

Planning, Scheduling And Resource Allocation Of A Small Commercial Building In Primavera P6

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Abstract :

Construction project management is one of the most critical disciplines in the civil engineering domain. The successful execution of a construction project depends largely on how effectively it is planned, scheduled, and monitored against defined objectives of time, cost, and quality. In developing economies like India, the construction sector contributes substantially to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is one of the largest employers of skilled and unskilled labour. Despite its scale, the industry continues to suffer from chronic delays, cost overruns, and poor resource utilisation problems that are largely attributable to inadequate planning tools and methods. This project presents a comprehensive study of planning, scheduling, and resource allocation for a small commercial building (Project ID: CM-4) using Oracle Primavera P6, one of the most powerful and widely used project management software solutions available in the construction industry today. The project spans from 02 April 2026 to 27 July 2027 and encompasses eighteen distinct Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) elements, covering the full construction lifecycle from General Conditions through Final Inspections. The study involves the development of a detailed project schedule within Primavera P6, including the creation of the Enterprise Project Structure (EPS), Organisational Breakdown Structure (OBS), Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), and a complete activity network with 176 logical predecessor-successor relationships across 126 activities. Resources including labour crews, specialist sub-contractors, and equipment have been assigned to activities based on project requirements. The critical path has been identified (36 activities with -7 days total float), a baseline schedule established, and all standard Primavera P6 reports generated. Results demonstrate that the use of Primavera P6 significantly improves project visibility, enables accurate forecasting of project duration and cost, and supports proactive identification of scheduling conflicts and resource overloads. The study concludes that the adoption of structured scheduling tools such as Primavera P6 is essential for the timely and cost-effective delivery of commercial building projects.

Keywords: Primavera P6, Project Scheduling, Resource Allocation, Critical Path Method, Work Breakdown Structure, Commercial Building, Construction Management.

1. Introduction

The construction industry is one of the oldest and most vital sectors of the global economy. It encompasses a wide range of activities from site preparation and structural erection to mechanical, electrical, and plumbing installations each involving numerous interdependent tasks, resources, and stakeholders. Managing this complexity effectively requires systematic planning, detailed scheduling, and disciplined resource management.

Historically, construction projects were planned using simple bar charts (Gantt charts) or manually drawn network diagrams. While these tools provided a basic visual representation of project activities, they were inadequate for managing the complexity of modern construction projects, particularly those involving multiple contractors, tight deadlines, and limited budgets. The limitations of manual planning methods led to widespread adoption of computer-based project management

software during the latter half of the twentieth century.

In the present scenario, Oracle Primavera P6 Enterprise Project Portfolio Management (EPPM) has emerged as the industry standard for construction project planning and control. Primavera P6 supports the entire project lifecycle from initial planning and scheduling through execution, monitoring, and closeout and is used by contractors, owners, consultants, and government agencies worldwide. Its ability to handle thousands of activities, multiple resources, and complex logical relationships makes it indispensable for large and medium-scale construction projects.

The present study applies Primavera P6 to a small commercial building project (CM-4) to demonstrate how structured scheduling and resource allocation can be achieved systematically using professional software. The study is relevant both academically as a demonstration of theoretical project management

principles and practically, as it produces an actual schedule that can be used for real project control.

1.2 Problem Statement

The construction industry in India and across the developing world faces a persistent crisis of project delays and cost overruns. According to various industry surveys, more than 70% of construction projects are completed behind schedule, and a significant proportion exceed their original budgets. The root causes of these failures are well documented: poor initial planning, lack of detailed activity scheduling, absence of a systematic resource allocation framework, and failure to identify and manage the critical path of the project.

Small commercial building projects, despite their relatively modest scale, are particularly vulnerable to these failures. Project owners, typically private developers or small businesses often rely on informal planning methods, verbal instructions, and experience-based estimates rather than structured scheduling tools. The result is poor coordination between contractors and sub-contractors, resource conflicts, idle time, rework, and ultimately, delayed handover.

The specific problem addressed in this project is the need to develop a complete, data-driven project schedule for a small commercial building using Primavera P6, incorporating all major work packages from initial mobilisation through final inspections, with clearly defined activity durations, logical relationships, resource assignments, and a baseline against which actual progress can be measured.

