



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
2026 PROJECT MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM

Kickoff Planning to Improve Delivery Success

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APPLIED RESEARCH LABORATORY FOR
**INTELLIGENCE
AND SECURITY**

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<https://tinyurl.com/KickoffsPMSymposium2026>



The Average Research Project Lifecycle



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Don't Forget About Project Kickoffs



Why Have Kick Offs?

- Manage Risk and Change
 - Identify the most likely and impactful impediments to success and plan mitigation strategies in advance.
- Affirm understanding of the terms and conditions of the grant/contract
 - Do we all (project team and sponsor) share the same understanding of the scope, schedule, budget and deliverables?
 - Are we prepared to meet all compliance requirements?
- Set expectations
 - Identify team roles and responsibilities.
 - Establish expectations for how, when work will be conducted.



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In today's workshop we will...

- Review key elements of an internal kick off
- Apply these elements to a mock award



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Group Work

- Review the case study together
- Break into groups and answer kickoff section questions
- Come back together to report





Invitees

Who are the key stakeholders at the kickoff?



Invitees

- Principal Investigator/Project Lead
 - Project Manager
 - Financial Manager
 - Task Leads
 - Contract Representative
-
- Inform
 - Procurement
 - Travel
 - Consultants



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Scope of Work

What are the main objectives of the project?



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Scope of Work

- Baseline sampling at 10 sites
- Remediation plan development
- Remediation at 3 sites
- Public Engagement campaign with meetings
- Reporting
- Areas of Ambiguity
 - Where are the designated sites?
 - How do we select the 3 remediation sites?
 - How many public engagement meetings?



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Task and Deliverables



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- Deliverables

- Remediation Plan
- Public Engagement Meeting Materials
- Quarterly Interim Reports
- Final Report

- Milestones

- Complete sampling
- Identify remediation sites
- Collect public feedback
- Complete remediation plan

- Scheduling/Dependencies

- Sampling timeline
- Public engagement timeline
- Report writing

- Tools

- Tracked by project schedule
- Progress dashboard



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Budget

What budget elements need review at the kickoff?



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Budget



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- Items requiring clarification
 - Labor Allocations
 - Consultant SOWs
 - Travel
 - Supplies and Materials
 - Elements of Community Outreach
- Define Budget management roles/responsibilities
- Planning travel spending to avoid cost overruns
- Change Management
 - What changes in scope or time will affect budget?
 - When must those anticipated changes be reported to the sponsor?
- Monthly Financial Report format
- Cadence of burn monitoring



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Roles and Responsibilities

How will project roles and responsibilities be defined for this project?



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Roles and Responsibilities



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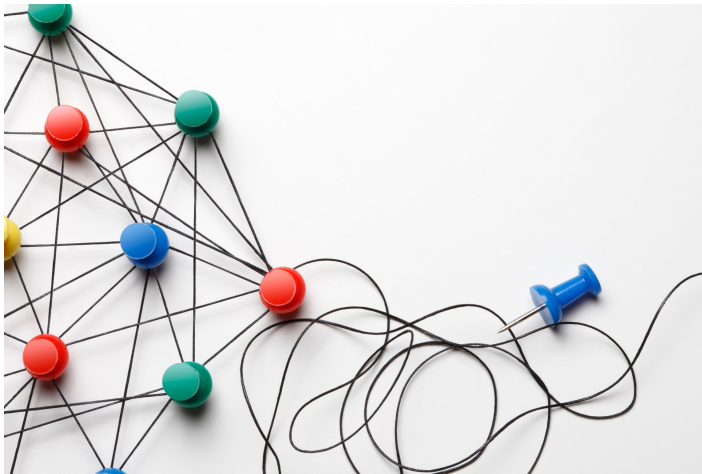
Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed

	PI/Project Lead	Scientists/ Consultants	Project Manager	Coordinator
Direction	R/A	I	I	I
Scientific Execution	A/C	R	C	I
Project Management	A/C	I	R	I
Financial Coordination	A/C	I	R	R
Asset Management	A/C	I	R	R
Travel Coordination	A/C	C	C	R



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Communication Plan

How will you communicate project actions and progress?



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Communication Plan



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- Internal Communication

- Internal Slack/Teams channel for discussion
- Additional email for team announcements
- Monthly reports to internal leadership on progress
- Document filing structure: location, naming conventions, etc.

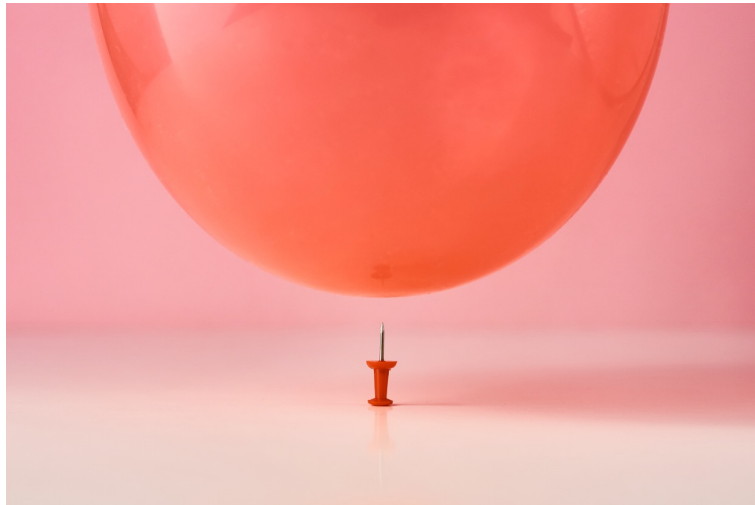
- External Communication

- Social media to engage community and keep them aware of upcoming meetings
- Sponsor communication channels



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Risk

What risks could affect project success?



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Risk



- Potential Risks

Risk Area	Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Schedule	18-month timeline may not be enough for sampling, remediation, and reporting phases	High	High	Build schedule buffers, track milestones closely, prioritize critical tasks
Technical / Environmental	Unpredictable site conditions could affect water quality results and remediation effectiveness	Medium	High	Conduct early assessments, use adaptive remediation strategies, keep contingency plans
Stakeholder / Community	Community resistance or low engagement could delay outreach and approvals	Medium	Medium	Engage stakeholders early, partner with local leaders, maintain clear communication



Compliance

What are key compliance terms of the agreement and how will they be managed?



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Compliance



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Compliance items for discussion

- Reporting formats and cadence
- Asset/Equipment management and reporting
- Regulatory requirements for scientific experiments
- Data management planning
- Consultant oversight
- Compliance contact for questions/concerns



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Next Steps

What actions must occur following the kickoff?



Next Steps



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Next Steps items for discussion

- Contracting with consultants
- Planning first sampling events
- Establishment of community communications channels
- Travel planning



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**FEARLESSLY
FORWARD**





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Questions & Evaluation

Evaluate Session:



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