



**Danish
Development
Research
Network**
*Bringing together
knowledge and
development*

Project management in research capacity building projects

**A REVIEW of management experiences, challenges, and
opportunities in ENRECA projects**



By Carsten Nico Hjortsø - Copenhagen, April 2010

Table of contents

Preface.....	4
Executive summary	5
1 Introduction.....	8
2 Study methodology	9
3 The ENRECA programme and projects	11
4 Characterisation of the ENRECA projects in the survey	12
5 Challenges and lessons learned.....	14
5.1 Pre-project phase.....	15
5.1.1 Initial contact	15
5.1.2 Selection of project objectives	17
5.1.3 Choice of project design	20
5.1.4 Choice of project management strategy	23
5.1.5 Balancing the partnership.....	26
5.1.6 Incentives and ownership.....	29
5.2 Project preparation phase	32
5.2.1 Project anchoring.....	32
5.2.2 Project analysis	38
5.2.3 Master project planning	48
5.3 Project start-up/inception phase	56
5.3.1 Detailed planning.....	57
5.4 Project co-ordination phase.....	58
5.4.1 Communication	58
5.4.2 Administration	61
5.4.3 Ongoing leadership and management	64
5.4.4 Monitoring and control	67
5.5 Project evaluation phase.....	68
5.5.1 External evaluation	69
5.5.2 Internal evaluation.....	69
5.6 Project closure phase.....	70
5.6.1 Closing the project.....	71
5.6.2 Project sustainability	72
5.7 Project management at the university, faculty, and department level.....	75
5.8 Donor relations	77
6 Conclusion	81
6.1 Pre-project phase.....	81
6.2 Project preparation phase	82
6.3 Project start-up/inception phase	83
6.4 Project co-ordination phase.....	83
6.5 Project evaluation phase.....	84
6.6 Project closure phase.....	84
6.7 Project management at the university, faculty and department level.....	85

6.8	Donor relations	85
7	References	86
	Appendix 1: The 36 ENRECA projects included in the survey	89
	Appendix 2: Persons interviewed	91
	Appendix 3: Overview of findings and lessons learned.....	92

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Project management activity areas and specific sub-activities in each area (Fangel 2008)	9
Figure 5.1: Typical ENRECA project activities according to intervention level and focus	19

List of Tables

Table 2.1: Institutional distribution of the 36 ENRECA projects included in the survey	10
Table 4.1: The starting year of the responding ENRECA projects	12
Table 4.2: The (expected) final year of the responding ENRECA projects	12
Table 4.3: The current three-year phase of the responding ENRECA projects	13
Table 4.4: The survey respondents' roles in their project.....	13
Table 4.5: The number of Danish and South institutions involved in the ENRECA projects	13
Table 4.6: The geographical distribution of ENRECA projects.....	13
Table 4.7: ENRECA project managers' ranking of the importance of typical individual (I) and organisational (O) capacity building activities for their project design	14
Table 5.1: ENRECA projects' overall balance between individual and institutional capacity building	18
Table 5.2: Distribution of project management man-hours between research and other capacity building activities	18
Table 5.3: The influence of the specific project management complexity (type of task, time-frame, existing experiences, number of participants, organisational culture, interdisciplinarity, etc.) on the project design	21
Table 5.4: Managers' experience of project management complexity in ENRECA projects compared to their expectations and other university-based projects	24
Table 5.5: Danish ENRECA project managers' perception of project participants' involvement, motivation and shared perception	30
Table 5.6: Project managers' perceived successfulness in creating ownership through upwards, outwards and inwards anchoring activities	33
Table 5.7: The use of project analysis in the preparation of ENRECA applications.....	39
Table 5.8: ENRECA project managers' perception of the importance of using different project analyses	39
Table 5.9: The application of planning element in ENRECA projects' most recent project phase.....	48
Table 5.10: Danish ENRECA project managers' perception of project participants' involvement, motivation, and shared perception	49
Table 5.11: Application of detailed planning practices in ENRECA projects	57
Table 5.12: The application of management information exchange and communication strategy tools in ENRECA projects' most recent project phase	59

Table 5.13: The application of financial management tools in ENRECA projects during the most recent project phase	63
Table 5.14: The inclusion of project monitoring tools in ENRECA projects' most recent project phase	67
Table 5.15: The use of internal and external evaluation results in ENRECA project management. Only projects where evaluation has taken place are included in the survey.....	68
Table 5.16: Typical project closure activities and their degree of implementation in ENRECA projects.....	71
Table 5.17: Sustainability strategies and the degree to which they are relied on by ENRECA project managers in their project's strategy for sustainability	73
Table 5.18: ENRECA project managers' opinions regarding department-level project management competencies and processes	75
Table 5.19: ENRECA project managers' perceptions of their collaboration with Danida and Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC).....	78

List of Boxes

Box 3.1: Successful twinning.	11
Box 5.1: Examples of incentive used in ENRECA projects.	31
Box 5.2: Typical risk and uncertainty elements in ENRECA projects.....	47

List of Abbreviations

Danida	Danish International Development Agency
DFC	Danida Fellowship Centre
DKK	Danish Kroner
ENRECA	Projects for the Enhancement of Research Capacity
FFU	Consultative Research Committee for Development Research
IPM	International Project Management
IPMA	International Project Management Association
LIFE	Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Copenhagen
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
MoFA	Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NIS	National Innovation System
PMF	Project management file
PRINCE2	Projects In Controlled Environments
PRP	Principal Responsible Party
RCB	Research capacity building
SAREC	Sida's research capacity building programme
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SPS	Sector Programme Support

Preface

My interest in how to manage research capacity building projects started when I became the daily project manager of an ENRECA project in 2004. At the initiation of the partnership in 2000, no research activities were carried out at our partners' institutions, and the project consequently involved a significant emphasis on institutional capacity building. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to stay for a longer period of time at our two partners' universities in Bolivia, each time for approximately half a year. As a project manager, I was fascinated with the complexity involved in managing a cross-cultural, cross-institutional, and partly virtual project. But in many cases my fascination turned into frustration as things did not develop according to the plans, or at least to what in my opinion seemed rational.

Finding support for better understanding the situation, especially when staying in South, was not easy. Few Danish colleagues had experiences with the same kind of projects, and often situations seemed very particular and context dependent. I looked for published project-level experiences, but found only few. When I began to discuss my experience with other ENRECA project managers, it soon turned out that they had also experienced most of the challenges that our project was struggling with. Recognizing that no study had previously been made on ENRECA projects exclusively focusing on participants' experiences with project management, the idea for the research communicated in this report was born.

Unfortunately, it took several years before the opportunity to carry out the study became a reality, and when I eventually started the research, Danida had decided to replace the ENRECA grants with a new (but similar) type of research capacity building projects. The new projects are intended to be larger to be directed toward strategic predefined research areas, and to be selected through a two-step process involving a pre-selection stage. Nonetheless, it seems that Danida's support to North-South research collaboration will continue to build on partnership principles and a combination of institutional and individual capacity building and activities. The experiences from the last 20 years of ENRECA project implementation therefore remain a valuable source of inspiration for enhancing project management in future research partnerships.

The funding and the time available have limited the study to include the Danish project managers' perspective only. The reader should be conscious about this bias. Hopefully, in the future a more complete study can be carried out, including the perspectives of our South colleagues.

I am very grateful to the Danish Development Research Network (DDRN) for funding the study. Especially, I want to thank Anne Sørensen and Kris Borring Prasada Rao for their ideas, constructive comments, and patience. I also want to thank Darriann Riber from Danida and Bente Ilsøe from Danida Fellowship Centre for their input and comments on the report. Furthermore, I want to thank Michael Rytikønen for his collaboration during the initial phase of the project. Most of all, I want to thank all the ENRECA project owners and managers, who have made the study possible by choosing to spend some of their limited time on answering a quite comprehensive survey and/or by participating in the interviews.

The present report is very comprehensive and is considered a background report. In order to convert the ENRECA project managers' experiences into a more hands-on and practical set of recommendations a separate publication: *Project Management Guidelines for Research Capacity Building Partnerships* has been published by DDRN, providing a set of recommendations on project management aspects to consider when designing future North-South research capacity building partnerships.

Carsten Nico Hjortsø

Copenhagen, February 2010

Executive summary

This report provides an overview of project management experiences and practices in *Enhancement of Research Capacity* (ENRECA) projects funded by Danida during the period 1989-2008. The study has, due to resource limitations, been limited to the perspectives of Danish project managers. An Internet survey, three focus group interviews, and eight key-informant interviews were used for data collection. Interviews were transcribed and analysed using content analysis. Project managers' experiences are presented and discussed according to six distinct project management phases throughout the project cycle: Pre-project phase, preparation phase, start-up phase, coordination phase(s), evaluation phase(s), and closure phase. Moreover, the report also presents the project managers' experiences with project management in the North institutional context and their experiences in relation to the interaction with Danida.

The aim of the research presented in this report is to document the project management "lessons learned" – challenges and opportunities – experienced by ENRECA project managers. The purpose is to provide future project managers, university administrators, and donors with an insight into the challenges involved in managing North-South RCB partnerships.

The scope of the various ENRECA projects has been very diverse. Some projects have focused on research activities, whereas others have focused more on organizational capacity building. The project management contexts in which RCB projects have been implemented have also been very different. Some projects have been administratively integrated with the South partner institutions and other projects have been managed as relatively independent organizations.

The specific characteristics of the initial process of establishing a RCB partnership are likely to influence the subsequent project management needs, and partners should consider the implications for project design and management strategies of whether projects are being initiated through personal or institutional contacts, or through a top-down or bottom-up approach. Different approaches will influence the level of institutional and individual ownership and commitment and thus affect the subsequent project implementation. Project partners should allocate the sufficient time to identify the right partners and develop a sound basis for the partnership, including developing personal relations and twinning of individual researchers with matching objectives, ambitions, and interests.

Partnerships have to take the degree of complexity involved in project definition, the specific context and working environment, and the characteristics of the planned project activities into consideration when designing the project and deciding on a management strategy. Keeping the project management effort as simple as possible is always important, and this is best ensured if partners spend the time needed to thoroughly discuss and agree upon which management design is most adequate for the unique situation they face in their specific partnership.

Most ENRECA projects have foreseen that project management would be relatively complex and this has to some extent influenced the project design, mainly in relation to administrative procedures and project organisation. Especially, designing multi- and interdisciplinary projects constitutes a challenge, and such projects can benefit from including activities that facilitate collaboration among disciplines and individual participants. Project design and management strategies, e.g. staffing, administrative procedures and organizational setup should not be static, but should be revised and adjusted as relations and capacities evolve throughout the project life cycle. Research is a dynamic process and a flexible management approach is imperative.

Understanding the incentive structures influencing both North and South partners is crucial. In general, ENRECA projects have been good at matching individual participants' and the project's objectives and the involvement of South PhD students and Danish project participants have been very high. In some cases, involving South staff has been difficult, since projects often have lacked the opportunity to directly employ or top up researchers' salaries. Involvement is also affected by South institutions' management practices

and organisational politics, and obtaining a basic understanding of the South partner's organisational processes can be important in order to design project management processes that optimize both partners' involvement.

The physical distance between the partners and the loose linkages that many participants have to ENRECA project activities pose a management challenge, but ENRECA projects have been relatively successful in ensuring effective collaboration between project team members. Building personal relations and regular visits to the South institution are considered important means to facilitate mutual understanding and effective project implementation.

Project analysis can be crucial to develop an appropriate project design and project management strategy. Partners can benefit from making explicit, and discussing in a respectful and inquiring manner, the experienced differences in project management approaches. Creating an overview of existing norms, rules, and procedures at the South institution can provide important input for decisions on project design and management strategies – especially if the project is focused on institutional capacity building.

Project master planning involves establishing a shared understanding of project objectives and implementation processes, which is considered crucial for project success. ENRECA projects have been relatively good at doing so, but project managers also emphasized that it is easy to become too ambitious and participants should carefully evaluate the realism of the objectives and approaches used in the implementation and make sure that plans are flexible and have built-in sufficient slack in order to meet later needs for adjustments.

Most ENRECA projects have explicitly defined participants' roles and responsibilities, and discussing role expectations has been important, especially in cross-organisational collaboration, where participants are working within unfamiliar organizational structures. Important aspects of designing the project organisation involve defining the optimal degree of administrative integration with the South partner's existing organisation and the degree of North representation in the South.

A majority of ENRECA projects have used two to six months for the project start-up phase. Project managers recommend establishing good communication practices among partnership participants during the inception phase. It is also recommended to start up slowly and use small-scale activities to initiate and practise the partnership collaboration and identify participants' interests.

ENRECA project managers evaluate the internal communication among project partners as having been highly efficient. Several projects have maintained a common project management file (PMF) listing all activities and keeping track of changes as an efficient means of communicating project developments. Projects are recommended to define their information needs in relation to the ongoing project administration, to establish simple procedures, and to implement these procedures from the beginning of the project execution. Most ENRECA projects have developed an explicit monitoring plan and have monitored activities on a regular basis. It is recommended that monitoring relates to an institutional baseline study and includes a few, but fundamental, performance indicators.

During the final stage of ENRECA projects, the partners have been relatively good at assessing the match between stakeholder expectations and project results. Participants have also to some extent reflected on, and documented, project management lessons learned. Some project managers argue that the partners should avoid finalizing project execution from one day to another, and recommend applying a strategy with a low-intensity and prolonged closure phase allowing activities to be completed and followed through.

All surveyed ENRECA projects have formulated a sustainability strategy. Inclusion of South partners in research networks; development of field research infrastructures and related databases; and quality research outputs are considered the most important strategies for sustainability.

In general, North ENRECA partners have received adequate administrative support from their university departments and faculties, but some project managers have lacked institutional backing and requested universities to develop clearer strategies to guide their engagement in North-South RCB activities.

The initiative grants previously offered by Danida to support the initial establishment of North-South partnerships are recognized as having been an important and very successful mechanism. The long time-frame (9-12 years) and the high degree of administrative flexibility are considered crucial for achieving the high input-output ratio that ENRECA projects have been recognized for. The long time-horizon is also considered by project managers to be a key factor for achieving long-term sustainable impact on South research capacity. Maintaining flexibility and simplicity in grant administration, avoiding creating a “consultant-approach”, and allowing the enrolment of South PhD students at the Danish universities are stressed as important elements in future RCB funding schemes.

1 Introduction

Enhancement of Research Capacity (ENRECA) projects based on partnership principles have been implemented by Danish researchers and their South partners since 1989. Danida has funded more than 50 long-term projects. These projects have been designed and managed very differently. Considering the scientific, geographical, and organisational diversity involved in ENRECA projects the resulting diversity is not surprising.

These diverse experiences constitute a unique source of learning and inspiration for project management of future research capacity building (RCB) projects. However, communication and interchange of Danish researchers' experiences has been limited. This is unfortunate, as much has been learned that can enhance efficiency and effectiveness of future project implementation.

Managing a RCB project in a North-South partnership is a task very different from managing a traditional research project in North. Working within a partnership model is also different from traditional project management. Although an increasing emphasis is placed on formal training of researchers in project management skills, it has traditionally been a field developed by "learning-by-doing" – and excellence in project management is gained from practical experiences. One of the reasons why project management can not be fully learned through a course, is that in real life things typically develop differently from what was initially planned and the preconditions for the planning are very often not sufficiently understood by the project participants. When working in an international, multi-cultural, and inter-institutional context this risk is significant.

This research has a twofold objective: 1) to establish an overall overview of the project management practices of ENRECA projects, and 2) to document the project management "lessons learned", e.g. the challenges and opportunities experienced by ENRECA project managers. The purpose is to provide future project managers, university administrators, and donors with an understanding of the complexity involved in managing North-South RCB partnerships. The findings have also been used as the basis for the publication *Project Management Guidelines for Research Capacity Building Partnerships* published by Danish Development Research Network. This publication provides project managers with practical hands-on recommendations on how to plan and organize North-South RCB partnerships.

The research was carried out in 2008-9 using a survey sent to 36 Danish ENRECA projects' principle responsible parties (PRP). Furthermore, a number of focus group interviews and individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with Danish project managers. The research therefore has a biased perspective – it is the story about the Danish project participants' experiences. It is important to emphasize that this study is not an evaluation of the ENRECA programme or individual projects (for references on programme and project-level evaluations see MoFA 1992, 2000a, 2001, HERA 2007, KEDHR 2001, Nyamongo and Aagaard-Hansen 2006, and Johnson et al. 2009).

Chapter 2 presents the research methodology. Chapter 3 provides a short introduction to the ENRECA programme, and chapter 4 provides a characterisation of the 25 ENRECA projects that have returned the internet survey. Chapter 5 is structured according to a general project management model based on the International Project Management Association's (IPMA) approach (Fangel 2008). The chapter presents and discusses the data from the survey and interviews based on the pre-project stage and the five phases in the project cycle: preparation, start-up, coordination, evaluation, and closure. The two last sections of chapter 5 address the issues related to project-university and project-donor interaction. Finally, in chapter 6 conclusions are drawn on central project management related "lessons learned" in ENRECA projects.

2 Study methodology

The objective of disclosing project management practices in ENRECA projects was addressed through an Internet-based survey. The objective of documenting “lessons learned” was addressed through a qualitative approach, using focus group interviews and key-informant interviews. The design of the questionnaire and the interviews was based on the generic Proactive Project Management model (Fangel 2008). This model involves two levels: The project level (the specific RCB project) and the organisational level (e.g. the university context). At the project level, the model consists of two activity levels: The project management level and the project execution level. The study has not addressed execution issues, e.g. choosing research or capacity building approaches and methodologies. The focus is on project management, i.e. how to ensure efficient and effective implementation of research and capacity building.

Prior to the project development phase, a pre-project phase can be identified. The pre-project phase involves the processes leading to the decision of establishing a partnership and initiating the planning of a specific project. The actual project life cycle involves five types of project management phases: Preparation, project start-up, coordination, evaluation, and closure. Preparation and start-up is carried out before the execution of the project is initiated and the closure is carried out after the execution has finished. At the management level, the project execution involves phases of coordination periodically interrupted by evaluation phases.

During the project management phases in the project live cycle, the manager and project team address four different activity areas. The four activity areas and eight sub-activities are shown in Figure 2.1. Depending on how advanced the project is in its project cycle, the project management will emphasize to a varying degree the eight sub-activities. Organising the project management of the specific phase (2) is addressed in all phases. Planning the project management (1) and performing overall project management (3) are primarily addressed in the preparation, the start-up, and the evaluation phases, whereas performing ongoing project management (4) is mainly addressed in the start-up and coordination phases.

1. Planning the project management

- Analysing complexity, defining overall design and management strategy

2. Organising the project management phases

- Planning, organising and documenting activities in the project phases

3. Performing overall project management

- Project anchoring
- Project analysis
- Master project planning

4. Performing ongoing project management

- Detailed project planning
 - Project control
 - Ongoing project leadership
-

Figure 2.1: Project management activity areas and specific sub-activities in each area (Fangel 2008)

The survey and the interview guides were structured according to the above-mentioned activity areas and sub-activities. Moreover, a literature study was carried out to inform the development of survey and interview questions in each activity area.

The internet survey was sent to all 36 principal responsible parties (the Danish project owners) in charge of ongoing or recently finished (after 2005) ENRECA projects (see Appendix 1 for a list of projects included in the survey). 25 responses were obtained, equivalent to a respond rate of 69%, which is considered

satisfactory. The responses were anonymous and the identity of the respondents is not known to the researchers, except where respondents gave their consent to be contacted.

The purpose of the survey was to characterize the project management effort in ENRECA projects, as perceived by Danish PRPs. The survey mainly included closed questions, but a few opportunities were provided for open-ended answers. The survey included 67 specific questions within the following 11 heading:

- General characteristics of the project
- Project management tools and systems used
- Experiences with Logical Framework Approach (LFA)
- The project management effort and complexity
- Project preparation
- Project start-up
- Project co-ordination
- Project evaluation
- Project closure
- Project management at the university level
- Donor relations

The interview part of the study included three focus group interviews involving nine persons and eight individual interviews (for a list of persons interviewed see Appendix 2) carried out as semi-structured interviews, using an interview guide covering the entire project cycle and the involved management activities. Interviewees were asked to elaborate on their project management related experiences, both positive and negative, in each of the project phases.

Table 2.1: Institutional distribution of the 36 ENRECA projects included in the survey

Danish principal partner institution	Number of projects	Number of individual interviews	Number of focus group participants
University of Copenhagen (KU)	18	4	3
Aarhus University (AU)	5	2	4
Roskilde University (RUC)	3	1	
Aalborg University (AAU)	2		2
Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland (GEUS)	2		
Copenhagen Business School (CBS)	1		
Copenhagen University Hospital	1	1	
University of Southern Denmark (SDU)	1		
The National Library	1		
The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture	1		
Statens Serum Institute	1		

An overview of the institutional distribution of the interviewed project managers is seen in Table 2.1. The focus group interviews were conducted at the University of Copenhagen and Aarhus University due to these being the two major grant holding institutions. Aalborg University was randomly selected among the remaining institutions holding more than one ENRECA project for a focus group interview. At Aarhus University and Aalborg University, the focus group and individual interviews included all ENRECA PRPs available at the period of interviewing. At the University of Copenhagen, the largest grant holding faculty is

Faculty of Life Sciences (LIFE) where the Centre for Forest, Policy and Planning was selected for a focus group interview, as it has three ongoing ENRECA projects – in different phases of the project cycle and in three different continents.

Individual key-informant interviews were carried out with present or former PRPs in four institutions. The selection aimed at ensuring a variety in disciplines, research fields, geographical areas, and experience with the ENRECA programme.

Interviews were transcribed and the NVIVO software was used for qualitative analysis. The interviews were analysed using qualitative content analysis (Gillham 2000). This method involves two steps, identification of key substantive points in the interview data and subsequently categorization into a set of overall issues. The generic categories emerging from the data were supplemented with categories representing the major stages in the project cycle.

3 The ENRECA programme and projects

The primary aim of the ENRECA programme was to build and maintain research capacity in developing countries as an instrument for their development. In addition, the programme aimed at enhancing Danish research institutions' ability and capacity to conduct research of relevance to developing countries and Danish development aid (MoFA 2000b, Ilsøe 2005). The driving force in the programme was the establishment of partnerships between Danish and South institutions with the purpose of promoting knowledge and mutual learning through collaborative research and capacity building (Ilsøe 2005).

The partnership approach is a "twinning strategy" and the idea is to "provide assistance that is more institution based, flexible, and withdrawn compared to traditional forms of technical assistance" (Jensen et al. 2007). The rationale behind using a twinning or partnership strategy instead of more straightforward provision of technical assistance is that "two institutions with the same or similar tasks in their respective countries should be able to create a more dynamic co-operation atmosphere". These positive effects are nurtured by the partners' comparative advantages; that the North partners have access to a high quality research base, whereas the South partners' comparative advantage is vested in first hand knowledge, the staff's expertise, and the institutional memory of dealing with development related issues and problems" (Ilsøe 2005). Premises for successful twinning and twinning success criteria as defined by Danida (2004) are shown in Box 3.1.

Ilsøe (2005) defines the essential features of ENRECA projects as:

"Cooperation in carefully balanced partnerships on planning and implementation of locally rooted research activities, PhD and MSc education of partner countries"

Box 3.1: Successful twinning

Premises for successful twinning

- *Match of institutions:* Institutions in the partner country need to match the institutions in Denmark with respect to mandate and field of operation.
- *Expressed wish:* The partnering country must have an expressed wish to ask for a mutually binding cooperation with a Danish institution.
- *Service not in market:* The cooperation must concern a service not already offered in the market.

Twinning success criteria

- *Danish involvement:* The Danish resource base has been actively become involved.
- *Local ownership:* The partner institutions have taken ownership of the programme.
- *Capacity building:* The capacity of partner institutions has been enhanced.
- *Long-term cooperation:* A platform for continued cooperation at the institutional level has been formed.
- *Collegial relations:* Fruitful collegial relations based on shared interests have been developed.

Source: Danida (2004)

researchers, preferably attached to their home universities in a ‘sandwich’ approach with shorter stays in Denmark, building-up of research environments in which they can continue their work, as well as supporting the building of the institutional capacity.”

The individual ENRECA projects have varied in the balance between institutional capacity building and research activities. Some projects have mainly been capacity-based, focusing on developing institutional capacity in the South. This has often been the case when no or little research was carried out by the South partner institution prior to the establishment of the partnership. In other projects, where the South partners already were engaged in research activities prior to the collaboration, a “research-based” approach was possible with a focus on joint research activities.

More than 50 ENRECA projects have been funded from the initiation of the programme in 1989 until 2008 when the last ENRECA projects were funded. Until 2004, ENRECA projects were managed through a programme modality managed directly by Danida. During this period, the projects were developed in collaboration between researchers and Danida staff. From 2004 to 2008, ENRECA grants were granted by the Consultative Research Committee for Development Research (FFU) to individual projects through a process of open competition among Danish institutions. In 2008, the ENRECA projects were granted around 60% of FFU’s annual budget of approx. DKK 100 million.

Funding for ENRECA projects was provided for three to four three-year phases, each phase with an average level of DKK 5-6 million. Africa was the central region for approved ENRECA projects and most of them were conducted within the health, environment and agriculture sectors, whereas social science and economy received relatively little attention (HERA 2007, MoFA 2000a). The criteria for prioritization and selection were the project’s research quality, the applicant’s academic qualifications, and the innovative character of the project (Ilsøe 2005). ENRECA projects have been subject to mid-term as well as post-implementation evaluations. Project implementation was evaluated regarding the quality of the RCB as well as the management and balancing of the partnership, sustainability issues, local prioritization, and institutional anchorage. Projects have also been evaluated in relation to organisational quality and interdisciplinarity (Ilsøe 2005).

4 Characterisation of the ENRECA projects in the survey

This chapter provides a characterisation of the 25 projects that have responded to the Internet survey. The responding project managers represent projects initiated throughout the entire twenty-year period from 1990 to 2009 (see Table 4.1). The majority of the responding projects are ongoing (see Table 4.2) and the responses provide a broad representation of projects in different stages of the project cycle (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.1: The starting year of the responding ENRECA projects (n=25)

Start year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Number of projects	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	2	3	0
Start year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of projects	1	1	0	1	4	2	2	0	1	1

Table 4.2: The (expected) final year of the responding ENRECA projects (n=25)

Start year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of projects	0	1	2	3	8	4	5	2	0	0

Table 4.3: The current three-year phase of the responding ENRECA projects (n=25)

Project Phase	1	2	3	4
Number of projects	4	8	6	7

96% of the responses were given by PRPs. As can be seen from Table 4.4, approximately 40% of the PRPs are responsible for day-to-day management of their project and approximately 35% also participates actively as researchers or teachers.

Table 4.4: The survey respondents' roles in their project (n=25)

Answer Options	Number of project
Principle responsible party/project applicant (PRP)	24 (96%)
Project coordinator (day-to-day management)	11 (39%)
Researcher/teacher	10 (35%)
Other (please specify)	-

Table 4.5 shows that 65% of the projects involve one Danish institution only. In 24% two institutions and in 12% three Danish institutions are involved. In the South, there is an equal distribution between projects with one and two partners, 32% and 36% respectively. Projects involving three and four partners account for 16% each. 56% of the projects are situated in Africa, 36% in Asia and 3% in Latin America (see Table 4.6). One project reported to operate in two continents.

Table 4.5: The number of Danish and South institutions involved in the ENRECA projects (n=25)

Answer Options	1	2	3	4
Danish institutions	16 (65%)	6 (24%)	3 (12%)	-
South institutions	8 (32%)	9 (36%)	4 (16%)	4 (16%)

Table 4.6: The geographical distribution of ENRECA projects (n=25)

Answer Options	Number of projects
Africa	14 (56%)
Asia	9 (36%)
Latin America	3 (12%)

Table 4.7 provides an overview of traditional ENRECA project activities as well as the project managers' ranking of their importance. Respondents were asked to rank the importance of the activities on a five-point scale from "not at all important" (1) to "of high importance" (5) with an intermediate value of "of some importance" (3). Activities are categorized as individual (I) or organisational (O) capacity building related. The Table shows that respondents generally consider applied research considerably more important than basic research. The Table also shows a significant variation in what is considered important. This supports the impression that ENRECA projects constitute a very heterogeneous group of projects.

Table 4.7: ENRECA project managers' ranking of the importance of typical individual (I) and organisational (O) capacity building activities for their project design (n=25)

Answer Options	Not at all important Of some importance Of high importance					Rating Average	Stdev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
Applied research (I)	-	8%	8%	16%	68%	4.44	0.96
Dissemination of results (I)	-	-	20%	20%	60%	4.40	0.82
PhD student scholarships for South partners (e.g. sandwich model) (I)	8%	4%	8%	8%	72%	4.32	1.28
Network (i.e. linking South partner(s) to national or international research environments) (O)	-	8%	16%	24%	52%	4.20	1.00
Training of South partners' academic staff (I/O)	-	4%	28%	24%	44%	4.08	0.95
Equipment and infrastructure support (O)	-	12%	20%	28%	40%	3.96	1.06
Library/literature support (O)	-	12%	28%	32%	28%	3.76	1.01
BSc and MSc scholarships for South partners (I)	16%	8%	12%	16%	48%	3.72	1.54
Basic research (I)	-	12%	40%	20%	28%	3.64	1.04
Funding of minor local research project at South partner university (I)	4%	20%	28%	8%	40%	3.60	1.32
Training of South partners' technical staff (I/O)	8%	20%	24%	28%	20%	3.32	1.25
Development of new and existing teaching programs (BSc, MSc or PhD) (O)	24%	8%	12%	28%	28%	3.28	1.57
Service provision to end users (e.g. primary health care, agricultural extension service, etc.) (O)	4%	24%	36%	16%	20%	3.24	1.16
Enhancing strategic management and planning capacity in the South partner institution (O)	4%	16%	44%	24%	12%	3.24	1.01
Danish PhD students linked to the project (also if not funded by the project) (I)	16%	20%	16%	28%	20%	3.16	1.40
Curriculum development at individual course level (I)	24%	12%	20%	16%	28%	3.12	1.56
Enhancing administrative capacity in the South partner institution (I/O)	12%	24%	32%	16%	16%	3.00	1.26
Danish BSc/MSc students linked to the project (e.g. writing thesis in the South) (I/O)	24%	20%	32%	12%	12%	2.68	1.31
Danish researchers teaching in partner university (O)	12%	32%	36%	16%	4%	2.68	1.03
Training of South partners' administrative staff (I)	24%	24%	28%	20%	4%	2.56	1.19
South researchers teaching in Denmark (I/O)	44%	40%	12%	-	4%	1.80	0.96

5 Challenges and lessons learned

In this chapter experienced challenges and lessons learned by ENRECA project managers are identified. First, more general consideration to be addressed prior to the project preparation is addressed in the pre-project phase section. Second, specific project management issues are discussed in relation to each of the five project phases: Pre-project, preparation, start-up, co-ordination, evaluation, and closure. The analysis draws on interviews with 8 project managers¹ as well as survey responses from 25 ENRECA projects.

