PROJECT INITIATION DOCUMENT - Support for Project Management

1.0 Background

The project management of projects, especially large collaborative EC funded projects, requires the hosting institution to employ a dedicated project manager to take responsibility for all administrative tasks. Smaller collaborative projects require less administrative effort and i.e. a percentage of a FTE. The project manager (PM) is responsible for the day-to-day coordination of the project and works in close collaboration with the Faculty/School RSS administration.

A need to review the current project management practices at the University of Manchester has arisen due to the following issues:

a. There is a widespread view amongst academic staff that the University does not provide adequate support for the coordination of European projects. This acts as a deterrent to academic staff who may wish to initiate new projects and control the formation of the consortium and scientific research.

b. The potential (and real) loss of experienced project managers to specific projects, and to the University, at (or in some cases before) the end of a project due to a lack of institutional forward planning, coordination and bridging capability.

c. The potential for inefficiency and greater risk exposure due to the substantial variation of project manager roles and a lack of consistent interface arrangements with RSS administrative support.

The University needs to develop an approach which can provide greater assurance to Principal Investigators (PIs) about the availability of suitably skilled project managers for their proposed projects. Informal attempts are currently made to address this issue by networking project managers and 'match making' between the pipeline of new projects and the expiry of current project manager roles. However, with no formal control over the deployment of project managers or budget assigned to advance, recruit or bridge staff between projects, this informal approach can only ever be limited in its effectiveness.

In order to address these deficiencies, the SLT has requested that a 12 month project is set-up to examine the development of a project management service.

2.0 Objectives

- Design and introduce an in-house project management service specialising in (but not exclusively to) EC funded projects and apply project management best practice. This will include:

a. Define role and responsibilities of the PM function in relation to the existing support structure for EC funded projects
b. Develop a business case for PM service; identify costs and resources required over 5 years and develop a projection of cost recovery. The business case will also include the recommended governance structure of the proposed service as the appropriate person roles will need to be included in the overall costs.
c. Define the job specification of the person(s) who will be assigned to undertake the role of PM.

- Evaluate the option of using external consultancies to provide project management services in order to be able to meet excess demand for project management.

- Develop a university policy with regard to the requirement for PIs to make use of the proposed project management service.

3.0 Scope

The project will develop a project management service primarily for European collaborative projects. This however will not exclude expansion of the role of the PM service into other types of projects and funders.

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 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))
b. Senior Researcher (this role is optional).
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. The PM liaises with the Faculty/School RSS administration and is the formal interface to the EC (Project Officer).
d. Research finance.
e. European Funding & Development Manager

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, European Funding & Development Managers
and external stakeholders like the EC.

The project will not attempt to change the role or design new processes for any other support roles as this falls within the responsibility of the University's new RSS structure.

The PM service will also include the provision of project management support at the early stages of a project's life cycle e.g. Proposal preparation and will supplement the support that is currently provided by the RSS. The proposed PM service will be required to determine the cost and level of resources that will be made available for this purpose. The cost for providing this type of support will not be recovered and will therefore need to be built into the business case for the proposed project management service.

The PM service will be made available to academic staff who are awarded a EC project, provided that the cost of the project management effort is included in the project budget. Project management will be offered at the post-award stages of a European project life cycle i.e. the Negotiation, Implementation & Reporting and Project Completion stages. The PM service will need to consider when it 'closes' a project as there are requests to deal with problems and investigations long after the completion of the project

4.0 Business Case (Benefits and Costs)

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 main advantages to the University of coordinating EC funded projects are 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.

- Management and coordination brings in additional funding to the University.

4.1 In-house Vs Outsource project management

There are two options that the university has considered to provide a PM service for EC funded projects:

4.1.1 In-house project management

Currently coordinated projects in Manchester recruit their own project managers. This can only be done when an individual project can justify the recruitment of a FTE or a School recruits a project manager to manage a number of small projects.

Alternatively the university can develop its own project management capability which can be allocated to coordinated projects from a central pool of project managers as and when it is needed. This can be organised as a centralised team which will support all faculties and schools if and when it is required. Project managers are not required to have specific scientific expertise although having a high level of understanding of scientific objectives and goals of any given research project can help develop good communication with the partners.

Advantages:

- Develop and retain skills and expertise for future use.
- Project managers will be part of a team. This will enable them to learn from each other and apply best project management practice.
- Able to cost and name specific project managers at application stage.
- Funding intelligence, contacts, business relationships are maintained and can be revisited in the future when applying for new funding.
- Develop close contact with other European administrators will encourage the use of best practice processes and improvement of UNIMAN internal processes.
- Cost recovery is 100% of total recoverable costs as opposed to 75% for research.
- Academic staff will prefer working with university colleagues with whom they have already a working relationship.

