

## **Management of Strategic Action Plan (SAP) in Supporting the Achievement of the University**

**Zaibunnisa Abdul Haiyee\***

*Faculty of Applied Sciences, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450  
Shah Alam Selangor  
Email: nisha@uitm.edu.my*

**Nor Hayati Saad**

*School of Mechanical Engineering, College of Engineering, Universiti Teknologi MARA,  
40450 Shah Alam Selangor*

**Mohamad Faizul Yahya**

*Faculty of Applied Sciences, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450  
Shah Alam Selangor*

**Alawi Sulaiman**

*Faculty of Plantation and Agrotechnology, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450  
Shah Alam Selangor*

**Azlan Ismail**

*Faculty of Computer and Mathematical Sciences, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450  
Shah Alam Selangor*

**Norfashiha Hashim**

*Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450  
Shah Alam Selangor*

**Greena Shayu Timbang**

*Faculty of Information Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450 Shah Alam  
Selangor*

*\* Corresponding Author*

### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to highlight the management of strategic action plan (SAP) in supporting the achievement of the university to achieve the targeted goal of becoming a globally renowned university by 2025.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The project management process is equipped through initiation, planning, execution, monitoring & control and closing. University Electronic Programme Management Office (UePMO) SAP Online system was developed to facilitate registration and monitoring the progress of the entire SAP projects of this mega university.

**Findings:** Strategic Action Plans (SAP) were mapped to 128 Performance Indicators (PI) and 144 Key Initiatives (KI). Planning and monitoring 1356 strategic action plan projects from all 9 lead directors (206 projects), 20 faculties (760 projects), and 13 campuses (390 projects) can be carried out more efficiently by using UePMO and Power BI tools.

**Research limitations/implications:** Measurement of risk and focus on mitigation plan will further enhance this study.

**Practical implications:** The results of this study can be used as a framework for higher learning institutions for project management.

**Originality/value:** This strategic action plan framework is the first in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** University, Strategic Action Plan, Project Management

**Introduction**

Strategic planning with clear objectives, responsibilities, and milestones is essential to ensure the success of a particular project (Broke & Lippe, 2015). A clear goal, vision, and mission are needed to ensure the success of the plan as shown in Figure 1. UiTM2025 Strategic Plan is an extension of the UiTM 11<sup>th</sup> Malaysian Plan (2016-2020) by taking into consideration the latest developments in Malaysia, including the higher education sector, focused on three Strategic Thrusts: Quality Education, Global Excellence, and Value-Driven Performance. The annual target for 5 years period has been specified for each of the performance indicators (PI).

