

LEADING A PROJECT TEAM WHEN DEVELOPING A NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

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Abstract: *Within the transformation and modernization process of the Romanian Army the need for a better connection between the university specialization of the graduates and their military one emerged. In order to satisfy that need, a new programme is needed for the logistics officers and accountants. The new programme, the Accounting and Management Information Systems, is to develop a new category of professionals able to integrate much more easily on the work market, and also to exercise the officer position in a more performing manner.*

Keywords: manager, project team, methodology, risk

1. Goal management plan

The *goal and objectives* of the project are:

- Analyzing the need for a specific university program, in order to bring solid arguments for developing it and feasible ones for the new COR qualification.
- Developing research, know-how and other activities in order to fulfill the new program requirements and to respond to the dynamics and demands of social order from the beneficiaries.
- Implementation of the alternative deemed most feasible in the Land Forces Academy of Sibiu, after ARACIS evaluation (at the end of the project).

Moreover, the *specific objectives* are to develop two essential types of competences: *professional* (to be able to identify and record the economic operations within the organization accountancy, to use the information system resources in order to analyze and diagnose any economic operation, etc) [1] and *transversal* (to apply the work ethic principles and values, to identify the roles and responsibilities within a team, etc).

Project feasibility:

- It responds to the concrete needs of the General Staff and Land Forces education institutions.
- A controlled process of managing activities, a risk management plan, a change management process, laws and regulations to be complied with quality standards and the basic facilities necessary to complete these activities are already in place.
- The project is mostly realized within “Nicolae Bălcescu” Land Forces Academy, Sibiu.

2. Assumptions and constraints

We start the project with the following assumptions:

- The required specialization will be approved by the MoD and General Staff
- It will receive a temporary accreditation from ARACIS
- It will satisfy the beneficiaries needs, especially from other ministries, like Internal Affairs or Ministry of Justice
- The number of cadets for the new specialization will increase and exceed the

present 50/year which is in the economic area.

Speaking of constraints, it mostly refers to deadlines, which are too rough (6 months till ARACIS institutional visit for accreditation from the moment the project starts), but also to the standards of ARACIS (aren't harmonized with the military ones), the budget (is institutional), the low number of personnel in key areas, many simultaneously-run activities, military requirements vs. the civilian standards for such a programme, military training time allocation vs. university activities, university practice.

3. Risks

From the institutional annually-made quality assurance reports analysis, we can assume some direct risks for developing a new programme, such as the ones below:

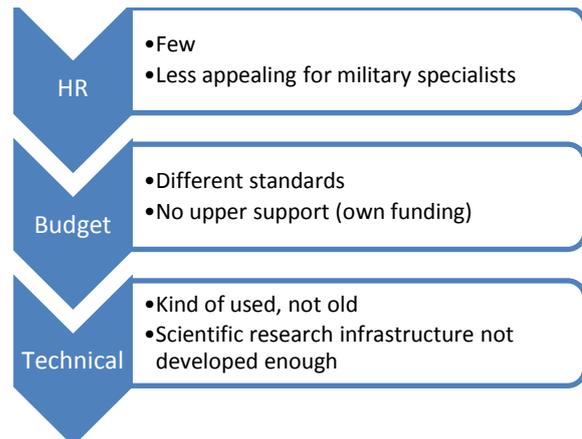


Figure 1. Basic risks identified through SWOT analysis

In order to build a quantitative analysis of the risks, a matrix is used in which the risk levels is made by the values of emergence probability and by the event impact (see Table 1).

Table 1 Risk factors and activities related to the project

No	Risk	Probability of appearance*		Impact*		RISK
		Probability	Score	Probability	Score	Score
1.	Personnel from project team missing	10	10	20	20	15
2.	Differences between the estimated costs	21	21	21	21	21
3.	Romanian legislation delays or changes	21	21	30	30	25.5
4.	Differences between the requirements and the content of the programme	25	25	50	50	37.5
5.	Institutional transformation	20	20	40	40	30

After doing the project risk assessment, as shown in Table 2, we consider the next actions to be required: some activities to be reassigned, time extension, external help (specialists, universities) and the fact that

no matter the managerial changes, the institution and cadets are the direct beneficiaries. [2]

Table2: Risk assessment in the project

		IMPACT		
		LOW has no effect	MEDIUM may pose a problem	MAJOR immediate action required
PROBABILITY	LOW rarely occurs	A,B	C,E	
	MEDIUM has occurred before, will occur again			D
	MAJOR occur frequently			

