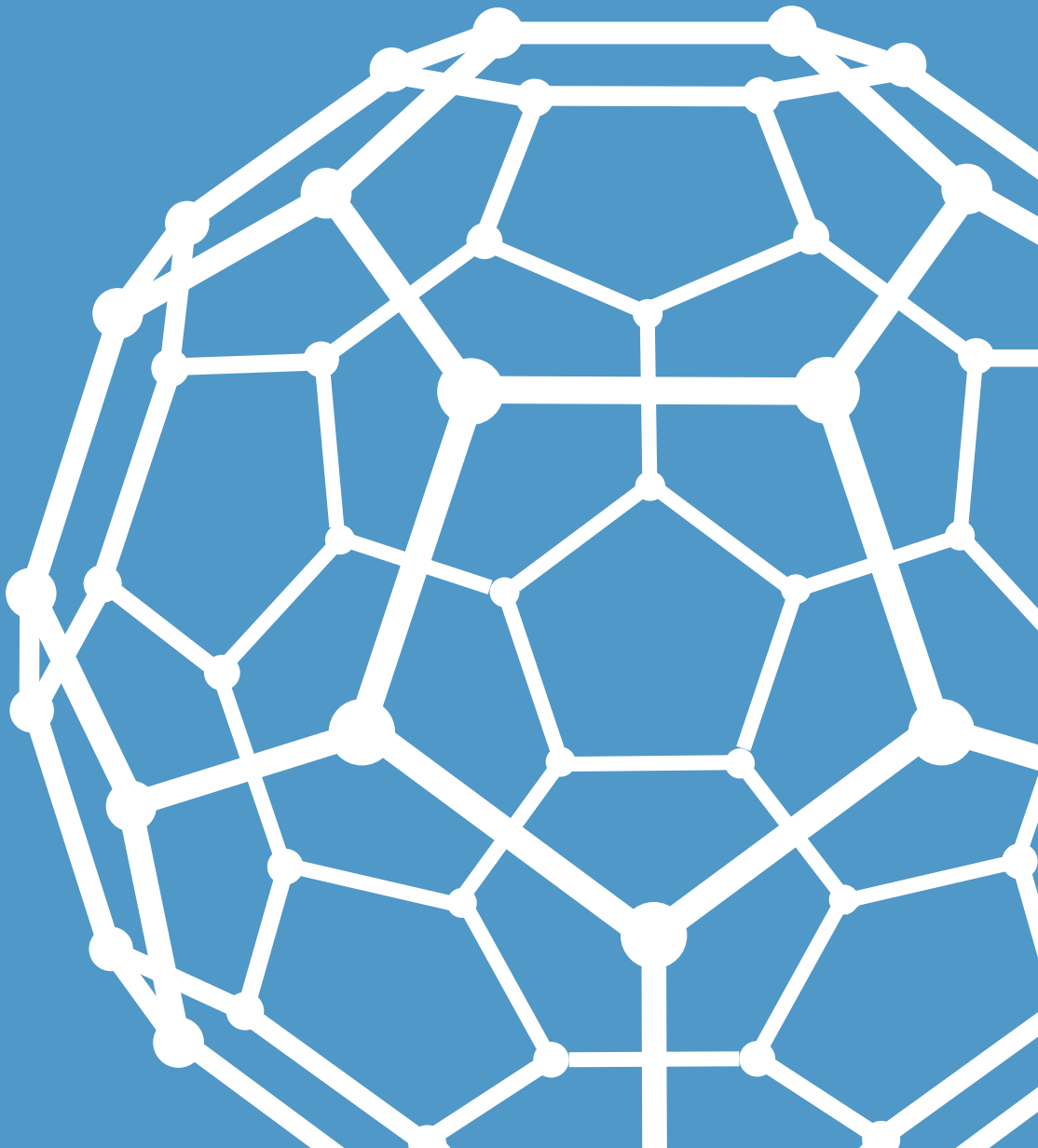# Praxis Framework Case Study
A Practitioner's View

Ricardo Santos
Project & Programme Manager / Growth and Productivity Catalyst
OT3 Management Consultancy Services

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TELL US ABOUT YOUR PROJECT & PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT BACKGROUND AND CURRENT ROLE

I have over 25 years' experience in operations management and project, programme and portfolio management (P3M) of large-scale, multi-disciplinary (construction, energy, utilities, railways, software, telecoms) projects in a variety of countries, including Ireland, Canada, Indonesia, Norway, Algeria, Poland, Spain and Portugal.

