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CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF ORGANISATION CULTURE ON PROJECTS

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This paper provides an approach to helping participants and stakeholders in international projects understand and appreciate the specific management and organisation related issues that occur in this type of project. This approach takes account of the different internal and external factors, which may also effect the management of this type of project.

At the start of every major international project, there is a need to systematically assess and understand any differences in the organisation, management or working styles of the participating nations. The assessment should use a systematic framework, such as Spectra Analysis (Figure 1.), to evaluate and understand the various aspects of organisation culture of the nations involved.

Nations can be involved in international projects for a variety of reasons, including operational necessity, mergers and the need for strategic alliances. The participants within international projects are not always able to work together in harmony during the course of the project. Some of the problems that occur are the result of differences in the working perspectives, of the nations involved.

A rigorous approach should be undertaken to gather relevant data, using a number of different techniques such as surveys, audits and literature searches. Based on the data obtained from each nation, a series of Spectra Charts can be developed.

Figure 1. Spectra Analysis Framework

Spectra Analysis Steps	Objective
Data Gathering	Obtain data on the participants management styles and ways of working Identify acceptable ways of working for each participant
Spectra Analysis	Identify extent of similarities and differences in working methods of participants. Provide a visual indication of similarities and differences in organisation cultures.
Resolve Issues	Obtain early agreement on the most appropriate procedures that can be used. Agree approaches to mitigating remaining areas of differences.
Communicate	Ensure that all participants are aware of any potential differences. Publicise agreed procedures and mitigation methods.
Monitoring & Report	Provide checks to ensure that procedures and mitigation methods are working. Provide reports relating to areas with continuing difficulties



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Spectra Charts show the, most relevant, logical extremes of the various management and working perspectives of the project, such as Empowerment to Dictatorship. The range of the extremes between the perspectives is shown as a series of cells, common to all perspectives, indicating a trend towards one extreme or another. The similarities and differences in working perspectives of project participants can be shown by plotting the data, gathered from each nation, on the Spectra Charts. Comparisons of the extent of differences between nations can be made, based on the relative distance between the cell plots of the nations.

Spectra Analysis can be used to assess the need for further investigations into any differences identified. Spectra Analysis will enable the need, and potential extent, for any mitigation to be undertaken. The analysis will also provide additional information and indicators for evaluation of the needs and benefits of the project.

The completed Spectra Charts will provide an easily understood visual aid, showing the different approaches to working perspectives of nations participating in the project. As such, Spectra Charts can be included in the communications programme, which should be introduced early in the project, to make participants aware of the extent of differences and how they can be minimised.

In addition to project initiation, Spectra Analysis should also be undertaken at major milestones of the project, such as when new partners are involved. Spectra Analysis should also be included as part of the project stage reviews. This additional analysis will ensure that all participants remain aware of any changes to the perspectives and organisation cultures of participants.

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