

Checklist Business Case

Use this list to check if your business case document is complete and well underpinned

For more information read 'Successful Project Sponsorship', Michiel van der Molen (Kogan Page, 2015).

A business case defines the justification of a project. A proper business case document is suitable for the following:

- to underpin the investment decision;
- to share the relevance of the project with stakeholders;
- as a foundation to assign benefit realization responsibilities;
- as a frame of reference for decisions on project continuation and changes;
- as a basis for the evaluation of project success.

Assess the quality of a business case document using the following questions.

1. Reasons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> What existing corporate strategies or policies are relevant for this project?<input type="checkbox"/> Is it clear how the project goal is related to these strategies or policies, allowing all stakeholders to understand the relevance of this project for the organization?<input type="checkbox"/> Has the main reason behind the project been briefly summarized, in a way that can be communicated unambiguously and powerfully (one-liner)?<input type="checkbox"/> Is it clear what will happen if we don't do the project or don't do it now?
2. Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Have several options been discussed and has an argued choice been made? There are always at least two options, 'do something' and 'do nothing'.
3. Proposed Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Is it clear what the main benefits are and which ones are just nice to have?<input type="checkbox"/> Are the benefits measurable?<input type="checkbox"/> Are the benefits quantified?<input type="checkbox"/> Is it clear when the benefits are expected to be realized?<input type="checkbox"/> Have benefit owners been found – that is, persons accepting responsibility to realize them based on the proposed project deliverable?<input type="checkbox"/> Have disbenefits been defined and quantified, and have they been taken into account in the investment decision?
4. Timescale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Is it clear what are the critical delivery dates?<input type="checkbox"/> Is it clear why these dates are relevant? A desirable delivery date is not the same as a necessary delivery date. A one-day schedule overrun can have just a minor impact, but can also be fatal.
5. Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Have all types of cost been included?:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Direct costs such as costs of purchasing, development, building, switching production, training or implementation.<input type="checkbox"/> Overhead costs such as project or programme management and auditing.<input type="checkbox"/> Lost income during project execution and/or switching production.<input type="checkbox"/> Costs of temporary facilities.<input type="checkbox"/> Costs of risk reservations.<input type="checkbox"/> Costs of compensation of negative effects and costs of claims.<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent costs of exploitation, maintenance, management and licences.<input type="checkbox"/> Are all suppliers committed to these costs by means of existing price agreements or proposals, or are the costs yet to be agreed?
6. Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Have the main risks been identified?<input type="checkbox"/> Have their probability and impact been assessed realistically?<input type="checkbox"/> Have stakeholders with different viewpoints (project sponsor, users, suppliers, specialists, opponents of the project) been involved in the risk assessment?<input type="checkbox"/> Has the resulting risk assessment been tested by those in the organization who are responsible for risk management?
7. Investment analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Has, taking into account all previously mentioned aspects, an assessment of the business case been made based on the current corporate standards for investment analysis?<input type="checkbox"/> Has the resulting investment analysis been assessed by those in the organization who are responsible for investment assessment?
8. General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Has the business case been assessed by knowledgeable persons who don't have a stake in the project?