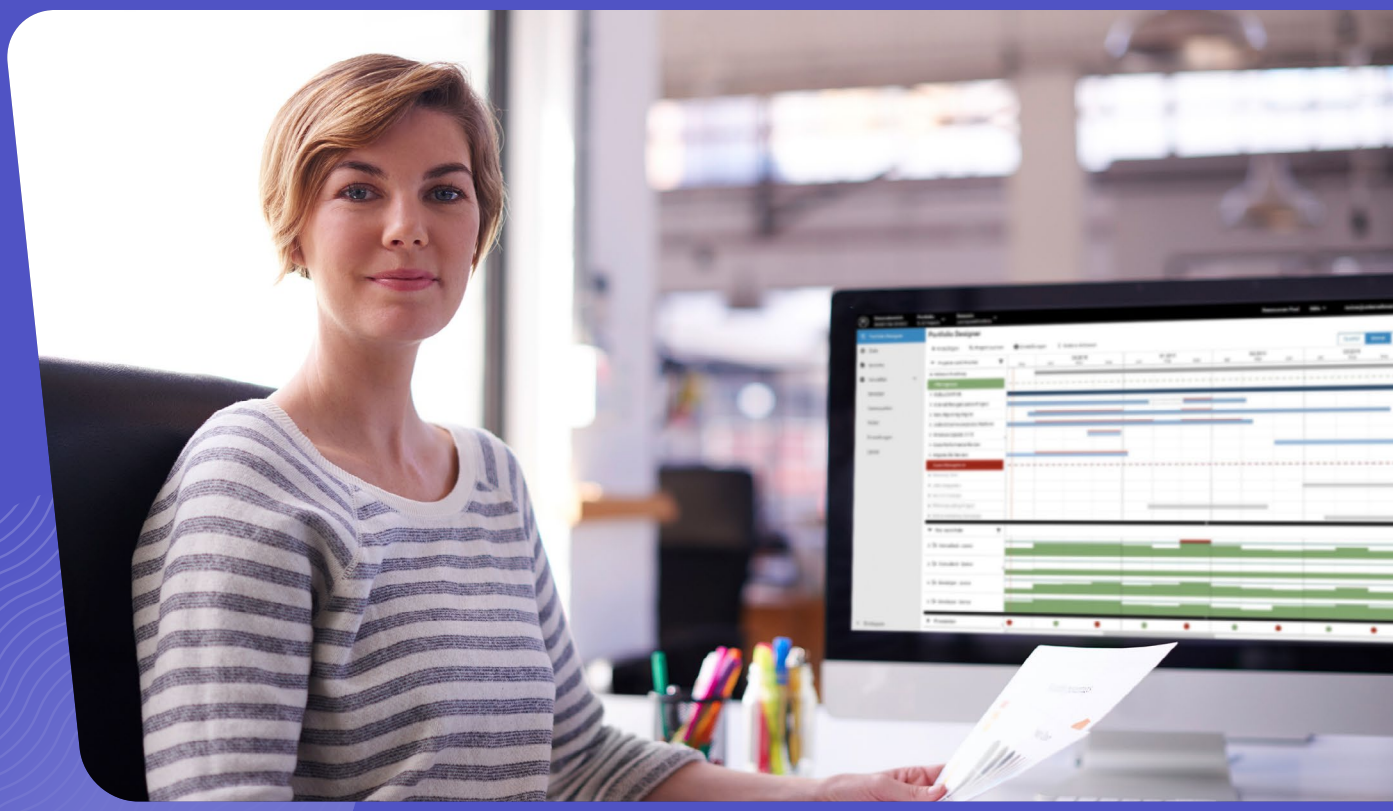
MEISTERPLAN

Successfully Introduce Lean Project Portfolio Management™ with Meisterplan

- Introduction and Configuration
- Implementation of Lean PPMTM with Meisterplan



The Guide to PPM that Finally Works

Project portfolio management (PPM) can be so easy - with Lean PPM™ and Meisterplan. On the following pages, we will show you step by step how to introduce lean yet effective project portfolio management to your company and how to implement it with Meisterplan. With sub-portfolios, scenario simulation, reporting, and more, you can ensure that the information you need right now is available during each meeting, and that challenges can be resolved as they arise. This ensures that your organization always makes the right decisions for a valuable and achievable portfolio.

Personal Support

If you would like personal support or advice during the introduction of Meisterplan to your company, our Customer Success team is always at your service.

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Always Stay Up-To-Date

We're constantly improving the Lean PPM method and the Meisterplan software. You'll always find the most up-to-date version of this guide available for download at meisterplan.com/lean-ppm-guide.pdf.

Document version: 1.1.13

Lean PPM is based on features only available in the Pro or Premium Edition of Meisterplan. If you have the Basic Edition and want to work with Lean PPM, please contact us.

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1 Introducing Lean PPM™ to Your Company

The 4 Success Factors for the Introduction of PPM to Your Company

We have helped countless clients implement project portfolio management. Therefore, we know that it takes more than a good PPM method and a good tool to firmly establish long-term portfolio management in a company. Here we reveal our four success factors for a sustainable and successful introduction of Lean PPM™.

High Acceptance through Simplicity

The right decisions depend on correct data and the absence of shadow systems or collateral agreements. Therefore, the key success factor is that all those involved in project portfolio management - from senior management to the portfolio coordinator to project managers and resources - accept the process and the tool used. That's why Lean PPM™ only includes the truly necessary activities and meetings and Meisterplan only maintains the project information that is actually needed for the next portfolio decision. This ensures that following the processes and maintaining the tool do not become annoying chores which only take time away from the actual work that needs to be done.

High Acceptance through Added Value

The acceptance of project portfolio management will be even greater if the value added by doing it happens quickly and is transparent to all. Therefore, be aware of the specific problem that Lean PPM™ solves for each employee and actively communicate the benefits. Take advantage of the in-depth visuals and reporting functions available in your Lean PPM™ tool. For example, show the company board how portfolio value has been increased, or show a key employee how his or her constant overbooking has been solved.

Start Fast, Scale Later

Company-wide rollouts of new processes, structures or tools are often extremely time-consuming, tedious and risky. It is easier and faster to introduce project portfolio management in one area or division of the company. After that, Lean PPM™ with Meisterplan can be extended to other business areas using the experience from the initial introduction.

Start Where the Pain Is the Greatest

Different business areas benefit differently from project portfolio management. For the maximum effect and to use as a role model for other areas, it is best to select a highly dynamic area. For example, choose an area that experiences a lot of technological change or one that has key resources that are chronically over-booked.

The Basis for Sustainable Decisions: The Lean PPM™ Process

Once you have found the right use case and the right area for the launch, introducing the process begins. We will show you which meetings and roles you need for Lean PPM™.

Overview – the 4 Areas of Lean PPM™

Lean PPM™ is the key to getting the right projects done at the right time and with sufficient resources. Lean PPM™ consists of four areas, most of which run concurrently and interact with each other:

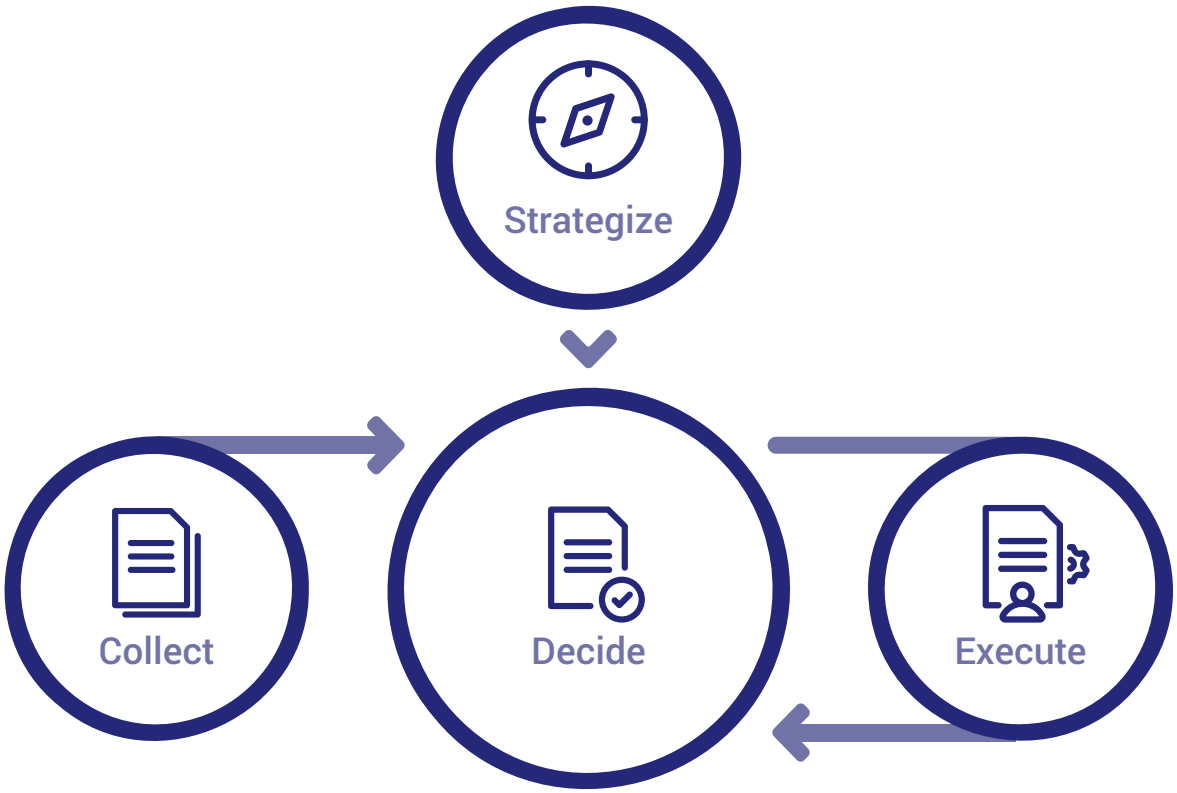


Figure 1: The 4 basic areas of Lean PPM™.

