



**COLLABORATION PROBLEMS THAT APPEAR IN A PROJECT BETWEEN  
PEOPLE AND TEAMS AS A PROJECT FAILURE FACTOR.**

**By**

**Koborozos Ioannis-Christos**

**A THESIS REPORT  
Presented to the Project Management Program in the  
School of Management of  
City University of Seattle  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT**



**June/2008**



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## Dedication Sheet

To my father, Chris,  
who was unfortunate in this life..

## **Biography Sheet**

Koborozos Ioannis-Christos

Ioannis – Christos Koborozos completed his studies in the department of Local Government of T.E.I. of the city of Kalamatas in November 2004. This department belongs to the School of Economy and Business Management of T.E.I. of Kalamatas.

He worked as an accountant in the economical department of the municipality of Rio (Patras) from April 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup> in 2004 before his graduation. Currently, he is working for the organization of the Greek agricultural insurances at the city of Patras in Greece. His employment position has to do with the department of economical support of this organization.

During the last three years he has worked on projects that had the mission of supporting the farmers of his region in cases of natural disasters. These projects, of the organization of Greek agricultural insurances, had serious problems mainly because there was no collaboration between the people and teams who were involved. Also, team efficiency as well as team roles are some concepts that were not familiar to the people and project teams in this organization.

## **Abstract**

This thesis describes the major importance of collaboration problems that appear in projects between people and project teams as a project failure factor. These collaboration problems play a significant role in every organization or business around the world. Also, it must be mentioned that the collaboration problems that appear have similarities. This is happening because there are economical, social and political connections through all the countries in the universe that affect the business world.

The author examined extended bibliography, conducted interviews and surveys in order to have a clear picture about how the collaboration problems can be faced. Project management's concepts related to this thesis are described as well as additional research through articles. Also, interviews from the case of the organization of the Greek agricultural insurances are presented, in which collaboration problems are very common.

The author's expectation is to learn how to vanish collaboration problems that appear between people and teams in project management environment. He believes that they play a significant role in order for the projects to be on time, cost and performance.

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## **Chapter 1 – Introduction.**

### **1. Nature of study**

Today, the world seems to be more complicated than ever. This is happening because there are economical, social and political connections through all the countries all over the universe. In other words, this situation can also be described as the phenomenon of globalization. This phenomenon affects all the organizations and businesses of every country in some way.

Project management seems to have solutions for many problems that appear in business environment, especially those that are about organizational problems. Because of the fact that usually in nowadays the deliverables of each organization are implemented through projects, the procedures and methodologies of project management must be followed correctly in order to have the result of disappearance of the organizational problems (Kerzner, H., 2006).

Unfortunately, in reality in many projects usually appear problems that have to do with the people and project teams that are involved into the projects. This situation has the result that the projects do not meet their objectives as they were planned.

As it is described before, because of the fact that Project Management is very related to these kind of problems the author plans to offer specific solutions and recommendations by following Project Management principles.

So, the nature of the study is by following Project Management's related theories to show and identify all the needed elements about successful team management, building up a team that functions effectively and other concepts for achieving the desired results.

## **2. Needs assessment.**

Stakeholders for this thesis include project teams, project managers, individuals as well as staff and senior management. These stakeholders, which usually take place in any project, must collaborate in a proper way in order to have a successful completion of the project.

In other words, the deliverables of each project depend on the collaboration between these stakeholders. So, this fact shows the necessity of maintaining and demonstrating correct project management procedures and methodologies.

This thesis will provide stakeholders with a view of:

- The recommendations to manage projects with people and teams.
- Identification of the problems that appear between people and project teams that are involved in projects.
- The role and the suitable selection of the project manager.
- The correct processes that must be followed.
- The factors that have major importance when working with project teams.

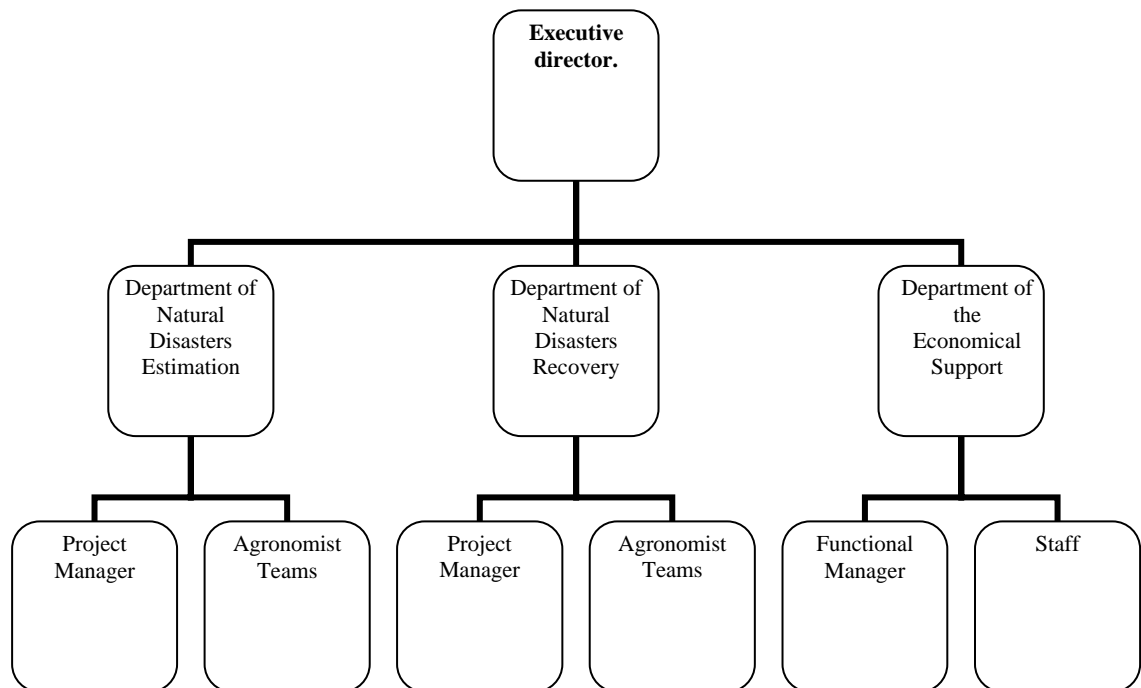
At this point it must be made clear that this thesis will also describe the case of the organization of the Greek agricultural insurances. Because of the fact that in this organization appear many collaboration problems between people and teams, seems to be a perfect example for indicating project management methodologies and recommendations that must be followed.

In addition, the fact that the author belongs to the staff of the branch organization, in the city of Patras, of the organization of Greek agricultural insurances has the result of maintaining and analyzing in a proper way all the involved stakeholders, their concerns and their benefits.

