

Managing Project Change Requests

- Consistent change handling protects project success and budget
- A repeatable method: document Change, Impact, Decision, Status
- Solves scope creep, budget overruns, stakeholder confusion, and missing approvals
- Journey from core concepts to hands-on exercise and your action plan



Why Consistent Change Management Matters



- A change request is a formal proposal to modify scope, schedule, cost, or quality.



- 52% of projects experience scope creep; informal changes compound into major overruns.



- Consistency builds trust through a single auditable record: what changed, why, and who approved it.

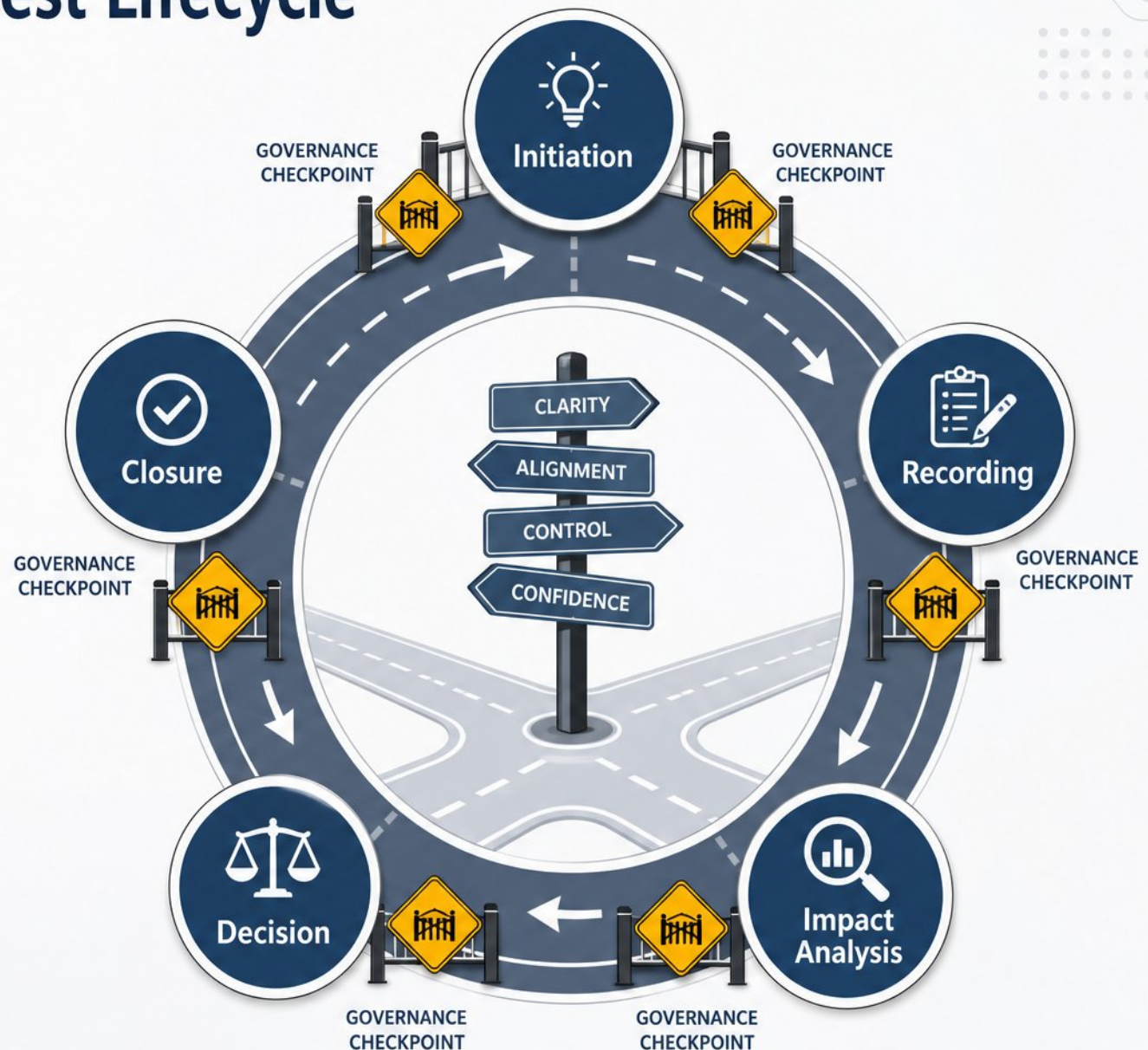


- Framework: Capture the Change, Impact, Decision, and Status for every request.



