Excerpts from the Human Dynamics Project Management Guidelines 2009

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INTRODUCTION

1. Aim

The aim of these Project Management Guidelines is to provide Human Dynamics (HD) Project Managers,[1] (PM) and Team Leaders (TL) with standard operating procedures for the implementation of projects so that the management of the project conforms to HD standards and objectives. Thus, with full compliance of HD client's contractual, as well as procedural requirements in view, this tool will help to ensure the highest client satisfaction.

The document covers the project management procedures involved in implementing a project financed by funds from a donor agency. It is designed to assist PM and TL by making clear what they are responsible for and how they should carry out their tasks to comply with HD requirements. It does not legislate for every eventuality but is a guideline to be used in conjunction with internal as well as specific client requirements, rules and procedures and should be adapted accordingly.

2. Structure

The document is structured so as to reflect the full project cycle for ease of use and reference. The first part sets out the roles, tasks and responsibilities for the PM and the TL. The second part deals with the preparatory phase for the project. The third part covers the Inception Phase. The fourth part examines major aspects of project management and all the regular procedures required during the Implementation Phase. The final part covers the Completion Phase. The guidelines are a working document and are therefore not static. Comments and suggestions for improvement should be sent to rowan.putman@humandynamics.org in the Head Office, Vienna. For simplicity's sake, the use of He as opposed to He/She is used throughout.

3. Institutional Framework and Documents

The guidelines are based on a common institutional framework for any HD project, as follows:

- The project is funded by a donor (assumed in the document to be the EC);
- The project is in the public sector and in support of a government programme;
- There is a Contracting Authority (CA) which deals with all contractual issues;
- There may be an Implementing Authority (IA), sometimes a Programme Implementation Unit (PIU);
- There are one or more project beneficiaries;
- There is a donor, be it the European Commission (EC) or World Bank (WB), which is a major stakeholder in the project;
- The project is solely implemented by HD or a consortium led by HD;
- The project is implemented in accordance with a contract according to the Terms of Reference (ToR), the EC General Conditions, the PRAG issued by the CA together with the HD Technical Proposal (TP), which sets out the work plan, among other elements, for the project.

[1] Also referred to by the EU as Project Directors

PART THREE

INCEPTION PHASE

The overriding goal of the inception phase is to achieve concurrence among all stakeholders on the lifecycle objectives for the project. The inception phase is of particular significance primarily for new development efforts, in which there are significant business and requirement risks which must be addressed before the project can proceed. For projects focused on enhancements to an existing system/process, the inception phase is likely to be more brief, but in both cases should focus on ensuring that the project, as defined in the ToR and in HD's response through the TP, is both worth doing and possible to do.

The inception phase is comprised of 6 key objectives:

- To describe the initial requirements
- To further develop an understanding of and justify the ToR (business case) for the requirements
- To determine the scope of the project
- To identify the people, organisations, and external systems that will interact with your project and develop a communication strategy
- To determine the success criteria, develop an initial risk assessment, schedule, and cost estimates for the project and the monitoring strategy to accompany that
- To develop an initial tailoring of the strategy to meet exact needs as originally set out in the TP

24. Understanding and justifying the ToR (business case)

The first stage of the project management process is to understand the reasons, or the business case, for the project. This may seem obvious for some projects; however it is important to know the rationale and business justification for the proposed work. All reasons for the project, regardless of how seemingly important, must be tested for validity and provide adequate justification. A thorough and comprehensively developed ToR allows the business to make accurate decisions and for the project to proceed with a solid understanding of its purpose and objectives. Whilst this early stage should have been driven by the donor in cooperation with the Beneficiary, as part of the development of the ToR, it should not be taken for granted that this was done properly/thoroughly. Indeed there may have been many contributing factors that could have prevented a thorough assessment/review of the complete business case, including time restrictions, financial constraints, an inability on the part of the beneficiary to take ownership for the design either because of a lack of understanding or availability, and/or the lack of convergence between the beneficiary and donor's priorities.

Whatever the circumstances, it is up to the TL, in coordination with his team, to ensure that what is written therein, is in fact the complete and accurate picture; feasible within the time and budget allocated; and where this is not the case, to take this on board when considering the development of the project work and resource plan.

It is not unheard of that the conditions surrounding the development of the ToR (timing, duration, availability of key stakeholders, materials etc) have not been entirely conducive to demonstrating a complete and true picture of the country circumstances at the time of drafting and thus only achieve the short term gain of having a complete, but potentially inaccurate document against which tender proposals can be submitted; in the long term it can take significant project time and resources to re-do work and correct mistakes that could have been avoided through a comprehensive, well thought out ToR. It is vital for the team and all project stakeholders therefore to take this into consideration and ensure that regardless of what is written in the ToR, they are confident that they have done their own investigations and research and are well aware of the full and true picture.