

Quick Reference Card Project Steering Committees

Goal: To provide Governance & Support, to reach the objectives as set by the funder, taking into account stakeholders

Via:

- ▶ Direction towards Project Management
- ▶ Holding Project Management to account on Performance and Conduct
- ▶ Helping the project team move forward

Formation

- ▶ Only form a steering committee if organizational risks or project complexity warrant the time spent by the members
- ▶ Determine where the steering committee has additional authority compared to the authority of the members from their permanent positions
- ▶ Determine the authorities of the project manager and when he/she needs steering committee approval
- ▶ List the stage-gates or products to be explicitly approved
- ▶ Select members first based on the roles needed, but try to take personal characteristics into account
- ▶ Include external vendors only if the project is innovative and there is high trust
- ▶ Determine the decision-making process in the steering committee
- ▶ Describe when the project is a success
- ▶ Share project goals, steering committee responsibilities and individual responsibilities

Members

- ▶ Roles can be:
 - Project owner; responsible for the business case of behalf of the funder, chairs
 - User representative; to gather requirements, accept delivery and prepare user organization
 - Supplier; to supply critical resources
 - Support organization representative; to gather requirements, accept delivery and prepare support organization
 - Quality Assurance on behalf of and advise towards the steering committee
- ▶ Make the roles and responsibilities of each member explicit including for which departments/organizations and processes
- ▶ Agree on who represent departments or processes which do not deliver members
- ▶ Take mitigating measures (training, trusted assistants, coaching, ...) if competences, knowledge, authority, or time are lacking

Do's for a member

- ▶ Understand which external factors influence the validity of the business case
- ▶ Work on mutual trust between members and share overall goals
- ▶ Dare to disagree, based on your own responsibilities
- ▶ Use experiments / POCs for complex issues
- ▶ Plan project reviews
- ▶ Ask questions to understand what status reports mean for your responsibilities
- ▶ Take action in the standing organization you represent
- ▶ Together with other members plan decision-making outside the authority of the steering committee
- ▶ Together with other members champion the project upwards, sideways and downwards
- ▶ Trust the project management, though provide rules and organize checks
- ▶ Organize your personal trusted assistant who can probe project deliverables
- ▶ Motivate the project team

Don'ts for a member

- ▶ Regard status reports as just "FYI"
- ▶ Kill the messenger
- ▶ Assume resources are infinite and time can be squeezed
- ▶ Negotiate with the project manager
- ▶ Leave actions or decisions open
- ▶ Decide on topics outside your own responsibilities
- ▶ Put all actions on the name of the project manager
- ▶ Send a replacement to the steering committee meetings
- ▶ Assume you have all the skills needed for your role
- ▶ Only let the project manager determine the agenda
- ▶ Add members just so they are informed
- ▶ Manage the project team
- ▶ Think cancellation of the project is no option