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ProSPER.Net Project Assessment Guidelines

In line with the ProSPER.Net Project Proposal Guidelines, this Project Assessment Guidelines aims to complete a series of steps to ensure quality and delivery of outputs regarding ProSPER.Net projects, as decided in the 6th ProSPER.Net Board Meeting held at Yonsei University, Seoul, on 8 and 9 December 2010.

Whereas the Project Proposal Guidelines sets the requirements for project proposals, the Project Assessment Guidelines determines the assessment process once the project is approved by the Board and fund is duly disbursed. Both documents shall complement each other.

General Guidelines

1. All ProSPER.Net joint projects are subject to assessment in the middle stage of its development and upon its completion.
2. The midway assessment serves to appraise progress in order to make necessary adjustments and refinements on the conduct of the project, once there might be undesired deviations from the project plan.
3. The final assessment comprises a critical appraisal of the overall project, to document experience gained and lessons learned. The basis or reference point for these assessments is the project proposal document, interim and final reports and other decisions that may have been made in discussion thereof with project partners and/or in ProSPER.Net Board meetings.
4. The assessment shall be conducted in a constructive manner, aiming at determining the relevant lessons to be learnt so that mistakes are not repeated and future project developments are improved.
5. One to three reviewers shall be identified and appointed by ProSPER.Net Board Chair to assess projects, provided that these are not faculty members from any institution participating in the project. Their findings are to be reported to ProSPER.Net Secretariat, responsible for

submitting them to the appropriate body for acknowledgement and final appraisal, either ProSPER.Net Board or its Advisory Panel. The assessing team should have sufficient technical expertise and professional standing in order to comply with the demands of the assignment.

5.1. The Chair shall nominate reviewers, on a need basis, requesting the cooperation of ProSPER.Net Board members. One reviewer shall participate in the midway assessment, whereas three reviewers will participate in the final assessment process.

6. Based on the review and recommendation from ProSPER.Net Board or its Advisory Panel, the Secretariat may withhold any installments related to the project, until project leader and its partners address the issues raised in the final review document.
7. The Project Proposal Guidelines complements this Project Assessment Guidelines, since it contains a series of requirements that are to be observed until the completion of the project takes place.

Specific Guidelines for the Assessment

The following are specific guidelines that may be used by the assessment team in evaluating projects. These are recommendations from ProSPER.Net Board and shall not limit any other item that the assessment team may deem necessary in accomplishing the tasks related to project evaluation.

1. Consistency with Project Selection Criteria

The project, as it progresses to completion, is expected to be consistent with the criteria used in the selection process. These are some of the key questions to be answered:

- Does it remain relevant to postgraduate education and research on SD? Explain briefly.
- Were the funding sources, as planned, realized?
- Were there financial over-runs/under-runs?
- Did the participating member/partner institutions effectively carried out their respective tasks?
- For completed projects, is sustainability ensured?
- Is there developed a sustainability plan?

2. Objectives

The objectives of the project form the basis of appraisal of success. This must be assessed both qualitatively and quantitatively, whenever possible. The satisfaction of objectives must be measured against the success criteria outlined in the project proposal document. The following are some of the key questions:

- Were the planned objectives realistic and achievable?
- Were the objectives actually met?

3. Outputs

Concrete results or finished products have to be ascertained whether or not they conform to the plan as described in the project proposal document.

- Did the planned outputs materialize? If not, why not?
- Measure each planned output against the actual output – Are there variances?
If so, why? Are there lessons that can be learnt?
- What working papers and other documents were produced as a result of the project?

4. Tasks and Timelines

Each task, as defined in the project proposal document, must be evaluated with respect to the work package – costs, manpower, timelines, etc.:

- Were there costs over-runs/under-runs?
- Were the manpower provided to the tasks sufficient?
- Were there time delays or early finish?
- Were there changes made in the tasks as compared to the work plan?

5. Implementation Arrangements

Being a joint undertaking, the implementation of the project needs careful coordination among participating members. It is important to assess whether or not the implementation arrangements were smooth or could have been improved.

- Were the assignment of responsibilities among members adhered to?

- Was there proper coordination of tasks and communication among members?
- Were contractual administration (ref. Institutional Contractual Agreement) met and properly executed?
- Were there resistances or any difficulty in execution within a member institution?
- Was there resistance to implementation?

6. Inputs

Resources are drawn from all participating members. It is important to assess to what extent planned contributions of members have actually been made task by task for the production of each output.

- Were the following resources as planned contributed?
 - Physical
 - Monetary
 - Manpower
 - Any other relevant resources

7. Costs

This is a sort of an external audit as to whether processes and actual disbursements were carried according to plan. The baseline of this exercise is the budget estimate contained in the project proposal document. The basic questions to be answered are:

- Were the planned costs in error?
- If so, why were they in error?

8. Overall Assessment

This scrutinizes the project in terms of its overall contributions with respect to the following criteria:

- Consistency of the project outputs/outcomes with ProSPER.Net ambitions and priorities
- Whether the problem to be addressed has been addressed
- Whether the project strategy has been the right strategy to address the problem
- Whether the objectives of the project have been met
- Whether all the resources required to conduct the project have been delivered
- Whether all activities, administrative arrangements, timelines, etc. have been satisfied

- What was the real impact of the project in terms of transforming practices, curricula, influencing outreach activities of the university, contributing to the development and enhancement of ESD within the region.

Scope of Application

Although these guidelines shall be used mainly by project assessors as specified above, ProSPER.Net members leading or participating in projects may consider using the specific guidelines to evaluate their own project activities for report submission to the Secretariat.
