

## 4. Office set-up and administration

### ► In this chapter

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Cash Projects have a clear management philosophy: lean and efficient management. For office administration of Cash Projects, standardisation of most procedures, tools, equipment, staff matters, etc. makes sense.

### ► Benefits

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- As Cash Projects try to keep overhead costs as low as possible, management structures and procedures are built bottom-up, starting from the beneficiary level.
- Standardised management tools and standardised solutions facilitate harmonised implementation in terms of administration.
- Proper project management and office administration create a relaxed working atmosphere. Everybody knows their tasks and duties, is informed about the standards to be met, and will be proud to contribute to achieving the project aims.

### ► Procedure

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Office administration is part of the project manager's duties.

#### ○ **Standards established right from the start of the project**

At the beginning of a project it is useful to clarify the organisational chart, set rules for the office management, assign responsibilities for finances, and establish a filing system and administration templates.

#### ○ **Well-used cash and administrative know-how**

- Use of recommended tools and procedures as far as possible
- Regular check of correct application of introduced tools and procedures
- Adjustment of tools and procedures only if really necessary
- Consulting with backstopper and approval of reliability before developing own additional instruments

#### ○ **Know-how sharing**

- Consequent sharing of newly developed tools that have yielded results as good or better than existing tools
- Integration of newly developed tools in the final report as "recommended tools" for new Cash Projects

- Successful office management is based on the following principles:

- **Simplicity** and strict application of procedures, tools and instructions
- **Efficiency** in terms of time (time budget, planning, schedule), costs (adhering to SDC rules and budget) and allocation of means and resources
- **Transparency** of key data, procedures, implementation, and closing down standards (e.g. regular team meetings, progress monitoring, reporting, date of end of Cash Project)
- **Safety** of people first, then of project means (safety plan regularly updated, known and practised by the whole staff)
- **Language** in the Cash Project office should be English, French or Spanish – as understood by the local staff (for team meetings, reports)
- **Local resources** to be used as far as possible (know-how, equipment, transport, communication)

## 4.1 Personnel

### ► In this chapter

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The local staff's competence is one of the main factors in successful implementation. For a project manager, the only way to find suitable persons to work with is to have a clear idea of what kind of staff is needed before recruitment begins. Specific profiles must be prepared before advertising and selection.

Cash Projects reach higher levels of performance if the project manager is able to inspire teamwork. Projects that benefit from a highly developed team spirit are much more efficient and reliable than projects with top-down management. Teamwork requires clear tasks linked with competences and responsibilities for everyone.

Weekly or even daily meetings for reviewing and planning that involve all members of staff concerned help to reach this goal.

### ► Benefits

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- If a team approach is employed with the permanent staff, the Cash Project will feature efficiency, good atmosphere and committed responsible staff.
- A critical aspect of the so-called “classic” management style is micro-management, often provoking disorientation and discouraging local staff.

### ► Procedure

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#### ○ Staffing

- Listed and required staff must match the tasks designed in the project planning.
- Time requirements for the different tasks must be estimated (in man months).
- Competences defined during the assessment mission must be checked and prepared in the form of a profile list for each category of staff needed.

#### ○ Recruitment

- For most Cash Projects it is strongly recommended to place advertisements in newspapers.
- Invited candidates must prepare a presentation of their dossiers.
- Informally recommended persons should be invited to present their dossier following the same standard recruitment procedure.
- Interviews lasting ½ hour should be conducted with the assistance of a person trusted by all parties.
- candidates should be clearly informed about project expectations and the limited period of employment.
- A candidate's familiarity with the local context, teamwork skills, and professional experience in humanitarian assistance should be assessed.
- Staff should be selected by using a simple rating system set up in advance, based on the defined profile and on additional criteria. The “sympathy” criterion alone might become a trap.
- All candidates should be informed about the outcome after decisions have been taken.
- Part-timers should be selected separately for short-term work and in a more informal manner. They must also be introduced, trained, guided and supervised very closely.

#### ○ ToRs and contracts

- Terms of Reference (ToRs) are the basis for any recruitment profile.
- Local salary scales are to be assessed and taken into consideration. The project's salary system should be based on local standards.
- Preparation and signing of employment contract should be done before starting work. ToRs and other relevant documents are to be added as integral parts of the contract.



#### ○ Work team and teamwork

Neglecting staff concerns will sooner or later bring about various problems. To get the project to run smoothly, the following points should be observed:

- introduction to the cash approach for any new member of staff
- familiarisation with the cash philosophy and cash methodology
- explanation of office rules and organisational chart
- short training according to requirements and general computer work
- regular team meetings following agreed rules and an agenda prepared in advance
- regular feedback to staff and periodic qualification of their performance and potentials
- issuing a work certificate when employment terminates.

#### ○ Expatriates

- Usually a Cash Project is managed by an expatriate. A deputy in a position to take over management in the case of the project manager's absence must be assured.
- **ToRs:** the project document forms an integral part of the project manager's ToRs and constitutes the main, binding point of reference.
- **Backstopping:** consulting the chapter 3.4 ([External support – backstopping](#)) in this workbook ensures coherence.

