

# Discussion Paper:

## Project Management - role and responsibilities

### 1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this discussion paper is to define the role of the Project Management (PM) function and the type of PM support services that will be offered to academic staff. In addition, the paper will define the key activities and responsibilities of the PM function based on a typical European collaborative project and within the current RSS support structure.

It is expected that certain PM responsibilities / tasks may vary depending on the type of European funding programme and the individual call of proposals. The aim will be to make the proposed PM service also available to other large complex projects e.g. European Structural Funds, EuropeAid, RCs.

Once the PM service is defined, a separate report will examine and evaluate the options of providing the service either by a single UNIMAN PM team that will work across all faculties, an external consultancy or a combination of the two.

### 2.0 Scope of the proposed PM service

In the European Framework Programme, the coordinator refers to the partner institution which has a very specific role amongst the participants in a given project. The coordinator signs the Grant Agreement directly with the EC and has to collect and submit to the EC the accession forms of the other beneficiaries. An important task for the coordinator is to "*monitor the compliance by participants [beneficiaries] with their obligations under this grant agreement*" which includes the participants' obligations regarding IPR, dissemination and use issues. [Article 25 of the Rules for Participation in FP7 outlines the tasks that the coordinator will be responsible for](#). In addition, Article II 2.3 of the ECGA (European Commission Grant Agreement) defines the tasks that the project coordinator is responsible for when representing the whole consortium to the EC.

On a typical European collaborative project, the execution of the coordinator's role will require the involvement of a team of individuals from the respective institution. These are as follows:

- a. Project Leader (senior academic who is the Principal Investigator (PI)): Key responsibilities include the planning, management and monitoring of the research work.
- b. Senior Researcher (this role is optional): The PI may want to delegate some of his/her tasks to a senior researcher who will assist in the running of the research work. This role is recommended in cases when the PI is participating in multiple research projects.

- c. Project Manager (administrative): The basic purpose of PM is to ensure the proper level of coordination and cooperation amongst the project consortium partners. Project management activities include non-technical tasks that support the consortium as a whole and not any administrative tasks of the individual partners. The amount of project management effort usually depends on the size of the project. Key responsibilities include providing advice and instruction to project team members and partners on financial and management reporting requirements, gather information required for financial and management reporting, monitor budget against expenditure and other contractual obligations, risk and conflict management, IPR and patent management, organisation and facilitation of project meetings, workshops and conferences and set up and maintenance of communication structures. .
- d. Research finance: Responsible for financial reporting.
- e. EU Funding and Development Manager: Key responsibilities include contract negotiation, providing advice on contractual issues and financial regulations and liaising with the EC to resolve project issues.

The proposed project will examine in detail the role of the Project Manager (administrative) and its key interactions with the other internal stakeholders e.g. PI, Senior Researcher, Research Finance, EU Funding & Development and external stakeholders like the EC.

### **3.0 EC Funded coordinated project - life cycle**

The PM service will be made available to academic staff who wish to prepare and lead a European proposal as a coordinator. Appendix 1 shows the entire project life cycle stages.

The PM service will include the provision of project management support at the early stages of a project's life cycle i.e. Proposal preparation stage. PM support at this stage will be complementary to the research support that is currently provided by RSS. The PM's contribution will be to provide advice on the Implementation part of the proposal e.g. management structure and project planning. The cost of project management support at these stages will not be recovered either from successful or unsuccessful proposals. The current service will not include hands-on preparation of the non-scientific parts of the proposal i.e. writing the Implementation section of the proposal and coordinating the preparation of the Impact section.

In addition, project management will be offered at the Negotiation, Kick-off & Implementation and Completion stages. The cost of project management effort will be recovered from the project's budget. The PM will also be expected to participate and assist in the Audit stage which will be led by the project's respective Faculty Research Finance Office.