The figure that follows (figure 1) shows the organizational chart of the described branch organization:

**Figure 1**

*The organizational chart of the branch organization of Greek agricultural insurances.*



### **3. Purpose of the study.**

The purpose of this study is to present strategies and their effectiveness for maintaining, training and inspiring people and project teams in order to collaborate. Also, approaches will be presented about taking a full advantage of team power. In other words, the author will focus on Project Management's concepts (PM 506, PM 502) of:

- Good participation
- Shared vision
- Teamwork
- Careful listening
- Sense of purpose
- Good meeting facilitation
- Effective decision making
- Common goal

In addition to the above the author expects that extended research and interviews conducted for this thesis will offer specific solutions and recommendations in order to solve the collaboration problems that appear in the organization of Greek agricultural insurances.

These problems which have the effect of delaying the project's deliverables appear mainly as human weaknesses (human side) of the people and project teams that are involved, but also as incorrect organizational methods.

#### **4. Employment position.**

The author works for the branch-organization of the Greek agricultural insurances in the city of Patras. This organization has the mission to support the farmers of his region mainly economically in case of natural disasters. The employment position of the author has to do with the department of economical support of the specific organization.

Project Management methodology is not very common in his country (Greece). This has the result that the projects fail to meet time, performance and scope. In other words they fail to meet their objectives.

With this thesis the author expects to apply Project Management knowledge directly to the organization that he works for. Because of the fact that the problems that occur in the organization he works for, have to do with the people and project teams that are involved in the project he decided to centre in the collaboration field.

The author expects to point out the reasons and the results of the problems that appear between the people and project teams as well as the solutions and recommendations in order to have a success in supporting on time this sensitive part of the community (farmers).

#### **5. Relation to the program of study.**

During PM 506 (Managing Projects with People and Teams) and PM 502 (Leadership Principles for Project Managers), the author was gravitated by theories that

described concepts of teamwork and project management. Also, in these courses, the role of the project manager was presented as well as preferred practices and appropriate working methods (Meredith, J. R., & Mantel, S. J., Jr., 2006).

Also, theories that introduced descriptions of people skills for project managers where items that the author was interested in. Furthermore, the purpose of creating a shared vision, a glue that holds people together and keeps them moving forward despite adversities (Scholtes, P. R., 1998), represent the ideology of his character.

In addition to the mentioned, mainly in these two courses it was well shown with the help of the instructors that especially teamwork is the foundation of all successful management (Smith, K., 2007).

Team-working smuggles away collaboration problems and in nowadays is becoming more rapidly than ever the preferred practice in many organizations. So, it seems to be a correct guide for accomplishing suitable working methods in this complicated work environment.

Consequently, the author wants to focus on these concepts that are very relevant to the problems that occur in his workplace. The problems will be solved with the help of these concepts.



## **Chapter 2 – Problem statement.**

### **2.1 Problem statement.**

Our global business environment is changing rapidly. The project environment seems to be more and more common as time passes. But, unfortunately in project environment usually appear collaboration problems between all the stakeholders and especially between individuals and project teams. This fact has the result that many times the projects fail to meet their objectives.

### **2.2 Rationale.**

Understanding and applying project management's principles and concepts ensures not only organizational effectiveness, but also the success of solving the collaboration problems that appear between the people and teams that are involved in the project. These problems are very much related to what Robert Heller has stated, "To harness and take full advantage of team power, the individual brains and personalities involved must be encouraged to collaborate. This process is vital in generating results" (Heller 1998). This statement shows the necessity of the good climate that has to be established from the individuals as well as from the project teams.

Moreover, during the last decade the "Greenhouse Effect" has become the most important environmental matter of the century all over the world. The rise of the average

temperature of the planet creates important climatologic and environmental changes. The climatologic changes have an immediate effect to the farmers of each country. In the last decade there were many natural disasters that have caused problems in the agricultural production. In each country exist organizations which are responsible for supporting the farmers economically when these natural disasters take place.

In Greece exists the Greek Organization of Agricultural Insurances (G.O.A.I.) that has this mission. Each time when a natural disaster happens, this organization creates projects in order to support the national agricultural production.

Also, in this organization's projects team efficiency, good teams as well as clear team roles are some concepts that are not familiar to the people and project teams. Eric Verzuh has stated, "A weak, uncooperative team is not just unproductive; it can make your job a daily grid of frustration and resentment" (Verzuh, 2005). From this statement it can be showed how important group performance is and also how this factor affects the entire project.

Because of the fact that the author works in a branch-organization of the Greek agricultural insurances means that he has a clear opinion about what has to be made in order to have a success on these kind of projects.

The aim of his work is to present the best possible ways of solving the problems that appear in projects. These best ways focus in cases of collaboration problems between the people and project teams in general, and in the projects of the specific organization.

### **2.3 Hypothesis.**

It is vital in a project strong relationships between the people and project teams to be established so that all difficulties, whether personal, work-related, or procedural, are tracked before they undermine the collective team spirit.

## **Chapter 3: Review of Literature**

### **Introduction**

The review of literature for this study is based on books, internet articles, newspaper articles as well as personal interviews with project managers of the organization of Greek agricultural insurances. Also, an interview with the functional manager of the same organization, which was focused on collaboration problems of the staff, was helpful for conducting this thesis.

It is important at this point to mention that in order to present collaboration problems that appear in projects as a project failure factor, the present research is divided into areas:

- ❖ Project management concepts related to people and teams in projects.
- ❖ Collaboration problems that appear between people and teams in projects.
- ❖ The case of the organization of Greek Agricultural Insurances.

### **3.1 Project management concepts related to people and teams in projects.**

#### **3.1.1 Projects and project management.**

According to Verzuh (2005), project is defined as work that happens one time only and has both a clear beginning and end. This kind of work may be contrasted with the ongoing operations of an organization that involve repetitive work with no defined end. Furthermore, according to Lewis (2005), a project is a one-time, multitask job with a definite starting point, definite ending point, a clearly defined scope of work, a budget, and usually a temporary team.

Also, Eric Verzuh had written that “projects enable the people that are involved to changing conditions”. For example reengineering an organization, assessing a company’s direction in a new market, bringing out a new product, or adapting new technology are all necessary changes accomplished through projects.

Project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements. Project management is accomplished through the application and integration of the project management processes of initiating, planning, executing, monitoring, controlling and closing (PMBOK, 2004).

