ELEMENTS OF GOOD PROJECT MANAGEMENT

PAPERS FROM THE THIRD DAPHNE CONFERENCE

BRUSSELS, 17 APRIL 2007

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FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

ADDRESS BY MS LINA PAPAMICHALOPOULOU, HEAD OF UNIT

I am happy to be able to bring together today all the coordinators and some project partners of the Daphne projects selected in 2006. I take this opportunity to thank all those involved.

The aim of this conference is on the one hand to start up your projects and give you technical, administrative and practical information and instructions for the management of your projects. On the other hand, we also want to give you the opportunity to meet other project coordinators and the Daphne team and share and exchange ideas, good practices and also discuss problems encountered and possible solutions in the field of violence.

Daphne is a programme with high visibility in our Directorate-General Justice, Freedom and Security, but also at the level of the Commission in general. With a relatively modest budget, this may be surprising, but its success lies in the fact that it has been able to show direct impact on a very concrete problem in Europe – violence –which addresses itself directly to the citizen.

Since its creation in 1997, the programme has achieved a very good reputation in terms of its results and the impact of these results on children, young people and women in Europe. The programme has succeeded in giving a response to the problem of preventing violence and supporting victims, which is recognised in all the Member States of the EU.

I am thus very happy to confirm to you that, after ten years of existence, the Daphne Programme will be reinforced in 2007 to allow the Commission to strengthen its actions to combat violence. The new 'Daphne III Programme' will run from 2007 to 2013 with a total budget of EUR 116.85 million. This is an average of EUR 16 million per year, which is a substantial increase. The Daphne III Programme is expected to be adopted in June 2007.

When I speak about successes, I do not speak about the Commission or about us, officials. This success is your success. It is thanks to your tenacity, your devotion, your professionalism and your knowledge that this initiative can have an impact in the fight against violence in Europe. I believe that your efforts will receive increased political support in the years to come both at EU and national level.

I wish you an excellent conference. Please be assured that my team remains committed to assisting you through the implementation of your projects and is always available to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.

INTRODUCTION TO THIS REPORT

MS INGRID BELLANDER-TODINO, DAPHNE PROGRAMME MANAGER

The first Daphne Conference was held in 2005 and a second in 2006. From each of these meetings, the Daphne Programme team collected feedback with a view to making the next conference more useful, relevant and indeed enjoyable than the one before.

On the basis of input from earlier meetings, in 2007 it was decided to use the opportunity of the third Daphne Conference to run four inter-active workshops covering technical areas that, in the past, have proved to be among the most challenging for Daphne project coordinators and partners.

This report, therefore, far from being a simple record of proceedings, can be looked upon as a useful guide to some important elements of project management:

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As the Daphne Programme marks its 10th anniversary in 2007, we continue to pursue our aim to learn and improve and to support all our partners to do the same, so that our efforts to end violence against children, young people and women in Europe succeed.

1. Risk anticipation and management

It is maybe not surprising that, when people think about spending their money -- on a house or a car, for example -- they often think of the upsides and best-case scenario first. But if they are wise, they also take a pretty good look at the downsides, or worst case. Some people, perhaps even the majority, even insure their homes and cars in case something does go wrong.

Unfortunately, too often those designing projects do not plan for any downsides or worst cases at all. It is rare to find a project design that has successfully taken into account the need to insure the project against failure.

The Application Form for Daphne support requires this to be done and yet few projects seem to pay attention to developing a proper risk management plan that includes the identification of risks to the project and its outcomes, the detailing of risk mitigation measures and actions to be taken in the event of a risk being realised.

A risk management plan is critical for all projects and should be something realised by projects during their inception phase. It is not science, but it takes some discipline and some mental activity. It is not a difficult process: it takes one or two brainstorming sessions for each project team to realise the core of a risk management plan. No project should go forward without a risk management plan that clearly elaborates the risks to the success of the project. Far from being something you do just to satisfy EC demands, it is for the good of the project that you prepare for various possible failures. Remember it is public money being spent and from this perspective alone the project deserves to be better insured against failures.

One of the most important reasons for understanding about risk management is that it is truly in the project coordinator and partners' interests to be prepared to manage problems because, when they arise (which they surely will), the EC is not in a position to simply allow wholesale revision of budget or plans to accommodate the failure of a project coordinator to plan adequately and manage risk adequately. Every project carries risks, some more than others, and it is the project managers' role to manage those risks.

The basic concept of risk

Many people do not actually understand the very basic concept of risk. Risks are quite simply all the possible ways in which your project could fail somehow: from simple delays, to changes of staff, to the loss of a partner, to embezzlement by someone on the project team. Here are some of the main risk areas that might befall projects, all of which have in fact occurred in Daphne projects in the past, and for which no adequate risk management plan was in place:

- Management (changes in personnel, excessive workload);
- Partnerships (non-performing partners, loss of partner, communication problems, competency levels). As an example: it is quite incredible to see a two-party project (one organisation in each of two countries) in which the programme planner has not considered the risk of withdrawal of one partner that would of course reduce the project to a single-party, single-country activity and destroy its 'European-ness';
- Funding (shortfall in necessary funding, non-availability of anticipated co-financing, poorly planned budget leading to squeezes/excesses);
- Methodology (no access to informants, data gaps);

- Timetable (delays, problems with non-activity times for example school holidays).

Managing risk

So how do you go about managing risk? Every project should develop a *risk register* which records details of all the risks identified at the beginning and during the life of the project, their grading in terms of likelihood of occurring and seriousness of impact on the project, initial plans for mitigating each high level risk and subsequent results.

A risk register usually includes:

- a unique identifier for each risk;
- a description of each risk and how it will affect the project;
- an assessment of the likelihood it will occur and the possible seriousness/impact if it does occur (low, medium, high);
- a grading of each risk according to a risk assessment table;
- a decision on who is responsible for managing the risk;
- an outline of proposed mitigation actions (preventative and contingency); and, in larger projects
- costings for each mitigation strategy.

This document should be maintained throughout the project and will change regularly as existing risks are re-graded in the light of the effectiveness of the mitigation strategy, and new risks are identified. In smaller projects, the risk register is often used as the Risk Management Plan.

Why would you develop a risk register?

A risk register is developed to:

- provide a useful tool for managing and reducing the risks identified before and during the project;
- document risk mitigation strategies being pursued in response to the identified risks and their grading in terms of likelihood and seriousness;
- provide the project coordinator, steering committee/senior management with a documented framework from which risk status can be reported;
- ensure the communication of risk management issues to key stakeholders;
- provide a mechanism for seeking and acting on feedback to encourage the involvement of the key stakeholders; and
- identify the mitigation actions required for implementation of the risk management plan and associated costings.

When would you develop a risk register?

Initial risks must be identified and graded according to likelihood and seriousness very early in the project. This initial risk assessment, the foundation for the register, should form part of the application to Daphne in the first place. Once the project is approved, the risk register should be more fully developed. A template for a possible risk register follows:

Risk Register Template

<PROJECT TITLE> File No.: <*xxxxxxx*>

Risk Register as at <*Date*>

Project Manager: <*Name*>

Project Scope: *A brief description of the scope of the project*

Rating for Likelihood and Seriousness for each risk			
L	Rated as Low	E	Rated as Extreme (used for seriousness only)
M	Rated as Medium	NA	Not Assessed
H	Rated as High		

Grade: Combined effect of Likelihood/Seriousness					
	Seriousness				
Likelihood		low	medium	high	EXTREME
	low	F	D	C	A
	medium	D	C	B	A
	high	C	B	A	A

Recommended actions for grades of risk	
Grade	**Risk mitigation actions**
A	Mitigation actions to reduce the likelihood and seriousness to be identified and implemented as soon as the project commences.
B	Mitigation actions to reduce the likelihood and seriousness to be identified and appropriate actions implemented during project execution.
C	Mitigation actions to reduce the likelihood and seriousness to be identified and costed for possible action if funds permit.

