

PROJECT MANAGEMENT - A STEP IN THE EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

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Abstract: *Project management is a course of action based on a rigorous plan to achieve certain objectives formulated as clearly as possible in a limited time and resources limiting. The terms and simple project management means work, guided by a rigorous plan.*

The extent of project management as a way to support economic competition, respond economic environment increasingly more demanding has led to a new type of organization - organization centered projects. If such an organization, performance is no longer measured, for example, depending on organizational soundness, but on the ability to adapt to projects and depending on the consistency of the project portfolio. This is a competition continues to attract existing resources based on reliability and completion of projects.

Keywords: project management, economic competition, project cycle management, implementation

JEL code: M₁₁; M₅₁; R₁; R₅₃; R₅₈

Introduction

Given the current conditions of a competition increasingly fierce everyone must clearly demonstrate efficiency that can create added value in making. Thus the actions of an individual or a community will not only be directed to an end in the short term but will be analyzed in a global context. This requires a project-oriented thinking and their continuity.

This concept is not new, man realizing projects thousands of years. Before you build bridges over rivers, streets, buildings were made projects. This capability, specifically human, to design prior to practice, turned with

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time, as has been improved, the occupation in art, and art combined with science. Research and more advanced concepts in this matter that design has become a profession, which has diversified continuously adapted numerous areas where it was applied, having a defining moment complex depending on the scope.

Word project became one of the most used phrases in the business environment and thus have the usual vocabulary of the Romanian language. This is caused a real explosion of projects in the world economy; the trend is even stronger in the European Union. Projects are the means by which organizations survive in the current environment, and in Romania, this trend became dominant, especially in the context of the EU integration.

The project is defined as a repetitive process that provides a new volume, well defined, specialized organizations. The project is characterized as a single action, specific, consists of a logical sequence of activities coordinated and controlled components, the innovative character of a different nature, conducted in a methodical and organized manner progressively, with constraints of time, resources and cost, for successfully obtain new complex results required to meet the objectives defined.

In literature there are many definitions set for a project, most of the common element that it is characterized by uniqueness, the specific objectives to be achieved according to a plan within the resources and budget available.

A number of features that define and adapt progressively throughout the project we found in greater or less in each project, regardless of their size and are reflected in the following key elements:

- The uniqueness result (goal) - firstly, the novelty of the result produced involves a degree of unknown characteristic of anything that has been done before;
- The implementation finite - because projects have given clear start and end, certain organizational gains a temporary, being tailored to meet the specific objectives of the project;
- Project budget is a measure project cost. This is an indicator based on which we can appreciate the usefulness of using project management. This feature has into account the temporal component, meaning the necessary financial and human resources throughout the duration of the project;

- The degree of innovation and complexity of projects - depend on a number of criteria, such as the novelty of the project, size of project, social, objective risk in the project, etc. A project remains complex even if one or more criteria have low value, as long as others have high value. The greater complexity of the project, the work should invest more in project management, project management thereby raising costs.

Description of the project management process

To improve efficiency management activity projects and programs, must to consider issues and circumstances relating to the drafting and implementation.

These conditions relate to:

1. Clear and realistic objectives for projects or programs:
 - Clear distinction between goals and means of achieving them;
 - Clear and realistic definition of the Project Purpose which must always involve sustainable benefits for the group (s) and target final beneficiaries;
 - Assumptions and pre-conditions: external factors, major project that could significantly influence its success.
2. "FACTORS OF QUALITY" that strengthen long-term benefits of the project:
 - a stable policy framework and reasonably incurred by the beneficiary country, particularly for regional and sectoral policies;
 - choosing the most appropriate technology;
 - respect for social and cultural values of the groups involved;
 - capacity to manage public or private institutions that implement projects and programs;
 - economic and financial viability of projects or programs and sustainability benefits of these;
 - integration of environmental protection;
 - the differences between men and women to be recognized and the principle of equality between women and men.

Project Cycle Management¹ is closely related to the broader external cooperation promoted at EU level, the central objective of poverty reduction. From this perspective, strategic areas derived from the Maastricht Treaty are:

¹ Manual Project Cycle Management; http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/methodology-aid-delivery-methods-project-cycle-management-200403_en_2.pdf

- Sustainable development, in particular by promoting equitable development investment and employment policies of labor, social and human development and environmental protection;
- Integration into the world economy by supporting regional cooperation and integration;
- Fight against poverty;
- Democracy, human rights, rule of law, peacekeeping and conflict prevention.

