



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY

UNU manual on project management and Pelikan



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Introduction and overview

I. UNU manual on project management and Pelikan

- 1) The present manual has been developed with the aim to support the management of research and capacity development projects at UNU. The manual is intended to provide UNU personnel with a comprehensive and transparent approach for managing UNU projects based on *a common and unified set of rules, principles, guidelines, and procedures, using the Pelikan system*. It focuses on the inception, implementation and completion of research and capacity development projects. The institutes and the Office of Academic Affairs separately regulates teaching and degree programmes.
- 2) The UNU manual on project management and Pelikan is building on a first version of the Programme and Project Management Manual¹ that was finalized in 2011². The present manual introduces a streamlined version of UNU project management cycle that focuses on freeing researchers to do research while enabling the implementation of a common and cohesive set of rules and principles throughout the University and preserving the directors of institutes and programmes as the main authority at the level of their respective institutes and programmes.

II. Pelikan

- 3) To support the implementation of project management at UNU, a web-based system named Pelikan has been developed by the University. The Pelikan aims to provide benefits to its users by making collaboration and the sharing of information easier, by facilitating processes such as reporting, and by making project information and data easily accessible by all for present and future reference. In order to ensure the greatest utility to end-users, a Steering Group composed of representatives from across the University guided the development of Pelikan. The Steering Group members and project staffs' views were sought after through intensive testing and feedback processes while developing the Pelikan.
- 4) A key principle while developing the Pelikan has been freeing researchers to research, and providing them with the tool that enables them to make the most of the University's accumulated knowledge and experience.
- 5) By documenting the project elements in a common form, the Pelikan creates an easily accessible database for all UNU staff. This allows for the straightforward examination of past practice by end-users, simplified reporting, and greater visibility and transparency for projects. It allows for an end to individual large stocktaking exercises, and the simplification of the entire project management process.
- 6) To access Pelikan, see: <http://pm.unu.edu/>

¹ To access the PPMM, see: <http://pm.unu.edu/pm>

² The PPMM (2011 version) had been developed taking account of (a) the core documents which guide the work and activities of the United Nations University (UNU), including the UNU Charter, Council documents, and other fundamental guiding principles such as the University's Statutes and (b) the best practices existing among the UNU institutes and programmes.

UNU Project Management –guiding principles-

III. Overview of project management at UNU

Projects are embed in the University’s strategic planning process

- 7) The UNU Strategic Plan sets out major research areas of institutes and programmes and outlines a vision to make UNU more effective as a bridge between the United Nations and the international academic community; with the aim to provide a platform for global and local dialogue; and to contribute to building research and teaching capacity, particularly in developing countries. It is meant to communicate explicitly the University’s mission, roles, goals, and objectives, as well as to outline clearly its major areas of focus.
- 8) The thematic orientation, goals and objectives contained in the UNU Strategic Plan serve as a framework for developing UNU’s academic programme and budget documents. The “UNU Academic Programme and Budget” document aggregates the academic work of all UNU institutes and programmes³ at the level of UNU programmes and includes estimated income figures and programme expenditures for a two-year period.
- 9) UNU’s programme planning and the budgeting processes are flexible in that they allow for projects to be developed at any feasible time during the programme cycle (i.e. within the two-year period of an academic programme and budget cycle). All programmes and projects at UNU are meant to contribute to the UNU Strategic Plan. The institutionalization of a strategic planning process within the University, together with the preparation of biennial academic programmes and budgets is an important instrument for enhancing the coherence and cohesiveness of the UNU system as a whole.

Projects are embed in quality assurance

- 10) A results framework is an approach aimed at achieving effectiveness and enhancing accountability. At UNU, the results framework is reflected in a chain of results that starts with the strategic goals, priorities and measures as defined in the UNU Strategic Plan, which in turn are achieved through project outputs.
- 11) Result based Management can be broadly defined as a flexible management approach that emphasizes results in planning, implementation, reporting, gender mainstreaming, and learning approaches. RBM can be carried out more effectively if lessons learned are shared and best practices disseminated.
- 12) In ensuring the quality of UNU academic activities, emphasis will be given to their alignment with and contribution to the UNU Charter and the University’s Strategic Plan. The framework for UNU quality assurance is outlined within the UNU Policy on Quality Assurance.⁴ The overall approach to UNU quality assurance takes account of best practices internally and externally, highlighting quality as an integral part of the work of all UNU personnel.
- 13) In order to achieve effective results and to ensure the highest possible quality within UNU in relation to project management, a strong results-based orientation must be seen as a critical element of all UNU programmes, projects, and activities. Such an

³ “UNU institutes and programmes” refers to the research and training centres and programmes as defined in the UNU Charter, Article III, 1, d.

⁴ The UNU Council adopted the UNU Quality Assurance Policy at its 57th session in December 2010.

accountability framework will be focused at the level of (1) Programme Managers/Programme Officers/Project Managers;⁵ (2) Directors of UNU institutes and programmes;⁶ and (3) the Rector.

