

Labour Party Major Capital Projects Review

What is the name of your organisation?

Association for Project Management (APM)

Do you represent a particular interest group? If so who?

APM is the only chartered membership organisation for the project profession in the world. We have over 40,000 members and more than 400 [corporate partners](#) who benefit from what we do. Our activities – from [qualifications](#), [research](#), [resources](#) to [networking and events](#), and debate – raise the profile of the project profession, set the highest standards and in a complex world, we're helping the project profession deliver better. Because when projects succeed, society benefits.

Which sectors are you particularly interested in?

Project management covers every sector in the UK. It can involve anything from an office move or in-house change up to something as complex as a new warship or a major railway system. Project professionals helped deliver the London Olympics, delivered the Covid vaccine and vaccination programmes and even helped NASA fly a helicopter on Mars. Every road used, train taken, building occupied was created through the application of project management principles.

What are your contact details for any follow-up?

Andrew Baldwin, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, andrew.baldwin@apm.org.uk.

Headline Questions

How can we improve estimates of costs, benefits, and timescales to completion for major projects?

To improve estimates of costs, benefits and timescales we need to reassess how we propose and process major government projects. We need more strategic focus on the earliest stages of project development – the golden time before the project is sanctioned to proceed. Major projects are almost certainly going to be set in complex and challenging circumstances and so recognising how this may impact on the scope in full (costs, timescales and quality) is going to be vital if these major projects are going to generate the growing confidence that they will need to succeed.

Costs and timescales are only two parts of the so-called Barnes, or iron, triangle of project management (first proposed by APM ex-President Martin Barnes) so any answer needs to focus also on the third – the quality or performance aspect of the project (what you are going to build e.g. an office block, a fighter jet, a motorway). So, we need to improve the scope as a whole (cost, time and quality *together*). Getting the scope set appropriately is an essential part of ensuring project success.

Traditional waterfall/linear project management involves a life cycle that aims to complete a project within a single pass through a set of distinct phases that are completed serially and span from the development of the initial concept to the deployment of an ultimate output, outcome or benefit. In these types of projects, quality is expected to remain fixed, based on the presumption that the initial concept needs to be delivered.

But we know that quality or performance, often ends up changing, often for political reasons.¹ While the scope changes, the public mindset does not. They still expect the project to be delivered to the *original scope's* cost and timescale (people assume time and cost can also be fixed – project professionals put in change control processes because they aren't). For example, HS2 suffered from scope creep when multiple miles of expensive tunnels were added to ameliorate the concerns of residents on the route. This change had not been imagined or costed for initially and led to the expected final cost being revised upwards and extending

¹ Financial Times, 2024. [Budget blowouts and delays: why the UK struggles with infrastructure](#).

the time to opening.² Whilst this was happening, the public and general media still expected the costs and timescales to remain the same.

Further examples here include the Ajax armoured defence vehicle which ended up with far more variants than had originally been expected³ and the Restoration and Renewal of Parliament programme which had been worked out on the basis of full decamp from Parliament, which was then rejected by MPs, increasing costs.⁴ Scope changes need to be used sparingly, be better costed (by likelihood of occurrence) or projects should be revised before substantial spend has been committed.

As the world becomes more challenging, complex and fast-paced, so this traditional 'fixed' view of projects needs to be augmented. The term 'agile' entered into the project management lexicon when software development became a major and widespread area of activity. Whilst a more detailed consideration of agile project management is beyond the remit of this question, there are important points to learn from its use, as for all major projects in the future there needs to be a recognition of the tension between the need to remain clear and firm on the scope, whilst also being cognisant of the reality that key variables, parameters, and assumptions, on which the project's case was based may change.

The National Audit Office (NAO) investigated delivering at speed in more detail and concluded that this approach should only be considered for projects with a fixed deadline (like the Olympics) or in an emergency situation, such as the Covid-19 projects on creating a vaccine and then rolling it out across the country.⁵

The eminent project scholar Bent Flyvbjerg addresses the issue of how to consider major projects in his book *How big things get done*, using a concept he calls "think slow, act fast."⁶ The idea is that the cost and time overruns are more likely if the delivery part of the project is prolonged unnecessarily. He noticed that those projects that failed tended to drag on, whereas those that succeeded finished fast.