1.3 Objectives of the Project

The primary objectives of this project are as follows:

- To develop a comprehensive Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) for the commercial building project covering all eighteen major work packages.
- To define, sequence, and schedule all 126 construction activities within Primavera P6, with appropriate durations and logical predecessor-successor relationships.

- To identify the Critical Path of the project and determine the Total Float available for non-critical activities.

- To allocate resources including labour crews and specialist sub-contractors to project activities and assess resource loading across the project duration.

- To establish a Baseline Schedule and demonstrate how it can be used for project monitoring and control.

- To generate standard Primavera P6 reports including the Gantt Chart, Network Diagram, Resource Histogram, and Activity Report.

- To demonstrate the practical benefits of using Primavera P6 over traditional manual planning methods in commercial building construction.

1.4 Scope of Work

The scope of this project is defined as follows:

- The project covers the planning and scheduling of a small commercial building identified as Project CM-4 within Primavera P6, with a project start date of 02 April 2026 and a planned completion date of 27 July 2027.

- The schedule encompasses eighteen Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) elements covering the full construction lifecycle from mobilisation to final inspections.

- Resource allocation is limited to the resource types defined in the project, including general contractor crews and specialist sub-contractor resources.

- The study does not include structural design, architectural design, quantity surveying, or detailed cost estimation. The focus is exclusively on project scheduling and resource management within Primavera P6.

- The project schedule is developed using a five-day working week, eight working hours per day, consistent with the Standard calendar in Primavera P6.

1.5 Project Overview Commercial Building (CM-4)

The project under study is a small commercial building, designated as Project CM-4 in the Primavera P6 database. Key project parameters are summarised in Table 1.1.

Project Parameter	Details
Project Name	Commercial Building
Project ID	CM-4
Software Used	Oracle Primavera P6 v8.3
Project Start Date	02 April 2026
Planned Completion Date	27 July 2027
Total Project Duration	Approximately 16 Months (340 working days)
Working Calendar	5 Days/Week, 8 Hours/Day (Mon–Fri)

Project Parameter	Details
Currency	Indian Rupee (INR)
Number of WBS Elements	18 Major Work Packages
Total Activities	126
Total Relationships	176
Critical Path Float	-7 working days