¹ The term “project manager” is used in the following chapters for PRP (the grant holder) and project manager or coordinator (the person responsible for day-to-day management) as these roles are often managed by the same person in FFU research capacity building projects.

Each section starts with a summary of challenges and lessons learned. A brief description of the project phase and project management tasks involved in each phase is also provided. The central project management related topics emerging from the interviews are then discussed and illustrated in more detail.

5.1 Pre-project phase

The pre-project phase can be defined as the time used to develop the foundation for the specific project development. This involves establishing contacts, developing relevant networks in North and South, scanning for potential partners, establishing a formal partnership, getting to know South colleagues, obtaining a basic understanding of national and organisational cultures in the South, developing the basic project idea, and deciding on a project design and management strategy.

Successful RCB projects rely on reciprocity, trust, mutual respect, sharing, understanding, idealism and enthusiasm, motivation of global equality, sense of fairness, and wish to make a difference (Ilsøe 2005:13). The importance of these dimensions was confirmed by this study as necessary, but a range of other aspects also play a role for project success. Interviewees emphasize that constructive collaboration can only develop if both South and North partners also understand and accept the motivation, incentives, and institutional dynamics influencing the involved individuals and institutions.

In this section, some fundamental themes to consider when initiating the development of a new RCB project are discussed. These themes have emerged from the interviews with project managers and include: The initial contact between partners, selection of project objectives, choice of project design, choice of project management strategy, balancing the partnership, and incentives and ownership.

5.1.1 Initial contact

Findings/lessons learned

- The majority of ENRECA partners knew each other before starting to develop the application and 38% of the projects were continuations of previous ENRECA projects.
 - Twinning the right North and South partners is essential – matching objectives, ambitions and competencies is important.
 - The individual match between project participants is also important since project success is often based on reciprocity, trust, mutual understanding and enthusiasm.
 - The FFU initiative grant has been an important tool for establishing good partnerships.
 - Both institutional and personal contacts play a role when initiating projects.
 - The way projects are initiated – whether it is top-down or bottom-up initiated – is likely to affect the subsequent project implementation.
-

The initiative to most of the ENRECA projects was taken by the Danish partner. But projects have also in some cases been initiated by South institutions. Several project managers mention that their projects have started as an offspring of their own research in the South partner country. The survey showed that in 38% of the projects, the partnership was a continuation of previous ENRECA collaboration. For example, in a project in East Africa, one ENRECA project continued in a new project, where the initial South partner institution became an important facilitator of South-South collaboration with universities in neighbouring countries.

Project managers mention that the subsequent project implementation can be highly influenced by who takes the initiative, e.g. whether the project is resulting from top management's institutional interests or it grows out of individual researchers' professional interaction and research interests. Either of these approaches can result in successful projects, but the specific context affects the project implementation. If

the South partner is initially defined as an institution, the project may later on be challenged with the task of identifying specific individuals interested in engaging in project activities. As expressed by a project manager:

“The “role-the-project-out” challenge is always a problem. Can you get the others to join you? Are the motivation and the incentive packages adequately designed? ... We had a problem getting people on board ... probably because it was the top management who had agreed on the project. People were not informed adequately. But as the project became more and more known, people lined up to participate.” [PM1]²

On the other hand, if the project is based on personal interest of a few individuals, it might suffer from lack of management level attention which might affect resource allocation and institutional integration.

Several project managers emphasize the importance of partners knowing each other personally, and in the majority of ENRECA projects participants knew each other prior to the formulation of the application. The survey showed that in 38% of the projects the participants knew each other from earlier professional collaboration, and 27% knew each other from before, but not from actual collaboration. In 41% of the projects, the first contact was established in order to develop the ENRECA project. This implies that both institutional and personal contacts have been important entrance points in ENRECA projects.

Personal relations and even friendship is considered important. As expressed by a project manager: *“if you don’t like each other you won’t collaborate”*. This has long been recognized. Ilsøe (2005) states that *“the partners must have found each other before the application, allowing for matches being made on an individual basis considering the attitudinal values so important for the quality of a partnership”* [PM2]. On this background it is noteworthy that 41% of the projects are developed based on contacts established with the purpose of developing the application. This indicates that previously established relations before starting up a partnership may be an advantage, but not a necessity for establishing a RCB project.

The FFU initiative grant³ has played an important role in bringing partners together. This grant is acknowledged as an important means for initiating collaboration and for developing the personal relationship emphasized as so fundamental for developing the partnership. The importance of securing a good match (twinning) of researchers at the same level is stressed in several ENRECA evaluations (Ilsøe 2005) and the initiative grant provides an opportunity for establishing the right contacts. Finding the right people is crucial as expressed by a project manager:

“Anchoring inwards in the partner institution depends a lot on the ability to find the right people, the ones who are really interested and are not seeing the project purely as a source of income. It is moreover crucial that the partners have a central position in the institution.” [PM2]

Finding the right partners also implies identifying people who can collaborate at an adequate professional level. If research is in focus, partners with the required skills and genuine interest in doing research need to be identified. As expressed by a project manager:

“I believe that it is a significant advantage that it has been researcher-to-researcher initiated. It gives a better understanding. Those who have been a little cumbersome to work with, were those who don’t really do anything [research] themselves, but who mainly sees it as a generator of extra funds. In those cases it easily becomes very bureaucratic”. [PM3]

² Each quote is identified by a code referring to a randomly generated list of the interviewed project managers. The codes have no resemblance with the order of appearance of the interviewees in Appendix 2.

³ Researchers aiming at establishing an ENRECA partnership have until 2008 had the possibility to apply for an initiative grant for covering mobilisation costs during the project development phase. In 2007, the initiative grant amounted to approximately 30,000 EURO.

Several project managers stress the importance of being able to select the best, most committed, and capable people as counterparts as a prerequisite for successful project. But it follows naturally from the whole concept of North-South RCB that this is not always easy, and project managers also emphasize the importance of matching human resources and ambition level. If no or very little previous research experience exists in an institution, it may not be the obvious choice for a research-based partnership.

5.1.2 Selection of project objectives

Findings/lessons learned

- On average individual capacity building is considered most important, but approximately half of the project managers consider institutional and individual capacity building equally important.
 - Project managers on average use more time on research management, but in most projects a substantial amount of time is also used on project management of other capacity building activities.
 - It can be difficult to define project objectives – South partners' lack of research experience and North partners' lack of insight into the specific conditions makes it easy to become overambitious.
 - It can be a challenge to align research and capacity development objectives with national and institutional policies and strategies, but RCB projects can be used as an opportunity for linking South institutions to government agencies.
 - Partnerships have benefited from using an initiative grant period to conduct basic analysis and facilitate that South partners clarify their research policy.
 - It can be difficult to ensure that the assumptions behind, and the implications of, the chosen project focus and intervention level are openly discussed.
-

ENRECA projects aim at supporting South development and should, when possible, be linked to the partner country's national research strategy and strategy for poverty reduction. ENRECA projects have emphasized this dimension to various degrees. Some projects are closely linked with Danida SPS and address developmental issues directly. Other projects are more closely linked to long-term research interests of the involved researchers and put less emphasis on short-term developmental impact. Most projects seem to manage to combine personal interest with development impact.

Project objectives should also correspond to institutional research agendas to ensure institutional backing and anchoring in both North and South. But in some cases, research agendas have been non-existing or of little relevance in relation to development issues. Some projects have emphasized the development of core strategy documents such as an organisational development plan and a research strategy as the basis for selecting and prioritizing project objectives. A project manager suggests that requiring and facilitating the development of these documents during the initial phase could be made a prerequisite for continuing the collaboration, and a way of testing the South partner's commitment and readiness for change.

Partnerships in some research disciplines have experienced a dilemma between applied and basic research priorities. South institutions' priorities and research interests of South researchers are likely to reflect the values of the international research community, where basic research is more conducive to an international career than focusing on solving local development problems. ENRECA projects have also experienced that some South universities have limited contact with the so-called "end-users" of development-orientated research outputs, e.g. farmers, local communities, NGOs, public authorities, and politicians. Close interaction with "end-users" can be new to traditional teaching-based institutions.

Considering national and institutional strategies, institutional strengths and weaknesses, and the participants' individual interests and capacities the partnership agrees on a specific project objectives. The overall objective of enhancing research capacity building is defined by the funding mechanism, but the interviews and survey have shown that ENRECA partnerships are considering two different dimensions when deciding the projects objective. First, the partnerships need to consider the specific *intervention*

focus, i.e. what should be the balance between engaging in research activities and building more general institutional capacity. Second, the partnership needs to consider the *intervention level*, i.e. choosing whether to focus the partnership on the institutional/organisational level, e.g. support to infrastructure, library, administrative procedures and organisational strategies, or to focus on providing opportunities at the personal/individual level, e.g. scholarships for PhD, Masters, Bachelors or technical training. The survey and interviews have shown that there are many different perceptions of what is the “right” balance between individual and institutional capacity building activities (see Table 4.7). Project participants may hold different opinions on what kind of intervention focus is important, when and why it is important, and which activities and outputs best support the objective. Some emphasize the importance of individual research and specific outputs, such as peer-reviewed articles, whereas others are more concerned with a broader change in attitude and organisational culture at their partner institutions. As seen from Table 5.1, the survey showed that ENRECA projects typically addressed both the individual and institutional capacity building dimensions.

Table 5.1: ENRECA projects’ overall balance between individual and institutional capacity building

Answer Options	10/90 ratio	25/75 ratio	50/50 ratio	75/25 ratio	90/10 ratio	Rating Average	Stdev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
Please indicate your project's approximate balance between individual capital capacity building (e.g. PhD/MSc/BSc/technical training) and institutional capacity building (e.g. support to infrastructure/library/organisational procedure/institutional strategies):	-	4%	52%	32%	12%	3.52	0.77

52% of the projects state that they have a 50/50% focus on institutional and individual capacity building. With an average value of 3.52 on the five-point scale, the typical distribution was between 50/50% and 75/25% indicating that the ENRECA programme as a whole has had a tendency of focusing more on the individual level. See also Table 4.7 for a more detailed overview of perceived importance of individual and institutional activities.

If the survey respondents’ distribution of time used on project management is taken as an indication of what is considered important objectives, it is also seen that both conducting research and carrying out other types of capacity building are considered important activities. Table 5.2 shows that 40% of the project managers share their time equally between managing research activities and other activities. A similar group (44%) indicates a 75/25% balance, whereas a small group (16%) indicates that research was weighted less than other capacity building activities.

Table 5.2: Distribution of project management man-hours between research and other capacity building activities

Answer Options	10/90 ratio	25/75 ratio	50/50 ratio	75/25 ratio	90/10 ratio	Rating Average	Stdev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
Please indicate the distribution of man hours used on project management between what you consider to be research activities and other capacity building activities:	-	16%	40%	44%	-	3.28	0.74

In general, research attains the highest priority, but most projects combine the two dimensions and project managers often argue that neither of the two dimensions can be seen in isolation. It is argued that good research is dependent on an adequate physical and institutional framework. Figure 5.1 shows a number of ENRECA activities identified in this study organized according to the possible combination of intervention level and focus.

Different project foci require different project management setups. Having a clear picture of what the partnership sets out to do is important:

“It is important to consider what kind of project you want, or need. When Danida says that the new larger projects⁴ should still include capacity building – how much is it then?” [PM4]

As this quote shows, partnerships also have to consider the donor’s expectations in terms of project objectives, and consider and discuss with the partners in the South how this affects the project focus and intervention level.

	Research focus	General capacity building focus
Organisational level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading research management systems • General research training workshops • Establishing research strategy • Establishing laboratories and other research infrastructure • Scientific journal subscription • Establishing long-term research programmes • Supporting establishment of department level research units • Supporting establishment of inter-organisational research collaboration (e.g. research centre) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing South institution website • Upgrading administrative procedures • Upgrading strategic management and planning procedures • Upgrading library management system • General textbook acquisition • Establishing local publication series/journals • Establishing teaching and administrative infrastructure • Upgrading or developing new programme level curricula and study plans • General training courses in teaching methodologies • Researchers teaching courses in partner university • Support service provision to end users
Individual level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific research project (North-South staff collaboration) • Small scale research projects (South staff) • Support dissemination of individual research results • South PhD study scholarships • South Masters thesis scholarships • North PhD and Masters thesis research in South • Participation in conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of administrative staff • Leadership training • Upgrading South staff to Masters level • Individual staff participate in courses • Individual course development (North-South staff collaboration)

Figure 5.1: Typical ENRECA project activities according to intervention level and focus

Addressing institutional capacity building objectives constitutes a challenge for several reasons. In some cases, Danish partners have, with the best intentions but maybe too uncritically, promoted ideas from

⁴ The interviewee refers to the policy change implemented with the 2009 FFU grant application process where the ENRECA grant type was replaced by a new grant type: “Larger more strategic research programmes (> DKK 5 million) with substantive elements of capacity building” within specific priority areas defined by FFU (Danida 2008)

Danish research and university management. This can be problematic if the Southern traditions and cultures are not taken into due consideration. “Rational” decisions may look very different in the North and South, when considering the characteristics of the different organisational and institutional settings.

5.1.3 Choice of project design

Findings/lessons learned

- Most ENRECA projects have to some degree considered the expected management complexity in the partnership’s choice of project design. Management complexity is considered more in relation to administrative procedures and project organisation than in relation to the choice of activities.
 - North-South RCB projects are subject to many factors of uncertainties that are difficult to be foreseen, but some factors can be identified from other projects or researchers working in the same region.
 - ENRECA projects have to a varied degree considered how project management complexity should be reflected in the project design.
 - Multi- and interdisciplinary project designs constitute a special challenge and projects can benefit from planning activities to facilitate integration.
 - It can be difficult to choose project partners, and it may take time to identify and select the right partners.
 - Partners may have very different perceptions of the importance of stakeholder involvement.
 - The project design should not be considered as static, but should be revised and adjusted as capacity evolves.
 - If focus is on South partner’s weaknesses rather than their strengths, RCB projects may fail to benefit from already existing South capabilities.
-

ENRECA projects were designed in many ways reflecting a broad variety in objectives, research fields, type of participants, and institutional settings. Establishing a partnership involves discussing which design principles to base a joint project on, which in turn may be influenced by the degree of complexity expressed in the specific context. A number of factors such as type of research, the time-frame, how well partners know each other, the partners’ past experiences, number of participants, organisational culture, the degree of interdisciplinarity, and the number of partners all influence the complexity of management.

Research activities are by nature uncertain. Working in a different organisational setting, with new colleagues, and in a foreign culture adds significantly to the well-known complexity of research. Project managers argue that several of the experienced events could not have been foreseen, such as natural disasters, institutional conflicts, and changes in donor policies. On the other hand, some elements of complexity can be disclosed and taken into account. For example, project managers working in Latin America were surprised by the political nature of university leadership. That the entire institute or faculty leadership may be changed a few years into the project could have been disclosed by talking with somebody experienced in the academic culture of Latin America. The survey showed that ENRECA project managers to various degrees consider project management complexity in design decisions (see Table 5.3). When asked to what degree the project preparation took into consideration the expected project management complexity, an average rating of 3.24 on a five-point scale going from “to a low degree” (1) to “to a high degree” (5) was given. Regarding the management complexity’s influence on the choice of activities, the average rating was 2.80. The influence of management complexity on the design of project management and administrative procedures was rated at an average of 3.40, as was the influence on the project’s organisational structure. Except for the choice of activities, there seems to be a relatively high consideration of project management complexity in design decisions.

Project managers argue that the design needs to reflect the project idea, and that the partners should avoid making projects unnecessarily complex. As expressed by one project manager:

“You should be very conscious of not choosing more complexity than you need. Why should you take the trouble if it doesn’t serve a purpose? Naturally, it should reflect the project idea. If it is an interdisciplinary idea, then you need to include the relevant disciplines. If it is a comparative study then you need several countries ... but it is absolutely necessary to consider the idea”. [PM5]

In this section, the focus is on some of the fundamental design issues identified in the interviews with ENRECA managers (more specific design decisions will be addressed later in Chapter 5). These issues include finding answers to principal questions such as:

- Should the project scope be narrow or broad?
- Should the project focus on institutional capacity building or research collaboration?
- Should the project be results and outputs orientated, or should it focus on process enhancement?
- What degree of multi- or interdisciplinarity should be involved?
- Should the research topic be narrow or broadly defined?
- Who are the relevant research institutions to include in the partnership?
- What is the optimal number of partners in North and South?
- Should other stakeholders be involved in the project?

ENRECA projects vary from having a broad to a relatively narrow activity focus. Project managers have also experienced that different participants may have very different priorities, e.g. South institutions may prioritize infrastructure establishment, whereas North participants focus on high-level research. If projects choose to opt for a broad consensus and become broad in scope it may contribute negatively to the ability to manage the partnership efficiently. Several project managers mention that they were to ambitious and wanted to do too much. Defining a realistic scope for the project can be a significant challenge and working in an almost unknown organisational and cultural setting call for caution.

Table 5.3: The influence of the specific project management complexity (type of task, time-frame, existing experiences, number of participants, organisational culture, interdisciplinarity, etc.) on the project design

Answer Options	To a low degree		To some degree		To a high degree		Rating Average	Stdev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)			
To what degree did your project preparation consider explicitly the expected complexity of the project management task?	8%	12%	40%	28%	12%	3.24	1.09	
To what degree did the specific project management complexity influence your project's choice of research/capacity building activities?	32%	8%	24%	20%	16%	2.80	1.50	
To what degree did the specific project management complexity influence your project's design of management/administrative procedures?	-	12%	52%	20%	16%	3.40	0.91	
To what degree did the specific project management complexity influence your project's design of an organisational structure?	8%	8%	42%	16%	24%	3.40	1.19	

From the interviews it seems that the highest degree of management complexity is observed in relation to institutional capacity building, and partnerships focusing on this dimension can be very demanding in terms of need for coordination, leadership, and project management. Whereas research collaboration and PhD training are well-known activities for most researchers, facilitating organisational development and change processes, and doing so in a different culture, may offer many unexpected surprises. Several interviewees argue that the long time-frame of the ENRECA projects offers a unique opportunity for facilitating

organisational change in South institutions. On the other hand, project managers also raised the question of whether the ENRECA project size is too small to ensure institutional build-up?

"It is ridiculous that you think it is possible to do something that can be compared with institutional build-up ... at that time we had a budget of 5 million DKK... to think that you can do something that compares to institutional build-up while you are at the same time doing research and developing education." [PM3]

However, other project managers do not find this mix of objectives problematic, as they see the two elements as complementary. There is no simple answer to this question, and what is possible may depend on the type of institutions and research involved, the initial institutional capacity of the South institutions and the developmental needs and objectives.

Most ENRECA projects are managed with a clear result-orientation (focus on concrete results). But some projects also involve a substantial element of process-orientation (focus on relations and mutual learning), involving an ongoing dialogue on management and administrative issues. Some project managers see the organisational change occurring in their partner institution as the main result, while others focus more explicitly on the research outputs. The survey showed that 70% of the projects consider themselves to be equally balanced between result-orientation and process-orientation. 5% state that they are mainly process-orientated and 25% that they are mainly result-orientated.

The specific research topic may also be narrow or broad. Some projects focus on one traditional discipline and rely on twinning between classical disciplinary institutes. Other projects aim at facilitating multi- and interdisciplinarity and involve a whole faculty or several organisations. Several project managers argue that a multidisciplinary approach is often the only realistic way to address the involved complexity in concrete development issues. But managing projects that bring together researchers representing different research paradigms and methodologies can be quite challenging. Such projects must be prepared to invest a significant effort in inwards anchoring to create the mutual acceptance and trust that allows participants to collaborate efficiently. A project manager recommends bringing in a facilitator knowledgeable in the challenges in interdisciplinary research, and making sure that the project budget allows for the necessary interaction:

"In crossdisciplinarity there are a range of things that can go very wrong. If you never have tried it before, it pays to bring in a facilitator. One who has tried it before. One who can sit at the head of the table as a neutral mediator and lead you through those things. 'There are some things you need to consider... Do you think it is okay both with quantitative and qualitative [research]? ... Power balance ... and that kind of things.'" [PM5]

Another dimension of choosing research topic is whether to enhance an existing paradigm or tradition in the South institution or deliberately introduce a new perspective as illustrated by this quote:

"We had great success in creating a scientific collaboration around a whole new way of seeing a certain problem. The partners were proud to be pioneers and people not directly attached to the project were interested in knowing if any new things occurred due to the 'exotic' features of the research partnership. ... Of course it was also difficult – what we told them was contrary to everything they had in their textbooks." [PM6]

In some projects, the development of the research focus leads to a need to include new research partners in the partnership, as additional competencies were requested. Selecting partners is a critical phase that calls for due consideration. As expressed by a project manager:

"If I was to start all over again, I think that I would make an effort to identify those who can deliver. I think we were too uncritical, or at least too eager to get somebody: 'we also need somebody who can do this and this' ... I believe that some sort of 'sizing them up' would have been smart. But you know when

you make a proposal then quite suddenly you are caught up. You can't really have them on probation."
[PM5]

A project can also involve a narrow or broad group of stakeholders. In some projects, it was decided to engage with representatives of a whole sector, whereas other projects focus on university staff only. Some project managers mention that they have experienced little willingness in their South partner institution to open up the project to outsiders by involving external stakeholders. Other projects have experienced positive interaction with external stakeholders.

Choosing an appropriate project design is not necessarily easy, and project managers argue that decisions often have to be reconsidered as partners learn through the process of project implementation. The three-year project phases allow the partners to reconsider the project organisation in connection with each new phase application. An interviewee mentioned the experience that thinking in capacity building often leads to a "negative" perspective where the focus is on what is not working rather than on what is working, but could be improved.

"Build on participants' strengths instead of focusing on what people cannot do. That will allow South partners to contribute and gain confidence in their own capability. In this way you ensure a more balanced relationship." [PM9]

5.1.4 Choice of project management strategy

Findings/lessons learned

- 60% of the project managers found ENRECA projects to be more complex to manage than other university-based projects and 40% found it to be more complex than initially expected. 72% of the project managers have used more time on managing the project than expected when planning the project.
 - Integration of projects administration with the existing South partner organisation can be a cost-efficient solution that limits transactions costs and supports South capacity building and project sustainability.
 - An independent project administration can in some cases be the best solution and such administration can become a benchmark for good governance in weaker South institutions.
 - With a strong independent (relatively to the South partner leadership) project organisation the partnership runs the risk of the project becoming a "project island".
 - Having a Danish coordinator working for an extended period at the South institution can provide a range of benefits, e.g. learning about the South organisation and culture; getting to know partners better; support implementation etc. But also some disadvantages are identified, e.g. that South partners may have difficulties assuming the responsibility.
 - Several project managers express that they have become overwhelmed by administrative tasks and it is recommended to establish from the beginning of the partnership clear agreements regards institutional support in both North and South.
-

Obviously, project partners' attention is often focused on decisions concerning the project design (intervention focus and level, research topic, number of participants, stakeholder involvement, etc.). But considering how to organize project management to efficiently implement the project design is also recognized as important for success and sustainability. Central themes identified by ENRECA project managers related to the choice of project management strategy include:

- The degree of administrative integration with the South partner's existing organisation
- Whether the project should be staffed with a Danish project coordinator staying with the South partner institution
- How to organize the project to minimize the researchers' administrative work load
- How to share the responsibility for project implementation in different stages of the project

It seems that ENRECA project are in general more challenging to manage and more time-consuming than initially foreseen by the project managers. Table 5.4 shows that compared with other university-based projects the project management task of ENRECA projects is considered to be more complex by 60% of the survey respondents. 24% consider the task to be comparable with other projects and 14% find it less complex. Fortunately, it seems that the level of complexity is not a surprise to approximately half of the project managers. 52% state that the management complexity experienced is approximately as foreseen and 8% find it even less complex. 40% find it more complex than foreseen. On the other hand, when asked about how much time is used on management tasks, 72% express that they have used more time than expected when planning the project.

Table 5.4: Managers' experience of project management complexity in ENRECA projects compared to their expectations and other university-based projects

Answer Options	Considerably less complex		Like other projects	Considerably more complex		Rating Average	Stdev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
Please indicate how complex you consider the ENRECA project management task to be compared with the management of other projects you are involved in	4%	12%	24%	28%	32%	3.72	1.17
Answer Options	Considerably less complex		Approx. as foreseen	Considerably more complex		Rating Average	Stdev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
Compared with what you expected when planning the project, how complex have the project management tasks then been?	4%	4%	52%	24%	16%	3.44	0.96
Answer Options	Considerably less than expected		Approx. as expected	Considerably more than expected		Rating Average	Stdev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
Compared with what you expected when planning the project, how much time has been used by the Danish partners on project management tasks?	-	-	28%	32%	40%	4.12	0.83

Thus, it seems that a relatively large number of projects underestimate the complexity and management workload associated with ENRECA project. One of the reasons why projects are considered more complex may be that a considerable effort is invested in organising and managing activities, e.g. in relation to institutional strengthening and capacity building, with which many researchers must be assumed to be less acquainted. Some interviewees also argued that researchers often just jump into the manager and leader role without much reservation:

"I came to the institution at the same time as the project started. I was almost hired to do it and was told: 'Then you can just do this' [manage the project]. I do not have any formal management training. Much of what I did has been 'blood, sweat and tears' and 'learning-by-doing', as probably most others [...]. Research management is much underestimated – it's something you think you can just do." [PM5]

The general impression is that many ENRECA projects have not necessarily been easy to manage and that the task has required more consideration than traditional research projects.

An important decision is how much to integrate the project management with the South partner's existing organisation. Some project managers argue that RCB projects should as much as possible avoid establishing parallel structures, but rely on, and facilitate, the development of existing South institutions. This may lower the project's administration costs and enhance the local problem solving and decision making capacity. If the South organisational capacity is low and the project is focused on institutional capacity building, several project managers recommend that a Danish coordinator is placed in the South institutions for a prolonged period in the beginning of the project. A separate project administration can be the only way to ensure successful project implementation. Having an efficient organisation in place also establishes a benchmark as pointed out by a project manager:

"Having a well-managed, efficient, and transparently working project office in place within a less efficient institution can be used as a showcase or benchmark for how university administration can also be managed." [PM8]

On the other hand, as experienced by one project manager, local project administration may also become disconnected from the South partner's organisational leadership, and the project may end up as a so-called "project island". In this case, the project failed to develop incentives for the participation of local researchers and experienced a decreasing involvement from individual and institutional stakeholders, and became increasingly ineffective in achieving its capacity building objectives.

When working within one South institution but addressing multiple departments, a project may also benefit from establishing an independent entity to organize the project management:

"When working across different research areas and with many projects, it is a good idea to have a neutral office or secretariat to avoid internal conflicts, e.g. over resource allocation." [PM1]

Building on existing capacities and inclusion of faculty staff in the project management may be the ideal solution for creating ownership and sustainability. But employment structures, promotion mechanisms, and internal power relations may also counteract integration in existing structures as discussed in Section 5.1.6, and several project managers stress that it is preferable to work with a parallel structure as it gives flexibility and provides a more dynamic environment for project implementation.

It is also argued by several project managers that being situated in an independent "project office" and referring directly to a Danish project manager can provide local administrative staff with the necessary weight to stand against local interests beyond the project scope.

Financial management at universities in the South is often experienced by Danish project managers as bureaucratic and time-consuming, and several mentioned that independent financial management is necessary to ensure accountability and to be able to comply with Danida requirements. Several projects have made it a precondition for implementing the project that Danida's funds were managed separately from the central South administration. This may improve project efficiency, but at the same time it also may decrease the level of institutional ownership and internal control at the South university.

Another important design decision is whether or not the project should be staffed with a Danish project coordinator placed in the South partner institution. Some projects have had a Danish coordinator working in the South institution for an extended period. Several project managers mention that it is very useful in order to get acquainted with the partner's organisational culture, and to know the South leadership and staff, promoting the project and clarifying objectives and purpose, get the project organisation and administrative procedures established, identify staff members interested in contributing to the project, and getting activities started up. On the other hand, some project managers argue that the presence of a Danish coordinator may also affect initiative and decision making in the South partner institution in less constructive ways. Being present in the South institution can support project implementation, but it can

also provide a pretext for South leadership not to assume responsibility for the project implementation, and thus counter management capacity development.

ENRECA programme evaluations have showed that involved Danish researchers express a lack of interest in capacity building as it is time-consumption and not contributing to their careers (Ilsøe 2005). In some cases, the interviewed project managers who stayed for an extended period in the South institution also felt that all their time became too occupied with ad hoc administrative and management issues, and little time was available for doing what they considered the most important – to do research. Considering how project management can be organized to reduce the administrative burden of researchers is therefore important. Some projects have been very efficient in using administrative support functions within the Danish university or establishing effective project administrations in the South institutions. Several project managers argue that establishing clear agreements on the kind of support that can be expected, and under which conditions, is important – both in the North and South.

