?

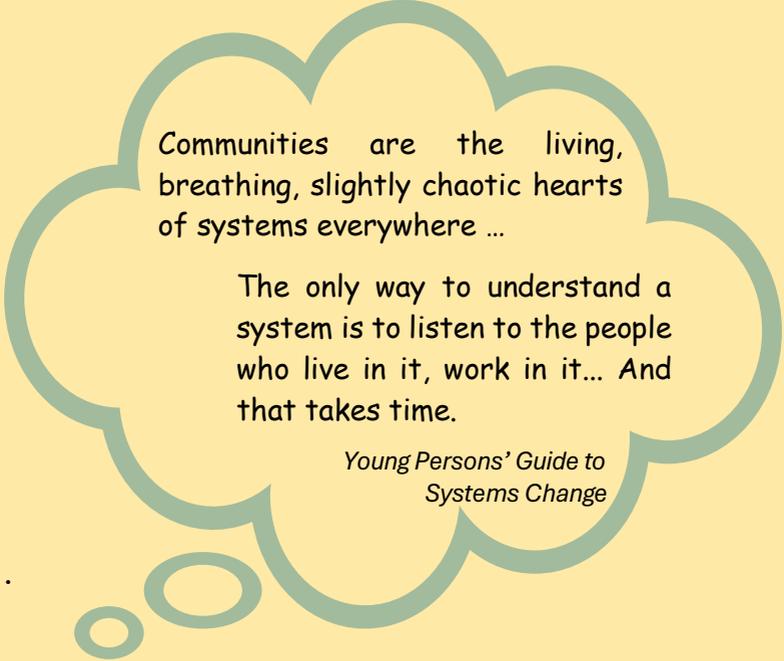
Spoiler alert: success isn't one-size-fits-all. It's a kaleidoscope and what you see depends on who's looking and when. Your version of success today might look completely different a year from now and your teammates will have their own takes too.

So, here's a challenge: start by writing down what success means for you. Paint the picture as clearly as possible. If you're working with others, have them do the same. Then compare notes, highlight where you agree, debate the differences and build a shared vision that everyone can rally behind. That vision will become your guiding star.

This is the deal: you can't hit a target you haven't defined. You need to know what you're aiming for before you set off. Your ideas won't be perfect at this stage, and the goal might be quite wide, but it's a great place to start.



Ok, so you've nailed down and shared some ideas with your team, but this is only the start. You need to go further. You need to learn more about the situation and you can do this by using what you know about systems. Remember the Young Persons' Guide to Systems Change?



Communities are the living, breathing, slightly chaotic hearts of systems everywhere ...

The only way to understand a system is to listen to the people who live in it, work in it... And that takes time.

*Young Persons' Guide to  
Systems Change*

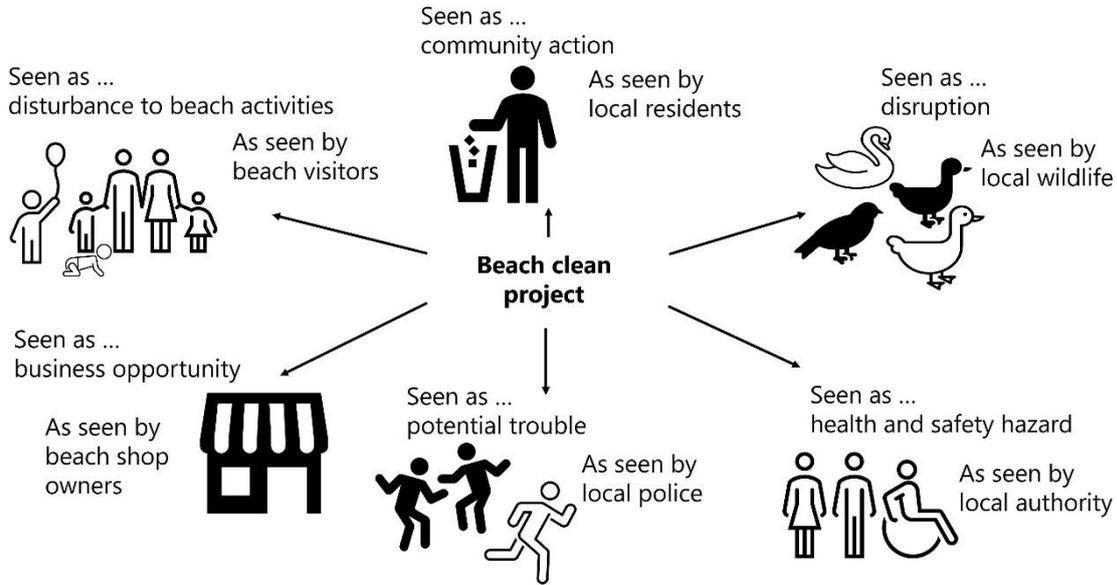
To learn more about the systems involved in your project, you're now going to sketch some pictures that will help make sense of the situation.