As many projects will still suit traditional project management approaches, we need to get better at managing waterfall/linear projects in complex and challenging times, and we advocate that Government projects should take their time and be more carefully formulated during the proposing and early planning phase, in order to then speed up during delivery (smaller projects, more often, with longer lead times). Sadly, the nature of politics means the opposite tends to happen. Political announcements, pet projects and inadequate planning has provided an evidence base that we tend to think fast then act slow, at which point the layers of accountability, approval, and bureaucracy impact on what can be achieved.

APM advocates for project managers to be included at the time of policy development and project proposal, not just policy delivery. We need those developing policy and formulating future projects to be aware of the implications of their policy and to have considered every issue that could impact on delivery.

We also need to be realistic about what the costs and timescales are, something that would also be more apparent after longer and more careful consideration of the project. Using a range of figures or looking at dates from similar past projects to better estimate costs and timescales can help here. And as part of costs, it would be sensible to factor in all the forms of the costs *and* benefits of a project: costs to the economy, to society, and to the environment (some projects chart their benefit across each of the UN sustainable development goals, for example). Anecdotal evidence suggests that the way we fund projects doesn't help either – the rush to spend cash at the end of the year approach does not encourage a "think slow, act fast" mentality.

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority's (IPA) Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP) talks of costs and benefits at the *same* time.⁷ To take the HS2 example, news reports only really focused on the upfront costs of the scheme. But if we'd also analysed the expected future stream of benefits over the life of HS2, then that would have dwarfed the upfront costs. We're seeing a similar process with the Thames Gateway crossing. Recent focus has been on the £300m cost of complying with the planning process,⁸ but if we chart this on a longer timescale, against the expected benefits of the scheme over time, then this figure, although large on its own, would be dwarfed by the financial benefits of the crossing (for example, in terms of local

² The Guardian, 2023. [Why has HS2 ended up being so expensive?](#)

³ Public Accounts Committee, 2022. [Armoured Vehicles: the Ajax programme.](#)

⁴ Public Accounts Committee, 2022. [Restoration and Renewal of Parliament.](#)

⁵ National Audit Office, 2021. [Delivering programmes at speed.](#)

⁶ Flyvbjerg, B. & Garner, D., 2023. How big things get done.

⁷ Infrastructure and Projects Authority, 2023. [Annual Report on Major Projects 2022-23.](#)

⁸ City AM, 2024. [Lower Thames Crossing planning application becomes UK's longest ever.](#)

development, reduction in traffic jams and decreased journey times, but also in this projects innovative use of green hydrogen, data from which will benefit future projects).

In their recent book *Gorilla in the Cockpit*, Vip Vyas and Dr Thomas D. Zweifel highlight this with a table of projects that were seen to be failures at their time of opening.⁹ There are very few on that list that we would still consider a failure now and a selected few are included below:

Project	Cost overrun
Suez Canal, Egypt	1,900%
Scottish Parliament Building, UK	1,600%
Sydney Opera House, Australia	1,400%
Excalibur Smart Projectile, USA/Sweden	650%
NHS IT System, UK	550%
Bank of Norway HQ, Norway	440%
Humber Bridge, UK	180%
Dublin Port Tunnel, Ireland	160%
Channel Tunnel, UK/France	80%
High-speed Rail Line South, Netherlands	60%

Source: *Gorilla in the Cockpit*

APM recommends a reassessment of the length of time to which we assign and derive project benefits. What might be considered a failure on day one, like those in the table above, will not be years later. For example, the Ever Given incident, where the Suez Canal was blocked by a container ship, cost an estimated \$10 billion in trade each day¹⁰ indicating that the benefits of the canal are now firmly higher than the original cost overrun. We know that the 2014 widening of the Ballah bypass cost \$9 billion to complete and doubled capacity – that’s still less that one day’s trade revenue. More locally, the Elizabeth line recently announced that it had topped 300m journeys since opening, or 770,000 per day.¹¹ At opening it was derided as a fiasco.¹²

To help with this obvious issue, APM recommends identifying and incorporating *all* benefits into projects at scoping/planning stage (social value often isn’t considered here). If benefit is accounted for at the start, then it becomes much more measurable.¹³

Does the Civil Service have access to the skills it needs for the successful delivery of major projects? If not what is needed?

