# COURSE SYLLABUS: Project Management

**Trainer:** Associate Professor Carmen Chasovschi, PhD
**Topic:** Project Management
**Total Duration:** 60 hours (Contact hours: 30 — Theory: 10 hours / Practical Activities: 20 hours; Individual Study: 30 hours)

## 1. Course Objectives

### General objective

To equip participants with the knowledge, analytical frameworks and practical competencies required to identify, design, plan, implement, monitor and report projects using Project Cycle Management (PCM) principles and contemporary project-management tools. The course places particular emphasis on needs-based project generation, stakeholder participation, intervention logic, results orientation, scheduling, human-resource planning, budgeting, procurement, reporting and the practical use of Microsoft Project.
In the short term, participants will be able to transform a documented need or organisational challenge into a coherent project concept and develop its main planning components. In the longer term, the course aims to strengthen participants' capacity to manage projects in a structured, accountable and results-oriented manner, including projects financed through European and international programmes.

### Specific objectives

- understand the defining characteristics of projects and the principles and phases of Project Cycle Management;
- generate project ideas on the basis of evidence, needs analysis, SWOT analysis and structured brainstorming;
- conduct stakeholder analysis and formulate a coherent Problem Tree and Objectives Tree;
- formulate SMART objectives and construct a consistent intervention logic linking activities, outputs, outcomes and impact;
- develop measurable indicators with baselines, targets and sources of verification;
- translate project logic into a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), GANTT chart, milestones and task dependencies;
- define project roles, responsibilities and human-resource requirements, including the use of responsibility matrices;
- prepare an activity-based budget and understand essential financial-management principles;
- apply basic procurement principles and understand the relationship between implementation evidence, monitoring and reporting;
- use Microsoft Project to create a schedule using milestones and resource assignments;
- integrate the main project components into a coherent mini-project proposal (Grand application).

## 2. Specific Competencies Acquired

Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to:

| Competency Type | Detailed Description |
|---|---|
| Professional competencies | Apply PCM principles across identification, formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. |
| | Diagnose needs and contextual conditions using needs assessment, SWOT analysis and evidence-based problem identification. |
| | Map stakeholders according to interests, influence/power, expected contribution, risks and engagement needs. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Construct Problem Trees and Objectives Trees and validate cause–effect and means–ends relationships. |
| | Formulate SMART objectives and design a coherent results chain: inputs → activities → outputs → outcomes → impact. |
| | Develop indicators, baselines, targets and sources of verification suitable for project monitoring. |
| | Develop WBS structures, GANTT schedules, milestones, dependencies and realistic implementation sequences. |
| | Plan human resources, project roles, responsibilities, communication and accountability. |
| | Prepare simplified project budgets and apply basic principles of financial management. |
| | Understand fundamental procurement principles: transparency, equal treatment, proportionality, competition, value for money and documentation. |
| | Understand the progress-reporting structures linking activities, results, indicators, expenditure, deviations and corrective action. |
| | Use Microsoft Project for task scheduling, dependencies, milestones, resource allocation and schedule review. |
| Transversal competencies | Critical and systems thinking — analysing causal relationships and testing the coherence of proposed interventions. |
| | Collaborative problem-solving — developing project components in teams and integrating different stakeholder perspectives. |
| | Evidence-based decision-making — distinguishing assumptions from evidence and using data to justify project choices. |
| | Communication and facilitation — presenting project logic clearly and providing constructive peer feedback. |
| | Planning and organisational competence — sequencing work, allocating responsibilities and managing constraints. |
| | Ethical and accountable project practice — considering transparency, participation, responsible resource use and sustainability. |

## 3. Contents of the Theoretical Part and Practical Activities

The 30 contract hours are structured as 10 hours of theory and 20 hours of practical activities. The course is organised in six integrated modules. Each module combines conceptual input with guided application on one project idea that participants progressively develop throughout the course, with the support of practical applications.

### 3.1 Overview Table

| # | Module | Theory (h) | Practice (h) | Total (h) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| M1 | Project Management & PCM Fundamentals; Project Idea Generation | 1.5 | 2.5 | 4 |
| M2 | Needs Analysis, SWOT, Stakeholder Analysis & Problem Analysis | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| M3 | Objectives Tree, SMART Objectives & Project Design | 1.5 | 2.5 | 4 |
| M4 | Project Logic, Results, Indicators & Logical Framework Thinking | 1.5 | 4.5 | 6 |
| M5 | WBS, GANTT, Scheduling & Human Resource Management | 1.5 | 2.5 | 4 |
| M6 | Budget, Financial Management, Procurement, Reporting & Microsoft Project | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| — | TOTAL | 10 | 20 | 30 |

### 3.2 Project Management Training Modules

**Module 1 — Project Management & PCM Fundamentals; Project Idea Generation**
**Theory: 1.5 h | Practical activities: 2.5 h**
**Competencies acquired**

- Explain the basic principles and stages of PCM.
- Differentiate a project from ongoing organisational operations.
- Generate project ideas from evidence and identified needs rather than from pre-selected activities.
- Screen preliminary ideas for relevance and feasibility.