## Making sense of your project – one picture at a time

We're going to start in a straightforward way. You can sketch the first picture by yourself or with your team – you don't need to use AI yet. Who can you think of who has even a whisper of influence on your project?

The first picture is a perspectives map showing everyone who has, or might have, a perspective on what you're doing. Individuals, groups, organisations; think broadly. Use your imagination and some detective-style research to figure out what they might think and, most importantly, how they might feel about it. Why do feelings matter? Humans are inherently relational creatures and decisions are often more about emotion than logic.

Once you've collected these insights, organise them, make a list or a diagram, so all the perspectives live in one place. For example, if your project is a beach clean, relevant viewpoints include beach visitors, wildlife, local residents and the local authorities. Each has their own story - compliance, enjoyment, safety, or environmental concerns - that shapes how they'll react to your project. Understanding these perspectives isn't optional; it's your first step toward a project that lands and improves things. We'll call them your **project stakeholders**.



**Fig. 1 Example of a perspectives map for a beach clean project**

Taking the example of making a video for a course, one important perspective is the assessor's viewpoint. What do they value? Where are the marks coming from? For you, what grade are you aiming for and do you truly know what 'good' looks like?

You might be able to chat with some of the stakeholders, but tread carefully. Go in prepared. Think about how your story connects with theirs. Their first instinct might be to see your project as a threat or a golden opportunity. Your mission: build allies early rather than wrestle with resistance later.



Since this is RPM, the environmental and social context can't be ignored. The RPM logo is a reminder that the land and water, communities now and in the future are all project stakeholders.

Think about the possible impacts of the project on biodiversity, soil, water and air, as well as on people, the local economy and wider society. For example, the energy required and the travel requirements to make a video have environmental and social consequences. Consider both the consequences of doing the project and the ripple effects of its results. Your favourite AI can help you kick things off but always double and triple check the information from the sources you use.

## 4. Digging deeper with the help of an AI buddy

Once you have created a basic perspectives map, you are ready to dig deeper, with help not just from your team, but your favourite AI buddy or Large Language Model (LLM). Here is a 6-step process for sketching a set of rich pictures about your project situation. And we'll suggest prompts for you to use.

Sketch as you go: people/roles, places, tools, arrows (→), clouds (☁), hearts (♥), stars (★), triangles (▲).

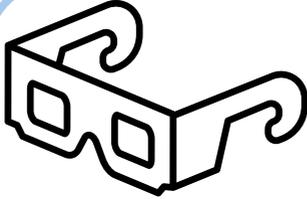
Tip: remember every project has **purpose, elements, interactions, limits and risks** - keep these in mind and ask the LLM follow up questions if you're not sure about anything.

**Step 1 Clarify purpose.** Write the purpose of your project in *one sentence*. Open your chosen LLM, such as Claude, ChatGPT, Gemini, DeepSeek, Grok or other software you use. Paste the following prompt:

**"Help me plan a rich picture for a project. My project is: [one sentence]. Ask me 5 short questions to clarify the purpose and who might be involved."**

## Step 2 Explore the situation with five system lenses.

This will be a 'discussion' between you and the LLM. For each lens, paste the prompt, discuss with the LLM and then you create a sketch.



### **Efficiency** (machine lens).

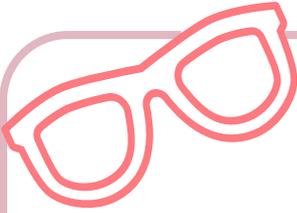
Here you are interested in exploring what must work reliably e.g. schedules, equipment, handovers etc.

Paste the following prompt: "**Machine lens: list 5 things that must work smoothly and where breakdowns might occur.**"



### **Adaptation** (organism lens).

Now explore what needs to learn, heal or grow; where do we need extra time or resources in case things go wrong, such as weather, exams, rules? Paste the following prompt: "**Organism lens: where do we need to adapt to surprises? list 5 things that must work smoothly and where breakdowns might happen.**"

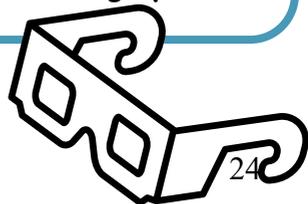


**Power / meaning** (culture / politics lens). Time to consider who has influence, where could values clash, who decides? Paste the following prompt: **"Culture /politics lens: who holds power? Who might feel unheard or overlooked? Any decision bottlenecks."**



**Wider effects** (social / environmental lens). Investigate who/what outside the team is affected now or later, e.g. community, nature, future generations. Paste this prompt: **"Social/environmental lens: list 5 impacts beyond the team - good and risky."**