	<p><b>Lean management by carefully selected and efficient staff</b> Most Cash Projects can be implemented by one expatriate and up to five national members of staff. Only very large and long-lasting projects will require a big team of more than five or six persons.</p>
	<p><b>Salaries, per diem and local context</b> Designers of Cash Projects strongly recommend that salary scales be adapted to local standards. Most international standards are completely disconnected from local reality, and even per diems are far too high. This may provoke jealousy and distortions, and it may send wrong signals of what the Cash Project is really about. High salaries do not guarantee high commitment.</p>

## 4.2 Infrastructure

### ► In this chapter

While chapter 2.9, [Resources needed for implementation](#), describes what is needed, this present chapter focuses on how to use the resources.

Efficiently setting up the infrastructure to suit requirements is essential, with project duration being limited and disaster victims being in dire need.

Standard infrastructure consists of an office space with standard office equipment, and possibly a garage for the vehicles.

Lean set-up means keeping it as small and functional as possible, renting existing infrastructure rather than purchasing or building new, opting for good and reliable equipment, and dispensing with excessively high standards. Infrastructure is costly and needs to be carefully administered.

### ► Benefits

Well-managed infrastructure facilitates implementation and creates a pleasant working situation. It is surprising to see to what extent the quality of office management and infrastructure is reflected in the quality of project implementation.

### ► Procedure

Before starting any activity, the assessment report and chapter 2.9, [Resources needed for implementation](#), should be consulted.

#### ○ Equipment

Purchasing office equipment and furniture on the spot also helps the project team to become familiar with local conditions. It must be kept in mind that goods ordered from abroad may take a long time to arrive. Besides, maintenance problems are easier to solve with goods purchased locally.

- asking for offers from 3 different suppliers for costly items
- while selecting equipment, it should be considered that later on it will be handed over to partners or other project teams, and therefore it should meet their expectations as well
- purchased items are to be entered in an inventory at the same time as in accounting.

#### ○ Transport

Resources needed for implementation (2.9) should be checked for the most appropriate means of transport in terms of cost, maintenance and reliability.

- Organisation-specific or standard rules for transportation are to be imposed and must be known and respected.
- A driver is to be assigned in order to keep the project manager and his/her deputies from having to drive. The driver must assume responsibility for vehicle maintenance, too, as this would consume too much of the project manager's time and energy.
- A log book for each vehicle should be kept as the best way to control use of the car, costs and maintenance.
- Rules and security aspects are to be strictly respected. People's lives are at stake, and the project may be severely handicapped in the case of accidents or non-functioning vehicles.

- **Office**
  - **Required space:** working space limited to 2 or 3 rooms has proven to be sufficient.
  - **Location:** a Cash Project office should – whenever possible – not be integrated in existing structures. An autonomous status facilitates un-bureaucratic functioning.
  - **Security** is the main concern for a Cash Project. Security guidelines are to be consulted carefully.
  - **Vehicles** used by the Project Team Cash should be stationed safely and nearby. Parking space suitable for emergency departure should be ensured.
  - **Power cuts** are frequent in emergency situations and may block work on computers. Purchasing laptops and emergency generators is indispensable in case the office space is not housed in a building equipped with stand-by sets, such as government buildings or office blocks.
  
- **Communication**

Once the communication infrastructure is established, good results mainly depend on how communication is organised.

  - **Costs:** clear rules are to be defined to keep costs low. Bills are to be checked regularly.
  - **Access** to communication lines must be guaranteed; having several lines available is recommended. Alternative access to phone and internet services must be investigated and tested. Communication must not be blocked by private communications.
  - **Liaison offices** in the capital or in a bigger town are important for information purposes at national level and facilitate supply under difficult circumstances. This can also be achieved with the help of a like-minded organisation right at the beginning.
  
- **IT equipment**
  - **Inventory, spare parts and supplies:** One person should be appointed as responsible for the inventory list, including updating. The same person should also be responsible for stock keeping of office and IT supplies (paper, ink and toner cartridges, CDs, floppy disks, etc.).
  - **Data management know-how:** Most Cash Projects leave many records on how to implement the project, but very little on how to manage the database. It is to be assured that the data manager keeps a record of his activities, which is especially useful in case of sickness, leave or early termination of contract.

## 4.3 Contracts and agreements

### ► In this chapter

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During the start-up phase there is a special need for contracts and agreements that take account of local legal conditions. It is the project manager's duty to elaborate and sign precise contracts and clear agreements, such as work contracts for recruited personnel, contracts for renting infrastructure or cars, as well as agreements with local cooperation partners.

### ► Benefits

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Using templates and existing contracts:

- reduces the risk of making mistakes or losing sight of relevant topics,
- saves working time because only key points need to be adjusted.

### ► Procedure

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- **Templates for contracts and agreements**

Before the start of the Cash Project it should be ensured that templates of contracts, agreements and other standard documents is at the disposal of the project manager (e.g. access to the toolbox to the SDC Cash Workbook)). A clear distinction should be made between contracts and agreements. Agreements usually have to be negotiated between the partners and their elaboration takes more time. Cash Projects require few agreements only, mostly with implementing partners such as banks, postal services, and monitoring and verification organisations.