I have a degree in electrical engineering, a post-graduate degree in business management, and I am an IPMA® certified project manager. The largest project I managed was the extension of the LUAS Light Rail System in Dublin (2007-2011), with a budget of 50m Euro. My most challenging assignment was setting up a project management office (PMO) at tidal energy company OpenHydro Technology.

Since early 2018 I have been fully dedicated to my consultancy business, OT3 Management Consultancy Services. I help SMEs grow and expand through increased productivity and efficiency. I work directly with business owners and C-suite executives on critical initiatives to increase benefits realization.

I use P3M methodologies to help small businesses select the right projects and contracts, and to consistently deliver them on-time, on-scope and on-budget. I support them in eliminating waste and optimizing resources, assisting business owners and middle management to become more productive.

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER THE PRAXIS FRAMEWORK?

Some years ago, I worked for Mott MacDonald Ireland and during interaction with colleagues in the UK, I was introduced to the Praxis Framework which was in the development process at the time.

Having reservations concerning other P3M guides available in the market (PMBOK®, PRINCE2®, MSP®, etc), I had been in search for a more complete, more user-friendly and more tailorable framework to better support projects of varying types and sizes.

Having explored TenStep® and PRIME® and decided neither was the answer, I discovered the Praxis Framework following my Mott MacDonald colleague's recommendation.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE AND RATE THE PRAXIS FRAMEWORK? FOR EXAMPLE, YOUR THOUGHTS ON:

The framework's content (volume and relativity): The Framework provides extensive information and covers all types of needs the user may have. There is an extensive resource library available with guidelines and templates available to address key P3M requirements. Praxis is the first framework to integrate project, programme and portfolio management practices into a single guide, with a common terminology.

Ease of access and understanding (is it intuitive?): Due to the significant amount of information available, it can be easy to 'get lost' at the beginning. However, with time and a little experience, the logical structure becomes apparent and it becomes simple to navigate and extract the required information and resources.

Ability to tailor to a specific company/department's requirements: It is easy to tailor to different requirements. One can select from the main sections – Knowledge, Method, Competence, Maturity – what suits the company / department, at a given time. It's easy to evolve progressively from one section to the next. It is also possible to cover all sections and processes lightly at the beginning, progressively delving into the detail as experience with the framework grows.

The additional resources on offer: I particularly like information on specific methods and tools including Earned Value, S-Curve, Project-in-a-Box, Managing Simple Projects and support for the UK Government Project Delivery Standard.

It's suitability as a company-wide PPM framework: Absolutely. Praxis was my main source of information when developing a P3M framework for OpenHydro Technology.

HOW DOES PRAXIS COMPARE TO OTHER POPULAR P3M FRAMEWORKS AND METHODOLOGIES (IN TERMS OF CONTENT, AVAILABILITY AND ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES)?

Praxis is simply the most integrated P3M framework on the market. I believe the following graphic, published by Praxis Framework and APMG International, supports this statement perfectly:

	Knowledge	Method	Capability Maturity	Competence	Library
Projects					
Praxis Framework™	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PRINCE2®	✓	✓			
PMBOK® Guide	✓	✓			✓
APM Body of Knowledge	✓				
Programmes					
Praxis Framework™	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MSP®	✓	✓			
PMI® Program Management Standard	✓	✓			
APM Body of Knowledge	✓				
Portfolios					
Praxis Framework™	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MoP®	✓	✓			
PMI® Portfolio Management Standard	✓	✓			
APM Body of Knowledge	✓				

I UNDERSTAND YOU USE PRAXIS WITH SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES; TELL US ABOUT THAT AND THE FEEDBACK YOU ENCOUNTER.