The PM service will also set-up a process for assessing and evaluating its management processes and practices.. It is proposed that after the closure of every project, the PM service conducts a short survey to assess and evaluate its service performance for that particular project. The PM assessment and evaluation will review existing practices and identify lessons learned, bottlenecks that need to be resolved and communicate to RSS any possible problem areas that need to be addressed. This exercise will also identify training requirements for PM and other staff.

#### **4.0 Why a PM function? – key benefits**

The main justification for providing a PM service will be to remove the barriers that academic staff are facing when deciding to lead and coordinate research projects. The ultimate aim of the PM service will be to enable a greater number of academic staff to lead and coordinate European projects and consequently increase the number of UNIMAN led projects and overall research funding from EC funding sources.

The main benefits to UNIMAN will be as follows:

- Leading a project provides an opportunity to shape the proposal from its initial stage and select the partners that are best suited to the project.
- By forming the core group of partners who will take the proposal forward, the coordinator is brought into direct contact with the EC and the EC project officer. This may prove beneficial for future projects, as the coordinator will be in a strong position to know EC's thinking and priorities on future calls and projects.
- Successful coordination of a proposal raises the profile and credibility of the leading partner and the consortium.
- Allows the PI of the coordinated project to focus solely on the scientific aspects of the project.
- Management and coordination brings in additional funding to the University.
- The PM capability will remove a considerable portion of the administrative burden of EU project management from the coordinating scientists.
- PM resource will be provided at short notice and for the whole duration of the project.
- An organised and structured PM function will enable the development and application of best practice project management methods.

## **5.0 Project Management Services**

Depending on the overall requirements and the available budget for management, the proposed PM service will be able to offer guidance, advice, support and a project management capability tailored around the requirements of the individual project.

The proposed PM capability will offer a range of services throughout the project life cycle. An attempt has been made to identify the key consortium tasks/activities of a typical collaborative European funded project in order to define the key PM responsibilities and interfaces both internal and external to the university. The PM tasks and activities are listed in Appendix 2.

The proposed project management function will offer the following services:

### **5.1 Proposal Preparation**

If and when required, the team of Project Managers will provide guidance and advice to PIs who intend to lead and coordinate a European research proposal. The project management support will be specific and limited only to guidance and advice on project impact, implementation and finances. The service that will be provided will be complementary to the support service that is already provided by the Faculty European Funding and Development team.

There will be a maximum amount of effort that the project management team will be able to allocate to these tasks, as the cost for such support will not be recovered by the successful proposals. The maximum level of effort that will be allocated to these activities will be determined at a later stage of this project.

### **5.2 Project Negotiation**

The project coordinator will receive an Evaluation Summary Report and if successful the EC will invite the coordinator to project negotiation. The assigned project manager will act on behalf of the PI and will formally engage with the project partners to undertake any necessary tasks that are required by the Faculty EU Funding and Development team (RSS) to complete the negotiation stage of the proposal.

### **5.3 Project administration**

The assigned project manager will undertake a wide range of project administration activities during the negotiation stage to project completion. These will also be determined by the Consortium Agreement which will outline how the consortium will be managed and how certain issues that may arise during the project will be addressed by the consortium.

The PM function will provide flexible support based on the needs of the individual project and PI. Typical tasks in project management are:

### **5.3.1 General Consortium Management**

The PM will undertake all tasks and activities that relate to the management of the consortium. The PM will ensure that all the partners comply with their obligations under the grant agreement and the consortium agreement. The PM will:

- Manage any Intellectual Property and confidentiality considerations.
- Support the PI and the consortium members to manage conflict resolution.
- Manage other activities included in the Consortium Agreement and ECGA annexes except the coordination of research and technological development activities.
- Liaise with the UNIMAN EU Funding and Development team with regard to the maintenance of the various agreements and the drafting of sub-contracts.