The Change Request Lifecycle

- Five universal stages: Initiation, Recording, Impact Analysis, Decision, and Closure.
- Connects to PMBOK/PRINCE2 integrated change control for cross-constraint evaluation.
- Skipping stages causes rework, disputes, and "I don't remember agreeing to that" moments.
- Treat the lifecycle as a decision flow, not just paperwork.



Core Elements of a Change Request Record

CHANGE REQUEST RECORD

Change Request ID:

Requester:

Date:

Change Description (Objective):

Business Justification:

Change Category (Select one):

☐ Scope ☐ Schedule ☐ Cost

☐ Quality ☐ Resource ☐ Risk

Linked To Change Register / Log:



- - Unique ID, requester, date, and an objective description of the change



- - Business justification: separating genuine needs from 'nice-to-haves'



- - Categorize the change: scope, schedule, cost, quality, resource, or risk



- - Connect the record to your central change register or log immediately

Structured Impact Analysis



- Compare current vs. proposed state across scope, schedule, cost, quality, risk, and resources



- Quantify realistic schedule delay, budget variance, and resource reallocation



- Identify secondary effects: dependencies, technical debt, testing scope, stakeholder communication



- Document assumptions and constraints to make the analysis defensible



Formulating a Clear Decision Package



- Package a concise executive summary with impact data for decision-makers



- Present clear options: approve, reject, defer, or conditional approval



- Define who decides, their authority limits, and approval thresholds



- Align request with CCB and project governance rules



DECISION PACKAGE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REQUEST FOR CHANGE REVIEW AND APPROVAL

RECOMMENDED DECISION

☒ APPROVE ☐ REJECT ☐ DEFER

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

Decision Outcomes and Status Tracking



- Standard decisions: approved, rejected, deferred, conditionally approved – with rationale and date



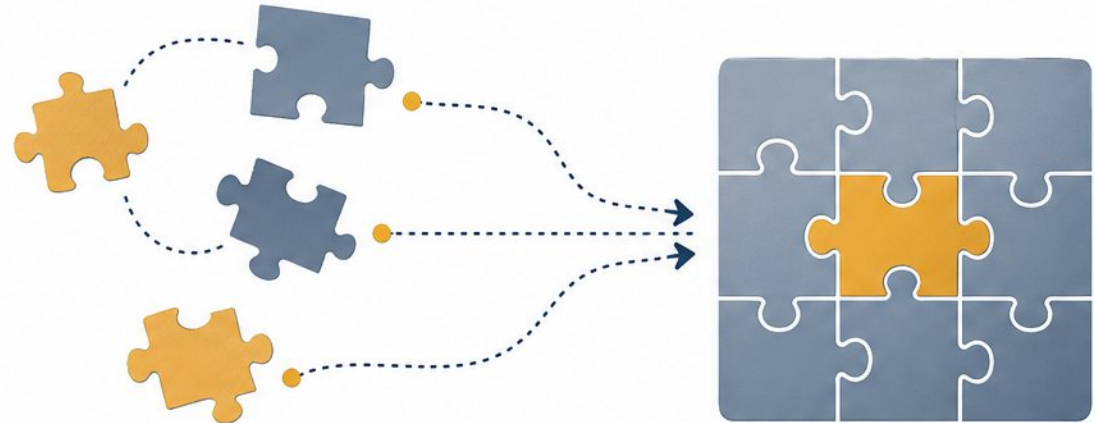
- Core statuses: open, under review, approved, implemented, closed



- Update the central change register immediately after every decision



- Rejected changes must be logged too – prevent repeat requests, show fair consideration



Open

New change requests captured and awaiting review



Under Review

Change is being assessed and evaluated



Approved

Change is approved with rationale and date



Implemented

Change has been implemented successfully



Closed

Change is complete and formally closed



Rejected

Rejected changes are logged with rationale and date. This prevents repeat requests and shows fair consideration.