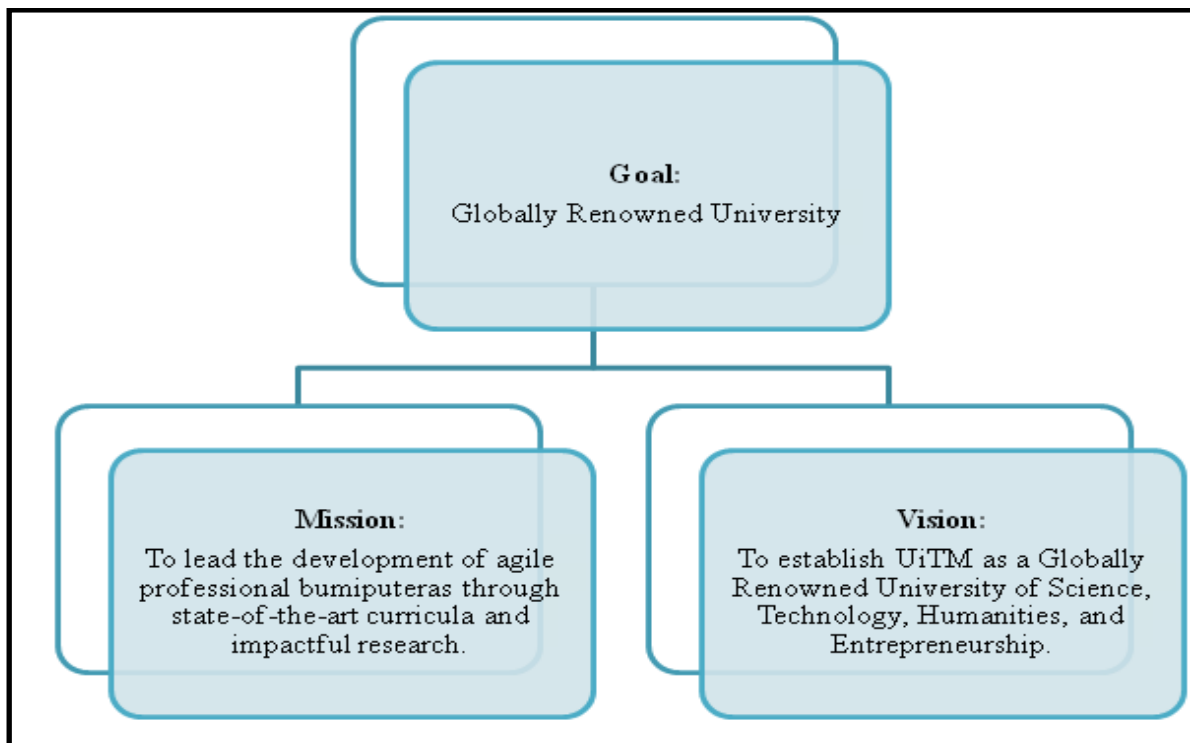


Figure 1: Goal, vision and mission of UiTM2025

Strategic Action Plans (SAP) were mapped to 128 Performance Indicators (PI) and 144 Key Initiatives (KI). Planning and monitoring 1356 strategic action plan projects from all 9 lead directors (206 projects), 20 faculties (760 projects), and 13 campuses (390 projects) was a very difficult and tiring process. Therefore, to facilitate registration and monitoring the progress of the entire SAP projects of this mega university, University Electronic Programme Management Office (UePMO) SAP Online system was developed. The key for the success of PM is to keep track and monitor data that has been registered. They are described as those processes required to track, review, and regulate the progress and performance of the project; identify any areas in which changes to the plan are required, and initiate the corresponding changes (Hodgson & Muzio, 2011).

### The Context of Sap Project Management Framework

Project management using UePMO SAP Online system is a platform to register the entire university strategic projects. This platform grants the convenience to structure their projects and can be referred for the following year to re-strategies. Project management (PM) framework for Strategic Action Plan (SAP) concept is as shown in Figure 2. The concept was contained with the strategy of the flow plan actions to achieve the strategic goal. Initiative of the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) is a form of a program or project with a milestone/pillar to achieve a specific strategy with desired outcomes. Project management is accepted as a: “young discipline” academically, especially compared with the traditional areas of economics, strategy, and organizational theory. It is, however, becoming increasingly accepted that more and more work within organizations is project based. The PM process is equipped through initiation, planning, execution, monitoring & control and closing, and skills in the management of projects have become a part of the accepted skills of the effective manager. There is evidence that interest in project based research is moving from the tools and techniques of project management, to a more behavioral bias, linking with some of those more established academic areas (Thesis, 2013).

Every ongoing project is monitored by its overall percentage of SAP completion which will be compared with their overall achievement score. The success of project management depends to effective communication, quality data presentation and documentation.

INITIATION	PLANNING	EXECUTION	MONITORING & CONTROL	CLOSING
1. Documentation (Project Charter) 2. Stakeholder Determination	1. Time frame 2. Work to be done 3. Cost/ resources required	1. Coordinating people and resources	1. Ensuring achievement of the project objective 2. Measuring progress and making adjustment	Formalizing acceptance of project
Effective Communication, Quality Data Presentation & Documentation				

Figure 2: Fundamental of Project Management Framework

### Method

#### Initiation

The overall success of this UiTM2025 Strategic Plan requires the commitment, contribution, and cooperation of all stakeholders to realize the aspiration of the University. Therefore, all lead directors, deans, and rectors have created Strategic Action Plan (SAP) every year targeted to achieve their Performance Indicators (PI) and as part of their UiTM2025 Key Initiatives (KI) activities.

