**Project Support**

I Background and points of Departure

**I.1 Background**

There is a wish from the side of ITC to motivate academic staff to become (more) active in project activities and activities related to capacity development. At the same time there is an increasing demand from staff in ITC for support in aspects of project management. Support to academic staff in these activities (and projects in general) can be provided in different ways and by different types of persons.

Administrative Support:

Support staff can be the Project Officers and the Project Support Officers, but also administrative support staff at Faculty and Departmental level:

* Project Officer
* Project Support Officer
* Departmental Secretarial Support
* Central Secretarial Support

Financial support:

The Project Administrators of FEZ provide financial support during proposal writing and project implementation, mainly focusing on budget development (based on donor formats), monitoring and reporting

General Faculty Board / Coordination support:

The Capacity Development unit in the Faculty Bureau provides support at conceptual and coordination level. This can include:

* Support during the proposal writing process
* Information sessions and training workshops on aspects of project development, management and evaluation
* Helpdesk service
* Mid-term, end of project, and impact evaluations

The aim is to provide support to projects that ITC is carrying out (either in the lead or as partner) and where this is possible to free scientific staff from administrative burdens (either big or small). This can vary from relatively small and simple projects (i.e. Tailor-made Training) to large and complex projects of large consortia with many partners, big budgets and complex administrative and reporting structures. For this wide range of project situations there is a need for support that can be tailored to the specific situation. This is not limited to projects carried out for third parties but can also include research projects.

**I.2 Points of Departure**

An important point of departure is that wherever possible project support is included in the project proposal as well as in the budget. There is no guarantee that support can be provided because there is a limit to the capacity that is available for this.

The table in the annex provides a key for the kind of support that can be offered and by whom. It also indicates the amount of time allocated for the different activities. This is not a measure for the time that will be allocated for support, but it can form a realistic estimate for budgeting purposes.

Depending on this specific situation a support package can be offered that meets the requirements of each individual project. Several scenarios are possible, ranging from a (very) light version to a full support package.

Allocation of project support will always be done within reason, and will be dependent on the capacity and volume of support staff available and within the budget space available.

Assignment of support will be done in discussion with the Manager Capacity Development, and the Project leader, and when necessary in consultation with the PFH Capacity Development of the Faculty and the (leading) Department. In all cases where support is requested the assigned capacity as well as the origin of the assigned resources will be documented.

The allocation of project support will be done when and where possible but will always be subject to the following considerations:

* The kind of support requested
* Availability of staff capacity
* Availability of project-based funding

It is noted here that the funding for project support must be arranged for within the project budget[[1]](#footnote-1). The Faculty may decide to allocate support from its own resources but this will be done only on a case-by-case basis and will only be done for projects that are considered of strategic importance.

Decisions for project support by the Faculty will always be made by the Dean of ITC based on a proposal by the Portfolio Holder Capacity Development. It must be realized that support by Faculty funding is more an exception rather than a rule.

**II Forms of Project Support**

Project support is available throughout the entire project cycle. Depending on the phase of the project (identification phase, proposal phase, implementation phase, post-project phase) different types of support can be provided by different people. An overview of this is provided in Annex 1

The volume for project support that is currently available is listed below.

1. Central Capacity Development Staff (Manager Capacity Development, Senior Policy Officer)

Analysis of calls, policy-based proposal components, needs assessment, theory of change and Logical Framework, mid-term and end-of-project evaluations, (post-project) impact assessments

1. Project administrators

Preparation of budgets and VOCA’s during the proposal phase; financial administration, monitoring and reporting during the project implementation phase.

1. Project Officers (0.5 FTE per Department, 1.5 FTE Faculty Bureau)

Identification and analysis of calls, partner/consortium identification, proposal writing, legal arrangements (agreements, contracts), signing procedures within the Faculty and within the UT.

During project implementation the support provided by POs is limited to incidental support. Legal arrangements remain with the PO.

1. Project Support Officers (2 x 0.8 FTE)

As described in the table under the project implementation phase[[2]](#footnote-2)

1. Project Secretaries (2 x 0.2 FTE)

Mainly for administrative support, letters, documentation and archiving, etc

1. Departmental Secretaries (variable, between 0.1 – 0.2 FTE per Department)

Mainly for administrative support, letters, documentation and archiving. Also for logistic support for visitors, meetings, travel, etc.

Besides the administrative support described above there are also other forms of support available:

1. **Helpdesk service**

At all times a helpdesk service is available for staff on matters related to development and design, management, etc. of projects. Questions can be directed to the Manager Capacity Development

1. **Information sessions and training workshops**

Regularly information sessions and training workshops will be organized on aspects of project management. A listing will be made available on Intranet of subjects that can be provided. Otherwise sessions can also be organized on request. Subjects that can be discussed in these sessions include:

* Workflow in general, procedures
* Partner selection and consortium formation
* Negotiation with partners
* Agreements and contracts
* Budgeting, VOCA preparation, financial monitoring
* Theory of Change
* Communication strategy, storytelling
* Data policy and knowledge management

**IV Procedure to get there**

**IV.1 Formal Project Support**

Project support must already be considered in the stage where a project proposal is developed and where the subsidy regulations allow for this, funding must be included in the project budget. It is the responsibility of the Project Officer and the Project Administrator to check what possibilities exist within the financial regulations of the funding agency for project support. In the proposal phase the request for project support must already be indicated.

A formal request for support is prepared by the Project Officer and the Project Administrator, and must be supported by the Head of the Department where the Project Leader resides. The request must be submitted to the Manager Capacity Development.

