Sensei

Navigating the end of Microsoft Project Online

A guide for PMO and IT leaders

Avg. Reading Time: **5 min**

Thank you for your time. Now that Microsoft has officially announced the end-of-life for Project Online as September 30, 2026, let us show you how Sensei can help you navigate the transition to modern PPM solutions.

Phillip Eilenberg

Client Success Lead, Sensei

About Sensei

Sensei is a leading provider of project and portfolio management (PPM) solutions on the Microsoft platform. We help organisations streamline project delivery, improve collaboration, and maximise strategic impact through smarter work management, automation, and the latest AI technology, including Microsoft CoPilot. Our solutions drive efficiency, reduce risk, and provide real-time insights, ensuring businesses achieve their goals with confidence. Learn more at sensei.cloud

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Executive summary

This white paper explores the transition from Microsoft Project Online to modern PPM solutions. Microsoft has now officially announced that Project Online will be **retired in September 2026**, giving organisations a fixed deadline to complete their migration. It covers the confirmed end-of-life timeline, risks of legacy systems, industry trends, and best practices for migration.

Introduction

Microsoft Project Online has been a key component of enterprise project and portfolio management (PPM) for many organisations. However, with Microsoft actively focused on modern, cloud-based solutions, PMO Directors and IT leaders must prepare for its end-of-life. This white paper explores Microsoft's **confirmed end-of-life timeline**, the risks of remaining on legacy technology, industry trends, best practices for migration, and how Sensei can support a smooth transition. With retirement now set for **September 2026**, PMO Directors and IT leaders must move quickly to avoid disruption.
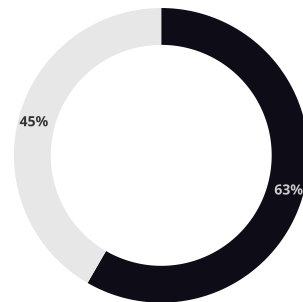
01

Microsoft's end-of-life timeline and announcements

Explore Microsoft's phased retirement plan for Project Online and the implications for organisations relying on this legacy technology.

Microsoft has been signalling the phased retirement of Project Online for several years. In 2019, the company introduced Project for the Web as its next-generation PPM solution and made it clear that all new development efforts would focus on this platform rather than Project Online. Since then, Microsoft has reiterated its intention to discontinue Project Online, with the launch of Planner Premium + Copilot, built on the Microsoft Power Platform, encouraging customers to begin planning their migration.

Data insights

The adoption of cloud-based PPM tools is on the rise, with 63% of organisations now using agile or hybrid practices, and managing dispersed workforces. This shift requires more flexible and intuitive project management tools. Data security remains a top priority, with modern tools offering enhanced cybersecurity measures. Organisations are increasingly leveraging AI to improve work management, with 45% adopting AI-enabled solutions.

45%

63%

Key Milestones

Confirmed retirement: September 2026.

Microsoft has confirmed that **Project Online will be retired in September 2026**. Until then, it will only receive security updates and limited patches — no new features or enhancements. Organisations should now be planning their migration ahead of this fixed deadline.

End-of-life impacts.

With the retirement set for **September 2026**, organisations have fewer than 12 months remaining to determine their approach and complete their transition. Decisions need to be made quickly to avoid disruptions and the very real risk of data loss. Delaying increases the risk of rushed migrations, business disruption, and higher costs.

Dependent technologies phasing out.

Project Online relies on legacy components that are also being retired. For example, **SharePoint 2013 workflows and Add-Ins will be retired by April 2026**, impacting customisations and reporting and current users will no longer be able to create new tenants. These dependencies accelerate the need to migrate before the September 2026 deadline.

Guidance for existing users.

The countdown has started: Project Online will retire in September 2026. Don't leave migration to the last minute. Sensei's Altus solution is designed to replace Project Online seamlessly, giving you advanced portfolio management, AI-driven insights, and enterprise-grade integrations. The time to act is now.

Let's talk

✓ Where to start
✓ What options are available
✓ General guidance

02

Risks of legacy systems

Understand the challenges and risks associated with continuing to use outdated project management systems.

Migration strategies

Establishing a clear migration strategy is crucial for a successful transition from Project Online. Organisations should set a target migration date, determine which data to migrate, and secure executive sponsorship to align the strategy with business objectives.

Assessing the current Project Online environment is essential. This involves taking inventory of active projects, identifying dependencies, and reviewing key functionalities critical to the organisation's PPM processes. This assessment helps in selecting the right target solution.

Selecting the appropriate target solution is a pivotal step. Options include Microsoft Planner Premium + Copilot for straightforward projects or Power Platform-based PPM solutions like Altus for more complex needs. Each solution offers unique capabilities to enhance project management.

