

# PMI® Ethical Decision-Making Framework (EDMF)



# Introduction

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This PMI Ethical Decision-Making Framework (EDMF) document describes steps that can be used to guide an individual in the project management profession through a process to make a decision when confronted with an ethical dilemma.

An ethical dilemma is a situation which has two or more conflicting values, none of which overrides the other. As such, these situations are beyond what is defined by law. In the case of an ethical dilemma, the individual is faced with a choice and needs to make a decision.

## Purpose

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The purpose of this document is to supplement the PMI Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct with an aid for project management professionals who are confronted with an ethical dilemma.

Comments or questions about this PMI EDMF document can be provided via email to the PMI Ethics Insight Team (EIT): [EthicsInsight@pmi.org](mailto:EthicsInsight@pmi.org).



# Background and Context

The PMI Ethics team originally developed the Ethical Decision-Making Framework (EDMF) through global benchmarking and extensive feedback from PMI leaders, members, and ethics experts. Created by PMI volunteers Michael O'Brochta, Giusi Meloni, Shobhna Raghupathy, and Peter Pfeiffer, with ethics consultant Marty Taylor, the EDMF remains an important companion to PMI's newly updated Code of Ethics.

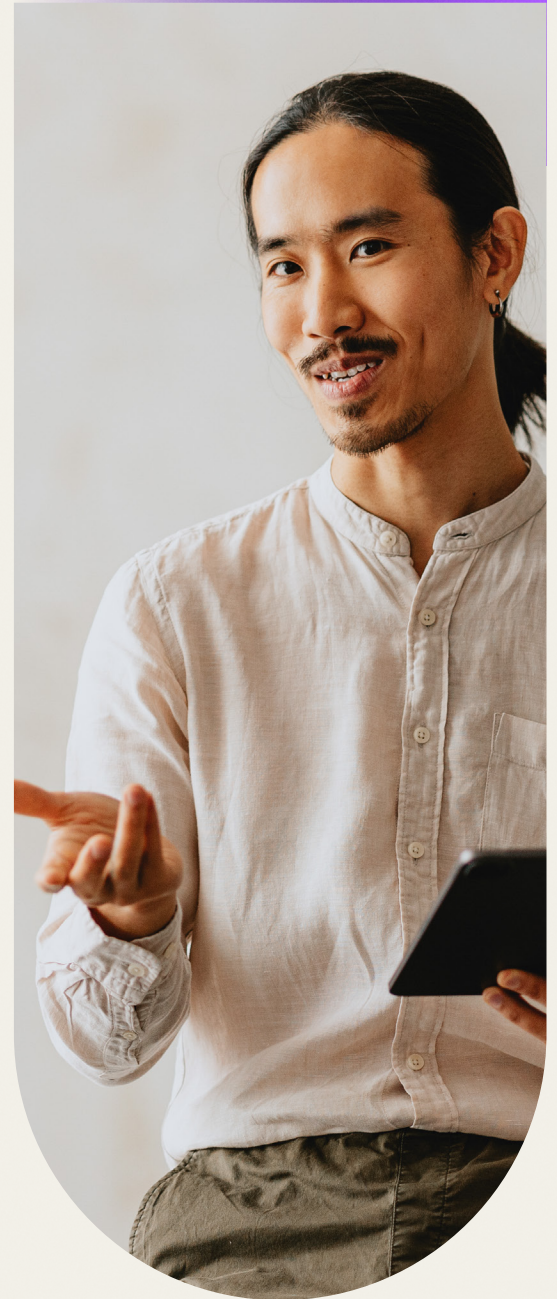
## How To Use The PMI EDMF

As a guide for critical thinking throughout the ethical decision-making process, it is represented as a sequence of questions with the recognition and assessment of the issue and ending with a decision and action.

The PMI EDMF can also be effectively used at the end of a decision-making process, when a decision is about to be made, to reflectively look back to see if the important steps have been taken and if the important considerations have been made.

Although the PMI EDMF is presented as a logical linear sequence of steps, users will likely find it useful to loop back-and-forth between steps.

Since the PMI EDMF is not entirely prescriptive and does not include every possible step or question useful for making an ethical decision, users PMI EDMF to challenge themselves with additional steps and questions.



The following describes the PMI EDMF steps.

## 01 Assessment

Make sure you have all the facts about the ethical dilemma

**To what extent does the dilemma abide, align, or agree with:**

- The law?
- PMI Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct?
- Employer's code of ethics and conduct?
- Client's code of ethics and conduct?
- Your ethical values?
- Ethical values of the surrounding culture?

If it does not abide by the law, seek legal counsel. If the answers to the above questions provide substantial facts to make a case, go to the next step. If you are not sure, you may need to gather more facts or ask a trusted person for advice.

## 02 Alternatives

Consider your choices

**List the possible alternative choices. Consider the pros and cons for each possible choice.**

If the alternatives result in a viable solution, go to the next step to analyze your candidate decision. If not, you may need to gather more facts and complete your research.

## 03 Analysis

Identify your candidate decision and test its validity

**To what extent will your candidate decision have a positive impact or prevent harm to:**

- Project managers?
- PMI staff or volunteers?
- Clients?
- Your employer's organization?
- Environment?
- Different cultures?
- Future generations?
- Other stakeholders?

**Will this decision seem like a good idea a year from now?**

**To what extent are you:**

- Free from influence to make this decision?
- Calm enough to make this decision?

If the possible impacts are acceptable, proceed to check your decision against ethical principles in the next step. If not, consider taking time to test another candidate decision, review your alternatives and/or your case.

PMI EDMF steps continued:

## 04 **Application**

Apply ethical principles to your candidate decision

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**To what extent is your candidate decision consistent with the values of:**

- Responsibility?
- Respect?
- Fairness?
- Honesty?

If your alignment with these values evokes doubts or seem to create a new dilemma, you might need to reconsider your decision, review the facts, the alternatives, and the implications. If your candidate decision is consistent with the values, move to the next step to decide and take action.

## 05 **Action**

Make a decision

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**To what extent are you willing and able to:**

- Accept responsibility for your decision?
- Make your decision public and feel good about it?

If you are comfortable with your decision, take action. If not, retrace these steps to discover a better solution.