



# **Issue Management Plan Preparation Guidelines**

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## 1. PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

Instruction:

This section provides the purpose of the document.

Recommended text:

The Issue Management Plan outlines the issue management approach for **<insert name of project>** It provides standard terminology, clear roles and responsibilities, a detailed description of the approved issue management process, and the standard templates used in that process. It is designed to guide the project team and stakeholders.

## 2. DEFINITION OF ISSUE MANAGEMENT

Instruction:

This section provides the definition of issue management.

Recommended Text:

An issue is something currently happening that is having a negative impact on the project and requires resolution for the project to proceed successfully. Issue management is the process of identifying, analyzing, responding to, and tracking issues facing the project.

## 3. OBJECTIVES OF ISSUE MANAGEMENT

Instruction:

This section provides the goal and objectives of issue management.

Recommended Text:

The overall goal of issue management is to protect the project from the negative impact of issues.

The objectives of issue management are as follows:

- Monitor a project to identify new or changing issues.
- Understand and minimize the cost and other impacts of project issues.
- Focus management attention on higher priority issues.
- Make issue-related decisions at the proper level of authority.
- Communicate clearly about issues with the team and project stakeholders.
- Maintain a clear and accurate record of issues and related actions over the life of the project.

## 4. TERMS, ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Instruction:

This section informs readers where they can access definitions for the terms, acronyms and abbreviations used in this document.

Recommended Text:

All terms, acronyms, and abbreviations used in this document are defined in the Project Management Glossary at [www.qnpm.gov.qa](http://www.qnpm.gov.qa).

## 5. ISSUE MANAGEMENT METHODS

Instruction:

This section outlines issue management methods to be used on the project for each step of the issue management process.

Recommended Text:

This section outlines issue management methods to be used on the project for each step of the risk management process.

These steps are issue identification, issue analysis, issue response, and issue tracking and reporting. Note that the first three steps happen in sequence, and the final step, issue tracking and reporting, happens throughout the process.



Tips:

- Remember that projects are committed to undertaking the issue management process and methods described in this document once it is approved. The Project Manager should be held accountable for completing activities described in this Plan by the Sponsor or Steering Committee.
- Avoid providing general descriptions of issue management best practice. This document describes the nature and extent of issue management activities for a specific project.
- The time and budget required to complete issue management activities described in this document should be included in the overall Project Schedule and Budget.
- Determine who should be involved in issue management activities. Options are to (i) limit activities to the Project Manager and team or (ii) include stakeholders.

## 5.1 Issue Identification

Instruction:

This sub-section identifies the activities the team will undertake to identify issues.

**Note:** Good issue identification is essential because issues can only be managed if they are identified. To do a thorough job in identifying issues, it is important to do the following three things:

- Encourage team members to bring any issues they identify to the attention of the Project Manager or Project Management Office.
- Orient team on the issue management process for the project.
- Probe for new issues at team status meetings and in discussions with stakeholders.
- Have a strong connection between your risk management process and issue management process. Once a risk (which is something a team thinks may happen in the future) becomes an actual problem, it should immediately move from the risk management process to the issue management process.

## 5.2 Issue Analysis

Instruction:

This sub-section identifies how the team will analyze issues.

**Note:** Issue analysis involves assessing each issue for its potential to harm a project by understanding its impact. “Impact” describes the loss a project will experience as a result of an issue. Below are definitions for high, medium and low impact. Note that the definitions of high, medium, and low vary by the impact type. For example, budget impact is measured in dollars, and schedule impact is measured in months. Note also that some issues can have more than one type of impact on a project.

Tips:

- Use the same impact definitions for issues, risks, and changes.
- Consider a broad range of impact types relevant to a specific project..
- A useful way to set budget and schedule impact definitions is to use percentages of the overall budget and timeline. For a QAR 50,000 project, a QAR 25,000 budget impact is a 50% budget impact and is likely to be considered a high impact. However, for a QAR 10,000,000 budget, a QAR 25,000 budget impact is a 0.25% budget impact and is likely to be considered low impact.

