Summary

This literature study gives an overview of how to achieve project management success, what the potential pitfalls are and how the petrochemical industry has gone about using project management as a day to day management form.

This study is done along two axes. The first is the historic axis; here the development of project management is explained. Along this axis the different techniques and methods are explained and why certain industries where early to pickup this management form. This ends in a discussion on the maturity of the techniques in different industries and the need to have a standardised maturity index to exchange best practises between industries.

The second axis in this study is the one between success and failure in project management. On this axis a distinction is made between scientific project management theory and practical experience of people in the field. An in-depth look is taken at the role/influence of a project manager, the effects of subcontracting and the importance of defining customer needs and benchmarking project success factors.

After the discussion on project management theory, it is held up against petrochemical industry as a case study. The petrochemical industry was chosen as it is one of the early adaptors of project management and because it has a few quite specific characteristics which make project management an adequate tool. Examples of these characteristics are the uncertainty due to political instability of the countries oil is found in, the fluctuating oil price versus the large investment and the fact that oil is hard to find.

The literature study is rounded off with a discussion on whether the Delft Systems Approach could be a useful tool in project management. The approach is one which tries to create understanding and solutions for operational problems. The discussion concludes that the Delft Systems Approach could be a very useful

addition to the existing project management tools as it creates order in the chaos of a project. The approach can be used by a project manager to clearly show the function of different elements in a project. It gives understanding in what each element in a project is contributing to the whole and also where potential problems may arise due to a lack of standards, an overlap or an unfulfilled function.

Hopefully at the end of this literature study, an understanding of the current state of project management with its success factors and potential pitfalls, especially in the petrochemical industry, is attained by the reader.