At the beginning of the year, all stakeholders (lead directors, deans, and rectors) must plan and register their Strategic Action Plan (SAP) in the SAP Online UePMO system, and the information needed are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Information needed for SAP project

Project ID*	Project Name	Objective	Start Date	End Date	Progress (%)	Project Cost (RM)	Stakeholder	Program Director	Project Manager	PI	KI

\*Note: Abbreviation dept, year and project number, eg AS2021\_01

The lead directors for the PI and KI have also been identified and are responsible for ensuring that the nine strategic themes are implemented effectively and successfully as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Strategic Action Plan Project Information

Strategic Thrust	Strategic Theme	Lead Director	No of UiTM 2025 Key Initiatives (KI)	No of Performance Indicators (PI)
Quality Education	Education 5.0 @ UiTM	Lead Director 1	24	19
	Entrepreneurial & Well-Balanced Graduates	Lead Director 2 & Lead Director 3	31	31
	Widened Access	Lead Director 1	10	8
Global Excellence	Translational Research Development, Innovation and Commercialization	Lead Director 4	13	23
	Industry, Community & Alumni Smart Partnership	Lead Director 5	13	11
Value-Driven Performance	Talent Excellence	Lead Director 6	12	10
	Agile Governance	Lead Director 6	18	4
	Smart Campus	Lead Director 7&9	11	6
	Sustainable Funding	Lead Director 8	12	16
TOTAL			144	128

### **Planning**

The UiTM2025 has outlined 128 performance indicators (PI) and 144 Key Initiatives (KI) and have been strategically planned to ensure the achievement of the desired goal of becoming a globally renowned university by 2025. The planning process helps SAP directors to have a much clearer strategy to achieve the target. Strategic planning provides a blueprint for achieving organization's goals. When creating a strategic plan, there are certain objectives that the organization is trying to satisfy during the execution of the strategic plan. The strategic planning is a requirement for sustained competitive advantage on organizations.

Stakeholders were requested to plan projects for a particular year. Long term projects (more than one year) will need to be carried out in phases and only a particular phase will be registered in the system for the purpose of monitoring. All the projects should be carried out with the aim to assist in the achievement of PI and as part of their activities for KI. Projects were coded according to department and year to ensure effective documentation and mapping as shown in Figure 3. The stakeholders must clearly state the project name, project objectives, the manpower involved and the project milestone during project registration to ensure smooth management.

The timeline given for all stakeholders to review and report the progress of the SAP is by quarterly as highlighted in Figure 2. As for the requirement for the project planning cycle, the stakeholders are responsible to properly plan for the resources, i.e., i) manpower (program director, project manager, person in charge (PIC) and project team members); ii) Cost/ funding to support the project, iii) material/ consumable items, iv) method for the stakeholders to strategically plan and handle multiple projects with available resources.

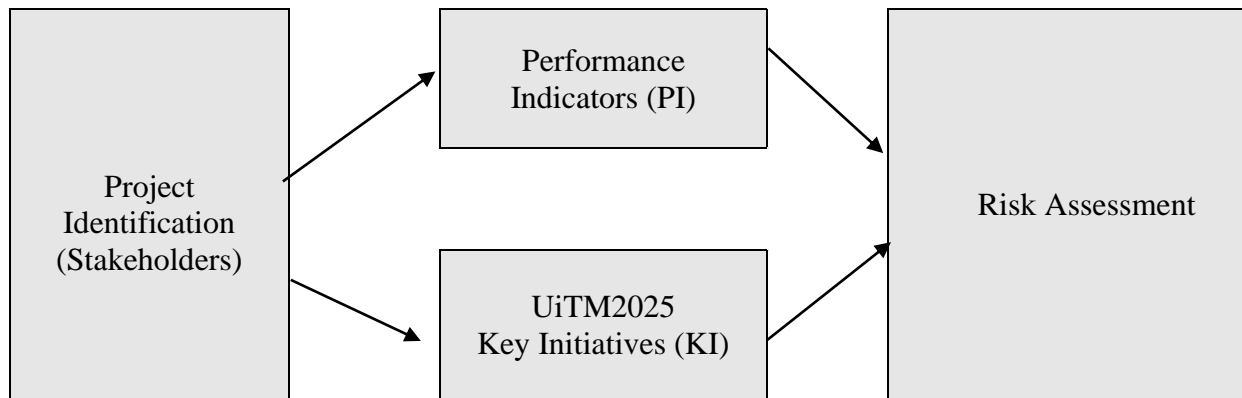


Figure 3: Project mapping

### ***Execution***

Execution is the stage of practice of a plan, a method, or any design, idea, model, specification, standard, or policy for doing the project. As such, execution is the action plan that must follow any preliminary thinking for something to happen. Stakeholders are responsible to coordinate all resources to conduct the project. State the percentage of project completion in the SAP Online UePMO system as which will be used for the monitoring by the University Transformation Division. For the execution of SAP to be successful, there are many tasks between different departments of the university that need to be accomplished in sequence or parallel. SAP systems strive to use proven methodologies and enlist professional help to guide university through the implementation of a system. Failure of many execution processes often stems from the lack of accurate planning in the beginning stages of the project due to inadequate resources or unforeseen problems that arise while handling the project through system (Grundy, 1998). Analysis of an organization's strengths and weaknesses is a key concept of strategic management. At this point, the project manager is intimately concerned with issues of power and politics that are utilized to drive the project forward, and to remove barriers and resistance, with utilization of and constrains within available resources, and with managing and motivating teams (Kingdom, 2007).