Example Impact Table:

Impact Type	High Impact	Medium Impact	Low Impact
Budget	> QAR 100,000	QAR 25,000-100,000	<QAR 25,000
Schedule	> 6 months	1 – 5 months	< 1month
Safety	Worker fatality or serious injury	Worker minor injury	Worker very minor injury
System	Loss of system	Major system damage	Minor system damage

### 5.3 Issue Response

Instruction:

This section specifies the activities needed to effectively respond to major issues.

**Note:** Issue response activities are the responsibility of the Project Manager.

Example:

The Project Manager will, in consultation with others, determine activities for responding to issues. The Project Manager will also assign these activities to appropriate team members and is responsible for monitoring whether or not these activities are being completed and whether or not they are effective in reducing the impact of an issue.

### 5.4 Issue Tracking and Reporting

Instruction:

This section outlines how issues will be tracked and reported.

**Note:** When writing this section, consider the following:

1. What type of Issue Log will be used to track issues?
2. Who is responsible for maintaining the Issue Log?
3. In what format will issues be reported?
4. Who will receive issues reports?
5. What are the thresholds for reporting issues? For example, the Project Manager needs to be aware of all issues, but the Steering Committee may only be interested in hearing about issues that are high impact.

Example:

The Project Manager is responsible for tracking issues. He will maintain the Issue Log provided in Appendix E by ensuring that information is up-to-date. This requires monitoring whether or not issues are changing and whether or not response activities are effective.

The Project Manager is also responsible for reporting on the status of issues. High and medium impact issues are reported in the weekly status report. The thresholds for reporting issues are as follows:

- The Sponsor is made aware of all issues that are accepted and all high and medium impact issues.
- The Steering Committee is made aware of all high impact issues.

## 6. ISSUE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Instruction:

This section outlines the issue management process for the project including how an issue is identified, analyzed, logged, tracked, and reported. It includes a process map (diagram outlining steps) and a process narrative (text describing each step).

Recommended text:

This section outlines the issue management process for the project and includes an issue is identified, analyzed, logged, tracked, and reported.

It clearly identifies roles, activities, the sequence of activities, inputs, outputs, and how and where information is stored.

Tips:

In designing an issue management process, aim to make the process as simple as possible while still achieving the process objectives listed earlier in this document. More complex projects require more complex project management processes. Factors contributing to project complexity include the following: team size, budget size, timeline length, strategic or political importance, impact on stakeholders, number of agencies and suppliers involved, number of dependencies on other projects.

In designing an issue management process, consider the following:

