11.2 Project Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT)

The main objective in the analysis through PERT is to find out the completion for a particular event within specified date. The PERT approach takes into account the uncertainties. The three time values are associated with each activity

1. **Optimistic time** – It is the shortest possible time in which the activity can be finished. It assumes that every thing goes very well. This is denoted by t_0.
2. **Most likely time** – It is the estimate of the normal time the activity would take. This assumes normal delays. If a graph is plotted in the time of completion and the frequency of completion in that time period, then most likely time will represent the highest frequency of occurrence. This is denoted by t_m.
3. **Pessimistic time** – It represents the longest time the activity could take if everything goes wrong. As in optimistic estimate, this value may be such that only one in hundred or one in twenty will take time longer than this value. This is denoted by t_p.

In PERT calculation, all values are used to obtain the percent expected value.

1. **Expected time** – It is the average time an activity will take if it were to be repeated on large number of times and is based on the assumption that the activity time follows Beta distribution, this is given by

$$t_e = (t_0 + 4\, t_m + t_p) / 6$$

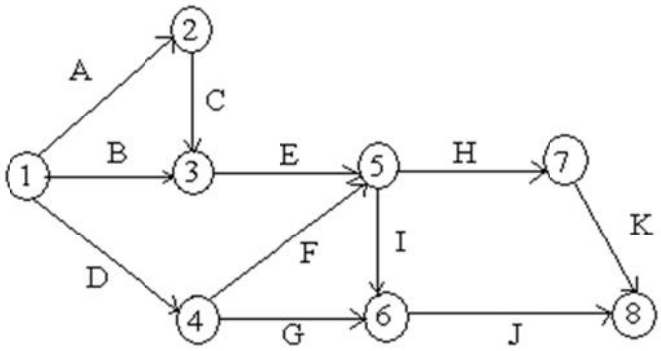
2. The **variance** for the activity is given by

$$\sigma^2 = [(t_p - t_o) / 6]^2$$

11.3 Worked Examples

Example 1

For the project



Task:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Least time:	4	5	8	2	4	6	8	5	3	5	6
Greatest time:	8	10	12	7	10	15	16	9	7	11	13
Most likely time:	5	7	11	3	7	9	12	6	5	8	9

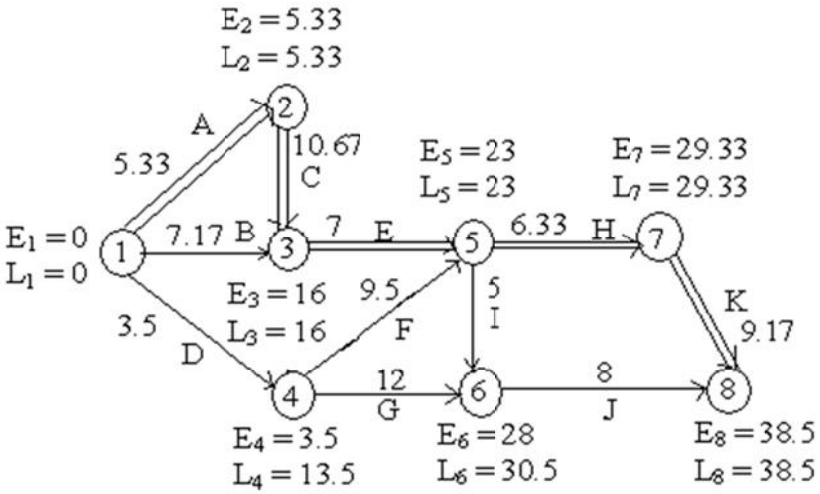
Find the earliest and latest expected time to each event and also critical path in the network.

