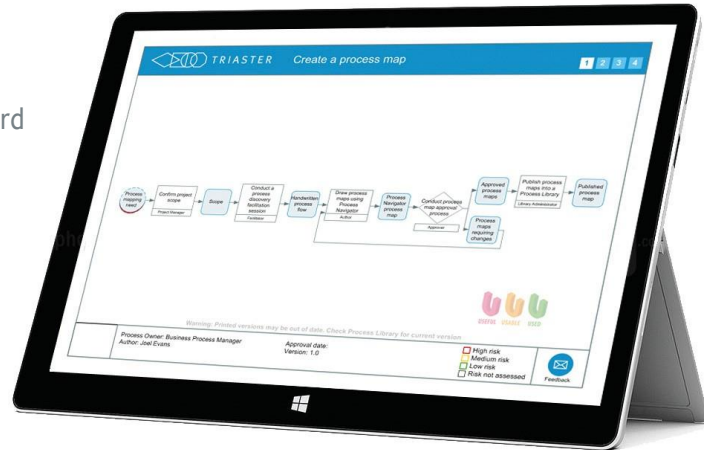


# Process Mapping Symbols

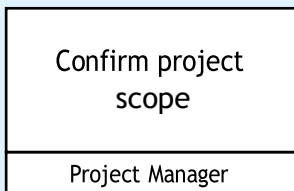
A guide to the different shapes used in Process Mapping

When mapping business processes, there are a number of different shapes that can be used to describe the key steps in a process. With over 20 years' experience in the process improvement industry, we understand, that without a standard template of shapes, process maps can become difficult to interpret and lack the uniformity across your business processes.

We've put together this list of the shapes most commonly used when creating a process map in line with our [Noun-Verb methodology of process mapping](#). Using these will help you create maps of your business processes that are easy to understand and are consistent throughout your organisation.

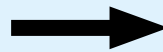
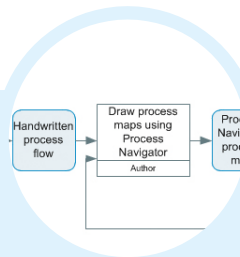


## 1. Activity



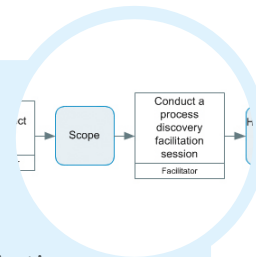
An 'Activity' shape is used to describe something you do. Activities are the steps of the process and are described using verbs. For example, 'Update sales order with customer number'.

## 2. Connectors



Connectors are simple arrows that connect 2 or more shapes together to show the direction of the process.

## 3. External Activity

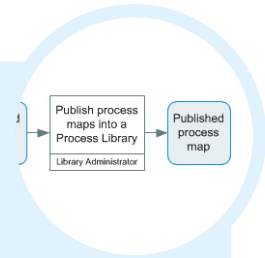


An external activity is used to highlight something that is done outside of the organisation but still needs to be shown in a process. External activities are described using verbs and transform their Inputs to Outputs. An example might be, the production of a company newsletter by an external printing company.

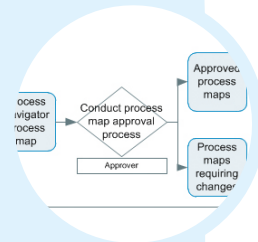
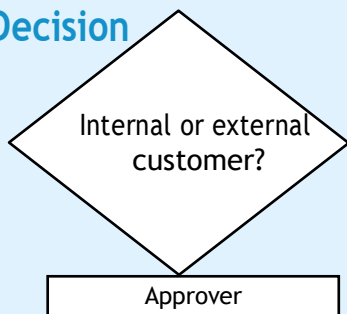
### 4. External Deliverable

Raise purchase order

External deliverables are outputs that are produced by an Activity that falls outside the scope of the overall process map. An external Deliverable is something that can be produced outside of the organisation, for example a purchase order from a customer.



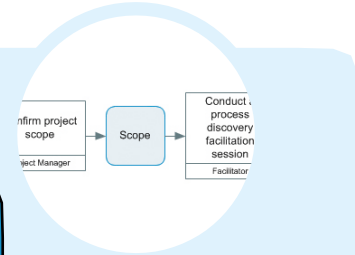
### 5. Decision



'Decision' shapes are a type of activity, usually in the form of a question, where only one of the outputs is produced. For example, 'Internal or external customer?' may then branch into two different process pathways depending on which option is selected.

### 6. Deliverable

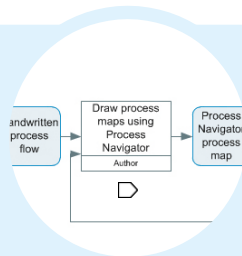
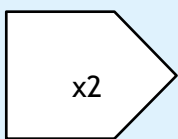
Approved process maps



A 'Deliverable' shape is used to describe something you produce and are the outputs of a process.

Deliverables are the items produced (or 'delivered') when each step of the process is complete and are described using nouns.

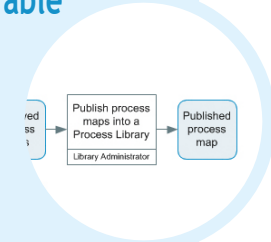
### 7. Off-Page Connectors



Off-page connectors are useful for overcoming the practical limitation of page sizes.

It allows the process mapper to produce a logical, large 'piece of paper' containing a single end-to-end process map with all the Deliverables (outputs to inputs) linked directly to each other.

### 8. Start/End Deliverable



A start/end deliverable is a deliverable shape that is used to signify the input at the very start or the output at the very end, and shows that there are no additional steps relating to that input or output.

**We hope that you have found this article useful. Triaster have been supporting organisations with their process mapping projects for over 2 decades, and as such we have a wealth of knowledge and experience available to help you to implement a process improvement initiative within your business.**