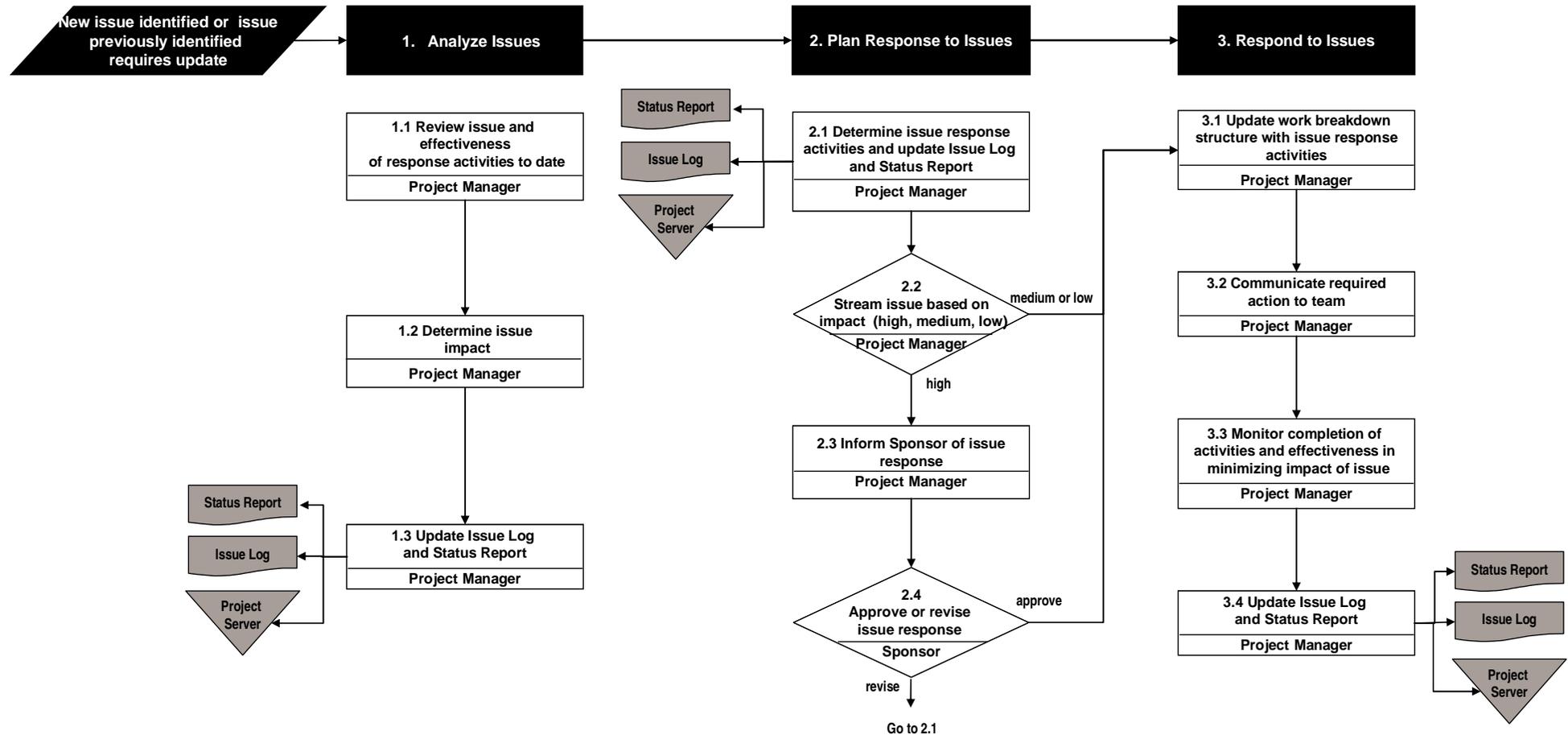
1. Approval authority: Who are all the decision-makers in the process and what is their role and level of decision-making authority? Decision-makers can include the, Project Manager, Steering Committee, Team Leads, or Project Sponsor
2. Required Documentation:
  - Simple: issue information is recorded in the Issue Log and Status Report only.
  - More complex: in addition to the Issue Log and Status Report, Issue Identification Forms and Issue Analysis Forms are used.
  - Storage: where should the Issue Log, Issue Identification Forms, and other issue documentation be stored? As soft copies, hard copies, or both?
3. Automation: Will any steps of the process be automated? Use of enterprise project management applications can automate some aspects of a issue management process.

Examples:

Below please find two examples of an issue management process. The first is a simple process and is appropriate for a relatively small and simple project. The second is more complex and is appropriate for a relatively large and complex project.

## 6.1 Simple Issue Management Process Map

The following process map depicts a straight-forward, manual issue management process that primarily involves a Project Manager and Project Sponsor. Documentation is limited to the Issue Log and Status Report.