5.1.5 Balancing the partnership

Findings/lessons learned

- Danish North-South partnerships are in general good at establishing symmetric relationships although the risk of asymmetric relations always exists.
 - Project participants' behaviour can unconsciously and unintentionally create asymmetric relations, e.g. due to differences in organisational cultures and individual attitudes.
 - ENRECA projects have used different modes of sharing responsibility: successively transference from a project office to the South institution; fifty-fifty sharing of responsibility throughout the project life cycle; South partner as main responsible from the initial phase; and a project office maintaining responsibility throughout the whole project.
 - Which mode of sharing responsibility is chosen may depend on a range of issues, e.g. the personal attitude and ideology of the PRP; the mutual history and previous joint management experiences; the level of transparency, type of governance system and administrative experience at the South partner institution; personal relations and degree of trust between the involved partners; and the number of institutions involved in the partnership.
 - Ensuring that both North and South partners contribute resources (financial and in kind) and making resource contributions explicit may contribute to create a genuine sense of ownership in both North and South.
 - South institutions can have difficulties living up to initially agreed contributions, e.g. due to lack of funding, cumbersome administrative procedures, and change in leadership.
-

The interviews disclosed the following important dimensions related to balancing the partnership: Symmetrical relationship, responsibility sharing, and balancing resource inputs.

It can be difficult for North project managers to allow South partners to assume a major part of the responsibility in RCB projects and the risk of the relationship being too asymmetrical with a dominant North partner is present (Gaillard 1994, Ilsøe 2005). Inevitably, a potential asymmetry exists, due to the major part of the funding generally being provided from the North. South partners seldom directly criticize their North partners for being too dominant, and dominance is often hidden from the North partners themselves (Ilsøe 2005:13). An imbalance may not necessarily be consciously recognized by the North party. If a Danish project manager is present in the South institution, it can be difficult for the South leadership to manage the project from a South perspective. A project manager gave an example of such a situation:

“When I was present in the South institution, I was often approached by staff members suggesting different things. I was happy because somebody showed initiative and tried to support them as good as I could. But their suggestions were rarely coordinated internally and I was, at least some times, being misused to shift existing power balances. It took some time before the local coordinator disclosed the problem. He felt that I was micro managing and often without knowing what went before. After that

time I always asked people to present their ideas to me and the local coordinator at the same time and made sure that he maintained the responsibility for taking decisions.” [PM9]

In general, ENRECA projects seem to be good at establishing a symmetrical relationship, despite the institutional and individual differences in capacity (Ilsøe 2005). Being open, frank, and transparent and showing sincere interest in the South partner's development is mentioned by project managers as factors supporting the partnership relations. Some project managers' emphasize that ENRECA projects have something special to offer South universities. One project manager characterizes the difference between the ENRECA partnerships and other international research projects in this way:

“In the other [American, French, or British] projects they [South] can earn some money which they can use as they wish. There they only have to deliver something – typically data and analysis – and then its over. They know perfectly well that it doesn't leave much [development] behind. I believe that the long haul, where we are continuously demanding something, is something they actually like. They are extremely good at negotiating. They actually respect it more if you really have a go at it and confront one another. Then, when you finally end up with a solution, they stick to it.” [PM4]

A project manager working in a collaboration involving several North institutions argued that the fact that ENRECA projects have both research and capacity building as objectives have made them more flexible, as Danish researchers were not only evaluated on whether they had obtained a specific research output during the project's three-year phase. Other (non-Scandinavian) Western research institutions are experienced to be stricter in their project management approach “which may sometimes make things work faster, but I'm not sure that it will work in the long run”. In relation to the Danish “way of working” the project manager also argued:

“I believe that we are not really very bureaucratic. It's our general mindset. We are more disposed towards discussing things and have them done in the best way.” [PM3]

Asymmetry in research capacity and decision power within projects does not necessarily give Danish partners the 'upper' hand. Several project managers emphasize that projects are highly dependent on the good-will and un-paid effort of South researchers. Ilsøe (2005:12) argues that balanced partnership will have a shared ownership, shared visions, and mutually rewarding outputs. Several project managers mention that developing the project jointly is essential for establishing these conditions.

In the survey, the respondents were asked to indicate who has been the main responsible for project co-ordination and execution in each three-year phase. Three response categories were available: a) a project office staffed by the project; b) the South institution's existing organisation; and c) responsibility is equally shared between a project office and the South institution. Four different strategies were identified regarding the division of responsibility: 1) Gradually transferring responsibility from the project office to the South's existing organisation; 2) equal sharing of responsibility between a project office and the South institution throughout the project cycle; 3) the South institution being in charge of the implementation throughout the whole project; and finally, 4) the project office being the main responsible throughout the project.

The following quote illustrates a vision mentioned by some ENRECA projects managers:

“In the first three-year phase I imagined myself driving a car with my South colleagues as the passengers; In the second phase I had moved into the passenger seat ready to assisting my colleagues who were now driving the car; in the third phase I had moved into the back seat; and finally, in the fourth period I see myself standing waving at my colleagues driving off by themselves.” [ENRECA project manager, quoted by B. Ilsøe, Danida Fellowship Centre]

In the survey, three project managers out of 20 indicated that their project had applied the first strategy where the South partner successively assumes increasing direct responsibility through the project phases.

The second strategy, where the main responsibility was shared between a project office and the South institution had been applied by three projects. One project manager argued that choosing a 'dual-directorship' where decision power was shared equally between a South project manager and a Danish project manager resulted in a very advantageous relationship. A powerful South leader could influence South participants and the Danish partner could manage relations to Danish partners and Danida. The arrangement meant interacting "at eye level and with respect":

"... [The Danish PRP] could have said: 'It is I, who is the responsible towards Danida, so you [South partner] need to be the underdog in this'. [...] But we chose differently, and I haven't regretted it. But maybe we were also a little lucky. What I want to say is ... that 'personality' is important. And of course it is much more complicated. I talked over the phone for hours for the same reason. You needed to talk about everything." [PM4]

The interviewee emphasized that projects should not underestimate the importance of having developed good personal relations when this kind of co-management is implemented.

The third strategy, where the main responsibility is placed with the South institution from the beginning of the collaboration, was applied by five projects. Finally, nine projects indicate that a project office is the main responsible for project co-ordination and execution. Six of these projects are in their first or second phase and may still opt for a responsibility transfer strategy in later phases.

The choice of responsibility sharing modes depended on a range of aspects. Among others, the following were identified in the interviews: The personal attitude and ideology of the PRP; the mutual history and previous joint management experiences; the level of transparency, type of governance system, and administrative experience at the South partner institution; personal relations and degree of trust between the involved partners; and the number of institutions involved in the partnership.

Several project managers emphasized the importance of balancing the resource input to create a genuine sense of institutional ownership and responsibility in the South. South partners often provide a significant in kind contribution⁵ that is not necessarily made very explicit in the FFU application or subsequent reporting. Project managers argue that although documenting in kind contributions may be difficult and time-consuming it helps establishing a more accurate picture of the premises underlying the partnership.

Defining explicit resource contributions can be a way of having the partner institute committing itself. Some projects have used a strategy where research assistants or administrative personnel were funded in the initial phase under the assumption that the South institution would, in later phases, assume the obligation of hiring the personnel. PhD students have in some cases been funded entirely by an ENRECA project, based on an agreement with the South university that it should employ the PhDs when they had graduated. Such agreements may prove very uncertain, e.g. because the direct partner has little influence on employment issues, where decisions can be highly political and are often taken at a higher level at the institution. In one case, well into the project the North partner realized that employment decisions were not even taken at the faculty level. Personnel were appointed by the central university administration without any consideration of local needs. Local administrative systems and practices may pose an insurmountable barrier. Financial conditions and institutional priorities can also change since the initial agreement was made:

"We had planned that the South university should pay the administrative staff's salaries, but we failed to do so due to a change of director and a cutback in their budgets." [PM4]

In practice, ENRECA projects may have little negotiation power as decisions are taken by high-level leadership or administrators not necessarily affected by the project.

⁵ In kind contribution is defined as a non-cash input which can be given a cash value.

5.1.6 Incentives and ownership

Findings/lessons learned

- Project success depends on understanding the incentive structures influencing North and South partners.
 - Project success depends on the match between individual participants' and project's objectives – ENRECA projects have been good at doing so.
 - Involvement of South PhD students and Danish project participants has been very high in ENRECA projects, whereas the involvement of South project researchers has been more challenging.
 - Involvement of Danish researchers can be supported by focusing on quality research and publication opportunities.
 - Having to work within existing organisational structures in South is a challenge, e.g. due to limited opportunity to employ or topping up researchers' salaries.
 - South researchers may lack incentives to participate in RCB projects for a range of institutional or personal reasons that can be difficult to make explicit during project preparation.
 - The lack of ability to provide salaries has been a filter ensuring that only those genuinely interested participate in projects.
 - It can be a challenge for North partners to understand how the often radically different living and working conditions of South partners impact on their project participation.
 - It can be difficult for North project managers to obtain an understanding of the partner's organisational processes and how the South institution's management practices and organisational politics influence the South participants' involvement.
-

The most unanimous message from ENRECA project managers is that project success depends on understanding the incentive structures influencing participants, and assuming that incentive structures in the South are similar to those in Danish universities is problematic. The interviewees identified the following issues as important areas to consider in relation to incentives and ownership: Alignment of project objectives with individual objectives; the implications of the ENRECA programme salary policy; the existing incentive structures in South; the effect of South's financial contribution; and the ENRECA project's impact on organisational politics and leadership issues.

The survey showed that ENRECA projects are relatively good at aligning project objectives and individual participants' objectives. When asked to what degree participant's individual motivation and incentives are taken into account in the project design and implementation project, managers gave an average score of 3.83 on a five-point scale, with 39% rating "to a high degree" (see Table 5.5). This is supported by respondents' evaluation of project participants' involvement. The degree of South PhD student involvement is scored at an average of 4.39 with 61% answering "to a high degree". No answers fall below "to some degree". Evaluation of Danish researcher involvement is also high with an average score of 4.04, but with a more scattered distribution. In relation to the involvement of South researchers (other than PhD students) the picture is a little different. Here an average score of 3.74 is obtained. It seems that South PhD students and Danish researchers are more involved than is the case with South researchers. It is not surprising that South PhDs students are highly involved in the project since they are the ones gaining the most direct personal benefits.

In general, the main driver for Danish researchers to engage in ENRECA projects is personal research interest. Idealism also plays an important role. Several project managers mention that they were never paid any salary by the projects. They emphasize the satisfaction from seeing their project partners develop and starting to play a role in the national and international research community:

"The project was a wonderful experience and the best has been to see how the South partners have grown and matured and how they now do very well, even internationally." [Project manager in survey]

Table 5.5: Danish ENRECA project managers' perception of project participants' involvement, motivation and shared perception

Answer Options	To a low degree	To some degree			To a high degree	Rating Average	Stdev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
Has your project been able to take participants' individual motivation/incentives into account in the project design and implementation?	4%	9%	26%	22%	39%	3.83	1.19
Has your project been able to achieve an adequate level of involvement from your South PhD students?	-	-	22%	17%	61%	4.39	0.84
Has your project been able to achieve an adequate level of involvement from South project researchers (other than PhD students)?	4%	9%	30%	22%	35%	3.74	1.18
Has your project been able to achieve an adequate level of involvement from your Danish project participants (other than PhD students)?	4%	4%	17%	31%	44%	4.04	1.11

Project managers mention that it can be difficult to create commitment among the Danish researchers. One of the ways to foster commitment is to ensure publishing opportunities. Several project managers emphasize the importance of projects providing relevant outputs for supporting the involved Danish academic's careers. As a project manager expressed it: *"If we cannot see a scientific article as a product of a research proposal we will not support the idea."* Danish researchers increasingly have to focus on producing high quality scientific publications. Whether participation in a RCB project leads to publishable results can be quite uncertain – at least much more uncertain than when doing research in a North setting. Some projects have quite successful publishing records, whereas others have more varied experiences. Success depends on leadership, critical evaluation of proposed activities, and support, as explained by a project manager:

"No research protocol is approved if it cannot lead to publications. We use the same quality parameters as here in Denmark. This focus [on publishing] also helps them [the South partners] with attracting funds in the future, as investors often look at what is published." [PM4]

A fundamental donor-defined premise of ENRECA partnership programmes is that South-North collaboration should be developed within the existing organisations, when possible. ENRECA projects have not been allowed to offer South researchers compensation through short-term consultant jobs or topping up of salaries. Salaries are normally only offered to administrative personnel and PhD students. In many cases, other externally funded projects at the South partner institutions have no problems topping-up salaries or employing faculty staff as consultants:

"There has been a culture ... there have been many projects in the institute [the South university department] where they have received large payments for doing things, which are actually part of their job and done in their normal working hours." [PM8]

Several project managers mention that this aspect can affect the collaboration, since such experiences have shaped the expectations of their South partners. With the limited opportunities to pay South researchers, projects have little chance of success if genuine interest does not exist in the South institution. This is mentioned as a fundamental limitation by several project managers.

“It is difficult to push them more than we already do. Their life is so different from ours and they have to work beside their university job to earn money. One reason is Danida’s rigid way of perceiving salaries which is not adjusted to realities.” [PM7]

However, several project managers mention that they were initially victims of the misperception that the main barrier to South researchers’ ability to do research was associated with a lack of research funding. This was a source of frustration for North partners, as it turned out that providing funding for research activities did not result in the expected outputs. In some cases, this was due to the fact that existing incentive structures did not encourage South university employees to do research. Most South universities are almost exclusively teaching institutions, and research often plays no role in existing incentive structures. Employment and salary is mainly related to teaching tasks, and the salary is in general so low, that faculty members are forced to take on external work to ensure their family’s existence, leaving little time to pursue research interests.

“We have had students [PhD and Masters] who could only survive if they used five hours a day on selling T-shirts on the local market. Many of the employees need to have an extra job simply to be able to feed their children. It is told to you and you can see all the numbers, but it is very difficult to understand.” [PM7]

It is important to recognize that South researchers often have no “free research time” in their schedule, and that they live under fundamental different conditions than their North partners. On the other hand, some project managers also mentioned that for those who really are interested in developing personal and institutional capacity, ENRECA offers a rare opportunity to do so.

Project managers also argue that the ENRECA approach provides a filter ensuring that only those really interested will participate. As expressed by two project managers:

“That project funding only covers travel expenses ... especially for pilot projects ... demands commitment from North and South partners.” [PM1]

“In the beginning we really did a lot to invite people to the meetings. We said: come on, what are we going to do? But we didn’t really get any input. Maybe they were not really interested. Actually they were interested in the subject. But putting in the time ... you know ... we could not really pay them for their time.” [PM8]

The conditions underlying the ENRECA model are important to consider when addressing ownership. Several project managers argue that projects should consider what is realistic and avoid being too ambitious.

One way to ensure realism and foster ownership is to insist that South institutions contribute financial resources to the project. For example, one project manager insisted that the PhD students’ salaries were paid by the South partner when they stayed in the South:

“I actually think you should demand more than most do. It must be clear that they have

Box 5.1: Examples of incentive used in ENRECA projects

- Per diem when on field work
- Participation in workshops and short courses
- Participation in national and international conferences
- Funding of small projects based on the researcher’s own ideas
- Direct payment on the grounds of publication of manuscripts as working papers and national or international journal articles
- Research visits to Danish partner institution
- Funding of local Masters
- Infrastructure investments
- Organisational build-up that creates long-term opportunities
- Support establishment of other and better paid projects

to deliver. Actually we were able to make the [South] institution cover all the salaries. The set-up is difficult, but they have had to free some persons and pay them a salary to do this [PhD studies]. That was what they had to invest.” [PM4]

This was seen as a very important way of ensuring that the South partner assumed a long-term responsibility for the PhD students’ education and future situation. Such a requirement may slow down the pace of activity implementation, but on the other hand it may ensure that activities are properly anchored in the South institution.

Optimizing future possibilities by being part of an institutional development process can also be an important individual and institutional driver:

“Many of the people we work with will leave the [South] institution. They cannot offer a proper workplace. But if we manage to establish this [national] research centre, then they can earn a lot of money, if that is what they want. So maybe that is what is driving it.” [PM8]

Some project managers argue that an ENRECA project’s impact on the South partner’s organisational politics also plays a role in shaping the level of South faculty involvement and engagement. As explained by a project manager in relation to considerations on whether or not to employ an internal staff member as local project coordinator:

“The dean said that it was a bad idea to have a staff member taking leave to take on the position as coordinator. They have many conflicts in the faculty. If you get one from that side, then the other side will not participate in the project. They preferred having someone from outside because once the projects ends they will not have any problems with that person.” [PM8]

Ownership at the faculty or department level can also be difficult to obtain in organisations where the leadership and management are frequently changed. It can be difficult to maintain a long-term strategy if an ENRECA project is working within an organisational culture where frequent change in leadership and weak organisation is combined with high power distance and, i.e. where it is accepted and expected that the new department head implements his own strategy rather than a broadly negotiated long-term institutional strategy. As expressed by a project manager:

“Organisational changes are the most difficult to move ... When we started the project we had one dean. He was replaced by another one, and now we have a third [in five years]. The management and priorities change to an incredible extent with a new dean. And it is difficult to keep number three to the promises made by number one.” [PM8]

But projects should also remember that the North-South ownership should be balanced. Ilsøe (2005:12) points to the fact that full South ownership with decision on objectives does not match the partnership concept well. If no genuine ownership exists on the Danish side, their contribution will become that of a consulting character and the projects cannot capitalize on free Danish inputs in terms of staff, training, and expertise.

5.2 Project preparation phase

5.2.1 Project anchoring

Ensuring that a project is seen as relevant and important by its stakeholders and that a sense of ownership is established, is the main purpose of the anchoring activities. Anchoring activities are directed *upwards* towards decision-makers in the involved institutions, *outwards* towards end-users and resource persons external to the project organisation, and *inwards* towards participants in the project itself. Table 5.6 shows the ENRECA project managers’ perceived successfulness of their projects’ different anchoring efforts.

Table 5.6: Project managers' perceived successfulness in creating ownership through upwards, outwards and inwards anchoring activities

Answer Options	Not very successful	Successful to some degree		Highly successful		Rating Average	Stdev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
Upwards anchoring within your own (Danish) organisation to ensure that the project is recognized and prioritized	4%	12%	36%	28%	20%	3.48	1.08
Upwards anchoring within the South partner(s) organisation to ensure that the project is recognized and prioritized	-	12%	20%	24%	44%	4.00	1.08
Using a project steering committee to support the project (upwards anchoring)	24%	4%	36%	32%	4%	2.88	1.24
Outwards anchoring with external stakeholders related to project outcomes, e.g. local communities, farmers, policy makers or other end-users of research output	4%	24%	40%	24%	8%	3.08	1.00
Outwards anchoring with external stakeholders that could contribute knowledge or other resources to the project, e.g. ministries, Danida sector programs, NGO's or others	20%	20%	36%	20%	4%	2.68	1.14
Outwards anchoring in terms of cross-sectorial coordination, e.g. with other projects or research institutions	12%	32%	24%	16%	16%	2.92	1.29
Inwards anchoring to ensure integration of the project team to facilitate efficient project implementation	8%	4%	28%	44%	16%	3.56	1.08

5.2.1.1 Upwards anchoring

Findings/lessons learned

- It can be a challenge for researchers to align their projects with the perspective of the donor.
- ENRECA projects were relatively successful in upwards anchoring in Danish and South partner institutions.
- Experiences show that project success can depend on North and South project managers having a certain degree of political flair, organisational insight and support from influential South university leaders.
- Alignment with South university administrative procedures and norms can provide legitimacy and may prevent administrative or "political" problems during the implementation.
- The experiences with using steering committees for upwards anchoring have been mixed.

Understanding the criteria applied by the donor in the project selection process is imperative. As expressed by a project manager:

"I believe that many researchers formulate their different kinds of proposals based on what they find interesting. But the success rate increases dramatically, if you try to imagine yourself sitting on the other side of the table. You have to try to understand the perspective of the donor and what motivates them for handing out money ... I think it is in general difficult to "place oneself on the other side of the table", but it is an important part of the preparation phase." [PM7]

On the other hand, some project managers argue that understanding what is important for the development agency is not necessarily an easy task for the researchers. It may be time-consuming to understand the specific developmental issues in the South partner country, and obtaining the policy information relevant for the development of the project idea may be difficult. Some researchers find it interesting to engage in the political dimension of project development, whereas others find this dimension very tedious and argue that this ought not to be their responsibility.

Upwards anchoring also involves maintaining an ongoing dialogue with decision-makers in both North and South partner institutions to ensure that major decisions are approved and supported. ENRECA projects have in general been successful in performing upwards anchoring. Anchoring upwards in the Danish institutions in order to ensure that the project is recognized and prioritized obtained an average score of 3.48 (see Table 5.6). Anchoring upwards within the South institution was more successful and obtained an average score of 4.00. The typical tools used by ENRECA projects to perform upwards anchoring included an ongoing dialogue and networking with relevant key individuals, steering committee meetings, and communication through periodical progress and annual reports.

The challenge of ensuring good anchoring within the South institutions was discussed with several projects. One project manager stated that:

“During the course of the project, a political change happened at the [South] university. Some sort of election where power relations were completely changed. Everybody disappeared. It became obvious that the project was not anchored in the institution. It was one of these ‘islands’ – that simply disappeared in a political power game.” [PM6]

The above quote illustrates one of the reasons for ensuring that a RCB project is adequately linked to the South and North institutions and not only to individual researchers. Several project managers mentioned that getting a department director or faculty dean personally interested and involved in the projects significantly facilitated the implementation. Projects have also experienced how department level leaders have used ENRECA projects as a lever for promotion, thereby having created a win-win situation when using their newly gained power-base to support the project further. In some cases, the opposite has also happened as supportive people in powerful positions were succeeded by leaders less interested in the project. Experiences show that project success may also depend on North and South project managers having a certain degree of political flair, organisational insight, and personal contacts.

Upwards anchoring can also facilitate project implementation by ensuring that project execution is aligned with South institution’s administrative procedures, thereby assuming that its actions are seen as legitimate by stakeholders. A project experienced problems after having selected their first batch of PhD students, when it was questioned whether the procedure was in accordance with the regulations of the South university. The issue became a matter of principle and entered the agenda of higher level authorities at the South university. The whole scholarship programme was delayed for a substantial time. This example also illustrates the risk that projects may unwillingly become part in local power games beyond control of the partners themselves.

A well-functioning steering committee may be an important means of upwards and outwards anchoring. Steering committees can provide institutional support and facilitate access to useful resource persons. Project managers argued that steering committees function best when they are actively used to ensure that major decisions are rooted in the partnership organisations. Active use of a steering committee has been more important in projects focusing on institutional capacity building where close interaction with the existing organisation was crucial for facilitating change.

The degree of success in using a steering committee to support the project is rated at an average of 2.88 on a five-point scale (see Table 5.6). Not all projects have established a steering committee and experiences are mixed, which is reflected in a significant variation (standard deviation = 1.24). Steering committees are further discussed in Section 5.2.3.5.

5.2.1.2 Outwards anchoring

Findings/lessons learned

- ENRECA projects have to some degree been successful in ensuring outwards anchoring to project stakeholders, other sector-level institutions and resource persons and institutions.

- Many ENRECA projects have had very positive experiences from the collaboration with SPS, but such collaboration is not necessarily easy. Project managers must consider that SPS has different success criteria from those of a typical RCB project.
 - Projects have benefited from SPS facilitating: Insight into local conditions; contact to potential collaborators and resource persons; and more easy access to field data.
 - Important factors for facilitating good ENRECA-SPS collaboration have included an early and ongoing dialogue to identify common interests and that ENRECA managers were well-prepared with a clear vision of how the project could support SPS objectives.
 - The importance of outwards anchoring can be perceived differently by the different partners in a RCB projects.
-

The main purpose of outwards anchoring is to ensure that outputs produced by the project are relevant, will be used and are likely to have the expected developmental impact. The degree of success of ENRECA projects' outwards anchoring with external stakeholders which could contribute knowledge or other resources to the project (e.g. South ministries, Danida's SPS, and local NGO's), is rated at an average value of 2.68 (see Table 5.6). The importance of outwards anchoring is illustrated by the following quote:

"There is no doubt that the personal connections that I have had, especially to the South partner, and the personal connections to the Vietnamese in the Ministry, but also to the SPS advisor in the [Danish] Embassy have been essential in this process [of developing the project]. Personal connections are crucial. Your project won't succeed if you get it wrong from the beginning." [PM4]

One of the main external stakeholders in many ENRECA projects was Danida's SPS. Several projects were developed in collaboration with Danish SPS. As ENRECA project applications are reviewed by local embassies, it is highly relevant to engage in an early dialogue, hereby ensuring development relevance and alignment with local Danish development aid priorities. Ilsøe (2005:9) have summarized factors that facilitate the SPS-ENRECA collaboration including: Involvement of researchers and SPS staff from the beginning; the right timing in relation to the SPS project cycle; a positive attitude towards ENRECA type activities from SPS and embassy staff; involvement of Danish Master's thesis students in the SPS. These aspects are supported by a thorough anchoring effort.

When asked if they found it easy to engage in a dialogue with Danish Embassy and SPS staff, ENRECA project managers gave an average score of 2.70. Experiences are very mixed which is indicated by a standard deviation of 1.40 (see Table 5.6).

Project managers argue that good relations to an SPS can offer many advantages, e.g. insight into local conditions, contact to potential collaborators and resource persons, and easier access to field data. On the other hand, interviewees also mention that collaboration is not always easy. Ideas take time to develop and mature and it can be difficult to maintain continuity as Danida's employees frequently rotate to new posts and Danida's priorities change over time. Embassy and SPS staff face other demands and success criteria than ENRECA researchers and finding common ground can be difficult. Interest in, and perception of, the need for local research and the role of North and South universities herein also vary much between different SPS representatives.

Although funds for research purposes may exist, SPS staff can be unclear on how to integrate research activities into their programmes. Despite the fact that two ENRECA programme evaluations have emphasized the improvement of SPS-ENRECA collaboration as a means of focusing Danida's overall development aid, no clear policy has yet been developed on this issue. Project managers emphasize that projects need to be well prepared before approaching a potential SPS partner.

The study has also shown that maintaining an ongoing dialogue with the embassy and SPS staff can contribute to promote ENRECA activities and furthermore result in spin-off activities involving both North and South partners. For one project, such spin-off activities were seen as a clear element in the project's

sustainability strategy as it provided the South partners with new post ENRECA opportunities. The interviews revealed that such projects can have a broader scope than ENRECA itself, and may be advisory, consulting, and training-orientated, thereby linking to traditional core competences in the South partner institutions.

Project managers rate their success in terms of outwards anchoring with external stakeholders related to project outcomes, e.g. local communities, farmers, policy makers and other end-users of research output at an average of 3.08 (see Table 5.6). Involving stakeholders in the project can contribute by broadening participants' perspectives and energizing the partnership:

"The NGO [the stakeholder] is a partner in the action research component where they organize workshops in local communities and facilitate some activities. I believe we get the most out of them by their participation in the project workshops. They are quite energetic. They contribute with some other things that can remove the focus from internal conflicts at the university. ... It contributes a different focus to the discussions. Clearly, I think they push the [South] institute a bit". [PM8]

When planning a project and the outward anchoring activities, clarity on who is perceived as stakeholders is important. The concept of end-user may not necessarily be defined in the same way by South and North partners. In one project, it became clear during a joint stakeholder analysis that North partners considered local farmers targeted by on-farm field experiments as the project's end-users, whereas South university staff perceived themselves and the department's students as the project's end-users.

The frequently discussed science-policy gap can also constitute a significant barrier to the utilization of research collaboration outcomes. On the other hand, some projects report that they have had a direct impact on policy formulation. A key feature in achieving such policy impact was the involvement of political decision makers and government institutions directly in project formulation and execution:

"Without saying whether it is good or bad, there is of course a difference between being a university-based or being ministry-based. We didn't face that issue, as two out of five South partner institutions were divisions in the Ministry. We didn't have to put on the coat and walk over and knock on the door." [MP5]

In the survey, project managers rate their success with outwards anchoring in terms of cross-sectorial coordination, e.g. with other projects or research institutions at an average of 2.92. Large differences exist between the project, as indicated by a standard deviation of 1.29 (see Table 5.6). Some projects were orientated towards an entire sector and cross-sectorial coordination was an integrated part of the project. Other projects focused on one partner institution and had few activities directed towards the sector level.

Some projects explicitly addressed cross-sectorial coordination, and project managers argued that South universities can achieve synergies by linking the existing institutions and thereby facilitate more efficient use of national resources in the South. Some partners have chosen to engage in monitoring of existing development programme or project activities rather than starting up independent activities. In one example, a project developed its own on-farm trials, while an ongoing FAO project had been doing almost the same type of activity for more than 10 years in the same region. After several years, the ENRECA project recognized this source of information and a collaboration agreement was made. If this had been done from the beginning of the project, a long period of data collection and a substantial investment could maybe have been avoided and capacity building in data analysis and interpretation could have been started much earlier. Project managers also argue that close collaboration with an existing SPS can provide RCB projects with local goodwill and legitimacy and facilitate access to local authorities, communities, and households needed for field experiments.

Providing a platform for national and international networking is considered one of the most important means for ensuring project sustainability (see Section 5.6.2). As expressed by a project manager: *"Ideas for*

projects often occur as a spin-off from other projects and contacts” [PM3]. Another project manager emphasized the importance of involving other North partners because of the synergies that are created:

“We have always tried to make use of the opportunities that showed up. Of course we are always interested in finding additional funding. [...] we are interested in getting other North partners in as we have realized that our type of research is based on collaboration with others. We have realized that when you are more people, the result becomes better than the sum of the individual contributions.”
[PM3]

A RCB project can function as a lever for other activities by facilitating contact between national or regional partners that may otherwise have difficulties getting together. But the positive effects of outwards anchoring are not always self-evident, as experienced by a project manager:

“In the first phase we had some money available for staff members who wanted to develop networks. But nobody wanted to do so. We thought that people wanted to do things but lacked the money. ... We believed that people would seek the opportunities by themselves, but they didn’t. In the next phase, we made sure to build in incentives for people to collaborate with other stakeholders.” [PM8]

The interviewees identified several reasons for the lack of interest at the South institutions in engaging in collaboration with stakeholders, e.g. perceived risk of having to share funding; lack of time; risk of changing existing competitive patterns by sharing knowledge with a potential competitor; and lack of confidence in other institutions. Several project managers have experienced that South partners are very unwilling to share project generated data and information with others, as the data may one day show to be of value to the “owner”, as data can attract external researchers with new projects or provide a basis for consultant assignments.