### **5.3.2 EC Reporting**

Reports must be prepared by the coordinator using information supplied by the partners. The PM will ensure that all the financial and management reports are complete, reviewed and also work with the PI to coordinate the preparation of the scientific report and any other required reports (Periodic and Final reports). The PM will be the central contact point for any queries that may arise before or after the submission of the reports and inform the PI of any issues that may arise. The PM will coordinate the responses to any questions of the EC and ensure that the reports are approved.

### **5.3.3 Financial Management**

The PM will provide Financial Management support at the proposal stage by collating partners' budgets and assisting in the preparation of the project budget. At later stages of the project the PM in collaboration with Research Finance will be responsible for the calculation of the pre-financing to be distributed to all partners, the on-going monitoring project spending and ensuring that the project is completed on time and on budget and manage any associated risks to project expenditure.

## **5.4 Consortium communication**

The PM will organise all the consortium scheduled meetings, pre-agree meeting agendas and facilitate all other internal communications like website, videoconferencing meetings etc. The PM will also work with the PI to ensure any conflicts or problems are resolved amongst the partners according to the terms agreed in the consortium agreement.

The PM will:

- Organise internal meetings and events e.g. management and scientific meetings, audit preparation meetings.
- Liaise between the Steering Committee and the WP leaders/coordinators.
- Set up of communications, including the setup and maintenance of collaboration software, project websites and the organisation of project meetings and reviews.

### **5.5 Monitoring of project progress.**

The PM will work with the PI and consortium partners and assist in the development of a detailed workplan on how to achieve the project deliverables. Throughout the duration of the project the PM will monitor the workplan and inform the PI about any deviations. With large, complex projects it is expected that the PM will also be assisted by the person/partner who will have technical/scientific management responsibility of the project (this may be the PI or any of the other project partners). Overall the PM will undertake to:

- Assist the consortium to develop and apply a quality assurance process for all project deliverables.
- Monitor the project milestones, on-going tasks and resource consumption.

### **5.6 Coordination with other EC funded projects and other interested parties.**

The PM will be the central point of contact for external contacts. The PM will:

- Coordinate the interactions, exchange and sharing of information with other related research projects.
- Liaise and coordinate activities with members of the external advisory board.

### **5.7 Dissemination of project results**

#### **5.7.1 List of publications**

With EU-funded projects, the coordinator is obliged under the GA provisions to submit a full list of all the publications that relate to the foreground of the project as part of the final project report. The PM will keep a record of all publications on an on-going basis and compile a full list for submission.

#### **5.7.2 'Open Access Pilot'**

The PM will be responsible for assisting the PI and the consortium in setting up the process for implementing the 'Open Access Pilot'. Under the Open Access pilot, FP7 grant recipients in seven areas (energy, environment, health, information and communication technologies [only cognitive systems, interaction, and robotics], research infrastructures [only e-infrastructures], science in society, and socioeconomic sciences and humanities) are expected to:

- Deposit peer-reviewed research articles or final manuscripts resulting from their FP7 projects into an online repository;
- Ensure open access to these articles within either 6 months (health, energy, environment, information and communication technologies, research infrastructures) or 12 months (science in society, socioeconomic sciences and humanities) after publication.

### **5.8 Dissemination workpackage (where applicable)**

In some collaborative projects the consortium partners agree that the dissemination work package (WP) will be undertaken either by the project coordinator or by one of the project partners.

Where the PM function is required to undertake the execution of the Dissemination WP, this will need to be agreed at the Proposal Preparation stage as it will depend on the availability of PM resource and the complexity of the dissemination tasks i.e. the dissemination tasks may require specialist skills which the PM service will not be able to offer.

## **6.0 Project Management interfaces**

### **6.1 Internal**

- RSS

The PM function will act on behalf of the PI to work with the Faculty EU Funding and Development team and Research Finance. There are a number of consortium management tasks / activities that will be undertaken by RSS – these are listed in Appendix 3.