- In the **„Strategize"** area, evaluation criteria for projects are defined.
- In the **„Collect"** area, new project initiatives are collected and evaluated.
- In the **„Decide"** area, the composition of the portfolio is decided.
- In the **„Execute"** area, the active project portfolio is controlled.

Meetings

This process is now managed through regular meetings with clearly defined participants, inputs and outputs.

Figure 2 shows you the Lean PPM meeting structure at a glance. For a detailed description of all meetings with participants, input and output, see **meisterplan.com/project-portfolio-management/project-portfolio-management-templates**.

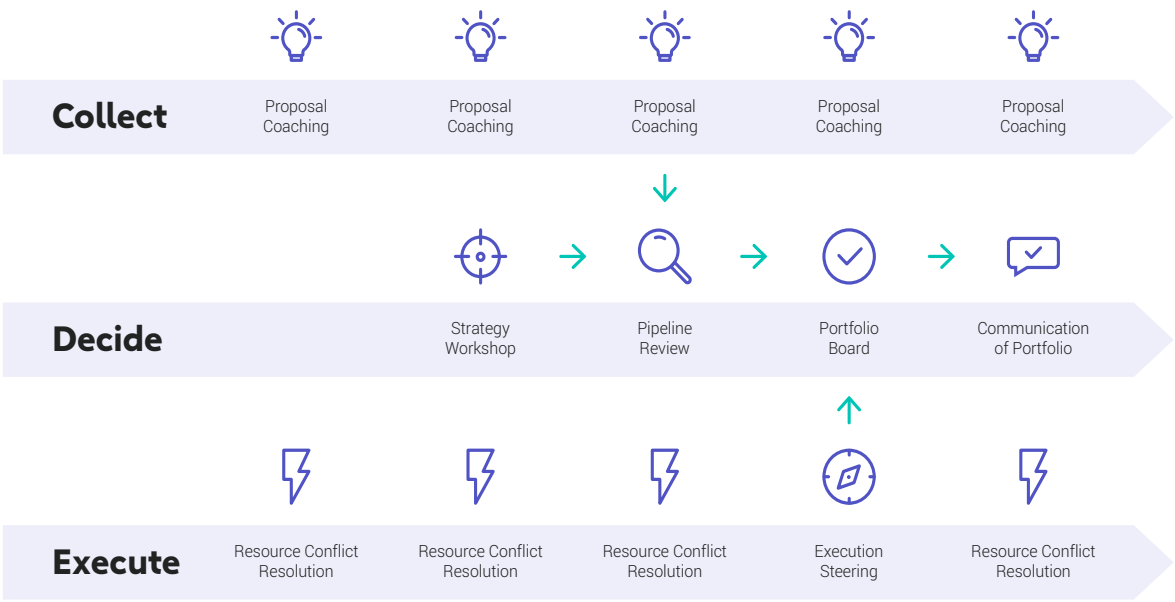


Figure 2: These meetings are essential for successful portfolio management.

Roles

In order for the meetings to succeed, the participants should be well-prepared and purposeful during the meeting. For this, it is essential that everyone involved in the Lean PPM™ process and understands their role.

PPM Role	PPM Responsibility	Typical Organizational Role
Initiator	• Brings in initiative • Captures initiative and details it out in the project proposal • Presents project proposal to Pipeline Review Committee (if required)	• Manager • Key Account • Manager • Expert

PPM Role	PPM Responsibility	Typical Organizational Role
Portfolio Coordinator	• Responsible for all or part of the company's project portfolio (e.g., for a business unit or a program) • Guides other roles through the entire process • Translates strategy into project prioritization criteria • Supports Initiator during idea phase, for example, by facilitating resource requirement estimates • Creates portfolio suggestions • Prepares decision-making meetings (outside of execution phase)	• Head of PMO • PMO Team Member • Business Unit Manager • Program Manager • IT Coordinator
Pipeline Review Committee Member	• Reviews, evaluates and prioritizes initiatives	• Department Managers • Business Experts
Portfolio Board Member	• Responsible for seeing strategy through to execution by using successful project portfolio management • Exerts control over active portfolio • Makes decisions regarding issues in active portfolio • Decides on the future project portfolio and the respective budgets	• Senior Manager • Executive
Project Manager	• Reports project status • Reports project resource requirements • Escalates project issues • Presents project to decision-making board (if required)	• Project Manager
Resource Manager	• Ensures correct mapping of resources to roles & skills • Staffing: (re-)assigns resources to projects • Resolves day-to-day/tactical resource management issues	• Team Lead
Team Member	• Works on assigned projects	• Any employee
Execution Steering Member	• Responsible for executing strategy through individual projects • Exerts control over active projects • Makes decisions regarding issues in active project • Resolves project management challenges	• Department Manager • Senior Manager • Executive

PPM Role	PPM Responsibility	Typical Organizational Role
HR Department	• Keeps employment records up-to-date, including hire/termination date, departmental allocation, work schedule, holidays	
Strategy Manager	• Works with Portfolio Coordinator to translate strategy into evaluation criteria (strategy workshop)	

Table 1: These roles contribute to successful project portfolio management.

To learn more about Lean PPM, visit our website at **meisterplan.com/project-portfolio-management**.

Customize Meisterplan for Your Business in 7 Easy Steps

When the roles are assigned and the meetings are scheduled, you can then configure the tool. Meisterplan comes pre-configured for Lean PPM™, so you can customize the tool to fit your organization's needs in just seven simple steps.

Project Phases/Milestones

Customize the preconfigured project phases (under **Manage > General Settings**) to reflect the progress of projects from planning to execution to completion. How you structure your projects will affect how you work with milestones: If you later add milestones to your projects, they can start or end a project phase.

To learn more about project phases and milestones, please visit our **Help Center**.

Stage Gates

A smooth Lean PPM™ process depends on making explicit and transparent decisions. Stage gates support this goal because they can be used to clearly define which levels a project has already reached before approval. The following stage gates are already preconfigured in Meisterplan:

- Idea
- In Definition
- Seeking Review
- Seeking Approval
- Approved
- Active
- Measuring Impact
- Completed
- Rejected

To learn more about Project Information Field Configuration, please visit our **Help Center**.

Project Information Fields

When it comes to the question of what additional project information is needed to make informed portfolio decisions, less is usually more. It is better to have a small amount of cleanly maintained data than an abundance of incomplete information and outdated fields. Under **Manage > Project Fields**, you can edit the preconfigured fields, add additional fields or delete unused fields. Under **Manage > Project Settings**, you can define which project fields are displayed where in your projects. To learn more about Project Information Fields, please visit our **Help Center**.

Organization Units (OBS Structure)

With efficient project portfolio management, decisions are made where the most knowledge exists. For dividing the portfolio into sub-portfolios as well as for resource management in general, it is helpful to map the structure of your company or organization in the PPM tool. In Meisterplan, we call this the Organizational Breakdown Structure (OBS). Under **Manage > Organization (OBS)**, you can edit the preconfigured structure and create your own departments, locations or teams. Read more about the OBS structure in our Help Center.

Roles

Roles such as Senior Developer or Junior Consultant describe how people will contribute to a project. For Lean PPM™, the scheduled workload of projects is specified at the role level during the proposal and rough planning phase. It is only in the detailed planning phase, after the resolution of the new portfolio, that individual resources are staffed to the project. In Meisterplan (found in the **Resource Pool** under **Roles**), some roles are preconfigured, here you can also create your own roles. More about using roles in Meisterplan can be found in our Help Center.

User Groups

User permissions are managed with user groups. Before you add users, create user groups under **Manage > User Groups**. Access rights should be configured based on a user's role, so that all involved in your project portfolio management process can optimally contribute to the portfolio.

Learn more about adding and configuring user groups in our Help Center.

The following user groups are recommended for Lean PPM™:

- Portfolio Coordinators
- Pipeline Review Committee Members
- Portfolio Board Members
- Execution Steering Members
- Project Managers
- Resource Managers
- Initiators
- Team Members

Learn how to easily configure these groups and their permissions in our Help Center.

Users

To enable the best collaboration, all involved in your project portfolio should be granted access to Meisterplan. Add new users under Manage > Users and assign them to at least one user group based on their role in the Lean PPM™ process. Learn more about user management in our **Help Center**.

(Sub-)Portfolios

The bigger your organization is, the more you gain by dividing the entire portfolio into multiple sub-portfolios. First of all, decentralization reduces the complexity of the PPM process, making it more manageable. In addition, decentralization in the sense of „lean" is efficient because decisions and conflict resolutions can often already take place where the most detailed knowledge is available.

