

Ensuring Quality in the Context Diagram



Eliminate:	Rationale and risk if you don't:	Do this instead!
Cryptic project names in the center circle.	Leaving an audience to assume the project's purpose or desired outcome may inadvertently create expectation the team is not prepared to meet and set the project up for perceived failure in the eyes of stakeholders.	Set appropriate expectations for your audience by introducing your project with a name that obviously reflects the project's purpose or desired outcome.
Data flows between external agents.	Including out-of-scope information flows between external agents may imply an impact or influence on communication channels that the project or team does not actually have.	Capture information flow information within requirements for process and data, or in stakeholder analysis documents.
External agents that don't interface with the project.	Agents not directly impacted by the project will lack any visible role with the project, and only "clutter" the diagram with extra boxes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capture non-impacted external agents as stakeholders. • Assess their needs for information or project updates. • Consider if or how they should contribute to the project requirements as a Subject Matter Expert.
External agents or information flows irrelevant to the business problem being addressed.	Adding project-related agents who communicate about scope but who are not within scope reflects inaccurate complexity within the project, potentially confusing or stressing the audience.	Identify the project-related information needs of stakeholders within communication plan(s) created during stakeholder analysis and project management planning.
"Bundles" of external agents depicted within a single box.	Grouping multiple external agents together within one box on the diagram, as if they were one external agent, inadvertently conceals project complexity from the audience, and potentially undermines their realization or appreciation of related risks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage appropriate project planning, resource allocation and requirements definition by identifying each external agent independently. • Bundle and depict multiple agents as one if, and only if, agents share the exact same interface(s), data flow(s), and information exchange method(s).

Use these tips to verify the quality of your scope diagram before validating its content with the stakeholders.