Risks of continuing to use Project Online

Remaining on Project Online poses several challenges

1: Stagnation of features and capabilities

No new enhancements means your teams miss out on the modern collaboration tools and streamlined workflows available in newer solutions, including AI enablement.

2: Security and compliance risks

Legacy platforms are more vulnerable to cyber threats, and struggle to keep up with compliance requirements as they continue to evolve.

3: Integration limitations

Many existing Project Online integrations will break as Microsoft decommissions older APIs and SharePoint dependencies.

4: Hard deadline risk

With Microsoft confirming retirement in September 2026, organisations that delay migration risk non-compliance, operational disruption, data loss and emergency transitions under time pressure.

5: Impact on team efficiency and adoption

Outdated interfaces and rigid workflows may lead to decreased usage and encourage shadow IT practices.

6: Hidden costs of delayed migration

Prolonging migration efforts may result in rushed transitions and data migrations, increasing consulting costs and business risks.

03

Industry trends and modern PPM

Explore the latest trends in project management technology and the shift towards modern, cloud-based PPM tools.

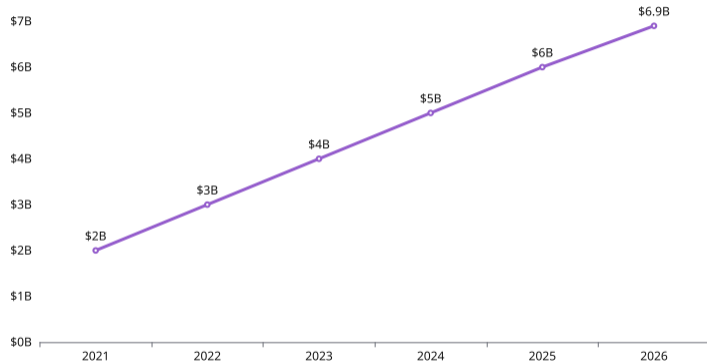**The confirmed retirement of Project Online in September 2026 aligns with broader shifts in PPM technology:**

- **Cloud-based PPM growth** – The market for cloud project management tools is projected to reach $6.9 billion by 2026, with organisations investing heavily in agile, connected, AI ready solutions.
- **Adoption of Planner for the web and Power Platform** – Microsoft's future PPM direction is centred around Planner Premium + Copilot, Planner for the web and the Power Platform (Power Apps, Power BI, Power Automate).
- **Rise of hybrid and agile workflows** – 63% of organisations now use agile or hybrid practices, requiring more flexible, intuitive project management tools.
- **Increased demand for PPM integration** – Modern organisations require seamless integration with Microsoft Teams, Azure DevOps, MS Project Desktop and other enterprise applications.
- **Focus on data security** – Cybersecurity and data integrity are major concerns for organisations today, requiring the latest tools and platforms that meet security posture requirements.
- **Leveraging AI** – The use of AI in work management is ever accelerating, and PPM is no exception, with modern tools able to harness the power of this latest innovation.

$6.9 billion

Cloud PPM market growth

The cloud-based project management market has seen significant growth over the years. In 2018, the market was valued at 2 billion dollars. By 2026, it is projected to reach 6.9 billion dollars, driven by the increasing demand for agile and AI-ready solutions.

04

Best practices for migration

Moving from a well-established system takes time and effort. Undertaking needs analysis, choosing a new solution, building and implementing it, deciding how much information needs to be migrated and where projects under way will reside are among the many decisions that need be made. Getting this right is critical to not just replace but elevate your project outcomes and future-proof your investment in the underlying PPM platform.

1.

Establish a migration strategy and timeline

- With Microsoft confirming the final retirement date of **September 2026**, organisations should set a target migration date no later than mid-2026 to ensure sufficient time for testing, training, and change management.
- Critically, determine which information and projects will be archived or migrated into the new platform.
- Secure executive sponsorship and align the replacement strategy with organisational objectives.

2.

Assess your current Project Online environment

- Inventory active projects, resource pools, workflows, and custom reports.
- Identify dependencies, third-party add-ons, and potential gaps in new solutions.
- Review current usage and key functionality critical to your organisation's PPM processes, project teams and key stakeholder requirements.

3.

Select your target solution

- **Microsoft Planner & Teams** – Useful for lightweight project/task tracking but not a serious consideration for professional project management.
- **Microsoft Planner Premium + Copilot** – Positioned as the latest, cloud-based Microsoft project solution, built on the Power Platform and integrated with Copilot. Ideal for straightforward projects, core project scheduling, light resource management and associated task management but lacks the sophistication and functionality to manage large and/or complex projects
- **Power Platform-based PPM solutions** (e.g. Altus) – Provide project, portfolio and strategy level capabilities, complex scheduling, financial tracking, resource management and forward planning, prioritisation and optimisation, and governance features as well as the ability for customisation and enterprise level integrations and AI enablement.

