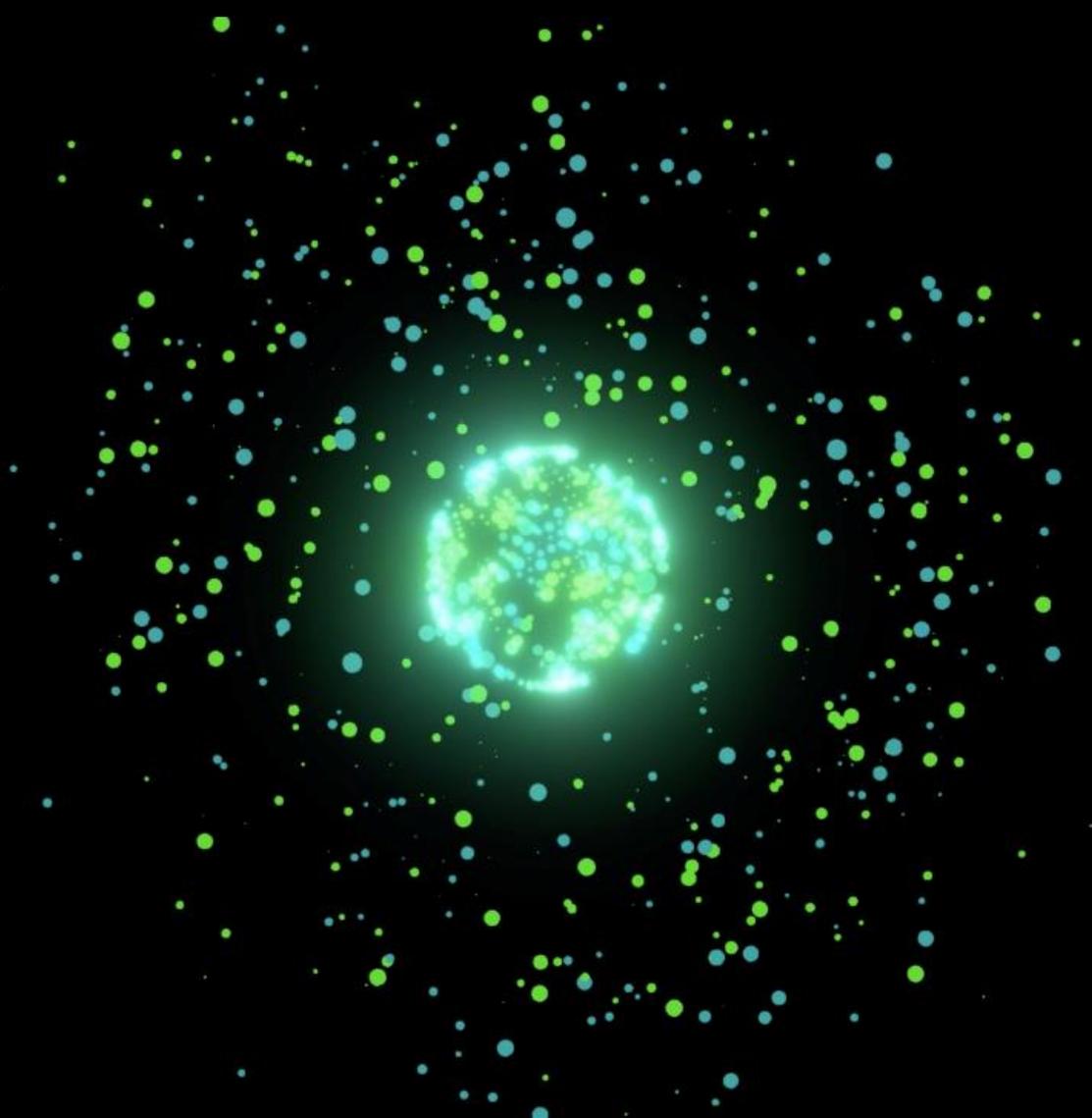


Deloitte.



Resetting challenged major programmes
A proven method to efficiently enhance delivery



Major Programme Failure



Based on our experience, Deloitte has developed a repeatable major programme reset framework, commencing with a rigorous diagnostic of root causes and focussing on high impact interventions.

