



Ref: 527796-LLP-1-2012-1-ES-LEONARDO-LMP

ANNEX 1. SPANISH NATIONAL REPORT ON COMPETENCES ON INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS MANAGEMENT

Country: Spain

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Date: 23th of March 2013

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Methodological approach to elaborate the report.....	3
3. Major findings of the interviews	4
4. Desk research	8
4.1. Bibliography.....	8
4.2. Good practices	9
Good practice number 1:	9
Good practice number 2:	10
Good practice number 3:	11
Good practice number 4:	12
5. Conclusions and remarks	13

1. Introduction

This national report on competences on international projects management is the Spanish contribution to the definition of competences for the final report: “Recommendations for the development of informal international project management training paths”.

The mentioned national report, has been elaborated by INVESLAN, as the Spanish partner of the Consortium of the “Learn, Play, Manage” project and it includes information extracted from interviews with international projects managers and from a desk research of good practices in international project management in Spain.

The aim with this report is to identify which competences are the most necessary to carry out the tasks of a manager of international projects or any other professional working in an international environment. To do so, the national report analyses the state of the art in Spain regarding this professional field and it will help to define the training path of the social game which will be developed within the “Learn, Play, Manage” project.

2. Methodological approach to elaborate the report

To elaborate this national report, two approaches have been used: interviews with professionals working in an international environment and a desk research on good practices in international projects management methodology or training, applied in Spain or by Spanish organizations.

In the first place, for the interviews the objective has been to involve different professional profiles with the common denominator of developing their tasks within an international environment. Several professionals were contacted, from the fields of international trade, NGOs, consultancy or international relations. At the end, three people were interviewed:

- A commercial manager from a Spanish consultancy specialized in innovation management and implementation of technological solutions.
- A project manager from the international relations department of a Spanish university, in charge of the coordination of the Erasmus Mundus Programme, action 2.

- A coordinator of international cooperation projects in a Spanish NGO which cooperates especially with Latin American organizations for economic development.

Secondly, for the desk research, the first step was to consult the bibliography, sources or methodologies recommended by the interviewees (as one of the questions of the interviews was related to this). Other sources used were associations or any other organization specialized in project management, such as AEIPRO (the Spanish Association on Engineering and Project Management), which were given information about the LPMnage project and to ask for their recommendations on bibliography or specific good practices that could be useful for the purposes of the WP3. The contact with these organizations made the research more efficient and it also showed that there is a high interest for the LPMnage project outcomes among this kind of entities.

At the end of the desk research, 4 good practices were identified and included in the national report, using for their description the template provided by the work package leader. A description of the bibliography or the resources where the good practices were found, are also included in the desk research section.

3. Major findings of the interviews

As stated before, three professionals working in an international context were interviewed for the national report:

- A commercial manager from a Spanish consultancy specialized in innovation management and implementation of technological solutions. The person interviewed is in charge of the expansion of the company in Mexico. He has 8 years of international experience and has been involved in the settlement of the company in Mexico since the beginning. Nowadays, his main function in the Mexico's delegation is to get new clients and new projects, deal with the actual clients and coordinate the working team of the company in Mexico.
- The project manager from the international relations department of a Spanish University. She has a wide and varied experience working within an international environment. She started 9 years ago in the same university assisting the Erasmus students and preparing cultural activities for them. Afterwards, she worked for an NGO in Mexico implementing a microcredits programme for women from rural and poor areas and later on she went on with her career working in a charity in the UK.

She has also worked in the office of UNESCO in Bangkok (Thailand) and some months ago she has come back to Spain to be the project manager of the international relations department of a Spanish University, being in charge of the coordination of the Erasmus Mundus Programme, action 2.

- The coordinator of international cooperation projects in a Spanish NGO which cooperates especially with Latin American organizations for economic development. She has 13 years experience working in international cooperation projects and among her tasks are the coordination of the teamwork between the central office in Spain with the local offices settled in Latin America, the preparation of applications for the different calls for proposals to get funds for their projects and the coordination and supervision of the training programmes offered by the NGO to the volunteers who go to underdeveloped countries in cooperation missions.

Following the same structure used during the interviews, we offer in the following lines our main findings.

Although the three interviewees have very different backgrounds and they work in very different economic sectors, comparing the results of the three interviews it is possible to detect some competences that seem to be essential when working in an international context, no matter the kind of projects or activities carried out or the professional position.