- PM service assessment and evaluation

The PM service will interface with RSS, academic and administrative staff when it assesses and evaluates its service performance for that particular project. One of the outcomes of this exercise will be to communicate to RSS any possible problem areas that need to be addressed and identify training requirements for PM and other staff.

### **6.2 External**

- European Commission: It is represented by the Project Officer who is responsible for project negotiation, the on-going monitoring of the project and the processing of finances.
- Consortium Partners / Beneficiaries: The consortium partners will sign the Grant Agreement and will receive grant funding for their participation to the project.

- **Third Parties:** These are organisations which do not sign the grant agreement and can either make resources available to the project or do part of the work as a subcontractor.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

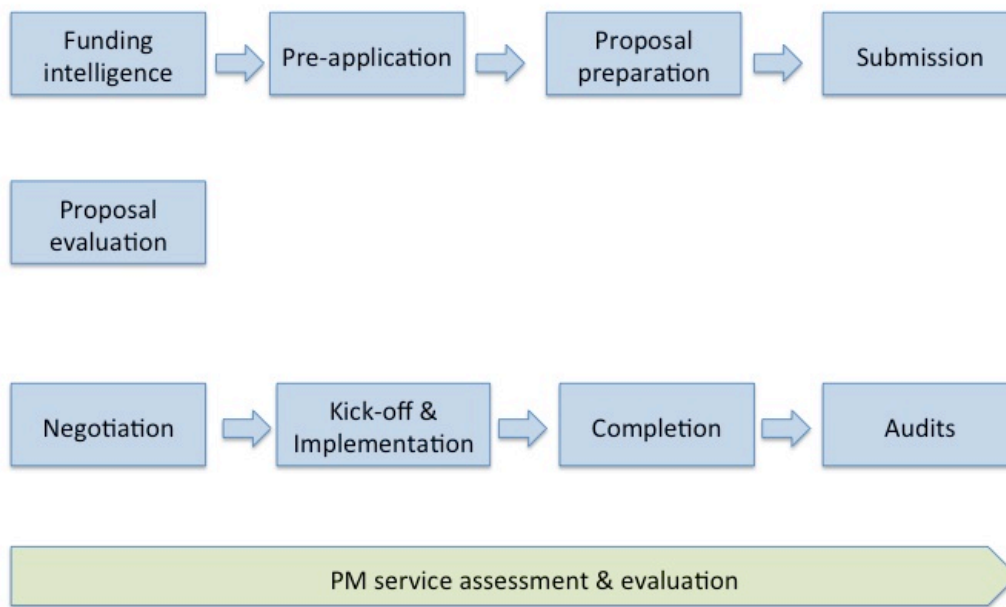
It is proposed that the University of Manchester develops a project management service that will undertake the coordination and cooperation amongst a project's consortium partners. Although the proposal has not yet examined whether the PM service will be provided by a university based team, external consultancies or a combination of the two, there are a number of recommendations around the proposed PM role and responsibilities that will need to be considered:

1. The role and responsibilities of the PM service will need to be communicated and agreed with the PI prior to accepting full responsibility for managing a project. The consortium tasks/activities and any alterations will form part of a pre-agreement between the PM function and the PI.
2. The PM service at the pre-proposal stage will be limited to the tasks and activities listed in Appendix 2. The level of support will be constrained by the PM effort that will be made available for this purpose and which will be defined at a later stage in this project. The PM service will complement the support that is already provided by the EU funding and Development team.
3. The proposed PM service will need to be flexible to adapt to specific project or programme requirements e.g. European and non-European funded projects. Also, alternative options will need to be considered for any required PM skills or knowledge that may not be available e.g. if possible, allocate the tasks to a consortium partner, appoint a PM with the required skills, use of an external consultancy.
4. The effective and efficient undertaking of the role of PM will not only depend on the clear definition of the role on the development of efficient and consistent processes throughout the project cycle across the whole University. It is recommended that the PM service has an input into the EU Operations Group's work when reviewing any support processes that are particularly relevant to coordinated projects and address any gaps in knowledge and skills.