The request must indicate which services are required (making use of the table below) and it must indicate what funding sources are available to cover the cost for the support. Funding support can come from the project budget or from the Departmental budget. When a claim is made to the Faculty for financial support this must be indicated and motivated in the request.

The Manager Capacity Development will evaluate the request for support and will assess its feasibility. The request will then be submitted to the Faculty Board through the Portfolio Holder Capacity Development for a decision. The decision will be documented and the Head of Department and the Project Leader will be informed (with copy to the relevant Project Officer and Project Administrator). The decision on project support will be archived with the financial information for the project.

Annex 1: **Tasks in Project Support**

MCD: Manager Capacity Development, PO: Project Officer, PSO: Project Support Officer, SPO: Senior Policy Officer, SEC: Secretariat, PA: Project Administrator

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Tasks** | **By** |  |  |
| **Project Identification Phase** | | | |
| 1. Monitoring of calls and opportunities 2. Analyzing call contents, preparation of go-no go decision | Staff, PO  Staff, PO, SPO, PSO |  |  |
| **Project proposal phase** | | | |
| 1. Proposal writing 2. Preparation of policy-based text (i.e. on gender, labor market, monitoring and evaluation, etc) 3. Theory of Change, Logical Framework 4. Budget preparation and VOCA 5. Legal arrangements (MoU, LoI, Consortium and Partnership Agreements, sub-contracts) 6. Signing process | Staff, PO  SPO, MCD  SPO, PO  PA, PO  PO, MCD  PO |  |  |
| **Project Implementation Phase** | | | |
| **Overall**   1. Assist in all aspects of project management 2. Advise on activity prioritization 3. Provide logistic and organizational support   **Reporting**   1. Prepare periodic reports to the donor   **Deliverables/project output**   1. Prepare deliverables together with other staff 2. Support activities in work packages   **Monitoring deliverables**   1. Monitor project progress and deliverables 2. report on project status and advise on corrective measure when needed   **Monitoring finance**   1. Prepare and monitor financial management information 2. report to the Project Leader on project status 3. Coordinate internal finance monitoring system 4. Ensures adequate project financial management towards the external partners   **Dissemination**   1. Prepare presentations and other forms of publication materials (e.g. flyers, posters) 2. Disseminate project results through sector events and (social) media.   **Communication**   1. Contact point for communication within the project consortium 2. Maintain and facilitate communication with external stakeholders 3. Liaise with similar projects to exchange information 4. Maintain the project website and other (social) media platforms for the project   **Project information/archiving**   1. Maintain and update the project documentation during the project lifetime 2. Update project reference forms 3. Keeping archives of the project in line with the requirements of the funding institution and in line with UT/ITC standards 4. Archive and share experiences about the project   **Contract management**   1. Prepares contracts needed within the project framework   **Monitoring and Evaluation**   1. Documenting Theory of Change 2. Carrying out mid-term and end-of-project evaluation and impact assessment | PSO  PSO  PSO, SEC  PSO, SEC  PSO, SEC  PSO  PSO  PSO  PSO, PA  PSO, PA  PSO, PA  PSA, PA  PSO, SEC  PSO, SEC  PSO, SEC  PSO, SEC  PSO  PSO, SEC  PSO, SEC  PSO, SEC  PSO, SEC  PSO  PSO, PO  SPO  SPO, MCD |  |  |
| **Post-Project Phase** | | | |
| 1. Archiving project documentation 2. Preparation of project reference form, show cases, Internet and other publications 3. Post-project impact assessment (after 1, 3, 5 years) | PSO, PO, SEC  PSO, PO, SEC, SPO  SPO, MCD |  |  |

**Questions and issues to be solved:**

*When we count on support from PA’s or secretarial staff, how much time is available there ? Is this sufficient or do we have to build in some flexibility here ? How could we do that (a flexible shell that we can call on (ZZP, other)) ?*

*It is essential to make an assessment of the capacity that is available within the Faculty for this kind of support. Possibilities for full support packages by Project Support Officers is limited when it has to be provided by currently employed staff. Also available capacity from other sources (i.e. Central and Departmental Secretarial Support) is limited. Only when funding is reserved in project budgets is there a possibility to hire additional support staff.*

*One of the questions is what funding is available in the project budget. Do we always need to have full funding through the project budget or are there things that the Faculty can provide regardless ?*

*We can make this part of the project design discussion. Funding issue to be discussed already before the project starts so that we have this clear and we do not run into problems a la GEOCAP afterwards.*

*In how far do we want to facilitate scientific staff in order to entice them to do projects (and then preferably aiming for a balance between non-profitable such as NOW, and profitable (i.e. H2020, werk voor derden, etc) ? We want to balance the portfolio; do we want to do this within the Faculty or within each individual Department ?*

* *Scenario 1: 3 NWO projects in one Department (or across Departments). Scientific staff is involved for a significant part of their time. Does this qualify for (shared) support ? I.e. do we want to set up some sort of central support for efforts like that ? Are they important and prestigious enough to justify investment from ITC base funding, or does this have to come from own (Departmental) secretarial support ?*
* *Scenario 2: Projects such as GEOCAP, SEALAN, ITS4Land but no reservations made in budget: Does ITC support these projects from its own resources ?*

*Also: document results of such discussions for transparency and future reference ….*

*Keep proper record of what has been discussed and decided. This can be in the form of (approved) minutes but necessary for future reference. Sounds very formal but these arrangements need to be recorded somehow.*

1. Funding space must be made visible in the internal budget and must be visible in the VOCA [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Based on the tasks of the Project Support Officer, as defined in Governance of Capacity Development [↑](#footnote-ref-2)