MANAGING PUBLIC PROJECTS WITH EU FUNDING IN POLAND

Abstract

The public sector in Poland does not have its own standard of project management, therefore the article will analyze the problems of public projects realization due to their specific characteristics, as well as the problems associated with the use of the Project Cycle Management methodology (PCM).

Key words: informatization of public administration, public projects, IT projects, Project Cycle Management methodology.

Introduction

The public administration, with the aim to rationalize the expenditures on the State’s informatization through the EU subsidies, discerned the potential inherent in project management and expressed this officially by enacting, in 2005, the act on informatization of activities of the entities conducting public tasks and a year later by preparing the first – in Poland’s history – plan of the State’s informatization [Kaczorowska, 2013].

Public projects, aside from the characteristics of the other ventures, have their own specifics. Their implementation has usually been financed from public funds and has its basis in two legal acts – The Public Procurement Law of 29 January 2004 [Marshal of the Sejm, 2010, hereinafter referred to as the PPL] and The Public Finance Act of 27 August 2009 [The Public Finance Act of 27 August 2009, as amended]. Unfortunately, the largest number of difficulties and failures in running, especially major public projects, results from the PPL’s records.

In 1992 the European Commission (EC) adapted a set of instruments for projects planning and management, referred to as the PCM. The only methodology recommended by the EC is the PCM which was introduced for improvement of the quality of established projects and their management, and consequently for increasing the effectiveness of offered assistance.¹

¹ The PCM methodology was developed according to the conclusions from the analysis of assistance efficacy undertaken by the OECD Assistance Development Committee.
Since Poland accessed the EU, Polish organizations accomplishing the measures have the possibility to use EU funds. The PCM is of universal nature, which means that it may be used when forming the projects on human resources development, as well as investment projects. General Directorates I and VIII (presently EuropeAid) of the EC use it within all programmes of external assistance.

However, the EC’s *Project Cycle Management Guidelines* [Aid Delivery Methods, Volume 1: Project Cycle Management Guidelines, 2004] related to realization of the projects co-financed with EU funds are not suitable for direct, complete use, because they are mainly focussed on the principles of project funding, to the detriment of other extremely important management processes, such as setting up a schedule and transforming it into a plan or project team management.

Informatization of public administration is conducted using the management form tested in another sector, i.e. the project management without competent coordination of IT projects. A complete coordination, organized at the governmental level, of preparing and implementing IT projects, is still missing. On the one hand, this leads to solutions of the same functionality, worked out by various public institutions, such as e.g. the same health projects accomplished by the National Health Fund (NHF), financed from the State budget, conducted by the Health Care Information Systems Centre (HCISC) and financed from the EU funds. On the other hand, this results in the lack of IT solutions for the activity areas considered to be “no one’s”.

The public institutions applying for project funding use the project management methodology known as the Project Cycle Management (PCM) [Manual – Project Cycle Management, 2004]. The structure of this methodology conforms with the construction of the application for funding within the Operational Programme Human Capital (OP HC). This gratuitous and systematically updated methodology is to serve an improvement in project management and programmes co-financed by the EU, but first of all making rational decisions by the EC employees dealing with allocation and control of the use of aid funds.


The conducted analyses of the Polish e-government’s position, determined by the public administration informatization [Kaczorowska, 2013, chapter I], point to high backwardnesses of the public sector in Poland, as compared to other