Table 1.1: Key Project Parameters Commercial Building CM-4

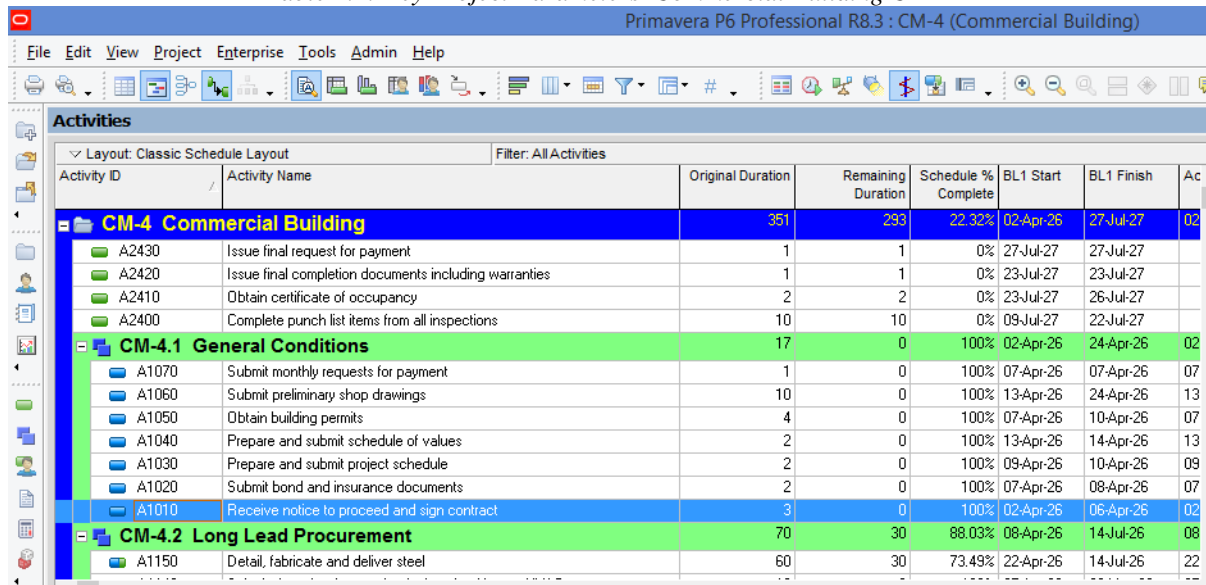


Figure 1.1: Project CM-4 record as displayed in Primavera P6 Projects window

1.6 About Primavera P6 Software

Oracle Primavera P6 Enterprise Project Portfolio Management (EPPM) is the industry-standard software for construction project scheduling. Originally developed by Primavera Systems and acquired by Oracle Corporation in 2008, P6 operates on a hierarchical structure Enterprise Project Structure (EPS) → Projects → Work Breakdown

Structure (WBS) → Activities and uses the Critical Path Method (CPM) to compute Early Start, Early Finish, Late Start, Late Finish, and Total Float for every activity. Key features used in this project include the WBS module, Activity module, Resource module, Schedule Calculation engine, Baseline module, and Reports module.

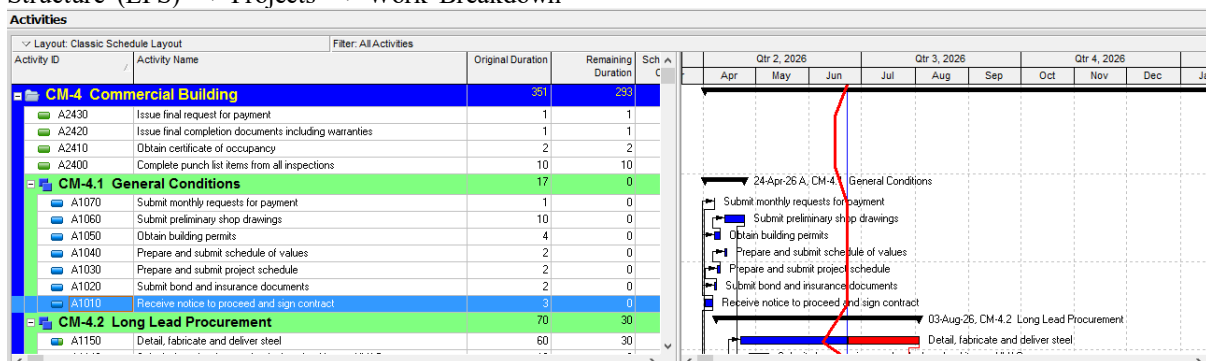


Figure 1.2: Overview of the Primavera P6 working environment

2. Literature Review

2.1 Importance of Planning and Scheduling in Construction

Planning and scheduling are universally recognised as the cornerstones of successful construction project management. Clough and Sears (1994) were among the earliest scholars to formalise the relationship between project planning and project

success, arguing that a well-developed project plan is the single most important factor in determining whether a project will be completed on time and within budget.

Mubarak (2010) further elaborated that construction scheduling serves multiple purposes simultaneously: it provides a roadmap for the contractor, a basis for progress monitoring, a

framework for communication between the project team and the owner, and a legal document usable in the event of disputes. The quality of the schedule in terms of logic, level of detail, and realism of durations is as important as the existence of the schedule itself.

In the Indian context, Doloi *et al.* (2012) identified inadequate planning as the primary cause of construction delays in both the public and private sectors. Their survey of over 100 construction professionals revealed that poorly defined activity sequences, unrealistic duration estimates, and failure to account for resource constraints were the most frequently cited reasons for project overruns. Assaf and Al-Hejji (2006) reached similar conclusions in their landmark study of 76 Saudi Arabian projects, where 70% experienced delays, recommending mandatory use of formal scheduling software for all projects above a defined value threshold.

2.2 Resource Allocation Techniques in Construction Projects

Resource allocation, the process of assigning available resources to project activities in a manner that minimises cost and duration while respecting constraints is one of the most complex functions in project management. Hegazy (1999) provided a comprehensive treatment of construction resource management, distinguishing between resource levelling (smoothing demand peaks while maintaining project duration) and resource-constrained scheduling (finding the shortest duration given fixed resource limits). Primavera P6's levelling algorithm was evaluated by Senouci and Eldin (2004), who found that P6 consistently produced near-optimal solutions for medium-sized construction projects.

