

### **Managing virtual project partnerships in an international environment**

The nature of work in today's organisations is becoming more complex, dynamic and global. Distributed, virtual teams, carrying out international projects in partnership with other organisations, are becoming an increasingly popular form of collaboration. The potential of working in partnerships is also recognised by the European Commission, which encourages cross-sectoral cooperation and sees it as a way to develop innovative solutions to important social problems of Europe. Despite the ongoing projectification, the development of management and quality studies, including project management and the growing popularity of project management certification, many projects still fail.

The literature review carried out and the analysis of the theoretical and empirical findings contained therein indicate that certain cognitive gaps (theoretical, empirical and practical) exist in this area, justifying the undertaking of this research topic.

The main scientific objective of the dissertation was the identification of the conditions for managing virtual project partnerships in an international environment of culturally, organisationally and individually diverse teams and the identification of the success factors of such ventures. The implementation objective of the dissertation, was to develop a communication and management solution for the management virtual project partnerships, which was implemented and tested in the international project partnership environment of the implementing entity.

The research was conducted internationally and included a quantitative component (questionnaire survey using the CAWI technique), and a qualitative component (participant observation, and individual in-depth interviews).

Managing virtual project partnerships in an international environment is a process characterised by great complexity and comprehensiveness. The analysis of the challenges facing international project partnerships was conducted from the point of view of their key attributes: inter-organisationality, multiculturalism and virtuality.

The results of the survey show that implementers of international projects involving multiple organisations see them primarily as opportunities, while noting potential difficulties. Projects implemented in international partnerships, in a virtual environment, are more demanding than projects within a single organisation, and require management methods to be adapted to their specific characteristics. The geographical dispersion of the members of the

project partnership implies a high level of virtualisation of the cooperation and thus a limited possibility of contact in real space. Multiculturalism in an international project partnership is seen as a factor that supports project implementation, but it is also associated with challenges related to communication, relationship management, knowledge management, or a different approach to meeting deadlines.

An exploratory factor analysis resulted in establishing three dimensions for defining project success in relation to EU projects implemented in the inter-organisational dimension: success based on results, success based on constraints and success based on team management.

The results of the survey indicate that people management is an important dimension of international partnership project management. An important determinant of the success of a project implemented by an international partnership is the competence and the experience in coordinating international partnership projects of the staff involved in project management. Three competence areas conducive to managing international project partnerships were identified: communication and relationship building, leadership and planning.

The success factors of an international project partnership were analysed from a broad perspective, taking into account the national, organisational as well as the individual dimension. In the case of international project partnerships, the individual dimension proved to be crucial to the success of this type of undertaking, which was confirmed by the results of the research - the existence of a link between the competences of the staff involved in project management and its success, and a link between their experience of coordinating international partnership projects and the success of the project were identified.

This dissertation contributes to the understanding of the functioning of international projects implemented in partnership, in a virtual environment, and can serve as an important starting point for further research and implementation work in this area.

**Keywords:** Project management, project partnerships, international cooperation, virtual teams, project success