

## **One Page Mastery: The Zakzouk Framework for Integrating Scope, Schedule, and Cost in Capital Projects**<sup>1, 2</sup>

*When you can put it on one page, you have mastered it*

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### **Abstract**

This paper presents a practitioner framework built on a single simple discipline: if you cannot put it on one page, you have not yet understood it. The framework was developed and refined over more than two decades of project delivery across the Oil and Gas, Energy, and Construction and Infrastructure sectors. It organizes project control around three one-page tools: a scope schematic, a linear schedule, and a master cost report. Each page serves a specific purpose, and together they form an integrated picture of project health that enables faster decision-making, earlier problem identification, and more reliable delivery outcomes.

The paper argues that compression is not a simplification of complexity but a test of mastery. It draws on real project experience across major capital programs to demonstrate how the discipline of fitting scope, schedule, and cost onto individual pages changes the way project teams think, communicate, and control. Two case examples are presented: a major bridge rehabilitation project on the Trans-Canada Highway, executed under a fixed closure window with significant financial penalties for delays, and a product loading facility demonstrating the use of the framework for a non-linear, system-based project scope. Both examples are drawn directly from the author's practice.

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## **Section 1: The Philosophy: Simplicity as a Standard of Mastery**

From the author's point of view, there is a common misconception in project management where complexity is mistaken for thoroughness. Thick binders, multi-tab schedules, and hundred-line cost reports are often mistaken for control, and the author sees this as a symptom of something far more concerning: the project team has not yet achieved true understanding of what they are managing.

The philosophy behind what the author came to call the One Page Mastery Framework, or the Zakzouk Framework (Zakzouk, 2026), is straightforward: if you cannot explain it on one page, you do not fully understand it yet.

The one page is not about formatting preference. It is a test of comprehension. The act of compressing a project's scope, schedule, or cost into a single coherent page forces clarity. It eliminates ambiguity, exposes gaps in logic, and demands that the practitioner make deliberate decisions about what truly matters. Every portion that goes into the one-page is there for a reason, and everything that cannot be distilled was likely noise to begin with.

This philosophy has deep roots in engineering and management thinking, where the best engineers have always known that the most elegant solution is usually the simplest one. It is not because simplicity is easy, but because achieving it requires the deepest level of understanding. The same principle applies to project controls. Being able to accurately represent the scope of a multi-million dollar capital project on one page is not a simplification of that project. It is proof of complete understanding.

This principle is not new. Blaise Pascal, the French mathematician and philosopher, famously noted: "I would have written a shorter letter, but I did not have the time." True mastery, in writing as in project management, is knowing exactly what to leave out.

In practice, this philosophy changes how the project team behaves. When a project manager can place a single page in front of a client, a contractor, or an executive and walk them through the full scope, schedule, and cost without hesitation, trust is established immediately, decisions are made faster, and misalignments are caught earlier. When problems arise, as they inevitably do on every project, the team that built its controls on a foundation of clarity responds faster and more effectively than the team buried in complexity.

Across more than two decades of project delivery in the Oil and Gas, and Construction and Infrastructure sectors, spanning more than eight countries across three continents and portfolios ranging from CAD 10 billion in EPC contractor work to USD 2 billion in owner-side capital programs, this discipline has proven itself repeatedly. The projects that were successfully managed and controlled were not necessarily the ones with the most sophisticated software or the largest control teams. They were the ones where the project manager could walk into any meeting, at any stage, and explain exactly where things stood on one page. It is important to highlight that this framework does not make decisions. It is the tool that provides the right information and makes it visible at the right time, enabling proactive decisions.

This framework organizes project control around three disciplines: scope, schedule, and cost, each captured on a single page, and each building on the one before it.

*When you can put it on one page, you have mastered it. Not before. This is the standard the author has applied throughout a career spanning three continents, and it is the foundation of everything in this paper.*

## **Section 2: Scope on One Page: The Schematic Discipline**

The scope or the "What", what needs to be built?, is the foundation for the schedule and the cost, and the author considers it the main pillar of project controls. By mastering the scope, a strong foundation is established, and a reference point is created against which every decision, change, and risk can be measured. If the scope is kept loose, there will be no reliable control over cost or schedule.

The typical approach to scope definition produces documents such as project charters, statements of work, work breakdown structures, and basis of design reports. All of these are valuable and necessary for execution, but documents alone do not create understanding. A project manager can sign off on a five-hundred-page scope document and still not truly grasp what is being built, where the interfaces are, what the critical dependencies look like, or where the risks are hiding.

The schematic discipline does not focus on whether the scope has been documented. It asks a different question: Is there enough information and knowledge to draw the scope?

A one-page scope schematic is a visual representation of the entire project, its components, boundaries, interfaces, and key relationships, captured on a single page in a way that anyone with relevant technical knowledge can read and immediately understand. It is not a detailed engineering drawing. It is a deliberate, high-level representation that reflects the skeleton of the project: what exists, what is being added, where one scope ends and another begins, and where the critical tie-ins or interfaces are located.

Over the years of practice, the one-page scope approach has taken different forms depending on the nature of the project. For linear infrastructure projects, it is relatively straightforward, as the schematic follows the physical alignment of the asset, whether a pipeline, a road, a bridge, or even a high-rise building. System-based or non-linear facilities, such as those found in Oil and Gas projects, require more creative thinking. Still, it can be as simple as a block diagram using standard engineering conventions, with equipment shown in P&ID notation, piping runs drawn with approximate proportional lengths, and discipline overlays for civil, mechanical, piping, electrical, and instrumentation scopes. The visual form adapts to the project. The basic discipline of compressing the full scope onto a single page does not change regardless of project type or scale.