D	To be noted - no action is needed unless grading increases over time.
F	To be noted - no action is needed unless grading increases over time.

Change to Grade since last assessment			
NEW	New risk	↓	Grading decreased
—	No change to Grade	↑	Grading increased

RISK REGISTER - <*Project Title*> **Last Updated: <*Date*>**

Id	**Description of Risk** **Identify consequences**[1]	**Likelihood**	**Seriousness**	**Grade**	**Change**	**Mitigation Actions**	**Responsible Officer**	**Cost**
1.1	Inadequate funding to complete the project	M	M	B	NEW	Re-scope project, focusing on time and resourcing	Project Manager	NA
1.2	Lack of technical skills in partner	H	H	A	↓	Develop training plan	Consultant	$2000
					↑	Written Assurance from partner	Partner	NA

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[1] In larger projects, the consequences of the threat may not be evident, and noting them under each risk, or in a separate column, can be useful in identifying appropriate mitigation actions.

2. Partnerships

Issues with partnerships are a leading cause of project problems and failures. If you have ever been a partner in a project, you might already have some insight into the difficulties of managing partners (and maybe some sympathy as well!)

It is worth looking at some of the things to remember about partners as you work your way through this project:

A first point to make is that if you go "partner shopping" when you are preparing an application, thinking that it will not matter too much who your partners are and that their name is the important thing, then you should think again. Problems with partners are among the leading areas of failure for projects. If you have gone partner shopping and you do not know who you have really recruited to your project, then it is definitely in your best interests to find out.

In projects the success or failure of partners can underwrite or overturn your success as a project coordinator. You need to involve partners fully in the project. Certainly from the EC's perspective, they want to see partners fully integrated. Projects that operate as single-country projects because partners are not appropriately integrated, or are incapable of the tasks that were envisaged, fail in a very important way – they fail to be European in nature. While a project can be European in many different ways, one important way is the extent and spread of the partnerships across European locations. For this, you need effective partners.

Here are some rules of thumb to guide the involvement of partners:

- involve the partners fully – partners cannot only be involved for their names, or reputations, or for having added a country that made the partnership look good. Someone, at some point, will recognise that this is not a true partnership. The participation of partners must be both full and continuous, and will need to be demonstrated to Daphne evaluators when they make their visits as well as to the EC in the Final Report.
- negotiate the partners' participation, making it as active as possible, including negotiating mechanisms for being in ready communication. It is a good idea to put in place a partner forum of sorts, agreeing to meet on-line for example, or to report by e-mail periodically (often);
- sign agreements as necessary to ensure the full participation of the partners. It is generally advisable to enter into some informal 'coordination' agreement, making sure both parties understand that to coordinate and to be coordinated takes some agreement, some work, and requires that partners surrender some sovereignty on the direction of the project;
- ensure full understanding and consensus, as it should not be taken for granted that you are in fact on the same page as your partners, and it might also be the case -- as has often been the case in the past – that, when you finally get approval for the grant and you receive your money; that the partners had a different idea about their role, or that in fact they do not have the capacity to do as they promised. It is worthwhile considering a partnership agreement to bind partners, not necessarily legally but at least morally.
- put in place means to deal with conflict or disagreement. Of course it is easy to take an autocratic approach and attempt to dictate to partners. But in some such instances the partners in disagreement just walk away because ultimately they know that you are the one responsible for the project, its results, its financial security, and the partnership as a part of all of those things. You will be held accountable to the EC for performance, including finishing the project with the partners you came on board with. You cannot assume a change of partners will simply be agreed by the EC – remember that your application was also considered on the merits of the partnership. A change in partnership is a serious change to the project. Are you ready for managing conflict in your partnership?
- always remember that the EC is looking for you to be able to demonstrate 'European-ness'. Without effective partners, you will struggle to demonstrate this and will be evaluated accordingly. You cannot just drop partners, and you cannot just let them walk away: they are as much a part of the package you submitted to the EC as you are.

Remember, a failed partnership very often means a failed project.

3. Monitoring & Evaluation

There is a distinct lack of responsibility on the part of many project coordinators for monitoring and evaluation of their own projects. Arguably, many do not appreciate how to evaluate their own project – against what criteria, in what framework etc - and this should be a priority for new projects. More projects are seeing the value in external evaluation, but many still do not.

There are a range of myths that exist around monitoring and evaluation in the Daphne context. Let us dispel them now:

1. That evaluation is done by outsiders.
2. That evaluation is something done only after a project ends.
3. That peer review of materials is evaluation.
4. That Daphne does evaluation for your project.

Let us step through these one at a time:

1. Evaluation can be internal and external, formal and informal, and is not done only by outsiders, and is not done only by insiders. It depends on what you want to evaluate and the best way to do that. What is important is that evaluation is programmed and scheduled from the inception of a project. The style can vary, from informal/low-key, to comprehensive. As small projects, coordinators should all set their own level of evaluation style and format and it is not up to anyone to dictate that. What is important is that you consider all the options and agree these within the partnership. Remember that you can combine different kinds of evaluation: some formal and informal, some external and internal.

2. While there are many different forms of monitoring (participatory, external, beneficiary-led, informal,formal etc) and evaluation (performance/output/impact, internal/external etc), at its simplest there are two main types of evaluation for our purposes: formative: with the purpose of improving a project; and summative: with the purpose of judging effectiveness, efficacy, cost, practice etc

Formative evalution

Formative evaluation includes project monitoring visits that the Daphne Programme carries out for each project. In this process, the aim is to be active early and throughout the life of a project to provide information so that an intervention can be appreciated, modified, and improved. You can carry out this kind of formative evaluation within the project, too, and should do so without depending on the Commission. The aim is to focus on whether the project is, or will be carried out as planned. If not; why not and what do you have to do as a result?

Summative evaluation

Summative evaluation is the type most people think of when they hear the word 'evalution' and includes the kind of ex-post evaluations conducted by the Daphne Programme. In this process, the aim is to produce information that can be used to make judgments about the overall success of a project (which is why summative evaluation usually occurs towards the end of a project or after it has finished). You should especially take an honest look at the efficacy of the intervention (whether the idea was right for purpose in the firsr place); efficiency of the project implementation; and cost/value.

3. Many projects seem to feel that having a range of peers (often also friends of the coordinator) assess and give their opinions on materials being produced in a project qualifies as evaluation. It does not. Peer review only provides a quality assurance process for discrete products. Quality assurance is nice; indeed with materials being produced it is essential, since peer acceptance or interest is critical in dissemination and usability, but it is not evaluation. Quality assurance does not tell you how your project is going; does not help manage your performance, does not tell you which in direction your project should go and, at the end of the project quality assurance or peer review, does not tell you what you have achieved with regard to the performance indicators you have set for yourself.

4. Many do not distinguish between evaluations and monitoring conducted by Daphne and for Daphne, and the M&E practices they should employ for their own purposes within their project. The EC, external to your project, periodically sends out experts to monitor your project, and at its conclusion to evaluate your project. This is not duplication and, to be frank, it is not done entirely for you. Although one of the aims of monitoring visits is to give you some support during project implementation by sharing ideas with you, most visits are primarily done for the EC, so that the Commission can be satisfied things are on track (or not) and that the project achieved what the Daphne Programme had hoped. Visits to your project do not take the place of your own evaluation.

Planning project evaluation

The first thing to be done is to decide on the purpose of any evaluation. Ask yourself:

- who is the primary audience?
- how will the results be used?

The answers to these questions will guide you: telling you if you should consider summative or formative, internal or external; formal or informal.

The issues for the project to next consider after determining the purpose and type of evaluation, are: objectives, and indicators.

Project objectives

In order to conduct an evaluation; you need to be really clear from the start about your project objectives.

Technically, objectives are usually categorised three ways: impact, outcome, and process.