**Unexpected change** (interrelationships lens). Finally, you need to explore possible knock-on effects or tensions in your project. Paste the following prompt: **"Interrelationships lens: suggest 3 possible unintended consequences and 3 leverage points."**



**Step 3 Build a rich picture.** Once you have explored the project situation with 5 system lenses, you are ready to do some more sketching and create a rich picture. Instructions:

- Put your **purpose** at the top.
- Add **elements** (people, tools, info, places). Connect with **arrows** for flows/influence.
- Mark **limits** (time, budget, rules, space) with boxes/boundary lines. Add **risks** with ▲.
- Sprinkle ☁ for unknowns; ♥ for values that matter to you/the community. *(This mirrors the “anatomy” of responsible projects and their footprints, not just deadlines.)*

You can use the following prompt to improve your picture:

**“Looking at my notes, draft a bullet list of elements: interactions, limits and top 5 risks to label on my picture.”**

**Step 4 Convene voices and boundaries.** Great projects bring people together. Ask the LLM who else should be invited and how to frame the story so they care (a *convening call*). Draw a dotted boundary around the *project team vs wider landscape* and sketch bridges across. Use this LLM prompt:

**“Suggest 5 stakeholders I should invite and one friendly, inclusive message to each explaining why their voice matters.”**

**Step 5 Reflect and check.** Circle 3 parts of your picture and answer on sticky notes or in the margins:

- **Surprise:** What did you notice that you hadn’t seen before?
- **Tension:** Where might conflict or misunderstanding occur?
- **Ethics:** Who could be harmed or left out? What will you do about it?
- **Next step:** One small change or experiment you will try next.

Here is an LLM prompt to suggest further improvements:

**“Using my rich picture, propose 2 tiny, low-risk ideas to improve the system and 2 ways to measure if things get better.”**

**Step 6 Storytelling.** Finally, to test your understanding, engage others and begin building commitment, give a 90-second walkthrough: “Here’s our purpose... key players... risks ... and our next steps.” One final prompt for you to use if you wish:

“Turn my notes into a 120-word voiceover script for presenting my rich picture to stakeholders and other interested parties.”



**Warning:** AI and LLM responses are generated from the data they have analysed statistically. They are not accurate or true; there will be bias and may be distortion. LLMs cannot think for you. But, with careful prompting, they can be helpful!



## 5. Plan for action

Alright, time to turn your bright ideas into real-world change! You've explored the systems, mapped the people and imagined the impact, now let's get practical and start shaping your plan for action.

### Build the story

First up: the storyboard. If you haven't fully explored all the systems yet, no problem. Developing a storyboard can happen at the same time and, in fact, doing both together is a smart move.

Don't worry, this part isn't about tricky formulas. It is about organising the pieces of the story; planning for action is the storyboard of how effort becomes impact.

The things you do (activities) lead to things you create (results). But your project results on their own won't change the world. The results need to be noticed, used and appreciated. Perception matters. The way people see your project makes all the difference between something that fades away and something that takes off.



*Secret Tip*

*The more you connect results to actual uses and tangible benefits, the more powerful your project will be.*

It's when people start using the project results, that's when the real benefits show up, for both people and the planet. The chain: **Project** → **Results** → **Use** → **Benefits** - is called **PRUB**. Think of it as your project's heartbeat. It keeps everything connected, showing how your actions spark outcomes that ripple outward. Keeping PRUB connections strong makes sure your work creates waves of good change that last.



How PRUB works is shown in Fig. 2. The left-to-right arrows show how activities lead to results, uses and eventually benefits. Dotted lines indicate the crucial things you can influence but not fully control. And those right-to-left arrows? That's feedback, golden insights that let you tweak your project and amplify its impact and benefits. Understanding these connections turns your project from a series of actions into a connected, results-driven story with real-world impact.

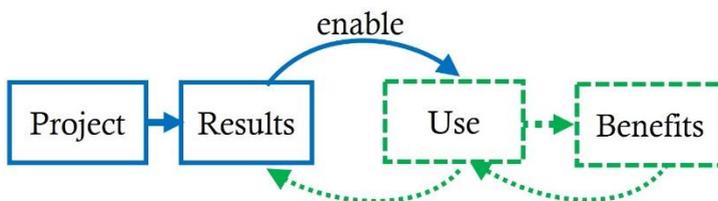


Fig. 2 PRUB Connections (Adapted from Driver, 2025)

PRUB connections are not just a planning tool, they are your project's secret weapon for clarity, learning and collaboration, making success far more likely to stick and far more fun.

Take the beach clean example, PRUB connections break the project into six sub-projects and eight results as shown in Fig. 3. But here's the interesting part, only three results generate benefits. The other five? They're crucial stepping stones, feeding other sub-projects to make the whole system run smoothly.