In practice, the author developed a one-page master scope for the overall project(s). As execution progressed, this was cascaded down to area-level schematics for team leaders and area managers who needed to zoom in on their specific work fronts. The master sheet was always maintained for overall integration and interface management. This

layered approach proved highly effective on complex multi-discipline projects where different teams needed their own reference without losing sight of the bigger picture.

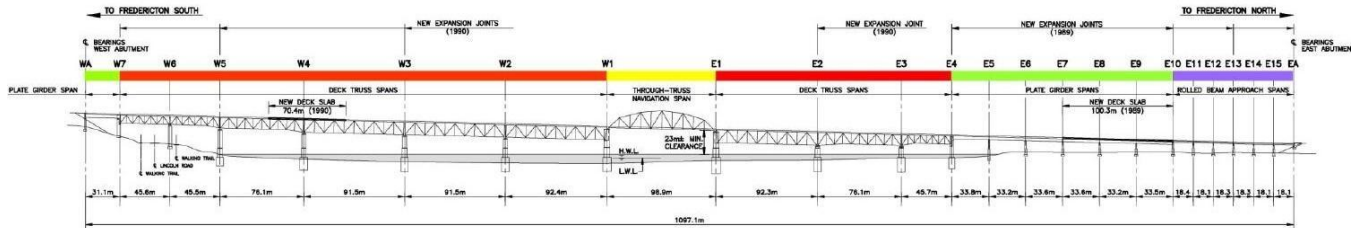
Once the scope is on one page, it becomes the reference point for every scope discussion. When a variation is proposed, the team does not dig through documents. They look at the schematic and immediately see what changes, what is affected, and what the downstream implications are. It becomes the single source of visual truth for the project.

### **Case Example 1: Major Bridge Rehabilitation, Trans-Canada Highway**

A major bridge rehabilitation project on the Trans-Canada Highway illustrates the schematic discipline at its most demanding. The bridge was constructed in the late 1950s and spans 1.1 kilometers across a river, carrying a complex mix of structural systems: nine deck truss spans, one through-truss navigation span with 23 meters of clearance, seven plate girder spans, and six rolled beam approach spans, supported by eight main river piers, fourteen land-based piers, and two abutments.

A condition assessment identified extensive deterioration across multiple systems simultaneously. Of 802 rail posts, 356 were defective. Of 742 sidewalk supports, 588 were damaged by corrosion. Of 315 floor beams, 155 were damaged. The substructure concrete showed extensive deterioration due to alkali-silica reaction and rebar corrosion. Bearings were seized, and drainage systems were leaking. The scope of rehabilitation was broad, complex, and deeply interconnected across disciplines.

Before a single contract was awarded or a crew mobilized, the full scope of work was captured on one page. The schematic below shows the complete 1.1-kilometer elevation of the bridge with every span type color-coded by structural system, all pier and abutment locations numbered from west abutment to east abutment, intervention zones marked, and key structural elements annotated. The side elevation confirmed navigation clearances and water-level references critical for the river pier work. Anyone looking at this page immediately understood the full extent of what was being rehabilitated, where the different scope packages intersected, and where the critical interfaces lay.



Overall length: 1.1 km

- 9 deck truss spans
- 1 through-truss navigation span (23 m clearance)
- 7 plate girder spans
- 6 rolled beam approach spans

8 main river piers, 14 land based piers, 2 abutments

Figure 1: One-page scope schematic, major bridge rehabilitation, Trans-Canada Highway. Every span type, pier, and intervention zone is captured on a single page.

What made this schematic powerful was not its detail but its simplicity. Any engineer looking at it could immediately understand the full scope without reading a single document. The schematic became the reference for every scope discussion, interface coordination meeting, and change control decision throughout the project. The test for the schematic is always the same: hand it to a competent colleague who has not been involved and ask them to explain the scope back to you. If they can do it accurately within minutes, the schematic has done its job.

## Case Example 2: Product Loading Facility

A product loading facility in the Oil and Gas sector demonstrates the same discipline applied to a non-linear, system-based project scope, showing that the framework is not limited to infrastructure projects with a physical alignment.

The facility comprises two upstream pumps, duty and standby tagged P-01A and P-01B, drawing from an incoming feed line and filling a central storage tank TK-01. Two downstream pumps, P-02A and P-02B, draw product from the tank and dispatch it through a discharge header to a truck loading bay equipped with three loading arms, a metering skid, and emergency shutdown valves. A foam skid system protects the

downstream pump station against fire. Four disciplines are active across all systems simultaneously: civil foundations and containment, mechanical equipment installation, piping interconnections, and an electrical and instrumentation backbone running from the substation through two motor control centers to the control room PLC and SCADA system.

The one-page scope schematic below uses standard P&ID engineering conventions throughout, with all equipment shown using internationally recognized symbols and instruments tagged directly on the drawing. The electrical and instrumentation backbone runs as a distinct layer across the top of the schematic, from the substation through both motor control centers to the control room and loading bay panel, with the cable route running the full length of the facility. Pipe run lengths are drawn to approximate proportional scale because those lengths directly drive the productivity slopes on the linear schedule that follows.