Projects as components of UNU academic programmes

14) UNU's academic work can be classified into three distinct, but hierarchical and interrelated categories: programmes, projects and activities.

Programme

15) A programme is a cluster of individual projects and activities. A programme strives to achieve overarching, higher-level institutional objectives and includes one or several individual projects. Programmes should have a specified duration that may be reviewed and extended for as long as the research, education, and dissemination activities are among the priorities of the University's work. All programmes would need to be incorporated in the University's biennial academic programme and budget document which is adopted by the UNU Council.

Project

16) A project is an interrelated set of activities with a specific time frame, with start and end dates, a defined budget, and allocated resources in order to achieve specified objective(s). UNU projects can start at any point in time within a biennial academic programme and budget period and can be implemented either internally or jointly with external organizations. As for a programme which comprises projects, a project comprises activities into its lifecycle to achieve certain results and outputs.

Activity

17) An activity is in most cases a task or work to be carried out in order to bring a project to completion and to accomplish the project's objectives. In other cases, activities may not be related to any particular project, but contribute to the accomplishment of the objectives of a programme.⁷

Projects, partners and sound collaboration

The importance of donors

18) At UNU, Donors can be generally divided into the following categories: the public sector (national governments⁸, international and regional organizations, such as the European Union, and local governments), academic institutions (universities, research institutes, academies of science), private sector (corporations), Non-profit sector (private foundations, corporate foundations, public charities, professional charities and NGOs, NPOs), private individuals (wealthy individuals), and alumni.

19) It will be necessary in some cases to identify early on the areas of convergence between UNU's project management approach on the one hand and maintaining

⁵ 'Project Manager' is a role, not a functional title. See the definition in 'Glossary'.

⁶ Directors of UNU institutes and programmes here and after "Director(s)", for a definition, see the glossary.

⁷ These activities could be captured in a special-purposed programme entitled 'Programme Development'. Programme development should, however, not represent more than 15% of the total amount of the Institute's budget.

⁸ National governments include (1) ministries, (2) government agencies (public bodies controlled by the ministries) and (3) independent public agencies (public bodies that are not controlled directly by the ministries).

good relations with project donors on the other hand. Donors may have specific additional requirements for project document preparation, approval, and reporting. A checklist of donor requirements in the inception, implementation and completion of a project should be used as a source of reference for all staff involved in that particular project. In Pelikan, the project manager and his/her team will be able to add in their work plan possible reporting requirement(s) from the donors; they will also be able to set some specific indicators which can help them track progress or trends as requested by the donors. It is also best practice to communicate and maintain contact with the donor throughout the project cycle and to provide donors with indications of tangible results from the project in order to cultivate trust and build a strong relationship.

The importance of target audiences

20) Identifying, understanding, and prioritizing target audiences⁹ are important elements of UNU project management. This identify-prioritize-understand process will facilitate the development of focused strategies and effective implementation measures as well as it will contribute to ensure efficient communications/dissemination efforts for each project.

The importance of having well established legal basis¹⁰

21) Agreements, memoranda of understanding (MOUs), and exchanges of letters or letters of intent are different types of legal documents that may relate to UNU projects. These documents provide sound legal basis for collaborating with a government, donor, or any partner institution. It should be noted that the documents that have legal and/or financial implications may only be entered into after consultation with the Office of the Rector in conjunction with the UNU legal adviser. Such agreements shall be signed by the Rector, or by a Director, or in exceptional circumstances, by other persons duly authorized to do so (in which case a document entitled "Full Powers" will be created to be recorded and filed with the original signed agreement). For reference, original signed agreements are accessible from the University intranet at <https://intranet.unu.edu/legalagreements/>.

The Funding of projects at UNU

22) The major sources of funding for UNU projects are the following:

Core Funds:

23) Core income represents voluntary contributions which are un-earmarked and unrestricted, and utilized to cover programme and operational activities fundamental for fulfilling the mission of the UNU. Core income comprises income from the endowment fund, operating contributions, other income, and cumulative surplus.

⁹ UNU Statutes define the University's key recipients and audiences as (1) the United Nations and its agencies, (2) scholars, (3) policy makers and decision makers, (4) government and non-governmental organizations, (5) regional, national, and local organizations, (6) the media, (7) the general public, and (8) students. 'Students' were added to the list after the Programme Management meeting on 12 October 2010.

¹⁰ See Rector's memorandum RO/2012/MEM/001 on authorization of agreements (issued on 21 February 2012).

Specific Programme Contributions (SPC):

24) Specific Programme Contributions (SPCs) represent voluntary contributions earmarked for a specific programme purpose and aligned with the priorities set by the UNU Council. This category of voluntary contributions is intended to support academic activities over and above planned activities financed from the core income.

Other sources:

25) In-kind contributions: voluntary transfer of resources received¹¹ in the form of services, goods and rights-to-use arrangements. Such contributions should normally be reported when the donation can be used in the normal course of UNU's activities.