- **Templates:** checking should be done to determine whether there are appropriate documents of previous Cash Projects. They can easily be adjusted to a new context.

- **If no templates are available:** using a checklist of topics to be stipulated in a new contract or agreement, the backstopper or HQ should be asked for a corresponding template before elaborating a new one.
- **Elaboration:** usually drafts of agreements negotiated have to be presented to the HQ and backstopper for comments. It is their responsibility to decide whether the legal department of the organisation also needs to be involved. As this might take a long time, interim solutions should be provided.
- **Simplicity:** it is important to keep contracts and agreements as simple as possible. Over time, templates become more and more complex without added value. Additional elements should be put in an annex (e.g. procedures, office rules).
- **Authority to sign:** in most organisations important contracts and agreements need to be approved by the HQ.

## 4.4 Correspondence

### ► In this chapter

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Implementers are practitioners who may sometimes neglect the importance of adequate correspondence with partners, HQ, backstopper and other parties involved. This chapter will give some tips on how to avoid this.

### ► Benefits

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- Standardisation of correspondence and use of project templates contribute to a corporate appearance and reduce loss of time and energy.
- Correct filing of project correspondence is essential to ensure transparency for the project management, and helps to avoid the trouble of lengthy searching of documents.

### ► Procedure

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#### ○ Correspondence

- **Templates:** these should be developed right at the beginning of the Cash Project and be made available on the server – protected against unauthorised changes. Whenever possible, existing templates are to be used, adapted to current requirements, and translated into the local language if necessary. Translated templates should be named the same way as the original file, with a corresponding suffix.
- **Official letters** must be signed by the project manager, except for standard letters sent according to fixed procedures. Once fixed, the logo (corporate design in header and footer) must remain unchanged.
- **Filing rules** have to be respected by everybody including the project manager. All staff including newcomers are to be familiar with those rules.
- **Confidential documents:** sensitive documents and files should be filed in a separate folder accessible only to the project management and protected by a password.

#### ○ E-mail communication

E-mail is a very comfortable and efficient way of communicating, but a few important points have to be observed:

- **E-mails:** Precise formulation in a short and clear style is advisable. Significant designations in the “Subject” line help to retrieve filed e-mails.
- **Documents:** Longish documents should be properly named and sent as attachments to an e-mail message. Compressing (packing) documents into a zip-file helps to reduce file size and transmission time.
- **Addressees** should be selected carefully. Cash Projects need to be precise and lean, and this is also valid for the distribution of e-mails and documents.
- **Periodicity:** Periodic communication is helpful for everybody. Concentration on the weekly report and specifying questions helps to minimise e-mail traffic.



**Adjust e-mail content for HQ**

Desk officers suffer from a flood of e-mails, documents and papers. They may become overburdened quickly, as they have many projects to attend to.

## 4.5 Filing system and documentation

### ► In this chapter

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The filing system of a Cash Project is comparable to its warehouse stocking know-how as regards concepts, reports, procedures, tools, templates, etc.

In Cash Projects systematic filing is rare, but much can be improved by strictly applying some basic rules. This is the only way for the project and for later users to capitalise on and share cash know-how as "open source capital". The tools of systematic filing of documents, lists and photos, and regular maintenance of the filing system as a precondition for proper management as well as for knowledge management, are explained later.

### ► Benefits

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- Correct filing makes it possible to find each document immediately for consultation. This saves energy and time for more important tasks than unproductive searching for urgently needed documents.
- The standardised Cash Project filing system allows documents to be filed in a set of folders and has proven its worth. If a check is wanted on how other Cash Projects managed a specific problem, familiarity with the standardised structure will help to quickly find the file on CDs of former projects.
- A good filing system will be beneficial during the closing down phase, too. While writing the final report one will easily have access to all relevant documents.