The interviews showed that the degree of outwards anchoring needed to ensure project success vary from country to country and from project to project. But in general, project managers argued that good personal connections and a well-developed network is a large advantage for the projects, not at least during the project preparation and start-up phases.

5.2.1.3 Inwards anchoring

Findings/lessons learned

- ENRECA projects have been relatively successful in achieving inwards anchoring ensuring integration of the project team as a means of facilitating project implementation.
 - The physical distance and the looser linkages of many participants to ENRECA project activities have constituted a challenge for inwards anchoring.
 - Personal relations and regular visits to the South institution are important to facilitate mutual understanding and thus effective project implementation.
 - Inwards anchoring involves careful consideration of incentive structures and mechanisms for creating ownership.
 - Maintaining a focus on research quality and North-South research collaboration is an important aspect of inwards anchoring.
-

ENRECA project managers find their projects to be relatively successful in achieving inwards anchoring, to ensure integration of the project team in order to facilitate efficient project implementation. This activity area achieved an average score of 3.56, thereby obtaining the highest score of the different anchoring areas (see Table 5.6). This illustrates that ensuring project participants’ commitment is considered important and that most projects are relatively successful in doing so.

Inwards anchoring involves creating a common vision, a shared perception of project objectives and plans, and an acceptance of, and willingness to, deliver the effort needed to reach project goals. In some cases, the nature of ENRECA projects have made it difficult to establish a sense of team spirit and common vision

among participants, since many participants only have a relatively loose relation to the project. The physical distance between Danish project managers and researchers and their South colleagues contributes to the challenge of creating a well-functioning project team. Personal relations are mentioned as important by several project managers, but also presence in the South, as explained by a project manager:

"[...] the relations between those who manage the projects are quite important. It is necessary that the person who is managing the project here in Denmark visits [the partner] quite often. [...] Many of the problems are caused by our difficulties in understanding each other. And it is difficult to do over the phone. You don't discover it. You really don't know what people are saying. If the words said are actually what is meant. You will become better at it when you are together with people." [PM3]

Project managers use a range of tools to support team-building, including internal newsletters, use of intranet for information sharing, regular short-term visits to South, regular joint planning and evaluation workshops, discussion seminars, joint excursions and field trips, social events and collective celebration of successes.

Some interviewees address the challenge of ensuring that South PhD students are well-integrated in both South and North research environments. It is argued that it is important that PhD students maintain the connection to, and communication with, their South institutions while staying in Denmark, since this will later improve their chances of a successful integration in the institutions. Some project managers insist that PhD students submit monthly progress reports to keep their home institutions updated, as well as their Danish supervisors.

Considering how ownership can be facilitated is an essential part of inwards anchoring, and project managers recognize the importance of considering what motivates participants and how commitment can be maintained. Maintaining a high level of research quality and associated publishing opportunities is one way to ensure interest. Quality is also obtained by involving the right researchers. One project manager considers it to be one of his most important tasks to ensure that the project is well anchored in the Danish research environment:

"Each activity needs to have somebody involved at our end. It needs to be collaboration. ... You can't really say that it is "my" project. We have more than 20 people involved here in Denmark. Your role is to find researchers that contribute with quality time. This is essential. If the quality goes, we can't reach our objectives. And I can't cover all areas professionally in detail. We need other researchers to contribute and guide us." [PM4]

The same argument holds for the South participants. Several project managers mention how the initiative phase provided an opportunity to meet and develop joint ideas and establish the relationship and connections needed for developing the partnership.

5.2.2 Project analysis

The *project analysis* stage involves a range of analyses addressing project conditions and context. These provide the basis for the master project planning (application formulation). The project analysis is an open and diverging processes emphasising participants' creativity. The aim of these activities is to motivate participants by giving them a solid knowledge and understanding of the project, to review previously obtained information, and to create a common platform for project planning.

In the following section, ENRECA project managers' experiences with the use of project analysis are presented. Table 5.7 provides an overview of the main types of analysis and to what extent they were used as a basis for the development of ENRECA projects. Table 5.8 shows to what extent ENRECA project managers perceive the main analysis types to be important to include in the process of developing ENRECA projects. The results will be discussed in the following sections in connection with each analysis.

Table 5.7: The use of project analysis in the preparation of ENRECA applications

Answer Options	Yes	No	Don't know
National strategies and/or policy papers (poverty reduction strategies, research policies, gender strategy, etc.)	80%	16%	4%
Sector-wide analysis/research system analysis (of the national research system, other project, sector policies, other institutions)	60%	40%	-
Organisational/institutional analysis (baseline study/needs assessment) of your main South partner institution	64%	28%	8%
An analysis of the challenges/problems to be addressed in the project (e.g. in terms of a problem tree)	72%	28%	-
An interest/stakeholder analysis	44%	52%	4%
A gender strategy (focusing on understanding and documenting the differences in gender roles, activities, needs, and opportunities in a given context)	20%	80%	-
A risk analysis (an analysis of probability and consequences of the failure of planned actions, as well as strategies for avoiding failure)	60%	36%	4%

Table 5.8: ENRECA project managers' perception of the importance of using different project analyses

Answer Options	Not important	Of some importance			Very important	Rating Average	Stdev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
National strategies and/or policy papers	16%	-	36%	20%	28%	3.44	1.36
Sector-wide analysis/national research system analysis	12%	8%	40%	8%	32%	3.40	1.35
Organisational/institutional analysis (baseline study/needs assessment) of your South partner(s) institution	-	4%	40%	20%	36%	3.88	0.97
Analysis of the challenges/problems to be addressed in the project	-	8%	8%	32%	52%	4.28	0.94
Interest/stakeholder analysis	12%	8%	24%	28%	28%	3.52	1.33
Gender analysis	20%	8%	48%	16%	8%	2.84	1.18
Risk analysis	4%	12%	36%	4%	44%	3.72	1.28

5.2.2.1 Cultural understanding

Findings/lessons learned

- Cultural differences can be a challenge to partnership collaboration and may impact project execution in several ways.
- Project managers emphasize the importance of understanding the culture in which projects are implemented. On the other hand, some project managers also warn not to over-interpret the cultural differences and their potential impact, as many of the same challenges can be experienced in both North and South institutions.

Culture is defined as a set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterize an institution, organisation, or group. Cultural differences play a significant role in North-South research collaboration. A project manager expresses it this way:

"I believe that researchers should be a little more humble to the situation of working in a foreign country. Many believe that they can just make an agreement, go down to the South and start working – but it is not at all like that." [PM7]

Several project managers identify cultural understanding as an imperative for project success. Being able to and willing to try to read the culture and interact on the premises of the South culture can make a significant difference:

"You should follow the culture for negotiation and the way they expect you to interact. [...] You should meet them on their ground and therefore cultural awareness is crucial." [PM4]

The culture shapes the fundamental premises for a project and should therefore be taken into consideration in the definition of the project concept, in the design of specific activities, and in the project management strategy.

A possible starting point for reflection may be Hofstede's (2001) five dimensions of culture. Hofstede has studied the interactions between national cultures and organisational cultures. He has demonstrated that there are national and regional cultural groupings that affect the behaviour of societies and organisations: Low vs. high power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long vs. short term orientation.

Power distance is concerned with the acceptance and expectation of power being unequally distributed among members of the organisation. Danish research institutions traditionally have an informal and democratic organisational culture with a high degree of employee influence and decentralized responsibility. Interviewees provide many examples of situations where assuming that the informal Danish attitude can function in a South context has resulted in problematic situations. The following examples show how informality can create problems:

"Someone cannot just assume a responsibility, because he feels like it [as it was expected by the North partner]. He cannot just take on responsibility. He must be nominated by the faculty leadership." [PM9]

"You need to formally match you partner. We had a very clever young Danish MSc staying as coordinator in one of the partner institutions. Once, in a good meaning, he critically reviewed a manuscript by one of the senior staff members who was at that time doing his PhD in the project. His thorough and frank comments were not well received. The PhD student felt offended since the coordinator critiqued him without being a PhD himself. Even though the coordinator was very qualified, he did not gain the respect needed to represent the project, since he was young and didn't have a PhD." [PM8]

The *individualism/collectivism* dimension relates to the degree to which individuals are acting as individuals or as part of the group. For example, this may affect the degree to which individuals can be expected to assume an informal responsibility in a group. A project manager had the following experience:

"... when we made some groups, ... and said that this group will now work with this research component, ... then they didn't do anything. They didn't organize meetings. They didn't work together. They couldn't sit down with a group leader and say: Now we are going to do something together. If somebody did something it was as individuals. We were quite surprised that nobody assumed the leadership and took on the responsibility." [PM8]

In this case, the self-organising working culture of the Danish organisation was made the project's management principle. Not having considered the differences in behavioural patterns and assuming that South and North partners will react alike proved highly problematic and resulted in a standstill in activities for a considerable period of time.

An element in the *masculinity/femininity* dimension is the degree of competitiveness that characterizes a culture. The competitive climate within an institution or between institutions can significantly influence the type of activities that can be carried out in a partnership:

"In some institutions, the 'competitive structures' creates prejudice and reluctance to share information and knowledge. People can be very protective and not interested in collaboration." [PM1]

Some projects have experienced significant resistance towards involving other local partners in ENRECA project activities, e.g. out of fear of having to share funding. Of course this can be a complex issue, but it can be very counter-productive if opportunities for research collaboration are considered as zero-sum games, i.e. an exchange situation where one party's gain corresponds to a loss for the other party. Several interviewees mention that such differences in attitudes can create problems in the collaboration if not addressed and managed early in the collaboration process.

Uncertainty avoidance is concerned with how comfortable people feel with uncertain situations. People's unwillingness to accept uncertainty, e.g. when assuming responsibility in decision making processes, can lead to inaction in order to avoid the consequences of wrong decisions. Several project managers have experienced a difference in decision making cultures and some aspects may reflect differences in how much uncertainty is acceptable:

"I was surprised by the formality involved in everything. You had to have procedures and regulations to follow before decisions could be made. Systems were very inflexible and often non-decisions were preferred over making decisions. This behaviour appeared as a lack of initiative or even interest, but it may just as well have been out of fear of the consequences [if something went wrong]. Even with a regulation in place, I was still asked to approve decisions that I felt were clearly up to them to take."
[PM9]

Organisational capacity includes decision making ability and acceptance of the risk associated with change. The way a project is designed and managed can enhance a South partners' ability to execute leadership and run a calculated risk. This issue is further addressed in Section 5.4.3.2.

Whether partnership participants have a *long-* or *short-term orientation* can also impact the project. The nature of ENRECA projects allows applying a long-term perspective in partnerships. This may be very much in line with some partners' attitude:

"In Asia, they boast being extremely long-sighted. They say they think in terms of several generations."
[PM10]

If the ENRECA project is seen as just one contribution in a long-term development towards a relatively clear vision, partners may choose other strategies than if the perspective is only the present three-year project phase. Organisational structures may support different perspectives, as for example in Latin America, where projects have experienced that short terms of office and the political character of university management may leave little room for long-term thinking.

Although much of what the Danish partners may experience, when working in a foreign culture, seems very different from what they know, some project managers also draw the attention to the similarities:

"I recommend that before engaging in a project, you should go through the potential conflicts and the actual conflicts you have had at your own university. Then you have all the lines drawn up. Because, none of what I have said [about the South], is not going on in here [in the Danish university]." [PM1]

Interviewees also mention that many of their experiences in South are also recognizable in a Danish context: Faculty staff surviving for years on temporary funding; teaching obligations overshadowing research and publishing; resistance to change in teaching programmes; resistance to institutional or organisational changes; and less effective accounting departments are just some examples.

Finally, several interviewees recommend that partners openly discuss a project's general design and management approach with other project managers, who have worked in the specific country. Asking an experienced project manager to be "the devil's advocate" may reveal if cultural aspects have been properly addressed.

5.2.2.2 National and sectorial strategies and policy papers

Findings/lessons learned

- A large majority of ENRECA projects have included South's national strategies and policy papers in the project definition and this type of analysis is considered of some importance in project planning.
 - Several ENRECA projects have obtained good support from the Danish embassy, SPS, and South ministries and agencies to identify relevant policy papers.
 - North partners can be useful for their South partners as door openers to ministry and agency representatives.
 - Half of the ENRECA projects have used sector-wide analysis in relation to project development and this analysis type is considered of some importance in project planning.
 - Working along the lines of national strategies can contribute to ensure future relevance of South partner's research and teaching competencies.
 - By mapping the national innovation system (NIS) a partnership may identify new research partners, research funding, and data and information sources.
-

Including national strategies and policy papers in the project preparation is common practice in ENRECA projects. 80% of the ENRECA projects have relied on such documents and they are, on average, considered by project managers of some importance as an input for project development (see Table 5.8). This is not surprising, considering the FFU application format requires that grant applicants consider and relate to development strategies of the South partner country.

Several project managers mention that the local Danish embassy can be very helpful in identifying appropriate documents. Visiting relevant governmental departments and agencies to introduce the project idea, generate support, and be briefed on the national developments within the subject area is mentioned as a way to identify where a project can support local development policies. Such contact is also seen as an opportunity to gather policy documents and other information, including information about other research and development projects and upcoming policy initiatives.

Some project managers have experienced that their local partners do not necessarily know national policies and key policy documents. In some cases, Danish researchers also find it difficult to identify and obtain the relevant documents, and it was suggested by interviewees that Danida or a support unit at the university could play a more active role in supporting projects with country specific knowledge needed in connection with application process.

Access to South authorities is not necessarily easy. For example, in Latin America, it may be very difficult for local researchers to obtain access to governmental officials if they do not have direct personal relations. Approaching governmental officials can be much easier for a representative of a foreign donor-funded project. In some cases, ENRECA projects have functioned as an important platform for linking South research institutions and governmental agencies by including both in the project. Other projects have involved governmental officials from the relevant line ministry in the project's steering committee as a way of trying to ensure a link to information and political support.

60% of the ENRECA projects have utilized a sector-wide analysis, and this type of analysis is considered relatively important as an input for project development (see Table 5.8). A project manager argues for the use of this analysis in this way:

"We discussed our project activities in relation to the national priorities in order to secure the future relevance of the [South] institute and the researchers. General trends in the sector were also discussed and evaluated." [PM4]

Building the relevant capacity in the South partner institution is important for long-term sustainability and project impact. But understanding the sector and the broader context can be difficult, and project resources for doing so are typically limited. In one project, a sector analysis was integrated as an explicit

activity in the initiative grant phase, as the project was designed with a sector wide focus. In other more narrowly focused projects, such analysis may seem less important. But being orientated towards the sector environment may pay off in several ways. As indicated by a project manager, it may help you understand better the general working environment as well as the partner institution:

"We should have consulted other projects and NGOs in the start-up phase to identify what kind of environment we were in, patterns of behaviour etc." [PM8]

Mapping the sector relevant part of the *national innovation system* (NIS) is a way to gain insight in the broader institutional context. The NIS can be defined as:

"[...] that set of distinct institutions which jointly and individually contribute to the development and diffusion of new technologies and which provides the framework within which governments form and implement policies to influence the innovation process. As such it is a system of interconnected institutions to create, store and transfer the knowledge, skills and artefacts which define new technologies." (Metcalf, 1995)

Performing a joint NIS analysis may contribute to long-term project sustainability in several ways. It may help identify sources for research funding that can provide opportunities for South partners to practise fundraising and develop projects. Knowing the main players in the NIS, e.g. related research projects, may be a way to identify potential project partners and collaborators. This can be beneficiary, e.g. in relation to obtaining data and access to field research opportunities. Knowing the research "landscape" also helps avoid duplicating existing research. In many developing countries the information exchange is very limited, and important literature is often available only at the NGOs' or governmental institutions' libraries. Developing contacts to such institutions can be very useful, e.g. in connection to South PhD students' research.

5.2.2.3 Organisational analysis and needs assessment

Findings/lessons learned

- A majority of ENRECA projects have included an organisational analysis in the project preparation phase and the analysis is considered relatively important.
 - Important aspects of an organizational analysis are: Perspectives on teaching and research; resources level and allocation; organisation of administration and management; financial administration; university governance structure; and incentives and behavioural patterns.
 - A large majority of ENRECA projects have performed an analysis of challenges/problem to be addressed by the project and the analysis is considered very important.
 - A qualitative and quantitative needs assessment provides partners with important information for project planning as well as a useful baseline for future monitoring.
-

64% of the ENRECA projects have conducted an organisational analysis (or institutional assessment) and this type of analysis is considered relatively important as an input for project development (see Table 5.8). An organisational analysis typically addresses the following issues (Lusthaus et al. 2002):

- *Organisational performance*: The ability of an organisation to meet its goals and achieve its mission
- *Organisational capacity*: The resources, knowledge, and processes employed by the organisation
- *External operating environment*: The external environment in which the organisation carries out its activities
- *Internal environment*: The internal factors that influence the direction of the organisation and the energy displayed in its activities

An organisational analysis can provide an understanding of strengths and weaknesses of the partner institutions, thereby helping to qualify the matchmaking between involved institutions and researchers. From a Danish perspective it is important to understand how the South organisation is operating, especially if the project involves a substantial institutional capacity building effort. Interviewees mentioned that Danish partners can also benefit from having a realistic picture of their own organisational capacity. From a South perspective it can be important to understand how Danish organisations are organized in order to better understand their Danish partner's attitudes and behaviour. In addition, both parties can hopefully be inspired by each others systems and identify areas where they want to develop their own competencies through the partnership.

An important output of the organisational analysis is an overview of existing administrative norms, rules and procedures at the South partner institution. This is important as a basis for decision making on how to integrate project management with existing structures. In a project involving a significant element of institutional development, it was realized after several years that the South partner was conducting its own annual planning in a standard format very similar to the ENRECA project's LFA⁶ and activity plan. From that moment the project planning was integrated with the regular South planning process and based on the South partner's own planning format.

Based on the interviews with ENRECA project managers the following list of issues was identified as important elements to address in an organisational analysis:

- The partners' perspective on the role and importance of research and teaching
- Available resources and their allocation to different types of activities
- Organisation of management and administration, including decision making procedures
- Organisation of financial administration and its compliance with donor requirements
- The nature of the university leadership system (e.g. in terms of continuity, politics, and culture)
- The nature of the incentive system and its effect on faculty attitude and behaviour

To believe that an organisational analysis will disclose all relevant information is naive. Many informal rules-in-use and norms are difficult if not impossible to make explicit. Also, more theoretical/formal rules concerning things that influence project implementation, such as the administrative procedure and formal incentive structures, can be difficult to make explicit to outsiders. This limitation is exemplified in the following quote from the project manager in a project that carried out a comprehensive analysis of their South partner institution prior to the project start-up:

"Next time we will be more aware of looking at the incentive structures. They have some very strange incentive structures. When you have experienced it once, you will look for it next time." [PM8]

Project partners typically conduct some sort of organisational analysis during the initiative grant phase, but additional information emerges throughout the whole project cycle. New situations and activities disclose new aspects of the organisational context in which the project works. Moreover, partners may be strategic in what they choose to communicate or not communicate during different stages in the project:

"The university had signed an agreement to employ the PhDs students when they had completed their studies. At some stage it became clear that this was in fact not that easy. Once I began to ask questions, it became clear that it had never been realistic. Obtaining permanent full-time employed at the university might take more than seven years after having obtained the degree and would in any case be highly dependent on the goodwill of the right persons." [PM9]

⁶ For a description of LFA see Danida (1996).

A *needs assessment* is an organisational analysis tool that specifically focuses on the development needs of an organisation. It can be defined as a decision-aiding tool for planning and resource allocation and it involves the gathering and analysis of information on the organisation, its environment, and its capacity needs and problems and possible solutions (Horton et al. 2009). A needs assessment analysing challenges and problems, e.g. in terms of the problem tree analysis used in LFA, was conducted by 72% of the ENRECA projects. An analysis of challenges and problems to be addressed by the project is ranked as the most important input for project development (see Table 5.8).

Project managers emphasize the importance of carrying out a comprehensive needs assessment:

“We initiated every project with a needs assessment which was good. This was done on all levels and including all factors – infrastructure, etc.” [PM4]

The Centre of Health Research and Development at the University of Copenhagen uses a needs assessment framework that relies on an analysis of four different types of capital: Tangible, human, managerial, and social⁷. The analysis relies on quantitative as well as qualitative data. The analysis is carried out by the South partner, and exchanged with the Danish project manager, who may ask clarifying questions which can lead to additional input. The analysis is neither considered difficult nor time consuming to carry out.

5.2.2.4 Stakeholder and gender analysis

Findings/lessons learned

- Less than half (44%) of the ENRECA projects have conducted a stakeholder analysis, but the analysis is considered relatively important.
 - Stakeholder analysis and management initiatives can provide important inputs for project design and planning.
 - The mutual understanding of the stakeholder concept, as well as the benefits and disadvantages from involving stakeholders in project activities should be clarified with South partners.
 - Few ENRECA projects (20%) have conducted a gender analysis, but the analysis is considered of some importance.
-

*Stakeholder analysis*⁸ is a term used to describe a process where all the individuals or groups that are likely to affect or be affected by the activities of a project are identified, described, categorized, and prioritized as a basis for development of the master project plan. Identifying and managing project stakeholders are important aspects of outwards anchoring. 44% of the ENRECA projects have conducted a stakeholder analysis, but the analysis is generally recognized as relatively important as an input for project development (see Table 5.8).

A stakeholder analysis can be carried out in different ways. It is a good idea to obtain inputs for the stakeholder analysis from different sources. In several cases, the Danish embassies have provided information and suggestions for whom to involve in projects. Stakeholder analysis has also been carried out together with, or been verified by, local SPS representatives.

Knowing and actively managing stakeholders, e.g. by developing strategies by which the project can meet important stakeholders' success criteria, actively include stakeholders important to the project execution, or limit the importance of less positive stakeholders, may help identify resources and opportunities or avoid problems. In a project a consequence of involving NGO representatives directly in some activities was that it broadened up the partner's perspective:

⁷ For an introduction to the capital types in a research capacity development context see MoFA (2000).

⁸ *Interest analysis* is another term used for this type of analysis. A comprehensive introduction to stakeholder theory and practice can be found in Friedman and Miles (2006).

"I think we get the most out of having them [the NGO] participating in the workshops. They are so energetic. They 'kick' some new thing into the process so that it doesn't all the time revolve around internal conflicts in the university." [PM8]

The interviews showed that the analysis can be useful, but also that it is not necessarily easy to perform, among other things because the perceptions of stakeholders and their potential role in a project can differ significantly among project partners. Who is perceived as stakeholders, why, and how they should be managed is fundamental for the project design, and different perceptions or disagreement among project partners in relation to how to deal with stakeholders can influence the project negatively:

"Now that the SPS had stopped, we [the Danish partner] felt that we had to open up a little to other interests. They [the South partner] were very much against it, among other things because they would then have to share part of the money. So the interest for opening up towards other stakeholders was limited from their side." [PM8]

Danish partners have also in some cases been interested in limiting the involvement of other stakeholders, e.g. to reduce complexity in the initial stage of a new project.

Project managers' experiences verify that dealing proactively with stakeholder issues is a useful element in research management capacity building. Being able to interact dynamically with a range of stakeholders, such as research users (e.g. local communities, policy makers, and public authorities) and funding agencies/donors, is imperative for developing South research opportunities in the future. Understanding stakeholders and being able to manage them is therefore not only a project management tool, but also an important competence area to include in institutional capacity building.

The *gender analysis* can be defined as "the systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences (gaps) and social relations in order to identify, understand, and redress inequities and inequalities based on gender". Only 20% of the ENRECA projects have conducted a gender analysis documenting the differences in gender roles, activities, needs, and opportunities. The gender analysis is considered of some importance as an input for the project development process (see Table 5.8). Unfortunately, this study was unable to identify the reasons for the lack of consideration of gender issues in ENRECA projects.

5.2.2.5 Risk analysis

Findings/lessons learned

- North-South research partnerships are typically implemented in settings with many unpredictable risks and uncertainties.
 - Risk analysis was conducted by the majority of the ENRECA projects and it is considered relatively important to include in project preparation.
 - The majority of the ENRECA projects have addressed risk management proactively, although not all have used explicit procedures.
-

In a *risk analysis*, expected risk and uncertainty elements are identified and evaluated regarding their consequences and the probability of occurrence.

59% of the ENRECA projects have included a risk analysis in their project development process. The risk analysis is considered the third most important analysis (see Table 5.8). The analysis does not need to be very sophisticated. One interviewee expressed it like this:

“You should think through what kind of environment you are in, and on what kind of things the function of the project depends; what might go wrong; and what do we assume. This is always useful to consider when you operate in a new environment – and, of course, make your partner do the same.” [PM1]

The analysis helps creating a shared perception among project participants of the risks and uncertainties involved in the project. Compared to the identification of assumptions known in the LFA, the risk analysis can be considered more proactive:

“The assumption analysis in the LFA is not proactive. They are perceived as “apologies” for eventual failures.” [PM7]

Box 5.2 shows some of the risk and uncertainty elements identified by ENRECA project managers in the interviews. The risk elements are categorized according to project sub-activity areas.

Project managers need to manage risk during project implementation. 46% of the ENRECA projects had designed some kind of procedure for explicitly dealing with risk and uncertainty in relation to project execution, half of which were judged by project managers to only have been implemented to an inadequate degree. 42% did not find it necessary. On the other hand, 63% state that they did during project execution address risk in a systematic way as part of the project management; 21% state that this was done only to an inadequate degree. 25% indicate that they do not find it necessary (see Table 5.9). Whether or not it is necessary may depend on the nature of the project and the activities involved. But it seems that the majority of ENRECA projects at the practical level address risk and uncertainty proactively. The following statement is probably representative for most project managers:

“You should think ahead, and in activities that you believe can be implemented. It is not that you don’t make a risk assessment when you plan, but it’s not made in a systematic way ... When you are planning the annual activities, you focus on the portfolio of activities you want and believe you can implement. ... This is positive thinking – the other approach [conducting an explicit risk

Box 5.2: Typical risk and uncertainty elements in ENRECA projects

PhD scholarships programme

- PhD students extend their study time
- No South advisor is found for “sandwich” PhD students
- PhD students are asked to teach during research time
- No qualified PhD students are identified in the first call

Research activities

- Changes in research processes are not communicated to all participants

Partnership issues

- New university authorities feel no ownership of the project and fail to allocate planned resources
- The local coordinator leaves the project for a better job

Administration

- Experienced accountant is replaced by inexperienced accountant
- Activities are paralysed due to unclear procedures
- Annual accounting is not handed in to the PRP before the deadline

Communication issues

- Problems are not communicated

Participation issues

- Lack of local ownership and personal incentives leads to poor activity implementation
- Gender inequity in project participation

assessment] is in some ways negative thinking. It is necessary. But be careful not to exaggerate it ..."
[PM1]

The following quote also illustrates the perspective of several project managers:

"It is difficult to assess future risks in the context of developing countries. Political changes, weather disasters etc. is impossible to incorporate into the planning." [PM6]

Many of the events that impacts North-South capacity building projects are very difficult to foresee. But this does not exempt the project planners from considering how to design activities in a way that offer appropriate degrees of freedom and flexibility to deal with surprises.

5.2.3 Master project planning

The results of the project analysis provide a basis for the *master project plan*. Master project planning is the process of clarifying the context, project objectives, the resource frame⁹, main processes, roles and responsibilities, project organisation, and the main budget. Contrary to project analysis, the planning stage is a highly focused and converging process closing in on a practical description of how objectives should be reached. Table 5.9 shows to what extent ENRECA projects included different planning elements in the preparation or inception phase and if the degree of implementation was considered adequate. Table 5.9 also shows if planning elements were not used and whether the project manager believes it should have been applied or find the element unnecessary to use in the ENRECA context.

Table 5.9: The application of planning element in ENRECA projects' most recent project phase (n=24)

Answer Options	Yes, and to an adequate degree	Yes, but to an inadequate degree	No, but we should have done it	No, and I don't find it necessary
Master project planning:				
Was an overall master project plan developed (e.g. in LFA format, milestone plan, work packages, or similar)?	71%	17%	4%	8%
Was a detailed annual work/activity plan developed for each year?	75%	13%	-	13%
Were project participants' roles and responsibilities defined?	79%	13%	8%	-
Was an organisational structure defined?	79%	4%	8%	8%
Risk management:				
During the project preparation, was any procedure designed for explicitly dealing with risk and uncertainty in relation to project execution?	17%	29%	13%	42%
During project execution, was risk systematically addressed as part of the project management?	42%	21%	12%	25%

5.2.3.1 Defining objectives and outputs

Findings/lessons learned

- ENRECA projects have been relatively good at establishing a shared understanding of project objectives and implementation throughout the project life cycle.
- It is a challenge to ensure that RCB projects do not become overly supply driven.

⁹ The resource frame includes the overall budget frame, but also other recourses available to the project partners, e.g. knowledge, competences, relations, networks, and facilities,

- Agreeing on objectives can be difficult due to different interests – individual and institutional – and project participants may try to redefine objectives during the course of implementation.
- Changes in South leadership can significantly impact a RCB project, e.g. due to new management priorities.
- ENRECA projects have often been too ambitious. Partnerships should evaluate carefully the realism of the objectives.

Developing project objectives typically involves some initial discussions and negotiations facilitated by the use of a graphical structure, such as the LFA objective tree, to develop and communicate the relationship between overall/development objectives, intermediate objectives, and specific outputs. ENRECA evaluations have stressed that mutual agreements should be reached on goals, approaches, outcomes, impact, and responsibility (Ilsøe 2005:14). ENRECA projects are good at creating such shared understanding among participants on project objectives, outputs, and action plans. When project managers were asked to what degree their projects have been able to create a shared understanding throughout the project cycle, an average score of 4.13 (see Table 5.10). 54% of the project managers answered “to a high degree”. This result is verified, when the question is turned around and respondents were asked if their projects have experienced that participants have expressed a lack of knowledge concerning the project objectives as defined in the project application. This question obtained an average score of 2.26 on a five-point scale, and 46% of the project managers answered “to a low degree”. In general, ENRECA projects seem to be relatively good at maintaining focus and awareness of project objectives.