- Impact objectives: These focus on change that, in the long-term, is expected to result from project activities, and should correspond to the highest priority goals of the project
- Outcome objectives: These focus on change in knowledge, attitudes, behaviours etc that result from the project activities, and should directly relate to the project's target and beneficiary populations.
- Process objectives: These should specify the actions needed for project implementation and should correspond with the various activities necessary to achieve the intended outcomes and impact.

Evaluation is determining how well and to what extent a project has satisfied these three different kinds of objectives. To do this, you will need to be able to measure using 'indicators'.

Indicators

Many projects do not set up indicators at the start of their project, and it is difficult to attempt to evaluate after the event. It is essential for projects to at least document in quite concrete terms what outcomes they would like to see, and how they will know when they achieve them. For evaluative purposes, it is useful to think of indicators as: measurements that can be used over time to track progress towards the achievement of objectives. Think about them as the answers to the question: "How will I know if...?"

It is not rocket science to define indicators, although many project coordinators seem to be scared to death of them. At the start of the project; working from the project objectives, you need to ask yourselves a series of questions to define your indicators. The bases upon which you should select and then test indicators are described thus:

- **Validity**: the extent to which an indicator is a true measure of the phenomenon
- **Reliability**: the extent to which indicator measurements are consistent and dependable across applications or over time
- **Sensitivity**: the likelihood of change within a reasonable time as a result of successful project activities *without* undue influence of external factors
- **Utility**: the ability to produce information that can be interpreted
- **Usefulness**: specifically how useful the indicator would be in guiding necessary change (generally those that provide early warning are best)

A useful process for generating indicators in social change projects -- where it is often tricky to define indicators because it is not always easy to see what has been achieved -- is the concept of a Hierarchy of Goals.

Consider goals (in the following ascending order) related to:

- *Process* (what were your processes and activities?),
- *Reach* (how far and how high did your message or outreach go?),
- *Information* (what did you learn about targets and beneficiaries?),
- *Impact* (what long-term change did you see as a result of your activities, or contributed to by your activities?)

Once you have your indicators you have essentially set up the paths for your project to follow. You will know you have achieved Goal A when you see Indicators 1,2,3 and 4. Seeing the indicators, though, is an issue in itself, and demands some thought. We have noted that, in social change projects, we sometimes do not see change or the impact of what we have done. While this is true, not all of your indicators in the hierarchy of goals are invisible, and sometimes you can use what are called 'proxy indicators' to demonstrate that you have done all you can to progress towards your objectives.

Seeing indicators demands an information collection plan. You need to understand how to collect information about them – for which you next have to identify your data sources. Ask yourself the question: Where do I find information about my reach, process, information or impact outcomes?

The things to consider in this data gathering exercise are:

- What resources are needed to collect such data?
- When are indicator data needed?

- When can meaningful change in indicators be assessed?

You now have the foundations of M&E. This is, of course, not the end of it.

You then need to follow through – and this is critical because we know everyone is very busy, and so it often slips to the side due to competing demands in project. Warning: do not leave preparing measurement until the end of the project - programme it!

Here are a few simple tips for making sure M&E is not forgotten:

- Establish a routine management information system (MIS) (recording inputs, outputs, outcomes)
- Make one person responsible for keeping the basic MIS updated
- Include evaluation activities in the budget – usually they are underestimated or omitted
- Hold regularly scheduled M&E meetings, or make M&E a standing agenda item in normal meetings
- Make everyone responsible for reporting on their own component's progress against indicators
- Encourage review and revision of the M&E plan – things change. Objectives and indicators can change as projects unfold, as interventions are refined and developed.

BRIAN ISELIN

TOPIC 2: SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Introduction

This paper is intended to provide organisations implementing Daphne II projects with operational, administrative and financial management guidelines. A number of documents are referred to, which can be downloaded from the Daphne website:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/2004_2007/daphne/funding_daphne_en.htm#:

- Guide to Submitting a Grant Application 2006-1;
- Guide to Operational, Administrative and Financial management of a Daphne II Project 2006-1;
- Guidelines on the Final Reports and Accounts;
- Templates for Final Report and Final Financial Statement 2006.

1. Operational management of a project

1.1. Contacts with the Commission

All communication regarding your ongoing project should be made directly to the Daphne management team at the Commission.

The team will during 2007 consist of a Programme Manager (Ms. Ingrid Bellander Todino) and four Project Officers. (At the time of the conference, Ms. Benedetta Turdo is the only Project Officer but, by June 2007, three more officers will be in place).

While the Programme Manager has overall responsibility for the programme, each Project Officer will be responsible for a number of projects which s/he will monitor from start to completion. The relevant Project Officer is thus the main contact point regarding any questions, requests or exchange of information related to your project.

For reasons of clarity, transparency and traceability, the management team prefers receiving written communications (easiest by e-mail, but for more formal communication by letter or fax).

The name of the Project Officer responsible for your particular project will be communicated as soon as the Daphne team is complete. In the meantime, please address all communications to Ms. Ingrid Bellander Todino, Programme Manager, or Ms. Benedetta Turdo, Project Officer:

E-mail: ingrid.bellander-todino@ec.europa.eu

benedetta.turdo@ec.europa.eu.

Telephone: +32-2-298 75 39 (Ingrid) or +32-2-299 97 65 (Benedetta)

Fax: +32-2-298 88 12

By post: European Commission, DG Justice, Freedom and Security, Office LX46 2/155, B-1049 Brussels.

1.2. Visits by the Commission

In addition to internal and external evaluation carried out within the project as part of the project's activities, the Commission itself generally organises external monitoring and ex-post evaluations of projects supported by the Daphne Programme:

(a) Monitoring visits

Your project will probably receive, during the implementation phase, a visit from an external, independent expert or a member of the Commission's Daphne management team.

The main aim of these visits is to help and advise organisations involved in the project while it is being implemented so that suggestions and help can be taken into account to enhance the successful outcome of the project.

The visits are made on-site and typically may last half a day.

After the visit, the expert/officer will prepare a report, which will be shared and discussed with the coordinating organisation before being submitted to the Commission.

(b) Ex-Post evaluation visits

Ex-post evaluation missions to projects take place some months after the project has ended and aim to look at project impact and outcomes.

Unlike monitoring visits, which aim to contribute to the project during its implementation, the ex-post evaluation is a review of the project's overall impact and lessons, with a view also to assessing the overall impact of the Daphne II Programme in any given year and to constantly improving the Programme.

(c) Audit

Projects should we prepared for a possible ex-post audit that the Commission's financial controllers (not the Daphne team!) carry out on grants selected by random sampling (or when an audit is considered necessary). These include an on-site visit to the project.

Audits can take place any time within **five years** of the close of the project (so after the final payment has been made), and all expenditure support documents and project documentation must be carefully kept and made available during this period in case they are requested by the Commission for audit purposes.

Monitoring or auditing missions may reveal that an activity has not been carried out, or not in accordance with the grant agreement. In this case, the financial controllers may request a recovery of Community funds paid to the project coordinator.

1.3. Changes to the project

The grant agreement includes in annex a description of the activity and an estimated budget for the activity that must be respected.

This means that the coordinating organisation, partners, key management staff, project location(s), beneficiaries, target group(s), budget, timetable etc. cannot be changed unless there are exceptional reasons for doing this.

These must be duly justified to the Commission and prior written approval of the Commission must be granted.

Please be aware that unauthorised changes in any of these key aspects may result in the Commission requesting reimbursement of payments already made or refusing full payment of the balance of the grant.

(a) Amendment to the grant agreement

During the course of the project implementation, the coordinating organisation may need to request an amendment to the grant agreement.

Such requests must be sent to the Commission at least **two months before the requested amendment is due to take effect and in any case two months before the closing date of the project**, except in cases duly substantiated by the coordinating organisation and accepted by the Commission.

Any amendment to the grant agreement must be the subject of a written supplement to the agreement concluded (signed) between the parties.