Project Cycle Management addresses these issues trying to ensure that projects and programs are consistent with, and contribute to achieving these general objectives of EU external cooperation policy.

After 1993, the use of PCM - Project Cycle Management has expanded from the traditional project approach to sector programs, which apply the principles and methodology PCM.

The PCM terminology, the use of these concepts, tools and documents standardized throughout life (cycle) of a project called "**integrated approach**". PCM effectiveness depends largely on the quality of information available (especially from the beneficiaries and target groups) and as fair use of the concepts, techniques and tools developed for this purpose

A project is defined as "a group of interrelated activities, grouped in a logical sequence, performed in a defined time and using limited resources to achieve results clearly defined in order to achieve clear objectives."

A program is defined as a series of interrelated projects whose objectives together contribute to the achievement of a common goal generally usually relevant at sector, country or even internationally. In some contexts, the concept of the program is understood as an institutional framework that allows multiple projects to be implemented in order to meet the overall goal or mission.

It is clear that the purpose and impact of a program is more extensive than for individual projects.

Projects and programs differ in amplitude resources employed by time scale, but also in terms of formulating objectives, management structures, the role of team members and the concentration are different types of evaluations. However, the principles and approach to project management is applied in both cases.

Individual projects are part of a cyclical process, each term contributing to the priorities set in the strategy of organizational or institutional.

Project Cycle Management is an integrated approach to planning, design and project management.

This integrated approach is a guarantee of the fact that the major principles and policies of each funder of the project or each stakeholder are taken into account systematically in every stage throughout the project.

The 6 steps in Project Cycle Management¹:

1) *Programming*

The programming phase is established in close consultation with the Government of principles and steps to be followed for cooperation between the European Union (EU) and the beneficiary country.

Thorough analysis of problems and opportunities existing in that country priorities at national and EU level, present and future actions of the donor and the resources available locally and in the EU, form the key elements on which decisions are made EU interventions focus on a specific topic or a specific sector. Main programs and projects are also outlined in general terms during this phase

The main document that is developed in this first phase is a national strategy or a national strategy document support.

2) *Identification*

In this phase are identified and reviewed specific ideas on programs and projects in the context of the national strategic documents; analyzed the problems, needs and interests of possible stakeholders.

To help the project development process is undertaken sectoral studies, thematic or pre-feasibility. Based on these studies and analyzes will decide on the options that will be explored in the future to complete a project proposal.

3) *Appraisal*

During this phase the project idea materializes into a project proposal. This phase is also an ex-ante evaluation. Are analyzed in detail key aspects of the project.

Are considered as key elements and key stakeholders are directly involved in the development and analysis of the project.

Also in this stage are developed logical framework of the project, including major strategic elements: objectives, activities, outcomes, indicators, risks and assumptions, together with planning tools esențiale: graphical implementation of activities graphic resources. These are used to evaluate the key elements that help predict the impact of the project: relevance, feasibility and sustainability.

¹ Victor Iliescu, Oana Gherghinescu, *Managementul proiectelor*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București 2005

The result is the decision to submit or not the financing proposal.

4) Financing

In this step is completed financing proposal which is then submitted to the appropriate assessment bodies and committees. The evaluation project sponsor decides finance or provide funding.

5) Implementation

The implementation consists in implementing and efficient completion and the best conditions of work, according to the original plan, using the planned resources, generating expected results in order to meet project objectives.

In this phase continuous monitoring activities are conducted to record progress in implementing activities, check whether they were carried out according to the original plan, updating operations in response to changes in the external conditions

Will be performed also interim evaluations to determine the impact of achieving planned. Based on their decisions will be made on completion or continuation of the project.

6) Evaluation

The role of evaluation is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, efficiency and effectiveness of the project, its impact and sustainability.

Evaluation can be done:

- During implementation - interim evaluations - when decisions can be made on continuation, modification or cancellation of the project;
- At the end of the implementation phase - Final evaluation - to determine the results and verify their final objectives;
- After completion of the project - ex-post - analyze the consequences of the project and can be used in future projects.

Basic principles of Project Cycle Management - Project Cycle Management (PCM):

The most important principles:

- Systematic compliance major EU policy priorities, as well as those of the beneficiary countries and other donors;
- Design and implement projects based on clear objectives and realistic;
- Relevance, feasibility and sustainability of the projects;
- Permanent consultation, stakeholder involvement throughout the project;

- Using the Logical Framework Approach in the design, management, monitoring and evaluation;
- Establish key quality factors for the start of the project.