First, edit the preconfigured portfolios (via the **Manage Portfolios** option in the **Portfolio** menu on the top left in the header). To do this, configure the usage rights for the standard PPM portfolios („Pipeline: Ideas", „Pipeline: Review", „Planning: Active + Approved + Seeking Approval + Measuring Impact") so that the corresponding roles can work with them. Simply delete unnecessary preconfigured portfolios.

Depending on the size and structure of your company, you can create the portfolios shown in Table 2 with matching filters and give access to the corresponding Meisterplan users (also via **Manage Portfolios** in the **Portfolio** menu):

Portfolio	Purpose
Portfolios for portfolio managers, program managers or multi-project managers	When responsibility and management are divided into individual portfolio areas, each manager has access to the projects assigned to him/her.
Portfolios for project managers	Each project manager maintains the status and progress of his/her own projects.

Table 2: The management of portfolios is decentralized through sub-portfolios.

Learn more about creating and managing portfolios in our **Help Center**.

Import Your Data into Meisterplan

After the configuration, you are ready to import your project data. At this point, it makes sense to delete the sample projects and resources. To do this, choose **Get Started** in the left sidebar and then in the **Import, Integrations & Reporting** section, choose **Delete Sample Data**. If you added own data before, these will be kept. Before the new Lean PPM™ process can start, projects that are already in process and their corresponding resources must first be entered or imported into the tool. It's best to start with the resources, because then the allocations for each project can be created right when you add the project to Meisterplan.

Depending on the size of your business, you can either manually create resources and projects in Meisterplan, or you can use our Quick Import by copying and pasting the data from spreadsheets (e.g., Excel). Additionally, you can import the data with one of the available integrations, such as Microsoft Excel, Smartsheet or Jira.

Particularly for manual creation, decentralization makes sense. Have resources and skills added to the tool by resource managers or by the HR department, and have projects and allocations added to the tool by your project managers.

The **Bring Your Own Data into Meisterplan** Help Center article explains what data you need and how to bring it into Meisterplan.

2 Implementation of Lean PPM™ with Meisterplan

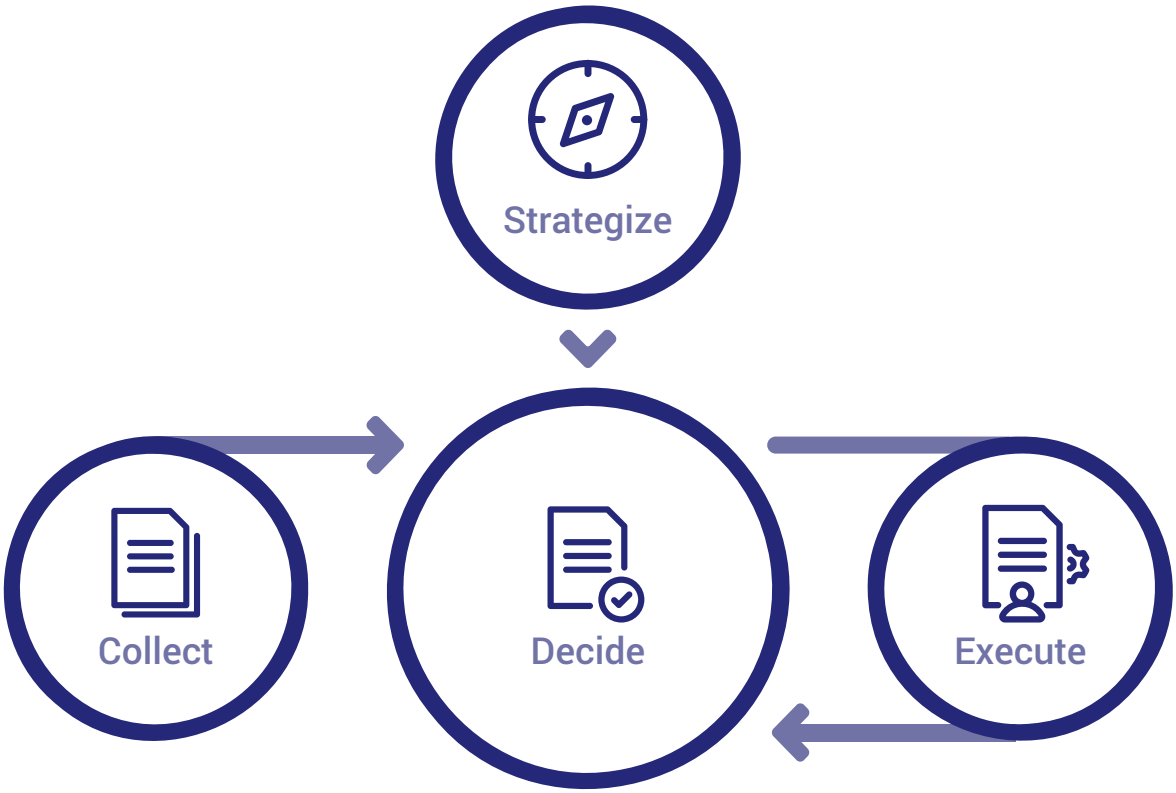


Figure 3: Lean PPM™ – from clearly defined meetings and roles to a high-value project portfolio.

In order to achieve sustainable project-driven results under dynamic conditions, there is no way around having a project portfolio management process. Through this process, the selection of new projects, the compilation of a strategic and feasible portfolio and the consistent execution of planned projects are structured and controlled with the help of defined meetings and roles. The result is higher earnings and happier employees.

In the first part of this guide, we showed you how to successfully introduce Lean PPM™ in the business, tailor Meisterplan to your needs, and import the active portfolio and resources into the tool.

In this second part, we will now show you step by step how to implement Lean PPM™ with Meisterplan in your daily work.

Translate Your Corporate Strategy (Lean PPM™: Strategize)

In the „Strategize" area of Lean PPM™, the participants ensure that the decisions to be made in the other areas can be based on the corporate strategy.

Lean PPM™ Context and Roles Involved

The Portfolio Coordinator and Strategy Manager are responsible for translating the corporate strategy. They develop criteria for the strategic evaluation of projects in the biannual strategy workshop, and if necessary, adapt them to changes to the corporate strategy. The Portfolio Coordinator also configures Meisterplan when needed.

This evaluation option for projects forms the basis for creating and executing a portfolio in the other Lean PPM™ areas that is as valuable as possible and in line with the corporate strategy.

Implementation in Meisterplan

For defining and weighting the project criteria against each other during the Strategy Workshop, Meisterplan is not necessary. Only the detailed definition of individual project score values is done later in the tool.

Defining and Weighting Project Criteria

Various Possible Approaches to Evaluation

In principle, depending on the strategic orientation, different approaches for evaluating projects make sense. For example, the net value of the projects could simply be used as the sole criterion if the company has no more strategic goals than making profits. For Lean PPM™ with Meisterplan, we recommend classifying projects using a project value that incorporates several strategic criteria.

IIn the Strategy Workshop, criteria for the strategic evaluation of projects are defined and weighted against each other. To use the strategy manager's time efficiently, this is initially done outside of Meisterplan. Still, the list of criteria should be maintained digitally, so that the current state is visible at the next strategy workshop.

Step 1: Create or update the list of project criteria derived from the company's strategic goals (e.g., „Profit Contribution", „Payback Period", „Benefit for Core Market X", „Benefit for Digital Transformation", „Risk Level").

Try to Have as Few Criteria as Possible

If you have more than 5 project criteria, it makes sense to combine related criteria. The simplicity of the process is one of the success factors for the introduction of PPM.

Step 2: Define the (updated) relative weighting of these project criteria (e.g., 3x, 3x, 1x).

The result of the strategy workshop can then look like in Table 3, for example.

Project Criteria	Weighting
Profit Contribution	5x
Payback Period	3x
Benefit for Core Market X	2x
Benefit for Digital Transformation	2x
Risk Level	2x

Table 3: Project Criteria are defined in the Strategy Workshop.

Defining Project Value Contributions

To evaluate projects, a score is used that reflects how far a single project contributes to the achievement of the strategy. That score is the sum of this project's individual project criteria scores.

In Meisterplan, a project's total score is given as the project value. The individual project criteria are created as project fields.

Step 1: In the left hand side sidebar, under **Manage**, open the **Project Fields** view.

Step 2: Now create a new project field of the **Lookup** type for each project criterion.

The result can be seen in Figure 4.