### ***Monitoring and Control***

The UEPMO system is an ideal platform for reviewing, updating and monitoring strategic projects. Monitoring process is part of the formal procedures of the project development approach and were also identified as an essential practice for open innovation project success (Barnes et al., 2006). Managing project requires flexibility to reformulate the objectives along the way, as, for example, the process of seeking an answer may generate knowledge that can disprove the initial questions (Lenfel, 2008).

All registered SAP must be endorsed by the head of department. Monitoring was carried out by both University Transformation Division and stakeholders as shown as shown in Figure 4. The progress of project has been monitored during best practice sharing. SAP data collected from lead directors, faculties and campuses were further analyzed and been visualized using Power BI software.

Strategy monitoring entails evaluating the strategy to determine if it yields the anticipated results as espoused in the organizational goals. Here, an organization determines what areas of the plan to measure and the methods of measuring these areas, and then compares the anticipated results with the actual ones. Through monitoring, an organization can understand when and how to adjust the plan to adapt to changing trend.

**Closing**

All stakeholders must update SAP progress and upload the final report in the system. Annual report will be prepared by University Transformation Division at the end of the year.

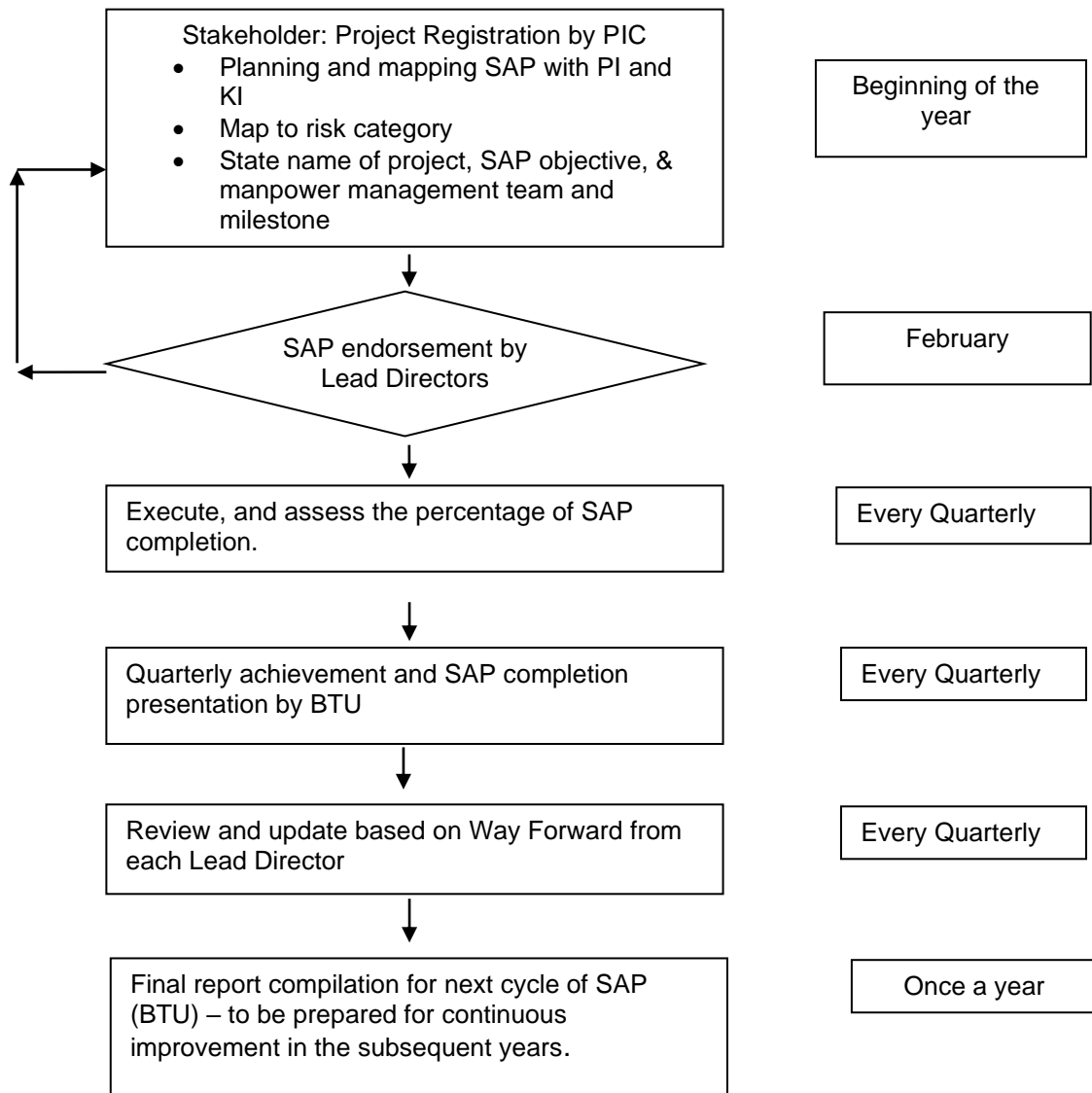


Figure 4: Process of Monitoring and Control