**Theoretical content (lectures & key concepts)**

- Definition and characteristics of a project; project versus routine operations.
- Project management as the coordinated application of knowledge, methods, tools and resources to achieve defined objectives.
- Project Cycle Management principles: relevance, feasibility, sustainability, participation, results orientation and learning.
- Overview of the project cycle: programming/context, identification, formulation, implementation/monitoring and evaluation.
- Project idea generation based on identified needs, organisational weaknesses, strategic opportunities and structured brainstorming.

**Practical activities**

- Project/non-project classification exercise using short scenarios.
- Needs-oriented brainstorming: generate several possible project ideas from a given context.
- Rapid project idea screening: relevance, beneficiaries, feasibility and strategic fit.
- Initial SWOT exercise connected to the selected project idea.

**Module 2 — Needs Analysis, SWOT, Stakeholder Analysis & Problem Analysis**
**Theory: 2 h | Practical activities: 4 h**
**Competencies acquired**

- Conduct a structured needs assessment using qualitative and quantitative evidence.
- Distinguish internal and external factors in a SWOT analysis and derive strategic implications.
- Identify, classify and prioritise stakeholders and formulate appropriate engagement strategies.
- Formulate a valid core problem and distinguish causes from effects.
- Construct and critically validate a Problem Tree.

**Theoretical content (lectures & key concepts)**

- Needs analysis: current situation versus desired situation; evidence, target groups and prioritisation.
- SWOT methodology: internal strengths/weaknesses and external opportunities/threats; using SWOT for project choices.
- Stakeholder analysis: identification, interests, influence/power, contribution, potential resistance and engagement strategy.
- Problem analysis according to PCM: defining the core problem and mapping direct/indirect causes and effects.
- Quality rules for problem statements: existing negative situations, specificity, neutrality and avoidance of disguised solutions.

**Practical activities**

- Complete a SWOT analysis for the selected project idea and identify priority weaknesses/opportunities.
- Build a stakeholder inventory; define engagement strategies.
- Formulate and test a core problem statement.
- Construct a Problem Tree using cards/sticky notes and validate cause–effect relationships.
- Peer review of Problem Trees using a coherence checklist.

**Module 3 — Objectives Tree, SMART Objectives & Project Design**
**Theory: 1.5 h | Practical activities: 2.5 h**
**Competencies acquired**

- Transform a Problem Tree into a coherent Objectives Tree.
- Use means–ends logic to test the plausibility of project objectives.
- Select an intervention strategy consistent with resources and stakeholder priorities.
- Formulate SMART project objectives and distinguish objectives from activities.

**Theoretical content (lectures & key concepts)**

- Objectives analysis: converting negative problem statements into desirable future conditions.
- Objectives Tree and means–ends logic.
- Selection of the project strategy: deciding which branches of the Objectives Tree will be addressed.
- SMART objectives: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.
- Relationship between overall objective, specific objective(s), results and activities.

**Practical activities**

- Transform the Problem Tree into an Objectives Tree.
- Select the intervention strategy and justify what is included/excluded from project scope.
- Write and revise project objectives using SMART criteria.
- Peer assessment of objectives for clarity, measurability and feasibility.

**Module 4 — Project Logic, Work Packages, Indicators & Logical Framework Thinking**
**Theory: 1.5 h | Practical activities: 4.5 h**
**Competencies acquired**

- Construct a coherent project intervention and detailed working activities (Work Packages).
- Differentiate activities, outputs, outcomes and impact.
- Formulate relevant and measurable indicators with baselines and targets.
- Identify feasible sources of verification and monitoring responsibilities.
- Recognise assumptions and test the internal coherence of project logic.

**Theoretical content (lectures & key concepts)**

- Intervention logic and results chain: inputs → activities → outputs → outcomes → impact.
- Distinguishing outputs, outcomes and impact; avoiding activity-based definitions of results.
- Indicators as measurable signals of achievement; quantitative and qualitative indicators.
- Baseline, target, timeframe and sources/means of verification.