In the first place, the three interviewees consider social skills as the most important ones. Empathy is mentioned as the main one because working in an international context is essential to be able to be in other's shoes, accept that there are not only personal but also cultural differences when working and also in the way people deal with professional and personal relations. Because of these differences, it is very important to show the other part that one is trustworthy and also "*being patient when people do not act in the way we are used to*".

Related to this, a deep knowledge of the culture of the country or the person one's dealing with is the first step. And going even further, it is important to have the ability to adapt to the new situation, being flexible and open minded to understand, for example, "*the different levels of stress tolerated by each working style*". This requires a certain grade of modesty to admit that the own way of doing things is not the only one which works.

Also as part of those mentioned social skills, the interviewees mention effective communication as a fundamental competence. In this sense, a good command in foreign languages, at least English, is basic because professional relations very often

take place with people with different languages. But even beyond this, it is very important to be able to expose and explain one's ideas in a clear and concise way, bearing in mind the different communication styles in each culture. Some cultures use a more direct way of communication, others, like Asian cultures, use a much more indirect way and this needs to be taken into consideration to keep a balance between the clarity of the message and not ending up being impolite or too aggressive.

Another competence mentioned during the interviews was teambuilding. Although being able to work in a team is important in any work, when working in an international environment this is even more important because it normally involves people from different countries and cultures which is already more challenging, and in addition, many times the members of that team are far away from each other and the lack of in person contact is an obstacle to develop trust among the members of the team.

Organization has also been mentioned as a key competence in international projects, even more than in any other job, because having to coordinate multicultural teams, sometimes working from different countries, and combining different working styles, makes organization essential to keep things under control. To guarantee an efficient organization, the interviewees mentioned that it was important having as systemized as possible all the working procedures. However, this also needs to be combined with a high flexibility capacity, *“especially when working in some markets like the Latin American ones, where conditions change unpredictably”*.

Related to these unpredictable changes and also to the lack of knowledge about the local environment or the minor control when working in a different country, a good risk management system is also much needed. One of the interviewees said that with experience she has learned to take a moment before making a decision to analyse the different scenarios which can result if things don't go the way she planned.

Lastly, another competence mentioned during the interviews was the ability of putting things in perspective. The cultural differences, the distance, the different working and communication styles mentioned before, sometimes make this kind of work very frustrating and it is important to know how to deal with this, giving each thing the importance they deserve and accepting that there are things that are beyond one's control.

All the competences mentioned above have been mostly acquired through professional experience. Although each of the interviewees had an academic background with an international component, they have stated that it has been the experience developed while working and the different situations they have been

through, especially those which were not solved in the best way, the thing that has made them obtain or improve the necessary competences to do their job.

Having this into account, they have said that any form of training which involves the resolution of cases or the exchange of roles is really helpful because it helps to, at least, being aware that certain situations can be materialised and if they are, it will be easier to react in the right way.

For example, one of the interviewees tells that they have used role games in his company to make the staff aware of the challenges they face when working in different positions *“with the aim of a better understanding of each other’s situation and to make the work team stronger through empathy”*.

Another one of the interviewees, points out directly to the use of games as a more simple and practical way to learn. However, she does recognize that many times she has the feeling that although this way of learning makes her more aware of situations in real life, there is still something missing: a bit more of content. For example, although through games she realizes of a possible situation and this helps her to not being caught by surprise if this finally materializes and she’s even provided with the guidelines to know how to act in the best way, she still misses some kind of training of the necessary competences to solve those situations. It’s not only necessary to know how to solve them but also know how to train the necessary competences for a good resolution.

In this sense, she highlights the possibility to access some materials that can train further the competences used in the resolution of cases or any other kind of game, so every time someone fails solving a situation due to a lack of a certain competence, she/he can access to the necessary resources to train them and improve them. The possibility to discuss the way to solve those situations with other professionals is also mentioned as a good way to learn.