Table 5.10: Danish ENRECA project managers’ perception of project participants’ involvement, motivation, and shared perception

Answer Options	To a low degree		To some degree		To a high degree		Rating Average	Stdev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)			
Has your project, in general, been able to ensure a shared understanding of project objectives and implementation throughout the project life cycle?	-	4%	35%	4%	57%		4.13	1.06
Have you experienced that project participants have expressed lacking knowledge concerning the project objectives as defined in the project application?	48%	4%	30%	9%	9%		2.26	1.39

ENRECA evaluations have shown that South and Danish partners in general play an equal role in selecting the research subjects. Considering the high degree of voluntarism involved in many of the projects, personal interest and enthusiasm is considered fundamental for obtaining success. Some projects have experienced a lack of South engagement in planned research activities, and some project managers attribute this to the failure of properly addressing South researchers’ personal interests and capacities, as well as institutional priorities. North-South RCB projects run a risk of becoming too supply driven. Striking the right balance between supply (i.e. what Danish researchers can and wish to offer) and demand (i.e. what South researchers and institutions need) is important, but not always easy. Project managers mention the dilemma, that even though project definition is made through a participatory process, it can be difficult to get partners to assume a proactive role in developing ideas.

Maintaining an ongoing dialogue on the project purpose and the objectives is stressed as important by several project managers. One of the reasons is that participants may initially have different agendas:

“There was a lot that was not surfaced during the initial meetings. Not everything came out in the open. A problem that came out up later was that some of them [South participants] were more interested in the income support that the project could provide ... and they were not so enthusiastic about the [research] idea. Not everybody was open about that from the start.” [PM6]

“I think the Dean wants more [resources] for his teaching and for running the place. You know, research, he is really not in favour of it. Of course he can see that research is needed, but on the other hand, there are so many other things that the project could do for him and his institution.” [PM8]

One project manager emphasized the importance of being clear and firm on the objectives of the collaboration and to develop institutional and individual incentives to ensure South involvement:

“If they aren’t here for the research, then we don’t need each other. If they want to earn consultant salaries, then they should do so. What we can offer is education, a sequence of courses; plenty of English courses; project management courses; and we have tried to make personal development plans for the participants. Moreover they get a lot of flexibility and responsibility.” [PM4]

In some South organisations the leadership changes frequently and new leaders may challenge old agreements and plans. Especially in the case of institutional capacity building objectives a general consensus in the South organisation is therefore desirable. This can only be obtained through a careful anchoring effort, where faculty staff is involved in defining the project’s long-term objectives, main tasks, and outputs.

Limiting scope creep – the tendency that objectives are expanded is always a management challenge. A risk mentioned by several project managers is the tendency to become overambitious:

“We really wanted the project when we did it, and maybe we were not quite realistic. Maybe we closed our eyes to some of the potential problems.” [PM11]

“It is difficult to setup realistic plans for the project as both Danida and the partners often are too ambitious. Not academically, but in relation to time.” [PM1]

Lack of experiences also constitutes a challenge. A project manager argued that if South partners are not experienced in doing research, little realism may exist regarding what can be achieved with the available resources and competencies: *“In many cases they [the South partner] probably lack the basis for judging how much effort has to be put into such [research] tasks” [PM11]*. Both North and South partners run a risk of over-promising and being too optimistic. Taking into consideration that Danish partners are also often entering a new field, at least institutionally and geographically, the same argument applies to their ability to judge the expected resource need. Exaggerated ambitions, and subsequent failure to reach the objectives, are mentioned by several project managers as a source of much frustration.

5.2.3.2 The resource frame

Findings/lessons learned

- ENRECA project managers have been creative and efficient in utilizing their projects to attract additional resources.
 - Resources for ENRECA projects have come not only from Danida’s grants, but from various other sources.
 - The flexibility associated with the ENRECA programme is often mentioned as an important reason for the high input-output factor associated with these projects.
-

In the planning process the partners should continuously consider the resources available for implementing the proposed activities – the *resource frame*. Multiple types of resources play a role in capacity building: Funds, knowledge, information, influence, power, connections, and infrastructure. Resources come from many different sources: The project budget, partnership institutions, external resource persons, SPS, NGOs, governmental agencies, and local grants. Several project managers mentioned that their ENRECA projects have not been ordinary research or development projects, where expenses are expected to be covered by the project funding. With the relatively modest funding provided for ENRECA projects it has been a challenge to get the most out of the available resources, and project managers mentioned that they have

used their partnerships as platforms for finding new research partners and additional funding sources. Often, the flexibility associated with Danida's administration of the ENRECA programme is mentioned as one of the reasons for the high input-output ratio the programme is recognized for (MoFA 2000a, Ilsøe 2005). A project manager argued that the ENRECA project grant size was actually too small, but the flexibility made the implementation possible:

"It has been managed by those in the local institutions. It has probably only worked because the programme was so flexible. If they [Danida] had a feeling that we made something useful, they didn't look too much on the budget lines. There has been a relatively large degree of freedom to use the money where they were most needed. This is very much contrary to other programmes [...]." [PM3]

5.2.3.3 Planning the main processes

Findings/lessons learned

- The large majority (88%) of ENRECA projects has used basic planning tools, e.g. the LFA, milestone plans, work packages, or similar formats, and most (71%) are satisfied with their application.
 - Application of participatory planning methodologies does not necessarily create ownership. Projects need to carry out the design and planning process together to ensure applicability, acceptance, involvement, and ownership.
 - Projects have experienced that things often take much longer time than expected.
 - Projects have benefited from starting up in small scale allowing the partnership to develop working relationships and testing participants' interest.
-

Based on the project objectives and defined outputs, the partners engage in the elaboration of an *overall master plan* indicating the main processes and activities needed to produce the outputs. ENRECA evaluations have stressed that plans should be flexible and based on realistic and shared ambitions and interests (Ilsøe 2005:14). This was confirmed by this study, and in general it seems that ENRECA projects were able to live up to these requirements to a large extent.

88% of the project had developed an overall plan, e.g. in the LFA, milestone plan¹⁰, work packages¹¹, or similar formats. 17% of the project managers felt that they had done so to an inadequate degree only. 13% had not developed a master plan of which 8% felt that it was unnecessary (see Table 5.9). Almost all projects used the LFA. When asked if they found the LFA useful in the ENRECA project planning process, an average of 2.88 was given on a scale from "not useful" (1) to "very useful" (5). Experiences are mixed, which is illustrated by a standard deviation of 1.30. When asked to what degree they find LFA a useful basis for a broad participatory planning process, responses gave an average of 3.12 (standard deviation = 1.20).

Creating a shared understanding of the plans can best be done by doing the planning together. On the other hand, no methodology guarantees true involvement and acceptance of the planning result. As expressed by a project manager:

"There have been so many projects [at the South partner institution]. By now they are maybe a little cynical and may think: 'Okay, now let's play that game' [conducting the LFA workshop]." [PM8]

By introducing a planning approach, e.g. LFA, North partners may unconsciously impose a specific logic on South partners that does not necessarily correspond with their way of viewing things. Also, a project manager points to the fact that participants can easily be very enthusiastic during the LFA workshop,

¹⁰ A *milestone* is the end of a stage that marks the completion of a work package or phase, typically marked by a high level event such as completion, endorsement or signing of a deliverable, document or a high level review meeting (Wikipedia.org).

¹¹ A *work package* is defined as a subset of a project that can be assigned to a specific party for execution (Wikipedia.org).

whereas the atmosphere and some of the participants may have changed once the actual work has to be delivered.

Obtaining realism in the planning can be difficult. Several project managers mentioned that it is very useful to start the collaboration between the actual participants on a small scale during the initiative grant phase to develop working relations and test the operation of the partnership:

“You should make sure that it is not only managed at the top management level. You need to find out how you can plan it. ... What we did was to say: Let’s try out [during the initiative grant phase] all the different activities we have planned for later, but in a small scale. We made small projects and seminars in order to see how it worked.” [PM1]

In practice, it can of course be difficult to get researchers in the North and South involved in activities during an initiative grant phase unless they are very interested and committed. But this can, as mentioned before, provide a useful indicator of the actual interest among the future partners.

Maintaining flexibility is stressed by several project managers as a fundamental quality of good planning. Flexibility can be incorporated in terms of time, funding and alternatives:

“Another thing is this about having slack in the projects. You should try to ensure some realism in terms of how long time things will take and what you can accomplish. ... I think it is important to say: If we don’t get forward this way, then we might do it in another. Having this slack is important.” [PM1]

Slack is defined as “the time you can postpone an activity without delaying any subsequent activity dependent on the output from the first activity”. Many projects have experienced that things take much longer time than expected. As expressed by a project manager: “If you believe you can plan like you do in Denmark you can really run into problems.”

The use of LFA in the project application phase is very focused on defining the project’s objectives and outputs. Less emphasis is placed on the subsequent planning of how to implement activities and this can become problematic later on:

“I think it could have been good if we had discussed this [how activities should be implemented] up front with the partners, but we didn’t have time to do it. We talked more about what should happen, what the project’s objectives were, and what activities to implement. But we didn’t talk about how it should happen. Everybody took for granted that it would just happen [...].” [PM8]

5.2.3.4 Defining roles and responsibilities

Findings/lessons learned

- A large majority (92%) of ENRECA projects have explicitly defined participants’ roles and responsibilities.
 - A clear division of roles and responsibilities is important to support effective implementation.
 - Projects have benefited from discussing role expectations, as being project responsible, project manager or coordinator may mean different things to the different individuals involved in a partnership.
 - In a cross-organisational collaboration where participants are working in unfamiliar structures defining roles and responsibilities are particularly important.
 - Changing the initial distribution of roles and responsibilities between North and South institutions during the course of the project can be a challenge and needs to be adequately discussed and planned.
-

A clear definition of *roles and responsibilities* involved in managing the project is imperative for developing effective and efficient partnership collaboration. The large majority (92%) of ENRECA projects have explicitly defined participants’ roles and responsibilities. 79% of the project managers stated that they did so to an adequate degree, and 13% to an inadequate degree only. 8% did not define roles and responsibilities, but found that they should have (see Table 5.9).

Project managers agree that a clear division of role and responsibilities is important. A number of themes were identified in the interviews that influence the definition of roles and responsibilities including: Cultural differences; differences in project management experiences; the balance between North and South responsibility; South-South and cross-institutional relationships; and responsibility as a factor in project sustainability.

The above-mentioned cultural dimensions (see Section 5.2.2.1), e.g. power distance, individualism/collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance come into play in relation to how people relate to the roles and responsibility within the partnership:

“In the first phase we tried to have a ‘key responsible scientist’ from the [South] faculty staff who should manage the process [of developing projects in a long-term research programme]. It totally failed. I think the reason was that the Dean just said: “Now you are the key responsible scientist.” ... But the problem was that he didn’t necessarily appoint the most competent or interested person.” [PM8]

“... there has to be a very clear division of responsibilities ... when you want people to collaborate [South-South]. They prefer not to do so. Normally, they say: ‘We can do this, and you can do that.’ But if they need to collaborate – budget wise – then it has to be completely clear who gets what for doing what ... but even then they are not happy to collaborate.” [PM4]

Obviously, participants’ commitment decreases when they are involuntarily appointed as responsible; led by less qualified teams leaders; or forced to collaborate if they prefer not to.

In some universities a project culture exists, where the individual project more or less exists as an autonomous unit without much central coordination or influence from the department leadership. A project manager explains the consequences:

“[...] it never really became clear to the South partners’ responsible parties [department directors] that they were responsible for the project. They always referred to the local coordinator when something went wrong. Getting them to take an active interest in the project was also very difficult. It was difficult to make the project a department matter.” [PM9]

The above quote illustrates the importance of starting the project with the right understanding of the involved roles. This project had not been properly anchored in the institution and had become a “project island”. In another project, a “project island” developed due to local staff having too strong a personal ownership of the project. This resulted in other staff members being excluded from influence and opportunities to making use of the project.

In cross-organisational projects the co-ordination and interaction deviates from the participants’ normal operational mode. Here an explicit definition of *management functions* is useful. This is an opportunity to focus on differences in organisational cultures and make explicit mutual expectations regarding collaboration procedures. A project manager expresses it this way: *“Discuss project management with the partner institutions. Things are not just happening as they are in the North” [PM1].*

This successive handover of power and responsibility discussed in Section 5.1.5 also constitutes an organisational challenge. Rapid changes to the initially established relationship can be a challenge for both South and North partners:

“When we went from phase 2 to 3 we changed our planning system. In the new model everything that had to do with institutional capacity building was planned locally on a half-year basis. It created much more ownership, but it was still difficult to engage people and make South authorities understand that they now had the main responsibility.” [PM9]

In projects involving more than one South institution, distribution of responsibilities and roles among South participants may also constitute a challenge. Some projects have experienced that distributional issues can

become very complex. The level of mutual trust between South institutions is not always high. Suspicion can develop as administrative systems are seldom very transparent, and this can easily result in conflicts:

“We had one of the partners in charge of the distribution to the rest of the South partners. This created some conflicts among them, and we never really managed to deal with these.” [PM6]

Project managers argue in favour of having clearly defined roles and responsibilities as it supports project sustainability:

“There should have been a ‘ping-pong’ process, but nothing happened. Both sides are to blame. ... Organisationally I won’t give anybody the responsibility ... it is difficult. But we believe that it was caused by some organisational problems regarding the division of responsibilities.” [PM8]

An important element of partnerships’ establishment is to ensure that twinning can take place between individual South and North researchers at a professional level where mutual gains can be obtained. Long-term commitment and involvement is necessary on both parts. Teaming up individual researchers in North and South as work package¹² responsible is a way of establishing a clear link between individual researchers and between researchers and the project.

5.2.3.5 Defining the organisational structure

Findings/lessons learned

- The large majority (79%) of ENRECA projects has defined an organisational structure and find it to be working adequately.
 - Well-functioning steering or management committees may provide upwards and outwards anchoring, improve information flow, and support inter- and intra-institutional collaboration.
 - Merging administrative functions with other projects can provide several benefits, e.g. enhanced administration and improved service, access to new research opportunities, improved job security and support project sustainability. Aligning to the norms of a wider collaboration may, on the other hand, reduce the flexibility associated with the ENRECA model.
 - The demand for administrative efficiency influences project decisions regarding the degree of integration with the South partner’s existing organisation, e.g. the degree of North representation in South, and whether it is desirable to establish an independent project office.
-

The classical project structure includes a steering committee (including strategic decisions-makers and project owners¹³), the principal responsible party (PRP) or grant holder at the Danish institution, the South responsible party, a management committee¹⁴, North and South project manager(s)/coordinator(s) responsible for daily management, a reference group or advisory board¹⁵, project office administrative staff in South, and the project participants.

The following discussion is based on what project managers have identified as important themes regarding the design of the organisational set-up for RCB projects. These themes include: The number of partners; South-South linkage; the use of a steering committee and a scientific committee; collaboration with other

¹² A *work package* is defined as a subset of a project that can be assigned to a specific party for execution.

¹³ In a traditional project management context the project owner is a representative of the upper management level of the company or organization where the project is placed. In an ENRECA project context, the PRP/grant holder is considered the project owner.

¹⁴ Some projects use a management committee to anchor the project with the South institution or important stakeholders. Such a committee meets more often than a steering committee and discusses more operational issues than are addressed in the steering committee.

¹⁵ A scientific committee and an end-user panel are examples of such advisory groups.

projects; North representation in the South institution; and whether or not to establish an independent project administration at the South institution.

The majority of ENRECA projects have defined an organisational structure (83%). 79% of the project managers found that they did so to an adequate, and 4% to an inadequate degree only. 17% did not define an organisational structure, of which 8% do not find it necessary (see Table 5.9). Designing the organisation does not seem to have been a major challenge, but this may to some extent be a consequence of the scope and typical size of the ENRECA projects (see Table 4.5). In one-to-one partnerships the question of how to organize the project may be relatively easy, but in more complex settings involving several partners the way the organisation is designed may impact the implementation significantly as illustrated by a project manager in a project involving one Danish and two South institutions:

“When I entered the project in the beginning of the second phase, I discovered that the faculty members at the two universities had never had an opportunity to meet each other at a joint meeting. No wonder that no collaboration had evolved. On the contrary, an attempt to develop a joint Masters programme had failed. Once we organized a joint workshop in a remote place, and made sure that everybody had a nice and cheerful couple of days, the level of collaboration rose significantly. We never got the joint programme, but a lot of ideas and experiences were exchanged between the two South partners during the following years.” [PM9]

In this case, the only project level decision body established was a steering committee that had never really come into function. No viable means for South-South linkage were designed. Later a joint management committee with frequent meetings, as well as an annual project workshop where all faculty members were invited were implemented and served as important venues for South-South project coordination and general exchange of ideas and experiences.

Today, the establishment of a steering committee is required by FFU, but older projects have not necessarily implemented such a committee. Experiences with a steering committee are mixed. Some find them very useful and others do not. Project managers recommended that the role and authority of the steering committee is clearly defined. Committee members can play an important role as ambassadors at higher level management within the university administration. Having representatives from university-level support units such as the research department or international relations office can be useful in order to promote and build support for the project. A project can also support its host department by facilitating upwards relations that might place the department in a better negotiation position within the university system. As expressed by one project manager:

“Our presence [the North partner], and the regular steering committee meetings involving university authorities provided an opportunity for our partners to discuss matters with the university authorities that they would otherwise have had difficulties to place on the agenda. They could use our support as a lever to advance some of their own organisational issues. ... It also seemed that the university had problems with their internal communication, and sometimes our host department also obtained important information from the authorities, e.g. on calls for research grants, staff training courses, and other opportunities through these meetings.” [PM9]

Ensuring goodwill and support at higher level administration can be important for project implementation, but in practice steering committees risk becoming of a more symbolic nature.

“People join the committees because they don’t want to be impolite, and maybe you do them a favour some other time. After a week or two they have forgot everything about it.” [PM7]

If participation in a steering committee becomes a symbolic act only, the decision-makers will soon lose interest in participating.

Establishing scientific committees can also be a way to integrate other players in the NIS thereby supporting South-South network building and inter-organisational collaboration. One project manager

argued that linking up with local high-level peers from other departments or institutions can help establish a realistic reference point and facilitate constructive competition.

In some cases, ENRECA projects have been linked more or less closely to other projects in larger research network or consortiums. This can provide both benefits and limitations. According to a project manager who's ENRECA project has been part of an international research consortium the benefits include: Ability to implement larger infrastructure investments; an ongoing flow of new project opportunities; larger job security for newly graduated PhDs; possibility to offer a broader range of training courses; increased sustainability, since activities in one project can be continued in another; sufficient volume to allow the employment of a professional administrator; and establishment of common norms and regulations regarding personnel management and administrative issues. In terms of limitations, participation in a larger consortium entails that participants have to accept some common norms, and working within such an organisational structure limits the traditional flexibility of ENRECA projects.

5.2.3.6 Planning main budget

Findings/lessons learned

- Cost estimation can be difficult due to lack of context specific knowledge and highly uncertain due to the nature of the involved activities.
 - Partners may use other projects, SPS, embassy staff, colleagues with country specific experience and task relevant knowledge to obtain cost estimates.
 - Distribution of funds can be a sensitive issue in projects involving multiple partners.
-

Project managers recommend using an activity-based budget since this provides a clear structure for budgeting, distribution, and monitoring. Project managers complained that the exact costs are often difficult to obtain and exchanging information with colleagues or Danida's SPS staff experienced with the specific country is recommended. It is also mentioned that since many activities are unique and complex, a significant degree of flexibility must be allowed.

Project managers argue that an unclear or uneven distribution between partners or within a department can be problematic. Several interviewees argue that a project inevitably will become a power base that will impact on existing relations in the South institution, and emphasize that North partners need an insight into existing conditions and some diplomacy in dealing with distributional matters to avoid internal conflicts.

5.3 Project start-up/inception phase

Findings/lessons learned

- 62% of the ENRECA projects have used between two and six months for project start-up.
 - Establishing good communication practices among partnership participants is an important part of the start-up phase.
 - Starting up the project slowly and using small-scale activities to initiate and practise the partnership collaboration can help identify strengths to utilize or weaknesses to address.
-

The project *start-up/inception phase* aims at creating the conditions for efficient co-operation among the project participants. In the inception phase the partnership participants come together to further detail the master project plan, i.e. the approved FFU application, and elaborate detailed plans. This phase involves further anchoring activities as well as repeating project analyses to improve the decision basis. In multi- and interdisciplinary research projects the project start-up may involve joint workshops where participants are prepared for collaborating across disciplinary boundaries.

In relation to the time spend by ENRECA projects in the start-up phase, i.e. the period before initiating actual research and capacity building activities, 17% of the projects used one month, 29% used 2-3 months, 33% used 4-6 months, 12% used 7-9 months, 4% used 10-12 months, and 4% used more than a year.

As suggested for the pre-project phase, several project managers also suggested using small-scale activities during the start-up phase to initiate and practise joint collaboration. Project managers also emphasize that the start-up phase should allow North and South participants to develop their personal relations in order to facilitate future collaboration and communication.

5.3.1 Detailed planning

Findings/lessons learned

- A large majority (78%) of the ENRECA projects have used sufficient time to further detail the master project plan during the start-up phase.
- Approximately half of the ENRECA projects have developed rules and regulations to an adequate degree. 29% found it unnecessary to do so.
- Approximately half of the ENRECA projects have not developed procedures for systematically dealing with deviations from their plans.
- Participants' detailed research planning can be supported by use of standard research protocols. When possible use the existing formats in South institutions to practise post-project planning.

Based on the approved master project plan (included in the FFU application) and the approved budget frame the *detailed planning* are initiated. Activity plans and an activity-based budget suitable for subsequent controlling are developed during the project start-up. Rules and regulations for project execution are agreed upon and quality control, and monitoring and evaluation processes are planned.

Table 5.11 shows that 78% of the ENRECA projects used sufficient time during their start-up phase to further detail the plans prepared in the preparation phase. Only 22% of the projects stated that they should have used more time on additional preparation before starting activities.

Table 5.11: Application of detailed planning practices in ENRECA projects

Answer Options	Yes, and to an adequate degree	Yes, but to an inadequate degree	No, but we should have done it	No, and I don't find it necessary
Was detailed planning carried out in collaboration between the partners?	78%	22%	-	-
Were specific rules/or management regulations developed? (regulations, job descriptions, TOR, contracts, etc.).	48%	22%	-	29%
Was any procedure for handling deviations from the plans established?	22%	26%	17%	35%

The level of joint planning in which partners engage vary from project to project and from researcher to researcher and depends on factors such as the type of activity, organisational culture, personal preferences, degree of mutual trust, and level of South research management experiences. Some of the complexity of this is illustrated by the following quote:

"No doubt that I would like to micro manage more. I think it is difficult to know what to do when things are not going the way I want them to. ... But I do hold back a little. I am afraid of being to 'imperialistic'."
[PM10]

It is recommended that results are clearly defined and processes designed to facilitate monitoring, e.g. by using milestones and intermediate outputs. Plans are frequently changed, and 48% of the projects have established some sort of procedure for handling deviations from the plans, of which 26% of the project managers stated that they did so to an inadequate degree only. 17% of the projects did not establish such procedures, but they wish that they had done so; 35% of the project managers did not find such procedures necessary (see Table 5.11).

Several projects have developed standard research protocol formats to support participants in developing research projects. Standard formats enhance capacity by focusing participants' attention on the necessary information, and at the same time it facilitates supervisor or peer feedback.

Some project managers pointed out the fact that project planning and monitoring also constitute a useful platform for "in-service training". In one project the policy was to involve as many staff members as possible in planning and monitoring activities to ensure ownership, but also to use the project as a platform for developing more efficient planning practices. In this project, the budget for institutional capacity building was distributed through a series of funds directed towards a range of specific activity areas, e.g. small research projects, literature acquisition, equipment acquisition, Master programme development, and thesis scholarships. Each fund was managed according to a set of regulations. A faculty member was appointed coordinator for each fund. Together with the rest of the academic staff, these coordinators developed half-year plans using the planning format of the South university for joint approval by the South project responsible and the Danish PRP.

The described procedure was aligned with the existing procedures in the South institution. But the actual existence of a budget – supplied by the ENRECA project – made South planning activities meaningful. The process was not without challenges, but the result was that planning skills were improved through 'learning-by-doing'. Participants expressed that they were now actually planning for the future, something they did not care much about before, when their ideas were never implemented due to a lack of funds.

5.4 Project co-ordination phase

Project *co-ordination* is the project management activities carried out in parallel with the actual execution of project activities. Project co-ordination aims at supporting participants' execution effort and maintain result-orientation. The main focus is on clarifying project planning and performing ongoing project management. The main activities included are: Communication, administration, ongoing leadership and management, and project monitoring and control.

5.4.1 Communication

Findings/lessons learned

- ENRECA project managers evaluate the internal communication between project partners to be highly sufficient to support efficient project implementation.
- A summary of the project document, internal newsletters, PhD students' monthly progress reports, a project notice board, and decision minutes from project meetings are examples of means used for information sharing in RCB projects.
- Half of the ENRECA projects found it unnecessary to develop procedures for exchange of project management information.
- Approximately one third of the ENRECA projects have used some kind of common platform (e.g. a project management file (PMF) for exchanging management information.
- A majority of projects have developed during project preparation stage a strategy for communication with stakeholders.

- Personal contacts, project newsletters, bulletins or up-dates, Email newsletters, and project websites have been the ENRECA projects' typical means of communicating with stakeholders.

5.4.1.1 Internal communication

Means used to facilitate ENRECA project participants' knowledge of project progress are: A short summary of the project document, internal newsletters, PhD students' monthly progress reports, a project notice board, decision minutes from project meetings, and a "book of minutes" accessible for interested participants and stakeholders.

Partners in ENRECA projects generally communicate well. When project managers were asked to evaluate if the level of communication between project partners had been sufficient to ensure efficient project execution, an average of 4.39 was given on a scale from "to a low degree (1) to "to a high degree" (5). 40% state that they did so "to a high degree". No score is lower than "to some degree" which was chosen by 15%. But the interviews also showed that communication is sometimes quite challenging.

"Concerning communication there seems to be a lack of realism because everything works so smoothly here [in Denmark]. Even though you don't always get an answer right away [on an email], we have a very different culture regarding answering quickly, and we also have much better technology here. But then when you start to communicate with several partners, it really becomes a much more time-consuming process. This is something you should consider from the start. How you get a communication system to function acceptable." [PM6]

As this quote shows, communication is affected by organisational culture, technology, and the number of participants.

Several interviewees mentioned that North participants may tend to unrealistic expectations in relation to communication, since everything runs relatively smoothly in their own organisational setting. In a North-South context, communication is more complex and it is important to ensure resources for good and sufficient communication and information exchange. For example, in one project the project manager experienced that South partners independently changed a field research protocol rather than communicating their problems to the Danish partners. More frequent North visits to the field could have disclosed the problems in the research design and a solution could have been found together. Working partly as virtual teams is a challenge for North-South partnerships, and meeting physically cannot be entirely substituted by the internet and emails.

Table 5.12: The application of management information exchange and communication strategy tools in ENRECA projects' most recent project phase (n=24)

Answer Options	Yes, and to an adequate degree	Yes, but to an inadequate degree	No, but we should have done it	No, and I don't find it necessary
During the project preparation, was a procedure for exchanging project management information planned (some kind of guidelines for exchange of management information)?	17%	17%	17%	50%
During project execution, was procedures for exchanging management information implemented?	17%	25%	8%	50%
During the project preparation, was a communication strategy developed (what, when and how to communicate to stakeholders during the project)?	38%	21%	8%	33%
During the project execution, was a communication strategy implemented?	38%	29%	8%	25%

33% of the projects had planned such procedures hereof 17% only to an inadequate degree. 67% had not planned procedures, and 50% did not find it necessary to do so. When asked if management information exchange procedures were implemented during project execution the responses were similar (see Table 5.12).

36% of the projects indicated that they have or planned to implement a project management file/handbook (PMF), intranet, or another kind of shared platform to maintain an overview of project documents and decisions. 12% indicate that they have a PMF and 12% indicate that they have a website with an intranet. 16% stated that they have a website but without intranet. One project has very positive experiences using a PMF:

"We have an activity file [i.e. PMF] with a numbering system that corresponds with the LFA. Whenever we have an activity it is recorded in the file. Typically they [South partner] do that at their weekly meeting and I get the file once a month. The file is continuously updated and constitutes the "project memory". ... When we have to report [Danida's annual report] we can just look at the file. We do it to be able to report, but also in order to be able to keep an eye on how far we have reached." [PM4]

In a large multi-disciplinary project, a "List of Project Documents" including document type, title, author, date, and discipline was maintained. All documents produced in the project were entered in the list: Project proposals, Master's thesis proposals, Master's theses, conference papers, journal articles, etc. This list of documents functioned as a project logbook for reporting, but also for sharing information on ongoing activities and publications. A hard copy of all documents was also kept at the local project office so that interested students, teachers, and researchers could easily obtain a copy.

Some project managers conduct weekly or monthly project staff and PhD supervision meetings using Skype. One project manager explains that an agenda is circulated by email some days before and the PMF is jointly reviewed and updated by the staff in South and North during the Skype meeting. See also Section 5.2.1.3 on inwards anchoring for a discussion of the importance of face-to-face interaction in order to ensure an efficient communication.

5.4.1.2 External communication and dissemination

External communication involves communicating with project stakeholders and disseminating research results. 59% of the projects have developed a strategy for communicating with stakeholders as part of the preparation for the most recent project phase. 21% of the projects indicate that the strategies were inadequately developed and 29% that they were inadequately implemented. 33% of the project managers did not find it necessary to develop a strategy during the project preparation.

ENRECA projects' communication strategies typically include two elements: A stakeholder communication strategy and a dissemination/publication strategy. The need for a communication strategy depends on the scope of the project. Some projects are engaged with, and depending on, communication with a broad range of stakeholders. Other projects may focus on close collaboration between few researchers and therefore less dependent on and involved with external stakeholders. Some projects are orientated towards publishing local Master's theses and working papers, and others focus more on articles in international peer-reviewed journals.

Personal contact to key stakeholders is recognized by project managers as important. In addition, a project newsletter, bulletin, or up-date published every quarter or half-yearly and distributed to main stakeholders has been used by several projects. Some projects have email newsletters integrated with an Internet website. One project manager emphasized the importance of public relations and sent relevant stories or press releases to the Danish embassy, so that they could be used in the promotion of the SPS with whom the project collaborated.