Lucko and Rojas (2010) highlighted the importance of integrated resource planning, where labour, material, and equipment are planned simultaneously. Projects adopting this approach experienced 15–20% lower total resource costs than those planning each resource type independently. Alavipour and Arditi (2018) further demonstrated that small changes in resource assignment for non-critical activities can yield significant savings in project financing costs over a multi-month construction period.

2.3 Critical Path Method (CPM) and its Applications

The Critical Path Method was developed in the late 1950s concurrently at DuPont (Walker and Kelley) and by the US Navy for the Polaris missile programme. CPM calculates four key dates for each activity Early Start, Early Finish, Late Start, and Late Finish with Total Float defined as Late Start minus Early Start. Kelley (1961) extended CPM to incorporate cost-time trade-offs through crashing, while Fondahl (1961) developed the Precedence Diagramming Method (PDM), extending CPM to

support four relationship types: Finish-to-Start (FS), Start-to-Start (SS), Finish-to-Finish (FF), and Start-to-Finish (SF).

Thangam (2016) applied CPM using Primavera P6 to a road construction project and demonstrated how P6's critical path calculations identify scheduling bottlenecks and support recovery planning. Subramanian (2015) confirmed that P6 produces accurate CPM results and highlighted its multi-calendar capability directly applicable to CM-4, where activities are assigned to multiple specialist contractors with independent working calendars.

Andrew Tom (2013) studied the monitoring and control of a G+3 factory building in Cochin using Primavera P6, a project broadly comparable in scale to CM-4. His study demonstrated the application of Earned Value Management (EVM) within P6, showing how early identification of critical path delays enabled the project team to implement corrective action before delays became unrecoverable.

2.4 Use of Primavera P6 and Review of Previous Studies

Primavera P6 has been adopted by construction organisations worldwide. El-Sayegh (2008) found that 78% of UAE construction contractors used Primavera as their primary scheduling tool, attributing its dominance to superior multi-project handling, robust resource management, and widespread industry recognition. Kim *et al.* (2003) observed that while P6 was effective as a scheduling tool, many contractors failed to realise its full potential because they did not regularly update the schedule with actual progress, underscoring that scheduling software is only as valuable as the discipline with which it is maintained.

In the Indian context, Chandramouli and Radhakrishnan (2017) found that P6 implementation in a Tamil Nadu infrastructure project reduced scheduling errors by approximately 40% and improved on-time activity completion from 52% to 71% over a six-month monitoring period. Rao and Sivasubramanian (2014) demonstrated that P6's resource levelling function could reduce peak labour demand by up to 25% without extending overall project duration directly relevant to CM-4's concurrent MEP and finishing trade phases. Ibrahim *et al.* (2019) confirmed a statistically significant positive relationship between schedule quality and project performance across 45 Malaysian commercial building projects, reinforcing the value of the detailed schedule developed in this study.

The literature collectively demonstrates that structured scheduling tools are the most effective means of mitigating construction delays and cost overruns; that CPM as implemented in Primavera P6 is the most widely validated scheduling method; and that P6 has been successfully applied to building construction projects of scale comparable to CM-4 in both the Indian and international context.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of Methodology Adopted

The methodology adopted follows the standard project planning and scheduling process prescribed by the Project Management Institute (PMI) and consistent with industry practice for construction scheduling using Oracle Primavera P6. The overall process was executed in seven sequential phases:

1. Phase 1 – Project Setup and Configuration: Establishing the EPS, creating the project record (CM-4), defining the OBS, and configuring the project calendar and scheduling options.
2. Phase 2 – Scope Definition: Developing the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) with eighteen major work packages covering all phases of the commercial building construction.
3. Phase 3 – Activity Development: Defining 126 individual activities under the WBS, assigning

unique activity codes (A1010 through A2430), and estimating durations.

4. Phase 4 – Schedule Logic: Establishing 176 logical predecessor-successor relationships using Finish-to-Start (FS), Finish-to-Finish (FF), and Start-to-Start (SS) dependency types.
5. Phase 5 – Schedule Calculation: Running the CPM scheduling algorithm in Primavera P6 to compute Early Start, Early Finish, Late Start, Late Finish, and Total Float for all 126 activities.
6. Phase 6 – Resource Assignment: Defining the resource library with 41 resource types and assigning resources to activities based on trade requirements.
7. Phase 7 – Baseline and Reporting: Establishing the original baseline schedule and generating standard Primavera P6 reports.

