

Lessons learnt from smaller projects applied to big projects – surely it must be easy?

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ABSTRACT

Surely, the principles that apply to the design of smaller projects apply to big projects! Let's consider some focusing questions.

As projects increase in scale:

- What happens to flowsheet and equipment lists when we move from a 1 Mt/y to a 30 Mt/y plant?
- What are the trends in bulk materials quantities?
- Why do we make the technical engineering and design process more complex?
- What happens to the interfaces between people that makes decisions harder to finalise?
- Is it more about people than the size of the technical problem?
- Are the real complexities more related to the infrastructure than the plant?

This paper will consider both the impacts of technical factors related to project scale, such as the implications of larger or novel equipment, and compare these with the behavioural factors associated with the more complex management systems and multiplying interfaces. Without doubt, more money is at risk and more effort is required. But are we efficient in our endeavours and how much does knowing what good looks like improve efficiency?