# Assigning responsibilities appropriately
## within a project

## The challenge

It is commonly acknowledged that assigning responsibilities appropriately is key to a project's success. However, there is frequent confusion between allocating tasks and clarifying responsibilities. Allocating tasks appropriately to those who are competent and available is unquestionably crucial to ensuring coordinated and effective progress. This alone, however, will not ensure the success of a project: the nature of each person's responsibility must also be clearly defined.

## Four different types of responsibilities

For each task, it is important to clearly identify who should take on each of the four major types of responsibility generally critical to ensure the overall dynamic of the project.

### Who is ACCOUNTABLE?

The person who **makes the final decision** and is held ultimately **liable for the results** of the project.

E.g. The main sponsor, a member of the executive committee, the department manager...

• **If several people are accountable**
The project risks getting bogged down when it encounters obstacles. Look closely at your decision-making process. Are those accountable well qualified? Who decides in the event of disagreement? Is a consensus required? If so, allow sufficient time for the approval process.

• **If nobody is accountable**
How can you ensure the project team's credibility with the rest of the organization? Who can you rely on, when arbitration is required?

### Who is IN CHARGE?

The person who **does the job**.

E.g. The site manager, the employee appointed to carry out the job.

**If many people are in charge**
The project risks consuming excessive resources, as well as lacking overall coherence. Check that the tasks are not too divided up or redundant.

**If nobody is in charge**
Beware, the project will not make progress!

### Who should be CONSULTED?

The person whose **technical support or advice** should be taken into account before deciding or acting.

E.g. An expert, a lawyer, the manager of another entity affected by the project, the works council.

• **If there are a lot of people to consult**
The project may find it difficult to make progress. Check that everyone really adds value. Should some actually be "in charge" or simply "to inform"? Who decides between the various opinions in the event of contradiction?

• **If there is nobody to consult**
The project is probably too isolated from the rest of the organization. Do you have access to all the skills required? Will the rest of the organization back you for deployment?

### Who should be INFORMED?

The person who should be **kept informed** of decisions or actions undertaken, of their modalities, expected consequences, or the state of progress.

E.g. Company executives, the other members of the project team, a partner, a service provider, the customer.

• **If there are a lot of people to inform**
This can be a sign of overly generic communication: do all these people really need to be informed of each task? Should you consult some of them upstream rather than simply informing them?

• **If there is nobody to inform**
Check that no-one has been forgotten. This is sometimes a sign warning that the team is closing ranks and risks losing the support of the rest of the organization.