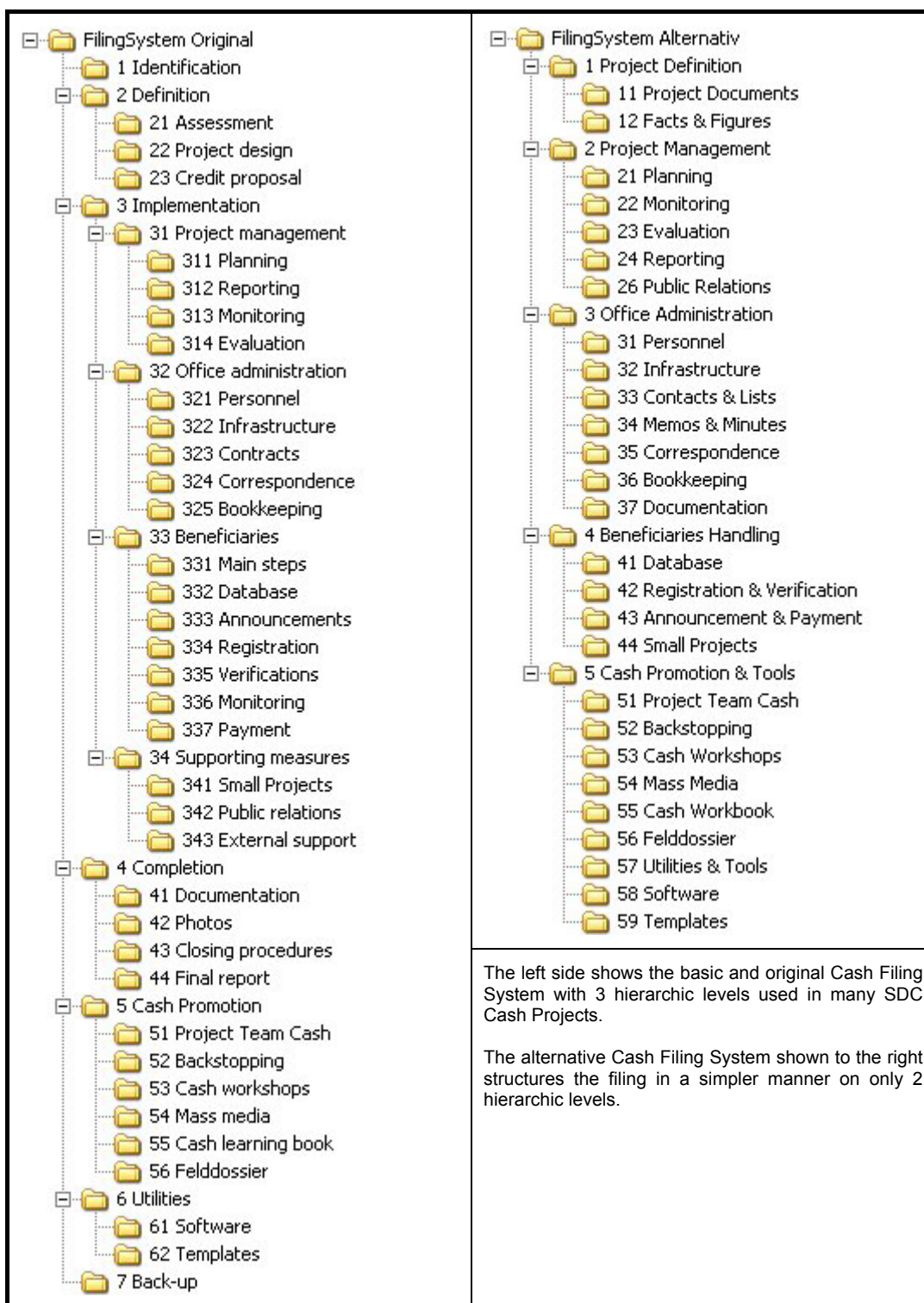
### ► Procedure

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#### ○ **Organisation of computer work and filing of documents at an early stage**

It is up to the project manager to set the rules for all electronic data work. Some of the tasks may also be assigned to the database manager:

- **PC rules:** Rules for daily PC operations proposed in this workbook should be checked as to whether they suit the planned project.
- **PC training:** It is useful to organise regular short training courses in computer work for the staff – with a high return on this small investment.
- **Filing structure:** It is to be ensured that rules and filing structure are visibly placed in the office and known to all persons having access to the computers.



o **Filing electronic documents is an ongoing task**

Based on the analysis of many Cash Projects, a standard filing structure was adopted as shown in the graphic above. Use of this filing system is highly recommended.

- o **Filing start-up:** The project manager starts filing by establishing the structure that will be used during implementation and that already integrates all relevant documents.
- o **Correct filing** of documents. Files are named in the form date\_projectname\_filename (standard format). Alternatively they can be named in the form projectname\_filename\_date (yyymmdd), as preferred by the project manager. No matter which system is chosen, it has then to be used consistently for all



documents. New files/documents are to be saved immediately in the correct folder before starting to write.

- **Filing hierarchies:** The filing structure should not be extended to a third hierarchy, as this might get out of control. If additional folders are really needed, a solution with distinct labelling is to be preferred to an additional hierarchy. Old files can be archived in a sub-folder “history” or “old files”, if necessary.
- **Filing check:** A weekly systematic check regarding duplicates and correct file location is advisable. It is useful to pin a list on the office wall with the dates of filing checks and back-ups performed.

○ **Filing papers and printed documents is important**

If the filing system is set up late, it will cause additional work after much struggling with the paper flood.

- **Paper filing system:** It is up to the project manager to set a few rules and to initiate a clear filing structure for folders, box files or a similar system.
- **Check** the paper filing regularly.
- **Finances:** Keep bookkeeping documents separate in a safe place.