4. Desk research

4.1. Bibliography

N.	Author, source (link, or title of the publication)	Year of publication	Subjects approached, target	Short description of the source and of the competences in international project management indicated	Comments or Remarks
1	Fuster Bragado, J. <i>“El laberinto multilateral. Las licitaciones y proyectos financiados por los Organismos Internacionales; Historias Reales y Lecciones de Cómo Ganar, Ejecutar y Sortear Dificultades en Proyectos con Múltiples Intereses, Culturas y Restricciones”</i>	2011	Management of international projects funded by international organizations such as the WCB, the EU, the IMF, etc.	The book offers an overview about how the whole process since the application for funds for an international project starts until it is implemented and its management implications. The author also offers some “lessons learnt” during his experience working in international projects.	N/A
2	Gómez, M., Sáinz, H. <i>“El Ciclo del Proyecto de Cooperación al Desarrollo”</i>	2010	The book is addressed to professionals working in the field of international cooperation	The book explains the main concepts of the management of international cooperation projects, giving a detailed explanation about the Logical Framework Approach (system of management applied to international cooperation projects) and also examples of its real application.	N/A

3	Rodrigo Alsina, M. "Comunicación Intercultural"	1999	The book is addressed to anyone who wants to improve his/her intercultural competences.	The book explains why is it important to take into consideration the existence of different communication styles, which are those and how to deal with them.	This reference has been included because, although is not especially addressed to IPM, it deals with one of the main competences necessary in the field: intercultural communication
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4.2. Good practices

Using the recommendations given by the interviewees and the own research carried out by INVESLAN, 4 good practices of international project management training have been identified. To select them, it has been taken into consideration the professional grounding of the organization in charge of the training in the field of project management and/or the development of transversal skills, such as intercultural communication.

Good practice number 1.

Title of the good practice	MBA Internacional y Gestión de Proyectos Multilaterales (International MBA in Multilateral Projects Management)
Country	Spain
Brief description. Why is it worthwhile to be considered a good practice or a good course? Highlight the strong points.	Nowadays there are more and more international tenders for projects financed by multilateral institutions, such as the World Bank, the UN or the EU and this course offer a wide training for professionals who wish to work in this field, helping them to get the necessary methodology to work in this projects but, more importantly, developing the key competences to be successful on them: communication, teamwork, creativity and assertiveness. The strong point of the course is that it's a combination between theoretical contents, needed for the preparation of proposals or

	for the later management of the projects, and the use of cases resolution to develop the mentioned key competences making the trainee to face different situations that he/she might find in his/her professional career in this field.
Promoter of the initiative (person or institution that developed it)	CECO, Centro de Estudios Económicos y Comerciales (Center of Economic and Trade Studies). Dependent of ICEX, Instituto Español de Comercio Exterior (Spanish Institute of International Trade).
Target group	Professionals with 3 years experience in international environments who wish to develop their careers in the field of multilateral projects management.
Competences improved	Communication, creativity, assertiveness, teamwork.
Educational and pedagogical approach	<p>The training mixes theory and the resolution of cases, individually or in groups.</p> <p>At the end of the Master, the student needs to develop a Master Thesis consisting in the development of a proposal for a project to be financed by a multilateral organization.</p> <p>The best 15 students will also make an internship abroad in an International Organization or in a Multilateral Financing Institution, having then the opportunity to apply the acquired knowledge and competences in a real environment.</p>
Further information / Additional Comments	Further information can be consulted in: www.ceco.es (in Spanish)

Good practice number 2.

Title of the good practice	Project Managers para el Desarrollo (Project Managers for Development)
Country	Spain

<p>Brief description. Why is it worthwhile to be considered a good practice or a good course? Highlight the strong points.</p>	<p>Project managers para el Desarrollo is part of the International Development Community of Practice, initiative promoted by the PMI to Exchange good practices and provide a fórum for organizations and individuals with international development interests to dialogue on building a better world through better managed projects. The idea is to apply some parts of the methodology developed by the PMI to international cooperation projects carried out by NGOs, which normally use a different way to manage their projects. Through this exchange, the aim is to define ways of management cooperation projects in a more efficient way by combining the different approaches.</p>
<p>Promoter of the initiative (person or institution that developed it)</p>	<p>PMI, Capítulo de Madrid (Project Management Institute, Madrid's Chapter)</p>
<p>Target group</p>	<p>Professionals in the field of international cooperation and NGOs.</p>
<p>Competences improved</p>	<p>Organization, quality management, technological competences.</p>
<p>Educational and pedagogical approach</p>	<p>The training is mainly based on the exchange of good practices among the target group and the trainers in project management using the PMI methodology. The tools used include webinars, discussion forums, wikis and blogs.</p>
<p>Further information / Additional Comments</p>	<p>Further information can be consulted in: http://www.pmi-mad.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=244:projects-managers-para-el-desarrollo&catid=173:voluntarios&Itemid=154 and http://id.vc.pmi.org/Public/Home.aspx</p>

