

## GAPPS PROGRAM TYPOLOGY

### Definition of a program

The term *program* has been defined in many different ways. For example:

- “A temporary, flexible organisation structure created to coordinate, direct and oversee the implementation of a set of related projects and activities in order to deliver outcomes and benefits related to an organisation’s strategic objectives; a programme is likely to have a life that spans several years.” (*Managing Successful Programmes*, UK Office of Government Commerce, 2007)
- “A programme is a set of related projects and organisational changes put in place to achieve a strategic goal and to deliver the benefits that the organisation expects.” (*IPMA Competence Baseline*, International Project Management Association, 2006)
- “A group of related projects managed in a coordinated way to obtain benefits and control not available from managing them individually. Programs may include elements of related work outside the scope of the discrete projects in the program.” (*The Standard for Program Management*, Project Management Institute, 2008; adapted from *The Handbook of Project-Based Management*, J. Rodney Turner, 1992)

Other definitions of program tend to be conceptually similar to these three: all recognize that a program is expected to actually deliver benefits (rather than just create the potential for benefits), and all recognize the existence of multiple, discrete projects within a program.

The definitions are all close enough in meaning that it is not necessary to choose one in order to understand what a program is.

### Types of Programs

Programs and program management span a wide range of undertakings:

- Development or expansion of a major transportation system such as a subway or an urban highway
- Implementation of an Enterprise Resource Planning system and the supporting policies, processes, and procedures
- NASA’s Mission to Mars
- Organizational change to implement a new corporate strategy
- Projects done for health care clients by an engineering consulting firm
- Regional activities of an oil and gas extraction company
- Major weapons system acquisition
- Crisis response
- Information Technology (IT) department support for a single line function such as sales or engineering

And some key characteristics of programs often vary considerably:

- Program manager’s authority to originate or terminate projects
- Degree of integration with the sponsoring organization
- How the sponsoring organization will evaluate the program manager’s performance