To sum up, projects require project management because in today’s organizational environment the range of activities in any workplace must be broken into groups in which effective collaboration and communication channels must be established

(O'Rourke, IV, J. S., 2001). Project management can categorize the ongoing operations that represent the work that is performed over and over with the work that is done one time.

### **3.1.2 The project team**

The Project Management Institute (PMI, 2004) defines project team as “people who have assigned roles and responsibilities for completing the project”. It is vital for the project the fact that the team members must be involved in the project’s planning and decision making.

Also, the project management team is a subset of the project team and is responsible for project management activities such as planning, controlling and closing. This group can be called the core, executive or leadership team. (PMBOK, 2004).

Furthermore, according to Flannes & Levin (2001) in today’s organizations the dramatic increases in project complexity require the integration of people with a diverse set of skills and experience into a project team. Normally, no single individual has all the knowledge that most projects, large or small require. Through a project team, an increasing number of disciplines can be brought together to accomplish the project objectives.

Moreover, according to CH2MHILL (2001) the workplan should be distributed to the enterprise's project team, including staff who will benefit from using parts of the workplan, the project sponsor, and subcontractors or subconsultants.

The mentioned show the necessity of the existence of project teams and their significant role for the project. However, the project teams are useless without a project manager. The project manager must lead the project teams correctly in order to accomplish the objectives of the project.

### **3.1.3 The effective project team.**

A positive environment promotes trust and respect among team members and increases performance through more productive work habits.(Verzuh, 2005). This has the result of an effective project team environment.

According to Pinto & Trailer (1998) the main characteristics of an effective project team are:

- Appropriate leadership. The team manager must have the skills and the intention to develop a team approach and allocates time to team building activities.

Management in the team must be seen as a shared function. Individuals other than the manager must be given the opportunity to exercise leadership when their skills are appropriate to the needs of the team.

- The commitment to the team. The team members must feel a sense of commitment to the aims and purposes of the team. They must be devoted to build the team by supporting the other team members.
  
- Constructive climate. The team must develop a climate in which people feel relaxed, able to be direct and open, and prepared to take risks.
  
- Concern to achieve. The team must be clear about its objectives. Targets of performance must be set and must be achievable.
  
- Clear department role. The team must have a productive role within the overall organization.
  
- Creative strength. The team must have the capacity to create new ideas through the interaction of its members. Some innovative risk must be rewarded and the team must support new ideas from individual members or from outside.
  
- Positive Inter-Group Relations. Relations with other teams must be developed in order to provide personal contact and identify collective priorities. The individuals of the team must be encouraged to contact and work with members of other teams.

### **3.1.4 The selection of the suitable project manager.**

Unfortunately, most projects fail to meet their objectives. This is happening for many important reasons. One of these reasons is the fact of the incorrect choice of the project manager. The project managers are often underappreciated players in organizations, and yet it is they who do the novel stuff that the organization cannot accomplish in its everyday processes (Loch, C. H., DeMeyer A., & Pich M. T., 2006). That is why the incorrect choice the project manager is an undesirable choice and has the result of not having the well described effective project teams as they are described in the previous chapter.

The appropriate selection of the project manager is vital for the project success, especially in maintaining in collaboration problems that might appear into project teams. The above make the selection of the project manager a difficult and risky decision. So, each company, organization or enterprise comes up with methods and techniques that will assure the selection of the appropriate project manager, as well as the success of the project.

According to Flannes & Levin (2001) for the selection of the project manager there are some criteria that must be followed. These criteria have a significant role for the collaboration problems that might appear in all the phases of the project between people and teams. More specifically these are:



- The experience. First of all the experience of a project manager is a very important qualification. It is true that many companies reject someone, who was project manager on previous programs, in which there were severe collaboration problems and cost overruns. In fact this method is not absolutely correct, because this person won't do the same mistakes again. A more qualified manager with less experience is more likely to do these mistakes. But it must be made clear that the maturity is not indicated by grey hair. It comes from exposure to several types of projects in a variety of project office positions.
- Personal characteristics and interview. Of course, personal characteristics are a determining factor for this selection. A good project manager must have a number of desired personal characteristics such as: flexibility and adaptability, leadership, aggressiveness, confidence, persuasiveness, verbal fluency, ambition, activity, broad scope of personal interests, ability to identify problems, willing to make decisions, ability to maintain proper balance in the use of time, being a generalist rather than a specialist, poise, enthusiasm, imagination, spontaneity and others. It is evident that it is hard to find someone with some of these characteristics. But in order to identify them, it is necessary to use an interview as a tool.

The solution of an interview may have great success only if the right questions are done. Because it is not sufficient to assure that a person has a good percentage of the above characteristics. It must also be approved that the project

manager has the skills needed for the specific project. The reason for this is that some people are good project managers only in some types of projects and not in all of them. So the interview must include questions relevant to the job need to be done. Also, it must be kept in mind that many individuals are totally unaware of what the project manager's duties are, though they want to start their career by working as a project manager. In these cases it would be useful to read elements of the job description to the potential candidate.

- Knowledge and specific qualifications. Another skill required is the knowledge about how the company works. Many project managers don't know this function and as a result they cause collaboration problems to the company trying to figure out their duties.

There are two techniques that provide the ability to resolve this problem. At first, many companies prefer to choose as a project manager someone who already works inside them. Besides, many of them use another method. They require that the individual spends an apprenticeship period of twelve to eighteen months in the line organization to find out how the company functions.

In this way, they are given the chance to get to know the people and teams, the policies and the procedures. In addition the project manager must understand the culture and value system of the organization he is working with.

After that, the company has the ability to select the one who managed to understand how the company functions and also the one who managed to have a good relation with the people.

Apart from all the above the selection should take place according to the size of the project. That happens because each project needs specific project manager's qualification in order to succeed. There are for example small projects in duration or cost, for which a part-time project manager can be selected. In addition to it happens that one project manager controls several projects, especially when they are related or similar.

On the other hand, a project may need a high technology effort, and the most appropriate person to control it is someone with the right knowledge. In some cases, the line managers have the adequate skills for this position, but they must also have the ability to establish the priorities. These cases indicate why it is necessary to select the appropriate project manager according to the project and not only according to the personal characteristics.

- The technical experts. From another side, project managers shouldn't be selected from a group of technical experts. This doesn't mean that the potential candidates shouldn't have technical skills. In the contrary, the good managers understand the technology involved, the engineering tools, the techniques employed, the technological trends and evolutions, the product applications, the relationship

among supporting technologies, as well as the specific markets, their customers and requirements. This understanding is appropriate for making decisions, resolving collaboration problems and communicating effectively in technical terms with the project teams.