Disadvantages:

- Difficult to cope with demand peaks as it takes time to recruit new staff.
- Need to train staff on EC funding developments.
- Risk of not having all project management staff allocated to EC funding projects i.e. have excess capacity.

4.1.2 Outsource project management

The second option is to partner with one or more companies which provide a project management service to EC funded projects. For collaborative projects, UNIMAN will require to invite the outsource company to become a partner in the consortium earlier on before the proposal is submitted.

Advantages:

- Project management resource can be made available at the start of the project; no need to wait 2-3 months after the start date to recruit a project manager.
- Availability is not dependent upon excess capacity.
- Availability of experienced staff; no need to invest in training.
- It will be easier to deal with the problem of low quality project management as change of project manager can be negotiated fairly quickly.

Disadvantages:

- The university will need to allocate management time to manage the relationship with the provider of the outsource project management services.
- The external provider will not be familiar with the university's internal EC funding processes.
- Project management skills will not be retained internally.
- The university will not benefit from EC contacts that will be made during the project.
- The university will depend on external consultants to give feedback information which will be necessary in order to improve and redesign its internal support processes.

4.2 Proposed Project Management Service

The project will examine the establishment of a project management service and will consider both the in-house single team approach, the use of external consultants or a combination of the two. The proposed PM service will support all faculties and schools and will be able to allocate dedicated project management effort to coordinated projects as and when it is needed.

The SLT has already indicated that a single project management team approach will be most appropriate given the disadvantages of the outsource option. It is recognised however that the use of external consultants as contractors in certain circumstances may be necessary to cope with unexpected demand peaks.

The service will also design a process for the support and evaluation of requests for project management.

4.2.1 Risks of the proposed project management service

a. The budget cost for project management does not always reflect the actual cost for managing the project. e.g. due to issues that arise which require considerable effort to resolve e.g. conflict resolution.

b. Required to deal with requests and investigations long after the end of the project which may have an impact on overall budgeted support cost.

c. There is not sufficient demand for the project management service to ensure the full utilisation of all employed project managers.

5.0 Project structure and organisation

- Project sponsor: Krishna Persaud
  The Project Sponsor will provide guidance and support to the Project Manager and will champion the project to the faculties and schools.

- Project Board:
    a) Faculty of EPS: Krishna Persaud
    b) Faculty of MHS: Chris Todd
    c) Faculty of FLS: Werner Muller
    d) Faculty of Humanities: Jakob Edler / Deborah Cox
    e) Research Finance: Sally McGill
    f) Regional & Economic Affairs: Sally Sagar
    g) Research Support Services (RSS): Ann Fretwell

  The Project Board consist of representatives from the key stakeholders e.g. the four Faculties, Regional Affairs, Research Finance and Research Support Services (RSS). The role of the Project Board will be to advise and guide the project manager and sponsor in the design and implementation of the project. The Project Board members will also ensure that the project aligns with the strategic objectives and direction of their own faculties, schools and teams.

- Project Manager: Constantinos Astreos
  The project will have a Project Manager working full time (Constantinos Astreos). The role of the Project Manager is to manage the project and ensure it delivers its goals and deliverables.

6.0 Stakeholders (see Stakeholder Analysis document)

The Stakeholder Analysis in Appendix 1 provides details of the stakeholders' involvement and interests in the project. The following stakeholders have been identified:

- SLT
- URG
- Academic staff
- Faculty RSS team
- Faculty Research Finance team

- Faculty EU support team
- Regional Affairs

7.0 Assumptions

- The pre-award support processes will be further improved and additional resources will be allocated to grow the portfolio of coordinated projects across all Schools.

- Development of efficient and consistent post award process across the whole university.

8.0 Constraints

- The proposed project will focus entirely on the project management function and not on other areas of project support that fall under the responsibilities of other teams in RSS.

- The Grant Agreement and Article 25 of the Rules for Participation in FP7 (similar rules are expected under Horizon 2020) define the main responsibilities of the coordinator institution.

9.0 Risks

The risk register in Appendix 2 lists the main risks, risk rating and mitigating actions. The risk register will be reviewed and updated throughout the duration of the project and will be the responsibility of the project manager Constantinos Astreos.

10.0 Milestones and Deliverables

The GANTT chart in Appendix 3 lists the tasks, deliverables and milestones for the project.

10.1 Milestones

PLANNING PHASE

- Agree PID with Project Board (end Feb)

DESIGN PHASE

- Approval of Business case / budget/governance (end May)

- Discuss and agree at PB the policy regarding the use of PM service by PIs (July)
- Discuss and agree at PB the option of using external consultants (July)

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

- Obtain approval for PM service implementation by SLT and URG. (October)
- Launch PM service. (November)

10.2 <u>Deliverables</u>

- Produce FINAL PID document (Feb)
- Report on the definition of the role of the project manager (participation in project phases), key responsibilities (in detail).
- Business case report
- Policy document regarding the use of the PM service by PIs.
- Report on evaluation of external consultants
- Job description for staff that will provide project management
- Development of a training programme for PMs.