26) Funding provided by donors to UNU's associated institutions to run joint UNU activities, which does not flow through UNU bank accounts, but which represents support made available by outside entities to finance UNU activities implemented locally or by a partner institution.

27) The policies, guidelines, and frameworks outlined in this manual and implemented in the Pelikan are recommended best practices for all UNU projects, regardless of the source of funding.

¹¹ In kind contributions are recognized when received, not when pledged.

UNU Projects and Project Cycle

IV. The University Project Cycle

28) At UNU, each project passes through three stages within its lifetime, and lives on as part of the institutional memory of the University, accessible to future users who are curious about past experience with, for example, a specific donor, or a specific research topic.

The three stages are:

- inception stage (planning the project)
- implementation stage (doing the project)
- completion stage (closing the project)

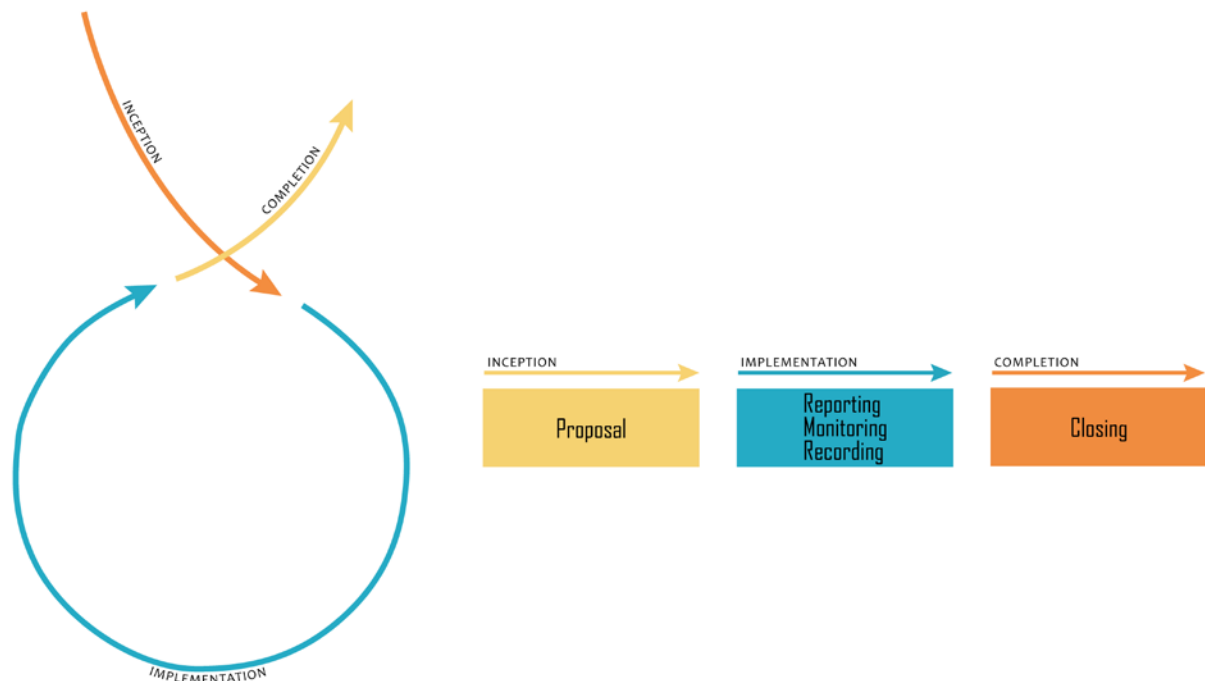


Figure 1: UNU Project Cycle

Inception

29) Inception is the first stage of project management. Researchers across the University have the possibility to develop ideas and plan and initiate a project they consider having the potential to make a substantial contribution to their institute, to the University and to the United Nations as a whole.

Project selection

30) In selecting topics for research and capacity development, project managers have the responsibility to ensure their high quality and relevance. Project managers also have the responsibility to ensure that the planned projects will bring added value to the institution rather than duplicating already existing projects; they have to ensure

that there is a niche for the planned projects. They also have the responsibility to identify the outcomes and outputs of projects and to foresee relevant dissemination plans. In selecting specific projects, UNU project managers will assess the relative importance of the issues against six criteria that relate specifically to UNU. These criteria are:

1. The relevance of the topic to the UN objectives of promoting peace, security, and prosperity including the Millennium Development Goals. The issues of peace and security, international law, humanitarian affairs, human rights, and development emerge most clearly from the UN Charter. Addressed topics and issues should be of particular relevance to the developing world, and should contribute to enhancing North-South and South-South collaboration;
2. The relevance of the topic to the overarching goals of UNU to contribute to global sustainable development—which is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland Report, 1987);
3. The nature and scale of human impact and the extent of the problem (i.e., global problems or issues occurring in many countries with the potential for replicability of solutions) as well as its degree of urgency (i.e., pressing issues rather than potential problems in the distant future). The Charter mandates UNU to “devote its work to research into the pressing global problems of human survival, development, and welfare that are the concern of the UN and its agencies”;
4. Whether the issue requires focused attention and relates to a critical gap in understanding on the causes of the problem and its potential solutions, or a lack of capacity so that UNU can make a real contribution through research, education, and dissemination;
5. The additionality UNU could bring by focusing on the issue—the presence of expertise within UNU staff and its immediate networks and the existence of prior experience within UNU are important considerations, as is whether UNU can effectively solve the problem;
6. The extent to which a proposed topic of research and teaching takes account of its “interconnectedness” with other topics, issues, and problems.