Several projects had an explicit dissemination/publication strategy. Some projects emphasized the development of a publishing culture in the South institution rather than producing peer-reviewed articles for international journals. One project succeeded in establishing a publishing culture by establishing venues for publishing such as a local working paper series. This was combined with training in research methodology and scientific writing, individual supervision and coaching, and financial incentives. The project's PhD students had an outlet for working papers in an early stage of their studies, which thus provided a training opportunity and generated useful comments from other researchers. Ilsøe (2005:14) states that partners should discuss the use of results from the planning stage, establish training in skills needed for publication, and ensure that dissemination is reflected in the budget.

Publishing in peer-reviewed international journals is becoming increasingly important and most projects have an explicit strategy for achieving this aim. Such a strategy is typically directed towards PhD students and their supervisors and can involve procedures for ensuring project quality, research and data quality, scientific writing training, twinning with staff co-authors, and North-South PhD student twinning.

5.4.2 Administration

Findings/lessons learned

- The majority (70%) of ENRECA projects have developed management regulations and norms to clarify mutual expectations and support transparency.
 - It can be a challenge to implement administrative procedures, if this is not done from the beginning of the project execution.
 - Developing management regulations can be a learning opportunity for partnership participants.
 - Partners are relatively efficient in implementing agreed upon administrative requirements.
 - Establishment of an independent project office is often chosen to ensure administrative transparency, independence from individual interests, and observation of donor-defined administrative requirements.
 - Some projects have established independent financial management and bank accounts; other projects have integrated accounting, but maintain separate bank accounts; yet other projects have integrated financial management in the South institution's system.
 - The majority (67%) of ENRECA projects have elaborated descriptions of financial procedures.
-

Coming from different organisational cultures, the project partners may associate different performance with different administrative roles within a project. A way to establish a common perspective on roles and responsibilities is to jointly develop management regulations, e.g. regulations, job descriptions, and terms of references. This was done by 70% of the projects, of which 22% found that they did so to an inadequate degree only. 30% of the project managers did not find it necessary to develop management regulations (see Table 5.11). In one project, the partners developed project regulations in a joint workshop including South faculty members. Although a tedious endeavour, everybody had a say in the process and had a chance to hear the accompanying discussion, which touched upon issues regarding the project objective and purpose, Danida's policies and regulations, roles and responsibilities, authority, accountability, transparency, monitoring and follow-up, and ethical aspects of distribution of support among different participant groups. In this way, the exercise of developing the regulation became an important learning experience for both North and South partners.

The importance of establishing efficient administrative procedures from the beginning of the project execution was emphasized by a project manager:

"I think it is extremely important that you have some procedures that run automatically and independent of researchers who have little interest in, and limited qualifications to, manage it [the administrative part of the project]. A relatively straightforward setup, where you have defined what you want to know ... and

then implement it from the beginning. It is twenty times more difficult to get it up and running if you have already started.” [PM3]

According to Danish project managers, their South partners seem to be relatively efficient in following agreed upon administrative requirements, e.g. progress reports, financial management, and status reports. On a five-point scale from “to a low degree” (1) to “to a high degree” (5) the managers scored an average of 3.70. 87% of the project managers stated that their partners did so “to some degree” or higher (3-5).

5.4.2.1 Project administration and staffing

The survey and interviews have shown that ENRECA projects to various degrees have established project management units at their South partner institutions. Projects that chose to establish separate project administrations needed to obtain a broad range of administrative information and engage in many activities unknown to Danish participants, such as ensuring that taxes are paid, registration and license for project vehicles are obtained, bank accounts are opened, personnel is employed according to national rules and standards, that contracts observe legal requirements, that project staff receive an appropriate salary, and that health security is organized for project staff. Project managers emphasize that North partners should not underestimate this task. Becoming sufficiently acquainted with such administrative aspects may take much more effort than expected. Project managers recommend allocating sufficient time and resources during the start-up for getting such practicalities in place before engaging in actual project execution.

The staffing policies of ENRECA projects reflect the diversity of the projects. Some projects had Danish project managers staying at the South institution during one or more project phases. Typically, the management tasks were gradually handed over to the South partner and Danish presence reduced in the second or third phase. But only relying on short-term visits has also proven a challenge for partnerships:

“They [the South partner] have the expectation that there should have been more presence of somebody from Denmark. They disapprove that you just come rushing in and out. They don’t like it. They prefer having somebody there permanently.” [PM12]

Some projects have also employed professional project managers, i.e. non-researchers, to manage the administrative part of the project as part-time employees. This may relieve project researchers from non-research related tasks. This seems to be a constructive solution to the problem of researchers being unwillingly involved in tedious administrative duties. On the other hand, it was rarely a full-time position and flexible employees were needed.

Having qualified and experienced project employees or existing staff members involved in South administration is considered crucial by several project managers. The ability to withstand pressure from local university authorities is mentioned as an important qualification of South project staff. An example from a project manager working in Asia: *“I think it works fine that he [the South project coordinator] is not an employee from the institution. Then he can allow himself to stand up against the management and others with special demands.” [PM8].*

A project manager suggested that projects should look for administrative personnel who have been working for an aid agency or a similar organisation before. This will ease handling administrative procedures considerably as they already are acquainted with the standards and expectations that a North partners will have, e.g. in relation to annual progress reporting. One ENRECA project is part of a large research consortium where they have pooled resources with other projects and established a joint project office, where accountants and other administrative personnel are shared. Securing adequate administrative and management back-up in Denmark is also emphasized by project managers. Some have relied on existing department resources and others have hired part-time employees to support the project.

5.4.2.2 Financial management

Establishing efficient financial administration in both North and South is important for creating a satisfying partnership. The establishment of a professional administration seems to be highly prioritized by North partners. Often this has led to the establishment of independent administrative units and employment of “outsiders” as accountants. It is argued that the Danish PRP is financially responsible to the funding agency and needs to have a reliable system in place:

“When you establish an office it is primarily ... because you need to make sure that the economy runs separately. As a project manager you don’t dare let the economy become part of the central [South] administration. I wouldn’t do it. If so, you really should have a deep insight into how they run their systems.” [PM1]

Some projects are more integrated with existing financial administration in South, but typically with a structure parallel to the central university system.

83% of the project managers stated that their budget was formulated at a level of detail adequately facilitating ongoing co-ordination, control and follow-up (see Table 5.13). 83% stated that they have relied on an activity-based budget. The benefits of organising the project based on activities are emphasized by several project managers. It allows the project to delegate responsibility and distribute tasks to specific staff members or employees. It also supports reporting as milestones and outputs can be closely monitored and checked off when completed. Table 5.13 shows that 67% of the projects carry out periodical (monthly, quarterly or half-yearly) internal budget control, but 21% of these found it to be to an inadequate degree. 29% of the project managers found it unnecessary to do internal budget control.

Table 5.13: The application of financial management tools in ENRECA projects during the most recent project phase (n=24)

Answer Options	Yes, and to an adequate degree	Yes, but to an inadequate degree	No, but we should have done it	No, and I don't find it necessary
Was a budget formulated at a level of detail facilitating ongoing co-ordination, control and follow-up?	83%	8%	-	8%
Was the budget activity-based?	83%	8%	-	8%
Has a periodical (monthly, quarterly or half-yearly) internal financial/budget control been carried out?	46%	21%	4%	29%
Were descriptions of financial management procedures elaborated?	46%	21%	4%	29%

One project manager explained that the ENRECA project at the individual project research activity level paid to the researchers in advance up to 70% of the budgeted costs, but retained 30% until a provisional report was approved, thereby introducing an incentive for participants to finalize research activities. According to the project manager:

“It is a little contract research-like. This is often not very good research. So you need to include some space and flexibility for idea development and research. But you need to have the frame, otherwise things will derail.” [PM4]

Misunderstandings are particularly unacceptable in relation to financial management. 67% of the projects answer that they have elaborated descriptions of financial management processes. 46% found that this was done to an adequate degree, whereas 21% found it inadequately implemented. 4.2% had not elaborated such procedures, but found that they should have done so. 29% of the project managers found it unnecessary to describe financial procedures (see Table 5.13).

5.4.3 Ongoing leadership and management

Findings/lessons learned

- Very few ENRECA projects have applied formal project management.
 - Approximately half of the ENRECA projects have included training in project management as an element in institutional capacity building.
 - It can be a challenge to Danish project managers to identify the right balance between control and sharing responsibility.
 - It can be a challenge to get participants to take initiatives in a culture where it is not allowed to make mistakes.
 - Research activities are dynamic and uncertain project management need to be flexible..
 - It can be difficult for project managers to ensure time to reflect on their own management role and long-term development of the projects.
-

Discussing project management and leadership in a concrete and practical context, such as a joint partnership, may provide a legitimate opportunity to address principal features of professional administration and leadership – issues that might otherwise be somewhat difficult to address in a close collaboration. In some cases, project managers mention that practices in relation to planning, anchoring, and monitoring and evaluation used in ENRECA projects are internalized by the organisation and put into use in other activities. In this perspective, project management becomes an important vehicle of organisational capacity building, and should therefore be consciously addressed.

5.4.3.1 Project management frameworks and training

During recent decades project management has become professionalized and a number of organisations and institutions have developed frameworks or standards to support the task of managing projects. Often these standards are linked to a certification scheme for project managers, such as the Project Management Institute's Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMI 2004); the International Organization for Standardization's ISO 10006 Guidelines for quality management in projects; the International Project Management Association's IPMA Competence Baseline (ADPM 2005); and PRINCE2 (Projects in Controlled Environments) (OGC 2009). However, none of the ENRECA projects have relied on any of these systems. One project has used Microsoft Project (MS Project). Whereas the previously mentioned systems are comprehensive project management frameworks MS Project is a software programme useful for timing and scheduling activities and for maintaining an overview of resource input, budget and costs. Some ENRECA project managers argued that using such formal systems seems out of proportion in relation to this type of projects.

The survey showed that 52% of the projects did not include formal training in project management as part of the capacity building effort. In projects with South responsible parties and South project coordinators, formal project management training was received in 12% and 8% of the projects, respectively. South administrative staff received formal training in 24% of the projects. Danish responsible parties and project coordinators received formal training in respectively 8% and 20% of the projects. Of course, the capacity building achieved through "on-the-job-training" should not be underestimated, but projects can probably gain from establishing early on in the project life cycle a common understanding regarding good project management practices.

5.4.3.2 Leadership cultures

Leadership is not a well-defined concept and different cultures have different expectations to project managers. What constitutes a good leader highly depends on the expectations and perceptions of the followers. In RCB projects, leadership behaviour is also highly context dependent. Different kinds of

projects, different key individuals, different activities and different stages during the project cycle call for different kinds of leadership.

It can be challenging for a Danish project manager to choose the 'right' kind of leadership approach in a given stage of the project. In several interviews, project managers identified and discussed the dilemma of finding the right balance between maintaining control (as a consequence of being or representing the PRP) and sharing responsibility and decision power with South partners. Some projects have delegated much decision power to their South partners as illustrated in this quote:

"You can get them [your South partner] involved. First you tell them that it is their budget and that it is their own responsibility, and if they do not use the money this year it will not be transferred to next year. That increases the motivation tremendously. But they find it difficult, and they write every single time they have to take a decision to hear if I believe it's a good idea. Then I answer that it is their budget, and that they have the project description with its goals and outputs to guide them. They just have to use the money to achieve those objectives." [PM7]

Sharing decision power is not necessarily enough to obtain engagement. Decision power has to be linked with management capacity. An important leadership capacity is the willingness to address emerging problems. ENRECA project managers have experienced that their South partners apply different strategies to cope with emerging problems during the project implementation. Some stay inactive, maybe wishing that the problem might somehow disappear – and problems actually sometimes do. Some project managers are reactive and address problems when they appear. Finally, project managers may also be proactive and try to foresee potential problems and address them before they become too serious. The Danish ENRECA project managers perceived their South partners' general attitude in relation to managing upcoming problems to be inactive in 30%, reactive in 60%, and proactive in 10% of the projects. In general, the result is positive. ENRECA project managers argued that when their South management colleagues do not address up-coming problems it is often because they are afraid of doing something 'wrong'.

The importance of South partners demonstrating leadership is mentioned by several of the project managers who emphasized how their projects were facilitated by visionary South leaders. Maintaining an ongoing dialogue with the institute or department director, the dean, or the vice rector can be very helpful to the project, e.g. when problems have to be addressed. Project managers explain how the long time-horizon of ENRECA projects has allowed South leaders to use the collaboration as a basis for promoting their political career within the university. In several cases, the young PhD students educated in the beginning of the project later became leaders in their institutions.

Several ENRECA project managers recommended ensuring that the local responsible party is a leader at a sufficient high level and ENRECA evaluations have concluded that strong leadership is necessary for success (Ilsøe 2005:14). This is supported by project managers, who emphasize the importance of providing direction and maintaining momentum:

"Be focused and consistent about addressing the objective of the project at every given opportunity. It is crucial for the projects success that people knows where to go and why." [PM1]

But being too dependent on charismatic individuals can be a vulnerability, especially in combination with a weak organisational structure or when key participants show a lack of co-operation competencies. Strong personalities can also create challenges for the implementation of a project, especially if personal conflicts develop between North and South key participants. A project manager argued that the limited size of ENRECA projects and the associated dependency on highly motivated individuals also made the projects very vulnerable to the negative consequences of personal conflicts. In some cases, it may be necessary for the North partner to maintain an active role in decision making in the South to ensure that the overall project strategy is maintained:

"In case of changes in the partner institutions or when a "strong" local project manager tries to hinder outwards anchoring, it can be necessary to make a decision-making structure where decisions need to be approved by the North partner, even if this is in conflict with the ownership principle." [PM6]

In this case, North participants maintained a shared decision platform to balance power, not only North-South but also South-South, in a multi-participant setup.

Several project managers mentioned management flexibility as a key factor for successful implementation. Flexibility is important due to the dynamic nature of research and the uncertainties associated with the project environment. Partnerships are not static and expectations, relations, and plans change over time (Ilsøe 2005:13). A project manager suggests the following approach for steering the project:

"Make a framework that you can steer within ... the worst you can do [...] is to believe that you can control everything in any way. That's impossible. There are some levels [administrative and political] ... and when things are lifted to those levels you can just as well give up [...]." [PM4]

But being too flexible can also be problematic. Sticking to the agreed plan can provide a barrier to potential power struggles that otherwise might evolve if the project's scope is up for negotiation as explained by a project manager:

"We had the project document and we very much agreed that this was what we were going to do. ... and it was not questioned. This was what we agreed and the document said so. If you started to deviate from that, it would create problems. Then everything could come into play again." [PM8]

An aspect of the leadership task is to understand how to manoeuvre in a foreign organisational culture:

"It is important to realize the patterns of roles and responsibilities in the partner's institution. Some times it is preferable to prepare everything before showing it to the authorities [the dean] as he will then sign it and leave you with the responsibility. This gives you the "blame" position, but at the same time it may ease the project management." [PM8]

"The [faculty] leadership is appointed among the faculty staff, and they are returning to the floor after their term [as managers]. They don't dare to make radical changes. They don't dare to go after teachers who don't lecture. The leadership doesn't dare do anything about it – what might not happen to them once they get back to the floor again?" [PM8]

The quotes illustrate that partnerships are operating in a management culture that needs to be taken into consideration when designing the project's management approach.

Several Danish project managers have experienced that they very easily became fully occupied with the day-to-day management and were unable to engage in actual research during their stay at the South partner institution. As expressed by a project manager working in Asia: *"The work load of the project management was surprisingly high"*. The daily duties may also overshadow the more strategic thinking regarding which role to perform and what kind of leadership to exercise:

"... as it is now, most of the time is used on operations and administration. Little time is left for overall leadership where you try to get an overview of what would be the best to do or how our processes could be improved." [PM12]

In this situation, acting to get things moving becomes the priority rather than understanding what would make things move more easily next time. This may create a situation where opportunities for institution building and management coaching are missed.

5.4.4 Monitoring and control

Findings/lessons learned

- 75% of the ENRECA projects have developed an explicit monitoring plan. In 79% of the project, the partners had developed indicators together.
- 88% of the ENRECA projects monitor activities on a regular basis.
- Monitoring should relate to an institutional baseline study and include a few but fundamental performance indicators.
- Discussing performance indicators, monitoring plan and data collection as part of the project preparation or start-up can help partners focus on project objectives and adjust expectations.
- Using LFA matrix indicator monitoring is not sufficient for ongoing follow-up on activities.
- Some projects use a list of project activities for ongoing monitoring.
- It is a challenge to ensure that “softer” project outputs or effects such as, e.g. the work climate, the collaborative environment, participants’ expectations, perceived involvement, and engagement are also monitored.

Monitoring provides a means for knowing if the project is moving in the right direction. As expressed by a project manager: “*Monitoring makes you focus on the things that you have to do. It keeps you on track.*” [PM1]. As a minimum, projects are obliged to monitor progress related to stated objectives in connection with the annual progress report to Danida. But project management normally involves a continuous monitoring effort as explained in this answer from the survey:

“The question on internal evaluation [in the survey] implicitly assumed that the format of evaluation were formal evaluation sessions (as I read the question). We have not had such procedure. Instead we have continuously made evaluations through guidance of MSc/PhD students, guidance/review/inspection of field and laboratory work etc. as it is common in research training in Denmark also.” [Project manager in the survey]

This comment also illustrates the difference between *monitoring* and *evaluation*. Where evaluation is a more formal activity planned and executed at a certain point in time, monitoring, on the other hand, is an ongoing activity used as a basis for continuously “optimizing” the project execution.

Table 5.14: The inclusion of project monitoring tools in ENRECA projects’ most recent project phase (n=24)

Answer Options	Yes, and to an adequate degree	Yes, but to an inadequate degree	No, but we should have done it	No, and I don't find it necessary
During project preparation, was an explicit monitoring plan/procedure incorporated in the overall project plan (e.g. in terms of follow-up guidelines)?	50%	25%	13%	13%
Were indicators for monitoring developed together with your South partner(s)?	50%	29%	17%	4%
Were specific milestones defined and used for monitoring progress?	63%	17%	8%	13%
During project execution, was project monitoring carried out on a regular basis (with or without a plan)?	54%	33%	4%	8%

The monitoring system can help the partners ensure an adequate quality in the collaboration, both in terms of process and results. One ENRECA project was initiated with a one year start-up phase, where research activities were supposed to slowly become organized in the South institution. But for several reasons, few activities were initiated and valuable time was lost. If some kind of monitoring had been in place this might have been avoided or corrective action could have been taken much earlier. But project managers also argued that it is difficult to follow activities on a distance and that monitoring is highly dependent on good

communication and reporting practices. Having jointly developed indicators for monitoring can help focus attention on information and processes that facilitate the monitoring task. Table 5.14 shows that in 79% of the ENRECA projects the Danish partners developed indicators for monitoring together with their South partners. 17% did not do so, 8% wish they had, and 13% did not find it necessary to jointly develop indicators. 79% of the projects used milestones to monitor progress, and 88% had carried out monitoring on a regular basis (with or without a specific monitoring plan).

Establishing a baseline for monitoring project progress helps focus attention on what is considered to be important areas for improvement. The LFA, which is used by most ENRECA projects, requires that indicators for each output are formulated. But only relying on the LFA level planning may be problematic. Several project managers emphasized that the LFA has to be translated into a more operational short-term activity plan with a corresponding monitoring plan.

Monitoring tend to focus on measurable outputs. But some project aspects are not easy to monitor:

“‘Milestones’ for commitment and other ‘soft’ measures are difficult to incorporate in the project. An idea is to organize seminars where all participants are able to express their feelings, e.g. disappointments, good experiences, etc. To assess it numerically is however difficult. What indicator should be used?” [PM1]

Project managers also argue that although difficult to monitor, attention should also be paid to the ‘softer’ elements of the collaboration. South partners may do a significant in-kind contribution without this being paid much attention because it is not made explicit, contrary to project inputs reflected in the budget.

5.5 Project evaluation phase

Project *evaluation* can be defined as a period in the project process where overall assessment of project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact is made. Evaluations can be done both at the end of a project and during project implementation to optimize or re-orient the implementation.

Table 5.15: The use of internal and external evaluation results in ENRECA project management. Only projects where evaluation has taken place are included in the survey

Answer Options	To a low degree		To some degree		To a high degree		Rating Average	Stddev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)			
External evaluation (n=8)								
To what degree were results from external evaluation(s) considered in the planning of the following execution period?	25%	-	13%	13%	50%	3.63	1.77	
To what degree did the external evaluation result in an open dialogue between Danish and South partners?	13%	13%	25%	13%	38%	3.51	1.51	
Internal evaluation (n=15)								
To what degree have you in general considered the results from internal evaluations in the planning of the following project execution?	7%	7%	20%	27%	40%	3.87	1.25	
To what degree did internal evaluations result in an open dialogue about the project between Danish and South partners?	7%	7%	13%	13%	60%	4.13	1.30	

Different evaluation methodologies are used. A distinction can be made between *internal* and *external* evaluations. Internal evaluations are initiated and carried out by the project participants themselves. External evaluations can be initiated either by the project participants or by an external party (typically the funding agency), but are carried out by an external party, typically a team of consultants with an expert knowledge of RCB projects. In *bottom-up/participatory* evaluations the project participants play a role in defining criteria and indicators for the evaluation as well as in collecting and analysing data. In *top-down/expert-led* evaluations, criteria and indicators are defined beforehand by outsiders, and participants are not involved in data collection or analysis. A distinction is also made between *formative* and *summative* evaluation. Formative evaluation processes focus on participants' learning and improvement of the situation, whereas summative evaluation focuses on judging past performance.

5.5.1 External evaluation

Findings/lessons learned

- 36% of the ENRECA projects were externally evaluated.
 - Both bottom-up (50%) and top-down (75%) approaches were used in external evaluation.
 - Both formative (50%) and summative (88%) evaluations were used in external evaluation.
 - On average, ENRECA projects manage to a relatively high degree to take evaluation results into account in subsequent project planning and use results as a basis for a dialogue within the partnership.
-

Eight (36%) out of 23 ENRECA projects were subject to an external evaluation. Three projects were evaluated once, four were evaluated twice, and one was evaluated more than two times. In four (50%) of the projects, a bottom-up process was used, and in six (75%) projects a top-down approach was used. A formative evaluation was used in four (50%) of the external evaluations and a summative evaluation was used in seven projects (88%).

ENRECA projects have managed to a relatively high degree to integrate evaluation results in the subsequent planning period. An average score of 3.63 was given on a five-point scale (see Table 5.15). 50% of the projects stated that they did so "to a high degree", and 25% state that they did so "to a low degree" only.

External evaluations can provide a very useful basis for a dialogue between North and South partners. When asked to evaluate the degree to which an open dialogue had been achieved as a result of external evaluations, project managers scored an average of 3.51.

The ENRECA programme and several projects were subject to external evaluations. The resulting evaluation reports (MoFA 1992, 2000a, 2001) provide a useful source of inspiration for partnerships in the process of designing RCB projects.

5.5.2 Internal evaluation

Findings/lessons learned

- 70% of the ENRECA projects have had or have planned at least one internal evaluation during the last project phase.
- 26% of the projects had developed an explicit evaluation plan during the preparation phase.
- Only bottom-up approaches were planned or used in internal evaluation of ENRECA projects.
- Both formative (64%) and summative (43%) evaluations were planned or used in internal evaluation.
- In the majority of the cases where an internal evaluation was made, the partners had jointly developed the evaluation criteria and indicators.
- The majority of projects have had or have planned at least one annual internal evaluation – e.g. in connection with an annual project-wide workshop.

- Project management issues were addressed in the large majority of the internal project evaluations.
 - Some ENRECA projects have enhanced transparency and accountability by publishing a report, which systematize the concerns raised by project participants in internal evaluations, as well as the actions taken by the project to address each concern.
-

Sixteen (70%) out of 23 ENRECA projects have planned or have had an internal evaluation of the project. Six (26%) projects indicated that they have incorporated an explicit evaluation plan into the overall project plan. In one case, the Danish partner developed the evaluation criteria and indicators. In the five other cases the Danish and South partners developed the criteria and indicators in collaboration.

In three projects (13%), an evaluation was planned/implemented twice a year or more. In 11 projects (48%), one annual evaluation was planned/implemented, and in two projects (9%), an evaluation was planned/implemented once or twice during the project phase (a three to four year phase). Several projects mentioned that they had an internal evaluation in connection with an annual project workshop.

In nine (60%) out of 15 projects answering this question, a formative evaluation approach was used in the internal evaluations. In six projects (40%), a summative evaluation was used. One project combined the two approaches. Internal evaluations were 100% based on bottom-up participatory processes, but one project indicated that a top-down approach was also used.

ENRECA projects who have carried out an internal evaluation have to a relatively high degree taken into consideration the evaluation results in the planning of the subsequent project execution (see Table 5.15). When asked to evaluate the degree of subsequent use on a five-point scale, an average score of 3.87 was given. Six projects (40%) stated that they did so “to a high degree”.

Project managers have experienced that internal evaluation can provide a unique opportunity to address the experiences – including the ‘softer’ experiences – that partners had with project management. Project management issues were addressed in 80% of the internal evaluations. One way to do so is by organising an evaluation workshop with the participation of project participants and stakeholders. In one project, a mid-term evaluation was held as a 2-day workshop and the result documented in a report:

“We had this mid-term evaluation. We held a workshop and wrote the result into a report, which became very popular reading. We got really good responses. Many issues surfaced, where participants were a little unsatisfied about something which was then noted in the report. Some of the things had never been within the objectives of the project. Some of the things we could accommodate. Some things we could not change and then we explained why. People were in general quite satisfied with the approach.” [PM8]

Project managers argue that documenting the concerns raised in an evaluation and thereby facilitating that they are subsequently addressed is a way of improving project management transparency and accountability. Internal evaluations also provide a useful basis for a dialogue between North and South partners. When asked to evaluate the degree to which an open dialogue had been achieved as a result of internal evaluations, project managers scored an average of 4.13 (see Table 5.15) The survey showed that compared to external evaluations internal evaluations seem to result in a more open dialogue between the partners..

5.6 Project closure phase

In this section, aspects related to the final stage of the project are first addressed and then followed by more general discussion of aspects concerning project sustainability and long-term impact.

5.6.1 Closing the project

Findings/lessons learned

- ENRECA projects have been relatively good at jointly assessing project results and verifying stakeholders' expectations.
- Participants in ENRECA projects have to some extent reflected on and documented project management learning from their projects.
- During the final stage of the project ENRECA projects have been relatively good at transferring new ideas and solutions developed during the project to the relevant stakeholders.
- ENRECA projects have benefited from a low-intensity and prolonged closure phase allowing activities to be completed and followed through.

Table 5.16: Typical project closure activities and their degree of implementation in ENRECA projects (n=11)

Answer Options	To a low degree		To some degree		To a high degree		Don't know	Rating Average	Stdev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)				
Have project results been jointly assessed by you and your South partner(s)?	-	18%	18%	18%	36%	9%	3.80	1.23	
Has it been verified that project results corresponded with stakeholders' expectations?	-	27%	-	18%	27%	27%	3.63	1.41	
Has reflection on project management learning during the project been facilitated?	-	36%	18%	18%	18%	9%	3.20	1.23	
Have the management experiences gained by your project been documented?	9%	36%	9%	9%	18%	18%	2.89	1.45	
Has your project facilitated that new ideas and solutions developed during the project have been adequately transferred to relevant stakeholders and participants?	-	18%	-	27%	36%	18%	4.00	1.22	

The results in this section are based on answers from 11 ENRECA project managers whose projects have finished and thus gone through a closure phase. Table 5.16 shows that ENRECA partners to a relatively high degree jointly assessed project results. On a five-point scale from “to a low degree” (1) to “to a high degree” (5), project managers scored this aspect at an average of 3.80.

In general, ENRECA partners also verified if project results corresponded with the expectations of the stakeholders. On the five-point scale, project managers scored this aspect at an average of 3.63. Project managers argue that considering the long time-horizon of ENRECA projects, verifying expectations and assessing results should be seen as a phase-related activity in order to allow projects participants to adjust their effort progressively as the project develops.

The survey also addressed the degree to which the ENRECA projects had facilitated participants in reflecting on project management learning during the project. The question was rated at an average score of 3.20. When asked if project management experiences gained have been documented, the average score is 2.89. The answers are almost equally distributed throughout the five-point scale (see Table 5.16) disclosing a significant variation between projects.

Some projects have published their experiences, e.g. see Gårdhøje et al. (2006), Nyamongo and Aagaard-Hansen (2006), and Johnson et al. (2009). Writing about management experiences is recommended by project managers as a good way of supporting the partners' reflection – especially if the writing is done in collaboration between North and South participants. Danida's annual progress report format requires the partners to reflect on “Lessons learned”.

During the final phase of the project, novel ideas and solutions developed during the project life cycle should be adequately transferred to the relevant stakeholders for future use. According to the project managers, ENRECA projects are relatively good at doing so, with an average score of 4.00 (see Table 5.16). In several cases, partners in an ENRECA project have continued collaboration in new projects, thus carrying with them ideas and best practices.

The most preferable closing strategy was discussed with project managers in the interviews. One project manager recommends a bell-shaped project cycle where start-up and closure phases are prolonged relatively low-intensity periods.

“The final reporting is difficult to do. Especially if you think you can close down and put a full stop at the last day in the official project period. Some things are not ready by the deadline. Other things just continue to come later on. Things just take time. If you draw out the closure, keep a low financial intensity, and pick up things, then I think it will benefit project management.” [PM7]

It seems that, facilitated by Danida’s flexibility, many projects have in practice experienced such a period of low intensity as projects have been extended up to one year to finalize pending activities.

5.6.2 Project sustainability

Findings/lessons learned

- All surveyed ENRECA projects have formulated a strategy for sustainability and a majority of the projects have done so from the first application.
 - Inclusion of South partners in research networks is considered the most important strategy for sustainability by ENRECA project managers.
 - High quality research output is by project managers considered the primary key to inclusion in the international research community and an important way to attract other projects as South partner becomes internationally known.
 - ENRECA projects have developed field research infrastructure and related databases as a way to attract future funding for South partners.
 - Enhancing South partners’ institutional setting as a strategy for sustainability has received little attention in ENRECA partnerships.
-

Project *sustainability* is concerned with the ability of the project to achieve a long-term impact. 23 out of 24 ENRECA projects had formulated a strategy for sustainability. 61% did so as part of the initial (phase 1) project application; 17% formulated the strategy as part an intermediate phase (phase 2 or 3); and 22% did so as part of the final phase application or during the implementation of the final phase. In Table 5.17, the most common sustainability strategies are listed in order of importance according to the Danish ENRECA project managers.