4.

Plan the migration process

- Use Microsoft's **upcoming migration tools** to transfer data where possible.
- Leverage third-party support for complex migrations.
- Conduct test migrations with pilot projects before full deployment.
- Archive historical data instead of migrating unnecessary content.

5.

Address reporting and integration needs

- Rebuild reports in Power BI using Dataverse instead of Project Online's OData feed.
- Reconfigure integrations with financial systems, HR, and ERP platforms.

6.

Train and support users

- Offer hands-on training for project managers, team members, and executives.
- Provide ongoing support and change management strategies to drive adoption.
- Communicate the benefits of the new tools and reward activity to encourage user engagement.

7.

Minimise business disruption

- Schedule major cutover activities during low-activity periods.
- Back-up data and projects prior to transition to avoid data loss.
- Monitor system performance and user feedback post-migration.
- Utilise vendor support to resolve issues, transfer knowledge to internal support teams and manage minor fixes.

PPM options in the Microsoft ecosystem

- **Microsoft Planner and Teams** – Ideal for basic task tracking but lacks advanced project management capabilities.
- **Planner Premium with Copilot** – Enhances scheduling and task management but isn't suited for complex projects.
- **Power Platform-based solutions (e.g., Altus)** – Provides enterprise-level project, portfolio, and resource management with AI and advanced integrations, making it ideal for strategic execution.
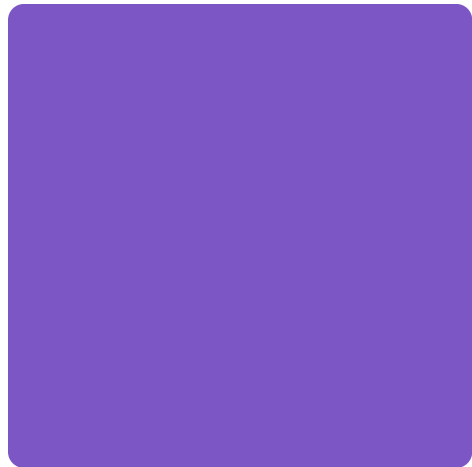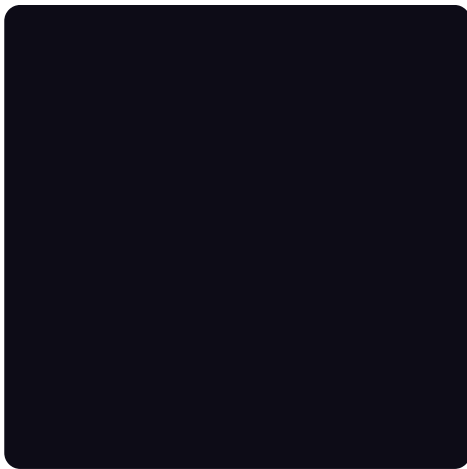
Find out more >>

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How Sensei can help

Migrating from Project Online can be complex, but Sensei offers expertise and purpose-built solutions to ensure a seamless transition.

ALTUS

A modern PPM solution

The Altus solution extends Microsoft's project solutions with several features.
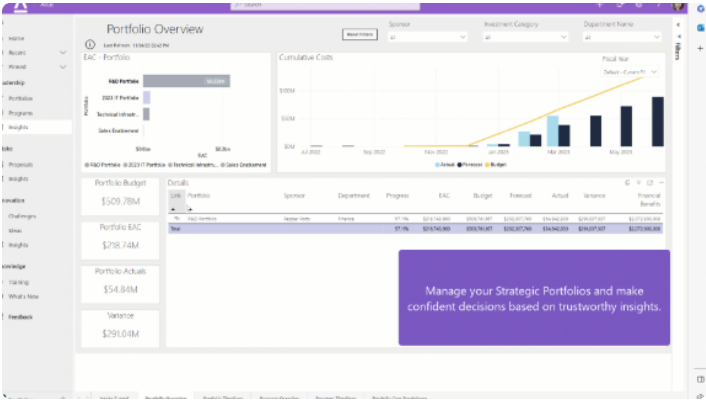
Align work to strategy and people to purpose to achieve your strategic goals with Altus, a Microsoft preferred, best practice portfolio and project management solution.
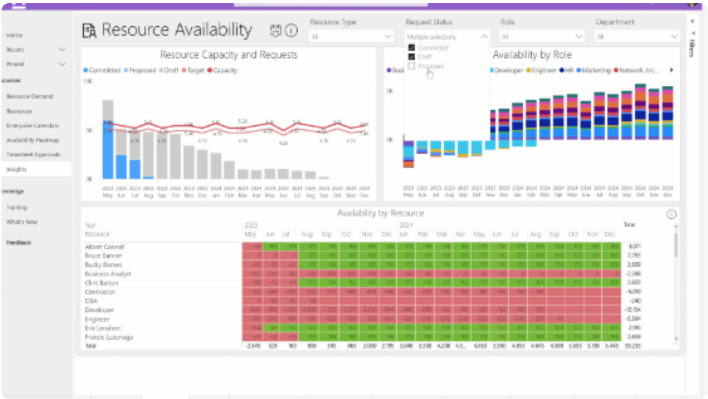
Let's talk

