

Scientific report on Short Term Scientific Mission "Project management: comparison at Warsaw University of Life Sciences and Gjøvik University College".

Summary

Project entitled "*Project management: comparison at Warsaw University of Life Sciences and Gjøvik University College* within Short Term Scientific Mission" was realized at the Gjøvik University College from 8 till 12 of September 2014, within the Short – Term Scientific Mission.

Short-Term Scientific Mission was implemented within the COST Programme, Action TN1302, entitled "*The voice of research administrators – building a network of administrative excellence (BESTPRAC)*"

Grantee: Małgorzata Ciborowska, Warsaw University of Life Sciences (WULS-SGGW), International Research Project Office.

Host Coordinator: Mrs. Kathrine Huke Markengbakken, Gjøvik University College (GUC), Faculty of Computer Science and Media Technology, Financial Adviser.

The purpose of the project resulted from the main aims of the Short-Term Scientific Mission of Action TN1302. The main goals of the project, declared within the Work Program document were achieved.

Purpose of the STSM

Main purposes of the project:

- comparison of the structures and activities of units responsible for international research projects - at Warsaw University of Life Sciences and Gjøvik University College
- exchanging experiences in the area of project management
- establishing a cooperation between both institutions, related to the area of projects management

Description of the work carried out during the STSM

During my STSM I had workshops with employees from Host University who are involved in the implementation of projects: staff from the administration of Faculty of Computer Science and Media Technology, staff from Research Administration and with a person responsible for administration of the project that is coordinated by GUC.

To better understand the project management process we had to discover in details the structure and an organization of both Universities. My coordinator explained the organization of GUC and I had a presentation about my University. After this we were analyzing and discussing the differences between both institutions. Main differences in the structure of universities in relation to the projects are:

- the size of universities and number of projects
- areas of expertise:
 - GUC focus on computer science, technology, management, engineering and nursery,
 - WULS focuses mostly on life sciences, e.g.: forestry and wood technology, landscape and urban architecture, nutrition and food sciences, sustainable

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development of rural environment, animal sciences, biology, biotechnology, civil and water engineering and others

- the central-level structure:
 - at WULS we have the position of Rector's Attorney of International Research Projects
 - in GUC there is a Vice Rector for Research
- organization of offices responsible of projects:
 - WULS has the International Research Project Offices on central administration level and Dean's Attorney for International Research Projects on each faculties,
 - GUC has the Research Administration on central level and administration on faculties, there are responsible for projects management
- database of projects
 - WULS has one database for international research projects
 - At GUC there is archive system for every projects.

My aim was also to discover the operational site of project management; therefore I had a meeting with an employee from Research Administration. We were discussing and comparing the duties related to the project realization.

The analysis revealed also so similarities:

- informing the researchers about new calls for proposals
- updating University's website (sections/sites related with projects)
- answering questions related to the guidelines and regulations of programmes

as well as differences in following areas:

- process of partnership acquisitioning
 - conducting the Local Point for Research Programs of the European Union network, part of National Contact Point for Research Programs of European Union.
- helping scientists with problems during projects

Each day I had also meetings with employees from administration of the Faculty of Computer Science and Media Technology. I was informed about their scope of duties.

Employees of the Department are in some part engaged in work related to administration of the projects. The chief of administration is responsible for financial aspects of each projects, mainly: budget preparation (consulting), financial reports, validation of timesheets (of employees working within the project), validation (formal aspects) of the application form.

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Remaining employees of the department's administration support scientists in the following areas:

- help in settling the business trips-reimbursement (formal aspects)
- interfacing with the coordinator of the project
- participation in international meetings before the application process is finalized
- advice within the programmers rules and regulations (including establishing the rules with foreign partners)
- support in writing reports

GUC has the highest indicator of fundraising within European Union in Norway. GUC employee a good researchers and they score the goal.

To sum up - main benefits of my STSM were the possibility to create a right point of reference for current and future actions in the area of project management. It is clear that the approaches, methodologies and tools used to route the project through its life-cycle are directly related to the size and organizational structure of the university. At GUC actions are more centralized, but such level of centralization might not work equally efficient in a larger institution.

Contribution to the goals of the COST Targeted Network

Main contributions were:

- exchanging experience, approaches and tools used in the area of administrative support of projects
- improved efficiency in project management by sharing best practices
- establishing an active network for the administrative, financial and legal services
- perspectives and suggestions to manual of List of weaknesses in project planning and implementation and Manual of good practices.

Description of the main results obtained

The main result of STSM was to acquire knowledge on how other universities deal with administration of the project. Participation in STSM enables possibility to identify these solutions that are used in Gjøvik that are feasible in my University. For example more financial control on the project centralized in a single office.

Visit also shed some light on weaknesses and space for improvement in our project planning:

- **Prepare an application just before the deadline**

this situation may causes many mistakes, special in a budget part. Researchers should consult the budget with an appropriate office on their universities. Some part of the budget may be calculated in different way within consortium, for example: personal costs. Each partners can have their own internal country and institutions regulations of calculating remuneration.
- **Lack of participation of researchers in meetings organized by financial institutions**

before creating a consortium and writing an application. Meetings such as: information days, trainings and workshop give an opportunity to meet your potential partners and get to know the formal rules of the new programs.
- **Problems with internal communication within the consortium**

not knowing partners in consortium and lack of internal communication may causes a problems such as: not clear rules of each partners and part that they are responsible for, delay in delivery of the results of the project or financial report to coordinator. In each projects it should be a person responsible for internal communication between coordinator and partners. It happens that partners do not inform the coordinator of problems during project and they try to work them out on their own. Partners involved in projects should organized regular meetings and discuss about progress in project.
- **Inexperienced staff in projects**

It happens that staff which is involved in project does not have experience in project implementation. This may have a negative impact of the project. Depending of the size of the project in each team there should be at least one person who has experience in implementation of projects.
- **Unclear roles in Work Packages**

sometimes lack of clear and transparent responsibilities in tasks may causes delay of implementation in one part of Work Package. It should be clear distinction of tasks and responsibilities of each partner.
- **Person in charge of administration management does not have information about all financial issue**

Person who is responsible for administration of the project should has full overview of financial issue and follow of the schedule.

Future collaboration

Planned future actions:

- Two-way communication of the local development of new best practices. Active know-how sharing.
- Active support of the implementation of best practices. Pro active advising in the process engineering which are being developed within the best practice deployment.