From the above it is made clear that the good project manager must have technical skills but he mustn't be a technical expert. The reasons for that are more than one. An expert can hardly become a project doer. The experts don't easily cooperate with people and project teams in the organization. They have confidence only in their own capacities and they usually mess up everyone's work. In plus, the best project managers are willing and able to identify their own shortcomings and know when to ask for help.

It is obvious that technical experts do not fulfill this qualification. Despite all that, technical expertise may be acceptable only in one case: when and only when the project requires this expertise and technical direction. If though, the project needs a generalist as a leader, then the selection of a technical expert as a project manager can do very harm.

The above analysis which is focused on Flannes & Levin (2001) indicates that the technique or the method followed for the project manager selection is very important for the individuals, project teams and to the whole project plan. It can make a whole project succeed or damage it. It is also made clear that for each case there is a specific technique that is appropriate.

## **3.2 Collaboration problems that appear between people and teams in projects.**

### **3.2.1 Introduction**

David Oates, (2006) in his article: Understanding and Solving the Causes of Project Failure gives some explanation about the fact that most projects fail to meet their objectives. Specifically, project failure costs businesses millions of dollars each year, denting profits and harming reputations in the process. Barely a week goes by without a large scale failure hitting the deadlines, and this is despite the fact that planning on long-term projects nowadays takes up more time and resources than ever before.

Furthermore, in many cases the organizations do not have the visibility into ongoing activities and as a result they can not keep the control once the project is underway. These organizations which are very common to meet in the business environment underestimate the importance of real time collaboration among people and project teams. This fact affects also the project managers. They rely upon weekly or monthly reports, which can allow collaboration problems to escalate in the meantime.

### **3.2.2 The collaboration problems.**

It is clear that it is not always easy to pull a group of diverse individuals together to work as a team. Barriers abound in the form of fierce territoriality, incentive systems that reward individual rather than collective achievement, and mistrust spawned by an

acquisition, merger, or major internal restructuring. The mentioned according to the article of Lauren Keller Johnson (2007): Give Your Team a Challenge They Can't Resist, describe the real business world.

Especially in project management environment, because of the fact that companies are increasingly relying on cross-functional working project teams at every level in order to have a successful completion of the project, it is very important to overcome the barriers and turn the colleagues into collaborators.

The collaboration problems that have the result of the project failure and prevent a constructive climate can be presented through the following categories:

- ❖ The individuals are not asked for their input. This is happening when the members of the project team are not invited to share ideas for surmounting challenges. They do not generate ideas and actually they do not manage to keep their creativity. Furthermore, they do not contribute to the whole project process and this fact has the result that they do not fulfill the deep need, that most people have, to be a part of something larger than themselves. In other words they do not express their dreams (Bellman, G. M., 2001).
  
- ❖ Insufficient information. Insufficient information may concern either the project managers or the project teams. In projects that the involved project managers and project teams are not well informed, they do not understand that their effort is

important for the company or organization that they work for. That is why sharing information can spur teams and individuals to rally together and establish a shared vision (Johnson, 2007).

- ❖ Static roles. When static roles are established in a project the people are not led into a challenge by offering them the chance to use skills that they do not normally exercise in their day-to-day work. By stretching beyond their skills set, people gain experience by thinking in fresh ways. These fresh ways is a very important element in effective team collaboration. This approach is described also in Christopher's Vice article (2007): Learning to Work in Teams.
  
- ❖ Unpleasant work environment. In most working environments that have to do with projects a sense of camaraderie is absent. This is happening because fun is not injected into team's challenge. In order to put team collaboration into overdrive a few laughs are needed for building a desirable collective teamwork environment.
  
- ❖ Clear roles. For the successful completion of a project it is necessary for everyone involved to have a clear role. Every individual must have a role that matches with his or her personality, while this role must be separated from the other roles. At this point it must be made clear that it is not necessary for each person to perform

only one function. If the team has only a small number of members, doubling or trembling up the roles is fine, as long as all the needs of the project team are truly covered and separated. Moreover, all the members must feel comfortable with their roles (Heller, 1998). In the next table (table: 1) an example of identifying roles within teams is showed.

**Table 1**

*Identifying the key roles within teams (Heller, 1998)*

<b>ROLES</b>	<b>CHARACTERISTICS</b>
<p><b>TEAM LEADER</b> Finds new team members and develops the teamworking spirit.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Excellent judge of the talents and personalities of individuals within the team.</li> <li>2. Adept at finding ways of overcoming weaknesses.</li> <li>3. Is a first-class two-way communicator.</li> <li>4. Good at inspiring and sustaining enthusiasm.</li> </ol>
<p><b>CRITIC</b> Guardian and analyst of the team's long-term effectiveness.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Never satisfied with less than the best solution.</li> <li>2. Expert at analyzing solutions to find the possible weaknesses within them.</li> <li>3. Merciless in insisting that faults be corrected.</li> <li>4. Constructive in pointing way to possible remedies.</li> </ol>
<p><b>IMPLEMENTER</b> Ensures the momentum and smooth-running of the team's actions.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A born time-tabler who thinks methodically.</li> <li>2. Anticipates threatening delays in schedule in time for them to be prevented.</li> <li>3. Has a "can-do" mentality and loves to fix things.</li> <li>4. Able to rally support and overcome defeatism</li> </ol>
<p><b>EXTERNAL CONTACT</b> Looks after the team's external relationships</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Diplomatic, and good judge of the needs of others.</li> <li>2. Has a reassuring, authoritative presence.</li> <li>3. Has an effective grasp of the overall picture of the team's work.</li> <li>4. Discreet when handling confidential information.</li> </ol>



<p><b>CO-ORDINATOR</b> Pulls together the work of the team as a whole into a cohesive plan.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understands how difficult tasks inter-relate.</li> <li>2. Has a strong sense of priorities</li> <li>3. Has a mind able to grasp several things at once.</li> <li>4. Good at maintaining internal contacts.</li> <li>5. Skilled at heading off potential trouble.</li> </ol>
<p><b>IDEAS PERSON</b> Sustains and encourages the team's innovative vitality and energy.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enthusiastic and lively, with a zest for new ideas.</li> <li>2. Eager for and receptive to the ideas of others.</li> <li>3. Sees problems as opportunities for successful innovation, rather than as disasters.</li> <li>4. Never at a loss for a hopeful suggestion.</li> </ol>
<p><b>INSPECTOR</b> Ensures that high standards are sought and maintained.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strict, and sometimes even pedantic in enforcing rigorous standards within the team.</li> <li>2. Good judge of the performance of other people.</li> <li>3. Unhesitating in bringing problems to the surface.</li> <li>4. Able to praise as well as to find fault.</li> </ol>

### **3.2.3 Strategies that can be followed by the project manager in order to face the collaboration problems.**

All project managers need strategies for managing collaboration problems at the point of conflict. Conflict management works best when the parties involved in a disagreement are equipped to manage it themselves (Fisher, R. & Ury, W.,1991). The aim is to get people to resolve issues on their own through a process that improves their relationships. Weiss and Hughes (2005) ended up in a number of strategies that help to reduce collaboration problems in a company and more likely can be implemented. These are:

- Devise and implement a common method for resolving conflict. A well-defined and well-designed conflict resolution method reduces collaboration problems and

as a result also transaction costs. Transaction costs, such as wasted time and the accumulation of ill will, that often come with the struggle to work through differences. There is an array of conflict resolution methods a company can use. But, in order to be effective, they should offer a clear, step by step process for parties to follow.