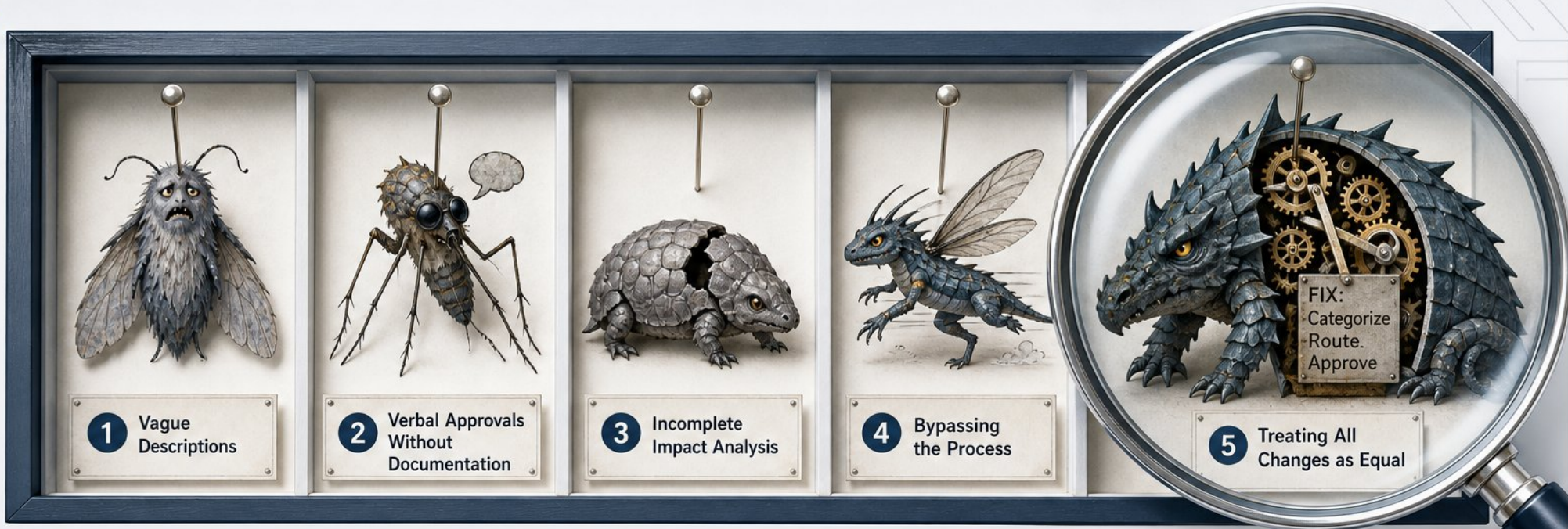
Maintaining Audit Trails and Version Control



- Log who requested, assessed, and decided — with dates and rationale
- Update scope, schedule, budget baselines, and the change log
- Revise requirements, test plans, risk register, and comms plans
- Use the log to spot recurring issues and unstable requirements
- Stale documents cause confusion; update only what drives action



Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them



- ▶ **Vague descriptions** (e.g. 'improve the dashboard'): require specific, measurable change statements.



- ▶ **Verbal approvals without documentation:** apply the 'no log entry, no change' rule.



- ▶ **Incomplete impact analysis:** use a mandatory checklist covering all constraint areas.



- ▶ **Bypassing the process under time pressure:** define an expedited path with conditional approval.



- ▶ **Treating all changes as equal:** categorize by impact (minor, major, strategic) and route to the correct authority.



Tools and Technologies for Consistency



- **Lightweight options:** shared spreadsheets, collaborative documents, simple change log templates.



- **Dedicated tools:** Jira Service Management, ServiceNow, Smartsheet, Asana, Monday.com.



- **Features that enforce consistency:** custom fields, mandatory fields, automated routing, approval workflows.



- **Configure your tool to** embed 'Change, Impact, Decision, Status' natively.