The civil service has greatly improved its project delivery skills over the past few years. The formation of the IPA, and its predecessor the Major Projects Authority, show a linear path towards better oversight of Government projects. Investment in the Major Project Leadership Academy and the cadre of project management qualified civil servants has undoubtedly assisted the UK in better project delivery, but there is more that can be done in this area. The number of Chartered project professionals within the civil service remains low and it is not uncommon to see major projects run by people who are not Chartered project professionals, or at the very least are not members of APM or APM equivalents, like the Project Management Institute (PMI).

It is clear we need to focus more on skills development within the civil service. The National Foundation for Educational Research report *The Skills Imperative 2035* identified the essential employment skills anticipated to be most in-demand by employers in the future, all of which are linked to project management; communication, collaboration, problem-solving, organising, planning & prioritising work, creative thinking and ‘information literacy’.¹⁴

The IPA remains vastly under resourced given the size of the portfolio they cover. The 2023 GMPP report comprised 244 projects with a total whole life cost of £805bn and £758bn of monetised benefits.¹⁵ In evidence to the House of Lords Built Environment Committee, Chief Executive Nick Smallwood said “we are

⁹ Vyas, V & Zweifel, T, 2023. *Gorilla in the Cockpit*.

¹⁰ Financial Times, 2021. [Ever Given owners reach deal with Egypt over Suez Canal blockage.](#)

¹¹ Evening Standard, 2024. [Elizabeth line’s ‘staggering achievement’ with 300m journeys made since opening.](#)

¹² MyLondon, 2022. [Elizabeth line: The £19 billion Crossrail fiasco.](#)

¹³ Association for Project Management, 2023. [Future Lives and Landscapes – Social Value.](#)

¹⁴ National Foundation of Education Research, 2023. [The Skills Imperative 2035.](#)

¹⁵ Infrastructure and Projects Authority, 2023. [Annual Report on Major Projects 2022-23.](#)

overprogrammed and trying to do too much” indicating that the successes above are in danger of being nullified by asking too much of too few.¹⁶

This is a worry, because project management was identified as a major skills gap in the 2021 House of Lords Select Committee on Risk Assessment and Risk Planning report, *Preparing for Extreme Risks*.¹⁷ This called for the Government to “bolster its skills base in the areas of analysis, emergency planning and project delivery and make more use of systems thinking and futures techniques when conducting risk assessments and developing policy.” At a similar time, the Transport Select Committee called on the Government to focus on “specific skills gaps, such as in transport engineering and project management.”¹⁸

We need to see major investment in project management career development and in project management skills. We’re working with the IPA to build the core of Chartered project professionals within the civil service.

How can we ensure greater transparency and regular reporting of project data to improve delivery?

There is already a robust and regular system for reporting on project data, so this isn’t the main problem. Transparency, however, remains an issue in terms of how that data is interpreted. Lord Maude’s *Independent Review of Governance and Accountability in the Civil Service* highlights that a “lack of transparency within government limits its effectiveness in decision making, in particular when it comes to ensuring value for money of government spending and reducing duplication. External to government, this lack of transparency damages confidence and trust.”

Multiple NAO reports have raised transparency across government departments and the Defence Select Committee recently complained that the Government’s reaction to their requests for data “has also been unacceptably slow and has impeded our work.”¹⁹ This is clearly not acceptable as lessons learned are an important way to understand what went wrong and ensure it doesn’t happen again.

A lack of transparency is usually a sign that something else is amiss. APM recently funded a study into fairness and unfairness in projects and its impact on people’s emotions, behaviour and attitude.²⁰ A lack of transparency runs the risk of fostering a culture of unfairness in projects, which impacts on the individual, the project and the organisation:

- Individual: Impact on career development, status, job performance, job satisfaction, job security, organisational commitment, behaviour, attitude and health and well-being.
- Project: Impact on project performance (time, cost, quality), client satisfaction, participant commitment to/identifying with project and organisational citizenship behaviours.
- Organisation: Impact on competitive advantage, organisational change and development, delivery of objectives/tasks and retention of workforce.