Lord Browne's observation in 2013 remains as true today as it was when he wrote "Getting a grip: how to improve major project execution and control in government". He observed: that "nobody ever stops or intervenes in a poor project soon enough. The temptation is always to ignore or under-report warning signs, and give more time for things to improve to avoid revealing bad news, rather than to intervene decisively at the earliest opportunity." It seems that a heady mix of optimism bias and possibly even wilful blindness to the indicators of project failure results in many projects simply limping on when they are in need of urgent and effective intervention that may even include closure. Recently, the Committee of Public Accounts published a report entitled: "Improving the performance of major defence equipment contracts" which included the following conclusions:

"The Department's system for delivering major equipment capabilities is broken and is repeatedly wasting taxpayers' money."

"The Department continually fails to learn from its mistakes."

"The Department will not secure a step change in performance until it can recruit and retain the highly skilled staff that it requires."

Professor Flyvbjerg observed "over budget, over time, over and over again" in respect of major projects. This sentiment has been repeatedly echoed including by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) which stated that a number of studies have suggested that around

75% of major programmes in the private and public sectors, overspend or are delivered late. The failure to deliver to time and to budget tends to be far more apparent in the public sector as the IPA is required to report on the progress (or otherwise) of those projects comprising the Governments' Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP). In the interests of balance, it should be noted that the UK government has some of the most novel and complex programmes in the world especially those in the GMPP. In 2020/21, the IPA's report on the GMPP revealed that, in respect of nearly a third of all major projects, successful delivery appears to be "in doubt" or "unachievable". When taxpayer money is so scarce and major project benefits so sorely needed there needs to be step-change in approach. UK plc and its citizens need the estimated £826bn of project benefits to be realised.

Major programme success

There is plenty of commentary as to the causes of major programme failure but limited commentary on major programme success which, in our view, is a missed opportunity that needs to be addressed by the National Audit Office, the IPA as well as the various Parliamentary committees.

Hardcoded failure

All too often major programmes have (elements of) failure hard coded into them right from the outset. Unlike many areas, the approach to major programme delivery has changed very little over recent years and yet we expect a different outcome. Deloitte has developed a revised approach to major programme delivery that delivers value faster, enhances the ability to run large, very complex programmes and reduces the overall risk profile (Programme Aerodynamics®).

See: [Major programmes: an approach to complex and demanding environments.](#)

How Deloitte can help



Deloitte applies a combination of its Programme Aerodynamics® approach and its RESET Framework for those major programmes that are already “distressed”.

This RESET Framework supports the recovery of distressed programmes by identifying the root causes of distress, determining the highest impact interventions, and developing a plan to quickly implement them. This is done by seasoned major programme practitioners who have a track record of recovering distressed major programmes, in recognition that major programmes are delivered by people for people. It is worth noting that before any meaningful activity is commenced, that we stress-test the business case, relevant policy and supporting rationale for the continued operation of the major programme in question. Occasionally the timely unwinding of a distressed major programme in a cost-effective and damage limitation way is the prudent outcome.



The Programme RESET Framework comprises a five-phase approach:

- 1. Rigorous Diagnostic:** Using our survey tool and codified symptoms, the team works with the relevant major programme delivery team as well as key stakeholders to thoroughly understand the situation before conducting a root cause analysis (being careful to distinguish between “causes” and “root causes”) with the team/stakeholders in one of our purpose-built workshops, called ‘Greenhouses’ or ‘Labs’.
- 2. Establish (Detailed Diagnostic):** Only once there is clarity on the root causes of the distress are the detailed interventions designed and prioritised. There is then a period of mobilisation of expert resources to commence priority actions and further assess opportunities for enhancing medium-term programme delivery.
- 3. Stabilise:** Deliver recovery interventions through resource augmentation, capability building, and/or transformation to address root causes of poor performance. This phase focusses on ‘brilliant basics’ and the foundations of Programme Aerodynamics®.
- 4. Evolve:** Continue to support and strengthen capability in response to new priorities and/or evolving programme requirements. This phase focusses on implementing advanced techniques that include a flexible architecture, continuous strategy, digital catalyst as well as the human system design which are all components of Programme Aerodynamics®.
- 5. Transition:** Once the programme is capable of delivering the required benefits, when capability has been strengthened and delivery and stakeholder confidence restored, is responsibility is transferred back to the permanent staff or appropriate delivery partners.

The RESET Framework is designed to be a truly decisive intervention. Programme Aerodynamics® brings together mindsets, expertise, methodologies and solutions from across strategy, digital, capital programmes and programme leadership. The framework better anticipates, shapes and manages the inevitable change in major programmes.

If you are interested in finding out how you can RESET a distressed programme, please reach out to our Leaders to find out more:



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