	<p><b>Project Documentation</b>                  An appropriate filing system is a precondition for complete final project documentation.</p>
	<p><b>“In our project everything is different.”</b>                  Sometimes people not familiar with Cash Projects are convinced that profiting from established procedures is too complicated and does not match their needs. Experienced project managers generally appreciate the advantages, and make a selection of tools.</p>

Rules for PC work, filing and back-ups step-by-step	
<b>Open and save a new file</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Labelling: The document is labelled with the current date and a meaningful name, or vice versa: e.g. 020902_CfH Backstopping program review mission.doc, or using another format: e.g. CfH Backstopping program review mission_020902.doc</li> <li>▪ Filing: The correct folder in which to save this new file is identified by consulting the filing structure. A printout must be pinned on a wall of the Cash Project office.</li> </ul>
<b>Prepare the file before starting to write</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Title: An accurate title must be entered at the top.</li> <li>▪ Footer: The file name (and possibly the path) should be inserted in the footer, as well as the page number. This allows the document to be located quickly.</li> </ul>
<b>Work on an existing document</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Re-labelling: The file is saved by changing the date in the file name only, in order to keep the document versions with their original and current dates. This clearly shows the updating of the same document: e.g. 020903 PC filing rules.doc – later: 020910 PC filing rules.doc or using another format: e.g. PC filing rules_020903.doc – later: PC filing rules_020910.doc</li> </ul>
<b>Working with Excel worksheets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Merging: Cells should not be merged, otherwise it is no longer possible to sort and filter data.</li> <li>▪ Formatting: Rows or columns should be worked with, rather than formatted cell by cell.</li> <li>▪ Concentrating: All information is to be kept in one sheet or several sheets in one Excel file. Remember that unused information (rows and columns) can be hidden.</li> </ul>
<b>Filing of pictures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Labelling: Date and name are to be indicated, e.g. 020903 CfH Computer Training. If they are not labelled, the pictures will get lost. It is advisable to select pictures from time to time and keep only the best.</li> <li>▪ Private pictures: Personnel folders can be set up for each staff member.</li> </ul>
<b>Respect the Cash Filing Structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Avoid documents which are not related to the Cash Project in the filing structure.</li> </ul>
<b>Assign responsibilities of the IT-manager</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Daily back-up: Every evening a back-up is made on the server. In addition, every day a back-up is burned on CD and stored alternately in the office safe and, the following day, in the project manager's flat.</li> <li>▪ Filing check: The IT manager checks the proper naming and filing of new files and immediately instructs persons who lack know-how or make mistakes to correct any errors.</li> <li>▪ Check calendar: The list is to be pinned on the office wall showing date of checking and place of back-up.</li> <li>▪ Database: Checking the quality of data entry before integration into database.</li> <li>▪ PC follow-up: Giving periodic feedback to the project manager by suggesting adjustments and proposing up-to-date instructions to the project's IT users.</li> </ul>

## 4.6 Database

### ► In this chapter

A reliable database constitutes the backbone for every Cash Project. Contrary to other projects using mostly MS Excel tables, Cash Projects should employ professional database software (MS Access, Filemaker).

Taking into account the complexity and the number of data sets needed, such a database is an indispensable and useful tool. A database concentrates all data for all main operational tasks:

- registration data for potential beneficiaries
- screening of data
- random verification
- various lists of payments
- samples and questionnaires for monitoring the use of cash contributions
- export of tables for progress reporting and
- summaries for the final report.

It is very interesting to observe that database managers of Cash Projects usually develop their own databases in spite of well-documented and successfully used databases being available from previous Cash Projects. Local database managers often argue – with some justification – that each previous database was developed for a specific project and its re-use and adaptation would take more time than to develop a new one. Therefore,

it is of utmost importance to ensure that the database to be created fulfils a number of quality standards and meets the specific requirements of the Cash Project.

In this chapter information will be provided about the design, set-up and finalisation of a professional database. Database applications are presented later, together with the main steps of implementing Cash Projects.

## ► Benefits

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A well-designed and reliable database will provide various benefits indispensable for professional implementation of Cash Projects, such as:

- Standardised data entry by authorised typists, by using masks facilitating fast entries and minimising errors
- Easy import of existing electronic raw data into the database if registration started earlier using Excel tables, or for comparison with other data sets
- Supported screening of data for easy analysis or visual detection of wrong or double entries: family names, addresses, identification documents, etc.
- Standardised lists for publications and hand-outs, payment lists for bank or postal services
- Random sample for verification, monitoring of impact, etc.
- Easy design of standardised reports for weekly progress reporting, quick print-outs of beneficiary reports with statistical tables
- Options to improve data security such as regulated access and specific authorisation, password protection and other features for professional database management

## ► Procedure

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### Step 1: Database set-up

Before designing the database, the project manager, the project assistant and the database manager have to identify the main steps in implementing the Cash Project, from registration, screening, verification and payment to progress monitoring and final reporting.

#### ○ Database concept/design

- The locally recruited IT specialist is responsible for the database concept and must therefore have at least basic knowledge of MS Access and be able to write the database concept.
- A coherent database concept requires participation of the database manager at an early stage of the Cash Project design.
- The database concept has to explain how:
  - to model the main steps of the Cash Project in the database
  - to identify the data required by the implementers
  - to perform data handling, screening and improving
  - to structure and index tables, lists, and samples required
  - to implement the basic table structure (relations)
  - to ensure database interoperability
  - to protect data integrity
  - to ensure data access
- **Result:** The database concept has to be elaborated in writing. Prior to specification the concept must be discussed and agreed by Cash Project management.