Project managers’ answers can be grouped into four major categories: 1) inclusion of South partners in research networks; 2) South partner’s ability to develop new projects enhanced; 3) North and South partners seeking to continue collaboration; and 4) enhancing South partners institutional setting.

Table 5.17: Sustainability strategies and the degree to which they are relied on by ENRECA project managers in their project's strategy for sustainability (n=24)

Answer Options	To a low degree		To some degree		To a high degree		Rating Average	Stdev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)			
Q1. Support your South partner's inclusion in international research networks	4%	4%	13%	26%	52%	4.21	0.93	
Q2. Support your South partner's inclusion in national research networks	4%	9%	17%	35%	35%	3.88	1.08	
Q3. Develop your South partner's ability to develop project proposals	9%	4%	30%	22%	35%	3.79	1.10	
Q4. Seek other funding for continuing your partnership	13%	13%	17%	30%	26%	3.58	1.28	
Q5. Develop your South partner's fund seeking capacity	13%	17%	9%	26%	35%	3.58	1.35	
Q6. Support improvement of your partner(s) public image, e.g. through a website or publications	4%	17%	30%	22%	26%	3.54	1.06	
Q7. You and your partner(s) aim to engage in common long-term arrangements after the ENRECA project has finished	13%	9%	17%	30%	30%	3.54	1.35	
Q8. Objectives of each project phase are reached before the closure of the phase	17%	13%	35%	9%	26%	3.13	1.39	
Q9. Integrate your project management into existing organisational structures at your South partner's institution	30%	4%	30%	4%	30%	3.00	1.59	
Q10. Support development of your South partner's institutional strategies and policies	17%	17%	43%	4%	17%	2.83	1.31	
Q11. Stepwise reduce your South partner's budget frame during the final phase	30%	17%	26%	17%	9%	2.58	1.32	
Q12. Enhance development of your South partner's administrative procedures	39%	17%	26%	13%	4%	2.29	1.23	

Table 5.17 shows that the inclusion of South partners in national and international research networks is considered by project managers to be the most important contribution to project sustainability (Q1 and Q2). Inclusion in networks was supported in many ways, e.g. by enrolling South PhD students in Danish universities; funding of PhD students', researchers' and Master students' participation in international courses, seminars, and conferences; providing grants for South scholars to visit universities and other institutions; and funding national or regional meetings, seminars, and conferences bringing South researchers together. Some project managers argue that facilitating South-South research collaboration is an important means of creating networks. Establishing cross-institutional or departmental research units is a strategy applied in several projects, e.g. an ENRECA project aimed at creating a research centre with the participation of 2-3 national institutions. The project manager considered the creation of the centre an important motivational factor for the South participants since it would provide unique business opportunities in the future. Another strategy is to establish large-scale field study infrastructure and databases as a means for attracting other projects:

"What we do is a kind of a platform. It will be tremendously attractive for people from the outside, especially international institutions, etc. ... everybody knows that establishing field studies is so resource demanding – logistics and set-up, etc. ... The aim is to establish the platform, and little by little have other institutions come in with other resources and funds." [PM4]

Emphasizing that South partners publish internationally is another way to support their integration into international networks. Ensuring quality research and demonstrating results is mentioned by several project managers as important. As expressed by a project manager:

“Our quality parameters [for evaluating PhD and Masters projects] are exactly the same as for our Danish colleagues. It is the same impact factors that we use. That is the best for everybody. It is important that they [the South partners] are seen. It is obvious that if a big American institution approaches them, it is because they have been publishing something of high quality.” [PM4]

Closely linked to the networking effort is the support for public relations (Q6).

Ensuring that the South researchers or institutions have the skills and reputation necessary for attracting external post-project funding is emphasized as a realistic measure of sustainability (Ilsøe 2005:15). The survey showed that this is also an important part of ENRECA projects' sustainability strategies (Q3 and Q5). Providing training and support for writing project proposals and applications as well as developing partners fund seeking capacity are elements of most projects. Small research grants for South researchers with well defined application procedures and evaluation formats are used by several projects. Such small-scale projects provide an opportunity for practising application writing in a meaningful context.

One of the aspirations of Danida's twinning approach is that collaboration should continue after the ENRECA project has finished, and opting for joint long-term arrangements after the ENRECA project is a strategy pursued by several projects (Q4 and Q7), generally with success. Being conscious about developing opportunities for continued collaboration during the project is mentioned as important:

“Make a ‘rolling’ planning by starting up new projects while phasing old ones out. The partners for the new projects can be partly enrolled in the old projects to create trustful relations.” [PM7]

The long-term engagement is stressed as an important factor for facilitating continuation of collaboration after the ENRECA project has ended. Project managers mention the importance of having established personal and trustful relations with decision makers in South universities. Such relations facilitate ongoing collaboration significantly. Especially the personal relations established with South PhD students are emphasized as an important platform for future collaboration.

Strategies directly related to project management, such as ensuring that objectives are reached for each project phase (Q8) and slowly phasing out the financial support (Q11), are ranked relatively lowly by project managers. Enhancing South partners' institutional setting as a means of securing project sustainability obtained the lowest priority (Q9, Q10, and Q12).

Some important sustainability issues relate to South organisational changes that may take a substantial time to achieve. An often mentioned theme is the conflicts between teaching and research, and consulting and research. Traditionally, research plays a very limited role for most South universities. Several of the project managers argued that the most important contribution from their ENRECA project was to support the development of a new vision of the university as a research-based institution. While this is of course not an easy task and it takes time to change mental models, organisational cultures, and incentive structures, it is not impossible. At a South university the vice chancellor promised one extra month salary for researchers that managed to publish an internationally peer-reviewed article. As this started to become too expensive, it was changed into 60 hours of exemption from teaching obligations. This experience is contrary to those of many other ENRECA projects, where incentive structures have been difficult to influence.

5.7 Project management at the university, faculty, and department level

Findings/lessons learned

- Many Danish ENRECA partners have obtained adequate support by university institutes, departments and faculties
- Some projects have experience difficulties in terms of poor administrative systems and lack of project type knowledge among administrative staff.
- Some project managers have lacked organisational backing and request universities to develop relevant strategies and to enhance the general awareness and recognition of the special characteristics of the RCB projects.
- In general, project managers do not see a great need for developing project management competencies at department level.
- A platform for exchanging RCB project experiences is requested by project managers.
- The ENRECA projects are only to a limited degree evaluated by their departments in order to learn from their experiences.
- In general, project managers to some degree support each other by sharing their management experiences.

Table 5.18: ENRECA project managers' opinions regarding department-level project management competencies and processes (n=23)

Answer Options	To a low degree		To some degree		To a high degree		Don't know	Rating Average	Stdev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)				
Do you feel that there is a general need for improving project management competences at your Danish department/institute?	30%	4%	30%	13%	13%	9%	2.71	1.45	
In relation to your project, has your Danish department/institute taken any specific initiatives in order to evaluate your project execution and learn from your experiences?	65%	22%	13%	-	-	-	1.48	0.73	
Is it your impression that project managers within your Danish department/institute support each other by sharing their project management experiences?	17%	9%	43%	-	26%	4%	3.09	1.41	

A RCB project is developed and implemented in an organisational context and the associated project management is integrated into and influenced by the broader organisational setting. In this section, the issue of how Danish partners' project management practices have been supported by their home institutions is discussed.

Several project managers mention that they have obtained good administrative support at the department and/or faculty level. But some also express frustration regarding the administrative support provided. The following comment in the ENRECA survey shows that project management in RCB projects needs to be seen in a broader context:

"Well, the financial management system is hopeless. There is weak backup in the administration to solve problems because staff is overloaded and stressed. It caused severe problems to planning that bookkeeping was messy (although it was in the end sorted out), and that there are no tools for project administrators to have real time data on expenditure – highly unprofessional. It was only overcome through a personal investment of many man hours in doing accounting and parallel bookkeeping, a service that should have been provided by the administration at department and central level. Accounting clerks are not trained or qualified to see through accounts from partners in other currencies and in English. But as usual in most respects, academic university staff survive by doing almost

everything themselves. However, a professionalized administration and awareness of the nature of North-South Projects would greatly facilitate implementation and stimulate the motivation among academics to apply for these projects. As it is, you think twice because it is a lot of work.” [Project manager in survey]

The quote clearly illustrates the importance of projects being professionally backed by adequately designed administrative systems and well-trained personnel.

Several of the researchers requested that their university plays a more active role in supporting project preparation and argued that if the university aims at having RCB projects in its portfolio, then it should also recognize the special needs associated with this kind of projects:

“It is naive of the University to think that it can obtain funding from a source like Danida, with the kind of criteria they have; with its project orientation; and with its development angle. And then just leave it all to the individual researcher. Most other organisations or a company would say: Okay, that’s something the researchers do not know, so let’s give them some support if we want this type of projects.” [PM7]

Some project managers associated the lack of support with the absence of clear overall strategies and awareness of what RCB requires from the involved researchers, and called for the departments to play a more active role by anchoring projects better. As expressed by a project manager: *“[The department should help] clarify what kind of support I can count on, e.g. accounting, secretarial, equipment, and commitment from faculty.” [PM13].*

The role of the Danish universities in enhancing employees’ project management capacity was also addressed by project managers. In general, ENRECA project managers do to some degree recognize a need for improving project management competencies at the department level¹⁶. On a five-point scale from “to a low degree” (1) to “to a high degree” (5) project managers score this question at an average of 2.71, but with significant differences indicated by a standard deviation of 1.45 (see Table 5.18).

Focusing on the project-department interaction, project managers were asked if, in relation to their own project, the department/institute had taken initiative to evaluate the project execution and learn from their experiences. This question was rated at an average of 1.48, with 65% of the answers in the “to a low degree” category. In the survey and interviews, several project managers requested coordinated initiatives to facilitate exchange of experiences between project participants involved in North-South capacity building.

RCB projects integrate the management of two different types of activities: Research and capacity building. Some project managers argued that the two activities require very different approaches. Research is perceived as an open-ended uncertain endeavour, where too much management can suppress creativity and flexibility and result in sub-optimal results. Capacity building, on the other hand, is more predictable and can better be planned and monitored through traditional project management tools such as the LFA. During several interviews, the feasibility of separating the two elements was discussed. Some project managers suggested considering partnerships between universities and consulting firms to enhance the capacity building part of the projects. On the other hand, it was also emphasized that the linkage between the two activities over a long time-horizon is very important:

“A consulting firm is very good at getting in, building the bridge, and getting out again. ... For us [the RCB project] it is important to be able to link capacity building and research, and make the long haul and prosper from the mutual trust and collaboration established through the partnership. But if you are in a situation where the capacity building requires the major part of the project management effort, then you

¹⁶ It should be mentioned that most of the survey respondents are senior staff with considerable experience in project management and North-South collaboration.

should be able to delegate this to some people who like to do it, so that the researchers are allowed to research.” [PM7]

Project managers recommend that RCB projects obtain faculty or department level support to make more efficient standard project tasks such information collection for application development, project reporting, bookkeeping, and accounting since this can help reduce the non-research activities that burden many researchers being project managers. On the other hand, it is emphasized by several managers that their South partners will probably not perceive the collaboration as being taken seriously by the Danish partner, if the project is not managed by an experienced researcher holding a PhD degree.

When survey respondents were asked if it is their impression that Danish project managers support each other by sharing their management experiences, an average score of 3.09 was given. Table 5.18 shows that the answers are very scattered with a standard deviation of 1.41. 26% answers “to a high degree”, which implies that this is a common practice in some research environments. Some project managers recommend that exchange of experiences is formalized more. But it is also recognized that it is not a subject high on the institutional agenda at Danish universities. A project manager expresses it this way:

“If you were in a place where project management in itself had a value, then it would be something you discussed over lunch. ... Here it is just something that you need to get over and done with. It is not valued. ... It becomes an isolated activity that always gets in the way.” [PM12]

5.8 Donor relations

Findings/lessons learned

- The initiative grant has been an important tool to develop partnerships, even when proposals are not funded by Danida.
 - Both Danida and DFC personnel are considered very service-minded.
 - Some project managers are missing a professional research-orientated dialogue with Danida.
 - Mechanisms for sharing project-level experiences are requested, e.g. introduction to new FFU grant applicants on the nature of development research and the special requirements associated with it. Also a better exchange of experiences between existing projects is needed, e.g. by sharing annual progress reports among projects.
 - Danida's/DFC's application guidelines and administrative procedures are considered reasonable “to some degree”. Maintaining flexibility, simplicity and avoiding creating a “consultant-approach” is stressed by project managers.
 - Some uncertainty about project selection criteria exists. Project managers requested that FFU make more explicit the meaning of “institutional capacity building” in terms of what success criteria are used and how they are prioritized.
 - The long time-frame and administrative flexibility associated with the ENRECA projects are considered crucial for achieving developmental impact.
 - The enrolment of South PhD students at the Danish universities is a major incentive for participating Danish researchers, and project managers stressed that this option should be maintained in the future.
-

Table 5.19: ENRECA project managers' perceptions of their collaboration with Danida and Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC) (n=23)

Answer Options	To a low degree		To some degree		To a high degree		Rating Average	Stdev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)			
Danida's/DFC's application guidelines are user-friendly	13%	17%	39%	22%	9%	2.96	1.15	
Danida's administrative requirements are reasonable	22%	17%	30%	22%	9%	2.78	1.28	
Danida's project selection criteria are transparent	26%	13%	39%	13%	9%	2.65	1.27	
It is easy to engage in a dialogue with the local Danish Embassy and sector programme support staff	13%	17%	39%	22%	9%	2.70	1.40	

Management of RCB projects not only depends on project-level management and the collaboration with the university management and administration, it is also depends on the interaction with the funding agency and the grant administration – in this case Danida, FFU and the Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC). The ENRECA survey also addressed ENRECA projects' interaction with these players.

As mentioned, the importance of initiative grants was emphasized by several project managers. They have provided an important basis for developing collaboration prior to the project application. Some project managers mentioned that FFU should offer more initiative grants to allow researchers to test potential partnerships. It may result in a larger number of potential projects and although these projects cannot all be financed, contacts have been established between North and South that might later develop into partnership collaboration in other ways.

Project managers argued that the present FFU application procedures may reinforce a supply-driven approach to project definition/formulation. Considering the competitive nature of the application process, an ambitious and well conceived (at least on the paper) research design seems to be required already for the initiative grant application. Some applicants have experienced to have their applications for initiative grants rejected due to a lack of scientific rigour.

In general, respondents and interviewees found both Danida and DFC supportive and service-minded. Project managers emphasized that at the employees are very helpful. Some projects have had a direct contact and ongoing dialogue with advisors in Danida, with whom they could discuss project contents. On the other hand, some experienced the ENRECA administration as understaffed and thus (probably due to lack of time) exhibiting a decreased interest in the research element in the projects. This is considered a loss by project managers, who had appreciated the professional dialogues they had previously been able to have with Danida's ENRECA staff.

Several project managers argued that the different prevailing organizational cultures and objectives of the two systems – Danida and the universities – can sometime create communication problems, as illustrated in the following survey response:

"The difference in culture of the two environments (Ministry and university) causes constant misunderstandings, mal-interpretation, and wrong expectations. For an academic person it takes years to read or understand messages from the ministry – and it is possible only if you have some extra background knowledge – otherwise you will misinterpret and be subject to misinterpretation for sure. ... The major problem is completely different concepts, background and terminology used in the Ministry and the university." [Project manager in survey]

The concept of upwards anchoring includes the collaboration with the funding agency. One question raised by project managers was whether this needs to be a project level responsibility only. An enhanced administrative support at the faculty or university level might be a means of facilitating the interaction

between researchers and Danida. A project manager pointed out the fact that a university can develop a competitive advantage by having its researchers focus on what they are good at doing and transferring some of the administrative burden to the central level.

The cultural difference can also be seen in what some researchers identified as the dilemma between the “consultant-approach” and the “researcher-approach”. They feel that Danida’s requirements are moving more and more towards a consultant-approach risking that the interest-based motivation for doing RCB projects may suffer:

“These ENRECA projects have to a high degree been driven by the researchers’ interest in doing research. All this about budgets, bottom lines, and this kind of things ... we don’t see the projects as a business opportunity ... we see it as an opportunity to do research. That’s the big, big difference. In all the ENRECA projects that I know, they do it because it is professionally exciting, and this driver and the motivation does not appear anywhere in the calculation. They make all these things that are very difficult and draw in the other direction. It assumes that you have a business culture where you invest a certain amount in developing ideas of which a percentage will then succeed, so that you can earn your money. This is the dilemma that I wish to disclose. It’s a lot about project management and those kinds of things. It is as if they [Danida] imagine that the universities have some things that they do not have.” [PM7]

In the survey respondents were asked if they find Danida’s/DFC’s application guidelines user-friendly. Project managers assessed the degree of user-friendliness at an average score of 2.96 (see Table 5.19). Project managers were also asked what they would suggest Danida and DFC to do in order to make the project application and monitoring process more efficient. Changes in procedures are in general not appreciated, and administrative procedures should be kept simple and to a minimum. A project manager suggested that Danida in the application process clarifies what development research implies and what the special requirements are:

“When you actually call it ‘development research’ – and you can get the money from Danida – then you should have first in the call a short preamble about the conditions for doing research in development countries, and that you can not do research without some kind of linkage to the development process and cultural collaboration.” [PM7]

When asked if they find Danida’s administrative requirements reasonable, project managers gave an average score of 2.78.

When asked if they find Danida’s selection criteria transparent, an average score of 2.65 (see Table 5.19) was given. Some project managers argued that FFU is unclear regarding its expectations in relation to the scope of capacity building and the prioritization between research and institutional capacity building. A project manager expressed the problem in this way:

“... I think there is a built-in problem in FFU’s new grant policy ... Focus is on research output and of course [developmental] relevance, but I have difficulties seeing how the broad capacity building will be weighted. One of the things that we have often said is that Danida’s guidelines are vague. We have had to define our own success criteria ... If they really want the institutional dimension, what is it then? And how is it weighted?” [PM4]

It also seems that quite different interpretations have existed regarding how significant the role of the institutional capacity building aspect of ENRECA project should be. This can be seen in the very broad range of project types represented in the ENRECA programme where some projects are engaged in a range of organisational change processes and others are almost only focusing on educating South PhDs.

Several project managers call for a broader inter-project exchange of experiences among FFU funded RCB projects:

“Knowledge sharing seminars about RCB for the new project managers would be good. What is the complexity like? These seminars would be even more important in the new Danida setup [with larger projects], as people with limited experiences from ENRECA will be responsible for the project management.” [PM7]

Project managers suggested that experiences from earlier projects are made available to new applicants, e.g. by circulating annual and phase reports between projects. Some project managers also argued that better support in the project preparation phase will lead to better project proposals, and that many researchers probably use a lot of energy on sub-optimal proposals since the information needed is not readily accessible. Moreover, project managers called for guidelines on practical matters such as local housing costs, insurance costs, etc., could be useful since such information is found to be difficult to obtain.

The general preparation of project participants was also addressed:

“When Danida do other types of projects, the experts and expatriates are all required to take courses to have some basic humility to other cultures, language and understanding of the political system. But we, the researchers, we believe that we can do everything, so we don’t need that kind of thing I believe that we should be more humble towards the challenges of working in a foreign country.” [PM7]

Another topic discussed was the size and the time-horizon of the future projects. The long time-frame for ENRECA projects is mentioned again and again as one of the most important elements in developing good partnerships. One project manager expresses it this way:

“It is important to have enough time to create trust and mutual understanding of the project and the way we work in the different cultures.” [PM6]

“Our overall impression has been positive or very positive. Our main lesson is that for developing a research culture in both North and South, a long involvement with the same partners and research questions and study areas is necessary.” [Project manager in survey]

There is a unanimous agreement among Danish project participants that the long-time perspective is imperative in order to fully develop the opportunities in RCB projects. Several project managers emphasize that a nine to twelve year time horizon is needed, if the focus is to build a research environment with some critical mass. As explained by a project manager: *“This allows the projects to initiate with the training of Master students, who later continue with a PhD and finalize with some years as Post Doc.” [PM7]*. Project managers also argued that the long-time perspective allows for establishing personal relations as well as seeking out the most promising students. A long-term relation also improves the research quality:

“... an important aspect of the long-time perspective is that you can find new research questions, which are growing out of the previous research. You can more specifically target something that is scientifically interesting as well as interesting in the local context. And practical ... political issues that are emerging, etc. You get a lot of things for free, or at least cheaper, if you have the long-time perspective.” [PM5]

Some project participants argued that smaller but longer project can be just as successful in achieving institutional change as larger projects. Institutional changes take time. It is also argued that the three-to-four-year project phases provide a certain dynamic, but they can also be problematic, if projects are asked to plan as if they might be stopped after each phase. This can easily result in a shift in priorities towards more short-term outputs, rather than a long-term commitment to support institutional change in the South.

The 2009 FFU call for proposals mentioned that PhD students should if possible be enrolled and trained in South universities. Interviewees argued that if PhDs are not trained in Denmark an important part of the motivation for Danish university staff to participate in RCB projects will disappear. Moreover, it was also stressed that Danish projects will not be able to attract the best candidates, since these often have the

option of choosing a scholarship at a prestigious American or European university. Some researchers foresee that the PhD students will, in general, be of a lower quality in the future due to this policy.

6 Conclusion

6.1 *Pre-project phase*

According to ENRECA project managers, characteristics of the initial process of establishing a RCB partnership (e.g. whether the project is initiated through personal or institutional contacts, whether the project is top-down or bottom-up initiated, or whether an adequate anchorage with high-level decision makers is ensured) will influence the subsequent project management needs. Different processes will influence the level of institutional and individual ownership and commitment, and thus affect project implementation.

Deciding on project partners can be difficult if no experience exists from previous collaboration, and participants should be careful not to commit themselves too quickly to new partners. Rather, partners should allocate the time needed to identify the right partners and develop a sound basis for the partnership, including establishment of personal relations and twinning of individual researchers with matching objectives, ambitions, and interests. ENRECA project participants have often had time to develop their relations prior to the project and the FFU initiative grant has played an important role in allowing participants to do so.

ENRECA projects have experienced that it can be difficult to be realistic when defining project objectives. Partners may have different interests, an issue which needs to be openly addressed. It is also important to address the implications of a chosen project focus (balance between research collaboration and capacity building) and intervention level (balance between organisation-level and individual-level activities) to avoid misunderstandings and disappointments. The project's scope needs to be thoroughly discussed, clearly defined and agreed upon, and subsequently reflected in the project design.

Most ENRECA projects have foreseen that project management would be relatively complex and this has to some extent influenced the project design, mainly in relation to administrative procedures and project organisation. Among other things, the project design should support the project idea, e.g. whether the project output or process orientated; whether it focus on individual research or institutional capacity building; and the degree of interdisciplinary research desired. Particularly, designing multi- and interdisciplinary projects constitutes a challenge, and such projects can benefit from designing activities to facilitate collaboration across disciplines and among individual participants. The project design is not static, but should be revised and adjusted as relations and capacities evolve throughout the project life cycle.

An important strategic project management issue to be considered by ENRECA projects is whether to establish parallel administrative structures or integrate the project administration with the existing South organisation. In principle, it is recommended to avoid creating parallel administrative structures, and organizational integration can be a cost-efficient solution that limits transaction costs and supports South capacity building and project sustainability. On the other hand, project managers argue that an independent project administration can in some cases be the best solution in order to ensure compliance with Danida requirements. But some project managers have also experienced that an independent project organisation run the risk of becoming an isolated "project island" unable to support the intended broader collaboration between North and South researchers.

The staffing policy constitutes another important strategic management issue. Having a Danish coordinator working for an extended period at the South institution can provide a range of benefits, e.g. learning about the South organisation and culture, getting to know partners better, and support implementation. But also some disadvantages have been identified, e.g. that South partners may have difficulties assuming real

responsibility. Being involved in daily activities in the South institution can also overwhelm a North project manager with administrative tasks at the expense of research activities.

Ensuring a balanced partnership is considered important, but the risk of asymmetric relations always exists, e.g. due to differences in organisational cultures, individual attitudes, and resources. A balanced partnership can be supported by ensuring that both partners contribute with resources (financial and/or in-kind) to create a genuine sense of ownership in both North and South, but at the same time it must be recognized that South institutions may for many reasons face difficulties in living up to initially agreed contributions.

Understanding the incentive structures influencing both North and South partners is crucial. In general, ENRECA projects have been good at matching individual participants' and the project's objectives and the involvement of South PhD students and Danish project participants have been high. However, the involvement of South research staff has often been more challenging. In some cases, involving South staff has been difficult since projects often lack the opportunity to directly employ researcher or top up their salaries. Involvement is also affected by South institutions' management practices and organisational politics, and obtaining a basic understanding of the South partner's organisational processes can be important in order to design project management processes that optimize the involvement of both partners.

6.2 Project preparation phase

Project anchoring is recognized by project managers as an important aspect of project preparation. Typical anchoring efforts include: Considering the perspective of the donor and their motivation for providing funding in the project design; alignment of project objectives with South national and institutional strategies; and alignment with South university research strategies and administrative procedures. Both North and South project managers can benefit from having support from influential university leaders. Such support may be obtained by involving upper level university management in a steering committee, although ENRECA project experiences with steering committees are mixed.

ENRECA projects have to some degree been successful in ensuring outwards anchoring to project stakeholders, other sector-level institutions, and resource persons and institutions. Many ENRECA projects had very positive experiences from collaborating with Danish SPS, which provided insight into local conditions, and contact to potential collaborators and resource persons.

The physical distance between the partners and the loose linkages that many participants have to ENRECA project activities pose a management challenge, but ENRECA projects have been relatively successful in ensuring effective collaboration between project team members. Building personal relations and regular visits to the South institution are considered important to facilitate mutual understanding and effective project implementation. Anchoring inwards in order to assure effective team collaboration involves careful consideration of incentive structures and mechanisms for creating ownership.

Project analysis contributes to the understanding of the national and organisational culture in which a project is to be implemented, and can be crucial to develop an appropriate project design and project management strategy. Partners can benefit from making explicit, and discussing in a respectful and inquiring manner, the experienced differences in project management approaches, e.g. by using an experienced colleague knowledgeable of the specific project context and different North and South cultures as a process facilitator.

Creating an overview of existing norms, rules, and procedures at the South institution can provide important input for decisions on project design and management strategies – especially if the project focuses on institutional capacity building. An analysis can include cultural aspects, structural aspects, and

procedural aspects. A qualitative and quantitative needs assessment can be relatively easy to perform, and can provide partners with essential information for project planning and a useful baseline for progress monitoring. The majority of ENRECA projects have performed an analysis of challenges/problems to be addressed, and the analysis is considered very important. Less than half of the ENRECA projects conducted a stakeholder analysis and only few ENRECA projects have conducted a gender analysis, but both types of analysis are considered relatively important. Project managers recommend that project participants develop a mutual understanding of the stakeholder concept, as well as of the benefits and disadvantages from involving different stakeholders in project activities. Several projects have conducted a risk analysis and the analysis is considered relatively important. The majority of the ENRECA projects have addressed risk management proactively, although not all have used explicit procedures.

Project master planning involves establishing a shared understanding of project objectives and implementation processes, which is considered crucial for project success. ENRECA projects have been relatively good at doing so, but project managers also emphasized that it is easy to become overly ambitious and participants should carefully evaluate the realism of the objectives and approaches used in the implementation, e.g. by using experiences from similar projects to estimate time and resource needs. Projects should also make sure that plans are flexible and have sufficient slack built in to meet potential needs for adjustment of the project's direction as participants learn from their experiences.

The large majority of ENRECA projects find that they have designed an adequate organisational structure. Project managers emphasized that a clear division of roles and responsibilities is important to support effective implementation. Most ENRECA projects have explicitly defined participants' roles and responsibilities, and discussing role expectations was considered important, especially in cross-organisational collaboration, where participants are working within unfamiliar structures. Important aspects of designing the organisation involve defining the optimal degree of administrative integration with the South partner's existing organisation and the degree of North representation in the South.

6.3 Project start-up/inception phase

ENRECA projects have had *start-up phases* of varied lengths. A majority of ENRECA projects have used between two and six months for project start-up. Project managers recommend establishing good communication practices among partnership participants during the inception phase. Inter- and multidisciplinary research teams should use the start-up phase to become prepared for collaborating across disciplinary boundaries. It is also recommended to start up slowly and use small-scale activities to initiate and practise partnership collaboration and identify participants' interests. Most ENRECA project managers stated that they used sufficient time to detail the master project plan during the start-up phase. Approximately half of the ENRECA projects found that they had developed rules and regulations to an adequate degree, but other projects found it unnecessary to do so. Furthermore, approximately half of the ENRECA projects developed procedures for systematically dealing with deviations from their plans. Some projects used standard research protocols to support research planning.

6.4 Project co-ordination phase

In general, ENRECA project managers evaluate the *internal communication* between project partners as having been highly sufficient to support efficient project implementation. Approximately one third of the ENRECA projects have used some kind of common platform for exchanging management information. Several projects have been maintaining a common PMF listing all activities and keeping track of changes as an efficient means of communicating project developments. Most projects have developed an *external*

communication strategy reflecting project objectives, e.g. a focus on peer-reviews publication or development of local publishing culture.

Project managers argue that in order to ensure efficient project management, projects should define their information needs in relation to the ongoing project *administration*, establish simple procedures, and make sure to implement procedures from the beginning of the project execution. In general, South partners are considered by their North counterparts to be relatively efficient in implementing agreed upon administrative requirements. Most ENRECA projects developed management regulations and norms to clarify mutual expectations and support transparency; developing such regulations can be an important mutual learning opportunity for partnership participants. Administration is often managed through an independent project office to ensure administrative transparency, independence from individual interests, and adherence to donor-defined administrative requirements.