No verbal agreement or exchange of e-mail may bind the parties to this effect.

Requests for amendment covering activities already carried out cannot be accepted.

Examples of cases where a grant agreement might be amended (if duly justified) include:

- a change in the duration of the activity and/or the agreement because of unforeseen delays or developments;
- an addition to or replacement of a partner or contractor or to the activity;
- modification in the amount of the grant;
- modification of the forecast budget implying a transfer between headings of more than 10%;
- change of bank account;
- change of legal representative.

(b) Any other changes to the project

Please remember to inform the Commission of any changes to the project implementation, even if you think that such changes will not require a formal amendment to the grant agreement.

The Commission will in such cases take note of the modification and confirm whether any particular action needs to be taken.

This exchange of information will normally be done by e-mail with the Project Officer.

1.4. Reporting to the Commission/Final Report

You will not be required to send any progress/intermediary reports to the Commission during the course of project implementation (other than specific communications regarding changes to the project or questions).

However, it is advisable to set up a system for regularly monitoring the progress of your project as this will facilitate the preparation of your Final Report (there is more on this in the first paper, *Risk Management and Monitoring & Evaluation*).

When the project is completed, you will be required to send a Final Report about the project implementation and results within three months after the closing date of the project.

You must use the Commission's template and follow its specific instructions, which are available on-line at the Daphne website.

It is important to follow this template closely, since the reports are widely used by the Commission and so should be comparable and easily accessible (there is more on this in the third paper, *Learning lessons and making them count*).

2. Financial management of a project

What follows is not comprehensive but an attempt to highlight the most essential requirements and also give a few tips on what to do and not to do when managing the project budgets.

2.1. Accounting system/internal control

It is important that the project sets up an analytical accounting system or an adequate internal system that makes it possible to identify:

- Sources of project funding;
- Project expenditure incurred during the contract period.

As the coordinating organisation is responsible for the partner organisations' accounting of expenditures, it is very important to set up a system that keeps track of all the payments and reimbursements to partners. The Commission will not be able to accept expenditure incurred by partners that have not been duly justified and in the end it will be the coordinator that has to be accountable for any errors made by partners.

The coordinator **must keep all accounting records as well as all proofs of expenditure (invoices, receipts etc) for at least five (5) years** after the date of the final payment from the Commission.

2.2. Budget adjustments – The "10% rule"

The most common change to the project is the adjustment of the estimated budget by transfers of expenditure between headings within a 10% limit of the total amount of *each* heading (permitted according to Article I.3.4 of the Grant Agreement). Here is a concrete example:

> You have budgeted €1.000 under heading C and €5.000 under heading D. Since you can transfer up to 10% from one heading to another, you would be allowed to transfer €100 from C to D (10% of C, 2% of D) or vice versa. However, you would <u>not</u> be allowed to transfer €500 from D to C (10% of D) without formal amendment, since this would exceed 10% of heading C.

Any transfers between budget headings that do not exceed 10% of the heading concerned can be made by just informing the Commission. For transfers exceeding 10%, the prior agreement of the Commission is compulsory (see paragraph 1.3 above).

Note that the amount of **total eligible direct costs** indicated in paragraph I.3.2 of the Grant Agreement cannot be exceeded.

2.3. Exchange rates

In your accounting, you should always register costs in the national currency in which they were incurred (euro or other national currency). Do not convert and record non-euro amounts in euro.

When you prepare your final financial statement to the Commission, you will be asked to provide the expenditure amounts in the currency in which they were incurred. You will also be asked to convert non-euro amounts into euro for the purpose of balancing the accounts, but it is important to remember that such amounts will only be indicative. **When the Commission makes its final payment, it will convert all non-euro amounts into euro using the official EC accounting rate applicable to the month when the payment is made**.

The official exchange rates are available at the Commission budget website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/budget/inforeuro/index.cfm.

Please note that exchange losses are considered non-eligible costs and cannot be claimed under the project.

2.4. Financial reporting/Payment of the grant

After the signature of the grant agreement, the Commission will pre-finance the project by making a payment equivalent to 70% of the grant.

The balance of the grant will be paid after completion of the project. The Commission will only process this payment after having received (within three months following the closing date of the action) and *approved* the following documents:

(1) A **final report** on the implementation of the project (see paragraph 1.4 above);

(2) A **final financial statement**, which must:

- be completed in all its parts;
- be drawn up in the currency of the incurred costs;
- contain a numbered list of all supporting documents referring to the costs incurred during the eligibility period of the project;
- be presented according to the same breakdown of revenue and expenditure as the one used for the detailed forward budget annexed to the grant agreement (or as amended by formal supplementary agreement);
- dated and signed.

Please note that supporting documents do *not* need to be submitted with the final financial statement. However, all or some of these supporting documents may be requested by the Commission after receiving the final financial statement.

(3) **Publications** (reports, manuals, surveys etc.), CD-ROMs, DVDs and other documents produced within the framework of the project; where courses, seminars or studies are concerned, signed attendance lists, agendas, results of the evaluation made by the participants and copies of the conclusions or proceedings.

(4) A **statement** showing any amount of interest or equivalent benefits generated by the pre-financing payment.

(5) A formal **request for payment**.

The templates to be used (obligatory) for drawing up the final report, the final financial statement and the request for payment are available on the Daphne Programme website:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/daphne/funding_daphne_en.htm

The Commission will examine the final report and financial statement and *only when both reports are accepted* will the Commission proceed to making the final payment. The Commission's deadline for approving the final report and financial statement is **45 days** (see Article I.4.2 of the grant agreement).

In order to allow an accurate analysis of the financial statement, the Commission may request supporting documents of a sample or all cost items. These are the invoices, pay slips, receipts etc that you are required to keep but that you should not send to the Commission unless so requested.

When the Commission requests such documents, the normal time delay of 45 days for approval of the financial statement is suspended. Such an interruption occurs also when the submitted final accounts or documents are incomplete or incorrect. The 'countdown' resumes when the Commission has received the information requested.

The Commission reserves the right to suspend or reduce the payment of the outstanding balance, or to require reimbursement of Community funds, if the form and/or content of the final report and final financial statement do not conform to the rules and the grant agreement.

In particular, non-eligible expenses or VAT/other taxes will be rejected. Also, transfers of amounts exceeding 10% of a budget heading to another heading without prior consent of the Commission will not be accepted. For further details on eligible expenditures, see section 3 below.

Once the final report and financial statement have been approved, the Commission will issue, within an additional period of 45 days, the corresponding final payment order.

3. Rules concerning eligible expenditure

Examples and information about eligible expenditures are explained in Sections 5.1 and 5.2 of the Guide to Operational, Administrative and Financial management of a Daphne II Project 2006-1, which all implementing organisations are strongly advised to read. Please also refer to Articles I.3 and II.14 of the grant agreement.

If there are any questions regarding eligible expenditure, contact the Daphne Project Officer at the Commission.

4. Justifications and proofs acceptable to the Commission

For the different items, here is a non-exhaustive list of the basic documents the Commission may require to justify expenditure:

4.1. Staff costs

- Copy of contract with the person specially recruited for the project, indication of tasks, working time and salary;
- Time sheets, indicating working hours and activity/tasks performed, signed and dated by employee and employer (if staff costs are paid by the hour);
- Copy of salary slips of the person for the months they worked on the project and proofs of payment through bank account (if staff costs are paid monthly);
- For officials/permanent staff of an organisation: proof of the assignment of the person to the project (internal note, for example) with indication of working time and tasks allocated;
- For officials/permanent staff of public authorities: copy of contract for the person replacing the official/person assigned to the project;

- For permanent staff of organisations other than public authorities: copy of salary slips of the replacement person;
- For officials/permanent staff being remunerated for overtime: proofs of payment of extra working hours/overtime, where applicable (e.g., payment through bank account).
- For external personnel such as consultants, interpreters: copy of contract or invoice indicating tasks, date and hours, price; and
- In all cases, the Commission will ask for proof of payment/bank transfers to verify that the staff costs were indeed incurred.