Most P3M books, manuals and bodies of knowledge have over 500 pages yet they cannot match the coverage of practical aspects that Praxis does. By [1] being entirely available online, [2] having a local streamlined version (32 slides) and [3] promoting utilisation of the resources and tools made available by Project-in-a-Box, the team behind Praxis has developed a project management framework that is friendly, encouraging and welcoming. Small businesses that I've introduced the framework to see it as a model of simplicity and efficiency.

When a consultant proposes the implementation of a PMO based on a cumbersome body of knowledge to an SME, the "retraction" from the SME is almost immediate, as they foresee complexity, time-consumption and hefty bills from the consultant.

If, instead, the consultant proposes to support the SMEs work implementing and adapting a more streamlined and user-friendly body of knowledge, the client reacts much more positively.

The best thing about Praxis is that is provides all the information needed, but this can be used in a modular way and with varying degrees of implementation, depending on the type and maturity of the organization.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC EXAMPLES AND SUCCESS STORIES YOU CAN SHARE?

I led the team that created a complete P3M framework for a renewable energy company that develops and manufactures systems for marine energy development: floating wind, tidal turbines and ocean thermal energy conversion (OTEC). The framework was fairly bespoke to suit the requirements of the company's operations. The work was based on the Praxis Framework and ISO 21500 standard, resulting in a very streamlined and interesting manual.

I am currently working with two IT SMEs who are very enthusiastic with the simplicity of Praxis Local, which justifies the high level of adherence of the internal teams. They see Praxis as a supportive productivity "tool" instead of a cumbersome set of processes generating additional workload. Processes are simple and well explained, and the mapping of Functions against Processes is very clear, whilst the availability of 30+ management documents exceeds the typical needs of small businesses.

IF YOU HAD TO SPECIFY YOUR TOP FEATURES AND/OR STRENGTHS OF PRAXIS, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

1. Most complete and integrated framework, with a wide variety of information ranging from Knowledge, Method, Competence and Maturity, to a Library full of examples, tutorials, papers and books;
2. Access to tools and templates;
3. Modularity – adoptions and complexity levels can be adapted to different needs;
4. Integration with Project-in-a-Box.

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THE PRAXIS FRAMEWORK TO OTHER P3M PROFESSIONALS AND ORGANIZATIONS?

I would have no hesitation in recommending the framework to fellow P3M professionals and organizations.

DO YOU SEE ANY RESTRICTIONS IN TERMS OF INDUSTRIES AND TYPES OF PROJECTS?

So far, I do not see any restrictions in terms of industries.

However, most R&D projects (particularly those in bio-sciences) struggle to comply with a given framework due to the unpredictability of deliverables. Schedule management can be particularly difficult to implement in this area due to the unpredictability of outputs. Nonetheless, all other functions of the framework can easily be adapted to the specific requirements of R&D initiatives.

FINALLY, IS THERE ANY SPECIFIC ADVICE OR RECOMMENDATIONS YOU WOULD OFFER TO OTHERS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE FRAMEWORK?

- ❑ Invest time in understanding the framework; learn the multiple links that transport the user from one area to another;
- ❑ Explore the valuable Library;
- ❑ Start with Praxis Local and progressively evolve adoption from there;
- ❑ Buy and read the paper book; it gives the reader a solid basis for understanding the framework;
- ❑ Follow discussion groups.

ABOUT RICARDO

Ricardo Santos is an experienced operations and project/programme/portfolio management professional. Having oversee a diverse portfolio of large-scale, multi-disciplinary projects around the world, Ricardo now runs his own consultancy business, OT3 Management Consultancy Services.

Connect with Ricardo and find out more:

Web:		www.OT3PM.com

Twitter:		@ricardoOT3PM

LinkedIn:		https://www.linkedin.com/in/ricardoot3pm/

ABOUT THE PRAXIS FRAMEWORK

Praxis is a free framework for the management of projects, programmes and portfolios. It includes a body of knowledge, methodology, competency framework and capability maturity model. The framework is supported by a knowledgebase of resources and an encyclopaedia.

Discover the framework at **www.praxisframework.org**.