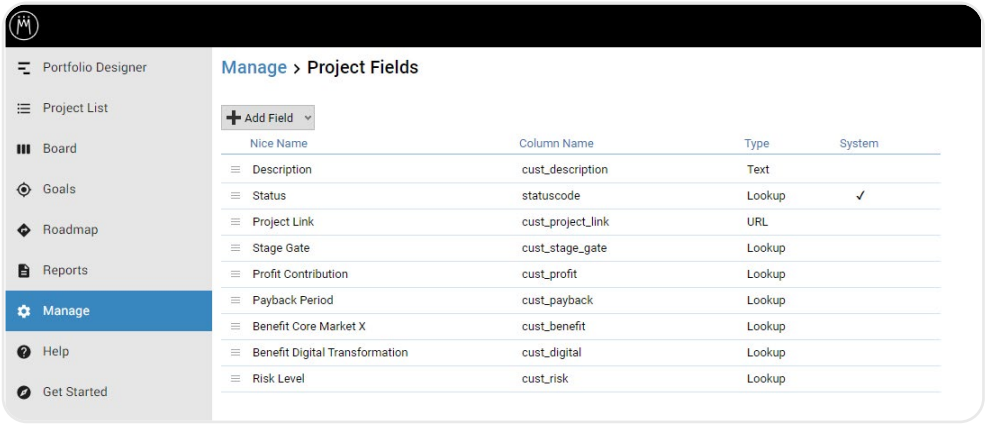


Figure 4: Project criteria as project fields in Meisterplan.

Step 3: For each gradation of a criterion, create a corresponding Lookup Value in the respective field. For example, „High", „Medium", and „Low" values for the Profit Contribution field.

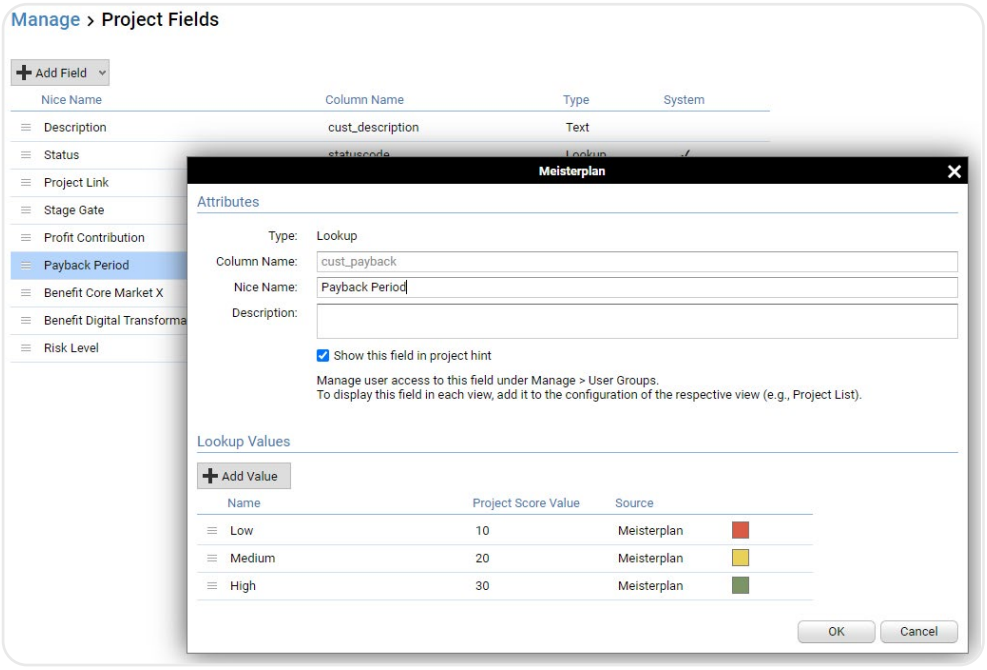
Step 4: Define for each gradation of a project criterion how many points should be contributed to the overall score of the project. The easiest way to do this is to first determine the highest score, based on the relative weighting of this criterion. This can then be done, for example, according to the principle shown in Table 4.

Projektkriterium	Weighting	Highest Score Possible
Profit Contribution	5x	50
Payback Period	3x	30
Benefit for Core Market X	2x	20
Benefit for Digital Transformation	2x	20
Risk Level	2x	20

Table 4: The weighting of the criteria determines the highest score.

With the highest score as a landmark, you can now set the score of the other grades. Enter the corresponding number as the project score value of the respective Lookup Value.

If you've set all the scores for a criterion, the result should look like in Figure 5.



Fiigure 5: The finished project criterion „Profit Contribution" in Meisterplan.

Now, you have defined the evaluation model for projects, and you will use this model from now on to measure how well your portfolio conforms to strategy. If adjustments are made in the next strategy workshops, apply these same adjustments in Meisterplan. For example, if the weighting has changed, change the score of the respective gradations. If there are completely new strategic goals, define corresponding project criteria and their weighting in the workshop, and then create these criteria in Meisterplan as a new project field.

More Information

Project Score in Meisterplan – Documentation

Now all activities from the Lean PPM™ area „Strategize" have been implemented with Meisterplan. The strategy is defined and up-to-date and can be used as a basis for further activities in the „Collect", „Decide" and „Execute" areas.

Management of the Project Pipeline (Lean PPM™: Collect)

In the „Collect" area of Lean PPM™, opportunities are being created to add new project initiatives to the project portfolio.

Lean PPM™ Context and Roles Involved

New project initiatives are brought into the project portfolio management process by project initiators. They are examined and prioritized in two stages, first by the Portfolio Coordinator and then by the members of the Pipeline Review Committee. This ensures that the initiatives are evaluated against the corporate strategy as translated in the „Strategize" area, and that they are best prepared for deciding on the future portfolio in the „Decide" area.

Implementation in Meisterplan

Initiators can create their project initiatives directly in Meisterplan and, if needed, link them to more detailed project proposal documents maintained in other systems (e.g. internal wikis). The tool is also used during the Proposal Coaching meeting so all participants have the same level of knowledge. The portfolio coordinator can even monitor the pipeline before the next planning cycle.

Creating New Project Initiatives

For an efficient Lean PPM™ process, new project initiatives are created in a decentralized fashion by the initiators themselves in Meisterplan. To avoid wasting time, the initiatives should not be detailed any further in case they are rejected.

Step 1: Open the „Pipeline: Ideas" portfolio.

Step 2: Review existing proposals to avoid creating duplicate initiatives.

Step 3: If there is no project already in Meisterplan for your initiative, create a new project.

Step 4: For the new project, select the **Stage Gate** „Idea".

Step 5: If the initiative already contains a project profile in another system, enter the link to the profile in the project information field **Project Link**.

First Review of New Project Initiatives

The first review of the new project initiatives will be done in the Proposal Coaching meeting with the portfolio coordinator and the initiators. To avoid wasting time with initiatives which will get rejected later, the Portfolio Coordinator first ensures that the initiatives created do not contain duplications or proposals with no chance of greenlighting for the foreseeable future. The remaining initiatives will be further developed so

that they can be objectively evaluated later in the process.

Step 1: Open the „Pipeline: Ideas" Portfolio to see all the initiatives.

Step 2: Delete duplicate initiatives and hopeless proposals, and briefly explain the reasons to the initiator.

Step 3: For all other initiatives, the portfolio coordinator and initiator fill in the project details together:

- Project fields, particularly fields for strategic evaluation
- Financial events
- Roles and rough allocations
- Milestones
- Dependencies other projects, if applicable
- Advice for the Pipeline Review Committee is added to the Notes field, if applicable

Use Actual Time Worked for Effort Estimation

For a rough estimate of the effort, it could be useful to refer to the actual time worked of similar projects that have already been completed.

You can find more information in our **Help Center**.

Step 4: If the details have been sufficiently defined, the initiative will be put under the **Cut-Off** Line.

The project in Meisterplan should now look like Figure 6.

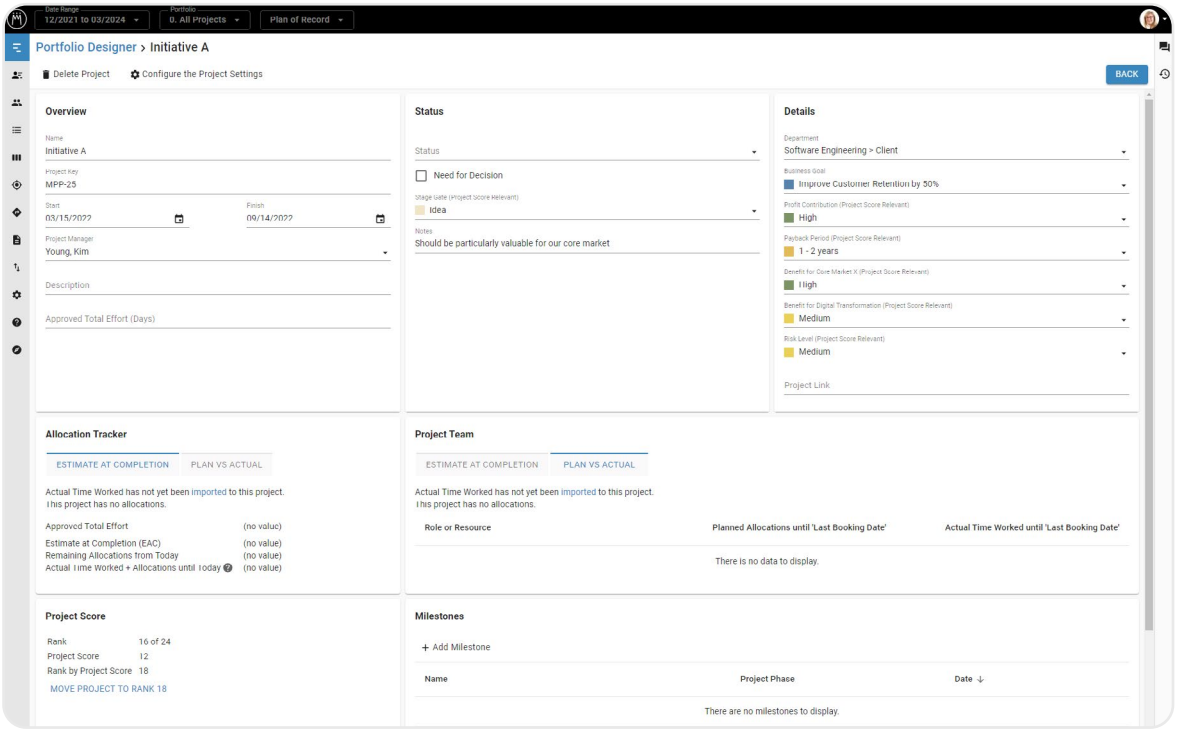


Figure 6: Details are added to new project initiatives in the Proposal Coaching meeting.