#### ○ Specifications

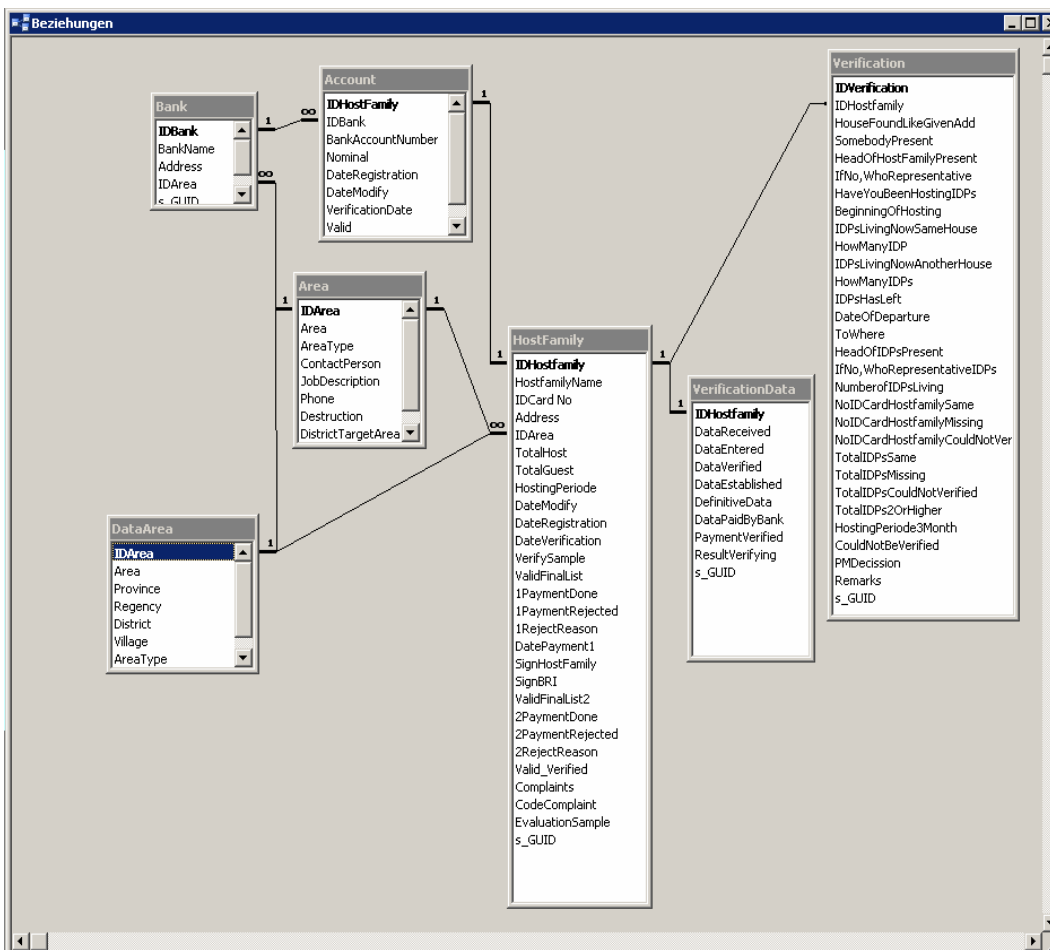
- All requisite data and outputs for every step of implementation have to be designed (e.g. data required for building up the "Preliminary list of beneficiaries": name, first name, passport number or number of identity card, address, town/village and other data relevant for eligibility).
- Previous Cash Project experiences should be drawn on and, if convenient, extensive use can be made of existing formats, lists, progress monitoring graphics, reports, etc.
- Data and figures to be collected and verified should be cross-checked with all stakeholders concerned (e.g. registration committee, bank or postal services, head of verifier team).
- **Result:** A list with all data required, with specification (e.g. language, size, ID variations).

#### ○ Configuration/Set-up

The following elements have to be developed:

- Introduction to Database Concepts

- Data Modelling
  - Conceptual Data Modelling
  - The Normalisation Process
  - Implementing the Basic Table Structure
  - Protecting the Integrity of Your Data
  - Securing Access to the Data
  - Table Structures and Indexing
  - Coding for Concurrency
  - Code-Level Architectural Decision
  - Database Interoperability
- To avoid data redundancy, similar data should be grouped in separate tables (e.g. tables regarding beneficiaries, areas, locations, bank data, verification) and corresponding relations between the tables must be established. Instead of creating a system of connected MS Excel sheets, it is highly advisable to make use of all advantages of a professional relational database.
  - The structures of each table must properly be designed and documented (e.g. primary key, reference numbers, field size, field type).
  - User-friendly and standardised data entry masks should be designed.
  - It is useful to prepare a standardised list of reports, taking into account the high number of necessary print-outs.
  - **Result:** Print-outs of all forms, lists and tables for the Project Team Cash, ready to be tested before implementation.
  - Unless they are fully familiar with database design and management, project managers should not ask for feedback from a professional database manager. This will substantially contribute to minimising application problems.



