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## The Role of Transferring Knowledge in Case of Non-Business Sector Projects

Nikoletta Kaszás<sup>a</sup>, Dr. Krisztina Keller<sup>a</sup>, Dr. Zoltán Birkner<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> University of Pannonia, Zrinyi str. 18., Nagykanizsa 8800, Hungary

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### Abstract

The Hungarian-Slovenian-Croatian cross-border region, whose disadvantageous situation and hardship was dealt with by several authors, is placed in the focus of our research. Being aware of these facts it is conceivable that the subsidies from various proposal sources are of high importance for the cross-border region, especially those that support co-operation and region development and these proposals can become one of the primal movers of development. In our study the projects implemented in the concerned Hungarian, Slovenian and Croatian counties were involved in the Hungary-Croatia IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013 and in the Slovenia-Hungary Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013 as well as the knowledge transfer methods in the managing organizations were analyzed. Each of the studied organisations belongs to the non-business sector as local government, school, foundation or association. It was characteristic of these studied organizations that in the 7-year cycle of the given programmed period they were involved in implementing several projects; therefore, the transfer of the managerial and professional knowledge gained in certain proposals could be of crucial importance in case of further projects. As a result, the aim of the research was to assess the correlation between knowledge transfer within these non-business organisations and the success of the projects. The analysis is timely and fills a gap since both studied programmes were closed in 2013 and the financed projects were finished in 2014; therefore, it explores significant information and correlations with regard to the projects of the programmed period to be closed for both the Joint Technical Secretariats and the Intermediate Bodies as well as for the applicants.

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### 1. Introduction

The cross-border region was given a role of utmost importance in our research. As we see it, it is worth dealing with this region since the cross-border regions are often considered to be in a peripheral situation, which implies a number of drawbacks. At the same time, this classification does not necessarily mean a disadvantageous position since the fact of being located by the borders bears a great number of opportunities and co-operation potential,

thanks to which the cross-border regions can achieve economic development (Mackinder, 1996). The cross-border projects that have been running for many years in different forms may serve this purpose directly since they can help regions combine each others' comparative advantages (Hardi, 2000). Accordingly, the subject of our study was the projects financed by the Hungary-Croatia IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013 as well as by the Slovenia-Hungary Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013. In the programming period starting from 2014 and lasting until 2020 the European Union sets up new priorities, whose framework allows new calls for proposals to be published. Those organizations that previously applied and won have an added competitive advantage with their experiences; however, it is questionable whether they can re-use the previously gained knowledge, whether they are able to use the amount of support appropriately and to implement successful projects. Our research answers these questions among others.

## II. Knowledge transfer within the organization

Thanks to the spreading of the more and more intensive globalization processes and the IT applications, the potentials and the difficulties of knowledge transfer have become the focus of attention in the past few years (Ratcheva, 2009:206), learning and knowledge transfer within the organization both became crucial tasks in the 21<sup>st</sup> century not only in the field of project management. As a result, nowadays a new field of science, human resource management is partly destined to support that knowledge transfer.

According to Kathiravelu and her colleagues, knowledge can be ranked among the important business tools of the organization and sharing it within the organization can contribute to maintaining the required performance and to success (Kathiravelu et al., 2013:119). Maintaining and sharing knowledge within the organization is also important according to Grant since not the knowledge itself but its integration is able to provide competitive advantage for the organizations (Grant, 1996:112-113).

Knowledge transfer is a factor of high importance in building and expanding corporate memory. Certain authors claim that this question has strategic importance (Újhelyi, 2001:33). All these are true for the field of project management as well, where the current calls for proposal and the accepted tasks require the appropriate project manager and project team to be set up in order to implement the project successfully. Thus, this field of human resource management is a topic to be dealt with in relation to projects.

Since the projects not only bear the possibilities to develop new competencies but also the ability to re-use that gained knowledge, the project management researchers of our time have realized that increased attention should be paid to how learning within the organization and developing competencies can be made easier in the project environment. Projects, therefore, can contribute to knowledge transfer. As Söderlund put it, projects are such arenas and areas where different knowledge elements can be integrated (Söderlund, 2008:519). In addition to that, the knowledge and experience gained in certain projects (e.g. technological knowledge, documentation, routine procedures and ideas) can be saved for later projects. These factors can ensure that the organization will not make the same mistakes project by project. (Söderlund, 2008:524).

In their research, Reich and his colleagues verified that a higher level of applying knowledge management shows a positive correlation with the depths and size of project based knowledge, which was defined by the authors as a combination of technical and organizational knowledge as well as of the information in relation with business values. However, the research also proved that there is no correlation between the level of knowledge management and the project performance (Reich et al., 2014: 594). In our own research we wish to review this conclusion with reference to proposal projects.

According to the research of Bassi, projects and their management create conceptual, networking, corporate and experiential knowledge; however, since the people implementing the project typically either return to their original scope of activities or start a new project after closing a project, this knowledge is not reused and is not built in to the corporate memory. The accumulated knowledge is not formed and archived. It is not effective either with respect to time or to finances since the knowledge gained by the organization before is not exploited in new projects (Bassi, 2014:460).

Based on the aforesaid it can be concluded that knowledge transfer within the organization is an exceptionally important factor, which can save time and financial resources for the organization and furthermore, it can provide a competitive advantage. On the other hand, practice shows that organizations are seldom able to utilize the

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