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Managing projects is not a trivial job. You need to have the necessary skills, experience and of course the right project management tools to help you. But when it comes to managing large projects things are becoming even more complicated.

Sometimes companies need to manage large projects that extend on several years and that require a huge amount of work to be completed. This kind of projects are too big to be handled as a whole and must be decomposed in several smaller parts. Each part is treated as a separate project with its own assigned project manager and its own budget and time constraints. However all these projects are related and are actually subprojects of a master project.

The idea is that the program manager is running multiple projects and all those projects are managed by other project managers. As a program manager, you need to see a consolidated schedule view to see how the program is doing. The master project should offer the structure of the subprojects and show the dependencies between the projects. Of course resources can be shared so that overallocations and overtime costs to be detected and correctly computed.

Updates are bi-directional between master and individual projects. So when a project manager performs changes on a subproject all those changes must also appear within the master project. And the reverse: if any updates are performed in the master project by the program manager those changes must also appear in all the affected subprojects.

Benefits of using the master project/subproject breakdown structure

One of the main reasons to work with subprojects is that the project is very large. So it would be a good idea to break it down into smaller and more manageable parts. If lower level project managers have a better knowledge and experience on certain areas of the project it makes sense to make them responsible on those tasks. Delegating tasks will also make work more efficient.

But managing inter-project dependencies might become a difficult task without a proper structure. Not to mention detecting the critical path! However working with subprojects gives the possibility to detect critical path for different areas. Also in this way it is easier to detect resource overallocation across multiple projects.

When working with large data there might appear privacy problems. Plus each stakeholder might only be interested in just some parts of the projects and not the whole data. By breaking the project there can be established different access rights.

Having multiple managers responsible to plan, control and update activities requires concurrent access from several users. For this it is needed a control module or a so called Server module to serialize all the performed actions. This way the management work can be done in parallel increasing the efficiency.

Article Source:

<http://www.articleside.com/management-articles/working-with-subprojects-and-master-projects.htm> - [Article Side](#)

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The possibility to work with master projects and subprojects is a must for a [project management software](#) especially for those users that need to manage large data. However this must not be confused with a [project portfolio management](#).

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