Quality factors that ensure sustainability of the project and its positive impact:

- Participation and involvement of beneficiaries in the design and implementation of the project;
- Ensuring political support from representatives of local authorities and central;
- The use of appropriate technologies and to the needs of each activity;
- Adaptation Strategy to socio-cultural project specific target area;
- Systematic application of the principles and practices that ensure equality between women and men;
- Environmental protection;
- Institutional development and management;
- Financial viability and economic forms of support that we introduce project for the target group.

The components of the project life cycle¹

The life cycle of a project includes next steps:

1. Identification, Analysis, Forms.
2. Prepare estimates (based on the criteria set), assumption.
3. Implementation, Monitoring, Reporting.
4. Final evaluation.

Step 1. Identification, Analysis, Forms; includes the following activities / processes:

- establish overall objectives;
- analysis of the situation;
- identify needs;
- needs Analysis;
- prioritizing those needs;
- the decision in terms of timeliness project;

¹ Constantin Opran, Sergiu Stan, *Managementul proiectelor*, Editura comunicare.ro; București, România, 2014

- definition of project ideas;
- consultation with potential beneficiaries.

Step 2. Prepare estimates (based on established criteria), assumption; includes:

- specification of objectives and results;
- identify resources needed for the project;
- identify resources available for the project;
- distribution of project activities;
- final design and project planning form.

Step 3. Implementation, Monitoring, Reporting; aims to:

- mobilizing resources for each task and objective;
- project marketing - continuous communication with the committee decision and potential beneficiaries (team members) on:
- expectations for the project and developments during project implementation;
- providing information about project development throughout its course;
- adapting the design and implementation of the project, according to the expectations of potential beneficiaries;
- ongoing monitoring and reporting forms (provide the information needed for a proper management);
- identifying problems;
- identifying failures and solutions leading to their elimination (by negotiation, by replacing those responsible, through an independent evaluation or, in extreme cases, by stopping the project);
- modification of project objectives and planned outcomes with some achievable.

Step 4. Final evaluation; include the following:

- evaluating whether the whole of the tasks entrusted to the contractor (is usually via an independent evaluation of the contractor or contracting authority);
- identify the best solutions for future projects based on experience gained;
- Identify resources for the future (it is considered correct assessment of those, depending on the sufficiency or insufficiency of their project conducted);
- identify needs for future projects.

Conclusions

Projects have become so complex and diverse that it created a certain fear around them, a kind of perception that a project is almost extraordinary performance that can be achieved only by a minority number the "experts". As in other areas, fear often comes from ignorance.

When the project involves dozens or even hundreds of activities when these activities are dependent on each other - some are parallel, others are interdependent, meaning that their early conclusion depends on (successfully) others as GANTT chart, then when the resources of a particular variety, be allocated different times in different amounts when funding comes from several sources, when the money come from a specific source in installments, when there are several partners with varying degrees of involvement in the project when the project team is assembled from different departments of the organization, when part of the work is subcontracted to third parties, project management is becoming a complex activity could not be prescriptive in any case which can be mild or lightly. The professional approach, project management is not a simple activity. But what can be said with sufficient certainty is that the skills and knowledge needed to achieve the best performance in this area are clear.

Novelty way of thinking comes from the fact that the project can be seen as a chain of activities that produce measurable results / measurable. This linkage is created, projecting from the end, that is how the funding source project defines the final result. Project Management is a way a course of action based on a rigorous plan to achieve certain objectives formulated as clearly as possible in a limited time and resources limi ing. the terms and simple project management means work, guided by a rigorous plan. Plan a project can be compared to a "roadmap" for a clear destination and shortest path or the most effective to reach that destination is set before setting off.

The extent of project management as a way to support economic competition, respond economic environment increasingly more demanding has led to a new type of organization - organization centered projects. if such an organization, performance is no longer measured, for example, depending on organizational soundness, but on the ability to adapt to projects and depending on the consistency of the project portfolio. The value of the organization is no longer measured by number of employees. Professional competence it there is no value in itself, what matters most is the speed with which employees join their skills and knowledge to find a solution to a common problem, and the speed with which, once solved (once completed project), employees form different combinations to solve a new

problem. This is a competition continues to attract existing resources based on realizării and completion of projects.

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