

Planning your way out

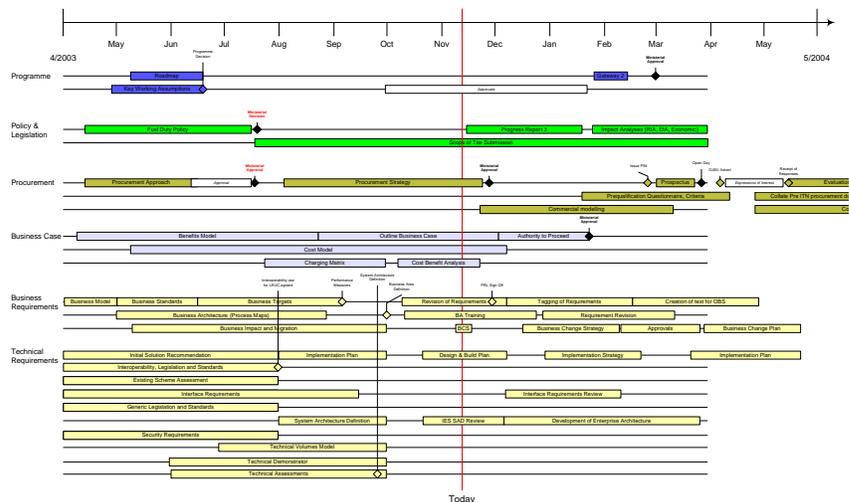


Oh no, it's the P word. There are plans, more plans and enormous plans usually. But does anyone actually read them? Do you sit down and check your own work against a plan? Do you check real progress against them? Of course you do – if you could understand it.

Green Squared believe in a top-down and bottom-up approach to planning. Detailed project plans never work. You know that. What you need is a strategic direction – a timeline – as your starting point. Work out the main events that are going to occur from the start, to the end and then beyond. Now place on the timeline all of those events that are around you. Do a strategic analysis – stakeholders, other programmes, deadlines, legislation, elections, funding reviews. Find out what is happening around you and plot it onto your work.

You'll find that people read timelines. They are easier to grasp, they provide information quickly and the context allows others to work out their own dependencies, derive the risks and issues that are going to be faced and work out what part they have to play.

The bottom up plan has its place as well. Details are needed for suppliers and contractors to ensure they meet targets, to communicate what needs to be done. But the top down and bottom up have to meet in the middle. You cannot use one approach to solve your planning dilemma. You will have to use both. And yes, where they meet they might not match. Does that really matter? You have a direction, a strategy; and you have some detail, some day-to-day tasks and they will all have to change.



Change is your constant so you will have to adapt accordingly and where the top down and bottom up meet is called management. It is the programme or project manager. It is their job to deliver the strategic direction – the concept from above. They do have a large say in that process of course, being part of the management team. They also have to receive reports from below, the team members, the suppliers and then actively manage both sets of information, making decisions (within the agreed tolerances of course) to solve the problems raised.

For further details about actively planning work contact Green Squared at www.green2.co.uk