Solution

Task	Least time(t_0)	Greatest time (t_p)	Most likely time (t_m)	Expected time $(to + t_p + 4t_m)/6$
A	4	8	5	5.33
B	5	10	7	7.17
C	8	12	11	10.67
D	2	7	3	3.5
E	4	10	7	7
F	6	15	9	9.5
G	8	16	12	12
H	5	9	6	6.33
I	3	7	5	5
J	5	11	8	8
K	6	13	9	9.17

Task	Expected time (t_e)	Start		Finish		Total float
		Earliest	Latest	Earliest	Latest	
A	5.33	0	0	5.33	5.33	0
B	7.17	0	8.83	7.17	16	8.83
C	10.67	5.33	5.33	16	16	0
D	3.5	0	10	3.5	13.5	10
E	7	16	16	23	23	0
F	9.5	3.5	13.5	13	23	10
G	12	3.5	18.5	15.5	30.5	15
H	6.33	23	23	29.33	29.33	0
I	5	23	25.5	28	30.5	2.5
J	8	28	30.5	36	38.5	2.5
K	9.17	29.33	29.33	31.5	38.5	0

The network is



The critical path is A →C →E → H → K

Example 2

A project has the following characteristics

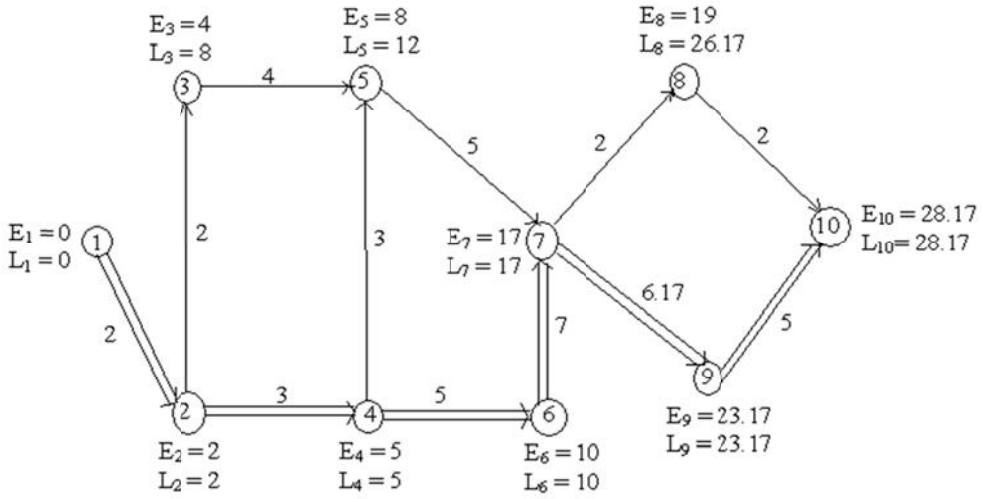
Activity	Most optimistic time (a)	Most pessimistic time (b)	Most likely time (m)
(1 – 2)	1	5	1.5
(2 – 3)	1	3	2
(2 – 4)	1	5	3
(3 – 5)	3	5	4
(4 – 5)	2	4	3
(4 – 6)	3	7	5
(5 – 7)	4	6	5
(6 – 7)	6	8	7
(7 – 8)	2	6	4
(7 – 9)	5	8	6
(8 – 10)	1	3	2
(9 – 10)	3	7	5

Construct a PERT network. Find the critical path and variance for each event.

Solution

Activity	(a)	(b)	(m)	(4m)	t_e $(a + b + 4m)/6$	v $[(b – a) / 6]^2$
(1 – 2)	1	5	1.5	6	2	4/9
(2 – 3)	1	3	2	8	2	1/9
(2 – 4)	1	5	3	12	3	4/9
(3 – 5)	3	5	4	16	4	1/9
(4 – 5)	2	4	3	12	3	1/9
(4 – 6)	3	7	5	20	5	4/9
(5 – 7)	4	6	5	20	5	1/9
(6 – 7)	6	8	7	28	7	1/9
(7 – 8)	2	6	4	16	4	4/9
(7 – 9)	5	8	6	24	6.17	1/4
(8 – 10)	1	3	2	8	2	1/9
(9 – 10)	3	7	5	20	5	4/9