A perfect example is the Intel company. At this company new employees learn a common method for decision making and conflict resolution. The company puts them through training in which they learn to use a variety of tools for handling discord. Not only does the training show that top management sees disagreements as an inevitable aspect of doing business, but also provides a common framework that expedites collaboration problems resolution. Little time is wasted in figuring out the best way to handle a disagreement, so people devote their time and energy for exploring and evaluating a variety of options to move forward. Intel's systematic method for working through differences has helped to sustain some of the company's hallmark qualities such as: innovation, operational efficiency, and the ability to make and implement hard decisions in the face of complex strategic choices.

- Promote the effective collaboration as “teaming”. Many companies think that teamwork training is the way to promote collaboration across an organization. So, they implement with the help of their HR department numerous training programs

which offer techniques for getting groups aligned around common goals.

Moreover, these training programs help the staff to clarify roles and responsibilities and share a set of behavioral norms.

Fortunately, in reality there is no difference. This means that teamwork training offers guidance on how to work together in the context of completing objectives and limited resources. But, the purpose is not only to establish a teamwork environment, but also establish an emphasis on “polite” behavior which regularly has the result of working towards a common goal.

- Provide the organization with collaboration tools. In cases that the staff of an organization is in different locations, collaboration techniques are needed. These techniques have to do with technologies that support synchronous meeting solutions, modeling systems and visualization software.

Moreover, these techniques use web technology and the internet to allow people to interact, resolve problems and work together on line. These techniques are much faster and more effective than using faxes and emails because they get all the involved parties together for face to face meetings. So, they enable businesses to bring the project deliverables on time, cost and performance because they help the people that are in different locations to collaborate effectively.

By implementing a project through collaboration technologies, organizations and companies can create a centralized system in which all project

details are located (Oates, 2006). An example could be one major global construction company. In case of an unforeseen problem at an activity, the rest of the team that may be at different location will learn about the problem immediately.

Collaboration based on technology is a very important concept for project environment. This is happening because this kind of collaboration techniques take a few minutes to resolve problems that otherwise would require days because of communication difficulties (Mac Krell, 2007).

### **3.3 The case of the Greek organization of agricultural insurances.**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

In Greece exists the Greek organization of agricultural insurances. (G.O.A.I.). This organization, which was founded in 1989, is responsible for supporting the farmers in cases of natural disasters. In order to have a success to this support the G.O.A.I. creates projects each time a natural disaster takes place.

Unfortunately, in these projects usually appear problems that have to do with the people and project teams that are involved into the projects. This situation has the result that the projects don't meet their objectives.

Because of the fact that Project Management is very related to these kind of problems the author believes that this organization is the perfect example-case to show the importance of collaboration problems and their significant role through project's life.

### **3.3.2 The organization.**

The organization of Greek agricultural insurances has its headquarters in Athens. The headquarters are responsible for the implementation of agricultural policies through projects that have to do with the protection, in cases of natural disasters, of the farmers of all the country.

The agricultural policies usually arise from the government's choices or rarely from European Union's regulations. At this point it must be made clear what is considered as a natural disaster.

Natural disasters are considered:

- Hail. Hail is a form of precipitation which consists of balls or irregular lumps of ice. This falling hard transparent ice damages the plant and tree production.
  
- Frost. Frost is considered the fall of temperature of the air in prices equal or smaller than (0<sup>0</sup>) degrees of Celsius which also damages the production of the farmers.

- Windstorm. Windstorm is considered the intense wind which causes damage in farmer's installation and eradicates the trees.
  
- Floods. Floods, which are very rare in Greece, are an overflow of an expanse of water that moves the land. When a flood takes place the results for the farmers are disastrous.
  
- Fires. Fires as a natural disaster usually take place during the summer season. Fires are the most important threat for the farmer's production because of the fact that there is no option for recovery.

In order to implement these agricultural policies through projects which have the aim to protect the farmers in cases of natural disasters, **the headquarters of the organization must coordinate, control and manage the branch-organizations** that are established through all the country. The established branch organizations are shown through the following table (Table 2) with the help of a figure (figure 2):

**Table 2**

*The established branch organizations.*

<b>Branch organization.</b>
1. Agrinio
2. Alexandroupolis
3. Ioanninon
4. Irakliou
5. Kavallas
6. Kozanis
7. Lamias
8. Larissas
9. Patras
10. Thessalonikis
11. Tripolis
12. Veroias

