The scope of a project is the most important area to define because it’s the base for the project management plan. The scope is one of the three parts of the project (the others are time and cost) to manage the stakeholders' expectations and it’s equal to:

- the product, service or result requested,
- the total functionality requested,
- the base to develop the project management plan.

If the scope is wrong, the project will be wrong no matter how well the other PMBOK knowledge areas are handled.

An Example: A large IT project was planned with junior resources in the project team and final users with a lot of experience in the business functionality. What do you think happened? When the execution process group started, the team members didn’t understand the functionality to design, and the users spent 120% more of the time estimated to clarify the scope definition. The project team had serious problems integrating the final scope. Because of this, the project did not achieve its time and cost objectives; the project manager had to assign additional senior resources to understand and close the scope gaps and reduce the drift.
To obtain a proper definition of the project scope, first of all, the project manager and part of the project team must be assigned during the Initial Process Group. They must:

1. **Understand the business requirement.** This is the first step to achieve. The Project Manager must meet with the stakeholder owner of the business requirement, understand the request and start to identify the first stakeholders in the project.

2. **Identify all stakeholders of the project, to receive from them the definitions and needs.** After the business requirement is understood, the project manager, assisted by the stakeholder owner of the business requirement and the sponsor, must start to identify all stakeholders.

3. **Understand the success critical variables and group these by deliverables**
   - **Identify, analyze and understand each requirement,** to detect whether the requirement is complete. Once the stakeholders are identified, the project manager and team must start to use the more important tools and techniques: focus groups, brainstorming and meetings. In each meeting, the project manager and team will be able to identify and clarify all requirements and to detect new stakeholders.
   - **Verify the acceptance criteria.** Confirm these with the users to be sure the plan defines the validation process that will allow the team to know when each requirement is finished and ready to be sent to the user. When the requirements understanding meetings are in progress is the best moment to clarify the acceptance criteria.
   - **Define each requirement's traceability with the other project requirements.** After understanding each requirement, the
project team must make the logical connections between requirements.

- **Classify each requirement within the proper deliverable.** After the project team knows the requirements with the properly traceability, they must put each one in the group of the deliverables to which it belongs.

4. **Integrate the final scope.** The project manager and the project team must integrate each requirement understood towards deliverables to obtain the final product, service or result requested in the business requirement.

With the scope totally integrated, the project will deliver the product, service or result requested and the project team will be able to better manage the stakeholders' expectations.

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