## Appendix 1

### EC FUNDED PROJECT LIFE CYCLE



## Appendix 2: Consortium project management tasks / activities

Project stage	European Project Management Tasks	PM service
<b>Proposal Preparation stage</b>	P1. Contribute to management/governance structure & project management aspects of the DoW.	Proposal Preparation
	P2. Provide proposal advice on project risk assessment & mitigation strategy	Proposal Preparation
	P3 Advise and assist coordinator / PI on preparation of Gantt chart; wording and timing of Deliverables and Milestones	Proposal Preparation
	P4 Liaise with RSS on calculations of person-months; advise and assist coordinator	Proposal Preparation
	P5. Provide cost for project management and provide project budget advice to the PI.	Proposal Preparation
<b>Negotiation stage</b>	N1. Liaise with project partners at negotiation stage in response to the Evaluation Summary Report	Project Negotiation
	N2. Prepare jointly with EU Faculty & Dev. team the Grant Preparation Form (GPF) for UoM and obtain relevant authorised signatures	Project Negotiation
	N3. Check, collate and submit Grant Preparation Forms from all beneficiaries through portal	Project Negotiation
	N4. Liaise with PI to ensure changes to Technical Annex are made and uploaded to portal.	Project Negotiation
	N5. Provide project budget advice to the PI (if required). Ensure any revised budget is uploaded.	Project Negotiation
	N6. Liaise with the EC Project Officer to assist the PI with any revisions of Part B of the proposal.	Project Negotiation
<b>Kick-off stage</b>	K1. Collect Grant Agreement accession signatures and return to UNIMAN EU Funding & Development (Grant Agreement accession procedure – Forms A)	Project Administration
	K2. Advise partners on EC rules, regulations and reimbursement method.	Project Administration
	K3. Collect partners' banking details	Project Administration
	K4. Collect and collate partners' legal, financial and scientific contact details	Project Administration
	K5. Calculate of pre-financing to be distributed	Project Administration
	K6. Preparation of pre-financing distribution memo (having it checked by EU Funding & Dev. team)	Project Administration
	K7. Collecting details for CA from all partners and send these to EU Funding & Development Manager	Project Administration
	K8. Ethical Approval (if needed)	Project Administration
	K9. Assistance with the recruitment of project staff	Project Administration
	K10. Arrange the set-up of project website	Consortium communication
	K11. Set up project management tools/communication system (e.g. Dropbox, or ProjectPlace) & arrange access to partners.	Consortium communication
	K12. Presentation to project Kick-off meeting (Requires Travel Budget) advising PIs on all management issues (finance, timesheets, reporting periods, reimbursement, time-lines, Deliverables and	Consortium communication

