Conducting a Green Project Audit

Recap of Green Project Management:

Green Project Management (GreenPM) integrates environmental thinking into all of the project management decisions. It is a way to ingrain "greenthink™" into every project management process.

The point about green project management is <u>not</u> that you make every decision in favor of the one that is most environmentally friendly. The point is that you start to take the environment into account during the decision-making process. You might make most decisions the same as you do today. But there might be some decisions you would make differently.

Project Audits

Project audits are a service, often provided by an organization's Project Management Office (PMO), to verify compliance with the organization's defined project management practices. However, even without a formally established PMO, an organization can identify an individual (possibly another project manager) to conduct an independent project audit for each project.

Project audits are often included as a part of quality management planning and then performed at the predefined schedule intervals established in the quality management plan. The audits are a part of the quality assurance process, since they focus on the processes established and used on all projects. These audits can determine whether good project management processes are defined and whether there is an organizational discipline to follow these processes. The results of the audit contribute to determining a project's likelihood of success and defining an action plan if needed.

It is recommended that the results of a project audit are shared with the project manager, the performing organization, and the Sponsor and key stakeholders. The results provide guidance and learning for the project manager, by describing what to continue doing and what requires improvement or corrective actions. The performing organization can use the project audit to contribute to an overall summary of all project audits to determine compliance throughout the organization. The Sponsor and key stakeholders can get a sense for a project's health and progression throughout the project.

Green Project Audits

An organization that follows GreenPM may look to enhance its project auditing process. If there is a predefined quality assurance checklist used to conduct project audits on all projects, the checklist can be updated to include questions that verify

that projects are complying with the defined green processes. Examples of some questions include:

- Do the project management processes or project management deliverable templates include environment considerations, (ie, environmental implications resulting from specific project situations)?

- Can the project demonstrate its alignment to the organization's environmental policy or environmental management system, if any?

- Are environment stakeholders identified and participating in project communications?

- Are environment stakeholders involved in defining business requirements?

- Are environment stakeholders involved in deliverable review and acceptance?

- Are any project environmental factors a consideration for determining whether to continue to proceed in each phase gate review?

Organizations can also link their green project audits to their environmental standards. For example, many organizations today are compliant with ISO14001 standards. The International Organization for Standardization, www.iso.org, established the ISO 14000 standards and within the ISO14000 standards is the ISO 14001:2004 environmental standard. It provides a framework for an organization to act in a manner that enables it to comply with its environmentally defined standards. It seems that an understanding of these environmental standards could help define the green questions asked in any project audit. The PMO (or performing organization) could demonstrate the alignment of the green project audit with the organization's environmental framework. It could also summarize all audit results across all projects to demonstrate environmental compliance.

Andrea Krasnoff, PMP is Director of TenStep Consulting Services. Andrea has more than 17 years experience in project management, program management, and PMOs. She has managed and delivered projects of various sizes, including rescuing and successfully delivering troubled projects for several clients. She has been responsible for development groups and consistently delivered business-related systems to meet strategic business needs. Prior work experience includes Andersen Consulting, CAP Gemini, The Coca-Cola Company, and Network Communications Inc.