But is transparency alone sufficient? Being transparent can lead to a deluge of data, which is not always easy to analyse. What is needed then, is ‘transparent accountability’. By this we mean:

- Accountability for the business case – who proposed the project, who developed the policy that led to it and are they accountable for the ability to implement it.
- Accountability for the project delivery – who will ensure the data is accurate, analysed correctly and escalated up as necessary.
- Accountability for benefits realization – who will be the librarian or recorder of all the benefits and disbenefits for as long as the project lasts.

¹⁶ House of Lords Built Environment Committee, 2023. [Letter from Lord Moylan to Baroness Neville-Rolfe](#).

¹⁷ House of Lords Select Committee on Risk Assessment and Risk Planning, 2021. [Preparing for Extreme Risks](#).

¹⁸ House of Commons Transport Select Committee, 2021. [Major transport infrastructure projects](#).

¹⁹ House of Commons Defence Committee, 2024. [Ready for War?](#)

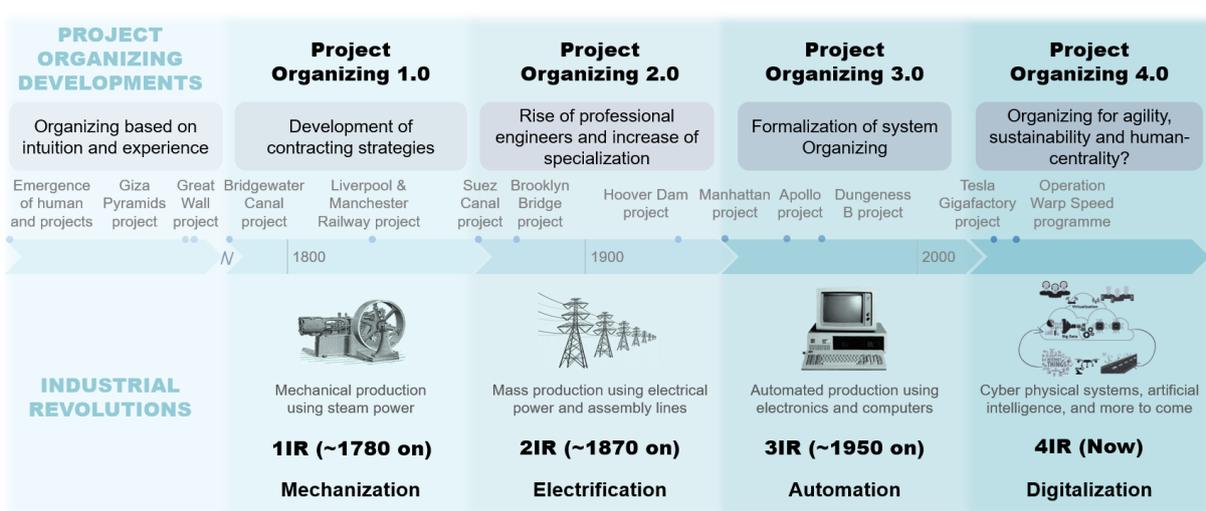
²⁰ Association for Project Management research fund, Unterhitzberger, C. & Lawrence, K., 2022. [Fairness and Unfairness in Projects](#).

We need a shift change in culture within the civil service to combat the risk of the above. Lord Maude’s Independent Review attempted to do that, and we would like to see the recommendations adopted in full. On transparency, the report highlights that some sections of the civil service have the “characteristics of a self-perpetuating oligarchy with a built-in resistance to change.” Linked to this, and perhaps fostering that culture, politicians want good news, but transparent reporting runs the risk of encountering bad news, which is less helpful politically (as was seen through optimism bias in HS2 reporting).²¹

How can government plan for changes in the external environment, including inflation, rising interest rates and other factors?

