



Applying the Activity Definition Process

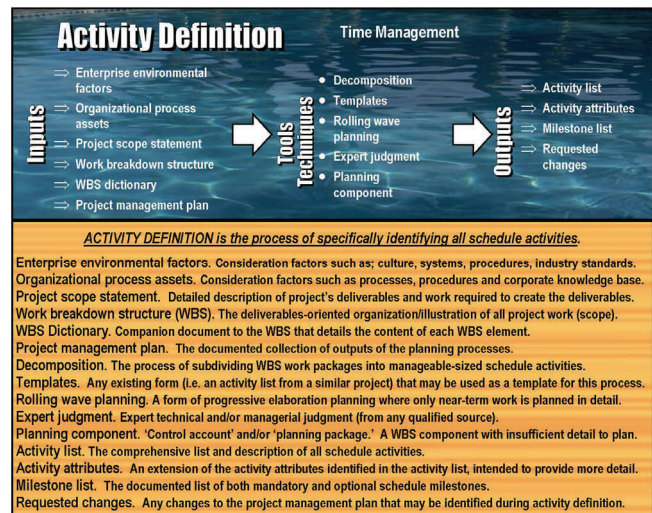
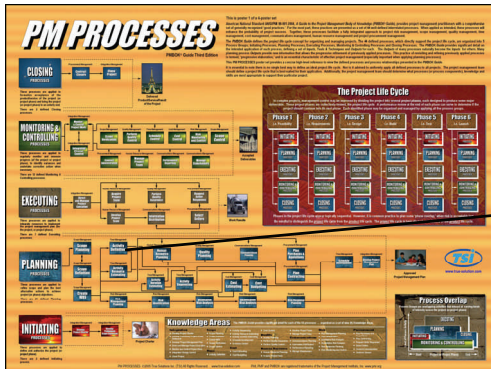
As we learned in a previous discussion, the WBS identifies the total of all project work in terms of *deliverables*. The WBS is *deliverables-oriented*. To adhere to this definition, our WBS should identify work using descriptive nouns, opposed to action-oriented verbs. We apply the Activity Definition process to convert our WBS work packages (lowest level elements) into action-oriented activities.

The Activity Definition process identifies and documents all the specific activities necessary to produce the deliverables identified in the WBS.

The primary deliverable (*Output*) from the Activity Definition process is the project's activity list. The activity list becomes an extension of the WBS.

The primary methodology (*Tool/Technique*) used to create the activity list is "decomposition." This is basically the same decomposition method used to create the WBS. The difference is that, in Activity Definition, decomposition is used to further subdivide work packages into manageable sized activities, and the final output (activity list) is described in terms of activities, rather than deliverables.

Ideally, Activity Definition is applied immediately following Create WBS. In real-world practice, however, the two processes are many times applied in parallel.



Activity Definition Must Know Concepts

1. "The Activity Definition process is intended to further subdivide (decompose) WBS work packages into manageable sized activities."
2. "The primary deliverable (*Output*) from the Activity Definition process is the activity list."
3. "The activity list may be viewed as an extension of the WBS."
4. "Decomposition is the primary methodology (*Tool/Technique*) used to create the activity list."
5. "In some projects, Rolling Wave Planning can be an effective tool to support Activity Definition. In Rolling Wave Planning, only near-term work is planned in detail, leaving future work summarized with less detail. As future work draws nearer, detailed planning is performed."
6. "Decomposition in Activity Definition differs from decomposition in Create WBS, in that it is used to further subdivide WBS work packages into manageable sized activities, and the final output (activity list) is described in terms of activities, rather than deliverables."