Project proposal

- 31) The project proposal (“create a project” section in Pelikan) provides project managers with a standardized format, shared by all staff members across the UNU. The format grants the flexibility required for projects of varied subjects and types to be accepted, ensuring that key, relevant information is documented.
- 32) The project proposal consists of a series of sections that focus on the project’s planned management structure; time frame; thematic orientation; contributions to the UN, UNU, developing countries, gender mainstreaming; objectives and beneficiaries; audiences and dissemination strategies; project team; internal and external project partnerships; project donors; work plan; monitoring mechanisms and indicators, and the funding and expenditure framework.
- 33) Filling the project proposal is a process that enables the project manager to develop project ideas and operational project plans. The project formulation involves identifying and analysing the problem; identifying possible risks and finding

possible solutions; preparing a strategy; estimating the level of support from a human resource perspective as well as the level of financial resources; and planning with regard to monitoring and evaluation. As projects are a component of programme(s), the project proposal should also specify clearly how the project contributes to the implementation of the programme.

Project approval

- 34) The project proposal when completed by the project manager (and his/her team) is submitted to the director who has the exclusive authority to approve or reject projects; the director can also request the project manager to revise some part(s) of the proposal. If the project proposal is approved, it becomes a “project document” and the proposed project becomes an “ongoing project”.
- 35) For the director to authorize projects, he/she shall consider the following criteria:
- 1) The extent to which the activities, results, and objectives conform and contribute to the mandate and strategic and programme objectives of the institute and the University;
 - 2) The extent to which the results identified are realistic, clear, achievable, and sustainable; and related intervention is sustainable and replicable;
 - 3) The extent to which gender and development perspectives are reflected in project strategies and activities;
 - 4) The linkage between the justification or background and the intervention being proposed;
 - 5) The comparative advantage and capacity of UNU and implementing partners to undertake the project;
 - 6) The extent to which the project incorporates and builds on the previous experience and lessons learned of the institute and the University;
 - 7) The level of risk in full project implementation;
 - 8) The proposal is in line with UN financial regulations and rules; meets the UNU project design criteria; and is substantively and technically sound.
- 36) As part of the project approval process, the directors must describe the quality control mechanisms they employ to ensure the high quality of each of the project. The description provided by the director is documented in the Pelikan and becomes part of the project repository. The director should further confirm that sufficient funds are available for implementing the project.
- 37) The project documents will guide the project implementation, monitoring, and evaluation throughout the project cycle. Projects can be created in ATLAS only after the director has approved the project proposal in Pelikan. For externally implemented projects, the project document also forms the contractual basis for any undertaking with a cooperating agency or supporting organization. It also forms the basis for the terms of agreement for any consultancy or contractual services for the project.

Implementation of projects

- 38) Implementation is the stage in which the project team actually carries out the “ongoing project”, aiming to achieve its objectives and fulfil the proposed work plan. The Pelikan system supports the documentation of the project during the normal

course of its implementation, it also aims to allow (possibly dispersed) colleagues to store and share information in a common space and in a timely manner¹².

About quality management:

- 1) Aiming at the highest possible quality across the University system, quality management should be integrated throughout the UNU project cycle. The project manager should ensure that project team members understand their roles in achieving quality goals and expected results are achieved through effective and efficient use of resources. Institutes and programmes managing a project should set up the necessary mechanisms to track progress towards results.
- 2) In order to achieve expected results within the approved budget and time frame, the planning of projects requires the integration of key indicators from results that specify the project objectives; setting of baselines, benchmarks, targets, and milestones; and collecting data, analysing, and reporting.
- 3) Indicators are important and useful tools for monitoring progress (or lack thereof) toward project objectives.
- 4) All indicators should, wherever possible, be disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity and socio-economic grouping. Gender-sensitive indicators have the special function of pointing out how far and in what ways development programmes and projects have met their gender objectives and achieved results related to gender equity.
- 5) Indicators may be used at any point along the results chain of outputs, outcomes, and impacts.
- 6) There are three main levels of indicators:
 - 1) Output indicators that measure the quantity and timeliness of the results from specific activities, projects or programmes. Output indicators could be, for example, target audiences reached, the number of printed outputs/documents/ papers, outreach/coordination initiatives; or electronic/digital outputs (system, Internet, CDs, DVDs);
 - 2) Outcome indicators that are likely to be qualitative observations on progress being made (or lack of progress) as a result of the outputs having been realized;
 - 3) Impact indicators that serve to identify the degree of change over the long term, which can be used in any ex-post evaluation of the project, several years after its completion. Impacts are generally not realized over the duration of a typical project. For operational purposes it is recommended focusing on programme and projects outcomes and ensuring that they are measurable over the lifetime of the programme and project. Examples include academic impact, policy impact, socio-economic impact, strategic impact, scientific and technological impact, and environmental impact and sustainability.