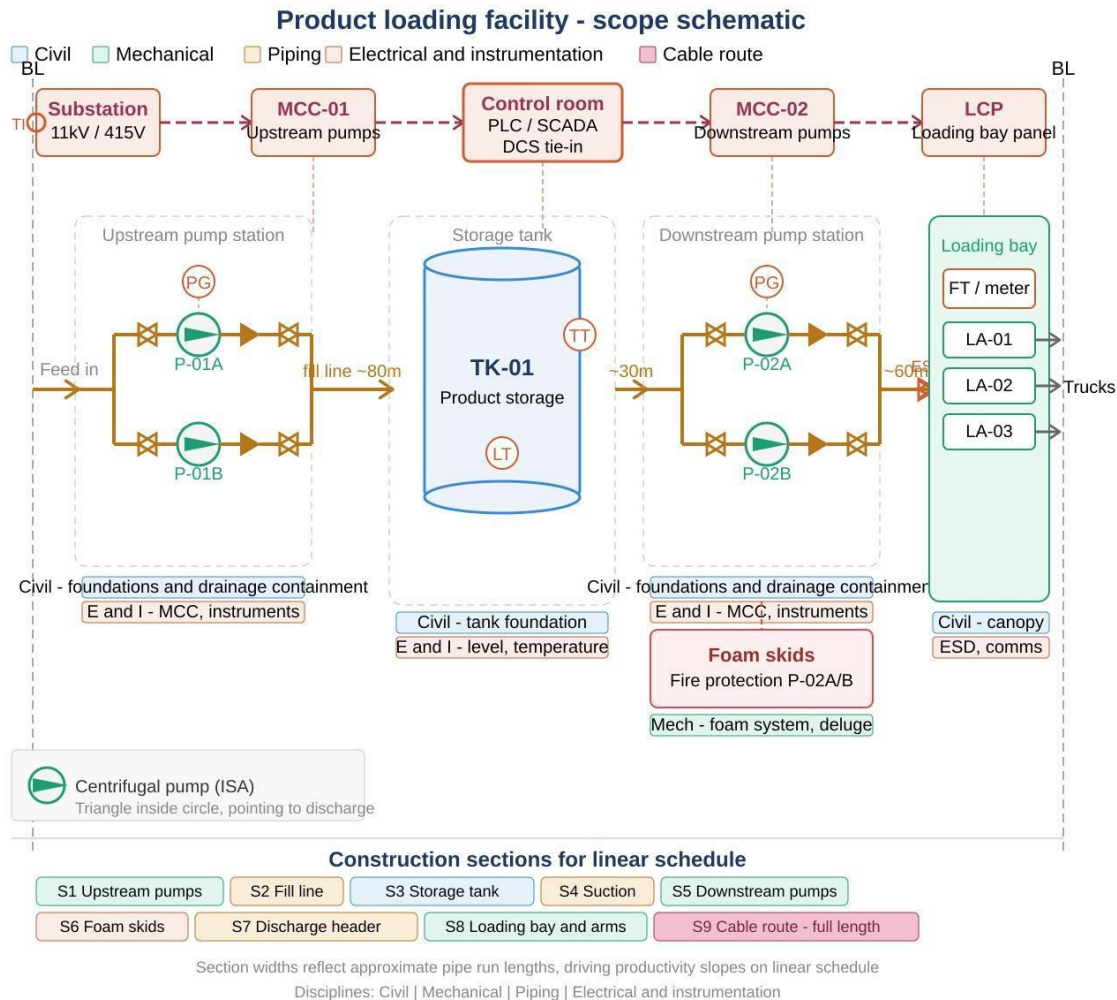


Figure 2: One-page scope schematic, product loading facility. All four disciplines are shown simultaneously from battery limit to battery limit, with construction sections defined for the linear schedule.

The schematic also defines nine construction sections that become the work fronts in the linear schedule. The scope page does not just describe what is being built. It defines how it will be built.

### Section 3: Schedule on One Page: The Linear Planning Discipline

Planning and scheduling are perhaps the most misunderstood disciplines in project controls. Practitioners often tend to use the two terms interchangeably, but the author

draws a clear distinction in this paper: the plan can be looked at as the strategy, the "How", while the schedule is the translation of that strategy onto a timeline, the "When". A project must be planned before a schedule can be developed meaningfully. In most project management offices, the common measure of a good schedule is its detail, level, 3, level 4 and even sometimes level 5 schedules. How many activities, how many logic ties, how many resources are loaded. In practice, detail without clarity is not control. It is noise. A schedule with four thousand activities that nobody can read is not a management tool. It is a filing system.

The one-page planning discipline begins with a different question: not how detailed the schedule is, but whether the right people can read it, understand it, and act on it without explanation.

The answer varies by project phase. During the early stages of feasibility, FEED, detailed engineering, and procurement, the work is largely sequential and milestone-driven, and a clean one-page milestone chart serves well. It is during construction and execution that scheduling becomes truly complex, and it is here that the one-page discipline demands a more sophisticated instrument.

### **The Linear Schedule as a Control Tool**

The conventional response to construction complexity is a Gantt chart with hundreds or thousands of activities. While Gantt charts have their place in detailed planning and contractor management, they carry a fundamental limitation at the project control level. They show sequence but not space, which means they offer one-dimensional planning rather than two-dimensional. They show duration but not productivity. The team gets buried in detail, in a 20 or 30 pages schedule, they rarely see the relationship between where crews are today and where materials, open work fronts, and critical constraints need to be for the project to succeed.

The linear schedule addresses all of this on a single page. The scope is placed across the top, organized by location, system, or work area. The time axis runs down the left side. Slope lines represent crew movement and communicate the productivity rate through their angle: a steeper slope indicates faster progress through the scope, while a shallower slope signals slower progress. When two slope lines converge at the same

location at the same time, a crew conflict is immediately visible, weeks or months before it becomes a problem in the field.

Vertical lines represent fixed-location activities where a crew works in one location for a defined period before moving on. Open work front indicators show when and where new work areas become accessible to construction crews. Symbols such as triangles placed at any point indicate a material delivery requirement, creating a just-in-time visual link between procurement and construction, while keeping them on the same page. Hard constraint windows, such as shutdown dates and tie-in milestones, are highlighted in a distinct color as non-negotiable boundaries that the entire team plans around.