**Practical activities**

- Map the intervention logic for the selected project.
- Formulate expected outputs and outcomes and check their relationship with objectives.
- Develop indicators for selected results, including baseline and target values.
- Identify appropriate sources of verification and data-collection responsibilities.
- Identify critical assumptions/external factors.
- Build a simplified Logical Framework Matrix and conduct vertical/horizontal coherence checks.

**Module 5 — WBS, GANTT, Scheduling & Human Resource Management**
**Theory: 1.5 h | Practical activities: 2.5 h**
**Competencies acquired**

- Decompose project scope into manageable work packages and tasks.
- Sequence activities and identify dependencies and milestones.
- Prepare and interpret a GANTT chart.
- Define project-team roles, competency requirements and responsibility allocation.
- Clarify accountability and coordination.

**Theoretical content (lectures & key concepts)**

- Work Breakdown Structure (WBS): decomposition of project scope into work packages, activities and tasks.
- Scheduling principles: duration, sequence, dependencies, milestones, lead/lag and critical timing.
- GANTT chart as a planning and monitoring instrument.
- Human Resource Management in projects.
- Resources assignment.

**Practical activities**

- Develop a Table/Chart with the Detailed Work Package, for the selected project.
- Translate the WBS into a preliminary GANTT chart with durations, dependencies and milestones.
- Identify project roles and required competencies.
- Build a simplified RACI matrix and test workload/responsibility distribution.

**Module 6 — Budget, Financial Management, Procurement, Reporting & Microsoft Project**
**Theory: 2 h | Practical activities: 4 h**
**Competencies acquired**

- Translate activities and resources into a coherent project budget.
- Apply basic financial-control principles and interpret budget deviations.
- Recognise essential procurement principles and documentation requirements.
- Connect monitoring data, indicators, expenditure and implementation evidence in project reporting.
- Create and review a basic project schedule in Microsoft Project.
- Integrate analysis, design, planning and implementation components into one coherent project concept.

**Theoretical content (lectures & key concepts)**

- Activity-based budgeting: linking activities, resources, units, quantities, unit costs and total costs.
- Financial management: budget control, supporting documents, cost monitoring, variances, eligibility logic and audit trail.
- Procurement fundamentals: needs/specifications, transparency, equal treatment, proportionality, competition, value for money and documentation.
- Monitoring and reporting: progress against plan, indicators, expenditure, deviations, risks, corrective action and evidence.
- Microsoft Project fundamentals: tasks, durations, milestones, predecessors, calendars, resources and GANTT view.

**Practical activities**

- Prepare a simplified activity-based project budget and verify consistency with the work plan.
- Analyze a budget-like scenario and propose adjustments compared with the project plan of costs.
- Procurement case exercise: define need/specification, selection approach and documentation.
- Draft a concise progress report section based on a simulated implementation scenario.
- Hands-on Microsoft Project exercise: enter tasks, durations and dependencies; create milestones; assign resources; review the GANTT chart.
- Final integration and peer review of the project concept.

**3.3 Detailed Delivery Schedule**

| Date | Contact | Theory | Practice | Main focus |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Friday, 8 May | 4 h | 1.5 h | 2.5 h | M1 — PCM fundamentals, project definition, needs-based idea generation, brainstorming, initial SWOT. |
| Saturday, 9 May | 6 h | 2 h | 4 h | M2 — Needs analysis, SWOT, stakeholder analysis, core problem and Problem Tree. |
| Friday, 15 May | 4 h | 1.5 h | 2.5 h | M3 — Objectives Tree, intervention strategy and SMART objectives. |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| Saturday, 16 May | 6 h | 1.5 h | 4.5 h | M4 — Results chain, indicators, baselines, targets, verification and simplified logframe. |
| Friday, 29 May | 4 h | 1.5 h | 2.5 h | M5 — WBS, GANTT, dependencies, milestones, HR and resources. |
| Saturday, 30 May | 6 h | 2 h | 4 h | M6 — Budgeting, financial management, procurement, reporting and Microsoft Project. |
| TOTAL | 30 h | 10 h | 20 h | |

## 4. Forms of Carrying Out the Training Activities

### 4.1 Plenary Sessions

Interactive whole-group sessions introduce essential concepts, PCM terminology and analytical frameworks. Theory blocks are deliberately concise and are followed by immediate application.