Management activities:

- 39) During the implementation of the ongoing projects, the management activities will focus on:
- 1) Monitoring;
 - 2) Reporting;
 - 3) Recording and documenting the project's activities, events and outputs;
 - 4) Collaborating with partners and donors;
 - 5) others that will depend on the nature of the project.

Project monitoring at UNU

- 40) Project monitoring is an essential component of project management. Monitoring is a continuous process to ensure that the project activities and events are being

¹² Pelikan operates as a single shared repository for all the project information.

implemented in an effective and timely manner taking account of the initial work plan, while project outputs are being produced as anticipated. Monitoring also makes it possible to provide the main partners in the project with an early indication of the progress being made in achieving project objectives.

- 41) At UNU, project managers set their own indicators, taking account of the specificity of their projects. They use these indicators to monitor progress, or the lack of progress in implementing the project; more specifically, the monitoring of projects' indicators enable the project managers to detect project deviations, or impediments to progress, and to take corrective actions to achieve results within the project time frame; or to detect early signs of the project's overall success and/ or failure.

Project reporting at UNU

- 42) At UNU, internal reporting comprises reporting to the UNU Council, as well as to the institute's board¹³.
- 43) Reporting promotes continuity and it also enables to clearly point out the progress made to all those involved or interested in the project. Reporting to the UNU Council encompass two kinds of reporting:
- a) The project manager shall compile a progress report which aims to highlight the state of implementation (at the time of report writing) of the project. The progress report includes a brief narrative on the status of implementation of the project in relation to the original work plan. The report should describe the main implementation highlight(s) to date; it should also highlight the main achievements and should describe any problem or constraints encountered in the project. The progress report should also include a brief description of the forthcoming planned activities within the project.
 - b) An annual report which describes the status of implementation of each project and related activities throughout the preceding year. Some of the institute's projects will feed into the Annual Report of the University; it is the director of the institute who selects the said projects, based on their relevance and high quality.
- 44) In addition to reporting to the Council of the University, project managers can be requested to prepare additional report, such as in the case of the report that has to be prepared for the attention of their respective institute's board members. The request is to be set by the director of the institute in preparation of the board meeting.
- 45) The Pelikan aims to limit the number of requests for reporting made to project manager by making the progress and annual reports available to all. Those reports can be used and/or re-used with different stakeholders, with the possibility to enclose additional information such as the list of activities, events, outputs that have been implemented or produced to date.
- 46) For more information on external reporting, see below "*Collaborating with partners and donors*" (#49).

Recording and documenting the project's activities, events and outputs (as they occur):

- 47) As part of the implementation of the project, activities and events are taking place, while outputs are being produced.
- 48) The recording of these project's activities, events and output by the project manager and his/her team is important as it supports the monitoring of the project by the

¹³ By "board" we refer to: Scientific Advisory Committee, Advisory Committee, Joint Advisory Board and Board.

project manager and her/his team, as well as it supports the documentation of UNU research and capacity development work. In the longer term, these elements constitute the University's institutional memory.

- 49) With the Pelikan system, the recording of activities, events and outputs is supported with the aim to ease the work of the team members who can document these on the go. It should be noted that with regard to publication, the Pelikan system and University Publication Repository are to be integrated with the aim that project managers and project team members only enter the same information once, they shall not have to duplicate efforts by entering the same information in the two systems.

Collaborating with partners and donors

- 50) External reporting, mainly to donors and partners, supports the strengthening of collaboration and partnerships. The format of external reporting will vary depending on the external partners requirements; however it is hoped that the project information available in the Pelikan, will support the team when producing these reports as all relevant information shall be easily retrievable from a single and common platform.

Other management activities including financial management

- 51) Monitoring also entails effective assessment of a project budget allowing for analysis of actual project expenditures against the planned project budget.
- 52) It should be noted that, at UNU, the financial management of projects is taking place through the ATLAS System. Financial management of a project is to be implemented in line with UN financial regulations and rules (ST/SGB/2003/7) throughout the project cycle. The project manager may delegate certain aspects of financial management, often those associated with controlling and monitoring project expenses, to colleague(s). Financial management involves applying controls by the certifying officer and approving officer that ensure the project stays within the agreed budget.

