SPERT® Scheduler — Import Activities from Spreadsheet

Quick Reference Guide

Bring an activity list from Excel or Google Sheets into SPERT® Scheduler · Settings → Import Activities from Spreadsheet

OVERVIEW

Import Activities builds a new scenario from a CSV file or from rows copied out of a spreadsheet — one row per activity, with a three-point estimate and, optionally, a distribution, confidence level, status, predecessors and, for work already underway, actual and planned dates. Every row is checked before anything is saved, and the import always creates a new scenario, in a new project or an existing one.

Where to find it	Settings page → **Import Activities from Spreadsheet**, the last section on the page (below Import Projects). Its **Import guide (PDF)** link opens this guide.
Two entry points	Upload a .csv or .txt file (up to 10 MB) with **Choose CSV File**, OR paste a range copied from Excel or Google Sheets into the box below. A paste must be tab-separated, as spreadsheets copy it; pasted CSV text is not recognized.
Download template	**Download template** (top right) gives spert-activity-import-template.csv: the headings in order, # comment rows, and 10 example activities in four of the five distributions (all but Beta-PERT), with predecessors and a Section row.
What gets created	A new scenario with the imported activities and dependencies: the only scenario of a new project named after it, or the last tab of an existing project. It starts on the earliest Actual Start it imports; with none, on today's date on your computer — set the real start afterwards. Dependency Mode is on if any row has predecessors; otherwise it follows your Preferences, as do trial count, targets, Parkinson's Law and the heuristic settings.

STEP-BY-STEP WORKFLOW

1	**Get the template.** Click Download template and open spert-activity-import-template.csv in Excel or Google Sheets. Rows starting with # are comments, skipped on import — keep or delete them.
2	**Fill in your activities.** One row per activity. Required columns: Activity ID, Activity Name, Optimistic (Min), Most Likely, Pessimistic (Max), Confidence Level (a level is needed only on T-Normal, LogNormal and Beta-PERT rows). Optional: Distribution, Status, Predecessors, Type, and for work already underway Actual Start, Actual Finish, Planned Start and Planned Finish.
3	**Choose your entry method.** To upload: save as CSV UTF-8 (not CSV Windows) and click Choose CSV File. To paste: copy the rows, starting at the header row, and paste them into the box.
4	**Review the preview.** A summary line counts activities, dependencies, errors and warnings; each row with a problem shows its row number and a plain-English message. Fix errors in your spreadsheet and upload or paste again. Warnings do not block the import.
5	**Set Commit Settings.** With no errors and at least one activity, Commit Settings appears. Edit the Scenario Name if needed (it is filled in from the file name, or “Imported —” and the date for a paste) and keep Create new project or pick an existing project.
6	**Import.** Click **Import Activities** (or press Ctrl+Enter; Cmd+Enter on a Mac). A green box confirms the count and links to the project; open it and, unless your rows have Actual Start dates, set the new scenario's Start date in the Scenario Summary Card.

Note: The import never overwrites existing data — it always adds a new scenario. To refresh a plan from an updated spreadsheet, import into the same project and use **Compare** to set the new scenario beside the old one.

COLUMN REFERENCE

Columns are matched by heading, in any order; capitals and spaces are ignored, and short forms such as ID, Task, Min, ML, Max and Depends work. Any other column with a heading (Description, Notes, Start, Finish) is ignored. So is one headed Predecessor Details (Primavera P6) or Unique ID Predecessors (Microsoft Project), and none of its links is imported, with no message. In a CSV file, a column of your own must have a heading. The four date columns are read only by their headings, so a paste with no header row never reads a date.

Column	Required	Default	Accepted values / notes
Activity ID	Yes	—	Any ID, unique within the file. Used only to link predecessors, not kept in the app — see Predecessor Syntax for the IDs a predecessor can name.
Activity Name	Yes	—	Free text, up to 200 characters.
Optimistic (Min)	Yes	—	Whole number of working days, 0 or more; not above Most Likely.
Most Likely	Yes	—	Whole number, 0 or more; between Min and Max.
Pessimistic (Max)	Yes	—	Whole number, 0 or more; not below Most Likely. LogNormal needs more than 0 / 0 / 0.
Distribution	—	triangular	normal (T-Normal), logNormal, betaPert (Beta-PERT), triangular, uniform; capitals and spaces are ignored. Type normal — T-Normal itself is not recognized. A blank cell, or an unrecognized value (with a warning), imports as Triangular, whatever your Default Distribution Type preference.
Confidence Level	Yes*	—	*The column must be present, but a level is needed only on T-Normal, LogNormal and Beta-PERT rows. Leave it blank on Triangular and Uniform rows, where it has no effect.
Status	—	planned	planned, inProgress, complete, or P6's Not Started, In Progress and Completed; capitals and spaces are ignored. The heading may be Status or Activity Status. Blank: taken from the row's dates (In Progress with an Actual Start, Complete with an Actual Finish too), otherwise planned. Any other word imports as planned, with a warning, unless the row has actual dates: then they set it.
Actual Start	—	none	The day work began, on an In Progress or Complete row; not after today. On a planned row it is not imported, and a warning says so.
Actual Finish	—	none	The day a Complete row finished: not before its Actual Start, not after today. A Complete row with an Actual Start must have one.
Planned Start, Planned Finish	—	none	Kept on a row that has started, both or neither, in order. On a row that has not started they are not imported: Scheduler keeps its own planned dates when the work starts.
Predecessors	—	none	Comma-separated Activity IDs, each with an optional lag (+) or lead (-) in working days, up to 365: A1 · A1,A3 · A2+3 · A4-2. All Finish-to-Start (FS).
Type	—	Activity	Activity or blank is an activity; Section marks a section row (as in the template), which is skipped. In a CSV file any other value is an error; a paste imports it as an activity.