**Other interim results** can usefully be included in your project too. Why? Because they can help test your understanding and keep everyone engaged. For instance, if your project involves making a video, one early result could be a storyboard. Share it, discuss it, tweak it, make sure you're heading in the right direction. You could even record some test clips to gather feedback before committing to the full production.



We are going to move on now and start planning the project work, but you will probably continue to refine the PRUB connections as everyone gets a better understanding of what's happening.

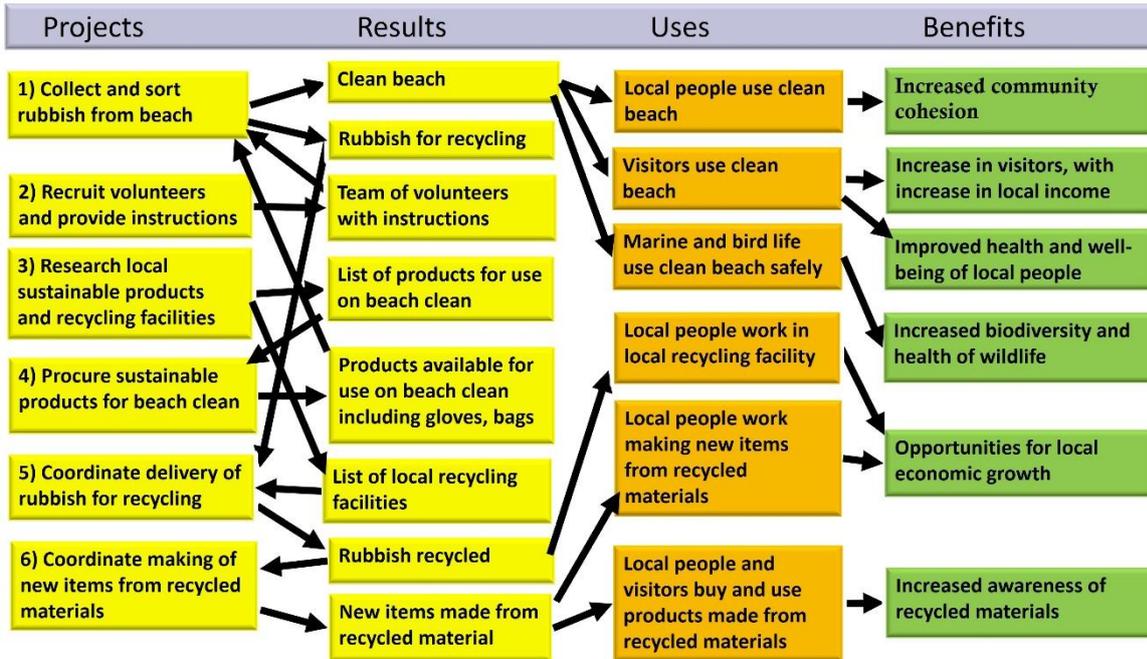


Fig. 3 Example of PRUB connections for beach clean project

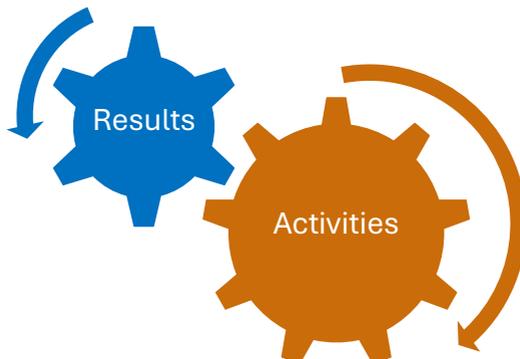
## Work Breakdown

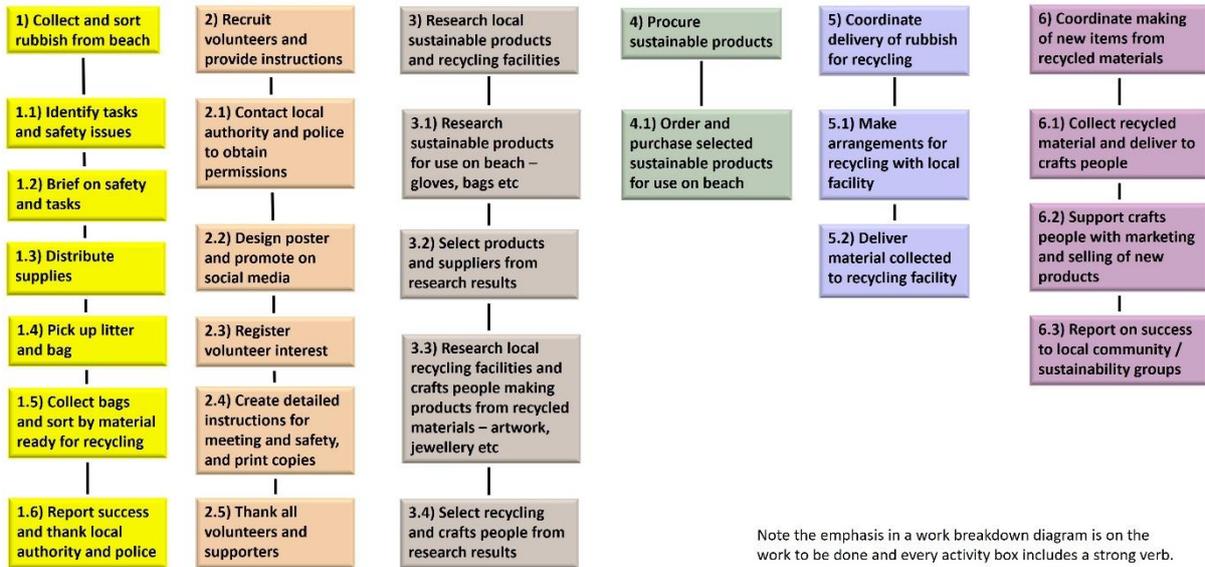
Now let's break it down! A project can feel a bit overwhelming, like staring at a mountain and wondering how you'll ever get to the top. The trick is to divide it into small steps.

Take every activity and split it into smaller pieces. Each activity should create a result you can see (such as a leaflet), measure (maybe a new skill) or share (perhaps notes from a meeting). Keep going until each activity is small enough to be clearly understood and tracked.

Here's a tip: think of results and activities as a dynamic duo. Work on activities and results together, cross-check constantly and look for anything you might have missed. Every activity should lead to a result and every result involves at least one activity.

The clearer the breakdown, the smoother your path to success and the fewer surprises along the way. Less guesswork, more progress.





**Fig. 4 Example of work breakdown for beach clean project**

Note: We do not explain in detail here how to construct a work breakdown, or a network diagram or a Gantt chart. These are commonly used techniques so you will find many examples and instructional videos available online.

## Estimating

Next, it's time for some educated guessing, or what project managers call estimating.

Estimating means figuring out how much time, effort and resources each activity will need. You're not expected to know everything perfectly. You can use your experience, your team's insights and maybe ideas from similar projects as a guide.

Resources come in many shapes and sizes: people, skills, materials, money, equipment, energy and motivation. For each activity you need to ask: Who's doing it? What do they need? How long will it take? It might happen over hours, days or weeks. Be realistic and remember no one complains if they finish early!

