

Project Requirements vs Project Scope Statement

Collecting a project's requirements and defining project scope are two vital processes for any project. Both processes belong to scope management and are part of the planning process group. The project scope depends on the collect requirements process.

In many small to medium-sized organizations, as there are very few stakeholders and the project is small sometimes the collect requirements process is followed by develop scope and the requirements documents is assumed to be the scope statement. However, for a large project, it is different. First, you collect the project requirements and then develop the scope statement. Here, although the scope statement is based on the requirements documents, it is different. To achieve your project's success you have to collect requirements from all stakeholders and develop the scope based on them.

You record the project requirements in the requirements documents and the project scope in the scope statement. Requirements documents are an output of the collect requirements process, and project scope statement is an output of define scope process.

Project Requirements

To collect project requirements, you meet with all project stakeholders and discover their needs, requirements and expectations. The requirements include project requirements as well as product requirements. In product requirements, stakeholders may want to see a certain feature of a product or behavior. In project requirements, they may want the project status report and the mode of communications in a particular format, etc.

As a project manager, it is your responsibility to ensure that these requirements are measurable so they tie in with the scope statement. These requirements are the basis for the scope statement and work breakdown structure.

How to collect Project Requirements

Collecting project requirements is a lengthy process and involves many activities. You will meet with important stakeholders and ask for their requirements. You may also call for a group discussion or hold sessions to collect requirements from other stakeholders. Once the requirements are collected, you may prioritize them through voting. Afterwards, you will combine and analyze these requirements with your team members. If any clarification or further information is required, you will have another meeting or session.

What do these Requirements include?

The requirements may include the following:

1. Business Requirements
2. Product Requirement
3. Project Requirements
4. Quality Requirements

The business requirements are high-level requirements and describe what benefits the project will bring to the organization or the reasons for the project's initiation. The product requirements can include what the product should look like, its features and behavior. The project requirements include stakeholders' expectations of your project, such as how they wish to be communicated the status or progress reports. The quality requirements include the inclusion of tests, quality checks, physical inspections, etc.

Project Scope Statement

The project scope statement has a detailed description on how you are going to complete the project, and the features of the product. To build your scope statement, you use the requirements documents and analyze it further. This is where you will define what is included in the project and what is not. You define all the deliverables here. Please note that all the requirements collected from stakeholders may not be included in the scope statement.

How the Project Scope Statement is defined

The method of defining the scope statement is somewhat similar to collecting the requirements. You meet with your stakeholders to further refine the requirements documents to turn them into the scope statement. You make sure that all unnecessary requirements are removed and the concerned stakeholders know about them. Along with these techniques, you will use product analysis. Here you will define the project deliverables. This is an important step and the description of the product should be with as much details as possible.

What does the Scope Statement include?

The scope statement may include the following:

- Project Scope
- Product Description
- Project Deliverables
- Project Exclusion
- Acceptance Criteria

Project Scope

The project scope includes all work that you will carry out to complete the project and deliver the project's output to the client. It includes developing the plan, executing the work, monitoring and controlling, and closing the project.

Product Description

Here you will describe the product in detail, its characteristics, how it will behave and its functional requirements.

Project Exclusion

Sometimes it becomes necessary to include what is not included in the project scope to bring clarity and clear any doubts. So, you will mention all project exclusions here.

Acceptance Criteria

This is the most important part of scope statement. This is where you will mention what conditions the deliverable should meet so that the client will accept it.

The Difference between Requirements and Scope Statement

The project requirements and scope statement are not competing for the same space. Without the project requirements, you cannot develop the scope statement.

The main differences between them are as follows:

- The requirements show the stakeholders' requirements and expectations while the scope statement defines the project boundaries, what is included and what is not.
- Requirements are collected directly from stakeholders while the scope statement is derived from the project requirements documents.
- The client or external stakeholders usually describe requirements, and the project manager and team members usually determine the project scope.
- The requirements documents are an output of the collect requirements process and the scope statement is an output of the define scope process.

Summary

Collecting requirements and defining scope are the basis of your planning process and your project's success depends on them. The requirements documents show the needs and expectations of your project's stakeholders and its deliverables. On the other hand, the scope statement shows what work needs to be done to complete the work and the features and behavior of the product.