4. Reports Generated from Primavera P6

Report Name	Description	Primary Use
Activity Report	Lists all 126 activities with ID, Name, Duration, ES, EF, LS, LF, TF and Resources	Project monitoring, Contractor review
Gantt Chart / Bar Chart	Horizontal bar representation of activity schedule with critical path in red	Site instruction, Owner reporting
Network Diagram	Precedence diagram showing all 126 nodes and 176 arrows	Logic review, Delay analysis
Resource Histogram	Bar chart showing resource loading per period for each resource type	Resource levelling, Crew sizing
Resource Loading Tabular Report	Spreadsheet showing hours/cost per resource per time period	Invoice verification, Cost control
Baseline Comparison Report	Side-by-side comparison of planned vs. actual/current dates	Schedule variance monitoring
Two-Week Look-Ahead Schedule	Rolling 2-week detailed schedule with daily activities and resources	Daily site management
Critical Path Report	Filtered view of critical activities with negative float values	Management escalation, Acceleration planning
Earned Value Report	BCWS, BCWP, ACWP, SV, CV, SPI, CPI metrics at WBS and project level	Cost performance reporting to client
S-Curve (Cost/Schedule)	Cumulative planned and actual cost/progress curves against project timeline	Visualisation for client presentations

Table 5.6: Primavera P6 Reports Generated for Project CM-4

5. Results and Discussion

Resource Cost Summary

Resource Type	Total Assigned Hours	Total Direct Cost (INR)	% of Total
Labour (GC + Sub-Contractors)	7,552 hrs	INR 72,26,388	63.2%
Material (Concrete, Steel, etc.)	1,301 units	INR 37,25,470	32.6%

Resource Type	Total Assigned Hours	Total Direct Cost (INR)	% of Total
Equipment (Excavator, Pump)	232 hrs	INR 4,84,000	4.2%
Grand Total	—	INR 1,14,35,858	100.0%

Table 5.7: Resource Cost Summary by Type – Project CM-4

Labour costs at 63.2% reflect the labour-intensive nature of commercial building construction. Material costs dominated by structural steel (INR 26,64,000, representing 71.5% of all material costs) and concrete (INR 7,56,000) represent 32.6%. Equipment costs are modest at 4.2%, concentrated in a short excavation and concrete pumping period.

Benefits of Resource Loading in Primavera P6

- Accurate Cash Flow Forecasting: Time-phased resource costs enable month-by-month expenditure forecasts, allowing the project manager and owner to plan financing requirements with precision.
- Proactive Resource Conflict Identification: The resource histogram identifies potential over-allocation before it occurs on site, enabling schedule adjustments within available float.
- Sub-Contractor Mobilisation Planning: The staffing strategy provides clear guidance on when each sub-contractor must mobilise, enabling optimal timing of sub-contract agreements and purchase orders.
- Earned Value Management: Resource-loaded schedules enable Primavera P6 to calculate EVM metrics automatically, providing quantitative schedule and cost performance indicators beyond simple on-time / over-budget assessments.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of Work Done

This project has undertaken a comprehensive study of planning, scheduling, and resource allocation for a small commercial building (Project CM-4) using Oracle Primavera P6, executed in a systematic, step-by-step manner consistent with Project Management Institute (PMI) principles and industry scheduling practice.

The literature review (Chapter 2) established the theoretical and academic foundation, confirming that structured scheduling tools such as Primavera P6 are proven and widely recommended for

construction project management in both the Indian and international contexts.

The methodology (Chapter 3) described the seven-phase process: Project Setup; Scope Definition (18-element WBS); Activity Development (126 activities, A1010–A2430); Schedule Logic (176 relationships); CPM scheduling and float calculation; Resource assignment (41 resource types, 186 assignments); and Baseline establishment and reporting. The project calendar (5 days/week, 8 hours/day), key milestone dates, planning assumptions, and project-level constraints were fully documented.

The schedule development (Chapter 4) produced the complete project schedule for CM-4, including the full 18-element WBS hierarchy with budgeted costs totalling approximately INR 1.15 Crores; all 126 activities with durations from 1 to 60 working days; 176 logical relationships; critical path identification (36 activities with TF = -7 days); total float distribution analysis; baseline schedule setup; and Gantt chart and network diagram outputs. The project runs from 02 April 2026 to 05 August 2027, a total planned duration of 340 working days.