There is great debate about whether the current changes are a storm to be rode out or simply the new normal. Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus coined the acronym VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) to describe the increasing complexity of the modern world. But that was in 1987, and the world has changed almost incomprehensibly since then. In the last few years, since 2020 more people have been adopting the acronym BANI (brittle, anxious, non-linear and incomprehensible) to explain the chaos of modern times. This can also apply to projects.

Professor Graham Winch talks of a fourth revolution in project management.²² This is something APM is investigating further through research that will be released in summer 2024,²³ and his work suggests that we need to rethink our approach to project management. External factors are no longer something to consider as *potential* issues or risks – they should instead be *central* to project planning.



Source: *Research Handbook on Complex Project Organizing*

We therefore need to be more realistic in our approach to project scoping, costings and timescales. If the external environment is unstable then there is little point focusing on a stable and fixed scope. Instead, a range can be employed based on different variances – less specific, but more realistic. When the Crossrail project was reset, they did not offer a specific opening date or final budget – they only offered a range of months and an upper expected cost limit.²⁴

This is not to say that we must only deliver agile projects in future. Instead, we need to deliver waterfall/linear better (as highlighted in Q1) – smaller projects, delivered more quickly. But this approach needs politicians facilitating the transition from one deliverable (e.g. money, approvals etc) and for projects to be benefits driven - so all those small deliverables contribute to big benefits. This aligns with Labour’s mission led government, which is of course inspired by Marianna Mazzucato’s book *Mission Economy*, based on lessons learned from NASA’s Apollo programme.²⁵

²¹ London School of Economics, 2024. [HS2 reveals the pervasiveness of optimism bias in government decision making](#).

²² Winch, G. M., Brunet, M. and Cao, D. (eds.), 2023. *Research Handbook on Complex Project Organizing*.

²³ Association for Project Management, 2024*. *Projecting the Future* (*yet to be published).

²⁴ Winch, G. M., Brunet, M. and Cao, D. (eds.), 2023. *Research Handbook on Complex Project Organizing*.

²⁵ Mazzucato, M., 2021. *Mission Economy*.

How can projects contribute more to UK economic goals, including supporting UK supply chains, jobs, and skills?

Projects and project management are already contributing massively to the UK economy. APM's Golden Thread report estimated that the project profession employs 2.13 million full-time equivalents in the UK, and accounts for £156.5 billion in gross value add to the UK economy.²⁶

There's a reason our strapline is "when projects succeed, society benefits." This is because projects have the potential to improve lives in so many ways. Projects can increase capacity, fix problems and offer new opportunities for those benefiting from their delivery. There are always added benefits that weren't originally foreseen (although our report on incorporating social value into projects demonstrates why these should be considered from the beginning of a project).²⁷

Projects are the lifeblood of our future industrial strategy. Whether our major projects are centred in specific locations such as Crossrail in London or Hinkley Point C in Somerset, or span geographies as HS2 is doing, the impact of these projects is felt nationally as jobs are created to fulfil the orders these projects place with suppliers up and down the UK.

But to achieve similar opportunities in the future we need to build an industrial strategy and then stick to it. Stability comes from a shared vision and goal – Government and business working in unison. And of particular importance here, and where we need to make more progress, is on jobs and skills.

HS2 saw initial start-up costs around skills and investment because the UK hadn't attempted a project of this scale before. A long-term programme was imagined, requiring a massive increase in the number of skilled practitioners (to cover HS2, HS2a/b and in theory an HS3 or 4). They therefore spent time ensuring the UK had the skills to achieve that long term vision. A similar story can be told for Hinkley Point C, where we have to rebuild the nuclear expertise we lost.

As the UK has had a more stop-start approach to sectoral investment, it should come as little surprise that we when we recommence activity in a sector where we have been dormant in for a long time, we pay a price. For example, when we hear talk of other countries delivering high speed rail at a fraction of the cost of the UK (as we have heard recently with Spain) we need to remember that they started down this course some 20 years ago. Spain's high-speed rail in Spain doesn't need the same level of investment in skills that the UK does. A better comparison would be with Spain 20 years ago, when they were still developing their workforce.

