

Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) Template

A practical project-planning tool that breaks a large project into smaller, assignable pieces of work so teams can estimate, schedule, own, and track delivery with less ambiguity.

PROJECT / INITIATIVE	PROJECT OWNER	DATE

Easy Adoption Summary

WHAT IT DOES	Breaks the project into a simple hierarchy of deliverables, work packages, and tasks. It makes the full scope visible before detailed scheduling begins.
WHO USES IT	Project manager, project owner, workstream leads, subject-matter experts, and the people responsible for estimating or delivering the work.
WHEN TO USE IT	Create it during project planning. Review it at kickoff and update it when approved scope changes occur.
HOW TO USE IT	Start with the final project outcome, list the major deliverables, break each deliverable into manageable work packages/tasks, assign one owner, add dates/dependencies, and confirm what “done” means.

What is a Work Breakdown Structure?

A Work Breakdown Structure, or WBS, is a structured list of all the work required to deliver a project. It starts with the whole project and breaks it into smaller pieces until the work is clear enough to estimate, assign, schedule, and track. A WBS is not just a task list: it shows how each task connects to a larger deliverable and to the overall project outcome.

When is the WBS detailed enough?

Stop breaking work down when a task is small enough to estimate, assign to one accountable owner, place on a schedule, track during status reviews, and verify as complete. The goal is useful control - not unnecessary detail.

How the WBS Works

#	STEP	WHAT TO DO
1	Define the outcome	Write the project objective and the final result the organization must receive.
2	Identify major deliverables	List the major outputs or results required to achieve the project outcome.
3	Break deliverables into work packages	Divide each deliverable into smaller pieces that can be estimated, assigned, and monitored.
4	Add task controls	For each work package/task, identify an owner, dates, dependencies, status, and acceptance criteria.
5	Manage from the WBS	Use the WBS to build the schedule, assign work, review progress, and control approved scope changes.

Simple WBS numbering

Use numbering to show the relationship between levels. Example: 1.0 = project, 1.1 = major deliverable, 1.1.1 = work package or task. Keep the numbering simple and consistent so the team can reference work quickly in meetings, schedules, and status reports.

Simple example

WBS ID	LEVEL	DELIVERABLE / TASK	OWNER	DEPENDS ON
1.0	Project	Strategic Plan Implementation	Project Manager	-
1.1	Major deliverable	Governance	Governance Lead	1.0
1.1.1	Work package	Update bylaws	Governance Lead	1.1
1.1.2	Work package	Approve committee structure	Board Chair	1.1.1

Adoption tip: use the WBS as the single source for scope. New work should be added only when it is approved, assigned, and connected to the project structure.

Blank Work Breakdown Structure

Complete the table from top to bottom. Add rows as needed. Use one row for each deliverable, work package, or task. Suggested status values: Not Started | In Progress | At Risk | Blocked | Complete.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE		PROJECT CADENCE	Example: weekly status review
SUCCESS / ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA		PROJECT SPONSOR	

WBS Detail

WBS ID	DELIVERABLE / TASK	LEVEL	OWNER	START	DUE	DEPENDENCY	STATUS	DONE / ACCEPTANCE