

REGIONAL REPORT – SLOVENIA – JULY 2010



Project Management Update from Slovenia

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PM Forum in Slovenia

Forum was organized by Slovenian Project Management Association from 2nd - 4th June 2010. Forum is the conference where the results of PM were presented in the last year in Slovenia.

Forum is held each year in another Slovenian region. In this way Slovenian PM Association wants to widen PM to all areas, not only in centres.

This year's Forum was held in Velenje. The town is not big by inhabitants but there are big industrial, energetic and mining firms there.

In the conference there were present 83 participants and 21 papers presented.

The programme and project manager of Forum was mag. Igor Vrecko from University of Maribor

There were three streams:

1. Projects for managing global changes and crisis
2. The development of project management field
3. The best Project Management practise

Some interesting themes on the Forum were:

The global crisis has shown that the »**project oriented society**« is not only a fashion but a great need. The right way to solve global crisis is to manage global projects in the fields like finance, pollution, economic development, energy etc. Global projects need global consensus. But it is very difficult to reach this consensus in today's world. It looks that such projects are not possible before great catastrophic events.

Also in Slovenia there are »Slovenian global« projects. The huge environmental **project** »**Clean Slovenia in one day**« (Bostjan Bozic) was done. In this project the cost was not high but the number of people involved was large. It was a nation-wide project on 17th April 2010 and 250.000 volunteers cleaned Slovenia. They collected 70.000 m³ of garbage. In this case it was seen how important was the role of good project management.

More papers tried to answer on the theme of European year 2010: Combating poverty and social exclusion. The projects of »**social entrepreneurship**« (Robert Drobic) help to reduce poverty and social exclusion, to create new jobs, etc. The available financial funds for these projects in Slovenia until 2013 are more than 63 million EUR. Very important condition for the success of these projects is capable project management. It means qualitative definition of goals, financial construction, way of leading, collaboration between stakeholders, start up manual etc. It is also an occasion for young project managers, who can be engaged in these projects. The need for good project managers is also in all nongovernmental organizations, which run their business mostly by projects.

At the **panel discussion** the managers of these firms were present: Pošta Slovenije; Gorenje-Domestic appliance manufacturer; Esotech - Environmental solutions and Power technologies; Coal mine Velenje, Power station.

The conclusions for the exit from economic crisis and achieving more competitiveness were

- more innovations
- more new products
- more new technologies

The strategy, of course, is implemented by projects. Today nobody doubts about project management and its »to be or not to be«. But it is important on which level there is project management in one firm. The managers of mentioned firms were thinking that the PM system in their firms is growing each year with higher organizational culture.

It was presented that the **project office** (mag. Uros Hribar) is not only a bureaucratic, conservative, rigid organizational unit but it should be the heart of PM system in a firm. The PM office should be the PM management center where are run many activities such as education, software, creation procedures and standards, cooperation between various units and people, support for strategic management, help to project managers, etc.

It was presented a comparison of project management experiences in the U.S.A., Italy and U.A.R. Although each of the project organizations had many similarities, there was significant variation in the performance of the projects due to the owner's approaches, and **the cultural differences of the owners and team members** (Michael S. Tomasik).

The **results of research PM in Slovenian firms** -137 firm answers (dr. Aljaz Stare) has pointed, that the average number of projects in a Slovenian firm is 20 to 30. They were finished later than programmed in average for 21%, with average higher cost of 14%. The reasons for these differences are bad goal definitions, too optimistic activity durations, neglecting risks, ineffective control and not appropriate project culture. The level of organizational culture is relatively high.

These are some examined criteria (5 is the highest mark)

- respect to project manuals and procedures (mark 3,2)
- the firm manager's relation to projects (mark 3,8)
- the relation of functional managers to projects (mark 3,7)
- the motivation of team members (mark 3,49)

The main reasons for delaying projects and their higher cost are

- the (non)capable project managers and project team members (50%)
- change management (30%)
- the project environment (20%)

The new president of Slovenian PM Association mag. Andrej Kerin said that the growth of PM in Slovenia has not been very fast but it has been stable and permanent.



The panel discussion



The programme manager mag. Igor Vrecko

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Andrej Skarabot, PhD, is an international correspondent for PMForum and PM World Today in Slovenia. He has a diploma in Chemical Engineering (1963) from Ljubljana University in Slovenia and a Masters of Science (M.Sc.) in Business Administration (1975) and Ph.D. in Business Administration (1985) from Zagreb University in Croatia. Dr. Skarabot was a professor at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia from 1980, retiring in 2007. During 1989 – 2006, he was also a partner in d.o.o., a management consulting firm based in Ljubljana. Beginning in 1965, Andrej was the first to write articles and teach seminars about network analysis and project management. Since then, he has extensive experience in the construction, pharmaceutical, electro, mechanical engineering and governmental sectors. He is currently President and First Assessor of the Slovenian Certification Body (SloCert) for the International Project Management Association (IPMA) and an assessor for IPMA's international awards. Dr. Skarabot has taught more than 300 seminars and published over 190 articles and papers in the management field. Andrej lives in Ljubljana, Slovenia and can be contacted at andrej.skarabot@quest.arnes.si.