Overview of Program Management Processes
Topics Covered

- Program Management Process Groups – salient features
- Summary of Program Management Process Groups
- Interaction between Program Management Processes
- Interaction between Project, Program and Portfolio
- Common Program Management Inputs
- Common Program Management Outputs
Program Management Process Groups – salient features

- There are five Program Management Process Groups (i.e. Initiating, Planning, Executing, Monitoring and Controlling, Closing)

- Process Groups are not linear and do overlap. Interaction occurs both within a Process Group and between Process Groups.

- Process Groups do not bear any direct relationship to phases of a program life cycle (phases as discussed in the previous chapter are Pre-program set-up, Program set-up, Establishing program management and technical infrastructure, Delivering incremental benefits, Closing the program).

- Usually, one or more processes from each Process Group will be executed at least once in every phase of a program life cycle.
There are five Program Management Process Groups (briefly discussed below, and covered in detail in next chapter)

- **Initiating Process Group**: This defines and authorizes the program or a project within the program

- **Planning Process Group**: This describes the best alternative courses of action to deliver the benefits of the program

- **Executing Process Group**: This integrates projects, people, and other resources to carry out the plan for the program and deliver the program’s benefits.

- **Monitoring and Controlling Process Group**: This requires that the program and its component projects be monitored against the benefit delivery expectations and appropriate corrective actions taken if necessary.

- **Closing Process Group**: This formalizes acceptance of a product, service, or benefit and brings the program to an orderly end.
Interaction between Program Management Processes

- There are many interactions among program management processes. Examples of some common interactions could be:
  - **Sequential:** Processes receive inputs from processes that logically precede them and send outputs to successor processes e.g. the execution process group receives inputs from the planning process group.

  - **Iterative:** Some processes can be iterative i.e. an output from a process becomes an input to the same process e.g. creation of a program management plan is an iterative process.

  - **Outputs from several processes flowing into a single process:** Example of this is lessons learned, which is produced as output from many processes and flows to a single closing process, Close Program, to be incorporated into a program closure report, and then archived.
Interaction between Project, Program and Portfolio

- The complexity of the program management process model is increased when inputs and outputs flow between the project, program and portfolio. Example
  - Project schedules flow to the program domain as inputs to the Schedule Control Process, in order to update the program's integrated master schedule. Similarly, several program schedules could be inputs to a master portfolio schedule. So, change in a project schedule indirectly affects the master portfolio schedule. (similar interactions are required for risks, status reports etc.)
  - Corrective actions may be created by program management processes and flow back to the project domain. At the same time, corrective action at a project level needs to flow to the program level.
  - Funding availability outputs flow from the portfolio domain to the program's Cost Estimating and Budgeting Process as inputs to the program budget, while cost performance reports from the program flow back to the portfolio domain.
Common Program Management Inputs

- Several inputs are common to most program management processes and are common knowledge throughout the organization. Examples of common inputs:
  - Assumptions: Assumptions are factors that, for planning purposes, are considered true, real, or certain. (Common assumptions could be related to regulatory requirements, availability of resources, stakeholder commitment/interests etc.) Assumptions are usually progressive elaborated (i.e. we know the high level details in the beginning of the program but as the program progresses, our assumptions get better defined). Assumptions should be regularly identified, documented and validated by the program manager.
  - Constraints: Constraints are factors external to the program that will limit the flexibility of the program manager (usually constraints related to time, cost, resources, or specific deliverables). For example, if the sponsor decides that a program should be completed within 3 years, that becomes a constraint for the program manager.
Examples of common inputs (continued):

- **Organizational Process Assets (OPA):** These include plans, policies, procedures, and guidelines that are developed and maintained by the organization (usually in knowledge databases). OPA may also include lessons learned documentation and historical information.

- **Historical Information:** Usually a part of Organizational Process Assets, historical information about previous programs can be a source of lessons learned and best practices for a new program. This could include all documents, plans, metrics, risks, and estimations from previous programs and projects that are pertinent to the current program.
Several outputs are common to most program management processes. Examples of common outputs:

- **Lessons Learned:** Lessons are usually learned when the program deviates from the program management plan. So, the lessons learned documentation should include causes of variances, corrective actions taken and their outcomes, risk mitigations etc. which will be valuable to management and stakeholders of future programs. These should be identified and documented throughout the program management life cycle.

- **Supporting Details:** This consists of documentation and information not included in formal program documentation but considered necessary to the successful management of the program. (e.g. the time required for specific activities may be mentioned in the program management plan but supporting details would include the process followed for doing the estimate, Minutes of Meetings where estimates were discussed etc.)
Common Program Management Outputs (continued)

Examples of common outputs (continued):

• Information Requests: As part of the Information Distribution process, requests for information on various aspects of a program can be initiated by different program stakeholders. These information could be outputs from several program management processes (and include status reports, variance reports etc.) These information requests are important outputs across all program management processes.

• Assumptions (discussed earlier): Assumptions could be both inputs and outputs for the program management processes.
Summary of concepts learnt in this chapter

In this chapter, we got a better understanding of:

- Program Management Process Groups features and high level overview
- Process Interactions: program, project and portfolio
- Common Inputs and Outputs for all processes

- This will be valuable information for us in the next chapter where we discuss all program management process groups in detail
Quiz for this chapter
(Overview of Program Management Processes)