

**Title:** Project outcomes and outputs: making the intangible tangible

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**Abstract: Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to introduce and discuss a process for specifying project scope and success criteria more completely – in terms of expected project outcomes, benefits and outputs.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The paper reports on the third in a series of five action research case studies along with a validation exercise conducted at an Australian state police force senior management conference.

**Findings** – The findings confirmed that project stakeholders are able to identify, prioritise and define intangible project outcomes when provided with a process for doing so. The process described in this paper provides project stakeholders with the means to cross-reference hitherto implicit intangible outcomes to explicit tangible outputs. Results indicate strong support for the process as a planning/review tool for projects required to deliver a combination of tangible and intangible outcomes.

**Research limitations/implications** – The series of five action research case studies was drawn from the public sector. Nevertheless, the authors propose that the approach can be applied more generally to projects which require the delivery of intangible project outcomes. The validation exercise conducted at an Australian state police force senior management conference collected workshop attendees' responses to brief pre- and post-workshop surveys. Whilst encouraging, the results should be treated with caution because survey responses were only collected from people responsible for delivering project outcomes, not receiving them.

**Originality/value** – The key breakthrough contribution of the process described in this paper is the use of outcome profiles to cross-reference intangible outcomes to tangible outputs; making the intangible tangible.

**Keywords:** [Performance measures](#), [Project evaluation](#), [Project management](#)

**Article Type:** Case study

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