**Result and Discussion**

***Comparison of the achievement of the lead directors for the year 2020 and 2021***

As shown in Figure 5, the lead director’s achievement increased when SAP system been implemented in 2021. By introducing the SAP framework, strategic projects can be effectively planned and monitored. Data were also reported in the form of percentage SAP completion in comparison to achievement score as shown in Figure 6. Monitoring by University Transformation Division for the effectiveness of project will be easier with this data presentation. Results clearly indicates that with the implementation SAP framework, achievement of lead directors increased. The field of PM has been evolving for decades. Although there are indications of improvement in terms of project success, there are still high rates of failure reported and thus a continued interest in identifying what contributes to

project success (Papke-Shields & Boyer-Wright, 2017). There is a shift away from process and toward behaviours within emerging project management research. This is evidenced by the growing volumes of research being published outside of the two main project oriented journals, and also the content of that output (Kingdom, 2007).

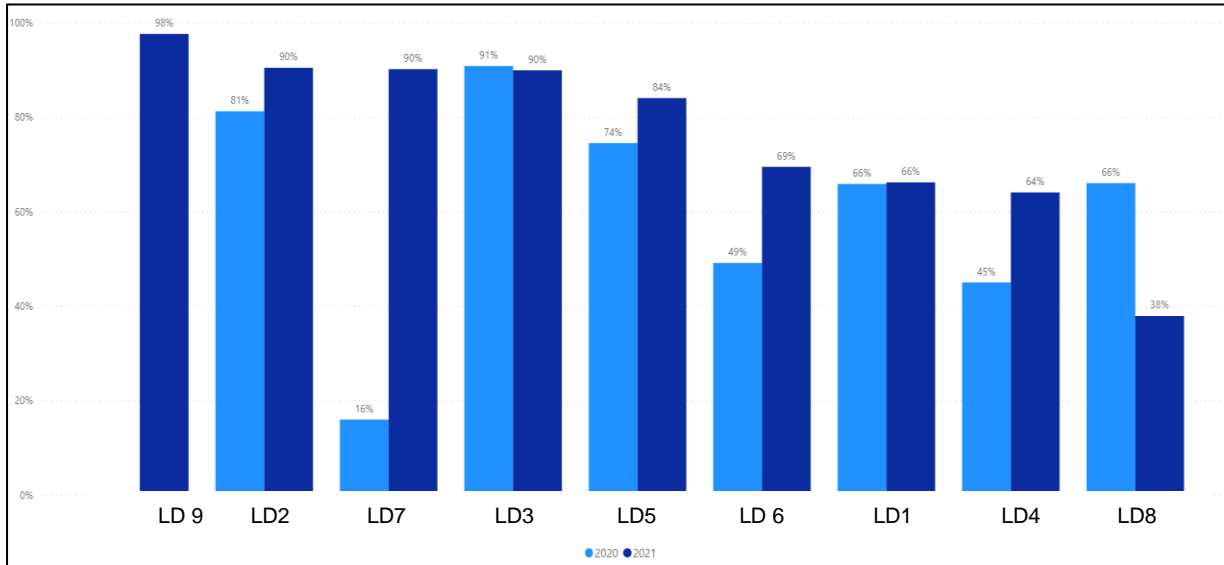


Figure 5: Comparison of the quarter 2 achievements of the lead directors before monitoring using SAP online system (2020) and with SAP online system (2021)

The Power BI system will also be able to visualize number of SAP projects that been mapped to UiTM2025 Key Initiative (KI) as shown in Figure 6 for Strategic Theme 1. This data presentation will give some indication which KI been focused for this year by stakeholders and future planning for projects.