4.2. Travel costs

- Copy of invoice of plane or rail tickets to travel agent, or proof of payment of electronic tickets;
- Copy of flight or rail tickets, including boarding passes;
- Travel expenses by private car: copy of the reimbursement claim made to the applicant organisation and with a maximum of first class rail fare. You will be asked to indicate the first class rail fare equivalent to the journey made by private car (for example using quote from travel agent or print out from the internet);
- If travel expenses are paid by the participant and are subsequently reimbursed by the coordinator/partner (for example if the participant is attending a conference arranged by the project):
    - copy of tickets, bearing the name, date and price *or* copy of the invoice (some tickets do not carry full price including taxes etc); and
    - proof of payment or of reimbursement to the participant (payment through bank account, except where the Commission has authorised other forms of payment).
- Copy of presence/attendance list(s) from all meetings/events for which travel costs have been incurred.

4.3. Subsistence allowances

Subsistence allowances are calculated in two possible ways:

Firstly, on the basis of a **fixed daily allowance**. The daily allowance includes all costs (hotels, meals, local transport) up to a maximum level fixed by the Commission and indicated in the project budget.

The following documents must be provided:

- Copy of expenses reimbursement claim from staff member (mission expenses reimbursement claim), indicating place, date and time of the trip and the claimed subsistence allowance, which must be signed and dated by employee and employer/person authorising the expenditure;
- Proof of payment of the subsistence allowance (payment through bank account or signature by participant of a document attesting that s/he received the indicated amount);
- Presence/attendance list at the meeting organised, with signatures of participants, or where a visit has been carried out, a copy of the mission report.

Secondly, on the basis of **real cost**. If the expenditure is incurred by the project coordinator:

- Hotel invoices (with name of the person(s) being lodged);
- Restaurant/catering invoices/receipts (showing number of meals);
- All other receipts for costs related to the trip and covered by the subsistence allowance, such as local travel (taxi, train, bus), parking etc.;
- Proof of reimbursement to person travelling (payment through bank account).

4.4. All other expenses

- Copy of invoices;
- Copy of proofs of payment;
- For translations: languages and pages always specified in the invoice;
- Proof of purchase of equipment;
- For equipment:
    - Depreciation rate applicable (generally three years for computer and technical equipment or rate used by the country's fiscal authority if more favourable – in this case, provide a copy of the national rules);
    - Date of purchase determines the amount that can be indicated as depreciation.

4.5. Indirect eligible costs (overheads)

These costs will not need to be justified, but remember that the types of costs covered through overheads (general administrative costs) cannot be claimed under any other heading. Indicate the percentage agreed in the contract and apply it to the total eligible costs.

INGRID BELLANDER-TODINO AND BENEDETTA TURDO

TOPIC 3: LEARNING LESSONS AND MAKING THEM COUNT

Introduction

When the Daphne Programme experts visit the projects every year, both for monitoring and ex-post purposes, they invariably report that they have seen potential in a project that those running the project were not aware of.

To some extent this is understandable. It is a big job running a Daphne project – managing partnerships, budget, project activity and reporting to the Commission and of course implementing the actions scheduled in the project plan. There is very little time to stop and think about the lessons that the project is revealing that may not have been expected, or that point to the future, after the project is completed and the Final Report is delivered.

The experts have the leisure to turn up and look at the project with an unbiased eye, and so can see things in the project that often those close to it cannot see. In fact, this is one of the reasons the Commission sends the expert team to visit projects while they are in course: so that there is an opportunity to help get the most out of the project. The expert briefings look at how the experts can do this.

Most projects do, in fact, contain within them the 'seeds' of new actions or further developments. These might be ideas that the same partner group can consider as a sort of 'stage two' of the current project, or they may be ideas that someone else could pick up to extend the project, adapt it in another geographical area, or in a new context.

Daphne projects have a short life if they remain limited to the plans in the original submission – no more than 12 or 24 months. But they can have a much longer life and, importantly, can achieve much greater and longer-lasting impact, if some simple steps are taken to learn the lessons that the project provides and consider what these mean for the future.

What follows considers the kinds of lessons that might be learned, how they can be collected in a form that can be used, and the importance of looking beyond the end of the project to see what might come next.

1. Learning lessons

First of all, it is important to understand what we mean by 'lessons'. There are several different kinds of lessons to learn in any Daphne project.

Lessons about violence

The first group of lessons relates to the issue that the project is addressing, for example domestic violence or trafficking of children or female genital mutilation.

The most useful lessons here are those that are specific to the country, area, target group or context related to the project. For example, we know a lot about domestic violence in general, but a Daphne project might find new information about domestic violence in rural communities in three countries of Europe, and this detailed information is valuable.

Unfortunately, unless the project is specifically a research project, this kind of lesson more often than not does not get shared – it is not mentioned in the Final Report, it may be included in a research report that is available in only one or two languages, or it may not be documented at all but just be used as an input to the development of an awareness campaign, for example, or training materials.

In fact, lessons like this have two different uses:

Firstly, they improve our understanding of the situation in a particular place or context; but they may also indicate that we need to extend the methodology and re-use it in more countries or different contexts. For example: a project might produce new information that boys aged 12 to 15 in a certain town are being targeted by drug dealers through their sports clubs. This is a vital piece of information to be able to do something about that particular problem. But it should prompt us also to ask whether that same problem occurs in other parts of the country, or in other EU countries. This one new piece of knowledge gives us a whole range of possible follow-up actions, and not only for NGOs but for researchers, law enforcement agencies, sports clubs, young people themselves and their families.

Secondly, related to this first kind of lesson, is knowledge that in fact changes what we think we already know. For example, a project might be based on the fact that there have been reports that girls are more likely to be trafficked from country A to country B than boys are. The whole project might be set up specifically to help girls who have been trafficked. But then as the project begins, you may find out that in fact there are more boys being trafficked than girls. It is very important not to look upon this new knowledge as a threat to the project. And it is also important not to just to carry on with the project based on the original, incorrect assumption. This new lesson can be built into the project, which can be adapted accordingly.

Again, this lesson about trafficking is an important one and needs to be documented so that it can be shared. It has many uses both to the project itself and to others outside the project: researchers, policy makers, law enforcement agencies, and so on.

So, in short, it is vital to consider what knowledge the project is producing and what the potential of that knowledge is as a lesson for the project and for others.

Lessons about project planning and management

The trafficking example also demonstrates the second kind of lesson. All Daphne projects learn important lessons about the project itself.

In that trafficking project, for example, adapting plans to take account of more boys than girls will provide really useful lessons about how to adapt a workplan, outputs, even staff, to take account of new realities.

There are other sorts of lessons that might come out of the project itself. These might, for example, relate to partnerships – for example, did one partner not produce planned inputs by the deadline? How did you deal with this? Did you learn any lessons about what you might have done at the beginning of the project to anticipate or avoid this? For example, did you choose the wrong partner? Do you have suggestions that might help others to avoid that mistake? Can you suggest how the partnership might have been negotiated so that the partners' deadlines were kept?

There are lessons, of course, to be learned about the budget – these usually relate to the fact that there is not enough money to do something! In fact, year after year we find that projects have to learn the same lessons – lessons they could have learned from while they were planning their projects if they had followed advice and carefully read through the documents provided on the Daphne website, and in the Daphne Toolkit. For example, many projects do not budget for an external evaluator, although it is clear from the Application Form that this is desirable. And almost no projects allow enough money for appropriate dissemination – projects have been known to produce 5,000 printed copies of a report with not a single Euro allowed for postage.

The Application Form also asks you to think about risks and contingency planning (covered in Section 1 of this report) but you should also consider whether any risk/contingency planning would also have financial repercussions and plan for those. If you do find you run into an obstacle or a problem that was anticipated, or indeed not anticipated, then there will be very valuable lessons to be learned from that. If you overcome the obstacles, then others will benefit from learning how you did it. If you did not overcome the obstacles, then that will also be a valuable lesson for others, especially if you also have some idea why that happened.