	Milestones, etc.)	
<b>Implementation stage *</b>	I1. Advise partners on distribution of next / final EC contribution	Project Administration
	I2. EC Reporting: Communicate with partners' PIs & response to queries	Project Administration
	I3. EC Reporting: Communicate with partners' administrators & response to queries	Project Administration
	I4. EC Reporting: Communicate with EC Project Officer on behalf of project	Project Administration
	I5. EC Reporting: Communicate with EC Financial Officer on behalf of project	Project Administration
	I6. EC reporting: use portal templates and instructions	Project Administration
	I7. EC reporting: contribute to management section	Project Administration
	I8. EC reporting: collect and check Form C, advising PI's finance staff of any changes; collate financial reports and audit certificates	Project Administration
	I9. Organise, attend & contribute to Steering Committee meetings and other consortium meetings (Requires Travel Budget)	Consortium communication
	I10. Attend & contribute to EC Project reviews (Requires Travel Budget)	Consortium communication
	I11. Organise and participate in weekly/monthly/quarterly management meetings e.g. teleconferences	Consortium communication
	I12. Maintain and update project management tools (e.g. Dropbox, or ProjectPlace)	Consortium communication
	I13. Maintain and update project website	Consortium communication
	I14. Monitoring progress of project activities (e.g. via 3 or 6 months progress reports)	Monitoring project progress
	I15. Monitor budget implementation and expenditure (e.g. via 3 or 6 months progress reports, including analysis and advice to PI and project partners)	Project Administration
	I16. Check that partner requests to move money between activities are reasonable; liaise with EC Project Officer.	Project Administration
	I17. Adjust the budget distribution between beneficiaries (as required)	Project Administration
	I18. Ethical monitoring	Project Administration
	I19. IPR: Liaise with the EU Funding & Development Manager and partners in order to coordinate the preparation of an IPR agreement.	Project Administration
	I20. Liaise with PI and Steering Committee regarding under-performance of partners, delays with deliverables, disputes between partners, etc.	Consortium Communication
	I21. Liaise and coordinate with EU Funding & Development Manager in order to prepare Grant Agreement amendments including collation of all necessary documents.	Project Administration
	I22. Assist the PI and the consortium with the accession of new partners, including the selection procedure	Project Administration
	I23. Collect / collate all the necessary paperwork when a new partner joins or leaves / relocates.	Project Administration
	I24. Submit a full list of publications relating to foreground of the project as part of the final project report.	Dissemination
	I25. Ensure that all GA obligations under 'Open Access Pilot' are met.	Dissemination

<b>Completion stage</b>	C1. Collect and collate information from all partner PIs for final report	Project Administration
	C2. Complete on-line EC questionnaires (gender, social, impact, etc.)	Project Administration
	C3. End of project: draw up proposal to consider re-allocation of any under-spend to partners who over-spent	Project Administration
<b>Audits stage</b>	A1. Liaise with RSS and assist with any end-of-project internal audit (i.e. UNIAC)	Project Administration
	A2. Assist with any EC-appointed audit (N.B. this can occur any time up to 5 years after the distribution of the final reimbursement payment)	Project Administration

\* The list of PM tasks does not include dissemination tasks that form part of the project's Dissemination WP.

### Appendix 3: Consortium project management tasks / activities performed by RSS in UNIMAN

Project stage	European Project Management Tasks	Performed by
<b>Proposal Preparation stage</b>	P1. Set up proposal on research participant portal. Contact partners and request PIC codes	RSM and PI
	P2. Provide proposal advice on Intellectual Property issues	EU F&D
	P3. Check budget compliance against UNIMAN and EC rules	RSMs and EU F&D
	P4. Provide UNIMAN costs	RSM
<b>Negotiation stage</b>	N1. EU Funding & Dev. Mgr checks UNIMAN GPF details and provides UNIMAN bank details.	EU F&D
	N2 Identify and communicate any special terms & conditions	RSM
	N3. Ensure that Part A of the proposal is correct	EU F&D
<b>Kick-off stage</b>	K1. Set up UNIMAN budgets and issue grant account code	RSM
	K2. EU F&D arranges project bank accounts set-up with Research Finance	EU F&D
	K3. Check pre-financing distribution memo	EU F&D
	K4. EU F&D instructs Central Finance to distribute payments to partners	EU F&D
	K5. Distribution of pre-financing payments	Research Finance
	K6. Draft and negotiate Consortium Agreement with partners	EU F&D
<b>Implementation stage</b>	I1. Monitor and check UNIMAN's budget expenditure	Research Finance
	I2. IPR: advise on management of authorship, ownership, access rights, protection and licensing	EU F&D
	I3. Negotiating with partners regarding changes to the Consortium Agreement	EU F&D
	I4. Provide guidelines and drafting of documents sub-contracting/tenders	EU F&D
	I5. Provide guidance with/drafting of documents on confidentiality agreements/Memoranda of understanding/Material Transfer Agreements:	EU F&D
	I6. Work with the PI and Project Manager to finalise Grant Agreement amendments e.g. new partner joins or leaves.	EU F&D