APM does not want to see current investment in long term projects like nuclear, where the workforce needs to be reskilled from scratch, to suffer a similar fate to HS2. The opportunity in new areas such as renewable and low carbon energy generation, electric and other low carbon transportation, and the improved energy efficiency of the UK built environment stock is one that, if we commit to, we can become truly world class in delivering.

To embrace this opportunity, we want to see a future Government develop a coordinated strategy for project delivery which outlines what sectors the UK will focus on. Coordination will undoubtedly include the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) which does, to some extent, already do this. APM recommends the Government ensure that their strategy links in with NIC recommendations such as those in the *Second National Infrastructure Assessment*.²⁸ In particular, section three highlights ways to deliver growth across all regions.

But coordination can go further – the IPA, NAO, and Public Accounts Committee (PAC) all have experience on how to improve projects, as does APM itself – any future strategy should include their expertise to maximise the likelihood of success.

How can the machinery of government be improved to support the delivery of major capital projects?

²⁶ Association for Project Management commissioned research, PwC, 2019. [The Golden Thread: Launch Report](#).

²⁷ Association for Project Management, 2023. [Finding and Incorporating Social Value into Projects](#).

²⁸ National Infrastructure Commission, 2024. [Second National Infrastructure Assessment](#).

Lord Maude's *Independent Review of Governance and Accountability in the Civil Service* touched on quite a few of the major problems that impact on project delivery in Government departments.²⁹ We'd recommend consideration of his point on creating an Office of Budget and Management to improve accountability and transparency (which, on the question of learning from abroad, would put us in line with Australia, Canada, Ireland and New Zealand). He also called for a specific review into the governance of and accountability for the implementation of cross-departmental programmes, which would help us to learn lessons from previous projects and hold those people behind projects to account.

In developing the review Lord Maude makes note of previous reviews that highlight the over-reliance on generalists when developing policy. APM would like to see project specialists involved in developing policy from the start of a project, to ensure it's achievable (returning to the think slow, act fast mantra – more people working on policy delivery, fewer working on policy development).

Similarly to Lord Maude, the House of Lords Built Environment Committee recently found “no method of prioritisation within government to identify the most significant projects in the pipeline” and that “the Government should explain how the Chief Secretary to the Treasury prioritises infrastructure spending between departments.”³⁰

The Labour party has suggested an Office for Value for Money which would look at the costings and benefits of projects, while the Lord Maude review recommended a complete overhaul of the way the Treasury handles projects. APM and leading academics have suggested a Chief Project Officer in each Government department who is wholly accountable for project delivery in their department. But we can go further still on this, given the obvious blurred lines of accountability between development, delivery, and benefits.

Given the recommendations by Lord Maude, there could be chief project officers at every stage of the project, to ensure a focus on accountability – one at the project shaping and proposing stage (i.e. pre sanction); one for project delivery, and one post-delivery to chart the ongoing benefits realisation of the project (which will be realised for years beyond completion).

Linked to that, on long term benefits realisations and future project delivery/development, we need to ensure that lessons learned exercises are acted upon. As mentioned earlier regarding a coordinated approach, both the NAO and PAC offer recommendations on how departments can improve their project delivery. But these recommendations are not always implemented – we need to get better at implementing their recommendations.

Current and future major projects

What projects or initiatives do you think should be prioritised for the future development of UK infrastructure, and why?

No comment – APM exists to deliver better projects as when projects succeed society benefits, but it would be inappropriate to recommend individual projects.

Are there specific technological advancements or innovations that you believe can significantly benefit infrastructure delivery?

One of the biggest unknowns in any industry at the moment is the extent to which AI and data development will impact on project delivery (see also APM website.³¹) Professor Peter Morris, former Chair and Vice-President of APM, said that projects are for people and by people. If projects are developed and delivered for AI will they really work for people.

In 2022, APM funded research with the University of Manchester asking whether AI can learn to be a project professional which suggested that there will always need to be a human element to project development and delivery.³² We also covered the use of AI in project management to enhance project decision-making and

²⁹ Lord Maude of Horsham, 2023. [Independent Review of Governance and Accountability in the Civil Service](#).