In short, every project produces many, many lessons that can be of use to the project itself and to others. But most of these just disappear with the end of the project because they are not recognized or are not captured.

Other examples of useful lessons that have arisen in Daphne projects were shared at the Daphne Conference:

- Lessons related to methodology – for example, that a methodology planned to be used in three countries turns out not to be immediately usable in one of those countries. There will be lessons arising from how this is handled: is that country excluded from the project (not the desirable option)? Is the methodology adapted somehow and what does that entail? Why was it not usable and what changes were made? Were the conclusions then immediately comparable across the different countries?
- Lessons related to definitions and approaches – for example, many countries cannot even agree on what constitutes a 'child'. In some countries a child is any person up to the age of 16, in others it is anyone between the ages of 5 and 18. What do you about this in order that the partners can work together? Do you just agree to work within slightly different frameworks? Do you decide to use the internationally accepted age of 18? Do you all consider children as between 0 and 15 (or the lowest upper age among the partner countries) and then allow some countries to find a way to deal with any 'missing' children?
- Different approaches can be quite difficult to deal with and have at times meant that a partner drops out of a project. For example, what can you do to ensure that a partner that takes, say, a feminist approach to violence works in cooperation with an organization that focuses on involving men in anti-violence work?
- There will be lessons relating to how the partnerships are handled in relation to finances. Remember that the project coordinator is accountable to the EC for the project's budget, so there must be clear agreements for any internal payments to the partners, when these will be made and how they will be justified. Will you link payments to performance? Will you make regular payments over the 12 months? Will you pay some at the beginning and then the final payment once the EC has approved the Final Report?

Capturing lessons

You could just think about the lessons you have learned during your project at the end, when you are preparing the Final Report. Then, though, there is a risk that you will not remember everything and, in particular, that all the partners will not provide the lessons they have learned.

It is far more efficient to set up a process at the very beginning of the project that helps all the partners to capture lessons as you go along.

List of questions

This might take the form, for example, of a simple list of questions that each partner goes through at the end of every month and e-mails to the project coordinator, who then compiles them and sends them to all the partners. You could discuss these in your first partner meeting and all agree to them. You might wish to arrange the questions under headings:

The issue (for example, domestic violence in country x/region z)

- Have you found any new information on this that you believe was not available before?
- Have you learned anything about this that contradicts what people thought was the case?

- Have you learned anything that should be considered by the project because it might need to be adjusted?
- Any other lessons about the issue?

Project management (don't forget, lessons can be positive and negative, so don't only look for problems – note things that worked so well that others might want to follow the example)

- Have you learned anything that might be useful to the project or to others in planning a project (usually something that you would do differently – for example a methodology that does not seem to be very effective or a meeting that was more expensive than anticipated and could have been organized differently)?
- Have you learned anything that relates to the deadlines set for various parts of project activity?
- Have you learned anything about the partnership?
- Have you learned anything about the budget that was planned?
- Any other lessons about the project itself?

What to do with these lessons

- Are these lessons that can be used within the project, so that it develops successfully?
- Are these lessons particularly useful for others, outside the project?
- Who are these 'others' (eg other NGOs, government, the EC, children, young people and women etc)?
- What do you think might be a good way to make sure they learn about these lessons?

One possible way to collect these lessons regularly as you go along (especially those that you need to take account of immediately, since they have repercussions for the project itself), is to ask each partner in the project to send you the answers to the questions at the end of every month. The answers only need to be short – just a few lines will suffice – and for someone to compile them and then share them with all the partners.

Who will that 'someone' be? It could be the project coordinator, although the coordinator will already have a lot to do. It could be that one of the partners takes on the role. Or maybe, if you have appointed an external evaluator to 'accompany' the project, then the evaluator could do this task. The lessons will, in any case, be very useful for the evaluator as s/he monitors progress of the project and sees how it has developed and responded to any lessons that arise.

2. Aiming for follow-up of project results

Lessons, by their very nature, should look to the future. It would be very sad to say 'well, we learned that lesson' and then not think what to do with it! We have seen that some lessons can be used immediately, to improve the way the project is progressing – and this is already a move forward. Some lessons, though, will be most useful because they help to indicate what might come next.

This does not necessarily mean that you have to think about another Daphne project the following year, a sort of 'phase two'. In fact, you will usually not have fully digested all the lessons from your project in time to prepare a new project in time for the next Call for Proposals. You need, in fact, to consider how the lessons can be used in a number of different ways:

- Is the lesson immediately useful for development of the current project? For example, does a lesson suggest that you need to review the methodology or the timetable?
- Does the lesson suggest a need for new policies by the government? By the Commission at European level? If this is the case, you might wish to consider making concrete recommendations on what those new policies might cover.
- Does the lesson indicate a need for new programmes at country or European level? For example, does the lesson suggest a new social programme in a country, or modifications such as a child protection officer being added to a law enforcement team in cases of domestic violence?
- Does the lesson indicate the need for an immediate follow-up? Who would do this and in what form? For example, this could be another project by the same partnership; a new project by a different group such as academics; a review of legislation by the government; a new piece of research by a university.
- How can the lessons be shared with the group that would need to take action? You can use this also to feed into your dissemination plan – and so think about the format you will use, the languages etc. Possible targets for your lessons might be NGOs, government authorities at local and national levels, law enforcement agencies, the media, MEPs, or the EC itself.

3. Preparing a Final Report for the European Commission

This brings us to what you are going to put into your final report for the EC. Sadly, although the Daphne Programme office provides a format for the report, most projects do not think about what this is trying to achieve but instead write reams and reams of words, as if they were trying to illustrate how much work they have done and so justify the EC's support.

In fact, the Commission lays tremendous store by what your project has learned. Among the criteria for evaluation of projects is the extent to which the project has contributed to European policy and programming – and the Daphne Programme itself is largely evaluated on this basis (as well, of course, as on the contribution the Programme has made to combating violence against children, young people and women).

Every year, the Daphne Programme team reviews all the most recently completed projects' final reports to pull out valuable lessons so that they can be used in a number of different ways – for example in the Daphne Toolkit, in various publications such as the Daphne Booklets (to be launched in mid-2007) and in the 'illustrative cases' that are distributed at meetings and conferences to showcase Daphne's work.

It is important, therefore, that the Commission is able to extract the lessons you have learned – all of them, both positive and negative, because all lessons can be useful to others preparing Daphne project submissions, running projects, preparing policy or programming and just to improve understanding and add to knowledge.

Unfortunately, what most people preparing the final report provide is a blow-by-blow account of every detail of the project, supplementing this by sending copies of the research report, training kit, poster, video or whatever the products are. Since the Daphne Programme supports around 40-50 projects every year, it would be impossible for the small team to read every word of these or watch every video or consult every website, in order to identify the lessons that are useful for the future. The final report gives you the opportunity to help the Commission to do this, and ensures that your valuable lessons do not get overlooked or lost in the mass of words that flow through Daphne each year.

Here is the format of the final report that you will receive from the Commission a month or two before your project ends. The format does change from time to time, but you could use these general headings already to start collecting your thoughts together:

Daphne Programme

Final Report

Project No :

Title:

Start Date: … **End Date: …**

Coordinating Organisation's name:

Contact person:

Name:

Address:

Postal code: **City:**

Country:

Tel. N°.: **Fax No:**

E-mail:

Partner Organisations' names and countries:

Aims of the project

a) What problem did the project aim to address?

b) What was the expected result?

c) Who are the beneficiaries?

d) Did the Commission formulate any conditions or recommendations relating to the project?