The resource allocation analysis (Chapter 5) documented the complete resource management framework: 41 resources (32 labour, 7 material, 2 equipment); rates from INR 200/hr (GC Labor Crew) to INR 72,000/tonne (Steel TMT Fe500); 186 resource assignments; phase-by-phase loading profiles; resource levelling analysis; staffing strategy covering four critical mobilisation decisions; schedule update procedure; two-week look-ahead schedule; and a full suite of Primavera P6 reports. Total direct resource cost was approximately INR 1.14 Crores.

6.2 Key Outcomes

Outcome	Value / Finding
Project Start Date	02 April 2026
Planned Completion Date (CPM)	05 August 2027
Contractual Must-Finish-By Date	27 July 2027
Total Planned Duration	340 working days (~16 calendar months)
Total Number of Activities	126
Total Number of Relationships	176
Number of Critical Path Activities	36

Outcome	Value / Finding
Total Float – Critical Path	-7 working days (schedule overrun vs. contractual date)
Number of WBS Work Packages	18
Total Budgeted Project Cost (WBS)	Approx. INR 1.15 Crores
Total Direct Resource Cost (Assigned)	Approx. INR 1.14 Crores
Dominant Critical Activity	A1150 – Detail, Fabricate and Deliver Steel (60 days)
Maximum Total Float	A1380/A1390/A1430/A1440 – Elevator Pit Works (+214 days)
Number of Resource Types	41 (32 Labour, 7 Material, 2 Equipment)
Number of Resource Assignments	186
CPM Float Calculation Method	Finish Float (Late Finish – Early Finish)

Table 6.1: Key Schedule Outcomes Summary – Project CM-4

6.3 Benefits of Using Primavera P6

- Accuracy and Reliability of CPM Calculations: P6 performs exact forward and backward pass calculations for all 126 activities and 176 relationships simultaneously, producing precise float values. Manual CPM for a network this size would be extremely time-consuming and error-prone.
- Integrated Schedule and Resource Management: Any change to the schedule automatically updates resource loading, and resource availability constraints can be reflected in revised activity dates providing a complete picture of schedule-cost trade-offs in one tool.
- Baseline and Earned Value Performance Measurement: The ability to establish a baseline and automatically calculate EVM metrics (BCWS, BCWP, ACWP, SV, CV, SPI, CPI) provides a level of performance measurement not achievable with simple bar chart software.
- Standardised Reporting and Communication: Professional-quality reports in consistent formats combined with the portable XER file format improve communication across all project stakeholders and provide a legally defensible schedule record.
- Enterprise Scalability: The EPS structure allows CM-4 to be managed within a larger project portfolio, meaning the scheduling approach developed here can be directly replicated for larger, more complex commercial building projects.

6.4 Conclusion

This project has successfully demonstrated the application of Oracle Primavera P6 to the complete planning, scheduling, and resource allocation cycle for a small commercial building project (CM-4). Starting from a raw XER data file, a comprehensive

and fully documented project schedule has been developed, analysed, and presented.

The study confirms that structured scheduling tools provide quantifiable benefits over manual methods in terms of scheduling accuracy, resource integration, performance measurement capability, and standardised reporting. The identification of the 7-day negative total float directly attributable to the 60-day steel fabrication activity exemplifies the core value of CPM-based scheduling: it translates a complex, 126-activity construction programme into a clear, actionable management signal, enabling the project manager to focus attention on the highest-impact scheduling risk.

The findings are consistent with the published research reviewed in Chapter 2, which consistently identifies structured planning tools as the most effective means of mitigating construction delays. In the Indian construction context, where the industry continues to experience high rates of project delay, the adoption of Primavera P6 for commercial building projects of the scale of CM-4 represents a practical and cost-effective investment in project management capability.

In conclusion, this project has achieved all its stated objectives: a detailed WBS and activity network has been developed; the critical path has been identified; resources have been allocated; a baseline has been established; and all standard Primavera P6 deliverables have been generated. The project schedule for CM-4 is ready to serve as the basis for site execution, progress monitoring, and project reporting throughout the 16-month construction period.

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