### **Tip for budgeting**

*If you are paying for work, whether in money or volunteer hours, duration and budget are not the same thing. An activity that requires 5 people for 2 days will require a budget of 10 ( $5 \times 2$ ) although the duration will still be 2 days.*

## Sequencing

You have a list of activities, so it's time to figure out the order needed. Some activities can start straight away, while others require another activity to be done first, like waiting for your event poster to be printed before promoting it. These are called **dependencies**.

List every activity and note what it depends on. Then join the dots. You'll start to see a pattern, a flow, that shows how your project moves from start to finish. This flow can be drawn as a **network diagram**. This diagram is simply a map showing the sequence that links all the activities together. (If you're not sure how to do this, you can find videos on YouTube video that demonstrate the process.)

By linking the activities together, you will discover something called the **critical path**. This path is the sequence of activities that determines the minimum time your project will take. If anything on this path is delayed, the entire project will be delayed so, these activities are the ones to watch closely!



The beach clean example is illustrated in Figs 4 and 5. Note that the network diagram shows the shortest time the project can be completed is 45 days, compared with the total of 86 days shown in the list of activities.

**Fig. 5 Example activity list for a beach clean project**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Depends on</b>	<b>Days</b>
1.1	Identify tasks and safety issues	none	1
1.2	Brief on safety and tasks	2.2, 2.3, 2.4	0.1
1.3	Distribute supplies	1.2, 4.1	0.1
1.4	Pick up litter and bag	1.3	0.6
1.5	Take bags to central point and sort by material ready for recycling	1.4	0.2
1.6	Report success and thank local authority and police	1.5	1
2.1	Obtain permissions	1.1	10
2.2	Design poster and promote on socials	2.1	10
2.3	Register volunteer interest	none	20
2.4	Create and print instructions	2.1, 3.2	1
2.5	Thank volunteers and supporters	1.5, 5.2, 6.1	1
3.1	Research sustainable products	1.1	3
3.2	Select products and suppliers	3.1	1
3.3	Research local recycling and product makers	none	3
3.4	Select recycling facility and product makers	3.3	1
4.1	Order and purchase sustainable products	3.2	5
5.1	Make arrangements for recycling	3.4	5
5.2	Deliver materials for recycling	1.5, 5.1	10*
6.1	Deliver recycled materials to crafts people	3.4, 5.2	1
6.2	Support crafts people with marketing and selling	6.1	10
6.3	Report on project success	1.6, 2.5, 6.2	2
		Total	86