### **The Pre-Project Decision Framework: One Page, Two Scenarios**

One of the most powerful applications of the one-page linear planning approach occurs before a single contract is signed or a crew is mobilized. The schedule serves as a decision-making tool to agree on the optimal construction strategy before the project begins.

Scenario A deploys one complete construction front moving across the facility from left to right. Civil leads every section; mechanical follows; piping threads through; and the electrical and instrumentation crew runs behind the civil trench opening. Material deliveries are sequential, one set of triangles moving in one direction. The project will be completed in eighteen months under standard conditions.

Scenario B deploys two complete construction fronts simultaneously, one starting from each end of the facility and moving toward each other. Every discipline within each front moves together: civil leading, mechanical following, piping, and electrical in sequence. Both fronts carry their own material delivery requirements, meaning procurement for both ends must be delivered simultaneously. The two fronts converge at the midpoint, creating an interface management zone that must be planned before mobilization. The project will be completed in thirteen months, five months earlier than Scenario A.

Both scenarios are presented on a page each. The comparison between them is immediate and visible. The conversation that follows is about what the project actually needs. Is there a shutdown window that must be met? Is there a weather season that makes certain activities impossible after a given month? Is there a contractual milestone

that demands earlier completion? The one-page schedule is the instrument that makes the trade-off visible to everyone in the room simultaneously, before any commitment is made. The two schedules for the product loading facility are shown below.



Figure 3a: Scenario A, product loading facility. One complete construction front, 18 months. Sequential material delivery, single crew movement left to right across all sections.

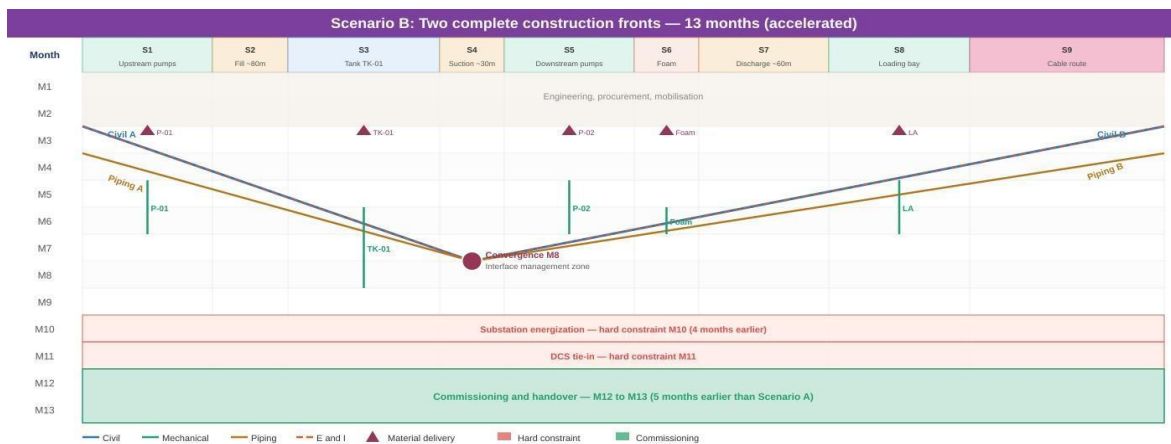


Figure 3b: Scenario B, product loading facility. Two complete construction fronts, 13 months. Simultaneous material delivery at both ends, convergence at midpoint, Month 8, five months saved.

## **Case Example: Bridge Deck Replacement, Trans-Canada Highway**

The bridge rehabilitation project provides a compelling illustration of the linear schedule under extreme constraint. The 2011 closure required complete deck replacement across the full 1.1-kilometer span within a fixed closure window, with significant contractual penalties for delay and no flexibility in the endpoint. Five work sections moved across the bridge, each using different equipment configurations driven by the structural constraints of the spans beneath them. Sections covering the deck truss spans used a purpose-built moving lifting frame (MFL) developed specifically for this project. Sections covering plate girder and approach spans used mobile cranes from ground level. Stage 3 pier work had to be completed at specific locations before new precast deck panels could be installed above.

All of this was captured on one page, shown below. The scope ran across the top: every span labeled by structural type from west abutment to east abutment, every pier numbered. The closure window ran down the left side. Each of the five work sections appeared as a color-coded zone moving across the bridge. The Stage 3 pier work appeared as a vertical constraint bar. Water level and temperature readings appeared on the right margin because both directly drove when certain activities could proceed. Material delivery triangles marked where precast panels and post-tensioning materials needed to be on site.

