



## Can Quality Go Green?

By Tom Mochal and Andrea Krasnoff

It is possible that in the future it will make sense to establish “environmental management” as one of the foundational skills for project managers. However, in the meantime I think that the Quality Management Plan is probably the place to recognize the environmental considerations of the project.

There are two levels of quality management programs – each of which can accommodate GreenPM concepts. One is focused at an organization level and one is focused on a project level. Quality initiatives at an organizational level include Six Sigma or the Capability Maturity Model Integrated (CMMI). Individual project teams don’t implement large scale quality programs such as Six Sigma on their own. This is normally done at an organization level.

It makes sense that if we have a Six Sigma initiative in our organization; we are going to need to adopt Six Sigma principles on our project. Similarly, if you are practicing GreenPM you should first look to see if your organization has an Environmental Management Policy (or something similar). If so, then you should make sure that your project aligns to these environmental policies and standard as well.

The second aspect of quality is the specific quality criteria that make sense for our specific project. When you are creating a Quality Management Plan for your project it is important to understand whether there are organizational policies and standards that you need to recognize and adopt on your project.

The project Quality Management Plan focuses on the stakeholders’ expectations (requirements) of quality, and the resulting activates needed to meet these expectations. If a project manager is practicing GreenPM, he should seek to expand this discussion of quality to discuss the environmental considerations of the project. This does not mean that every project will have environmental considerations. However, if we start to ask the questions and start to raise awareness, you might be surprised to learn that there may be green areas of interest to your stakeholders.

Once you know the expectations of quality, you can create a proactive plan to achieve these expectations. This proactive plan will consist primarily of quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) techniques that will be applied to project.

Environmental elements can be incorporated into these discreet quality activities as well. For instance, you may incorporate a QC checklist to validate deliverable quality. Perhaps it makes sense for your checklist to include questions that tie in environmental aspects to the deliverable you are building. One idea could be to



ensure that you use recycled paper to create your project paper-based deliverables. This is a small thing but could have a large impact when multiplied over hundreds or thousands of projects.

It is likely that environment goals and metrics will not exactly follow the best practices of current quality management processes. However, there are areas of similarity and concepts that can be adapted. As green becomes more routine within the world of project management, we will further understand how to best apply and adapt current project management processes into a structured, proactive approach for managing environment-related aspects to our projects, and contribute to our organization's environment policies and goals.

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