Dates may be written 2026-10-05, 05-Oct-26 (P6; its A and * marks are ignored), Mon 10/5/26 (MS Project) or 10/05/2026, and a time is ignored. A date such as 10/05/2026 is read in your Date Format's order (month first for YYYY/MM/DD), unless the file's other dates can only be read the other way; a note then says so. Blank, NA and N/A mean no date. A date on a day your work week doesn't work is kept as given.

CONFIDENCE LEVEL REFERENCE

Type any of these in the Confidence Level column; capitals and spaces are ignored, and Medium-high and Medium-low also work. A level sets the spread of T-Normal, LogNormal and Beta-PERT activities (unless Min equals Max). Triangular and Uniform ignore it — leave it blank there, since any entry must still be one of these ten.

Near Certainty	Very narrow range. Highly confident in estimates.	**Medium Low**	Wider range. Some unknowns present.
Very High	Narrow range with strong certainty.	**Low**	Broad range. Significant uncertainty.
High	Reasonably tight range. Well-understood work.	**Very Low**	Very broad range. Limited information.
Medium High	Moderate range with good understanding.	**Extremely Low**	Extremely wide range. Mostly unknown.
Medium	Balanced range. Typical for familiar work.	**Guesstimate**	Widest range. Barely an educated guess.

PREDECESSOR SYNTAX

The Predecessors column takes a comma-separated list of the IDs in your Activity ID column. Every imported dependency is Finish-to-Start (FS). Add + and a number for a lag, or - and a number for a lead, in working days (up to 365).

Example	Meaning
`A1`	This activity starts after A1 finishes (standard FS, no lag).
`A1,A3`	Starts after both A1 and A3 finish. A space after a comma is fine; one inside an entry (A1 + 2) is not.
`A2+3`	A2 must finish, then 3 more working days pass before this activity can start.
`A4-2`	A 2-day lead: this activity may overlap the last 2 working days of A4.
`A1,A2+1,A5`	Depends on A1 (no lag), A2 (1-day lag) and A5 (no lag). Mixed list.
`T-01`	Read as activity T with a 1-day lead, never as an ID written T-01: here a hyphen can only start a lead. If your sheet has an activity T, the link goes to T with no message; if not, the row reports “Predecessor "T" not found”.

Editing a CSV file by hand? Put a cell that lists several predecessors in double quotes, as the template does (`"A3,A4"`). Unquoted, the comma splits the cell and every cell after it moves one column right: the row is refused, with a message that says to quote the cell. A paste splits on tabs only, so a comma cannot split it.

■ **Tip:** Activity IDs only link predecessors during the import — they are not kept in the app. An ID you list as a predecessor must use only letters, digits and underscores (A1, T01, REQ_1), and matching is case-sensitive: a1 is not A1.

UNDERSTANDING THE PREVIEW

After you choose a file or paste data, the preview appears at once (for a paste, click **Parse Data** if you have unticked Auto-preview on paste); a file with nothing to import may show a red box with **Try again** instead. Nothing is saved until you click Import Activities.

Summary line	N activities · N dependencies · N errors · N warnings. The error count is green at zero and red otherwise; import is blocked until it is zero.
Date notes	Lines under the summary say what the import does with dates: the scenario starts on the earliest Actual Start; planned dates are not imported for activities that haven't started; a blank Status was taken from the dates; the order a file's dates are read in; recorded dates on days your work week doesn't work.

