Module Four
Completion of Research Projects

Training on Project Cycle Management for Researchers
Ethiopian Academy of Sciences
25-27 May 2016, Ghion Hotel, Addis Ababa

Closing the Project
Module Objectives

● Enhance understanding on project completion requirements and elements thereof

● Develop increased know-how of actions to enhance project output dissemination & impact

● Raise competencies in effective project completion within the planned provisions whilst upholding commendable communication with team members, donors and other stakeholders
Expected Outcomes

After completing this topic, participants will have:

i. A better view of proper project completion requirements and elements thereof

ii. Increased knowledge of actions that enhance project output dissemination and impact

iii. Acquired enhanced competencies to complete projects within the planned provisions whilst upholding commendable communication with team members, donors and other stakeholders
Research Project Completion

When is a research project declared all done?

- At the end of the allocated time
- Upon achieving the outcomes

Whether a project ends as a total success, partial success, complete failure, cancelled, or with some other designation, the project must still be "closed" in order to formally terminate the work effort.

A project has a beginning & ending time built-in its plan

- Each project is a short-term initiative meant to produce a specific outcome and is temporary by design
- **Project closure** is a key part of the project life cycle

➢ But where in the cycle ??
Completion of Projects:

- Part of Research Execution Components
  - Managing research implementation
  - Coordinating & keeping the team together
  - Maintaining project documents and records
  - Completing/terminating the project & maintaining effective communication with team members, donors, other stakeholders

- Where in the Project Cycle?
  - Part of project Implementation/Execution
In the Six-Stage Process of the Project Cycle

1. Identification
2. Formulation
3. Appraisal
4. Implementation
5. Monitoring
6. Evaluation

- Completing/terminating the project
- Maintaining project documents & records
- Coordinating
- Managing

Identification of follow on projects
Like this one, we are treating it as a separate Module.
What needs does Project Closure Fulfill?

What are the values of Ending a Project the Right Way?

- To transition deliverables to their long term operational status
- To release team members for other projects or return to regular positions
- To complete any remaining obligations and conduct formal practices of project review
- To recognize the work and efforts of project team and commitment of stakeholders
- To establish a record of project results to build on for the future
Closing/Completion Phase Involves:

• Presentation of findings to stakeholders/holding of dissemination workshops (for validation or sharing)

• Project team reflection on lessons from research project phases (monitoring/evaluation)

• Finalizing of report, including incorporating comments/ feedback from presentation/ dissemination workshop

• Submission of final report, including quantitative and qualitative databases, hard copies of completed data collection instruments - Peer review, editing for publication; publication
Project Closure Steps and Requirements

● Project acceptance criteria are defined in the proposal and they include:
  ● The form and function of specific project deliverables
  ● Ways of establishing end-user expectations and requirements
  ● The basis by which project deliverables are accepted or rejected

● Furthermore, project acceptance criteria are usually spelt out in the contract agreement and the specific transition/turnover requirements are considered in the contract agreement
Are there Tools for Use in Project Closure/Completion?

- YES, There Are
<table>
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<tr>
<th>PROJECT PHASES/ELEMENTS</th>
<th>MANAGEMENT TOOLS</th>
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| **CONCEPTUALISATION/INITIATION** | - Research project terms of reference  
- Formats: concept notes, expression of interest (EOI), research proposal |
| **PLANNING/DESIGN** | - Conceptual frameworks, research data collection and analysis tools  
- Log-frame, RBM, project management triangle, work plan, work breakdown schedule, Gantt chart, PERT-CPM,  
- Budgets and spreadsheets  
- Terms of reference (ToR) |
| - Firming up the research design  
- Determining goals, results, scope, work to be done, milestones and deliverables  
- Allocating the financial resources to the project  
- Assigning responsibilities to team members |
| **EXECUTION/IMPLEMENTATION** | - Monitoring tools (log-frame, RBM, defined milestones, work plan)  
- Style guide for periodic reports  
- Research data gathering and analysis tools, including technology and software |
| **CLOSING/COMPLETION** | - Evaluation/assessment instrument  
- Style guide for completion reports  
- Budget reports (actual) |
Project Closing/Completion Tools

- Evaluation/assessment instrument
- Style guide for completion reports
- Budget reports (actual)

What are Important Project Closure Activities?