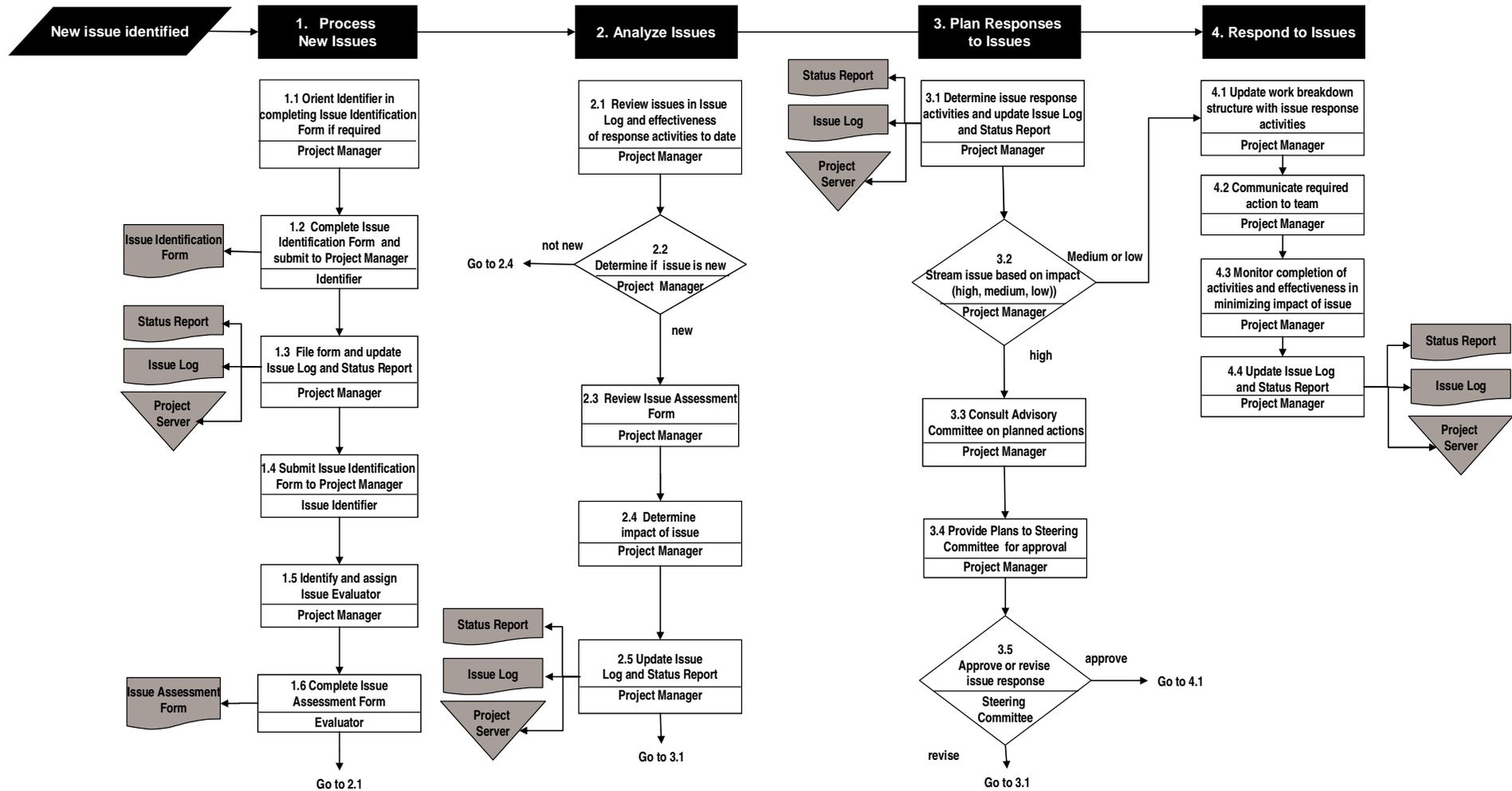
## 6.2 Simple Issue Management Process Narrative

The following table describes the steps in the issue management process. Note that an activity assigned to the Project Manager can be completed by the Project Manager or a designate.

Step	Responsible	Action
<b>1. Analyze Issue</b>		
1.1	Project Manager	The Project Manager reviews issue and effectiveness of response activities to date.
1.2	Project Manager	The Project Manager determines the issue impact based on established impact definitions.
1.3	Project Manager	The Project Manager updates the Issue Log and that period's Status Report. These documents are stored on the project server.
<b>2. Plan Response to Issue</b>		
2.1	Project Manager	The Project Manager outlines what activities must be done to address an issue; this activity is often done in consultation with others. The Project Manager then updates the Issue Log and Status Report. These documents are stored on the project server.
2.2	Project Manager	The Project Manager streams the issue according to issue impact (high, medium, low) for further action and communication. If the impact is medium or low, go to step 3.1. If it is high, go to step 2.3.
2.3	Project Manager	The Project Manager informs the Sponsor of the planned issue response for high impact issues.
2.4	Project Sponsor	The Sponsor approves or revises the issue response. If it is approved, the next step is 3.1. If it is revised, the next step is 2.1.
<b>3. Respond to Issue</b>		
3.1	Project Manager	The Project Manager updates the project work breakdown structure with issue response activities.
3.2	Project Manager	The Project Manager communicates the required action to the team.
3.3	Project Manager	The Project Manager monitors completion of activities and their effectiveness in minimizing issue.
3.4	Project Manager	The Project Manager updates the Issue Log and Status Report. These documents are stored on the project server.