Special Cases during Implementation

- 53) Ongoing projects can go through several processes that can be considered "special cases"; these "special case" must be approved by the Director to take effect, and can be initiated by either the Project Manager or the Director¹⁴. Each of these "special cases" are documented in the Pelikan.
- 54) The special cases are:
- 1) extension
 - 2) revision
 - 3) suspension/resumption
 - 4) cancellation.
- 55) It is important to note that on the occasion of the annual external audit of the University, the audit team when looking at project management, usually starts its auditing by asking a list of all the ongoing projects, as well as a list of those which were either extended, revised (i.e. substantive revision, see below for more

¹⁴ In most cases, the project manager will post the request for extension, revision, suspension/ resumption and/or cancellation. However, each of these special cases can also be initiated by the directors of institutes themselves as the institutes' programmes and projects are under their authority.

information) or completed over the course of the biennium. This request highlights the importance of the processes which are all thoroughly executed in the Pelikan.

Project extension

- 56) Extension is simply postponing the end date of a project, without editing any other part of the project document (which would require revision).
- 57) If a project will not be operationally complete within the time frame denoted in the project document, a request for a project extension must be made by the project manager¹⁵. The request for extension must indicate the new date of expected completion (i.e. extended end date), and it shall include the reason for requesting the extension. The request for extension has to be approved by the Director; it further needs to be submitted to the project donor(s) if any.

Project Revision

- 58) Revision is a process whereby a Project Document is revised to any degree; in Pelikan revisions to a project can be made by the project manager¹⁶ as well as by team members to whom the project manager has granted editorial rights. A revision of a project may be substantive, or non-substantive. Both types of revision are recorded within the project document as the Pelikan system automatically tracks the editing of the project document (version tracking).
- 59) Only substantive revision requires approval by the. It is at the discretion of the Project Manager to decide whether a revision is substantive or non-substantive, knowing that a substantive revision is a formal change in the design of the project during its implementation. A substantive revision can be made in response to changes in the project context, to unforeseen risks, or to correct flaws in the design that emerge during the implementation of the project.

Budget revisions as substantive revision

- 60) In the interest of sound financial management, budgets must be kept up to date and aligned with agreed plans in order to properly assess progress and performance. If during the project's implementation, the project budget deviates substantially from the budget in the project document, a budget revision must be made by the project manager, in conjunction with Administration and Finance, and authorized by the Director.

Project Suspension/resumption

- 61) Suspension is a process whereby a project is suspended for an indefinite period of time, by the project manager¹⁷, and with the approval of the Director. The project may be resumed at any point by the project manager with the approval of the director. During the period of suspension, all project activities, events and outputs are suspended, as well as reporting and monitoring. The status of the project changes from "on going" to "suspended" until the project is either resumed, in which case it becomes "ongoing" again, or cancelled.
- 62) If it is decided to suspend a project, the project manager must notify the donor(s) accordingly. Additionally, if the project manager or Director decides to resume the operation of a suspended project, the donor(s) must also be notified accordingly.

¹⁵ ibid

¹⁶ ibid

¹⁷ ibid

Project cancellation

- 63) Cancellation is the process of the early closing of a project, by the project manager¹⁸. A cancelled project cannot be resumed and must immediately, or as soon as possible, proceed to completion.
- 64) The most common reason for project cancellation is that expected project results will not be able to be realized even if the project is revised in a substantive manner.
- 65) In Pelikan, the cancellation process requires the project manager to stipulate the reasons that motivate his/her decision for cancelling the project. The project manager further needs to confirm whether the potential donors have been informed, and should that be the case, whether it has been done. The project manager can attach copy of relevant document(s), such as correspondences, to document the process. Ultimately, the cancellation of projects has to be approved by the director to become effective.

¹⁸ ibid

Project completion

66)The completion of a project encompasses two aspects: operational and financial completions.

Operational completion

67)A project is operationally complete when all activities and events have been implemented, and project outputs have been delivered within the project's time frame.

Financial completion

68)In order to process the completion of the project, the project manager shall further provide financial information; he/she shall confirm that all payments and financial obligations relating to the project have been completed. The project manager will also stipulate whether the project generated a financial surplus or a financial deficit compared with the approved project budget. Finally, the project manager shall confirm the steps taken to address either of these situations:

In case of project ending with a surplus budget:

69)The surplus can either be transferred back to the donor or retained by the University, pending agreement from the donor(s). Shall the donor(s) accept that the University retains the surplus, the project manager and director will decide where to transfer the project surplus (e.g. to another project or to a programme development fund). After this has been determined, the project manager will notify Finance and Administration to confirm where the funds should be transferred to.

Project ending with a deficit:

70)Shall a project ends with a deficit¹⁹, the project manager will contact the project donor(s) in order to suggest a budget revision in the project document to reflect the budget deviation. If the budget revision is granted by the donor(s), financial completion may proceed as per the revised project document. If a budget revision is not granted by the donor(s), the project manager and the Director will identify surplus funds from other sources to cover the budget deficit.