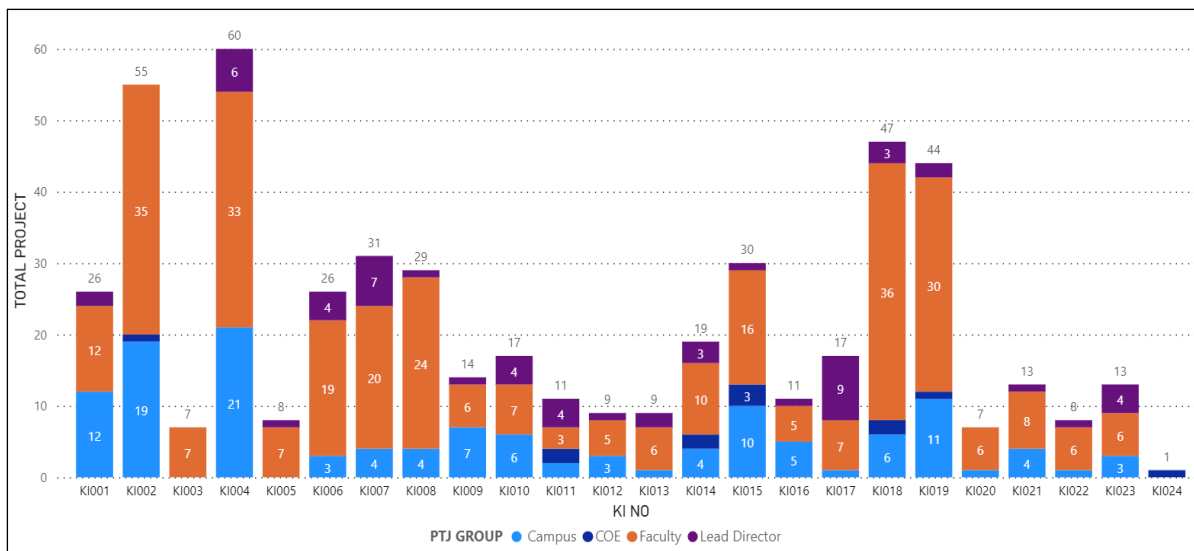


Figure 6: Number of SAP projects registered for Key Initiative (KI) under Strategic Theme 1: Education 5.0



**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the project management under the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) will give positive support towards the achievement of the university. Explicit understanding of the theoretical basis of PM is necessary, as it provides the opportunity to understand the assumptions which underpin practice, to question their appropriateness, and then consciously choose an alternative, when it is appropriate to do the project management. The UiTM2025 lifts the spirit in a way to expand the networking through the system for University Transformation Division and stakeholders. A continuous improvement on the framework is important in supporting and providing necessary information and data to top management and to ensure the project implementation and monitoring run smoothly according to the planned schedule.

**References**

- Barnes, T. A., Pashby, I. R., & Gibbons, A. M. (2006). Managing collaborative R&D projects development of a practical management tool. *International Journal of Project Management*, 24(5), 395–404. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2006.03.003>
- Committee, A. (n.d.). *Strategy Management And Strategic Planning Process By Stevens Maleka 2 | P a g e Stevens Maleka: Strategic Management And Strategic Planning Process: South African Perspective*.
- Grundy, T. (1998). Strategy implementation and project management. *International Journal of Project Management*, 16(1), 43–50. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0263-7863\(97\)00016-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0263-7863(97)00016-1)
- Hodgson, D., & Muzio, D. (2011). Prospects for Professionalism in Project Management. *The Oxford Handbook of Project Management*, August 2018, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199563142.003.0005>
- Kingdom, U. (2007). *T He C Hanging B Ias Of P Roject A C Onsideration Of The L Iteratures*. 61–73.
- Papke-Shields, K. E., & Boyer-Wright, K. M. (2017). Strategic planning characteristics applied to project management. *International Journal of Project Management*, 35(2), 169–179. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2016.10.015>
- Thesis, D. (2013). *Doctoral Thesis T Hrough the L Ooking G Lass* : 35(3), 15–26.