### 4.2 Workshops and Practical Sessions

The 20 practical hours are organised around a progressive project-development workshop. Participants work individually and in small groups on needs analysis, SWOT, stakeholder mapping, Problem Trees, Objectives Trees, indicators, WBS, GANTT, budgets and reporting tasks.

### 4.3 Case Studies and Simulations

Short realistic cases are used for project idea screening, stakeholder conflicts, financial deviations, procurement decisions and reporting situations.

### 4.4 Individual Study Sessions

The 30 hours of individual study support consolidation and development of a Personal Project Portfolio. Tasks have explicit outputs and are connected to subsequent classroom activities.

### 4.5 Tutoring and Feedback

Feedback is provided through immediate trainer comments, structured peer review, short formative checks and individual comments on selected portfolio components.

### 4.6 Delivery Mode

Face-to-face training supported by digital resources, templates and guided individual work. Microsoft Project is used during the final practical module.

## 5. Training Methods

The methodological approach is competency-based, participatory and application-oriented. Concepts are introduced only to the level required for participants to apply them to realistic project situations.

### 5.1 Core Methods

- Interactive lecture — concise conceptual input supported by examples and visual models.
- Problem-based learning — project ideas originate from documented needs and problems.
- Workshop method — participants progressively build the components of one project.
- Case study method — realistic project situations are analysed and solved collaboratively.
- Cooperative learning — small teams develop and critique project components.
- Visual facilitation — cards, matrices, trees and timelines are used to make causal and planning logic visible.
- Peer review — participants test each other's objectives, indicators, schedules and budgets against explicit criteria.
- Demonstration and guided digital practice — particularly for GANTT scheduling and Microsoft Project.
- Reflective practice — participants identify assumptions, weaknesses and lessons learned after major exercises.

### 5.2 Use of Digital Tools and AI

Digital tools may be used for scheduling, collaborative documentation, visual mapping and data organisation. AI assistants may support brainstorming, alternative formulation and quality checks, but participants remain responsible for validating factual accuracy, project logic, indicators, budgets and compliance requirements.

### 5.3 Differentiation

Participants with greater project experience may work on more complex real projects, while less experienced participants may use trainer-provided scenarios and templates. Extension tasks may include assumptions analysis, risk integration, more complex dependencies or alternative budgeting scenarios.

## 6. Individual Study Activities (30 hours)

### 6.1 Essence and Pedagogical Role

Individual study doubles the contact time and enables participants to consolidate the tools introduced during training. It follows a guided-autonomy approach and is organised around a Personal Project Portfolio based on a real or realistic project selected by the participant.

### 6.2 Distribution of the 30 Hours

| Activity Type | Hours | Output / Deliverable |
|---|---|---|
| Needs/context research and evidence collection | 4 | Short needs-analysis note with evidence and target-group description. |
| SWOT and stakeholder analysis refinement | 4 | Completed SWOT + stakeholder matrix and engagement strategy. |
| Problem Tree and Objectives Tree refinement | 4 | Validated Problem Tree and Objectives Tree. |
| SMART objectives, project logic and indicators | 6 | Objectives, results chain, indicators, baselines, targets and verification sources. |
| WBS, GANTT and HR planning | 5 | WBS, GANTT chart and responsibility/RACI matrix. |
| Budget and financial planning | 4 | Simplified activity-based project budget. |
| Procurement/reporting case preparation | 1 | Short procurement/reporting response. |
| Microsoft Project / digital schedule refinement | 2 | Digital schedule with dependencies and milestones. |
| TOTAL | 30 | Complete Personal Project Portfolio. |

### 6.3 Personal Project Portfolio

- Project idea and short rationale based on identified need(s).
- Needs analysis and target-group description.
- SWOT analysis.
- Stakeholder matrix and engagement strategy.
- Problem Tree.
- Objectives Tree and selected intervention strategy.
- SMART objective(s).
- Project results chain / simplified Logical Framework Matrix.
- Indicators, baselines, targets and sources of verification.
- WBS and GANTT chart.
- Project team / responsibility matrix.
- Simplified budget.
- Short procurement and reporting note.
- Microsoft Project schedule or equivalent digital planning output.

## 7. Evaluation Methods

Assessment combines formative and summative elements and evaluates both conceptual understanding and the ability to apply project-management tools.

### 7.1 Formative Assessment

- Trainer observation during workshops.
- Short concept checks and quizzes.
- Peer feedback using structured criteria.

- Review of intermediate outputs: SWOT, Problem Tree, Objectives Tree, SMART objectives, indicators, GANTT and budget.