- Transfer of the deliverables
- Project analysis
- Documentation
Important Project Closure Activities

Transfer of the deliverables (goods, programmes, reports, work packages)

- For some projects delivering the final product to the client is sometimes a step in the closing process

Example: Software development

- Project closure activities ensure the product created meets project requirements
Project Closure Activities

Project analysis

- Review successes & shortcomings for future reference
  - Project participants
    - Look back over the project successes and failures
    - Conduct a group meetings or individual interviews of the people who worked on the project
    - Use meetings to review the project outcomes in addition to finding out how the participants felt in the process
    - Ask for suggestions on making future projects more successful based on the process and outcome of the closing project
Project Closure Activities

**Documentation** (Maintaining Research Documents & Records)

- Finalize the documentation
  - Documenting the process (initial requirements, development phases and the records)
  - Retention of any documentation related to the project for future reference if necessary
  - Creation of a cover sheet for all of the documentation with a brief overview and outline of the project and list of participants
- Organizing documentation chronologically to easily locate information in the future
Reporting Project Outcomes

- Project managers must provide reports on major undertakings including progress and completion
  - The PI gets reports from Teams & Team leaders get reports from researchers

- The aims of the research reports are to:
  - Provide sufficiently detailed information
  - Check the state of advance of the project in light of its objectives
  - Check the anticipated results & activities to be carried out
# Types of Reports and Main Implementing Periods

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual progress report</td>
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- ✓ Inception Report
- ✓ Annual Progress Reports
- ✓ Final Report

- ➢ Usually these are the Compulsory Reports
- ➢ The Closing Report is the Final Report
Reporting Project Outcomes

- The reports also cover details of budget implementation
- Future budgetary provisions are included if not a terminal/final report
- Progress reports are most likely/usually submitted on a quarterly basis
- A good outline/format is needed for reporting
- A good format is the one provided by the funding agency when there is one
An Outline for Drafting Research Reports

Contents of the Report

• Project Title
• Executive Summary
• Main Report
  • Background
  • Project overview
  • Achievement of the project’s objectives
    • Original objectives
    • Performance against objectives
  • Project performance
    • Performance against planned time
    • Performance against planned cost
  • Approved project changes
    • Effect on original project plan

• Project management conclusions
• Lessons learned (recommendations)
  • Management
  • Technical
  • Quality
  • Major issues during the project lifecycle
  • Project reviews (usually formative, mid-term, summative)
  • Follow on actions
  • Dissemination (flyers, policy briefs, articles, workshops, conferences, other)
Completing and Terminating the Research Project

Preparing and Holding Dissemination Workshops

● Disseminating findings is part of the closing phase of research
  ● Research should be presented to donor, other users of the findings

● Dissemination should be planned in advance, strategy built into the project design and work plan, with funds allocated to it in the budget
Purpose of Disseminating findings

This is good for:

- Validating the findings
- Sharing the findings with beneficiaries and stakeholders
- Contributing to theory building
- Creating an impact on policy and legislation
- Providing situational analysis to local, national or international development efforts
Finalizing the Research and Incorporating Comments/Feedbacks

● Finalizing the research report and incorporating comments and feedback from presentations/dissemination workshops

● Documents required for finalizing the report

● Documents with:
  ● Goal, objectives, activities, deliverables and milestones
  ● Copy of the contract; milestones, which consist of outputs and reports
Finalizing the Report

The report must indicate:

● The Project Milestones
  ● First milestone is the inception report; second is draft report; third is final report
● Inclusion of primary and secondary data and their treatments; data sets that guide the formulation of research findings, conclusions and recommendations
● Incorporating comments and feedback
● Submitting the final report, including quantitative and qualitative data
Finalizing the Research Report and Incorporating Comments and Feedback from Presentations/ Dissemination Workshops

- Submit or make available the supporting documents, research instruments and databases that will substantiate the claims being made in the report
  - The finance unit, data management specialists, data management team and others help to ensure that the report is supported by a set of project and associated documents
- Get the report peer reviewed
Forms of Project Outcome Dissemination