4. Project Quality

The quality approach consists in controlling the deliverables according to existing standards [3]. All the members of the project team are employees of the Land Forces Academy and their activity is carried out in accordance with the standards applied to the entire institution. In 2012-2013, along with other higher education institutions included in the “B” category - education and research institutions, “Nicolae Balcescu” Land Forces Academy participated in the international institutional assessment processes within the project “Performance in Research, Performance in Teaching - Quality, Diversity and Innovation in Romania’s Universities”. The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is an independent membership service of the European University Association (EUA) that offers evaluations to support the participating institutions in the continuing development of their strategic management and internal quality culture. The IEP is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and is listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

The Management is committed to the Quality endeavor by providing all the necessary resources in terms of manpower, skills, tools etc. Together with the Quality goals, Land Forces Academy has a well structured Quality Management System (QMS) having a strong process focus and

comprising of Procedures, Guidelines, Standards and Templates. Stakeholders decide on the quality of the cadets based on the performance of the command officers building up process, according to the assumed institutional task/target, a process that is presented in the next figure.

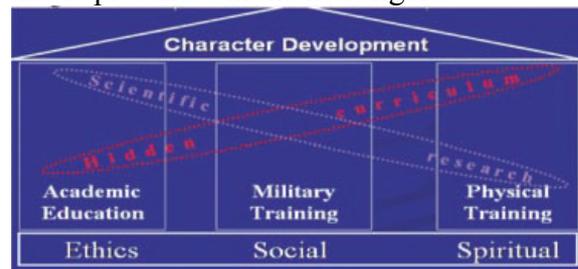


Figure 2. Pillars of Quality Assurance in cadet education [4]

4.1. Human resource management

The organizations of the project’s team follow the diagram in the figure no.3. The main responsibilities and associated necessary skills are:

- The project manager (Vice Rector for studies) approves and will be responsible for carrying out all indicators. He is the one responsible for the relation with the rector of the institution. The project manager must have strong knowledge in quality assurance requirements and standards, and must be an expert for the required university specialization.
- The economic director will provide financial management and will be

responsible for drawing up all financial documents.

- The HR director will be responsible for communicating with the MoD and specialized structures involved in the training and learning area, and also provide expertise in areas of personnel fluctuation.

- The DEAN will be responsible for planning and coordinating the activities regarding the accreditation of the programme. He will also be the one who will inform the rector with the work status at all times.

- The Head of the Educational Management, with the help of the Quality Assurance Office will provide statistical data regarding the new study plan, working schedules, and also will monitor the ARACIS standard implementation within the new designed programme.

- The director department of the Management department will coordinate the professors and specialists activities, will

assign tasks and establish work schedules. He is directly responsible for that and he will keep the dean informed about the work progress at all times.

- The director department of Social and Behavioural studies will act as an expert on establishing the desired competences and provide consultancy whenever needed.

5. Project costs

Since similar activities/projects have been done before, we have the know-how, and an accurate estimate of how much the project will cost, so we used a *definitive estimate* [5] type of cost estimation:

Phase 1: 10,000 lei (start-up, acquire info, documents preparations, meetings, COR qualification)

Phase 2: 55,000 lei (ARACIS institutional visit)

Phase 3: 100,000 lei (implementation, investments)

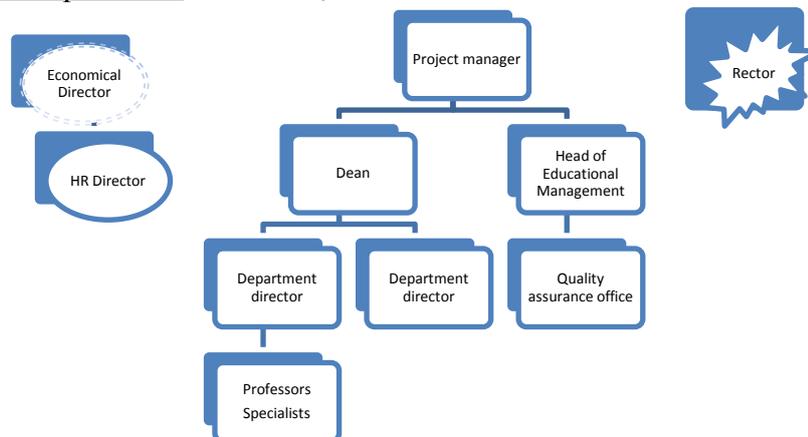


Figure 3: Project structure

6. Conclusions

The need to match higher military specializations with the demands of stakeholders operating in a dynamic environment leads to the need for a permanent adaptation of military organizations, especially those of education. This article has attempted to demonstrate a project from a methodological point of view, introducing a new academic program

to meet the needs of the beneficiaries, taking into account all aspects involved (costs, human resources, material resources, institutional capacity) and their predictability. The model developed by this project ensures that the beneficiaries will be satisfied with their demands and the institution that is able to make these changes without affecting the radical change of activities.

References

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