71)Shall there be no deficit or surplus, no additional action with regards to financial matters will be required from the project manager.

Self-evaluation by project manager

72)In Pelikan, the operational and financial completions happen in parallel; for the completion process to be complete, the project manager must prepare a project self-evaluation which has to be reviewed and approved by the Director. The self-evaluation by the project manager shall highlight the use of resources, the implemented activities and events, the main project outputs and outcomes, as well as the lessons learned and possible challenges encountered during the project cycle.

73)The project evaluation is conducted at the end of the project with the aim to foster a University learning process. The lessons learned throughout the implementation of

¹⁹ The project manager must take necessary actions to ensure that there is no project budget deficit at project completion.

the project should be actively captured to ensure ongoing learning and adaptation within the organization; they should be highlighted in the self-evaluation.

Evaluation by director

- 74) As part of the completion process, the director is requested to make his/her own evaluation of the project. The Director then finally confirms the completion of the project which results in the project changing status from “ongoing” to “closed”, and/or possibly from “cancelled pending completion” to “cancelled”.
- 75) The completion of projects contributes to the soundness of academic programming. By incorporating certain minimum project completion activities at the end of a project, valuable feedback can be generated indicating where strengths and weaknesses occurred throughout the project. Such vital feedback makes it possible not only to avoid similar project pitfalls in future activities, but also highlights project strengths and methodologies that can be applied in future projects.
- 76) The approval of the completion process by the director marks the end of the project cycle at UNU. The project is from that moment onward considered “closed” (or cancelled).

About evaluation and impact assessment:

- **Evaluation:**

- 1) Evaluation is a systematic and objective assessment of projects in relation to stated objectives, aiming to determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the project. Project evaluation is an assessment that takes place at a specific point in time in which objective procedures are used in a systematic way to judge the effectiveness of activities within the project, the project’s design, its implementation, and overall results. Within the scope of the duration of the project, the evaluation should not only examine the immediate objectives, results, and activities, but also the outcomes, impacts, and sustainability of the project. The process of reviewing or evaluating work is vital for recognizing and understanding successes and failures, for learning from experiences, and for sharing lessons learned with others.
- 2) Evaluation framework and guidelines
- 3) Evaluation is an important tool to analyse and assess performance against a project objectives. It can be conducted from an accountability perspective, a developmental perspective, or a knowledge/academic values perspective. Evaluation can be carried out by the project team itself (internal evaluation, self-evaluation, or self-study), by an independent group of consultants or peer review (external evaluation), or by a well-balanced combination of internal and external evaluation.

- **Impact assessment**

- 1) Impact assessment is the systematic analysis of the lasting or significant changes—positive or negative, intended or unintended. Impact assessment therefore considers more than the immediate, predicted outputs of an intervention (project or programme) and is much more concerned with the implications in the medium and long term. However, assessing impact must be looked at from a long-term perspective.

Appendices

I. Glossary

Process/Item	Definition
Project	A project is an interrelated set of activities, events and outputs. It operates in a specific time frame, with start and end dates, and has a defined budget and resources. It works in order to achieve an objective of a research or capacity development effort.
Institute	For the purposes of this document, "institute" refers to UNU research and training centre or programme, as well as academic and support units.
Project Proposal	A project proposal is a document in a standardized format which identifies the proposed project's contributions, objectives and beneficiaries as well as audiences and knowledge sharing strategies. It further defines project elements such as the project team, partners and donors. The proposal establishes a project work plan, monitoring practices and a proposed budget. Once formally approved, the project proposal becomes the project document.
Project Document	A project document is a project proposal which has been formally approved by the director. All other documents, forms, revisions and records subsequent to approval also form part of the project document. This includes, but is not limited to, records of possible cancellation, extension, revision and suspension, records of activities, events, and outputs, records of monitoring indicators, and all other items attached to the project document.
Project Manager	The Project Manager is a role, not a title or position. The Project Manager is involved in all phases, processes and elements of a project, from its inception to its completion; ensures that the expected results are achieved on time to the highest quality and standard, and within the budget outlined in the project document; and is accountable for the overall project management. A project must have someone, not necessarily contracted to UNU, assigned as a Project Manager to be accountable for all aspects of the project. If the Project Manager is not contracted to UNU, at least one team member must be contracted to UNU, and act as a focal point for the University.
Project Approval	A formal process whereby a Director approves a project proposal and affirms (i) that sufficient funding is available and (ii) that the project is of sufficient quality and relevance.
Work Plan	A set of planned activities, events and outputs outlined in the project proposal which is used by the project team as a tool and a guide in implementing the project throughout its life.
Activities and Events	An activity or an event is a task carried out by the project (for example field research, or a workshop). These are established in the Work Plan of the Project Proposal and additional information regarding them is added to the Project Document as they occur.
Outputs	An output is a tangible product of the project, for example an article produced as the result of field research. These are set in the Work Plan of the Project Proposal and additional information regarding them is added to the Project Document as they are produced.
Extension	Extension is the postponing of the project end date. Extension of a project must be approved by the Director. Extension can be initiated by the Project Manager or Director.
Revision	Revision is a process whereby a Project Document is revised to any degree. A revision may be (i) substantive, or (ii) non-substantive; the former requires approval by the Director while the latter does not. It is at the discretion of a Project Manager to decide whether a revision is substantive or non-substantive. A substantive revision is one that significantly affects the nature of the project (for example, the relocation of all field research from Ghana to Niger). A non-substantive revision is one that does not significantly affect the nature of the