Form of Dissemination

- Workshops, research forums, conferences, roundtable discussions with stakeholders/ donors/ sponsors, GOs, NGOs, local partners, project beneficiaries
- Pre-meeting or informal meetings with key policy makers to discuss findings
- Publication of the research report in journals, newsletters and non-academic publications in the form of a policy brief, working paper or power point presentation
- Publishing in media: newspaper, TV, radio, magazines, the web
- Research articles for academic publications/conferences
- Academic lecturing and teaching
- Sharing with research networks and associations
A policy brief/message is:

- A short strategic summary of project outcomes/recommendations
- Summary of the key objectives of a particular research
- No more than about three pages
- Simple enough to be understood by various audiences
- All of the above address a policy concern and identify policy response options
Allowing and Facilitating Team Reflection

Project team reflections on Lessons from the research

- Team reflection is an important part of research management and capacity building throughout the life cycle of the research.
- It is used to analyze the research practices and their strengths, identify areas of conflict and clarify and solve problems.
- It includes:
  - Team reflection on doing the research
  - Team reflection on lessons learned
Allowing and Facilitating Team Reflection

Focus of team reflection

- Task oriented Team reflection on learning from the research experience
- Process oriented team reflections (learning from research)
- Team reflections focus on learning how to do research
Some Questions that the Team Reflection Needs to Address

● How did the team manage?
  ● The conceptual framework
  ● The literature review
  ● The research methods and instruments, sampling, site selection, fieldwork, data gathering and analysis
  ● The report writing
  ● Dissemination of the results

● How far is the research from accomplishing the milestones?

● What are the problems with the data and how are these to be addressed?

● What are the deviations and how can they be explained/justified?

● Who is doing what and how far are expectations or responsibilities being met?

● What areas need improvement and how should the gaps be addressed in future research?
  ● How should data be collected, interpreted, analyzed & managed?
Submitting the Final Report

- During post-project audit, the first thing donors/clients will look for will be the data.
  - The research team should be ready with the different data sets (primary & secondary).
- Some reports belong to the beneficiary (e.g., Ministry of Health).
  - The ownership of the data rests with the beneficiary.
Submitting the Final Report

Other aspects

● The research team needs to be guided by institutional policies on how to make data available to the public

● Keeping a good file of reports to make them available upon client’s request

● A cover letter or a transmittal letter to accompany each final submission

● Every report and signed cover letter is submitted with a hard copy (CDROM)

What the beneficiary is expected to do upon receiving report

➢ Must provide some kind of receipt or certificate acknowledging the completion of the project and acceptance of project outcomes
Key Actions for Project Close-out

- Conduct a formal debriefing session
- Complete paper work and archive the project file
- Acknowledge, reward, compensate, honour, pay tribute to team members’ contributions
- Formally celebrate project completion
  - Talk about the success story to boost morals of those who were parts of the project
  - Promote the project
  - Disseminate the key findings and the take home messages
The Best Ways to End a Project

• Submit all deliverables in revised and approved form

• Create a project archive and put where things belong

• Create a list of future actions to increase the project's success

• Offer your availability for quick calls or emails to give advice or answer questions
The Best Ways to End a Project

• Document the lessons learned
• Say thank you and goodbye to team members, the leader who brought the team onto the assignment
• Delete future assignments/meetings from your calendar
• Take some time to celebrate the successes in a farewell
• Shift the gear to another project
Communicating/Interacting with Donors

Interaction with donors

- When? What? How

- Send evaluation report to donor
- Send concept note to donor for CLEARANCE
- Send completion report to donor
- Send proposal to donor for APPRAISAL and APPROVAL
- Send monitoring and review reports to donor
FIVE Processes of Project Management

- Initiating a project
- Planning the project
- Executing the project/plan
- Controlling execution of the project/plan
- Closing the project

Elements of Project Management

- Tasks
- Resources
- Time

Success Factors in Project Management

- High quality delivery
- Within budget delivery
- On time delivery

High quality delivery
Within budget delivery
On time delivery
The Results Chain in the RBM Framework

Goal

Purpose

Output

Purpose

Output

Purpose

Output

Activities

Inputs
Thank You