Step 5: Finally, change the **Stage Gate** of the project to „Seeking Review". The project will no longer be part of the „Pipeline: Ideas" portfolio.

If there is not enough information to fill in all of the details for an initiative, leave the **Stage Gate** as „Idea" and ask the initiator to provide the necessary information for the next Proposal Coaching meeting, e.g. by leaving a comment. The result of the meeting is, in any case, an initial refinement of the project pipeline.

More Information

Adding and Editing Allocations - Documentation

Deciding on the Portfolio (Lean PPM™: Decide)

In the „Decide" area of Lean PPM™, the inputs from the „Strategize", „Collect" and „Execute" areas converge and make it possible to decide on the future portfolio.

Lean PPM™ Context and Roles Involved

The path to deciding on the future portfolio begins with the members of the Pipeline Review Committee, who re-examine and rank the project initiatives proposed in the „Collect" area. Using this prioritized list as well as the active projects, the Portfolio coordinator will design his proposal for the future portfolio that he will submit to the members of the Portfolio board. They will discuss the proposal, and at the end of the discussion, they will decide on the future portfolio. The portfolio coordinator then, in turn, communicates the future portfolio to other portfolio managers and project managers responsible for executing it.

Implementation with Meisterplan

For maximum transparency and efficiency, all involved use Meisterplan: The Pipeline Review Committee instantly sees the initiatives, the coordinator designs his proposal directly in the tool, and the Portfolio Board sees at a glance how the projects are doing. Meisterplan supports every step with its extensive reporting functionality and list views.

Second Review of New Project Initiatives and Mutual Prioritization

So far, Proposal Coaching has generated a list of projects that have been proposed for inclusion in the portfolio. However, future planning is easier if the proposed projects are already prioritized relative to each other. („If only one of these five proposals fits into the portfolio, we would most like to have this one there."). Depending on the nature of the projects and the structure of the organization, a second validation (e.g., by technical experts or individuals with different perspectives) is necessary.

In the Pipeline Review Meeting, participants will review all projects up for review and make the decision on each project as to whether to continue scheduling, request further specification, or to reject. All approved projects are then prioritized relative to each other.

Step 1: Open the „Pipeline: Review" Portfolio in Meisterplan.

Step 2: Open the **Board View** and choose **Stage Gate** as the project field value, so that the columns show the Stage Gates of the projects. In the column „Seeking Review" (see Figure 7), you can see the projects that the Pipeline Review Committee should review on in the first part of the meeting.

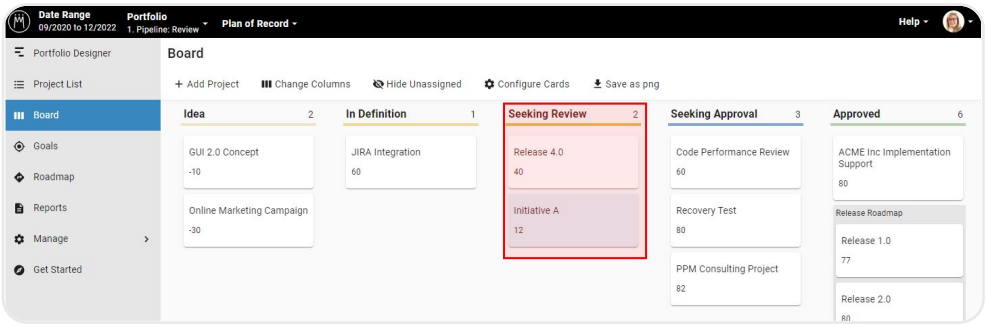


Figure 7: For the first part of the Pipeline Review meeting, only projects with the Stage Gate „Seeking Review" will be considered.

Step 3: The Portfolio Coordinator presents each initiative to the Pipeline Review Committee for consideration: What is the project? What are the benefits and costs associated with it? What is the resource requirement?

Step 4: A clear decision is made regarding how to proceed with each project:

- If an initiative is not defined clearly enough, it will be moved to the column „In Definition". The initiative must then be reworked in Proposal Coaching. You can use the Project Comment function to record what improvements are needed.
- If there is no corporate interest in implementing a specific project (and the Pipeline Review Committee has the authority to decide this), the initiative can be immediately rejected, and the project moved to the column „Rejected".
- If the initiative is properly defined, and there is a need for implementation, then the comittee will move the initiative to the next step in the process which is represented by moving the project to the column „Seeking Approval".

Step 5: In the second part of the meeting, you will prioritize the projects in the column „Seeking Approval" relative to each other. The displayed projects scores derived from your criteria will help with this prioritization (see Figure 8).

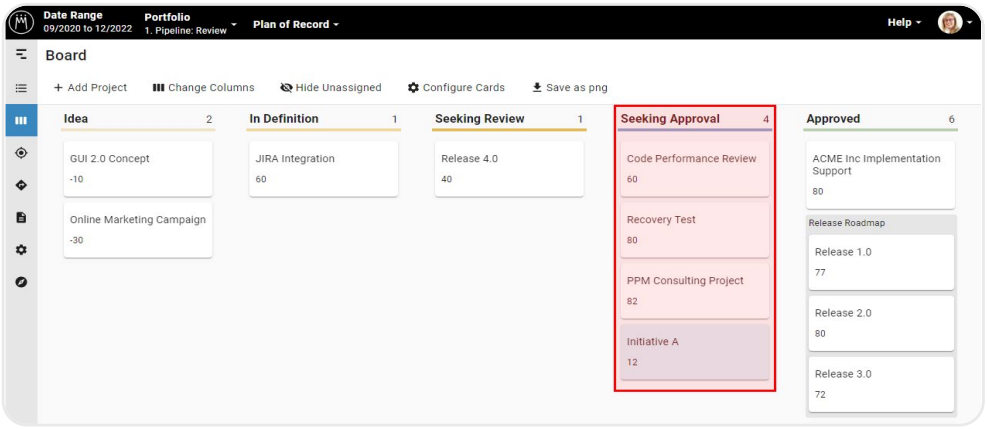


Figure 8: In the second part of the Pipeline Review Meeting, the reviewed projects are prioritized relative to each other.

Optional: If you want to sort your projects automatically by their project score, switch to the Portfolio Designer and sort the projects via the More Actions menu in the toolbar. Select ALL PROJECTS and confirm to sort all projects in the active portfolio by their project scores.

By sorting according to strategy contribution, the order of the already-approved projects now best reflects the strategy of the company. However, depending on the situation and when needing to decide between several projects with the same high strategic contribution, further evaluation criteria and priorities may be necessary. Meisterplan supports this with additional features, such as:

- Gantt chart color schemes where project bars are colored depending on their attributes, for example, by business area or strategic project criteria
- integrated pivot reports that, for example, use diagrams to show the projected net value of the project proposals (see Figure 9)

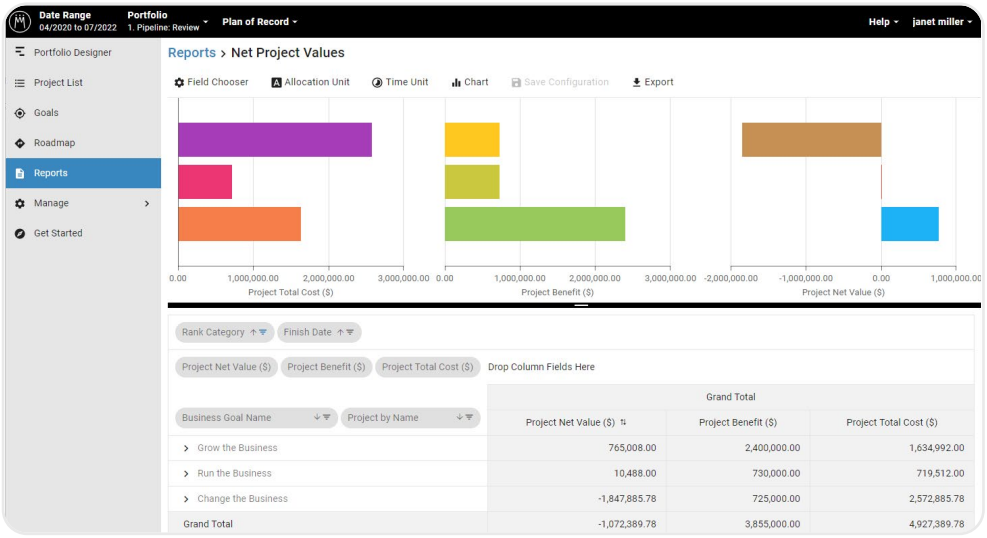


Figure 9: Meisterplan reports and other helpful features support prioritization.

