

Imagine. Five nations, more than ten independent organisations, five languages, one hundred and fifty e-mails a day, and over one hundred people spread across more than twenty project teams, each of them working hard to achieve the same goal: coupling the markets for energy transmission. Welcome to the CWE project.

Eurogroup Consulting mobilizes and people in complex transformation program

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Mobilization

It's difficult enough to manage large projects for just one company or organisation, but managing a program of the above mentioned size is a true challenge. A multi-party, multi-stakeholder program requires more than your average program management. The diagram illustrates the elements required to mobilize the stakeholders and achieve the desired results, with mobilization being the common denominator.

A clear structure and organisation forms the foundation. This may sound simple, but projects of this size require considerable missionary work and continuous attention to get and keep the project organisation in place.

Four building blocks then follow: Collaboration, Communication, Continuity and Conflict handling. These four C's keep the project from Clashing, Causing Confusion and Creating Chaos.

Collaboration

You can't make it on your own. Getting all the different work groups and their members, each with their own style and culture, to work together requires leadership.

You need to guide the team members in their activities and bridge the cultural gaps by 'translating' views and ways of working. Team up the flexible French with gründliche Germans. Keep mobilizing everyone towards the project goals and educate them in cultural forgiveness. Make sure everyone feels appreciated and valued, make them happy, heureux and glücklich.

Communication

Good morning, guten Tag, mais oui, jaja. In a large project like CWE, communication is an issue. People talk all day, but preferably only with the people around them and in their own language. With project members scattered all over Europe and a project buzzing with new results and findings every day, miscommunication or a lack of communication is a continuous threat. For the project to work, you need to keep all the stakeholders informed and have people meet and call and talk to each other. This is easier said than done. It demands hard work, both structurally in the form of e-magazines, the distribution of minutes of meetings and those PowerPoint slides you just presented to the steering committee, and simply by doing it – even if it means receiving and writing 150 e-mails a day.

Connecting power lines for social welfare

The Central Western Europe (CWE) program aims at creating the largest regional electricity market in 2010 in order to increase social welfare in the CWE region.

Three goals have been identified to achieve this.

1. Harmonise the LT Auctions rules in the region explicitly allocating capacity
2. Couple the CWE electricity markets (France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg and Germany) implicitly allocating capacity
3. Improve collaboration of the 7 TSOs involved (RWE, EnBW, Transpower, Tennet, Creos, Elia and RTE) in order to achieve a satisfactory Security of Supply

The CWE program is a multi-party project with 4 major players: governments, regulators, power exchanges and Transmission System Operators (TSO's). Eurogroup Consulting staffs the Program Office and works in accordance with the 4 C model.

Continuity

Who will stop the train? It takes skill and determination to keeping a program going despite project members joining and leaving the team, a mounting resistance to change, political backdoor fights, and priorities

to the formal (and often internal) organisation, with qualified staff at all levels of the project, from team leader to the highest steering committee. This construction, often used by Eurogroup Consulting, has proven very successful. ■

organisations

being redefined or budgets re-discussed. So be the driven project hero, the shield for discouraging news. Keep your people moving and show the outside world you're still going strong. Plan milestones per week, involve your team and inform those distant project bosses of your progress. It will all add to the momentum and keep everything rolling.

Conflict handling

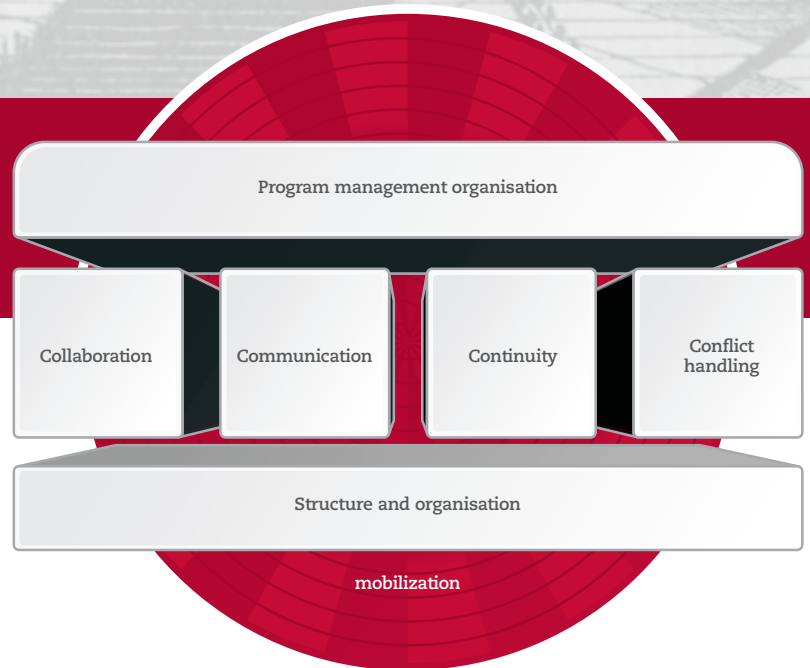
Clash! Panic! A difficult but rewarding task in complex projects like CWE is managing the conflicts that arise. Understanding of the characteristics of the conflict including the pivotal role of perceptions and prejudices is crucial to handling the conflict. You have to understand people's different ways of thinking, their communication styles and cultures. So when the pragmatic Dutch clash with their hierarchy-sensitive French colleagues, you need to first make them understand their cultural differences before dealing with the content.

Structure and organisation

Who is the boss? A successful program needs a sound structure and organisational setup. Clear and standardised reporting tools and communication lines, transparent decision-making processes, and responsibilities for all bodies and all work groups across the program, can shield the project from discussions-about-nothing and lost time.

Program management office (PMO)

Redundancy can be very helpful in the project organisation as well. With the right structure and staffing in place, and the 4 C's in mind, the members of the Program Management Office can support the project at all levels. PMO acts like a shadow organisation



The 4 C's supported by structure and organisation are the key to success

Collaboration is the way in which all the work groups and stakeholders work together, taking into account the different cultures and styles of working and the pressures that all the involved parties are under.

Communication involves continually ensuring that there are no misunderstandings and that everyone is up to date and informed. It is o-so important, and there is no such thing as over communication. In projects like this you need redundancy and forgiveness. When you get the same message from more than one person, chances are higher the information is right. Tons of forgiveness are needed as well, because whatever you do, one thing is sure: there will be misunderstandings.

Continuity means keeping the momentum going, making sure decisions are taken and not easily forgotten. As a program manager, you need to keep on pushing and motivating, knowing that any activities that cause delays will defeat the project.

Conflict handling is facing the conflicts that will undoubtedly arise and dealing with them in an acceptable way for all parties that not only respects the various cultures involved but also avoids compromising the project objectives.

The final element of the model is a single 'D': Daily program management. This is managing in terms of the four C's and, of course, managing progress and deliverables in line with the project plans. Only with a proper D, can the 4 C's flourish.