**Figure 2**

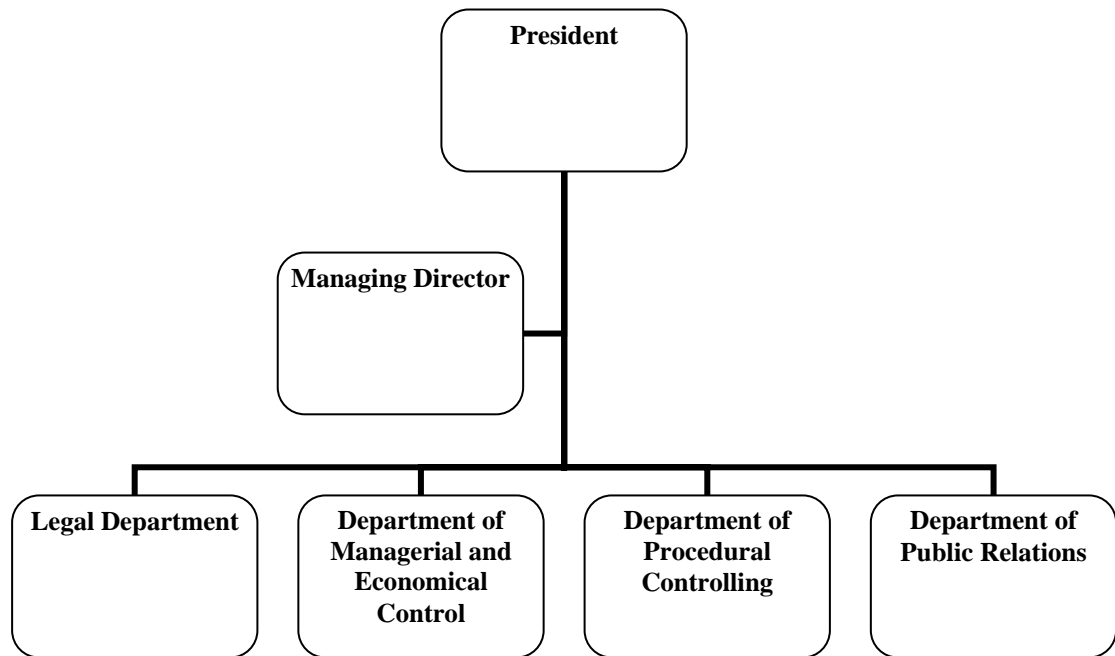
*The established branch organizations.*



Also, the headquarters and the branch organizations can be described in a better way through the following organization charts (figures 3, 4):

**Figure 3**

*The Headquarters organization chart*



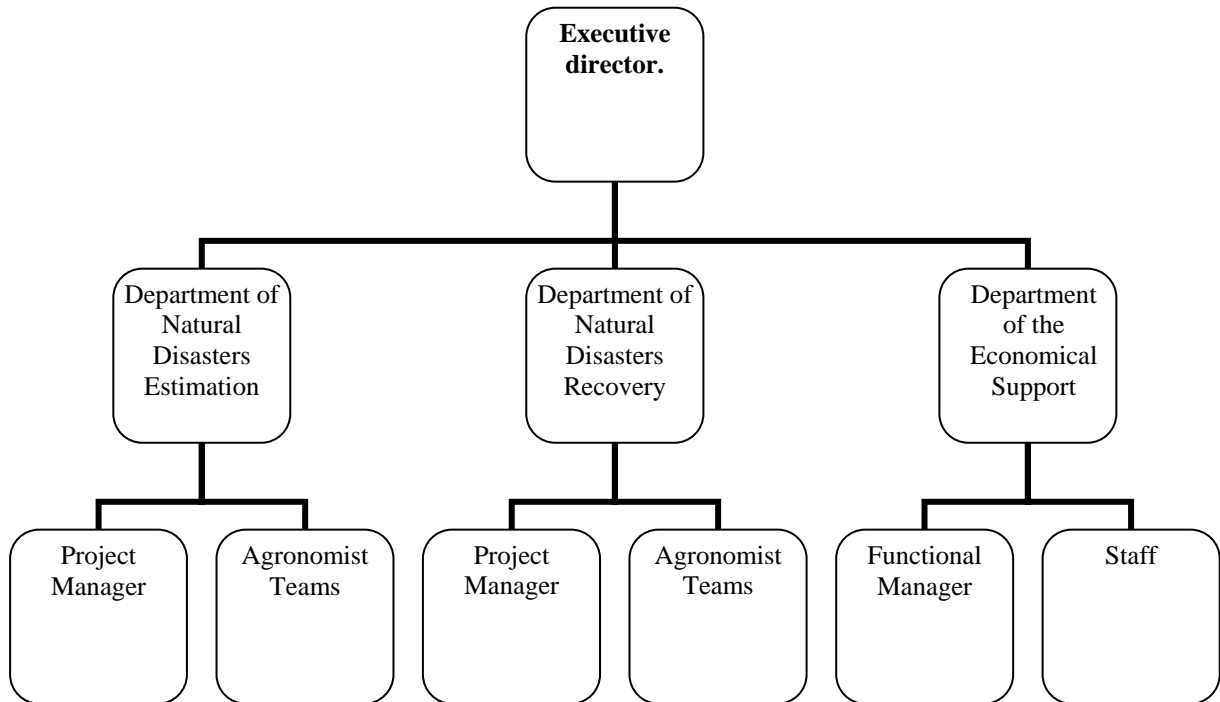
The president of the organization is responsible for coordinating and maintaining the correct procedures. He is also responsible for making strategic decisions and gives the needed guidelines for the departments of the headquarters. Because of the fact that his work is always under pressure he has an assistant (the managing director) who advises him in order to manage the organization correctly.

All the departments of the headquarters have the mission to control, coordinate and assist the branch organizations which are established all over the country. They are independent each other but they have specific roles and a common purpose.



**Figure 4**

*The organization chart of each branch organization*



*Note:* The organization chart is the same for each branch organization.

The executive director is the individual that is responsible for the communication channels between the headquarters and the branch organization. He is informed directly from the headquarters and he has the key role in order to implement the correct procedures and strategies in the branch organization.

The three departments of each branch organization have different roles and different duties.

## **The departments:**

- I. The first department of estimation has agronomist teams that are responsible for going immediately to the stricken areas in case of natural disasters. Their mission is to note down and commit to paper the damages of the stricken areas and to conduct reports and studies for the climate. These agronomist teams have a project manager that is responsible for coordinating and split the work to all of them.
  
- II. The second department of recovery and more specifically the agronomist teams, visit the stricken areas and advice the farmers for the best practices and best solutions for the fastest methods of recovery of the production of the farmers. Their mission is also to come close to the production areas and predict any new natural disasters. For these predictions these agronomist teams have technology tools that collect data from the environment. The result of their research is a number of environment indexes that are very helpful for the farmers of each region.

For the second department the role of a project manager is also necessary. He, as a coordinator, is responsible for the recovery plan and he arranges the number of individuals in each agronomist team according to the needs of every stricken area. In other words his decisions are very

crucial to the project in order to achieve the best formulas for the desired results.

III. The third department of economical support has the mission to provide all the economical support to the agronomist teams as well as to the farmers of the region. More specifically, this department is responsible for providing the needed budget for the estimation and recovery of the farmer's production. It must be mentioned that the economical support of the farmer's production is relied always on the data that the agronomist teams collect. This policy enables a fair treatment among to this sensitive group of the community (farmers).

The department of economical support does not need a project manager because the work is more specific, is based only on table sheets (data from the estimation and recovery agronomist teams) and on an easy software that is established for payments through bank accounts. In other words, the needed work can not be compared with the other two department's because it seems to be more easy to accomplish.

The mission of all the organization depends on the correct procedures that must be followed from all the departments (Estimation, Recovery, Economical support). The organizational structure of this organization that implements projects in cases of natural

disasters seems to be appropriate. But every person in this world knows that the things do not go over as they are planned. This happens because collaboration problems always arise.