Example of relations between tables in the relational database of a Cash Project

## Step 2: Database management

- **Data entry**
  - Staff must be trained for the various tasks related to data entry.
  - Quality of data entry as well as progress and completeness of data must be checked daily.
  - If the Project Team Cash wants immediately to start with the registration process, MS Excel sheets using a data entry mask may be provided. Data from Excel sheets can easily be integrated into an MS Access database later on. Accepting such an interim measure might avoid conflicts while building up a professional database.
- **Database administration**
  - Fixed rules for database management (e.g. access, security, quality control) are essential.
  - A data security system must be established, carrying out one back-up daily (while entering data, it may even be useful to have several back-ups a day) and keeping back-ups at 3 safe places. The loss of a database could be disastrous.
  - Authorisation rules to access the database must be defined: access for reading, for writing (data entry) and for any changes (delete, new categories, etc.).
  - Involving the staff by giving an overview of database management and regularly asking them for their opinion as users can improve data management significantly.
  - The database manager has to keep the project management informed about data quality and has to suggest measures to improve this quality.
  - It makes sense that the database manager participates in all field activities in order to be in touch with beneficiaries and implementers.
  - Progress monitoring regarding the main steps, in the form of tables and charts, is very useful for adequate reporting to the HQ.
  - Updating the database concept and related documents after major changes helps to track development of the database. Otherwise, intransparent improvisation might become common practice.
  - Continuity of database running must be assured by instructing an assistant or deputy accordingly, which avoids any disruptions in cases of sickness or leave.




## Step 3: Database finalisation

- **Closing of database**
  - A consolidated payment report compares the number of beneficiaries paid with the number of contributions listed in the final account provided by the bank or postal services.
  - Final statistics contribute to the final report and project presentation by summarising achievements and results in tables and charts.
  - Finalising the database, with all its elements, documents the project team's work for the organisation. It has to be assured that database versions for external parties respect the obligation of confidentiality regarding beneficiary-related data (e.g. ensuring anonymity of beneficiaries).
  - The database report should be finalised based on the regularly updated database concept and tools used. Complemented with some recommendations, it will be helpful for new Cash Projects.
- **Future use of the database**
  - A well-documented database is valuable in its own right. It can be very useful for further Cash Projects and their database managers.
  - The further use of a database depends on a) accessibility (it must be assured that password protection is removed or at least that the password is provided with the stored database), b) a clear database concept (in order to understand the design and structure of the relational database) and, if ever possible, on c) an address to contact the project manager and/or database manager responsible.



### **Responsibility over database**

A Cash Project database must have one database manager only who bears full responsibility. Therefore, the concept has to be carefully drawn up, step-by-step follow-up has to be ensured, and there has to be an insistence on clarifying rules and restricting access, which must be limited to authorised user groups only.

	<p><b>National database manager</b> A database is usually managed by a local IT specialist and not by an expatriate (foreign expert) because it constitutes quite a heavy workload and perfect knowledge of the local language is indispensable.</p>
	<p><b>Systematic development of main steps</b> An early and appropriate design of the cash approach with its main steps forms the basis for any reliable database concept, data modelling and smooth project implementation.</p>
	<p><b>Do not use Excel!</b> It is not recommended to use Excel work sheets for beneficiary data management, because of the danger of data loss.</p>

## 4.7 Finances and bookkeeping

### ► In this chapter

In Cash Projects the defined budget is final, determining the number of beneficiaries, the amount of the contribution and the implementation costs. In order to manage the financial part properly, a Cash Project needs a bookkeeping system to record expenditures and to ensure budget control.

Money transfers and all procedures related to the payment of contributions to the beneficiaries are treated in this chapter.

### ► Benefits




For many project managers, budget control and regular bookkeeping appear to be rather difficult and time-consuming. Therefore, strict application of procedures and tools as provided by the HQ is recommended, as this facilitates:

- **Transparency** regarding the budget: expenditures made and remaining funds.
- **Preparedness** in order to ask for early money transfers from the HQ, considering the time required for transfers from the HQ to the local bank or the postal service.
- **Providing** timely accounts for HQ or local audits. Accurate figures such as overhead costs are also relevant for determining key figures and for budgeting new Cash Projects.

### ► Procedure

- **Financial set-up to be started already at the HQ**
  - **Money transfers:** All steps should be defined with the HQ desk officer in writing. Special attention must be given to institutional requirements concerning bank reliability checks.
  - **Budget management:** A mutual understanding of how the budget has to be used and controlled is indispensable.
  - **Bookkeeping system:** For the project manager, an introduction to the HQ bookkeeping system is essential even if the bookkeeping will later be delegated. The project manager is responsible for the finances.
- **Agreement on steps in money transfers**
  - **Main steps:** Clear definition of the money transfer steps is vital for every Cash Project. The itinerary of the foreseen money transfers should be visualised.
  - **Timing:** The time required has to be estimated and responsibilities should be allocated for each different step.