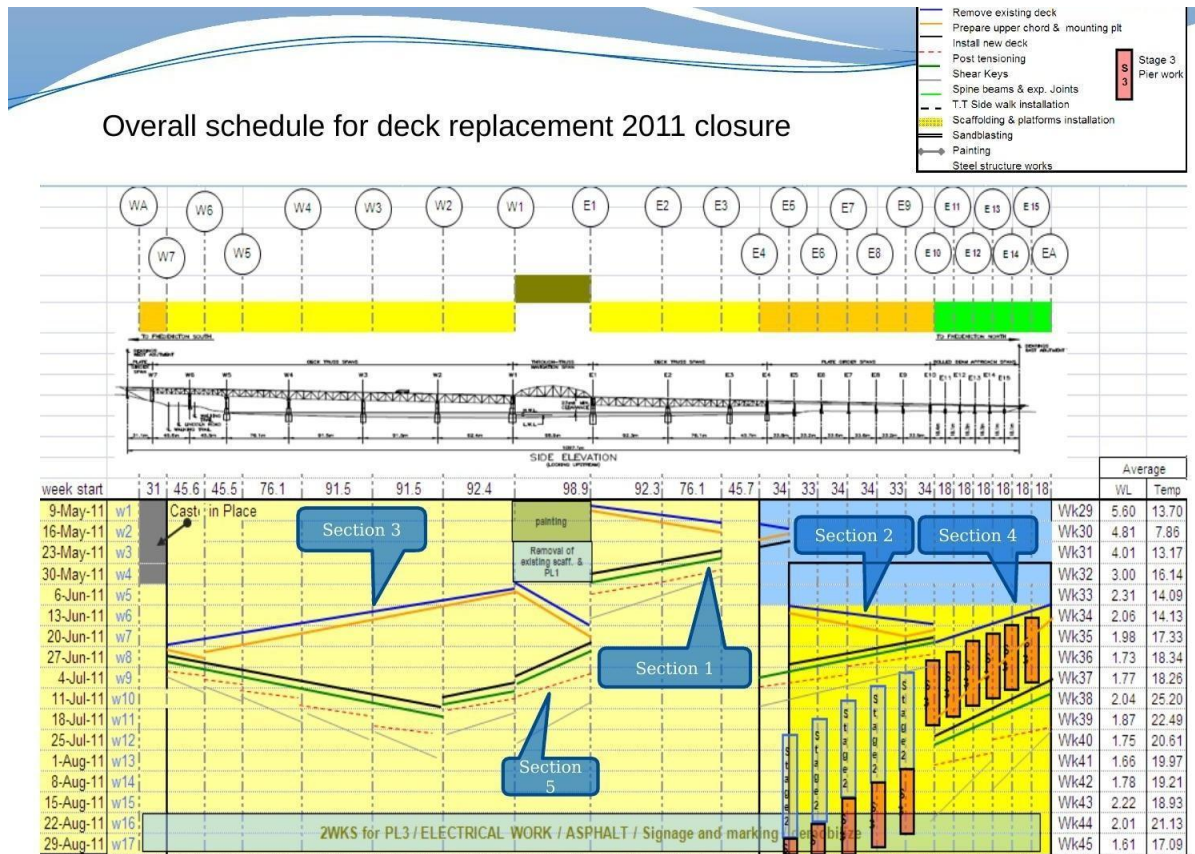


Figure 4: One-page linear schedule, bridge deck replacement 2011 closure. Five work sections, Stage 3 pier constraint, water level and temperature columns, and material delivery triangles. Maintained as a live document throughout the closure with regular updates to reflect actual progress and productivity rates against plan.

In practice, this schedule was maintained as a live document throughout the closure, updated regularly to reflect field progress, actual quantities installed, and productivity rates against plan. Every deviation from the planned slope lines was visible the day it occurred. This single page answered the most important question before the closure began: Is this achievable within the closure window? The schedule made the critical conditions visible and was agreed upon before the bridge was closed to traffic. Every crew movement, every open work front, and every material delivery requirement was on the same page and understood by everyone in the room before work began.

## Section 4: Cost on One Page: The Control Discipline

Cost control is the discipline most prone to false confidence. Numbers on a page carry an inherent authority that scope drawings and schedule lines do not. A cost report that balances feels like control, but in reality, it often is not. What it frequently represents is a snapshot of commitments and actual expenditures at a point in time, with no forward visibility, no connection to physical progress, and no signal of what is coming before it arrives.

The one-page cost discipline is built on a different standard. It asks not just where the money is today, but where it is going, why it is going there, and whether the work being delivered justifies what is being spent.

### The Structure: What Belongs on the Page

The one-page cost report organizes the project into work packages. The number of packages depends on the project's complexity, covering distinct disciplines and contract boundaries. For the bridge rehabilitation project, construction work packages covered paving; demolition of piers and abutments; rebar installation in piers and abutments; deck works, including expansion joints and drainage; site preparation; post-tensioning; steel structure fabrication and installation; blasting and painting; and electrical work. Alongside these construction packages, indirect management packages covered employee costs, travel and air tickets, other employee expenses, communications, photocopies and document expenses, external consultants, and IT.

For each work package, the page carries the approved original budget, the revised budget reflecting approved scope changes, the total commitment representing all legally obligated costs, the trend representing foreseen movements not yet formally approved, the unawarded scope representing the uncommitted balance of the approved budget, the cost incurred in the current period, the cumulative cost incurred to date, the current forecast, the period-on-period forecast variance, and the final variance calculated as budget minus forecast. The forecast is the sum of the total commitment, the unawarded scope, and the trend.

The unawarded scope column deserves specific attention. It represents the portion of the approved budget that has not yet been committed to a contract or purchase order. It is

not free money. It is the remaining financial flexibility on each package. A work package with a large unawarded scope balance at a late stage of execution is a signal: either the procurement is running behind plan, or the scope assumptions behind that budget are at risk of not materializing as planned. The unawarded scope column makes that signal visible on the same page as every other cost indicator.

The author also recommends reflecting the CPI and SPI as columns in the cost report to show performance for each package and the overall performance at the project level.

### **The Trend: The Most Valuable Number on the Page**

Of all the elements on the one-page cost report, the trend column carries the most intelligence. It reflects foreseen changes, positive or negative, that are visible to the project team but have not yet been completed through the formal change control process. A scope addition or deletion that is verbally agreed but not yet contractually executed, a productivity shortfall emerging on site, or a material cost reduction secured through a negotiation not yet finalized. All of these are tracked in a separate register and reflected in the trend column without delay, rather than waiting and reflecting them in the next report when the damage or the saving has already been absorbed. Some organizations maintain a separate column for formally submitted changes, but in practice, the trend column can capture all foreseeable movements so that the forecast always reflects the project's true expected outcome.

This forward-looking discipline transforms the cost page from a historical record into a management instrument. The project manager who maintains a rigorous trend column is never surprised by the final cost, because every movement in the forecast has been visible and signaled in advance.