APPENDIX 1: RISK REGISTER

DATE	DESCRIPTION OF RISK	LIKELIHOOD (1-5)	IMPACT (1-5)	RISK RATING	ACTION
31/01/2013	1. Take longer than originally estimated to complete the project	3	4	12	Regular review of plan; business case completion to be of high priority
31/01/2013	2. Implementation takes longer than originally planned	3	2	6	Priority will be given to inform academics that the service will be available when they prepare proposals for Horizon 2020 beginning of 2014
31/01/2013	3. The proposal is not accepted by all faculties and academic staff	2	4	8	Consultation will take place at PB level to ensure that concerns and requirements are taken into account when designing the service. Plan to brief academic staff with School visits

Appendix 2: Stakeholder Analysis

Project Title: Support for Project Management

Stakeholder	Stake in the Project	Potential Impact on Project	Expectations of the Stakeholder	Perceived attitudes and/or risks	Stakeholder Management Strategy	Responsibility
SLT	Decision making team which provides strategic leadership and direction to administration procedures	High	Expected to provide final approval of project recommendations and give green light for its implementation	Need clear outline of benefits, financial implications, risks.	Regular update of progress through the Director of RSBE	Project Sponsor and Project Manager
URG	Ensure that the project aligns with the university's research strategic priorities	High	Approval of proposal and recommendations	Take-up of the service by academic staff and utilization of all project management staff	Provide update of progress by attending the URG meetings	Project Sponsor and Project Manager
Project Sponsor	Potential user of the service;	High	Will provide guidance and support to the Project Manager		Communicate regularly with the project manager via email and meetings	Project manager

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			and will champion the project to the faculties and schools.			
Project Board	Represent faculties/teams which have an interest in removing barriers of leading EC projects and introduce best practice on PM	High	Will provide guidance and support and ensure the project aligns with their faculty/team strategic priorities	How the service will interact with existing support structure	Hold brief meetings and distribute draft of deliverables to be discussed with project sponsor and project manager.	Project Sponsor and Project Manager
Faculty EU support teams	Will interact with Project management during negotiation stage and on contract management issues	High	Provide feedback on project mgmt service role and areas of interaction	Overlapping of roles and responsibilities	Hold ad-hoc meetings to discuss issues . request feedback on deliverables	Project manager
Faculty EU Research finance teams	Will interact with Project management during post-award stage	High	Provide feedback on project mgmt service role and areas of interaction	Overlapping of roles and responsibilities	Hold ad-hoc meetings to discuss issues and request feedback on deliverables	Project manager

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Regional & Economic Affairs	Potential user of the service where the project is funded from European regional funds.	High	Will provide guidance and support and ensure the project aligns with the University's European regional funding priorities.	Not clear how regional funds will be made available through Horizon 2020.	Represented at the PB.	Project Sponsor and Project Manager

APPENDIX 3: PROJECT PLAN

	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
PLANNING										
Put in place a Project Board	■									
Produce DRAFT PID doc	■									
Agree deliverables & milestones	■									
Visit & evaluate PM service of other univs	■									
Receive feedback from PB		■								
Produce FINAL PID doc (D1)		X								
Agree PID with Project Board (M1)		X								
DESIGN										
Define role of PM		■								
Outline options for PM svc i.e inhouse Vs outsource		■								
Define PM responsibilities		■								
Draft Report (D2)		■								
Send to PB and ask for feeedback			■							
Report final (D2)		X								
Develop process for project mgmt demand forecast		■								
Define selection process for projects		■								
Evaluate future demand for PM			■							
Cost for PM service			■							
Develop budget / financial scenarios (over 5 yrs)				■						
Financial model				■						
Report (D3)				X						
Approval of business case/budget (M2)					X					
Develop a policy regarding the use of PM service by Pis					■					
Review policy with PB & obtain feedback						■				
Discuss and agree at PB M3)						X				
Final policy document (D4)						X				

Task	Timeline
Evaluate option for using external consultants	▮
Present options and ask for feedback	▮
Report (D5)	X
Discuss and agree at PB (M4)	X
Establish risks + contigencies	▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
Measures to mitigate risks	▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
Prepare job descrip. of staff	▮
Job descriptions (D6)	X
Development of a training programme for PMs	▮
Training programme (D7)	X
Prepare Service Description	▮
Final approval by SLT and URG (M5)	X
IMPLEMENTATION	
Employ PO staff	▮
Communicate processes to Faculties & Schools	▮
Launch PM service (M6)	X