Learn more

Portfolio management

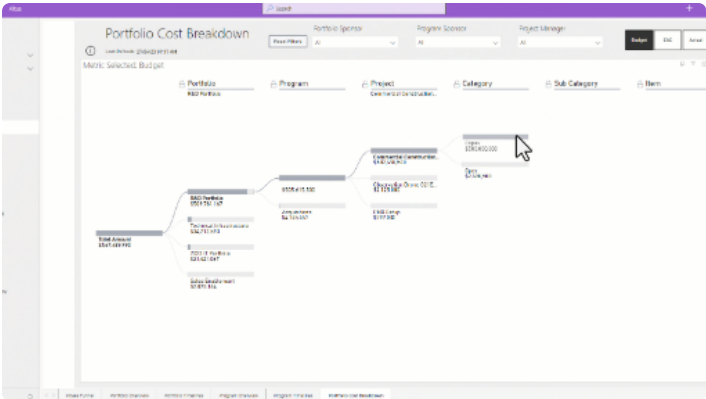Visibility into all projects, programs, portfolios and strategic initiatives.

Resource planning

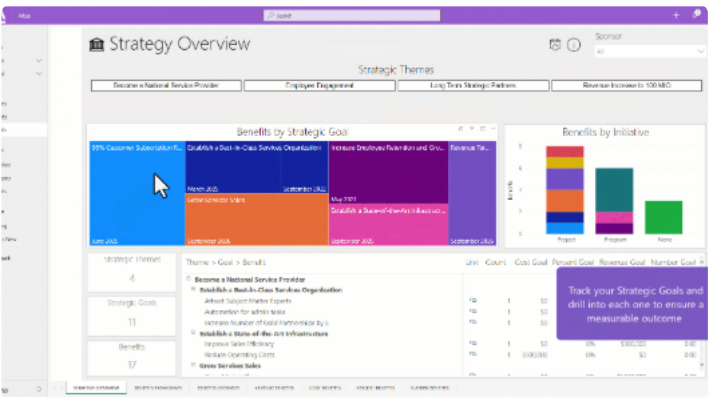Capacity allocation, forecasting and workload balancing, and timesheets.

Financial management

Budget tracking, cost approvals, and actuals reporting.

Advanced reporting

Real-time Power BI dashboards for executive insights.

Direct integrations

With MS Project Desktop, Planner, Teams and more, your complete hub for Microsoft project tools.

AI enablement

Through Microsoft Copilot and the deployment of agents.

"There has been a strong uptake of Altus across the Department, with approximately 2,800 users and counting. The platform's user-friendliness and intuitiveness is one of the main reasons behind its rapid adoption."

Colin Munro, Project Manager, NSW Department of Customer Service

See case study

A seamless transition from Project Online

Altus is designed to seamlessly replace Project Online, offering enhanced capabilities within the Microsoft 365 ecosystem and advanced data security with all information contained in your Microsoft tenant.

Change management and user adoption

Sensei offers tailored digital adoption and change management programs to help organisations transition smoothly. In addition, Client Care support and dedicated Account Management services ensure ongoing success beyond the initial migration.

Trusted by Australia's top organisations

Conclusion

Microsoft has now **confirmed that Project Online will be retired in September 2026**. Organisations that act proactively can turn this fixed deadline into an opportunity to modernise their project and portfolio management practices. **By moving to modern PPM solutions like Power Platform-based tools such as Altus, organisations can unlock new efficiencies, improve collaboration, link projects to strategic goals, access the power of AI and future-proof their PPM practices.**

Sensei provides the planning, tools, expertise, and support needed for a successful migration. With a structured approach and the right partner, your organisation can embrace the next generation of PPM with confidence.

For more information on how Sensei can assist with your migration, visit our website **sensei.cloud**

Get in touch

We would love to hear from you to see how we can help.

Let's chat