### **3.3.3 The collaboration problems.**

#### **The first department:**

According to the project manager (Dimitrios Sintilas) of the department of the natural disasters estimation (branch organization in the city of Patras), it was pointed out that the most difficult part of his work is to determine from the start of the project who will be part of each team. The team members that are chosen each time a natural disaster happens, must feel a sense of commitment to the aims and purposes of the team and of the whole project.

This process is not very easy to be completed because the team members usually do not agree with their responsibilities and roles on the project. Also, according to the specific project manager a constructive climate must be developed in the team in which people feel relaxed and are able to be direct and open. In other words the agronomist teams of his department are not formed very easily.

In order to overcome these obstacles, the specific project manager pointed out that the role of a “democrat” project manager is very suitable for these kinds of circumstances.

At this point, it is important to describe the main characteristics of a “democrat” project manager-leader. The most suitable description of the “democrat” project manager-leader characteristics are showed through Jeffrey Pinto’s book (1998): *Leadership skills for project managers*. These are:

- The democratic project manager makes his decisions by consulting his team and at the same time he maintains the control of the group. Also, the democratic project manager allows his team to decide how the task will be tackled and who will perform which task.
- A good democratic project manager-leader encourages participation and delegates wisely, but never loses sight of the fact that he bears the crucial responsibility of leadership. Also, he values group discussion and input from his team and can be seen as drawing from a pool of his team members' strong points in order to obtain the best performance from his team.
- An important characteristic that the “democratic” project manager must also have is the will of motivating the project team by empowering, directing, and guiding with a loose reign.

## **The second department.**

According to the project manager of the second department (natural disasters recovery) of the branch organization of Greek agricultural insurances, the elements that are considered very important for him have to do mainly with the human side of the individuals of each project team. The collaboration problems that usually arise in his department, in his opinion, are connected or have to do mainly with the human side of each person.

Furthermore, a strategy that he pointed out for facing the collaboration problems that appear between people and project teams in his department is implementing a S.W.O.T. analysis of each person in his department (self analysis).

As, it is well known in the business world, the S.W.O.T. analysis is a powerful technique used for understanding Strengths and Weaknesses, and for looking at the Opportunities and Threats we may face.

But, S.W.O.T. analysis can also be used for **self analysis**. The self analysis helps building up a career in a way and at the same time it helps taking the best possible results for talents, abilities and opportunities that every individual possess. It's all about knowing the self and then planning and reacting accordingly. Also, it must be kept in mind that it needs to be realistic in approach while doing any such analysis.

The help of a self S.W.O.T. analysis, according to the same project manager

(Panagiotis Stergiou), is very important for the human side of each individual of each project team. The self-analysis makes the team and the individuals to take corrective actions in order to keep the status of the project in the desirable progress.

### **The third department.**

The functional manager of the department of economical support (Nikoletta Karagianni) connected the collaboration problems in her department with the human side of each individual of each project team.

She stated that: “In order to establish a collective work environment the field that must be taken into consideration is the mental frame of each person. In other words, the images, stories and thoughts must be shared in a way that a collective climate can be established”.

The things that the functional manager of the third department of the specific organization stated show the importance of the human side of each individual. Her sayings come close to the “mental models” that Peter Senge (1994) explains in his book:

*The fifth discipline:*

Mental models are the images, assumptions and stories which we carry in our minds of ourselves, other people, institutions and every aspect of the world. In other words mental models determine what we see.

The mental models must be brought out to the surface in order to explore them and talk about them with minimal defensiveness. In this way we can examine the impact in our lives and find ways to sharpen our skills and abilities.

### **Summary of the Literature Review.**

In this literature review, the collaboration problems that appear in projects between people and teams as a project failure factor, were thoroughly discussed. The whole research was divided into three areas in order to present in a best way these collaboration problems.

The first area demonstrates the project management concepts related to people and teams in projects. In the second area, additional project management concepts and research about collaboration problems between people and teams in projects are described.

The third area comprises the case of the Greek organization of agricultural insurances. An organization in which collaboration problems are very common and as a result it is a perfect example for the author, to show the necessity of conducting a thesis with this subject.



#### **Chapter 4 – Methodologies and Procedures Used in the study.**

This thesis examines the collaboration problems that appear in projects between the people and project teams as a project failure factor. For the present thesis the author collected extensive data through multiple sources. These multiple sources include articles, books and interviews. So, the present thesis is based essentially on qualitative research.

This qualitative research, as the most appropriate method, is used with the help of the real case of the organization of Greek Agricultural insurances. In this way the author takes into account all the necessary details surrounding the subject of this thesis.

By following the above the objective is fulfilled in order to analyze the importance of collaboration problems (Chapter 3 – Literature review), present results (Chapter 5 – Results) and make recommendations.

The recommendations (Chapter 6 – Discussion – Conclusions and Recommendations) have the aim to strength the relationship between the people and project teams so that the collective team spirit is supported. In this way, there will not be many conflicts between them and the roles of each stakeholder will be derived. In addition to that, there will be benefits for all the members of the project in order to cooperate with each other.

Furthermore, the recommendations, which are the most important part of this thesis, offer specific solutions as well as correct patterns. The author's purposes and

expectations are for all the individuals and teams to be motivated to follow these patterns in order the projects to meet their objectives.

## **Chapter 5 - Results**

The results of this thesis can be divided into the areas of the third chapter (Literature review). By using this segmentation it is easier to understand and reach to the recommendations that are necessary. It is important at this point to remind these areas to our readers with the help of the following table (Table 3).

**Table 3**

*The three areas of the third chapter.*

<b>Areas</b>	<b>Subject</b>
1	Project management concepts related to people and teams in projects.
2	Collaboration problems that appear between people and teams in projects.
3	The case of the organization of Greek Agricultural Insurances.

## **5.1 Project management concepts related to people and teams in projects.**

The results of this area have to do with the fact that in today's organizational environment the range of activities in any workplace must be broken into groups-teams in which collective team spirit must be established.

Also, it is made clear through this research area that it is necessary for project teams to exist because they play a significant role for the project. More specifically, the project teams in order to have desirable impacts to the project they need to be effective.

Effective project teams are considered the teams with:

- Appropriate leadership.
- Commitment to the team.
- Constructive climate.
- Concern to achieve.
- Creative strength.
- Positive Inter-Group Relations.

However, the project teams are useless without a project manager. The project manager must lead the project teams correctly in order to accomplish the objectives of the project.

The correct selection of the project manager ensures the project success, especially in maintaining in collaboration problems that might appear into project teams. The criteria for the selection of the project manager come out also from the complete research of this area:

- The experience.
- Personal characteristics and interview.
- Knowledge and specific qualifications.
- The separation from the technical experts.