CHANGE LOG TEMPLATE

Change	Impact	Decision	Status

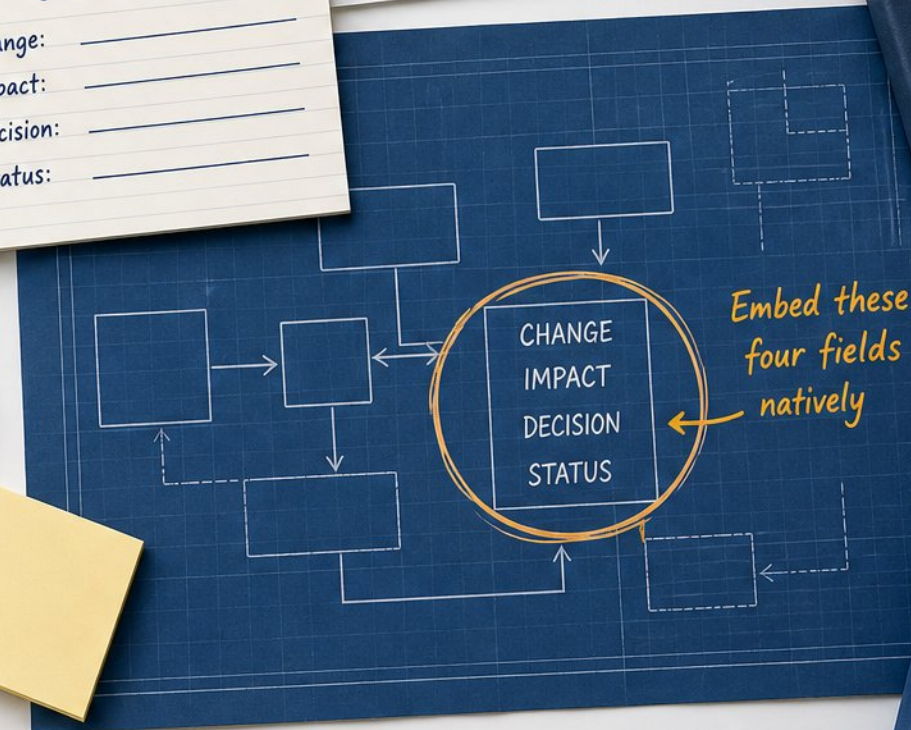
CHANGE RECORD

Change: _____

Impact: _____

Decision: _____

Status: _____



Exercise Part 1: Recording the Change



- **Scenario:** mid-project feature addition with a tight deadline



- **Record the change:** unique ID, clear description, justification



- **Use objective language:** describe “what” and “why” without ambiguity



- **Compare interpretations** to see why consistent wording matters



Exercise Part 2: Impact Analysis and Decision Package



- Assess impact across scope, schedule, cost, quality, risk, and resources



- Quantify effects: estimated delay days, budget variance, resource shifts



- Draft a one-page decision summary with a clear recommendation



- Present trade-offs: 'If we add X, we must delay Y or drop Z'



Exercise Part 3: Review and Model Answer



- Compare your record against the model answer to spot gaps.



- Common errors: vague descriptions, underestimated impact, missing trade-offs.



- Rejected decisions require updated follow-up status and stakeholder communication.



- A complete record protects the team, budget, and stakeholder trust.

CHANGE RECORD (Your Record)

Change Description

Update process.

Too vague

Reason for Change

Needed improvement.

Not specific

Impact

Minor impact.

Underestimated

Alternatives Considered

Looked at a few options.

Too general

Trade-offs

None.

Missing

Decision

Rejected.

No follow-up status

Stakeholder Communication

Not sure.

Missing plan

Approved by:

John

CHANGE RECORD (Model Answer)



Change Description

Revise approval workflow to reduce delays and improve accuracy.

Reason for Change

Current process causes delays and frequent rework due to unclear handoffs.

Impact

Moderate impact on process, training needs, and short-term productivity.

Alternatives Considered

Option A: Workflow automation.
Option B: Additional approvals.
Option C: Status quo.

Trade-offs

Automation reduces delays but requires initial training and system updates.

Decision

Rejected: Automation not feasible this quarter due to resource constraints.

Stakeholder Communication

Informed project team and stakeholders.
Documented decision and next steps.

Approved by:

John

Summary and Your Action Plan



- Revisit the four-part record: Change, Impact, Decision, Status.



- Adopt a standard template and central register for your current project.



- Identify one change-control improvement to implement this week.



- Resources: PMBOK 8 references, templates, and tool trials.



- Q&A and closing.



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