Step 7: If necessary, use the analysis options described above as support during the prioritization.

Step 8: If the committee decides to deviate from strict sorting according to strategic contribution, simply change the rank of the respective project via drag-and-drop.

This completes the mutual prioritization and second validation of the new project initiatives. You should now have a clear recommendation on which new projects should be included in the portfolio, and the new initiatives have been specified as realistically as possible.

Create a Proposal for the Future Portfolio

The strategy was formulated, new initiatives were collected and assembled into a qualified recommendation, and the ongoing projects were carried out in the „Execute" area. It is now up to the portfolio coordinator to consolidate all these aspects into a portfolio proposal that is as valuable as possible while still being feasible. The portfolio coordinator will then present this proposal to the decision-makers, and finally a decision on the new portfolio will be made.

Planning Cycle

Several properties of an organization, such as size, affect how often the future project portfolio is planned. In this guide, we use quarterly planning, which in our experience suits many organizations. If a longer or shorter cycle is more appropriate for your business, only the gaps between activities change - the principle remains the same.

For the proposal of the future portfolio, the portfolio coordinator initially focuses on one question: Which project is the most valuable? This question is also the main concern of the Pipeline Review Committee. However, the design of a portfolio is not just a simple sorting according to strategy and/or profit contribution. The feasibility of the portfolio, continuous resource utilization, dependencies on other projects and external factors such as legal frameworks must also be considered. The human factor in terms of feasibility must not be forgotten - a good proposal doesn't come from the computer alone. The portfolio coordinator aims to achieve the highest possible acceptance of major changes compared to the active portfolio by getting into personal contact with those affected, even before a decision is made.

Why Not Freeze the Plan of Record?

In principle, during the planning phase, you could simply remove all users of write access to the plan of record. As a rule, this will only hide changes, but not prevent them. After all, the execution of the ongoing projects doesn'tstop while the portfolio managers work on their plan for the upcoming portfolio. It is more efficient to be clear about any problems and solve them immediately rather than hide them.

Step 1: Create a new scenario called „(Copy) PoR before Planning". You can use this scenario to check whether there have been changes to the plan of record since the beginning of the planning phase, by comparing the scenario to the Plan of Record.

Step 2: Inform (e.g., by email) all Meisterplan users who have write access to the plan of record about the beginning of the planning phase, and make it clear that they themselves are responsible for aligning any changes to the plan of record data with the decision of the Portfolio Board.

Step 3: Create a new scenario called „Proposed Scenario [Date]", replacing the „[Date]" with the date of the current planning). Make sure that you open a portfolio that contains all the projects before you create the scenario. Then open the new scenario.

Step 4: Open the planning portfolio „Planning: Active + Approved + Seeking Approval + Measuring Impact", which contains only projects with the respective stage gates.

Step 5: Create a proposal for the most valuable strategy-compliant portfolio that is still feasible in terms of the capacity of available resources.

This can be done using the same helpful features already used in the Pipeline Review Meeting:

- Evaluate the Board View or Project List for an overview of projects in the organization, to compare projects, and find out which projects are the most valuable.
- Sort projects in the Portfolio Designer by project score to help prioritize the projects with the highest contribution to the corporate strategy.
- Gantt chart color schemes, coloring project bars, for example, by business area or strategic project criteria (see Figure 10).

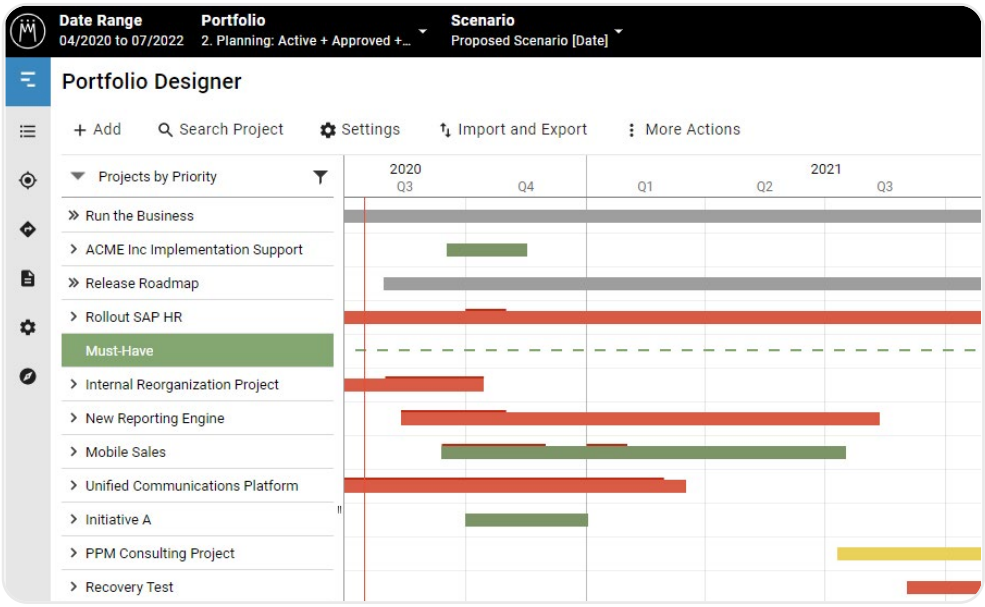


Figure 10: To aid decision-making in planning, the projects are colored according to their profit contribution.

- integrated pivot reports on costs, net profit and other key figures of the projects
- external reporting and BI software such as Power BI

Step 6: In the scenario manager, call up a scenario comparison between your proposal scenario and the Plan of Record to see which projects have the greatest differences in terms of schedule.

For longer planning cycles, the portfolio coordinator should also check which changes have been made to the planning data since the beginning of planning. To do so, he can use the previously created copy scenario.

Step 7: Open a scenario comparison between the copy scenario „(Copy) PoR before Planning" and the Plan of Record. Make a note of relevant differences.

Step 8: Show portfolio managers and relevant project managers your plan, especially deviations from the current Plan of Record. Explain the background and get feedback to ensure that your plan is widely accepted before senior management makes the decisions. If problems arise from any changes in the Plan of Record made after planning has already begun, contact the person responsible for the change right away.

Since subsequent changes are not the responsibility of the portfolio coordinator, he should only adjust the plan after planning has begun if it is makes sense and is necessary.

Step 9: If applicable, adjust the plan based on the feedback.

Step 10: Create at least one copy of the proposed scenario as well as one copy of the Plan of Record using the scenario manager. Those will be used during the Portfolio Board Meeting.

This completes the proposal for the future portfolio. It is now time to present both the current portfolio and the proposal to senior management and make a decision regarding the future portfolio.

Decision Regarding the Future Portfolio

So far, a lot of energy and manpower have gone into project portfolio management. To make sure that all efforts are not in vain, it is essential that a comprehensive decision is made about the future portfolio based on the portfolio coordinator's consolidated plan.

In our experience, decision-makers, regardless of the size of the organization, usually have the same needs in such a meeting. Before planning, they first want to know what is currently being done and what the current projects' status is. Therefore we recommend splitting the Portfolio Board meeting into two parts. Take stock of the current situation at the beginning, and then make the decision regarding the future portfolio.

Meisterplan in the Portfolio Board Meeting

We recommend working directly in Meisterplan during the Portfolio Board Meeting. In doing so, you will have the opportunity to simulate suggestions and objections from the other participants, such as „But couldn't we tackle this one project earlier?", directly in the scenario and visually demonstrate if the option is feasible.

However, we have also seen that some companies find it easier to decide on the future portfolio by working with a PowerPoint presentation prepared by the portfolio coordinator, where he or she uses screenshots from Meisterplan instead of using the application during the meeting.

Before the start of the meeting, let's quickly review all the scenarios that the Portfolio Coordinator should have prepared in Meisterplan (see Table 5):

Scenario	Purpose
Proposed Scenario [Date]	shows the proposal of the portfolio coordinator, to be presented during the Portfolio Board Meeting
Approved Plan [Date]	shows the last portfolio decision, to be compared to the current Plan of Record
(Copy) PoR before Board Meeting	shows the current Plan of Record, to be compared to the last portfolio decision.
(Copy X) Proposed Scenario [Date]	Backups of the original proposal so that it can be quickly returned to, if required, when the simulation of change requests during the Board Meeting has rendered the actual planning scenario unusable.

Table 5: These scenarios should be provided by the portfolio coordinator for the Portfolio Board Meeting. Replace „[Date]" with the date of the respective scenario or plan.

Part 1: Reviewing the Current Portfolio

In this part of the meeting, the portfolio coordinator ensures that all participants get an overview of the current portfolio, in particular the differences compared to the last decision and the opportunity to dive deeper into critical projects. If you already used Meisterplan during the last planning cycle, you should haxve a scenario called „Approved Plan [Date]" which you then use to visualize the difference between the current Plan of Record and the last decision. If you did not use Meisterplan before, the portfolio coordinator explains key differences without the scenario comparison as visual aid.