Approximately half of the ENRECA projects included training in project management as an element of institutional capacity building. Such training events can be an opportunity to discuss *leadership* and management styles openly and with respect for different perspectives. Understanding the partners' different management and leadership cultures is a prerequisite for optimising the project design and management strategy. Key issues include finding the right balance between control and sharing of responsibility; ensuring flexibility to accommodate the dynamic nature of research; and developing a project culture in which it is allowed to make mistakes and learn from experiences.

Most ENRECA projects have developed an explicit *monitoring* plan and have monitored activities on a regular basis. Some projects have monitored progress based on an institutional baseline study, which includes a few but fundamental performance indicators. In the majority of the projects, the partners developed performance indicators together. Discussing performance indicators, monitoring plans and data collection as part of the project preparation or start-up can help partners focus on project objectives and adjust expectations.

6.5 Project evaluation phase

One third of the ENRECA projects were *externally evaluated*, and generally ENRECA projects managed to a relatively high degree to take evaluation results into account in subsequent project planning, and to use the results as a basis for an internal dialogue.

Most ENRECA projects have undertaken or planned to undertake at least one *internal evaluation* during their most recent three-year project phase. Some projects developed an explicit evaluation plan during the preparation phase. Only bottom-up approaches were used in internal evaluations, and in most cases the partners jointly developed the evaluation criteria and indicators. Project management issues were addressed in a large majority of the internal project evaluations. Some projects have supported project management transparency and accountability by documenting concerns raised by participants in internal evaluations, as well as the subsequent measures taken by the project to address these concerns.

6.6 Project closure phase

During the *project closure phase*, ENRECA projects partners have been relatively good at jointly assessing the match between actual project results and the stakeholders' expectations. Participants in ENRECA projects have also to some extent reflected upon, and documented, project management learning achieved during their project implementation. Project managers consider themselves relatively good at transferring new ideas and solutions developed during a project to relevant stakeholders. Some project managers argue that the partners should avoid finalizing project execution from one day to another, and recommend

applying a strategy with a low-intensity and prolonged closure phase allowing activities to be finished and followed through.

All surveyed ENRECA projects had formulated a *sustainability strategy* and a majority of the projects did so as part of the initial application. Inclusion of South partners in research networks is considered the most important strategy for sustainability and quality research outputs are considered the primary key to inclusion in the international research community and an important way to attract other projects. Developing field research infrastructures and related databases is also seen as an important tactic to attract future projects to South institutions. Enhancing the South partners' institutional setting, as a strategy for sustainability, is given least importance.

6.7 Project management at the university, faculty and department level

Many ENRECA projects have obtained adequate support from university departments and faculties, but some projects have experienced difficulties in terms of poor administrative systems and lack of grant specific knowledge among administrative staff. Some project managers lacked institutional backing and requested their universities to develop strategies to guide North-South RCB activities, and to enhance the awareness and recognition of the special characteristics of the RCB projects.

ENRECA project managers did not see a great need for developing project management competencies at department level, but inter-project platforms for exchanging RCB project experiences were suggested. In general, project managers only to some degree support each other by sharing their management experiences, and university departments do little to evaluate project performance in order to learn from their experiences.

6.8 Donor relations

The following conclusions are primarily aimed at Danida's future grant policy and administration. The initiative grant has been an important tool for the development of North-South partnerships, even if proposals were not subsequently funded by Danida. The long time-frame (9-12 years) and the high degree of administrative flexibility was highly appreciated by researchers and research administrators and are considered crucial for achieving the high input-output ratio that ENRECA projects have been recognized for in external evaluations. The long time-horizon is also considered key to obtain a long-term sustainable impact on South research capacity. Both Danida and DFC personnel are considered very supportive, but some project managers argued that the different perspectives in the university system and in Danida can be problematic. Project managers express that they now miss the professional research-orientated dialogue they previously had with Danida, when ENRECA projects were organized through a special programme (until 2004). Application guidelines and administrative procedures are considered reasonable "to some degree". Some uncertainty exists about project selection criteria and project managers suggest that FFU makes the meaning of "institutional capacity building" clear and explicit in their requirements for future RCB projects; especially in terms of the success criteria used and how they are prioritized. Maintaining flexibility and simplicity and avoiding creating a "consultant-approach" in future funding schemes is stressed by several project managers. The enrolment of South PhD students at the Danish universities has been a major incentive for the participating Danish researchers, and some project managers stress the importance of maintaining this option in the future. Mechanisms for sharing RCB project experiences are also suggested, e.g. sharing annual progress reports among projects; and an introduction of the nature of development research, and the special requirements associated with it, to new FFU grant applicants.

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Appendix 1: The 36 ENRECA projects included in the survey

ENRECA project title	Funded until	Danish principal partner institution
Biodiversity and Economically Important Species in the Tropical Andes (BEISA II)	2010	AU/NAT
Training and Research on physiological constraints in aquaculture in the Mekong	2009	AU/NAT
Capacity building for biosafety and ecological impact assessment of transgenic plants in East Africa	2010	AU/NAT
Recovery from Armed Conflict in Northern Uganda. Planning for Human Security	2008	AU/HUM
Community and Health System, a Longitudinal Study of Interaction and Change in Uganda	2007	AU/DPU
International Business Research in Vietnam in a Development Perspective	2007	CBS
Registration and preservation of Bhutanese books	2010	The Royal Library
Analysis and modelling of Geological Basins in Vietnam	2011	GEUS
Water Resources Management in Vietnam	2008	GEUS
Wastewater Treatment in Tanzania – Waste Stabilization Ponds	2007	KU/FARMA
GDArch – Archaeology of Ghana: Advances Education, Research & Administration	2009	KU/HUM
Systemic Acquired Resistance – an Ecofriendly Strategy for Managing Diseases in Rice and Pearl Millet	2007	KU/LIFE
Improving the Health and Productivity of Rural Chicken in Africa	2007	KU/LIFE
Forest Management in Bolivia (FOMABO)	2009	KU/LIFE
Capability Building for Research and Development in Traditional Fermented Food Processing in West Africa	2010	KU/LIFE
Improvement of Smallholder Livestock in Bolivia and Nicaragua	2008	KU/LIFE
Enhancement of research capacity to control and manage bacterial plant diseases in Eastern Africa	2011	KU/LIFE
Community based Natural Forest and Tree Management In Himalaya	2010	KU/LIFE
Nutrient and Pest Management in High-Production Rice Ecosystems in South-East Asia	2010	KU/LIFE
Food and Nutrition Security in Bangladesh: Energy and Micronutrients Availability in Rice-based Diets	2008	KU/LIFE
Participatory forest management (PFM) for rural livelihoods, forest conservation and good governance in Tanzania.	2011	KU/LIFE
Circulation of Nutrients	2009	KU/NAT
A Base-line Study of Toxic Microalgae for the Safeguarding of Marine Living Resources in Vietnam	2008	KU/NAT
Biodiversity Research and Training in Tanzania and Uganda	2008	KU/NAT
Enhancement of Research and Teaching Capacity in Hydrogeology	2008	KU/NAT
Livestock-wildlife diseases in East Africa	2009	KU/NAT
Strengthening Population & Reproductive Health Research in Vietnam (REACH)	2008	KU/SUND
Community Initiatives and Democratization of Planning (Ghana)	2007	The Academy of Fine Arts School of Architecture
The Accra Copenhagen Research Link	2006	Rigshospitalet – Copenhagen

		University Hospital
Political and Cultural Institutions in Development	2008	RUC
Capacity Building within Multidisciplinary Environmental Research & Education	2006	RUC
Molecular Science, Vietnam	2010	RUC
Sustainable, Sanitary and Efficient Management of Animal Manure for Plant Nutrition in Vietnam (SUSANE)	2009	SDU
Long-term Community studies to evaluate and improve primary health care programmes in Guinea-Bissau	2013	Statens Serum Institut
Sustainable Development Strategies for Central America (SUDESCA)	2007	AAU
International Business Research in North-South Perspective – Ghana	2007	AAU

AU: Aarhus University. CBS: Copenhagen Business School. GEUS: Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland. KU: University of Copenhagen. RUC: Roskilde University. SDU: University of Southern Denmark. AAU: Aalborg University. NAT: Faculty of Natural Sciences. HUM: Faculty of Humanities. DPU: Danish School of Education. SUND: Faculty of Health Sciences. FARMA: Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences. LIFE: Faculty of Life SciencesU.

Appendix 2: Persons interviewed

Name	Institution	Project	
Anders Dalsgaard	University of Copenhagen/ Department of Veterinary Disease Biology	Sanitary Aspects of Drinking Water and Wastewater Reuse in Vietnam. Fishborne Zoonotic Parasites in Vietnam (FIBOZOMA).	I
Annika Büchert Lindberg	Aarhus University/ Department of Biological Sciences	Cantho University – University of Aarhus Link in Environmental Science Project.	F1
Bjørn Johnson	Aalborg University/ Department of Business Studies	Sustainable Development Strategies for Central America (SUDESCA).	F2
Erik Thulstrup	Roskilde University/ The Department of Science, Systems and Models	Molecular Science, Vietnam.	I
Finn Borchsenius	Aarhus University/ Department of Biological Sciences	Biodiversity and Economically Important Species in the Tropical Andes.	I
Finn Helles	University of Copenhagen/ Forest & Landscape	Forest Management in Bolivia.	F3
Helle Overgård	University of Copenhagen/ Forest & Landscape	Community based Natural Forest and Tree Management In Himalaya.	F3
Henrik Balslev	Aarhus University/ Department of Biological Sciences	Biodiversity and Economically Important Species in the Tropical Andes.	F1
Ib Bygbjerg	University of Copenhagen/ Department of International Health, Immunology and Microbiology	Collaborative Research and Training Programme on Malaria and Lymphatic Illariasis.	I
Jens Aagaard- Hansen	University of Copenhagen/ DBL – Centre for Health Research and Development	Kenyan-Danish Health Research Project (KEDADR)	I
Jørgen Madsen	University of Copenhagen/ Department of Large Animal Science	Income generation through market access and improved feed utilization – production of quality beef and goat meat (IGMAFU- meat).	I
Lise Herslund	University of Copenhagen/ Forest & Landscape	Community based Natural Forest and Tree Management In Himalaya.	F3
Lotte Meinert	Aarhus University/ Department of Anthropology, Archaeology and Linguistics	Recovery from Armed Conflict in Northern Uganda: Planning for Human Security.	I
Mark Bayley	Aarhus University/ Department of Biological Sciences	Training and Research on physiological constraints in aquaculture in the Mekong.	F1
Olav Jull Sørensen	Aalborg University/ Department of Business Studies	International Business Research in North- South Perspective – Ghana.	F2
Thor Theander	University of Copenhagen/ Department of International Health, Immunology and Microbiology	Long-term community studies to evaluate and improve primary health care programmes in Guinea-Bissau (Bandim Health Project).	I
Thomas Nielsen	Aarhus University/ Department of Biological Sciences	Cantho University – University of Aarhus Link in Environmental Science Project.	F1
Bente Ilsøe	Danida Fellowship Centre	ENRECA programme coordinator	I

F1: Focus group interview at Department of Biological Sciences, Aarhus University; F2: Focus group interview at Department of Business Studies, Aalborg University; F3: Focus group interview at Forest & Landscape, University of Copenhagen.

Appendix 3: Overview of findings and lessons learned

Pre-project phase

Initial contact

- The majority of ENRECA partners knew each other before starting to develop the application and 38% of the projects were continuations of previous ENRECA projects.
- Twinning the right North and South partners is essential – matching objectives, ambitions and competencies is important.
- The individual match between project participants is also important since project success is often based on reciprocity, trust, mutual understanding and enthusiasm.
- The FFU initiative grant has been an important tool for establishing good partnerships.
- Both institutional and personal contacts play a role when initiating projects.
- The way projects are initiated – whether it is top-down or bottom-up initiated – is likely to affect the subsequent project implementation.

Selection of project objectives

- On average individual capacity building is considered most important, but approximately half of the project managers consider institutional and individual capacity building equally important.
- Project managers on average use more time on research management, but in most projects a substantial amount of time is also used on project management of other capacity building activities.
- It can be difficult to define project objectives – South partners' lack of research experience and North partners' lack of insight into the specific conditions makes it easy to become overambitious.
- It can be a challenge to align research and capacity development objectives with national and institutional policies and strategies, but RCB projects can be used as an opportunity for linking South institutions to government agencies.
- Partnerships have benefited from using an initiative grant period to conduct basic analysis and facilitate that South partners clarify their research policy.
- It can be difficult to ensure that the assumptions behind, and the implications of, the chosen project focus and intervention level are openly discussed.

Choice of project design

- Most ENRECA projects have to some degree considered the expected management complexity in the partnership's choice of project design. Management complexity is considered more in relation to administrative procedures and project organisation than in relation to the choice of activities.
- North-South RCB projects are subject to many factors of uncertainties that are difficult to be foreseen, but some factors can be identified from other projects or researchers working in the same region.
- ENRECA projects have to a varied degree considered how project management complexity should be reflected in the project design.
- Multi- and interdisciplinary project designs constitute a special challenge and projects can benefit from planning activities to facilitate integration.
- It can be difficult to choose project partners, and it may take time to identify and select the right partners.
- Partners may have very different perceptions of the importance of stakeholder involvement.
- The project design should not be considered as static, but should be revised and adjusted as capacity evolves.
- If focus is on South partner's weaknesses rather than their strengths, RCB projects may fail to benefit from already existing South capabilities.

Choice of project management strategy

- 60% of the project managers found ENRECA projects to be more complex to manage than other university-based projects and 40% found it to be more complex than initially expected. 72% of the project managers have used more time on managing the project than expected when planning the project.

- Integration of projects administration with the existing South partner organisation can be a cost-efficient solution that limits transactions costs and supports South capacity building and project sustainability.
- An independent project administration can in some cases be the best solution and such administration can become a benchmark for good governance in weaker South institutions.
- With a strong independent (relatively to the South partner leadership) project organisation the partnership runs the risk of the project becoming a “project island”.
- Having a Danish coordinator working for an extended period at the South institution can provide a range of benefits, e.g. learning about the South organisation and culture; getting to know partners better; support implementation etc. But also some disadvantages are identified, e.g. that South partners may have difficulties assuming the responsibility.
- Several project managers express that they have become overwhelmed by administrative tasks and it is recommended to establish from the beginning of the partnership clear agreements regards institutional support in both North and South.

Balancing the partnership

- Danish North-South partnerships are in general good at establishing symmetric relationships although the risk of asymmetric relations always exists.
- Project participants’ behaviour can unconsciously and unintentionally create asymmetric relations, e.g. due to differences in organisational cultures and individual attitudes.
- ENRECA projects have used different modes of sharing responsibility: successively transference from a project office to the South institution; fifty-fifty sharing of responsibility throughout the project life cycle; South partner as main responsible from the initial phase; and a project office maintaining responsibility throughout the whole project.
- Which mode of sharing responsibility is chosen may depend on a range of issues, e.g. the personal attitude and ideology of the PRP; the mutual history and previous joint management experiences; the level of transparency, type of governance system and administrative experience at the South partner institution; personal relations and degree of trust between the involved partners; and the number of institutions involved in the partnership.
- Ensuring that both North and South partners contribute resources (financial and in kind) and making resource contributions explicit may contribute to create a genuine sense of ownership in both North and South.
- South institutions can have difficulties living up to initially agreed contributions, e.g. due to lack of funding, cumbersome administrative procedures, and change in leadership.

Incentives and ownership

- Project success depends on understanding the incentive structures influencing North and South partners.
- Project success depends on the match between individual participants’ and project’s objectives – ENRECA projects have been good at doing so.
- Involvement of South PhD students and Danish project participants has been very high in ENRECA projects, whereas the involvement of South project researchers has been more challenging.
- Involvement of Danish researchers can be supported by focusing on quality research and publication opportunities.
- Having to work within existing organisational structures in South is a challenge, e.g. due to limited opportunity to employ or topping up researchers’ salaries.
- South researchers may lack incentives to participate in RCB projects for a range of institutional or personal reasons that can be difficult to make explicit during project preparation.
- The lack of ability to provide salaries has been a filter ensuring that only those genuinely interested participate in projects.
- It can be a challenge for North partners to understand how the often radically different living and working conditions of South partners impact on their project participation.
- It can be difficult for North project managers to obtain an understanding of the partner’s organisational processes and how the South institution’s management practices and organisational politics influence the South participants’ involvement.

Project preparation phase

Project anchoring

Upwards anchoring

- It can be a challenge for researchers to align their projects with the perspective of the donor.
- ENRECA projects were relatively successful in upwards anchoring in Danish and South partner institutions.
- Experiences show that project success can depend on North and South project managers having a certain degree of political flair, organisational insight and support from influential South university leaders.
- Alignment with South university administrative procedures and norms can provide legitimacy and may prevent administrative or “political” problems during the implementation.
- The experiences with using steering committees for upwards anchoring have been mixed.

Outwards anchoring

- ENRECA projects have to some degree been successful in ensuring outwards anchoring to project stakeholders, other sector-level institutions and resource persons and institutions.
- Many ENRECA projects have had very positive experiences from the collaboration with SPS, but such collaboration is not necessarily easy. Project managers must consider that SPS has different success criteria from those of a typical RCB project.
- Projects have benefited from SPS facilitating: Insight into local conditions; contact to potential collaborators and resource persons; and more easy access to field data.
- Important factors for facilitating good ENRECA-SPS collaboration have included an early and ongoing dialogue to identify common interests and that ENRECA managers were well-prepared with a clear vision of how the project could support SPS objectives.
- The importance of outwards anchoring can be perceived differently by the different partners in a RCB projects.

Inwards anchoring

- ENRECA projects have been relatively successful in achieving inwards anchoring ensuring integration of the project team as a means of facilitating project implementation.
- The physical distance and the looser linkages of many participants to ENRECA project activities have constituted a challenge for inwards anchoring.
- Personal relations and regular visits to the South institution are important to facilitate mutual understanding and thus effective project implementation.
- Inwards anchoring involves careful consideration of incentive structures and mechanisms for creating ownership.
- Maintaining a focus on research quality and North-South research collaboration is an important aspect of inwards anchoring.

Project analysis

Cultural understanding

- Cultural differences can be a challenge to partnership collaboration and may impact project execution in several ways.
- Project managers emphasize the importance of understanding the culture in which projects are implemented. On the other hand, some project managers also warn not to over-interpret the cultural differences and their potential impact, as many of the same challenges can be experienced in both North and South institutions.

National and sectorial strategies and policy papers

- A large majority of ENRECA projects have included South’s national strategies and policy papers in the project definition and this type of analysis is considered of some importance in project planning.
- Several ENRECA projects have obtained good support from the Danish embassy, SPS, and South ministries and agencies to identify relevant policy papers.
- North partners can be useful for their South partners as door openers to ministry and agency representatives.
- Half of the ENRECA projects have used sector-wide analysis in relation to project development and this analysis type is considered of some importance in project planning.

- Working along the lines of national strategies can contribute to ensure future relevance of South partner's research and teaching competencies.
- By mapping the national innovation system (NIS) a partnership may identify new research partners, research funding, and data and information sources.

Organisational analysis and needs assessment

- A majority of ENRECA projects have included an organisational analysis in the project preparation phase and the analysis is considered relatively important.
- Important aspects of an organizational analysis are: Perspectives on teaching and research; resources level and allocation; organisation of administration and management; financial administration; university governance structure; and incentives and behavioural patterns.
- A large majority of ENRECA projects have performed an analysis of challenges/problem to be addressed by the project and the analysis is considered very important.
- A qualitative and quantitative needs assessment provides partners with important information for project planning as well as a useful baseline for future monitoring.

Stakeholder and gender analysis

- Less than half (44%) of the ENRECA projects have conducted a stakeholder analysis, but the analysis is considered relatively important.
- Stakeholder analysis and management initiatives can provide important inputs for project design and planning.
- The mutual understanding of the stakeholder concept, as well as the benefits and disadvantages from involving stakeholders in project activities should be clarified with South partners.
- Few ENRECA projects (20%) have conducted a gender analysis, but the analysis is considered of some importance.

Risk analysis

- North-South research partnerships are typically implemented in settings with many unpredictable risks and uncertainties.
- Risk analysis was conducted by the majority of the ENRECA projects and it is considered relatively important to include in project preparation.
- The majority of the ENRECA projects have addressed risk management proactively, although not all have used explicit procedures.

Master project planning

Defining objectives and outputs

- ENRECA projects have been relatively good at establishing a shared understanding of project objectives and implementation throughout the project life cycle.
- It is a challenge to ensure that RCB projects do not become overly supply driven.
- Agreeing on objectives can be difficult due to different interests – individual and institutional – and project participants may try to redefine objectives during the course of implementation.
- Changes in South leadership can significantly impact a RCB project, e.g. due to new management priorities.
- ENRECA projects have often been too ambitious. Partnerships should evaluate carefully the realism of the objectives.

The resource frame

- ENRECA project managers have been creative and efficient in utilizing their projects to attract additional resources.
- Resources for ENRECA projects have come not only from Danida's grants, but from various other sources.
- The flexibility associated with the ENRECA programme is often mentioned as an important reason for the high input-output factor associated with these projects.

Planning the main processes

- The large majority (88%) of ENRECA projects has used basic planning tools, e.g. the LFA, milestone plans, work packages, or similar formats, and most (71%) are satisfied with their application.

- Application of participatory planning methodologies does not necessarily create ownership. Projects need to carry out the design and planning process together to ensure applicability, acceptance, involvement, and ownership.
- Projects have experienced that things often take much longer time than expected.
- Projects have benefited from starting up in small scale allowing the partnership to develop working relationships and testing participants' interest.

Defining roles and responsibilities

- A large majority (92%) of ENRECA projects have explicitly defined participants' roles and responsibilities.
- A clear division of roles and responsibilities is important to support effective implementation.
- Projects have benefited from discussing role expectations, as being project responsible, project manager or coordinator may mean different things to the different individuals involved in a partnership.
- In a cross-organisational collaboration where participants are working in unfamiliar structures defining roles and responsibilities are particularly important.
- Changing the initial distribution of roles and responsibilities between North and South institutions during the course of the project can be a challenge and needs to be adequately discussed and planned.

Defining the organisational structure

- The large majority (79%) of ENRECA projects has defined an organisational structure and find it to be working adequately.
- Well-functioning steering or management committees may provide upwards and outwards anchoring, improve information flow, and support inter- and intra-institutional collaboration.
- Merging administrative functions with other projects can provide several benefits, e.g. enhanced administration and improved service, access to new research opportunities, improved job security and support project sustainability. Aligning to the norms of a wider collaboration may, on the other hand, reduce the flexibility associated with the ENRECA model.
- The demand for administrative efficiency influences project decisions regarding the degree of integration with the South partner's existing organisation, e.g. the degree of North representation in South, and whether it is desirable to establish an independent project office.

Planning main budget

- Cost estimation can be difficult due to lack of context specific knowledge and highly uncertain due to the nature of the involved activities.
- Partners may use other projects, SPS, embassy staff, colleagues with country specific experience and task relevant knowledge to obtain cost estimates.
- Distribution of funds can be a sensitive issue in projects involving multiple partners.

Project start-up/inception phase

- 62% of the ENRECA projects have used between two and six months for project start-up.
- Establishing good communication practices among partnership participants is an important part of the start-up phase.
- Starting up the project slowly and using small-scale activities to initiate and practise the partnership collaboration can help identify strengths to utilize or weaknesses to address.

Detailed planning

- A large majority (78%) of the ENRECA projects have used sufficient time to further detail the master project plan during the start-up phase.
- Approximately half of the ENRECA projects have developed rules and regulations to an adequate degree. 29% found it unnecessary to do so.
- Approximately half of the ENRECA projects have not developed procedures for systematically dealing with deviations from their plans.
- Participants' detailed research planning can be supported by use of standard research protocols. When possible use the existing formats in South institutions to practise post-project planning.

Project co-ordination phase

Communication

- ENRECA project managers evaluate the internal communication between project partners to be highly sufficient to support efficient project implementation.
- A summary of the project document, internal newsletters, PhD students' monthly progress reports, a project notice board, and decision minutes from project meetings are examples of means used for information sharing in RCB projects.
- Half of the ENRECA projects found it unnecessary to develop procedures for exchange of project management information.
- Approximately one third of the ENRECA projects have used some kind of common platform (e.g. a project management file (PMF) for exchanging management information.
- A majority of projects have developed during project preparation stage a strategy for communication with stakeholders.
- Personal contacts, project newsletters, bulletins or up-dates, Email newsletters, and project websites have been the ENRECA projects' typical means of communicating with stakeholders.

Administration

- The majority (70%) of ENRECA projects have developed management regulations and norms to clarify mutual expectations and support transparency.
- It can be a challenge to implement administrative procedures, if this is not done from the beginning of the project execution.
- Developing management regulations can be a learning opportunity for partnership participants.
- Partners are relatively efficient in implementing agreed upon administrative requirements.
- Establishment of an independent project office is often chosen to ensure administrative transparency, independence from individual interests, and observation of donor-defined administrative requirements.
- Some projects have established independent financial management and bank accounts; other projects have integrated accounting, but maintain separate bank accounts; yet other projects have integrated financial management in the South institution's system.
- The majority (67%) of ENRECA projects have elaborated descriptions of financial procedures.

Ongoing leadership and management

- Very few ENRECA projects have applied formal project management.
- Approximately half of the ENRECA projects have included training in project management as an element in institutional capacity building.
- It can be a challenge to Danish project managers to identify the right balance between control and sharing responsibility.
- It can be a challenge to get participants to take initiatives in a culture where it is not allowed to make mistakes.
- Research activities are dynamic and uncertain project management need to be flexible..
- It can be difficult for project managers to ensure time to reflect on their own management role and long-term development of the projects.

Monitoring and control

- 75% of the ENRECA projects have developed an explicit monitoring plan. In 79% of the project, the partners had developed indicators together.
- 88% of the ENRECA projects monitor activities on a regular basis.
- Monitoring should relate to an institutional baseline study and include a few but fundamental performance indicators.
- Discussing performance indicators, monitoring plan and data collection as part of the project preparation or start-up can help partners focus on project objectives and adjust expectations.
- Using LFA matrix indicator monitoring is not sufficient for ongoing follow-up on activities.

- Some projects use a list of project activities for ongoing monitoring.
- It is a challenge to ensure that “softer” project outputs or effects such as, e.g. the work climate, the collaborative environment, participants’ expectations, perceived involvement, and engagement are also monitored.

Project evaluation phase

External evaluation

- 36% of the ENRECA projects were externally evaluated.
- Both bottom-up (50%) and top-down (75%) approaches were used in external evaluation.
- Both formative (50%) and summative (88%) evaluations were used in external evaluation.
- On average, ENRECA projects manage to a relatively high degree to take evaluation results into account in subsequent project planning and use results as a basis for a dialogue within the partnership.

Internal evaluation

- 70% of the ENRECA projects have had or have planned at least one internal evaluation during the last project phase.
- 26% of the projects had developed an explicit evaluation plan during the preparation phase.
- Only bottom-up approaches were planned or used in internal evaluation of ENRECA projects.
- Both formative (64%) and summative (43%) evaluations were planned or used in internal evaluation.
- In the majority of the cases where an internal evaluation was made, the partners had jointly developed the evaluation criteria and indicators.
- The majority of projects have had or have planned at least one annual internal evaluation – e.g. in connection with an annual project-wide workshop.
- Project management issues were addressed in the large majority of the internal project evaluations.
- Some ENRECA projects have enhanced transparency and accountability by publishing a report, which systematize the concerns raised by project participants in internal evaluations, as well as the actions taken by the project to address each concern.

Project closure phase

Closing the project

- ENRECA projects have been relatively good at jointly assessing project results and verifying stakeholders’ expectations.
- Participants in ENRECA projects have to some extent reflected on and documented project management learning from their projects.
- During the final stage of the project ENRECA projects have been relatively good at transferring new ideas and solutions developed during the project to the relevant stakeholders.
- ENRECA projects have benefited from a low-intensity and prolonged closure phase allowing activities to be completed and followed through.

Project sustainability

- All surveyed ENRECA projects have formulated a strategy for sustainability and a majority of the projects have done so from the first application.
- Inclusion of South partners in research networks is considered the most important strategy for sustainability by ENRECA project managers.
- High quality research output is by project managers considered the primary key to inclusion in the international research community and an important way to attract other projects as South partner becomes internationally known.
- ENRECA projects have developed field research infrastructure and related databases as a way to attract future funding for South partners.

- Enhancing South partners' institutional setting as a strategy for sustainability has received little attention in ENRECA partnerships.

Project management at the university, faculty, and department level

- Many Danish ENRECA partners have obtained adequate support by university institutes, departments and faculties
- Some projects have experience difficulties in terms of poor administrative systems and lack of project type knowledge among administrative staff.
- Some project managers have lacked organisational backing and request universities to develop relevant strategies and to enhance the general awareness and recognition of the special characteristics of the RCB projects.
- In general, project managers do not see a great need for developing project management competencies at department level.
- A platform for exchanging RCB project experiences is requested by project managers.
- The ENRECA projects are only to a limited degree evaluated by their departments in order to learn from their experiences.
- In general, project managers to some degree support each other by sharing their management experiences.

Donor relations

- The initiative grant has been an important tool to develop partnerships, even when proposals are not funded by Danida.
- Both Danida and DFC personnel are considered very service-minded.
- Some project managers are missing a professional research-orientated dialogue with Danida.
- Mechanisms for sharing project-level experiences are requested, e.g. introduction to new FFU grant applicants on the nature of development research and the special requirements associated with it. Also a better exchange of experiences between existing projects is needed, e.g. by sharing annual progress reports among projects.
- Danida's/DFC's application guidelines and administrative procedures are considered reasonable "to some degree". Maintaining flexibility, simplicity and avoiding creating a "consultant-approach" is stressed by project managers.
- Some uncertainty about project selection criteria exists. Project managers requested that FFU make more explicit the meaning of "institutional capacity building" in terms of what success criteria are used and how they are prioritized.
- The long time-frame and administrative flexibility associated with the ENRECA projects are considered crucial for achieving developmental impact.
- The enrolment of South PhD students at the Danish universities is a major incentive for participating Danish researchers, and project managers stressed that this option should be maintained in the future.