\* Includes time for recycling process

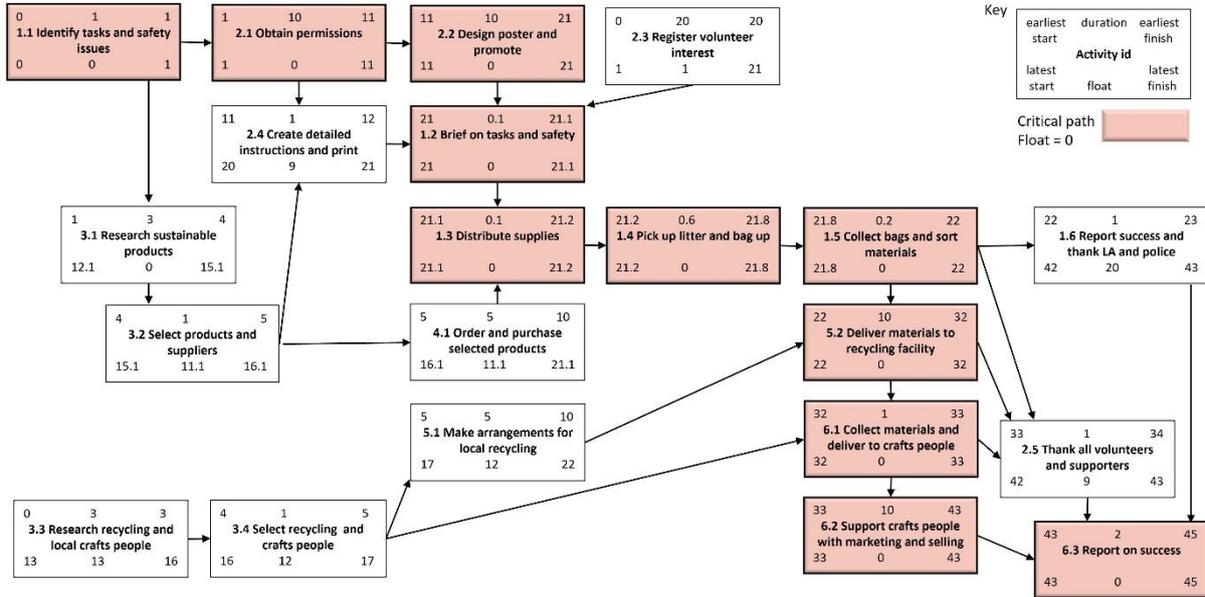


Fig. 6 Example of network diagram for beach clean project

## Scheduling

Now it's go-time! Grab a calendar and turn your network diagram into a real timeline. Think about when people and resources will actually be available – weekends, workdays, holidays and family commitments all matter.

Sketch your first version, then share it with your team and anyone helping. Listen to their feedback, they might know things you've missed. Keep adjusting until everyone feels confident. A great schedule isn't set in stone; it's a living plan that grows and adapts with the project, setting you up for smooth sailing from start to finish.

Collaboration here saves chaos later.



# Beach clean up project

SIMPLE GANTT CHART by Vertex42.com  
<https://www.vertex42.com/ExcelTemplates/simple-gantt-chart.html>

