

Milestone plan

Give the sponsor and the steering group one page of key dates, each a result that someone checks and accepts.

MILESTONE (A STATE)	CHECK	DECIDES	DUE
Plan approved	Plan and charter signed	Steering group	End of month 1
Design approved	Requirements and design signed	Sponsor	End of month 2
System links work in test	All links pass their tests	Project manager	End of month 5
End-to-end test passed	No open critical defects	Sponsor	2 weeks before go-live
Service live	Go-live checklist met	Steering group	End of month 8

Illustrative: a city project that moves parking permits online in eight months, before most residents renew in January.

WHAT IT IS

A **milestone** is a key point or event: PMI's guide gives it zero duration, and APM (Association for Project Management) ties it to accepting a deliverable. A milestone plan puts the few that matter on one page, with dates, for the people who steer; the detailed schedules sit below it. Our advice, a common convention: name each as a **state** reached, not an activity, with a check and a person who decides that it is reached.

HOW IT WORKS

- 01 Choose the stages: more uncertainty, shorter stages.
- 02 Pick five to eight: stage ends, decisions, outside dates.
- 03 Name each as a state, with a check and a decider.
- 04 Date them; only the steering body moves one.

MID-LEVEL • WORKED EXAMPLE

Apply it well

The situation: A city team has eight months to move resident parking permits online, and must go live before January, when most residents renew.

Five milestones on one page for the steering group, from 'plan approved' (month 1) to 'service live' (end of month 8). 'End-to-end test passed' means no open critical defects. The detailed schedule sits below.

In the exam: List four to six milestones as states, each with a check, a decider and a date, and say who hears first when one is at risk.

SENIOR • WORKED EXAMPLE

Design and lead it

The situation: A city is joining 14 online services under one login over 30 months, in three waves of services, replacing its old portals. The national login takes changes only once a quarter.

The board's one-page plan shows each wave's 'services live' and 'old portals switched off', plus outside dates: the quarterly release windows and the council election in month 20. Only the board moves a baseline milestone.

In the exam: Explain the planning levels and their readers, which dates you do not control, and who may move a baseline milestone.

WHERE IT SITS

IPMA • ICB4	PMI • PMBOK® GUIDE 8 • PMP® EXAM	APM • BOK 8 • PMQ EXAM
4.5.4.3: number, content and length of stages; more uncertainty, shorter phases. Milestones: 4.5.4 knowledge	Guide: zero duration, milestone list (p. 123); milestone schedule (glossary p. 269). Exam outline: Domain II, task 8	BoK: milestone tied to accepting deliverables (glossary); schedules from a plan on a page (§5.5). PMQ (APM's Project Management Qualification) objective 20

Sources: IPMA ICB4 (2015); PMI, PMBOK® Guide, 8th ed.; PMI, PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); APM Body of Knowledge, 8th ed.; APM, PMQ handbook (v6, 2026)

Key: IPMA = International Project Management Association; ICB4 = IPMA's Individual Competence Baseline (4.5.4 etc.: its competence elements); PMI = Project Management Institute; PMBOK® Guide = PMI's body-of-knowledge guide; PMP® = PMI's Project Management Professional; BoK = APM's Body of Knowledge. Unofficial study material for IPMA®, PMI® and APM exams. Not affiliated with, endorsed by or approved by IPMA, PMI or APM, and not an accredited or endorsed training provider. IPMA® and IPMA ICB® are registered trademarks of IPMA in Switzerland and other countries. PMI, PMP, CAPM and PMBOK are registered marks of Project Management Institute, Inc. APM is a trade mark of the Association for Project Management. Other marks belong to their owners. PMP® exam facts are from PMI's public PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); check the current version on pmi.org. APM's qualifications are its own; this series is not an APM Accredited Provider or APM Endorsed. Examples use a fictional city and its projects. Levels (this series' labels): Mid-level = moderately complex projects (IPMA Level C, PMI's PMP®); Senior = complex projects and people (IPMA Level B, APM's Chartered Project Professional).

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