## **5.2 Collaboration problems that appear between people and teams in projects.**

This research area describes comprehensively the collaboration problems that appear between people and teams in projects. As a result, these problems give some explanation about the fact that most projects fail to meet their objectives and can be well categorized through the following table (Table 4):

**Table 4**

*The categorization of collaboration problems.*

<b>Collaboration problem</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
The individuals are not asked for their input.	This is happening when the members of the project team are not invited to share ideas for surmounting challenges. They do not generate ideas and actually they do not manage to keep their creativity.
Insufficient information.	Insufficient information may concern either the project managers or the project teams. In projects that the involved project managers and project teams are not well informed, they do not understand that their effort is important for the company or organization that they work for.
Static roles.	When static roles are established in a project the people are not led into a challenge by offering them the chance to use skills that they do not normally exercise in their day-to-day work.

Unpleasant work environment.	In most working environments that have to do with projects a sense of camaraderie is absent. This is happening because fun is not injected into team's challenge.
Clear roles.	For the successful completion of a project it is necessary for everyone involved to have a clear role. Every individual must have a role that matches with his or her personality, while this role must be separated from the other roles.

Also, with the help of the second area of the third chapter valuable results have been achieved about strategies a project manager must follow in cases of collaboration problems. These are:

- Devise and implement a common method for resolving conflict. A well-defined and well-designed conflict resolution method reduces collaboration problems and as a result also transaction costs.
- Promote the effective collaboration as “teaming”. Many companies think that teamwork training is the way to promote collaboration across an organization. So,

the purpose is not only to establish a teamwork environment, but also establish an emphasis on “polite” behavior which regularly has the result of working towards a common goal.

- Provide the organization with collaboration tools. In cases that the staff of an organization is in different locations, collaboration techniques are needed. These techniques have to do with technologies that support synchronous meeting solutions, modeling systems and visualization software.

### **5.3 The case of the Greek organization of agricultural insurances.**

The third research area of the third chapter of this thesis was very valuable in order to arrive to some very useful results about collaboration problems. That is why in the real case of the organization of the Greek agricultural insurances, these kinds of problems are very common.

Also, the fact that the author during the last three years is working for this organization made the research more constructive. The interviews from the functional and project managers had significant results for his workplace and showed a point of

view which is very interesting and is centralized on the human side of each person in a project. More specifically:

- ✓ The collaboration problems that usually arise are connected or have to do mainly with the human side of each person. Furthermore, a strategy that they pointed out for facing the collaboration problems is implementing a S.W.O.T. analysis of each person in the project (self analysis).
  
- ✓ Also, the collaboration problems according to them are very much connected with the mental frame of each person. In other words, the images, stories and thoughts of each individual must be shared in a way that a collective climate can be established. Only by this way the individuals and project teams can find ways to sharpen the skills and abilities.

## **Chapter 6 – Discussion, Conclusions, Recommendations.**

### **6.1 Discussion.**

The previous results gave some special issues about the vital role that collaboration problems play in projects. These collaboration problems that usually appear



between people and project teams, if they are underestimated, they become a project failure factor.

The author while examining extended bibliography, conducting interviews and surveys in order to have a clear picture, he realized the necessity of establishing strong relationships between all the involved in the project.

With the help of those strong relationships all the difficulties, whether personal, work-related, or procedural, are faced before they undermine the collective team spirit.

The author's findings, through this thesis, will be a useful guide for his career because of the fact that he learned to implement strategies and procedures about how to vanish collaboration problems that appear in project management environment.

## **6.2 Conclusions.**

The conclusions of this thesis have to do with the fact that in today's organizational environment the range of activities in any workplace must be broken into groups-teams in which **collective team spirit** must be established.

Also, it is made clear through this thesis that in project management environment, it is necessary for project teams to exist because they play a significant role for the project. Moreover, the project teams in order to have desirable effects to the project they need to be effective.

But, because of the fact that the project teams are useless without a project manager, it is made clear that there must be an appropriate selection of a suitable person for this role. The fact that explains the mentioned is that the project manager must lead the project teams correctly in order to accomplish the objectives of the project while **facing the collaboration problems** that might appear.

The real case of the organization of the Greek agricultural insurances showed the same useful results about collaboration problems. The only difference is that from the interviews from the functional and project managers that the author conducted, the outcomes had to do more with the human side of each person in a project.

### **6.3 Recommendations.**

Project management concepts have solutions for many problems that appear in business environment. Especially, in cases of collaboration problems there are some procedures and methodologies that can be followed in order to manage to overcome these kinds of obstacles.

Because of this fact, the author through this thesis offers specific solutions and recommendations by following Project Management principles. In other words, he identifies all the needed elements about successful and effective team management, building up a team that functions effectively and other elements for achieving the desired results. The recommendations are summarized through the following table (Table 5).

**Table 5**

*Recommendations.*

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Select the suitable project manager.</b>	The appropriate selection of the project manager is vital for the project success, especially in maintaining in collaboration problems that might appear into project teams. So, each company, organization or enterprise must come up with methods and techniques that will assure the selection of the appropriate project manager, as well as the success of the project.
<b>Implement appropriate strategies for collective team spirit through all the levels of the company, organization or enterprise.</b>	The implementation of appropriate strategies for establishing collective team spirit through all the levels of an organization, company or enterprise, does not allow collaboration problems to escalate in the background.

<p><b>Insist on the “mental models” of each individual.</b></p>	<p>In order to establish a collective work environment the field that must be taken into consideration is the mental frame of each person. In other words, the images, stories and thoughts of each individual must be shared in a way that a collective climate can be established.</p>
<p><b>Provide the company, organization or enterprise with collaboration tools.</b></p>	<p>In cases that the staff of an organization is in different locations, collaboration techniques are needed. These techniques have to do with technologies that support synchronous meeting solutions, modeling systems and visualization software. Collaboration based on technology is a very important concept for project environment. This is happening because this kind of collaboration techniques take a few minutes to resolve problems that otherwise would require days because of communication difficulties.</p>

<p><b>Perform self S.W.O.T. analysis</b></p>	<p>S.W.O.T. analysis can also be used for self analysis. The self-analysis makes the team and the individuals to take corrective actions in order to keep the status of the project in the desirable progress.</p>
<p><b>Implement training programs.</b></p>	<p>Many companies think that teamwork training is the way to promote collaboration across an organization. So, they implement with the help of their HR department numerous training programs which offer techniques for getting groups aligned around common goals. Moreover, these training programs help the staff to clarify roles and responsibilities and share a set of behavioral norms.</p>

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