### 6.3 More Complex Issue Management Process Map

The following process map depicts a more complex manual issue management process with a Project Manager, and Steering Committee. Documentation includes an issue Log, Status Report, Issue Identification Form, and Issue Assessment Form.



## 6.4 More Complex Issue Management Process Narrative

The following table describes the steps in the issue management process above. Note that an activity assigned to the Project Manager can be completed by the Project Manager or a designate.

Step	Responsible	Action
<b>1. Process New Issues</b>		
1.1	Project Manager	When a new issue is identified, the Project Manager orients the identifier on how to complete an Issue Identification Form if Required.
1.2	Identifier	The Identifier completes Issue Identification Form and submits it to Project Manager.
1.3	Project Manager	The Project Manager files the Issue Identification Form and updates the issue Log and Status Report. These documents are stored on the project server.
1.4	Identifier	The Identifier submits the Issue Identification Form to Project Manager.
1.5	Project Manager	The Project Manager identifies and assigns an Issue Evaluator.
1.6	Evaluator	The Evaluator completes Issue Assessment Form and submits it to Project Manager.
<b>2. Analyze Issues</b>		
2.1	Project Manager	The Project Manager reviews Issue Log and the effectiveness of response activities to date for each issue
2.2	Project Manager	The Project Manager determines if the issue is new. If it not new, the next step is 2.4.
2.3	Project Manager	The Project Manager reviews the Issue Assessment Form.
2.4	Project Manager	The Project Manager determines the impact of the issue based on established impact definitions
2.5	Project Manager	The Issue Manager updates Issue Log and Status Report. These documents are stored on the project server.
<b>3. Plan Response to Issues</b>		
3.1	Project Manager	The Project Manager determines issue response activities and updates the Issue Log and Status Report. These documents are stored on the project server.
3.2	Project Manager	The Project Manager streams the issue according to issue impact (high, medium, low) for further action and communication.
3.3	Project Manager	The Project Manager consults the Advisory Committee on planned actions for high impact issues.
3.4	Project Manager	The Project Manager provides the planned actions to the Steering Committee for approval
3.5	Steering Committee	The Steering Committee approves or revises the Issue response.
<b>4. Respond to Issues</b>		
4.1	Project Manager	The Project Manager updates the project work breakdown structure with issue response activities.
4.2	Project Manager	The Project Manager communicates the required action to the team.
4.3	Project Manager	The Project Manager monitors completion of activities and their effectiveness in minimizing the impact of the issue.
4.4	Project Manager	The Project Manager updates the issue Log and Status Report. These documents are stored on the project server.

## 7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Instruction:

This section outlines roles and responsibilities for those involved in issue management.

**Note:** This section should only include issue management-related responsibilities. It should also provide more detail on issue management responsibilities than provided in the Project Plan.

Example:

The table below describes roles and responsibilities related to the issue management process.

Role	Responsibilities

## **APPENDIX A: ISSUE IDENTIFICATION FORM**

Insert the Issue Identification Form template if one is required in the issue management process documented in this Plan. A sample template is available at [www.qnpm.gov.qa](http://www.qnpm.gov.qa)

## **APPENDIX B: ISSUE ANALYSIS FORM**

Insert the Issue Analysis Form template if one is required in the issue management process documented in this Plan. A sample template is available at [www.qnpm.gov.qa](http://www.qnpm.gov.qa).

## **APPENDIX C: ISSUE LOG**

Insert the Issue Log to be used in the issue management process documented in this Plan. A sample template is available at [www.qnpm.gov.qa](http://www.qnpm.gov.qa).