Step 1: If you have a scenario showing the last decision, open the scenario „(Copy) PoR before Board Meeting". In order to focus first on the projects, collapse the resource view and initially color the Gantt chart neutrally, e.g., by workload.

Step 2: In the scenario manager, open a scenario comparison between this scenario and the „Approved Plan [Date]" scenario. This visualizes changes, such as changes to a project's duration, in the Gantt chart in Meisterplan (see Figure 11).

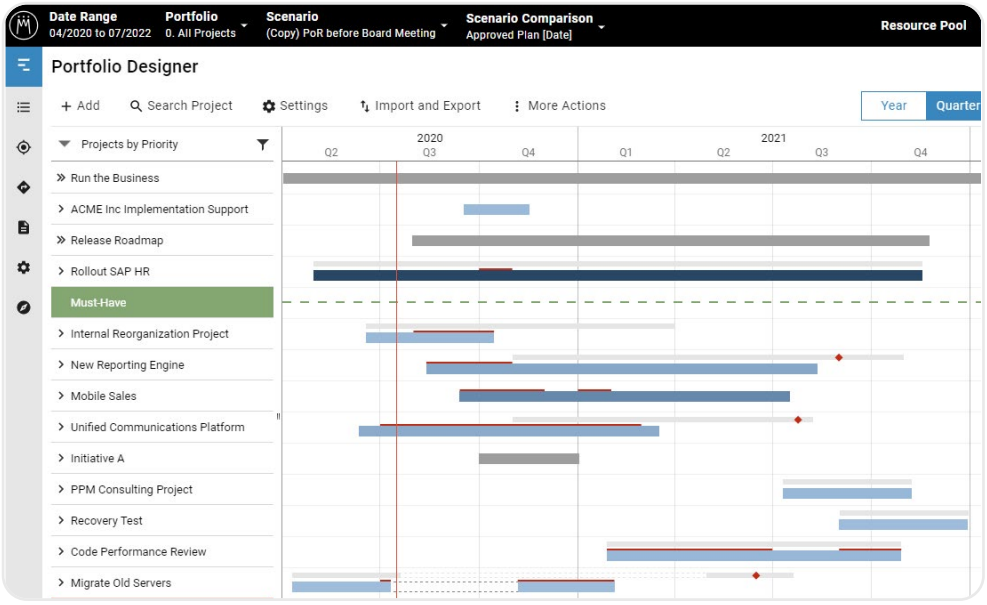


Figure 11: At the beginning of the Portfolio Board Meeting, differences between the last decision and the current status are highlighted.

Step 3: For the other participants, highlight relevant differences between the last plan and the current situation. Where have projects shifted significantly? Where did new dependencies arise? Use the actual time worked in the project details to get a closer look at the deviation between the plan and actuals.

Step 4: Close the comparison and the scenario so that the Plan of Record is displayed again. Now, color the projects in the Gantt area according to their status. This allows you to quickly identify critical projects (see Figure 12).

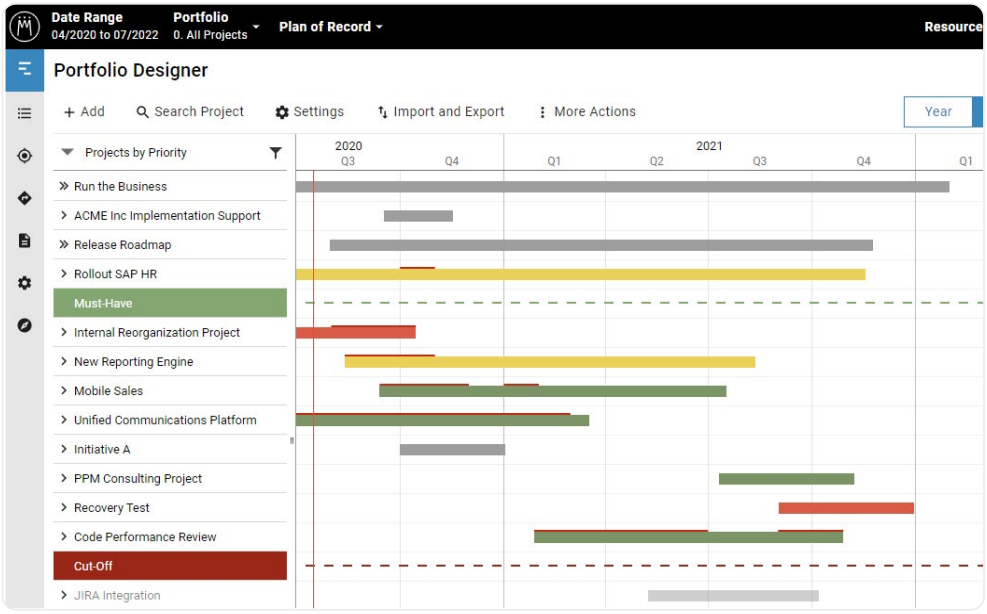


Figure 12: With help from the Gantt color scheme, you can quickly identify critical projects during the Portfolio Board Meeting.

Step 5: Show the other participants the critical projects. If required, deep dives can be made using the Project Link project field.

Step 6: Depending on the interests of the other participants, additional overview functions such as pivot reports, project list or external BI software can be used. Those can show at a glance the cost changes, budget status or resource utilization.

If all meeting participants are informed and have a clear understanding of the current portfolio, then the portfolio proposal for the coming quarter can be presented and a decision can be made.

Part 2: Decision Regarding the Future Portfolio

The portfolio coordinator presents his proposal in Meisterplan. To emphasize the highlights, he again uses the visual support functions and evaluations that are integrated in the tool. Depending on the context, he can also use external reporting software as needed.

Step 1: Open your proposed scenario. Again, it makes sense to color the projects in the Gantt chart neutrally, for example, according to workload, and collapse the resource view.

Step 2: Open the scenario comparison between the proposed scenario and the Plan of Record to visualize the differences. Explain the strategy behind your proposal and the changes to the current portfolio.

Step 3: Use the evaluation functions of Meisterplan to emphasize your strategy and to illustrate the advantages of your proposal compared to the previous portfolio.

Some suggestions:

- Using the scenario comparison between your proposal and the current Plan of Record can make it clear that your proposal enables, for example, the two most important projects to be implemented more quickly than in previous planning.
- You can show the members of the Portfolio Board at a glance how much net profit the projects included in your portfolio proposal would achieve, for example, with the integrated pivot reports.
- Improved resource utilization is visualized via the histograms in the resource view.
- With external reporting and BI software you can expand the evaluation options of Meisterplan in order to get to the heart of your planning.

Step 4: Initiatives and alternative suggestions from other participants can be simulated directly in the scenario. You can answer questions such as: „Can we handle another project?" or „Couldn't we start this project earlier?" Thanks to the graphical indicators in the project and resource section of the Portfolio Designer view, all participants can directly see the answer to such questions.

Quickly Return to the Original Plan

If you want to quickly restore the Portfolio Coordinator's original proposal while simulating change requests, simply open one of the copies of the proposal scenario.

Step 5: After all questions from other participants have been answered and all feasible requests for changes have been implemented, the binding decision is made. In order to make this explicit, you should directly change the stage gates of the individual projects in the **Board View** – newly approved projects, which will start right away, are moved to the column „Active", approved projects, which will start later, are moved to the column „Approved".

Deciding on the portfolio is the key decision for project portfolio management, and thanks to Meisterplan, it is based on facts, not on gut feelings. The Portfolio Coordinator can now complete the Portfolio Board Meeting in an organized fashion.

Follow-Up on the Decision

To prevent the scenario manager in Meisterplan from becoming too crowded, it is advisable not to permanently keep all planning and approved scenarios. As a rule, after the decision for the following quarter is made, the current quarter's approved plan is no longer needed in Meisterplan.

Therefore, rename the scenario „Approved Plan [Date]" to „Archived Plan [Date]", archive it to hide archived

scenarios in the scenario manager. Finally, in the closing meeting, rename the „Proposed Scenario [Date]" to „Approved Plan [Date]".

Next, the approved portfolio will be communicated to those who implement and control it.

Communication of the Decision for the Future Portfolio

First, the current last agreed decision will be shown to the relevant portfolio managers and project managers. Then the projects from this approved scenario are transferred to the Plan of Record, where all users can then, as the planning cycle comes to an end, go back to regularly making changes just as they did before planning started. This Plan of Record will be communicated to the organization.

Optional: In Meisterplan, make a scenario comparison between the approved scenario and one of the copies of your original proposal. This will allow you to directly show portfolio managers and project managers how much the approved plan deviates from your original plan, which you had previously agreed upon with the portfolio managers and project managers.

Step 1: Open the approved scenario and perform a scenario comparison with the Plan of Record. What are the priorities of the plan? What new initiatives have been scheduled? You can also open a Scenario Comparison Report to highlight changes in resource allocations.

Step 2: Make the decision clear by going through the projects individually with the respective project managers and applying them (by clicking the three dots after the project name and selecting the corresponding option in the context menu) from the approved scenario to the Plan of Record. For projects where changes are introduced after the planning had started, the portfolio coordinator leaves it up to the project managers whether to reconcile the changes and the new decision themselves, or whether the coordinator simply moves the project from the approved scenario to the Plan of Record.

Step 3: If necessary, export the new data to connected systems (project management software, etc.).