Good practice number 3:

<p>Title of the good practice</p>	<p>Curso en Competencias para la Dirección y Gestión de Proyectos (Course on Competences for Project Management)</p>
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Country	Spain
Brief description. Why is it worthwhile to be considered a good practice or a good course? Highlight the strong points.	Although the course is not particularly addressed to project managers working in an international environment, it has been included as a good practice because is directly aimed to develop the necessary competences used in project management, mentioned by the interviewees (organization, stress management, flexibility or communication), with specific modules about risk management, conflicts resolution or the importance of the personal dimension in project management.
Promoter of the initiative (person or institution that developed it)	Universitat Politècnica de Valencia (member of AEIPRO, Spanish Association of Engineering and Project Management)
Target group	Professionals working in project management who wish to improve the competences needed to be more efficient.
Competences improved	Quality management, risk management, conflicts resolution, organization, leadership, motivation.
Educational and pedagogical approach	The course is completely accessible on-line and it combines theoretical contents, which are tested by on-line tests and a practical approach through the resolution of cases where the different competences need to be put in practice.
Further information / Additional Comments	Further information is available in the following link: http://www.dirgesproyectos.upv.es/index.php/programa-academico/menucursos/16-curso-en-competencias-para-la-direccion-y-gestion-de-proyectos-project-management

Good practice number 4:

Title of the good practice	Intercultural Learning-Cultural Competences
Country	Spain

<p>Brief description. Why is it worthwhile to be considered a good practice or a good course? Highlight the strong points.</p>	<p>The Intercultural Learning-Cultural Competences is an European project, lead by AEDIPE, which developed a guide to train intercultural competences. As these ones were mentioned as one of the main key competences to be a good international projects manager by the people interviewed for this national report, this project has been included as a good practice because it aims at developing intercultural competences for any professional working in an international context.</p>
<p>Promoter of the initiative (person or institution that developed it)</p>	<p>AEDIPE, Asociación Española de Dirección y Desarrollo de Personas (Spanish Association of Management and Personal Development).</p>
<p>Target group</p>	<p>Professionals working in an intercultural environment.</p>
<p>Competences improved</p>	<p>Intercultural management and intercultural communication.</p>
<p>Educational and pedagogical approach</p>	<p>Explanation of different intercultural models, analysis of best practices, role playing, simulations and resolution of cases within a professional context.</p>
<p>Further information / Additional Comments</p>	<p>Website of the project: http://www.aedipe.es/expert_vision2/111x/index.html</p>

5. Conclusions and remarks

The three interviews carried out with different professionals who work in international projects management in different fields or economic sectors, have made it possible to identify the following competences as the most important ones for someone working in an international context:

- Communication, especially intercultural communication, to be able to transmit one's ideas in a clear way but also to understand other's.
- Adaptability to other working styles, which also implies an open minded attitude and to be up to accept different ways of doing things.
- Organization combined with flexibility. It is necessary to systemize working procedures in order to be more efficient, so everyone knows how to work and how things must be done. This is highly important when working in a multinational and multicultural team where homogenization of working procedures is needed so everyone works according to the same standards. But dealing with different cultural contexts is also necessary to

- be ready to adapt to other working styles or to “change the plan” when the situation requires so.
- Risk management. This is important in every project but in international projects is even more because there are more unpredictable situations, there is less information, the working environment is not that well known, etc.
 - Prioritisation. It is important to learn to put things into perspective and to prioritize among the different tasks.

Regarding the training initiatives addressed to improve the competences used in international projects management, the good practices included in this national report are in the same line to train the same competences mentioned by the interviewees as the most important ones in the exercise of their profession.

All the good practices included use a combination of a theoretical approach with more active ways of learning, especially the resolution of cases. This is also in the line of the statements of the interviewees, who declared that professional experience and the fact of having to face and solve specific situations has been the way they have learnt to develop their professional competences.

For the design of the contents of the “Learn, Play, Manage” game, not only the competences mentioned above need to be taken into consideration, but also the way they must be trained needs to be according the way professionals have acquired them, i.e. according to the methodology of role playing and problem solving.

Another aspect that needs to be borne in mind is that the game not only should show the different situations an international project manager could face and the way he/she could solve them and with which competences, but it is also necessary to provide the player with resources to train those competences. What is important is not just the right answer but also how to develop the competences which lead to the right answer.