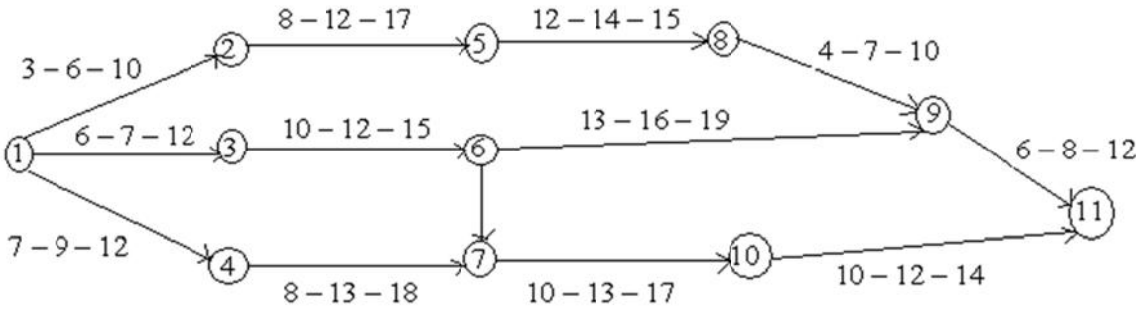
The network is constructed as shown below



The critical path = 1 → 2 → 4 → 6 → 7 →9 →10

Example 3

Calculate the variance and the expected time for each activity



Solution

Activity	(t_o)	(t_m)	(t_p)	t_e $(t_o + t_p + 4t_m)/6$	v $[(t_p - t_o) / 6]^2$
(1 – 2)	3	6	10	6.2	1.36
(1 – 3)	6	7	12	7.7	1.00
(1 – 4)	7	9	12	9.2	0.69
(2 – 3)	0	0	0	0.0	0.00
(2 – 5)	8	12	17	12.2	2.25
(3 – 6)	10	12	15	12.2	0.69

(4 – 7)	8	13	19	13.2	3.36
(5 – 8)	12	14	15	13.9	0.25
(6 – 7)	8	9	10	9.0	0.11
(6 – 9)	13	16	19	16.0	1.00
(8 – 9)	4	7	10	7.0	1.00
(7 – 10)	10	13	17	13.2	1.36
(9 – 11)	6	8	12	8.4	1.00
(10 – 11)	10	12	14	12.0	0.66

Exercise

1. What is PERT?
2. For the following data, draw network. Find the critical path, slack time after calculating the earliest expected time and the latest allowable time

Activity	Duration	Activity	Duration
(1 – 2)	5	(5 – 9)	3
(1 – 3)	8	(6 – 10)	5
(2 – 4)	6	(7 – 10)	4
(2 – 5)	4	(8 – 11)	9
(2 – 6)	4	(9 – 12)	2
(3– 7)	5	(10 – 12)	4
(3 – 8)	3	(11 – 13)	1
(4 – 9)	1	(12 – 13)	7

[Ans. Critical path: 1 → 3 → 7 → 10 → 12 →13]

3. A project schedule has the following characteristics

Activity	Most optimistic time	Most likely time	Most pessimistic time
(1 – 2)	1	2	3
(2 – 3)	1	2	3
(2 – 4)	1	3	5
(3 – 5)	3	4	5
(4 – 5)	2	5	4
(4 – 6)	3	5	7
(5 – 7)	4	5	6
(6 – 7)	6	7	8
(7 – 8)	2	4	6
(7 – 9)	4	6	8
(8 – 10)	1	2	3
(9 – 10)	3	5	7

Construct a PERT network and find out

a. The earliest possible time

b. Latest allowable time

c. Slack values

d. Critical path

4. Explain the following terms

a. optimistic time

b. Most likely time

c. Pessimistic time

d. Expected time

e. Variance

5. Calculate the variance and the expected time for each activity