**7.2 Final Evaluation**

| Evaluation Type | Criteria and Methods | Weight in Final Grade |
|---|---|---|
| Continuous Assessment | Active participation, quality of intermediate project components and peer-review engagement completion of project application. | 50% |
| Final Evaluation | Integrated Personal Project Portfolio and short presentation/defence of project logic. | 50% |

**7.3 Grading Criteria**

- Relevance and needs orientation — the project responds to a clearly demonstrated problem or opportunity.
- Analytical quality — SWOT, stakeholder and problem analyses are coherent and evidence-based.
- Intervention logic — objectives, results, activities and indicators are causally consistent.
- Feasibility — schedule, responsibilities and budget are realistic and mutually consistent.
- Measurability — indicators contain appropriate baselines/targets and feasible verification sources.
- Management quality — financial, procurement, reporting and HR considerations are adequately integrated.
- Professional presentation — project components are clear, structured and internally consistent.

**7.4 Conditions for Course Completion**

- Participation in the required contact sessions according to programme rules.
- Completion of the main practical activities.
- Submission of the Personal Project Portfolio.
- Participation in the final evaluation.

## 8. Glossary of Core Terms

| English Term | Short Definition |
|---|---|
| activity | a specific action undertaken to produce a project output |
| assumption | an external condition considered necessary for project success |
| baseline | the initial value of an indicator before intervention |
| beneficiary | a person or group benefiting directly or indirectly from a project |
| budget | the planned financial resources and costs of a project |
| critical path | the longest sequence of dependent tasks determining minimum project duration |
| deliverable | a tangible or verifiable product produced by project work |
| dependency | a relationship in which one task depends on another |
| evaluation | systematic assessment of a project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability |
| GANTT chart | a time-based visual schedule of project activities |
| impact | broader long-term change to which a project contributes |
| indicator | a quantitative or qualitative variable used to measure progress or achievement |
| input | resources used to implement project activities |
| intervention logic | the causal logic connecting activities, results and objectives |
| milestone | a significant scheduled point or achievement |
| monitoring | continuous tracking of implementation and performance |
| objective | a desired change or condition the project intends to achieve |
| outcome | a change resulting from the use or uptake of project outputs |
| output | a direct product, service or result generated by project activities |

| | |
|---|---|
| PCM | Project Cycle Management; a structured approach to managing interventions through the project cycle |
| problem tree | a visual representation of a core problem, its causes and effects |
| procurement | the process of acquiring goods, works or services |
| project | a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a defined result within constraints |
| project cycle | the sequence of stages through which a project is identified, designed, implemented and evaluated |
| RACI | a responsibility matrix: Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed |
| result | a change or product generated by project intervention |
| risk | an uncertain event or condition that may affect project objectives |
| scope | the boundaries of the work and results included in a project |
| SMART objective | an objective that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound |
| stakeholder | an individual, group or organisation that can affect or be affected by a project |
| SWOT | analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats |
| target | the expected value of an indicator by a specified date |
| target group | the group whose situation the intervention directly aims to improve |
| WBS | Work Breakdown Structure; hierarchical decomposition of project work |
| work package | a manageable cluster of related project activities/tasks |

## 9. Recommended References and Sources

The bibliography combines foundational Project Cycle Management sources with contemporary project-management standards and practical references.

### 9.1 Core Bibliography


- European Commission (2004) Project Cycle Management Guidelines. Brussels/Luxembourg: European Commission.
- European Commission (n.d.) Aid Delivery Methods: Project Cycle Management and Logical Framework Approach resources. European Commission.
- Project Management Institute (2021) A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide), 7th ed. Newtown Square, PA: Project Management Institute.
- International Project Management Association (2015) Individual Competence Baseline for Project, Programme & Portfolio Management (ICB4). Zurich: IPMA.
- AXELOS (2023) Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2®, 7th ed. London: TSO.
- OECD (2019) Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Kerzner, H. (2022) Project Management: A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling, and Controlling. 13th ed. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Lock, D. (2020) Project Management. 11th ed. London: Routledge.
- Turner, J.R. (ed.) (2016) Gower Handbook of Project Management. 5th ed. London: Routledge.


### 9.2 Recommended Participant Resources

- European Commission funding programme guides and calls for proposals relevant to participants' organisations.
- European Commission Project Cycle Management and Logical Framework guidance.
- Project Management Institute learning resources and practice guides.
- Microsoft Project documentation and training resources.
- Programme-specific applicant guides, grant agreements, procurement rules and reporting templates for projects used as course cases.