### **The S-Curve and Earned Value: Connecting Cost to Time and Physical Progress**

The cost table alone tells only part of the story. It shows the financial position of each work package but says nothing about when the money flows or whether the spend profile is consistent with physical progress. For this reason, the one-page cost discipline carries

the earned value analysis alongside the table, tracking cost performance against physical delivery.

Earned value analysis compares three elements: the Planned Value, the Earned Value, and the Actual Cost. Together, they produce the Cost Performance Index and the Schedule Performance Index, two of the most reliable indicators available for measuring project health. A CPI of 1.0 means that every dollar spent delivers exactly the planned value of work. A CPI below 1.0 means more is being spent than the value of work delivered justifies. The SPI applies the same logic to schedule progress. A project that has spent exactly what was planned but has completed only 70% of the planned work is not on budget, it is in trouble, and the earned value analysis makes that visible immediately.

### **Owner and Contractor: The Same Discipline, Different Scales**

The one-page cost discipline applies equally to the contractor managing a complex EPC scope and the owner managing a lean portfolio, but the nature of the control challenge differs. On the contractor side, the challenge is complexity: a major EPC project carrying a budget between CAD 100 million and CAD 2 billion requires integration across multiple disciplines and subcontractors. On the owner's side, the challenge is concentration. A project with a budget of USD 50 million to USD 150 million may carry only one or two lump-sum turnkey contracts that represent the vast majority of the project's value. A single trend movement in a single LSTK contract can materially shift the entire project forecast. In both environments, the standard is the same: one page, complete information, forward-looking by design.

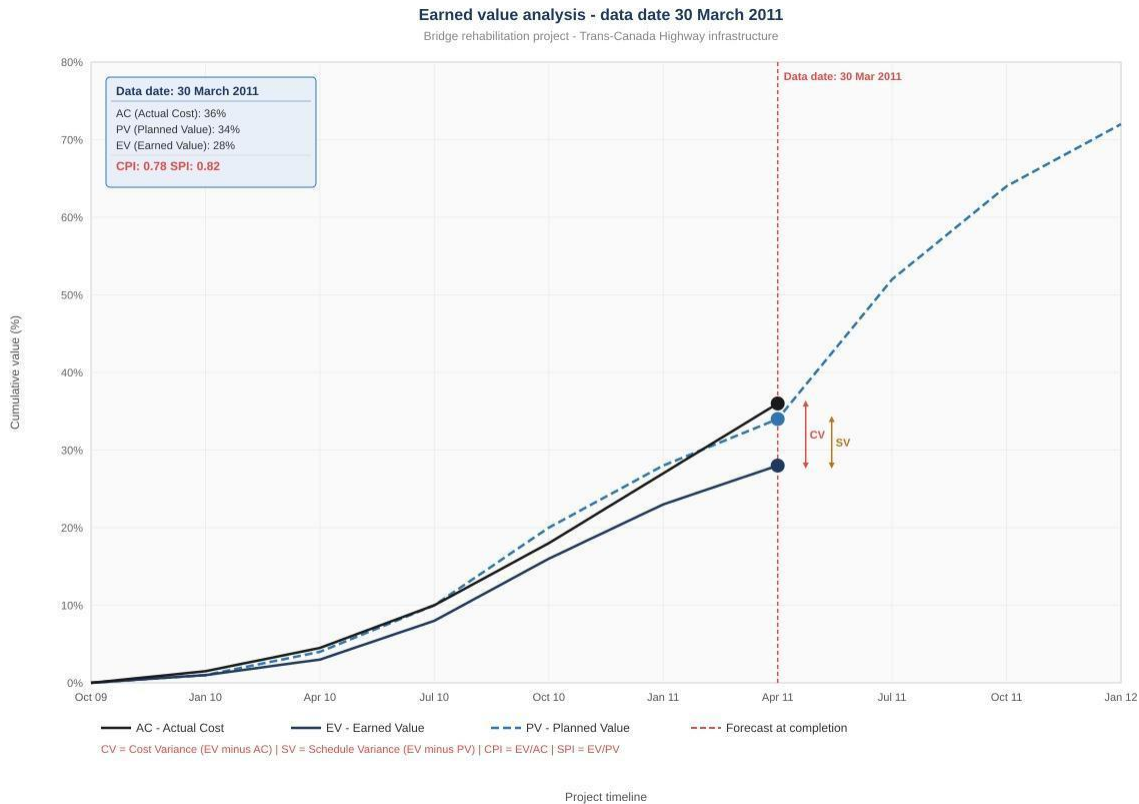
### **Case Example: Bridge Rehabilitation Project, Cost Performance**

The bridge rehabilitation project provides a direct illustration of the one-page cost discipline in practice. The cost report carried all work packages with their budget, commitment, trend, unawarded scope, actuals, and forecast columns, exactly as described above. The structure is shown in Figure 5a. Alongside it, the earned value curve shown in Figure 5b placed Actual Cost, Planned Value, and Earned Value on the same page, with both the CPI and the SPI displayed at the data date and a forecast at

completion projection showing where the project was heading if performance continued unchanged.

One-page cost report - consolidated work package summary										
Work Package	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Total Commitment	Trend	Unawarded Scope	Incurred This Period	Incurred To Date	Current Forecast	Forecast Variance	Variance (Bud - Fcst)
<b>C - Construction packages</b>										
C1620 - Paving work										
C2141 - Piers and abutments demolishing										
C2142 - Piers and abutments rebar installat										
C2600 - Deck works, expansion joints, drain										
C2610 - Misc. site preparation and support										
C2670 - Post tension										
C3100 - Steel structure installation and fabri										
C3620 - Blasting and painting										
C7000 - Electrical										
<b>M - Management and indirect packages</b>										
M9200 - Employee salary										
M9301 - Air ticket										
M9302 - Other employee expenses										
M9303 - Communications										
M9305 - Photocopies and document expens										
M9307 - External consultant										
M9310 - IT expenses										
Key formula: Current Forecast = Total Commitment + Unawarded Scope + Trend Trend reflects all foreseen changes, positive or negative, not yet formally approved. Unawarded scope is the uncommitted balance of the approved budget.										

