

Editorial Advisory Board

The Editorial Advisory Board of Windtech International consists of professionals who, each in their discipline and with an independent view, assist the editorial board by making recommendations on potential authors and specific topics. The Editorial Advisory Board is served on a non-committal basis.

Members

Paul Gipe, USA

Stefan Gsänger, Germany

Mark Haller, USA

Preben Maegaard, Denmark

Eddie O'Connor, Ireland

Frits Ogg, The Netherlands

Peter Rae, Australia

Steve Sawyer, Belgium

Philip Totaro, USA

Frans van Hulle, Belgium

Project Governance for Wind Energy

Are technical expertise and knowledge necessary to achieve operational excellence on a wind energy project? Yes, indeed they are critical! But are they sufficient? No! When the project takes a wrong turn is it really the result of a technical issue or a lack of professional training? In most cases, both the problem and the solution lie elsewhere.

By Thierry Nicloux, Certified Business Coach at Muse coaching, France

It is difficult to anticipate and correct the way a project is going (its schedule, costs, quality and, above all, the client's confidence and satisfaction) using technical expertise alone.

Open, assertive communication, and even sometimes constructive confrontation, will restore confidence between stakeholders, and rebuild a team spirit where everyone assumes responsibility for their share in the project. Ideally, such restored mutual confidence will continue in the long term, way beyond the initial project's scope.

But how should a company support the project manager and his or her team to develop suitable skills? One answer is project governance coaching. But what is this?

Project governance can be defined as communication and human interaction to address the project setbacks. It is not technical, nor is it project management training. The aim is to reach project resolution, project delivery and project excellence.

For example, your company may develop, finance, build and operate renewable energy power plants all over the world. In one 5 million euro project you committed to deliver two wind turbines in Croatia by a specific date, up and running, and with quality control performed. However, it appears the delivery is delayed and quality control fails. The likely result is as follows:

- Your company does not meet the commitment
- Penalties are due for every day of delay
- The client is unhappy and confidence is at risk for future business

How can you prevent this happening? Anticipate! Well before the deadline contact, call or meet internal colleagues and upstream providers who will be affected and make sure the communication is regular and intensive. Get commitments from them, monitor the timelines and improve interpersonal confidence. Ask: Are we on time? What about the quality control preparation? Are there any bottlenecks that could create a delay?

Also keep in close contact with the downstream stakeholders and clients and always be authentic and truthful. For example say 'we face a delay, the options are this and that, we propose to proceed this way, is this ok for you?'. Never force the customer to have its back to the wall without notice and discussion well in advance. Show that you are reliable because you anticipate and you communicate.

The outcome is that delay and penalties will be reduced to zero. The client will feel and know that you really took care of its needs and will trust you in the future.

Issues such as the example above are frequent. Companies may try to address them by technical training or IT tools? However, often this is not successful, because technical training is not targeting the real root cause: human interaction.

So consider that solutions may lie with communication, interpersonal relations and commitment.

Project governance coaching can help you to address issues that will derail the project. And coaching professionals can support the project manager and his or her team to develop and apply these skills. ■