³⁰ Built Environment Committee, 2023. [Letter from Lord Moylan to Baroness Neville-Rolfe](#).

³¹ Association for Project Management, 2024. [What is artificial intelligence in project management?](#)

³² Association for Project Management research fund, Wang, K. & Stewart, I., 2022. [Can Artificial Intelligence Learn to be a Project Professional?](#)

support problem-solving functions³³ and are funding further such research with the University of Southampton which will be launched in late 2024.³⁴

Beyond that APM recently launched a guide to developing project data analytics skills to help project professionals get to grips with this emerging field.³⁵

What can we learn from the experience and approach taken by other nations in terms of accelerating infrastructure projects?

As we have seen above, although it can be easy to compare UK projects with other countries it is very rare that we compare like for like – the example of Spanish high speed line development has been used before.

The table from *Gorilla in the Cockpit* (see Q1 answer) demonstrates that the UK is not alone in cost overruns. There is little specific evidence to suggest we are any better, or any worse than any other country.

APM corporate partners maintain that the rest of the world still looks to the UK for expertise and innovation in project management. In a recent debate in Parliament Virginia Crosbie MP highlighted that a site in her constituency was, according to a Korean delegation, “a better site for new nuclear than any site they have.” In that same debate the Minister told the House that his counterpart in the Czech Republic was keen to see what the UK can offer in terms of nuclear SMR.³⁶ So the idea that the world does everything better than us is not substantiated by the evidence.

But this can also be a problem. Through “talent flight” we have seen experienced project professionals in the UK offered major incentives to move to the Middle East and other areas where project management systems are less mature than the UK.

On the approach in other countries, Jimoh Ibrahim et al. looked into megaprojects in Nigeria and found similar issues to the UK.³⁷ They also compared Nigeria’s approach to countries with similar project management maturity levels – India, Thailand and Indonesia – and found that all three countries shared Nigeria’s problems around “lack of continuity, slow decision-making and corruption” which caused “delays and budget overruns.” As Bent Flyvbjerg’s extensive research on megaprojects around the world shows, these projects are infamous for failing to deliver both what was initially expected of them and for the costs and within the timeframes they set out to deliver by and within. But that also outlines part of the issue around megaprojects. Cost and time savings come through precedent – have we done something similar before? But so many megaprojects are unprecedented.

While maturity levels are completely different to the UK, making comparison difficult, lack of continuity and slow decision-making were also seen in our own civil service and indeed one of our former corporate partners identified three issues faced by major projects.³⁸

- 1) Poor planning and project set-up: including misunderstanding cost-estimates and what they can be used for and lack of incentives for those involved early to provide “honest” estimates.
- 2) Loss of control and accountability: meaning a lack of change control over timescales, costs and scope, poor visibility of data, and information throughout the levels of a project.
- 3) The wrong people providing the wrong sort of scrutiny: widespread feedback from industry experts highlighted issues around having the wrong people with the wrong expertise as a client or the project sponsor.

Ibrahim et al.’s report eventually recommends an agency be created that can own and oversee the portfolio of projects – a “Large Government Project Strategy and Budgets Office.” We see parallels here with the Lord Maude’s Office of Budget and Management,³⁹ Labour’s Office for Value for Money⁴⁰ and the comments above

³³ Association for Project Management research fund, Dacre, N. & Kockum, F. (2022). [Artificial Intelligence in Project Management](#).

³⁴ Association for Project Management research fund, 2024*. Dacre, N., Baxter, D., Dong, H., & Mhdawi, A., Digital Transformation in Public and Private Sector Project Management (*yet to be published).

³⁵ Association for Project Management, 2024. [Developing Project Data Analytics Skills](#).

³⁶ House of Commons, 2024. [Debate on the Civil Nuclear Road Map and Wylfa](#).

³⁷ Ibrahim, J., Loch, C & Sengupta, K., 2022. How Megaprojects are damaging Nigeria and how to fix it.

³⁸ Northern Policy Foundation, 2022. [Getting the basics right](#).

³⁹ Lord Maude of Horsham, 2023. [Independent Review of Governance and Accountability in the Civil Service](#).