(When the Daphne expert visits your project for a mid-project monitoring visit, you will be asked to agree with the expert a simple description of your project that allows readers to immediately get a good example of what your project is and does. You can reproduce that short description here in the answers to the four questions asked. For example, your answer to question (a) might say something like: "The project aimed to contribute to better understanding of the problem of domestic violence among teenagers by running training sessions in secondary schools and distributing information packs to teachers and students".)

Implementation of the project

a) **List briefly the planned activities that were carried out.**

b) **List activities that were planned but were not carried out, and explain why they were not implemented.**

c) **Describe any activities that had not been planned but that became necessary/useful during the progress of the project and so were implemented.**

d) **Explain any revisions to the timetable.**

e) **Outline the role, activities and contributions of every partner.**

(Here you should not go into minute detail about what you did – for example, the times of the final conference and the flight numbers of travel to the meeting – but you should concentrate on showing that you achieved what you said you would do in the timetable/workplan attached to your Grant Agreement.)

Results and impacts of the project

a) **What concrete results were obtained from the activities described above?**

b) **How did you evaluate the results?**

c) **What did the evaluation tell you about the impact OR possible impact of the project?**

d) **Were the beneficiaries involved in evaluating the results?**

e) **What did you learn from the beneficiaries' involvement?**

f) **How did you ensure that people were aware of the EC's support of your project?**

(This is the section where you can include the lessons that arose in your project and that you want to share. It is a good idea to put these into groups suggesting who the lessons are useful to – for example, researchers or police officers. You can keep the lessons short but make sure they are clear enough to be immediately understood by a reader who does not know the detail of your project. Try and work out why you have succeeded and why sometimes have not, and share these ideas for others to learn.

You should also try and cover here the impact of your project on the beneficiaries and on intermediate target groups (for example, school children may be the beneficiaries but you may try and have an impact on them by working through a training course for their teachers, so teachers will be the target group). It is clear that you cannot measure impact your project will have had on the problem of violence itself – that needs to be measured over a much longer time. However, you can indicate some more immediate impacts: for example, if you ran that training course for teachers, you could do a pre-course and post-course questionnaire that allows you to estimate how much the teachers' understanding has increased.

You should also include some information here about the coverage of the project – for example it is useful for the EC to know that your training course reached 400 teachers in 4 countries.

Also remember to include lessons related to the project itself, if you have not included them already in the preceding section.)

Lessons learned

a) What concrete results were obtained from the activities described above?

b) How did you evaluate the results?

c) What did the evaluation tell you about the impact OR possible impact of the project?

d) Were the beneficiaries involved in evaluating the results?

e) What did you learn from the beneficiaries' involvement?

f) How did you ensure that people were aware of the EC's support of your project?

Dissemination and follow-up

a) How did you develop your dissemination strategy? Who were the main targets you wanted to share your results and products with?

b) How did you disseminate (eg by e-mail, in a meeting, by post, in person)?

c) Do you intend to continue disseminating materials/results after the end of the project? How?

d) Do you have concrete plans to follow up your project?

e) Have you secured funding for follow-up?

f) If you do not have concrete plans, do you nevertheless have ideas about the kind of follow-up that would be valuable?

(This is partly a descriptive section, where you can reflect here any feedback you got from the recipients of your dissemination, although there may be lessons, for example, if you find that a certain group of users request copies of a publication and you had not thought they would be interested at the outset.

Importantly, this is the place where you can include all the lessons you have on what might come next: for example, what could the EC do? Your local authorities? The government? Other NGOs? Researchers etc? Sometimes you might want to go so far as to put these in as 'recommendations' to emphasize their importance.)

Conclusions

(Here you should sum up how the project achieved the aims described at the very beginning. Do not repeat details, but you might consider this as a sort of brief summary of the Final Report itself, so that the Commission has a succinct note on your project overall that it can use as a reference.)

Annexe: Key words

(Consider this very carefully and do not overstate your project here – these key words are used for many different things, including the search engine on the Daphne Toolkit website, and checking key word boxes that are not fully accurate in relation to your project's targets, format and coverage is therefore very misleading.)

Annexe: Products (list)

(The EC annexes some products to the project pages in the Daphne Toolkit – for example videos or multi-media products – so you should make sure the Commission gets a copy of these. If you have produced brochures or posters or other printed materials, you should send these as PDF files so that they can be posted electronically to the Toolkit site.

You do not need to send products that are purely 'process' related – for example minutes of meetings or compilations of e-mail exchanges. You should, however, send both a Word and a PDF copy of research reports, studies and, if available, the external evaluator's report.)

JUNE KANE

TOPIC 4: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING A DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

Understanding the need for dissemination

As stated at Daphne Conference 2006 by June Kane, "dissemination is a key element of all Daphne projects. It is the way the project moves beyond its own programmed boundaries into the realm of European policy and action".[1]

Although dissemination should reflect a willingness to spread the project's results, it is often a weak element of project planning. It takes place too late in the project cycle; when budgeted, it is often poorly equipped financially. It looks as if those in charge of the project satisfy themselves with the good work accomplished without bothering about the possible legacy to future generations and to places outside the scope of the current project.

With such a mindset, project partners fail to reach potential users and policy and decision makers who are looking at Daphne with a view to learning lessons that will contribute to their own work.

Is it being too shy about it or is it just because, once the project has been completed, people have to move on to something else? Actually, if dissemination initiatives are planned properly and start developing during project implementation, it will become obvious that outputs can and will be used in an appropriate way. They will not run the risk of being under-used or even ignored.

One should feel proud about sharing with others reports, studies, training materials or other relevant information. Beyond offering the actual written or audio-visual materials, dissemination is also an opportunity to pass on messages and lessons learned (both positive and 'negative') in the course of the project. This can relate to general views about violence, prevention and protection of victims, or to the experiences of a coordinating agency in dealing with its partners, or the partners' assessment of their role and responsibilities in the project.

It is also the right time to promote new structures or specific programmes discovered or created by the project, to identify gaps and needs which still need to be covered, to stress shortcomings in data collection or to mention difficulties to manage the project due to insufficient budget planning.

In fact, dissemination exists not only to promote success stories. It is also an essential tool to help oneself and others to upgrade skills, to take stock of mismanagement issues and to analyse why the project went wrong at some stage. Such appraisal will help improve performance in the future. It will also prove that a thorough evaluation has been made on strengths and weaknesses and that relevant conclusions have been drawn in order to put future actions on the right path.

At this point, the potential of the project has to be assessed.

A project might have potential for adaptation to be used in other EU countries. It might show potential to be developed further in a follow-up project. It might have potential to move beyond research, for example, into a pilot action project or a set of guidelines or policy indicators.

By taking a closer look at their results, project partners will identify which project outputs can be used by other NGOs in the partner countries or beyond, in Europe at large or in specific regions, in a region sharing the same language or in more regions should materials be already available in more languages. They will also be in a position to identify and suggest changes which could be made to increase the potential of adaptation to other contexts. They could provide a kind of *vade mecum* for the benefit of future users.

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1 The present paper draws from Dr June Kane's presentation on the development of a dissemination strategy at the 2nd Daphne Conference, Brussels 2006 (see the Daphne website for copies of earlier conference reports).

Planning a dissemination strategy

When starting to design a dissemination plan, a series of questions should be asked and answered at the occasion of regular meetings or contacts between the coordinator and project partners.

First question:

What will the project produce and what will be the potential of such outputs?

- studies and research reports
- training packages
- leaflets, brochures, posters or other awareness-raising materials
- audio-visual materials (photos, films, video footage, sound recordings)
- multi-media products (DVDs, CD-Roms, websites)
- tools (databases, protocols, checklists)
- lessons learned (issues- or project-based – see preceding paper)
- good practices (which should have been tested, measured and evaluated prior to being qualified good practices)
- resources (bibliographies, professional networks, lists of useful websites)
- reports or proceedings of conferences, seminars or other events
- recommendations for further development, adaptation and replication (choice of regions, countries, languages).

Second question:

Who are the potential users of these outputs?

