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"PM² by European Commission. Open, free and common project management framework for all European institutions, companies and citizens. – PM²EU+"

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WHITE PAPER

How Open and Free initiatives work. The PM² case.

One of the current trends in knowledge management is increasing the visibility of the results obtained, whether at a teaching, research or professional level, by making the resources available in an open and free format.

Open and Free mean, on the one hand, that the whole community provides the resources in an editable format whose acquisition and use is completely free.

This brings about an increase in the number of members using a certain method, methodology, software or framework, ensuring the existence of many more perspectives and applications for different projects (both in size and complexity) in different fields and environments (including cultural ones).

The result of the involvement of a larger number of practitioners, often with eminently practical approaches, is a large number of lessons learned which, if well managed, could lead to opportunities for improving the original proposal.

To make this possible, once a resource has been made open and free, it is necessary to think about how to manage it.

Widespread access to the resource means the participation of a multitude of users with different roles, which immediately results in the acceleration of the processes of change and improvement. This is because the resource is being tested in a multitude of contexts, which are often unforeseen by the developer at the outset.

Therefore, there are two possibilities for the original developer once the resource has been set up as open and free:

1. Maintain control and leadership over the evolution of the resource. This means answering the demands of the user community, establishing a continuous line of communication that makes it possible to receive feedback, as well as to deal with the difficulties that arise in the use of the resource and the proposals made. Once this information has been received, the developer will improve and update the versions of the resource to the extent and in the direction of the lessons learned from the practical application of the resource. This requires the original developer

to establish an agile and effective mechanism, with sufficient resources for this task.

2. Let the product evolve in line with the movements, whether organised or not, of the community of users of the original resource. In this case, the developer must keep in mind that, eventually, the original versions will become obsolete and replaced by those improved by the users. These versions will include lessons learned and essential feedback in a fast-changing and highly uncertain working environment.

The European Commission's Open PM² initiative is an example of an open and free resource. It was made possible by the implementation of the European Commission decision of 12 December 2011 (2011/833/EU) on the "reuse of Commission documents to promote accessibility and reuse".

It is a project management methodology (for any type, size, complexity and nature of project) whose main objective is to facilitate the achievement of objectives in terms of deliverables and results simply, providing a framework that includes a governance model, the project lifecycle, processes and artefacts to be used. It also establishes a common language that facilitates communication and understanding between managers and stakeholders related to the project, based on international best practices.

Although it has a generalist vocation, it is clear that, due to its origins (DIGIT-EU), the methodology has many references related to the European institution and IT projects.

Since it became available in an open and free format (at the end of 2016), the Commission has wanted to oversee the process of the evolution of the methodology, creating, at that time, the PM² centre of excellence (CoEPM²), which brings together all the official development and training actions, either directly or collaboratively, related to PM². There is even a support network for the use of PM².

After a reasonable period of time, we are at the end of the fifth year of OpenPM², it is clear that there are many opportunities for improvement based on the lessons learned from its use.

It would be interesting to receive feedback concerning the opportunities and/or difficulties that the use of the methodology presents in private initiative projects, or in other fields of activity. Sectors such as energy, water, urban development, transport, development cooperation and logistics are good examples of scenarios in which the methodology should be tested, adapted and customised to meet the particular conditions of each case.

Professional certification processes complement the standards and methodologies. There is a real demand from project management practitioners because it is a normal process in the project management field, and it is an element recognised by employers as part of an individual's C.V.. Currently, the European Commission's professional certification system is limited exclusively to its own staff.

The impossibility for professionals outside the European Commission to obtain official certification and the active dynamic of users and professionals who are putting PM² methodology to good use has resulted in the emergence of non-profit entities on the market that are trying to fill the gap left by the original developer.

With an in-depth knowledge of the methodology and a collaborative approach, these entities offer a space for the exchange of experiences and lessons learned. They have also established professional certification mechanisms at different levels and with different objectives, developing publications that provide formal and documentary support for all these processes. The PM² Alliance is the most visible example of this movement.

The release of the open and free version of the PM² methodology are timely and its importance has been confirmed by the volume of investment foreseen in the framework of the Next Generation actions of the European Union. This is an unique opportunity in the generalisation of the use of the methodology.

It is necessary to take advantage of this opportunity to consolidate a common, open and free project management methodology for all Europeans. At this point, it would be advisable for the European Commission to activate all the actions necessary to achieve this objective.