⁴⁰ UK Labour Party, 2024. [Labour’s missions for Britain](#).

about better coordination between institutions. We'd recommend any future Government considers ways to ensure the political independence of Government projects.

Procurement and Supply Chains

How can we enable more efficient local supply chains?

Stability is the key driver here. Local supply chains need long term investment as this leads to confidence to invest and we can see this beginning to happen in the north-west around nuclear power. Greater, more secure, and long-term investment provides local supply chains with the confidence to grow. And this growth encourages further investment and encourages local skills development.

The opposite can be seen with the decision to terminate the Birmingham to Manchester section of HS2. The Government states that Alstom / Hitachi joint venture was only contracted for Phase 1,⁴¹ however it is likely they would have been preparing to develop their businesses, confident in the likelihood of investment in Phases 2a and 2b. Local supply chain efficiency and success is inextricably linked with stability, continuity, and long-term planning. Indeed, Alstom recently announced that 1,300 jobs were now at risk because of a lack of orders beyond 2024.⁴²

Future reforms, funding and investment

What do you see as the main obstacle to the private sector investing more significantly to help improve UKs infrastructure?

The current period of instability is extremely unhelpful to future investment. Cancelling major projects like HS2 without consultation with relevant stakeholders is unhelpful, and one of our corporate partners recently commented that the industry cannot take another HS2 like cancellation.⁴³ Why invest when that investment may be curtailed or lost unnecessarily?

But beyond this we need to see more joined up thinking. For example, in order to install more electric vehicle charging points in a motorway service station involves separate projects with National Highways, National Grid and the Local Authority. A way of streamlining these processes, projects and planning applications would be extremely helpful.

Are there regulatory changes or policy recommendations that you believe would be beneficial to accelerate investment and delivery?

In terms of delivery, we need policy that is focused directly on success factors. We've covered the Lord Maude review recommendations above. But we also need to go further and actively create the right conditions for project success, as touched upon in the answer on civil service skills need. The culture needs to be right, so a way of addressing the barriers here would be useful. There have been multiple attempts to quantify project success and APM produced both the conditions for project success⁴⁴ and the dynamic conditions for project success⁴⁵ as set out below.

APM conditions for project success (2015)	APM dynamic conditions for project success (2021)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective governance • Goals and objectives • Commitment to project success • Capable sponsors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal skills • Training and qualifications • Team ethos • Technology and data

⁴¹ House of Commons Written Questions, 2024. [High Speed 2 Line: Rolling Stock.](#)

⁴² The Guardian, 2023. [Train maker Alstom puts more than 1,300 jobs at risk in Derby.](#)

⁴³ Association for Project Management, 2024. Comments in roundtable discussion with Bill Esterson MP on infrastructure road projects.

⁴⁴ Association for Project Management commissioned research, 2015. [Conditions for Project Success.](#)

⁴⁵ Association for Project Management commissioned research, Eggleton, D. et al., 2021. [Dynamic Conditions for Project Success.](#)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure funding • Project planning and review • Supportive organisations • End users and operators • Competent project teams • Aligned supply chain • Proven methods and tools • Appropriate standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts • Knowledge management • Agility • Sustainability • Diversity
--	---

There are multiple examples of projects failing because of deficiencies in these areas. Any future Government needs to focus on the conditions above and actively look to embed them within the civil service culture (or understand why they currently do not arise).

APM continues to advocate to improve the quality and professionalism of the project community within Government. We are working with the IPA to increase the number of Chartered Project Professionals in senior project roles. Ideally, we'd like Chartered or working towards Chartered to be mandated as the default for senior officials in control of major projects, providing another level of assurance, and of competence, to each Government project.

What do you see as the main alternative funding models* available to the sector to fund stations and their surrounding city developments?

No comment as this is not an area of expertise for the APM.

Are you aware of best practice approaches and case studies that have used alternative models with successful outcomes?

No comment – although our corporate partners would be able to offer advice and guidance on this and APM would be happy to facilitate a roundtable with corporate partners.

Additional

Are there any other issues you would like to raise that are relevant to the Review's Terms of Reference?

No comment.