More Information

Apps & Integrations – Documentation

Step 4: Inform all Meisterplan users with write access to the Plan of Record that the planning is now complete and changes to the Plan of Record can be carried out normally.

Step 5: Inform your organization about the decisions made in the Portfolio Board Meeting. Use the roadmap to show which business goal is supported by the projects (see Figure 13). Export the respective roadmap view as an image file for your communication.

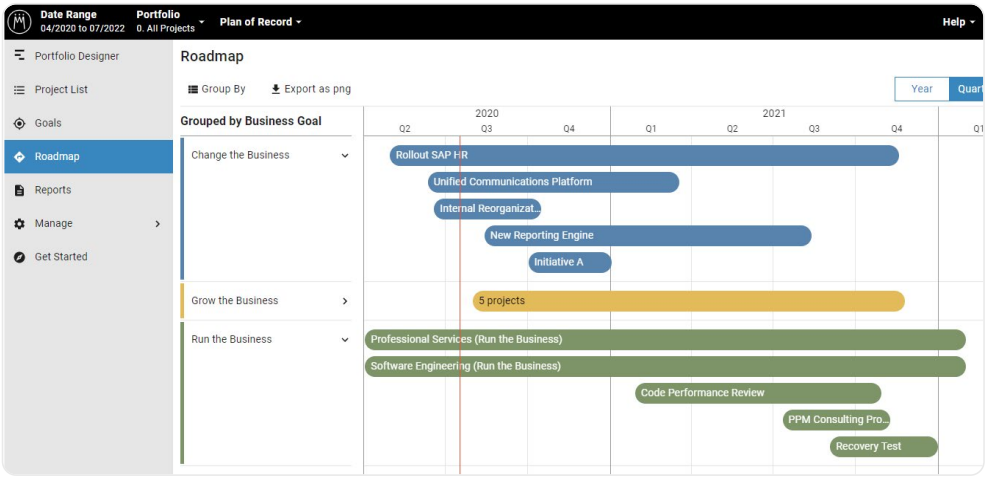


Figure 13: To see the individual projects in the roadmap you can expand the respective value.

In this way, you have ensured that all parties are immediately informed about the new decision and can start with the implementation.

Execution of the Approved Portfolio (Lean PPM™: Execute)

In the „Execute" area of Lean PPM™, what the portfolio approved in the „Decide" area will be implemented.

Lean PPM™ Context and Roles Involved

The approved project portfolio is executed by the selected resources (people or project teams). Project managers keep track of the respective project status. During execution, questions and problems inevitably arise that need to be solved. This happens in several stages. First by the project managers and resource managers involved in the Resource Conflict Resolution meeting. What is not resolved are topics for members of the Execution Steering Committee. Any issue that is still unresolved is brought to the next Portfolio Board Meeting by the Portfolio Coordinator.

Implementation with Meisterplan

It's clear when executing projects that project portfolio management only works when resource management is a constant part of the process. With Meisterplan, all involved not only see the projects, but also the resulting resource utilization.

Solving Resource Conflicts

The longer resource conflicts remain unresolved, the longer portfolio implementation is inefficient. Because resource utilization and conflicts are clearly shown in Meisterplan, the project leaders and resource managers involved can independently seek a solution or do so with the portfolio coordinator as moderator by setting up a Resource Conflict Resolution meeting.

Step 1: Open the sub-portfolio with the resource conflict in Meisterplan.

Step 2: Identify the resource conflict and analyze the utilization of the affected resources.

Here, the Portfolio Designer view also displays non-portfolio projects and associated allocations of selected portfolio resources, so that you don't lose sight of the overall picture (see Figure 14).

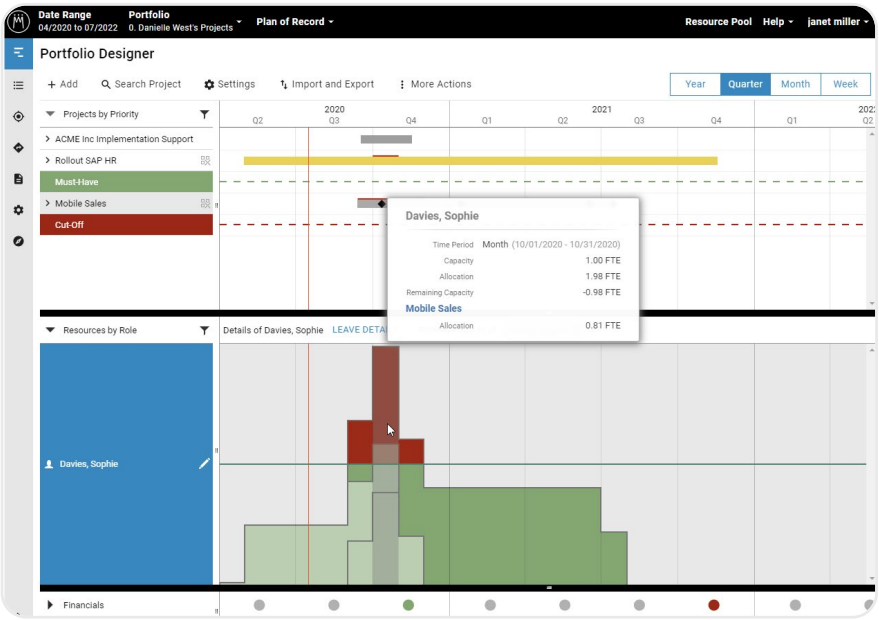


Figure 14: In the Resource Conflict Resolution meeting, resource utilizations are analyzed – including non-portfolio projects.

Step 3: Solve the resource conflict.

One way to solve the conflict is by shifting work within projects. If all project leaders are involved, a solution might also include shifting resources between projects. However, this must not result in any changes to the schedule that was approved during the previous Portfolio Board meeting.

Step 4: Inform employees affected by allocation changes.

Step 5: If necessary, inform the Portfolio Coordinator about issues that cannot be resolved. These will then be addressed in the Execution Steering Committee meeting.

By using the Resource Conflict Resolution meeting, most resource conflicts can be resolved without the involvement of other decision-makers.

Steering Individual Projects

In order to ensure project success and meet challenges during project execution, regular Execution Steering meetings are held for individual projects. The participants are typically business unit managers, experts and other relevant stakeholders.

The project lead gives a status update and highlights which decisions need to be made. If there are resource conflicts that could not be solved in the Resource Conflict Resolution meeting or if there are large deviations between the actual times worked and the approved effort of a project the project lead can now propose changes, such as to the scope of the project.

Thanks to the multi-stage conflict resolution meetings in the „Execute" area of Lean PPM™, the portfolio coordinator only addresses the necessary topics with board members during the portfolio board meeting.

Review: Lean PPM™ with Meisterplan

Efficient project portfolio management for a value-added and strategy-led portfolio requires that correct decisions can be made quickly. Meisterplan is the ideal tool to support this process by ensuring that the strategic contribution of individual projects can be quantified at all times, project dependencies and resource utilization are clearly visualized, and processes and meetings are decentralized.

The described Lean PPM™ process can be easily adapted to individual circumstances in your organization. Don't need a distinct Pipeline Review? Validate and prioritize new project initiatives during Proposal Coaching. Your Portfolio Coordinator can't join every Conflict Resolution meeting? Let his tasks be carried out by Portfolio Managers. We will gladly assist you in the adaptation of the process, the implementation of Meisterplan and in training users.

Personal Support

If you would like personal support or advice during the introduction of Meisterplan to your company, our Customer Success team is always at your service.

Phone: +1-888-908-5834 (North America)
+49-7071-3667-7600 (Europe)

Email: **sales@meisterplan.com**

Appendix

All in one place for your reference: These portfolios and scenarios enable the implementation of Lean Project Portfolio Management™.

Portfolios for Lean PPM™ with Meisterplan

Portfolio	Meeting/Action
Pipeline: Ideas	Create new project initiatives, Proposal Coaching
Pipeline: Review	Pipeline Review
Planning: Active + Approved + Seek- ing Approval + Measuring Impact	Create a proposal for the future portfolio
All Projects	Portfolio Board
Sub-Portfolios per Project/Portfolio Manager	Resource Conflict Resolution, Execution Steering

Table 6: Use these portfolios for Lean PPM™ with Meisterplan.

Scenarios for Lean PPMTM with Meisterplan

Scenario	Meeting/Action
Approved Plan [Date]/ Archived Plan [Date]	• Portfolio Board Meeting (compare Approved Plan [Date] to current status) • After Portfolio Board Meeting (archive the Approved Plan [Date])
(Copy) PoR before Planning	• Create proposal for the future portfolio (check if Plan of Record was changed since beginning of planning cycle)
(Copy) PoR before Board Meeting	• Portfolio Board Meeting (compare current status to last decision)
Proposed Scenario [Date] / Approved Plan [Date]	• Create proposal for the future portfolio • Portfolio Board Meeting (present proposal / approve portfolio) • Communication of the decision regarding the future portfolio
(Copy X) Proposed Scenario [Date]	• Portfolio Board Meeting (if required, return to original proposal after simulation of alternatives)

Table 7: Use these scenarios for Lean PPM™ with Meisterplan. Replace „[Date]" with the date of the respective scenario or plan.

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