Figure 5a: One-page cost report structure. Work packages grouped by construction and indirect categories, showing original budget, revised budget, total commitment, trend, unawarded scope, incurred costs, current forecast, and variance. Forecast equals commitment plus unawarded scope plus trend.



*Figure 5b: Earned value analysis, data date 30 March 2011. Actual Cost 36 percent, Planned Value 34 percent, Earned Value 28 percent. CPI 0.78, SPI 0.82. The forecast-at-completion projection shows where the project is heading if current performance continues.*

At the March 2011 data date, the curve showed an Actual Cost of 36 percent, a Planned Value of 34 percent, and an Earned Value of only 28 percent. The CPI was 0.78, and the SPI was 0.82, measured against the rebaselined project plan. Both signals were visible and measurable on one page, months before the financial impact became irreversible. That signal, produced at a regular reporting interval, is what the one-page cost discipline is designed to surface. The instruments do not make decisions. They are the tool that makes the right information visible at the right time for proactive decision-making.

## **Section 5: Integration: Where Control Becomes Delivery**

The three disciplines described in the preceding sections are individually powerful. A project team that maintains a clear one-page scope schematic understands what is being built. A team that works from a one-page linear schedule understands how and when it will be built. A team that manages the cost through a disciplined one-page report understands what that effort is worth financially. Each page, on its own, represents a standard of clarity that most projects never achieve.

But the real power of this framework is not only in the individual pages. It is what happens when the three elements are brought into a relationship with each other.

### **The Natural Integration of Scope and Schedule**

Scope and schedule are not two separate subjects. They are two dimensions of the same reality. The one-page linear schedule resolves the separation by design. The scope sits across the top of the page, and the schedule flows beneath it. Every slope line, every vertical bar, every open work front indicator, and every material delivery triangle is anchored directly to a specific element of the scope. When a scope change is proposed, the schedule implication is immediately visible. When a work front opens earlier than planned, the acceleration opportunity becomes immediately apparent. When a material delivery triangle shifts, every downstream impact is traceable without opening a second document. The result is a project team that thinks about scope and schedule simultaneously, not sequentially.

### **Extending Integration to Cost: Performance Without Exposure**

In most project environments, absolute cost figures are subject to confidentiality requirements that limit how freely they can be shared. The solution is not to abandon cost integration, but to present cost performance through indicators that convey the essential signal without exposing the underlying figures. Two indicators, used together, achieve this with precision.

The first is the Cost Performance Index, drawn from the earned value calculation on the separate cost page. A CPI above 1.0 signals efficient performance, and a value below

1.0 signals that more is being spent than the value of work being delivered justifies. The second indicator is the Schedule Performance Index, drawn from the same earned value calculation. Color-coding both values, green above 0.95, amber between 0.85 and 0.95, and red below 0.85, carries the performance signal for both cost and schedule without exposing any underlying financial figures. Together, the CPI and SPI give every member of the project team a complete picture at a glance. This integration is demonstrated directly in Figure 6, where the weekly CPI and SPI values, color-coded by performance threshold, sit alongside the water level and temperature columns on the bridge linear schedule. Two numbers, two colors, and the complete cost and schedule performance picture, without a single currency figure visible.

Some practitioners would argue that CPI and SPI at the overall project level can be misleading, and the author tends to agree. However, they remain a useful overall indicator of project performance, and as noted earlier, the cost report presents them at the package level for more precise monitoring and control.