	project (for example, the correction of typos).
Suspension and Resumption	A project can be suspended by a Project Manager (with the approval of a Director), or by a Director alone. A suspended project is suspended for an indefinite period of time. The project may be resumed at any point with the approval of the Director. During the period of suspension all project activities, events and outputs are suspended, as well as reporting and monitoring.
Cancellation	Cancellation is the early closing of a project. Cancellation of a project requires the approval of the institute Director. A cancelled project cannot be resumed and must immediately complete Operational and Financial Completion.
Project Team	A Project Team is a set of individuals that work and collaborate on a single project. The Project Team must always comprise at least the Project Manager and may include an unspecified number of team members that do not have to be contracted to UNU. The Project Team operates the project under the supervision of a Project Manager and, ultimately, the director. At least one project team member must be contracted to UNU.
Project Donors	Donors are those entities, organizations or individuals that contribute to a specific project with Specific Programme Contributions. Donors are considered those that contribute only and exclusively with financial assets directly to UNU and its projects/programmes. The financial assets must come under direct project control, and the donor is only the immediate supplier of the assets. For example, if Microsoft provides funding to an NGO, which then provides funding to a UNU project, only the NGO is a donor, not Microsoft.
Project Partners	Project Partners are those entities or organizations that collaborate on projects with UNU. Project Partners may be (i) other UNU institutes, (ii) external partners, or (iii) associated institutions. They may partner with UNU on many levels and on different parts of projects. Project Partners may also be donors if they fulfil the conditions to be a one based on a definition of a Project Donor and vice versa.
Operational and Financial Completion	The operational completion of a project is defined by the stage when there are no more activities, events, outputs, or any other actions related to the substance of the project to be executed, and all activities, events and outputs, or any other actions related to the substance of the project have been completed. Operational Completion is achieved by the submission of a self-evaluation of the project by the project manager (which narrates the overall comparison between the proposed and achieved elements of the project as well as the potential impact of the project); the self-evaluation has to be reviewed and approved the Director. The financial completion is the stage of a project, when all financial and contractual transactions have been processed in Atlas, while the status of possible surplus or deficit has been determined and agreed upon between the project manager, Administration and Finance and with the approval of the director. The operational and financial completion happen in parallel in the Pelikan system.
Monitoring	Monitoring is a continuous process aimed at ensuring that the project activities, events and outputs, as well as set indicators are being implemented in an effective and timely manner. It is an internal process for the project team, during the course of normal project management.
Indicator	Indicators are set by the project team in the work plan. They are quantitative or qualitative variables that provide a simple and reliable basis for the team to measure changes, results, performance, or achievement.
Director	The Directors of institutes and programmes are responsible for overall project management within their institute. The Director, or an Officer in Charge acting on his behalf, approves all project proposals, extensions, revisions, cancellations, suspensions, resumptions, operational and financial completions within their institute.
Officer-in-Charge (OIC)	The Officer-in-Charge is the member of staff who acts as temporary Director when the Director is unable to carry out their duties (due to mission travel, annual leave, or illness, for example). The Officer-in-Charge is appointed by the Director,

	and ceases to act as Officer-in-Charge when the Director returns to his/her duties. There can only be one Officer-in-Charge at a time, and they must be UNU staff.
Evaluation	Evaluation is part of Operational Completion. It is the establishing, by the project team, of “lessons learned” in the course of the project. It is also the comparison of the completed project with what was planned in the original proposal. The self-evaluation by the project manager is completed by an evaluation of the same project by the director.
Core Funds	Core income represents voluntary contributions which are un-earmarked and unrestricted, and utilized to cover programme and operational activities fundamental for fulfilling the mission of the UNU. Core income comprises income from the endowment fund, operating contributions, other income, and cumulative surplus.
Specific Programme Contributions (SPC)	Specific Programme Contributions (SPCs) represent voluntary contributions earmarked for a specific programme purpose and aligned with the priorities set by the UNU Council. This category of voluntary contributions is intended to support academic activities over and above planned activities financed from the core income.

II. Acronyms and abbreviations

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CONDIR	Conference of Directors of UNU institutes and programmes
EXCO	Executive Committee
IAC	International Advisory Committee
ICA	Institutional Contractual Agreements
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
MID	Macro-Indicator of Institutional Development
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
RBM	Results Based Management
SPC	Specific Programme Contributions
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNU	United Nations University