

Minimum Requirements for a Project Charter

Module 4: Use Cases

Topic 4: Implementation Timelines and Milestones



Timeline Realism Principles

A use case timeline is one of the easiest places for a Charter to lose **credibility**, because it's comparable to how long similar work would take.

The most common timeline pattern across successful first-wave Charters spans roughly 18-24 months from Charter approval to delivered outcome, structured in phases rather than a single end date. Small buffers are included for any milestone that depends on another Node's schedule.

Evaluators read sufficient Charters to recognise a timeline copied from a template versus one that reflects genuine planning between the named Nodes.

A single end date with no intermediate milestones or a timeline with zero slack is difficult to assess.

Milestone Definition

Each milestone should be checkable — someone outside the project should be able to look at the milestone description and determine whether it happened or not, without needing to ask the team.



Not checkable: “Progress made on integration between Nodes.”



Checkable: “Metadata translation layer deployed to staging environment, tested against 500 sample records from both Nodes’ catalogues, with error rate below 2%.”

Dependency Management

Multi-Node use cases have a timeline risk that single-Node use cases do not: your Node's own milestones may depend on the other Node's infrastructure, staffing, or funding cycles, which you don't control. Name these dependencies explicitly, tied to this use case's own milestones — broader Charter-wide dependencies still belong in Module 6, not here.

Example:

“Milestone 3 (translation layer testing) depends on the Regional Climate Node's infrastructure upgrade, scheduled for completion in Q2 2027 per their confirmation email — if delayed, Milestone 3 shifts accordingly.”

Draft your milestone sequence (aim for 3-5 checkable milestones across the use case's timeline):

Milestone 1:

Target date: Depends on:

Milestone 2-3 (4 if needed) repeat the same steps for each.

Final Milestone:

Target date:

Thank you!