- **Test:** It is informative to perform an early test transfer of a moderate amount of money from HQ to the selected national bank. Correctness of conversion into the local currency and the time required for the transfer must both be checked.
- **Forecast:** The details of how to order money in terms of time and quantity have to be fixed clearly. Using a spreadsheet for monitoring and steering money transfers is very helpful.
- **Budget control as the main tool for professional project management**
  - **Summaries:** An overview budget control chart with monthly updates of the main figures has to be prepared after the monthly closure of accounts.
  - **Budget balance:** Before effecting major expenditures, the remaining balance has to be checked and possible suggestions are to be submitted to HQ.
- **Bookkeeping is a daily task**
  - **Petty cash:** Only one staff member is to be responsible for the bookkeeping regarding small expenditures, acting on the principle of good purchasing insisting on receipts to be submitted for all goods. Every advance and expenditure must immediately be entered into the petty-cash book.
  - **Bookkeeping:** Bookkeeping has to be done weekly. All receipts have to be filed, numbered and copied if required. All budget categories should be reflected adequately in the bookkeeping.
  - **Accountability:** HQ has to give instructions to whom exactly the monthly bookkeeping/receipts are to be reported/delivered.

	<p><b>Responsibility</b> The responsibility for bookkeeping or petty cash should be assigned to one person only – the same person to whom compliments or complaints are to be addressed.</p>
	<p><b>Respecting the bookkeeping rules</b> Several Cash Project managers strictly followed the rules given by HQ. As a result, management was disburdened, accounts were correct and ready in time. Their bookkeeping was done regularly at the end of each week.</p>
	<p><b>Too many accounts and petty-cash books</b> Several Cash Projects used too many bank accounts and cashbooks, and too many persons were involved. At the end, receipts were missing, staff left before the bookkeeping was properly settled, and the final closing of accounts was considerably delayed.</p>

## 4.8 Closing down office

### ► In this chapter

Cash Projects have a limited duration and normally do not include follow-up activities, which means that each project has to be closed down completely and in good time.

Cash Project managers are under pressure and must maintain a high level of performance until the very end of the project. As a consequence, closing-down operations are often done in a hurried and unstructured way. Thus Cash Project knowledge easily gets lost and there is a danger of valuable information no longer being accessible.

### ► Benefits

- **Expressing appreciation:** Good results should be shown to the public and appreciated by local authorities and employees as well as by HQ during a closing-down ceremony. Thus closing down the project will be perceived as a pleasant final activity.



- **Obligations towards staff:** Fulfilment of all contractual provisions (certificates, payment for holidays not taken, etc.) avoids any expectations of staff beyond the Cash Project, and corresponding disappointment.
- **Disengagement:** All activities and office structures should be closed down in an orderly manner without leaving any obligations open.
- **Documentation finalised:** It is advisable to write the draft final report in time and to select a limited number of documents as a basis for debriefing and for the final report, and as a valuable contribution to the cash knowledge base of the organisation.

► **Procedure**

- **Schedule:** Existing checklists for the main closing-down tasks are to be adapted to actual needs and local requirements. Time limits fixed in the project document are to be respected, setting both priorities and specific deadlines.
- **Responsibilities:** It is useful to allocate responsibilities for all tasks, asking for transparency in the detailed planning including essential elements such as: date of start, person responsible and date of execution.
- **Communication:** Staff and partners are to be informed early and in advance. Enclosing the schedule for closing-down operations with the weekly report to HQ is advisable as the schedule may require HQ approval.
- **Fairness:** Postponement or unfair delegation of remaining tasks has to be avoided.

**Closing-down checklist**

Topics	Tasks
<b>Authorisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mandate by HQ</li> <li>○ Plan of action / schedule of closing-down operations</li> <li>○ Minutes of the final meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Rented objects / infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Offices</li> <li>○ Private accommodation</li> <li>○ Other rented objects</li> <li>○ Telephone, internet connection</li> <li>○ Electricity, water, gas</li> <li>○ Equipment (sale or hand-over) based on inventory</li> </ul>
<b>Personnel / staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Termination of employment</li> <li>○ Work certificates</li> <li>○ Salary accounts</li> </ul>
<b>Finances</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Operating funds</li> <li>○ Bank accounts</li> <li>○ Petty-cash box</li> <li>○ Bookkeeping</li> </ul>
<b>Project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All cash payments</li> <li>○ Supporting projects</li> <li>○ Hand-over of remaining tasks in writing</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Local partners</li> <li>○ Mass media</li> <li>○ International partners</li> </ul>
<b>Data / documentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Beneficiary data</li> <li>○ Implementation: instruments, procedures, administration</li> <li>○ Documentation: filing system, photos, presentations</li> <li>○ Selected tools for Cash Project know-how sharing</li> <li>○ Final report</li> </ul>
<b>Debriefing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Local authorities and partners</li> <li>○ Closing-down ceremony</li> <li>○ National authorities and humanitarian organisations</li> <li>○ Coordination office and HQ</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Using a closing-down checklist...</b> ...prepared well in advance prevents headaches at the end of an intense working period. Any serious involvement deserves a smooth phasing-out.</p>
	<p><b>Administrative requirements</b> Both from a cash knowledge and from a purely administrative point of view, a project is only considered closed down once a number of requirements have been met: final bookkeeping, inventory, personnel accounts closed, final report and debriefing at HQ.</p>