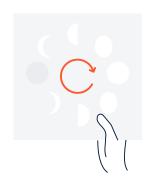
## 3.2 TECHNIQUE - COMMON VOCABULARY OVER COMMON TOOLING

## Agree on "what is a project" and phases



Ask a team of 10 people to independently write their answers to "what is a project?" chances are you'll get 10 different answers.

## How to set it up

**Step 1.** Ensure you have an appropriate decision maker engaged (async or live) who can help standardize the outcome of this exercise across teams.

**Step 2.** In a collaborative document (or in a meeting) collect examples of projects across departments.

**Step 3.** Ask a selection of project owners, contributors and group leaders across departments to fill out a "Mad Libs" style template to create their definition of a project. The template should include number of people, time period and differentiating features of projects (compared to work that is not a project, like a spike (quick burst of work) or service-style engagement)). For example Atlassian defines a project as any body of work that requires 2+ people for 2+ weeks. Yes, it can be that simple.

**Step 4.** Once you collect everyone's inputs on your collaborative document, as the facilitator, use the inputs of your advisory group to propose one (or a few) project definitions for your advisory group to react to.

**Step 5.** Collect input to your proposed project definitions, revise and propose to the decision maker for use across the company.

**Step 6.** Once project definition is agreed on, you have the foundation to define what phases each project will go through. The Project Management Institute defines the 5 phases of a project as Initiating, Planning, Executing, Controlling and Closing (source). Atlassian development teams use Wonder, Explore, Make, Impact.

**Step 6 cont.** We recommend starting with a standard framework and making it your own. Put it in your own language, reflect your company values and ensure it can be used and understood across functions.

**Step 7.** Design a system to reflect the project phase in each team's updates. Atlassian teams reflect it on their **Project Poster** and in their **Team Central** weekly updates.

**Step 8.** Communicate to key project drivers the guidelines for project definition and phases and build in a mechanism to receive their feedback as each project leader uses the new guidelines.