First row	Says whether an error stands in the way. With none: a green checkmark and the number of valid activities. Otherwise: a red cross and “Nothing can be imported until every error is fixed”, with what to do — correct your file and choose it again, or correct your spreadsheet and paste the rows again. With no header row, the amber box below takes its place.
Error rows	A red cross marks a row to fix, with the column's heading and a plain-English message. In a file, the row number is the one your spreadsheet shows — the header, # comment rows and blank rows all count; with the template's comments kept, its first activity, A1, is row 10. In a paste, the first row you paste is row 1 (a note under the table says so), and blank rows count. A failed row is left out, so rows naming it as a predecessor report it “not found” too.
Warning rows	An amber warning sign marks a row with only warnings: an unrecognized Distribution (imported as Triangular) or Status (imported as planned, unless the row's actual dates set it), a date-like Activity ID, dates the row's Status doesn't keep, which are not imported, only one of Planned Start and Planned Finish or the two out of order (neither is imported), or an In Progress or Complete row with a blank Actual Start. Warnings never block import.
Global errors	In the preview, whole-file problems are listed in red below the table: missing columns, a dependency cycle, more than 500 activities or 2,000 dependencies. “No recognizable header row found” appears only in the amber box described next.
No header detected	When a pasted first row looks like data (a whole number in its third cell, something in its sixth or later), an amber box offers **Treat first row as data and assume default column order**: the template's order without Type — Activity ID, Activity Name, Optimistic (Min), Most Likely, Pessimistic (Max), Distribution, Confidence Level, Status, Predecessors; leave out Section rows. It works on a CSV file with no header row too.
Commit Settings	Shown only with no errors and at least one activity ready: Scenario Name, Add to project, then Import Activities or Ctrl+Enter (Cmd+Enter on a Mac). Cancel clears the import. In cloud storage the button is greyed out, with a note, while your projects load.

COMMON ERRORS & FIXES

Missing column / no header row	The header row must name all six required columns; the message lists any missing. Check the headings against the template and, in a file, that commas (not semicolons) separate the values.
More cells than headings / Type	In a CSV file, usually several predecessors typed A3,A4 without quotes: quote the cell. A column of your own needs a heading; Type takes only Activity, Section or nothing.
Unrecognized confidence level	Not one of the ten levels — checked even on Triangular and Uniform rows. The message lists the ten as the app shows them, from Near certainty to Guesstimate; capitals and spaces are ignored.
Confidence Level is required	A T-Normal, LogNormal or Beta-PERT row has no level: add one, or make the row Triangular or Uniform.
Min / ML / Max	Whole numbers, 0 or more, with Min ≤ Most Likely ≤ Max; the message names the problem (“Optimistic (Min) is above Most Likely”). For a fixed duration, enter one value in all three.
Predecessor not found	No Activity ID in the file matches. IDs are case-sensitive, T-01 is read as T with a 1-day lead, and a row that failed its own checks counts as missing.
Dependency cycle detected	Activities depend on each other in a loop; the message names each Activity ID and row in it. Remove one predecessor to break the loop. A cycle is reported only when no row has an error.

More than 500 activities	A scenario holds up to 500 activities and 2,000 dependencies. Split the list into several imports, keeping each part's predecessors within it.
Excel date conversion	An Activity ID shaped like 1-Mar or 1/15/2026 draws a warning — a spreadsheet may have turned your ID into a date. Format the column as Text before saving, or use IDs such as A1.
Dates	A date that can't be read, one after today, an Actual Finish before its Actual Start or without one, or a Complete row with an Actual Start and no Actual Finish. For a date like 10/05/2026 the message names the order it was read in; check Date Format in Preferences. A number such as 46083 is a date Excel stored as a number: format the column as a date and copy it again.

Note: Files are read as UTF-8. Save from Excel as “CSV UTF-8” (not “CSV Windows”) to keep accented and special characters in activity names — the template's comment rows carry the same reminder.

TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

Use the template examples	Its 10 activities show four distributions (all but Beta-PERT), blank Confidence cells on Triangular and Uniform rows, quoted multi-predecessor cells and a Section row.
Clipboard paste for quick tests	Copy the range from your spreadsheet and paste it into the box — no file to save. Start the selection at the header row: a # comment row above it stops the header being recognized.
Triangular / Uniform	Leave Confidence Level blank on these rows: it has no effect there, and a blank raises no warning.
No predecessors is perfectly valid	Leave Predecessors empty for a flat list. To add dependencies later, switch on Dependencies in the Scenario Summary Card and use the Dependencies panel.
Add to an existing project	Pick it under Add to project. The scenario becomes the last tab, but the project opens on another one — click the new tab. Up to 50 scenarios per project; archived projects aren't listed.
A project underway	Include Actual Start and Actual Finish, and keep finished activities, since their successors need them. Most Likely is the whole duration, not the work remaining: Scheduler counts the working days since the Actual Start.
Re-import after corrections	Nothing is saved until you click Import Activities. Fix your spreadsheet and upload or paste again as often as needed; each new file or paste replaces the previous preview.

■ **Tip:** After importing, set the real Start date if the work hasn't begun, then click **Run Simulation** to produce the Monte Carlo results and schedule buffer. Clone the scenario for what-if versions, or use **Compare** to set it beside an existing baseline.