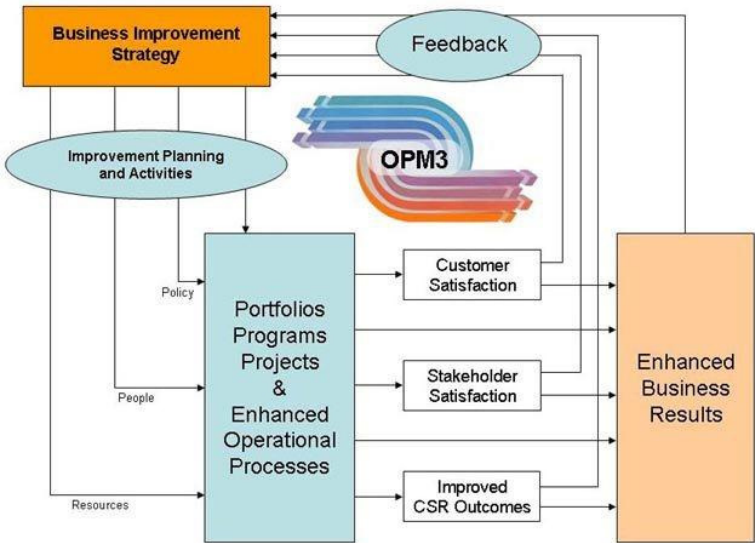# EEF and OPA – The Differences


The latest versions of the *PMBOK® Guide* and PMI's Organizational Project Management Maturity Model, OPM3® have placed an increased focus on the ability of the organisation's systems to support Portfolio, Program and Project (PPP) management. In the OPM3 knowledge base, these capabilities and systems are referred to as 'organisation enablers'; organisational (or business as usual) 'best practices' that facilitate the implementation of PPP best practices and help make organisational improvements sustainable.

The *PMBOK® Guide* defines 'Enterprise Environment Factors' (EEF) and 'Organisational Process Assets' (OPA) as the two forms of support (and in some cases constraints) the organisation and the wider community provide to assist project teams manage and deliver their projects. It is nearly impossible to consistently deliver successful projects if the organisation cannot provide the necessary resources and support. This White Paper focuses on defining EEFs and OPAs.

Enterprise Environment Factors - EEF (*PMBOK® Guide* 2.2)
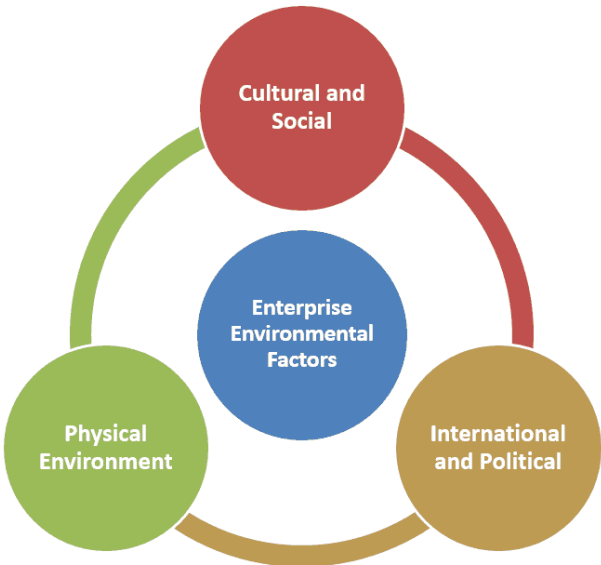
EEF = the **Environment**: just as you need different approaches to the management of a project to deal effectively with different physical environments (hot or cold / wet or dry) you need different approaches to deal effectively with the cultural, political, economic and legal environments the project is operating within.

The Enterprise Environment Factors (EEF) include all of the conditions and systems that are not under the control of the project team that influence, constrain or direct the work of the project. The includes things such as the existing internal and external infrastructure, computer systems, networks and software, naturally occurring phenomena (not just the climate) and legislation that exist, both inside and outside of the organisation that will affect the way you manage your project. This ranges from environmental, anti-discrimination and occupational health and safety legislation to the choice of project management system used by the organisation, personnel administration, staff capabilities and availability, and PMI's *Code of Ethics*. Some elements of the EEF are mandatory, some represent good practice others cultural norms or constraints; regardless of the nature of the factor, you have to work within the physical, political and cultural environment to be effective.

Organisational Process Assets - OPA (*PMBOK® Guide* 2.3)

OPA = **Assets**: The plans, processes, policies, procedures and knowledge base specific to, developed by, and used by, the organisation – and which you actually <u>use</u> in the management of the project. Most organisations have developed a range of templates, proforma contracts, plans, procedures, registers and assessment tools to assist in the management of the project. Organisations have also acquired knowledge in the form of lessons learned[1] and the organisation's knowledge base that can be very useful.

PMI classifies OPAs into two general categories. The various documents, both current documentation and historical records, and the 'knowledge repositories' that hold and organise the information (electronic or other filing / library systems) and make it accessible.

Therefore, Organisational Process Assets would include virtually anything the organisation has developed that you can use (or organisational policies state you must use) in the management of the project such as standard operating procedures (SOPs)[2], to calendars and report formats that run inside the proprietary software programs that make up the EEF. Generally, OPAs are directly aligned with facilitating the execution of the process described in the *PMBOK® Guide*.

OPSs become part of the project's documentation once the 'blank template' is copied and completed in full, or in part, with the project's information. For example an OPA may be an Excel template for a risk register. The copied template becomes part of the project documentation once it has been updated with some of the project's identified risks and recommended responses[3]. The 'project risk register' is then maintained and updated as part of the project's documentation. At an appropriate time various aspects of the organisation's 'process assets' may be updated or improved based on the 'lessons learned' by the project team whilst using the register; these may be updates to the template itself, or updates to associated OPAs such as the list of potential risks and their responses.
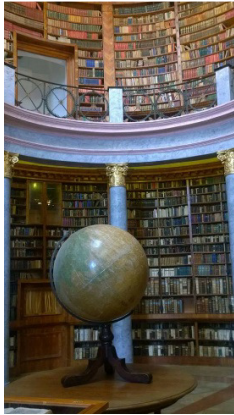
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The dividing line between some internal policies and some assets you use in managing the project can be a bit blurry. For example, the computer systems, networks and software that together provide the capability to operate the 'project management information system' and the 'lessons learned' knowledgebase are seen as infrastructure and are therefore part of the EEF. However, organisation specific policies, processes, data and artefacts such as a risk register or the data entered into an organisational knowledge base are seen as OPAs even though the information is accessed via the infrastructure.

In summary, you use OPAs to improve the management of your project. You manage within the constraint and guidelines established by the EEFs.

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[1] For more on *lessons learned* see: https://www.mosaicprojects.com.au/WhitePapers/WP1004_Lessons_Learned.pdf

[2] For more on *SOPs* see:
https://www.mosaicprojects.com.au/WhitePapers/WP1086_Standard_Operating_Procedures.pdf

[3] For an example of a *risk register* see: https://www.mosaicprojects.com.au/ftp/RMP_Sample.xls