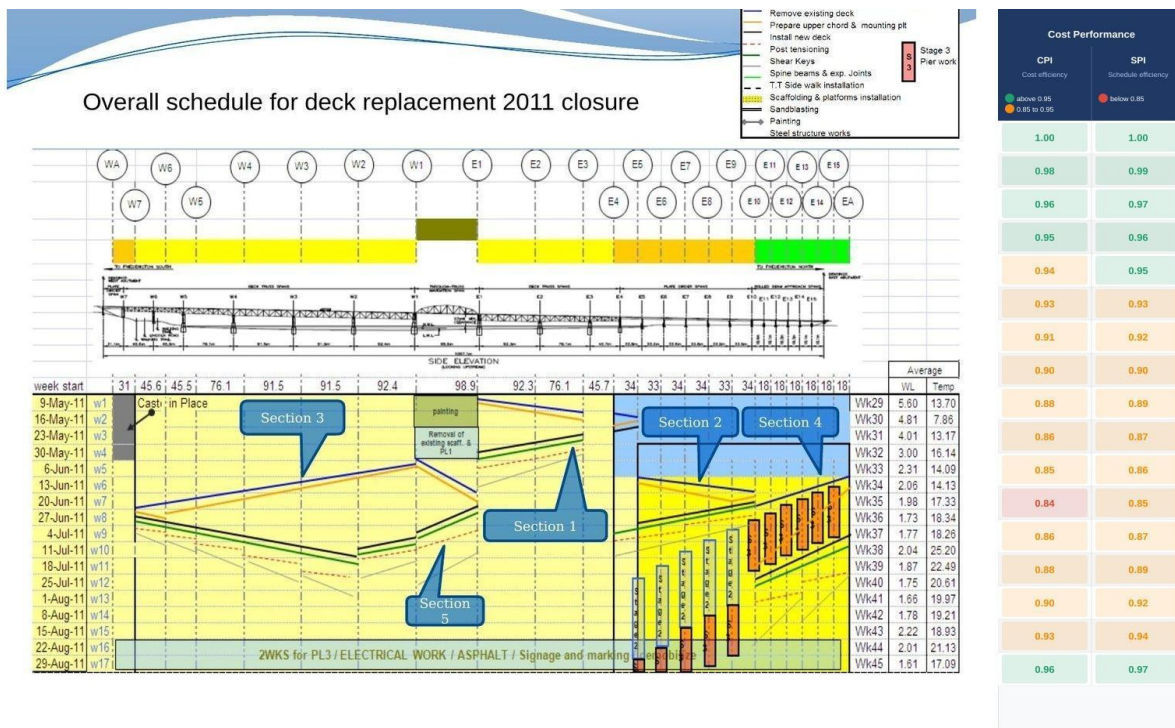


Figure 6: Integrated one-page instrument, bridge deck replacement schedule with cost and schedule performance indicators. Scope, physical constraints, water level, temperature, and weekly CPI and SPI values are visible simultaneously. Color coding: green above 0.95, amber 0.85 to 0.95, red below 0.85. All three disciplines are integrated without exposing a single financial figure.

## The Project Manager as the Point of Integration

The scope and schedule live on one page by design, and the cost detail lives on a separate page by necessity. The point where these two pages connect is the project manager. This is not a limitation. It is one of the most important features of the framework. The project manager who maintains both pages understands the cost performance behind every indicator on the integrated schedule and can trace every trend on the cost page back to a specific slope line or material delivery triangle on the schedule. This level of understanding is something that no software dashboard can replicate.

This is what genuine project control looks like: not a system that generates reports, but a person who understands the project completely in all three dimensions simultaneously, and can communicate that understanding clearly to any audience on demand.

## When Integration Fails: The Warning Signs

When scope, schedule, and cost live in separate systems, maintained by separate teams, and reviewed in separate meetings, the project manager and project controls function become coordinators rather than controllers. Misalignments accumulate quietly until they surface as problems too large and too late to manage effectively. The project that is behind schedule, but whose cost report still shows a green forecast. The project, whose scope has grown through incremental changes, but whose schedule has not been updated. The project whose committed costs have accelerated beyond the S-curve but whose earned value has not kept pace. These are not unusual situations. They are the normal condition of projects that manage scope, schedule, and cost as separate disciplines. The one-page integration discipline makes these misalignments visible early, on a single page, in a form that any informed reader can act on immediately.

## Section 6: Conclusion: Mastery on One Page

There is a question that has guided the author's practice across more than two decades of project delivery, from the infrastructure projects of Canada to the capital programs of the Arabian Gulf, from the engineering offices of major EPC contractors to the owner organizations of one of the world's most demanding project environments. That question is deceptively simple: can you put it on one page?

For some people, this might sound like a formatting preference. It is not. The author sees this as a standard of mastery.

Behind every one-page scope schematic, there are hours, sometimes days, of deep engagement with and thinking about the project. Reading documents, walking the site, challenging the assumptions, resolving the ambiguities, and thinking hard about what is actually being built and where the boundaries truly lie. The schematic does not create that understanding. It proves it. The moment a project engineer can draw the full scope on a single page, clearly and without omission, is the moment they have truly understood what they are managing. Until that moment, they have only read about it.

The same is true of the schedule. A one-page linear schedule that shows crew movements, open work fronts, material delivery points, and critical constraint windows has not been developed by someone who has filled in a template. It is developed by someone who has thought through the construction sequence completely, who understands the productivity assumptions behind every slope line, who has considered the procurement implications of every triangle, and who has considered the hard constraints imposed by the operating environment. That level of understanding cannot be delegated to a scheduling tool. It needs to be earned through mastering every project.

The cost one-page, with its disciplined separation of committed, uncommitted, trend, and forecast, maintained realistically and updated with integrity, reflects a project team that is not waiting for problems to appear in a report. They are watching for them in the work, capturing them in the trend column before they become surprises, and managing the financial story of the project with the same clarity they bring to the scope and the schedule.

This framework was not developed in a classroom or derived from a textbook. It was built across twenty-four years of practice, across three continents and more than eight countries, on projects ranging from a bridge rehabilitation on the Trans-Canada Highway to billion-dollar capital programs in the energy sector of the Arabian Gulf. It was refined through successes, failures, and the hard lessons of projects where complexity was mistaken for thoroughness and detail for control.

Every young project engineer who has sat across a desk from the author has heard the same words at some point: when you can put it on one page, you have mastered it, not

before. Not when the schedule has a thousand activities, and the cost report has fifty line items. When it is on one page, clear and complete, that is when the real work of project management can begin.

It is the sincere hope of the author that the Zakzouk Framework presented in this paper reaches beyond the projects and organizations where it has been applied, and finds its way into the classrooms where project managers are trained, the standards bodies where methodologies are codified, and the project offices where the next generation of practitioners is learning what control truly means. The tools described here are neither proprietary nor complex. They are the product of disciplined thinking applied consistently over time, and they are available to any practitioner willing to do the work that one page requires.

The project management profession has produced extraordinary frameworks, sophisticated software, and comprehensive bodies of knowledge. What it has not always produced is simplicity. The argument of this paper is that simplicity, genuine, earned, disciplined simplicity, is not the opposite of sophistication. It is its highest expression.

*When you can put it on one page, you have mastered it. That standard, applied to scope, to schedule, and to cost, is the foundation of every project this framework has delivered. It is offered here in the hope that it will deliver many more.*

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The author used AI-assisted writing tools during the drafting and editing of this paper. All ideas, methodology, case examples, data, and intellectual content are entirely the author's own. AI tools were used solely to assist with language editing, structural suggestions, and formatting. The author takes full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of all content presented.

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