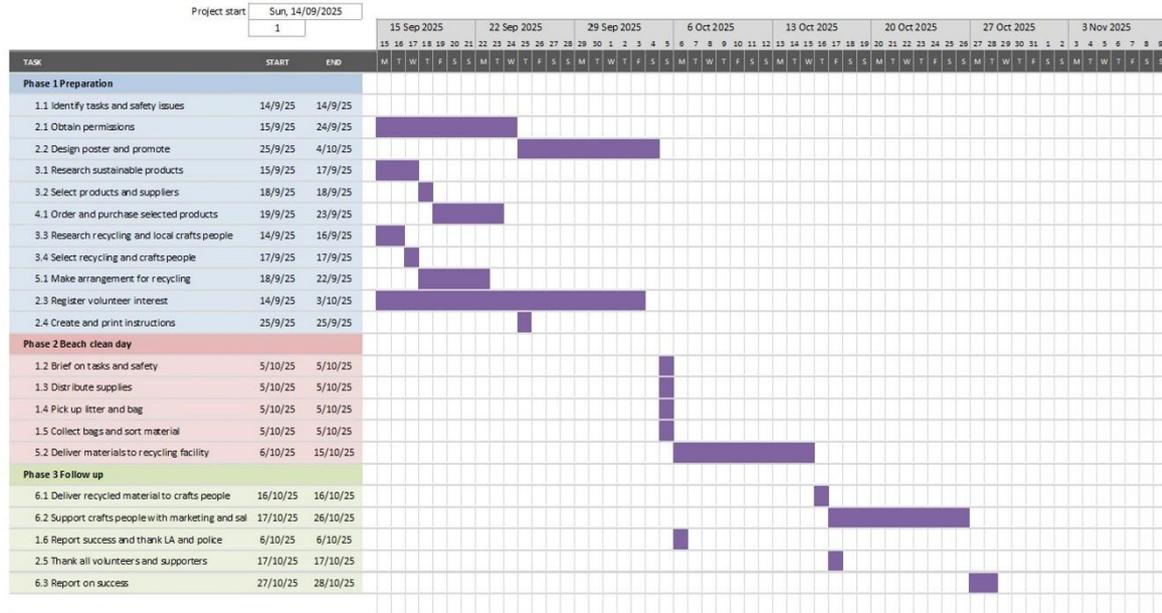


Fig. 7 Example of Gantt chart for beach clean project

## What could go wrong ... or better than expected?

Before you kick off, hit pause. Let's talk about risks and not just the scary kind. Risks include opportunities – the unexpected turns that can make your project even stronger.

Think of risks as 'what ifs'. What if the weather changes? What if a volunteer drops out? What if a local influencer shares your video and it goes viral?

Smart project managers don't fear risks; they plan for them. You can:

- **Prevent:** reduce the chance of something bad happening (mitigation).
- **Prepare:** work out how to adapt if there is change (contingency).
- **Play:** seize a lucky opportunity if it shows up (exploitation).

For example, if you're making a video, you might build in extra time for filming in case of bad weather, illness, or last-minute creative sparks.

A little anticipation here can open doors and turn surprises into stories worth celebrating.



## Plan for change

And finally, expect the unexpected. Projects rarely go exactly as planned and that's ok. You can plan for that.

Create groups of results along the way, we'll call them **milestones**, that can be used to learn and adapt as the project unfolds.

Milestones and interim results are great for measuring progress, uncovering threats, seizing opportunities and preparing for use of your project's results. For example, if you're making a video, you could release a short teaser or trailer early. Gather feedback, tweak the story and keep people engaged. Results like these can help you test ideas, build momentum and spot opportunities you might have missed.

Think of milestones as checkpoints on your adventure. They keep your project moving, connected and full of life.

In short, planning for action is about connecting your ideas with reality; one clear step, one smart decision and one conversation at a time. PRUB connections help you see the big picture, while breakdowns, schedules and risk analysis keep you grounded.

Now, go make your plan sing and bring your project to life.



## 6. Bring it home

It's showtime and you're ready to roll! As a Responsible Project Manager, your real superpower is **communication**. Responsible Project Management is not just about following the plan; it's about staying connected to people, purpose and progress. Your role is to keep the story moving forward. This means staying curious and asking questions.



Check-in frequently. What's going well? What's slowing things down? Has anything surprising sneaked in and needs attention? The goal isn't to catch people out, it's to stay aware. Even if you are working solo, comparing what's happening with what you expected can change the game.

If everything's on track, amazing! But if not, don't panic. Projects rarely glide smoothly. Maybe an activity took longer, a resource vanished, or a brilliant new idea popped up. Flexibility can be critical to success.

Projects thrive on **stories** and **relationships**, which are complex and ever-changing. Have quick chats, share updates and celebrate small wins along the way. When something shifts (because it will), take a breath, talk it through and adjust the plan.

Your plan is not carved in stone; it's more like clay and you need to keep shaping it as new information comes to light. Stay open and honest, keep your team in the loop and ask for help when you need it.

And yes, people will question, complain or resist – that's normal. Change can make people feel uneasy. The best way to handle it? Keep them included. Keep telling your project story in ways that others can relate to. When people feel a part of the journey, they're far more likely to be allies than obstacles. Keep the relationships strong and your project will not only cross the finish line but will have an impact that lasts.



## 7. Celebrate success

You did it. Whether your project is wrapped up neatly or has evolved into something bigger – take a moment, you’ve earned it!



Time now for reflection, recognition and ripple effects. It might be tempting to rush into the next project (especially if your brain is buzzing with great ideas) but pausing to celebrate is powerful. It’s how you lock in learning, share appreciation and give your project the ending it deserves.

Start with the practical stuff. Tidy up any loose ends; handover results; send thank you notes to make sure everyone involved knows they mattered. If others will use the results or carry things forward in other ways, give them a clear map and maybe some guidance. A smart move is to start a list of outstanding tasks as the end approaches, so nothing slips through the cracks.