- NGOs
- universities, institutes, researchers
- national, regional and international organisations
- health professionals, hospitals
- social workers, schools
- legal professionals
- police and law enforcement personnel
- public authorities, ministries, specialised offices
- MPs (European and national levels)
- media
- beneficiaries (children, young people and/or women)
- general public

Third question:

How are you likely to reach these targets?

Before any action, a decision should be taken on the languages in which materials are going to be produced (in full or in summary to reach the priority targets. English is not necessarily the best option if you are aiming to achieve broader dissemination and use of the materials in non-English speaking countries. You might, for example, want to produce summaries of some of your materials in a number of languages: a 200-page report in French, for example, might be supplemented by 4-page summaries in English, German, Spanish, or indeed any other language.

Once you know where you want the outputs to reach and the form they will take, then you can decide how best to make sure your targets have access to them. Remember to be pro-active: putting your outputs on a website and hoping that people find them there is not dissemination! Websites are more like a library where materials can be stored and they cannot be easily advertised (unless you accompany creation of a new website with an active dissemination plan to let people know it exists).

- identify and use existing networks
- prepare mailing lists for all categories of interest in different countries (the project partners' countries + others as decided during project implementation)
- study carefully who should be invited to final conferences or events
- select journalists with a special interest in the issues
- lobby among decision makers
- seek support among people or groups concerned.

Fourth question:

What is the best vehicle to be used for each target and how will it reach the target audiences?

- printed material
- audio-visual products
- electronic format
- direct presentation (eg presentation of ideas)

to be:

- sent by post
- sent electronically
- used in conferences, seminars
- handed over at the occasion of a personal contact
- transmitted to the media or via specialised publications

You will also need to carefully budget all measures to be taken for an efficient dissemination drive, for example:

- translation
- graphic design
- production costs (print, film, electronic)

- mailing and distribution
- storage of spare copies.

Once all relevant questions have been answered, a timeframe can be designed and updated according to project development, in close liaison with all project partners. To make sure the outputs are useful, you could 'taste-test' them by contacting representatives of the priority targets to check on their interest and readiness to use the project outputs. This could also provide the opportunity to get early feedback on replicability of the results or to redesign some of the planned measures if necessary (translations, choice of vehicles, etc.).

Involving the media

The question about involving the media in a more decisive way is left open. You should remember that just sending materials to the press is not dissemination – the press might not cover the item and so there is no guarantee that you will reach anyone through them. Moroever, always remember that the media are not there to be 'used'; you should work to build a good relationship with the media so that they know and trust you and are more likely to wish to be involved.

Should you decide to undertake press activities, then a professional approach has to be followed and carefully prepared. It would for instance require:

- a full analysis on the relevance and usefulness of a media campaign;
- a clear vision on what is expected from the media;
- a knowledge of journalists' special interests so that you can target the right ones;
- the preparation of specially designed press kit;
- the inclusion of press activities in the budget.

As an example, the planning process can be summarised as follows (*source: June Kane's paper – April 2006*)

Planning stage	Work out a provisional dissemination strategy by going through the questions. Work out how much the strategy will cost Decide who will be responsible for each phase of the dissemination activity and make sure they have enough time to do it. Decide whether you will need additional professional help (printer? designer? writer? and include these in the budget). Consider what will happen after the project has ended – will dissemination continue? Make sure that you have contingency funds in place to allow for this to happen
First phase of project activity	Discuss with partners how the raw materials will be gathered – who will document the lessons? How will good practices be measured? Who will be responsible for other outputs?

	Put in place processes for gathering the materials/outputs that will be disseminated. Begin drawing up dissemination lists – names and contact details of those who will receive the products (email lists, mailing labels, networks, etc) Begin any necessary design or production processes.
Middle phase of project activity	Review the dissemination strategy and in particular make sure that the outputs that are arising from the project are the ones anticipated. Review the budget and make sure that funds allocated to dissemination are not being 'eaten up' by other project activity. Review the dissemination lists with partners and ensure that they are appropriate. Try and expand them further. Review the dissemination lists to make final decisions on quantities to produce (eg don't print 1,000 copies of a report in Italian if you only have 20 Italian speakers on the dissemination list)
Final phase of project activity	By this stage the 'products' of the project should be near finalisation. This is the time to ensure that they are as good as you can make them, are in a suitable form for potential recipients, and are ready to be disseminated. If the project has been well planned, you should have time and resources now to undertake a systematic, targeted dissemination.
After the project has ended	The outputs of the project may continue to be useful after the project has ended. You should have in place processes for continuing to disseminate them. This is particularly important if there are personnel changes in the organisation (leave behind the dissemination lists and a note on the dissemination strategy) If the products include data or information that will go out of date, you should also consider at what point you will no longer disseminate the materials – information that is no longer valid is not useful and may in fact be misleading, so always put a 'use by' date on your outputs.

Implementing a dissemination strategy

Once you have a dissemination strategy, it is time to make sure that the products made available by the project are good enough to be used by others.

This is particularly true for a pilot project which usually results in only preliminary, not widely tested outputs. In that case, it would be wise to test the material with a limited number of potentially interested people before launching a full dissemination action. Depending on the feedback gathered, decisions can then be taken to distribute the product with an explanatory note making clear to the users that this is to be considered as a first step. Should feedback not be positive, you should not hesitate to go back to the drawing board and re-think your outputs rather than allowing an unfinished product to be spread with the risk of transmitting inappropriate outputs.

While following the plan of action, you can still alter some of the dissemination steps in order to suit remarks or suggestions which might have been made by Daphne experts or by those who tested the products. For instance, the number of copies can be brought down or increased (if budget allows); the question of languages could surface again, asking for changes to be made; the website contents must be updated along the way, taking stock of the first feedback; media outreach could be reshaped according to advanced information received from a closer contacts with journalists.

It is also essential to make sure that all project partners are fully in line with the decisions taken concerning the dissemination strategy and ready to put it into motion. The leading country – the project coordinator – should not be seen as playing a lone hand. Too often, there is a very unbalanced situation as far as dissemination efforts are concerned. This is because insufficient attention is paid to the question of translation, or not enough time is devoted to identify the potential users in all partner countries, or the networks are less developed in one country compared to another.

This should not happen. The strategy should be tailored in such a way that it does not create frustrations among the partners. On the contrary, it should support them in their attempts to increase their efficiency and their visibility (not forgetting Daphne's visibility) in their own country thanks to the quality of the products which are made available.

Conclusion

As shown in this paper, the decisive part of a successful dissemination strategy is the planning stage. This is when all elements are put on the table: wishes, expectations, obligations to meet the project's and the Daphne Programme's objectives. It also gives the opportunity to re-think what the project had in mind at the time of the grant application and to feel the weight of its ambitions.

The quality of dialogue with the partners will make it possible for the project to achieve its full measure at the occasion of the establishment of a dissemination plan. Should differences be present at this stage of the process, they should be dealt with so that all partners are working in the same direction. Such are the minimum requirements for a successful dissemination drive.

MICHÈLE MERCIER

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS

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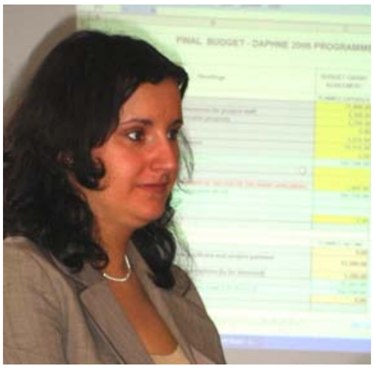

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As an independent consultant in international cooperation and public communication with Human Touch, Michèle Mercier works mostly with governmental and non-governmental bodies involved in humanitarian affairs worldwide. Over the last 30 or more years, she has participate in numerous field missions in crisis situationsl as a communication advisor or evaluator. She is the author of a number of books and publications on contemporary humanitarian issues. Ms Mercier has been one of the group of experts to the Daphne Programme since 2003.