Then zoom out. Look at what your project achieved. How did it make a difference for people, for community or the planet? Sometimes success is loud and visible, sometimes it’s quiet but deeply meaningful. Both count.

Don’t forget to share your story. Post about it, record a short video, write a reflection or make notes that you can use when you are talking about your experience. Stories

have a funny way of sparking new projects in others and your energy will be infectious.

And most importantly – celebrate. You turned an idea into reality, you faced challenges, adapted and grew. That deserves recognition. Remember, endings are really new beginnings. Every project teaches you something that will shape your next adventure.

So, celebrate, reflect, recharge and then, when you are ready, start dreaming again. Because the world needs changemakers like you.



## 8. Summary

Responsible Project Management (RPM) offers a practical toolkit to help you design and deliver projects that respect both people and the planet.



At its core, RPM encourages you to see projects as living systems rather than isolated tasks, connecting activities to results, uses and long-term benefits. It emphasizes the importance of understanding diverse viewpoints, anticipating risks and opportunities, breaking work down into manageable steps, monitoring progress with milestones and using interim results to test, adapt and engage others along the way. Success is not just about meeting deadlines or budgets but about fostering relationships, learning from feedback and creating meaningful, sustainable impact. By applying the techniques we've explored in this guide, you can turn ideas into reality while building resilience, strengthening collaboration and leaving a footprint to be proud of.



## Your toolkit in a box

### ❖ Explore viewpoints

Begin by mapping out who cares about your project: individuals, groups and organizations. Understand not just what they think, but how they feel. Emotions drive decisions, so anticipate reactions and look for allies early. Consider the social and environmental impact of your project and collect all insights in one place to guide your planning.

### ❖ Perceptions and feedback matter

Your project results alone won't change the world; they must be used. Connect activities with results, uses and benefits. Keep in mind perception matters: how others judge your project effects its real impact. Feedback loops let you improve as you go. Remember, some things you can influence but not control, plan accordingly.

### ❖ Boost success with PRUB

Break your project into sub-projects and results. Only some results create benefits directly; others are building blocks. Interim results let you test understanding, gather feedback and engage others.

## ❖ **Break it down**

Divide results into small pieces until every activity can be clearly described. Activities must lead to results and thinking about both together helps spot anything you might have missed. Detail is your friend here.

## ❖ **Estimating and sequencing**

Estimate the time and resources for each activity, people, skills, materials, costs and track availability. Pay attention to dependencies: some tasks can start immediately; others rely on prior steps. Build a network diagram to visualize the flow and connections.

## ❖ **Plan for action**

Convert your network diagram into a real-world schedule, considering availability and timing. Share the draft plan, gather feedback and adjust until everyone is confident it will work. Collaboration now prevents chaos later.

## ❖ **Threats and opportunities**

Pause before starting work and review risks. Identify threats that could derail your project and opportunities that could improve it. Add mitigation and contingency measures and build in flexibility to exploit chances when they appear.

## ❖ **Leverage interim results**

Don't wait for ta-da to become uh-oh. Use interim results to test, get feedback and prepare others for the final outcomes. Mini milestones keep the project moving, maintain engagement and allow you to adapt as you go.

## ❖ **Roll out and communicate**

Action begins; but communication is key. Brief, motivate and update everyone involved. Compare progress with your plan, track changes and adjust. Projects run on relationships and stories as much as plans, so keep stakeholders engaged and informed throughout.

## ❖ **Wrapping up and reflection**

Your project ends or evolves. Celebrate successes, reflect on lessons learned and decide on future roles. Tie up loose ends: hand over documentation, provide guidance, settle costs and ensure a great legacy.



## 9. What next?

Remember how we mentioned the *Young Person's Guide to Systems Change* at the beginning? Well, we hope that this practical toolkit will spark and support your systems change journey to make a real difference.

It's your moment. Armed with these tools, you're ready to manage your first project. You're not doing this alone. This guide is just a start. There are templates to help you at [www.ResponsiblePM.com](http://www.ResponsiblePM.com)

Start small, but start now - choose a project idea, however modest and practice these techniques. Experiment and reflect. Share your story.

### **Join the RPM Community.**

This guide isn't just for reading; it's a **call to action**. Step boldly into the fray, dive into your first project and see what you can achieve. The world is waiting, and it needs changemakers like you more than ever. We can't wait to see what you do!



# Acknowledgements

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Responsible Project Management:

[www.ResponsiblePM.com](http://www.ResponsiblePM.com)

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Responsible Project Management is an on-going collaboration between academics and practicing project managers. We invite you to connect, engage and participate in this work.

The 50 Percent is a global platform that empowers young people, regardless of their background, to pursue making a positive impact in their community, country, or globally.

We believe that systems change comes from all people embracing their agency to make a difference in their context.

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