



Guidelines for the new Operational Teams

Introduction and Background

The GAELIC Programme originated out of a consortium formed amongst the libraries at the higher education institutions within the Gauteng and greater Gauteng regions. Its purpose was to create the means for greater negotiating and bargaining power when dealing with publishers and when purchasing expensive products. Their initial project was the purchase of a joint, integrated library system. After this the consortium used its combined bargaining strength to negotiate good publisher deals and to purchase additional system products and modules at a reduced price.

It is now over 10 years since the consortium was established and the function of publisher negotiations has largely moved to a national initiative which is controlled by SANLiC. The Innopac library system was set up and is functional in all the member libraries, all of which use a Millennium version. Last year the GAELIC Governing Board (made up of library heads from all the member libraries) realized that the focus of GAELIC had to move away from an emphasis on a joint library system to one that would be more suited to dealing with other issues facing staff within their libraries. With this in mind a new strategic approach was proposed, approved and adopted by the GGB in 2008 and is now being implemented.

Aim

The overall aim of the Operational Teams remains the same as that of GAELIC with our motto being “information through cooperation” and we aim to provide timely, cost effective knowledge and information delivery to the university community. The aim is therefore to be as inclusive as possible so that there is optimal opportunity to share knowledge and experiences while enhancing and upgrading individual skills. The Team approach affords representation of every member institution and greater inclusion of all staff by means of feedback sessions and experience sharing. It also provides for the means to consider the total workforce when planning and selecting projects. In this way we hope to help create a larger network of GAELIC empowered staff.

Objectives of the Operational Teams

The GGB adopted 3 new strategic objectives:

- 1) To promote optimal use of the Millennium system in the GAELIC libraries
- 2) To build capacity through identification and provision of training needs and services for the optimal utilization of resources
- 3) To improve cost efficiency through joint procurement and resources sharing

Purpose of the Operational Team:

The purpose of the Teams includes inter alia the following points:

- To provide a forum for discussion of problems and participation in mutual problem solving

- To develop and improve the skills and expertise of the library staff within the GAELIC libraries
- To establish and maintain best practices within the consortium
- To utilize and share staff expertise to ensure optimal service delivery
- To consider ways to share resources and harness combined power when purchasing resources
- To consider ways to harness and disseminate African content

Organisational structure

- The existing GAELIC Governing Board remains the primary governance structure whose purpose is to determine strategic direction and policy. The Steering Committee will continue to be the functional decision-making body reporting both from the convenor level and to the GGB.
- The Convenor (who is both a library head and member of the GGB) will oversee the relevancy of application of each of the 3 new objectives.
- The Operational Managers will assist the Convenors in the management of the practical aspects and oversee the functioning of the Objective Teams.
- The Objective Team will be made up of staff from each member institution nominated by the library head.
- The GAELIC Programme Manager will oversee the new process and act as an advisory for the three new objective areas. S/he will act as the central point of communication and information dissemination between the three working groups and serve as the channel of reporting to FOTIM.
- The Programme Manager will assist the Convenor and Operations Manager with the arrangements of workshops, consultants and marketing of events both within and beyond the consortium and in any other practical way.
- S/he will also act as mediator between the 3 strategic levels.

Operational Team Structure and Content

- There will be 3 Operational Teams – one for each strategic objective
- Each Team is headed by a Convenor who is both a head of library and a member of the GGB.
- This Convenor is assisted by a functional Operational Manager who also sits on the GGB. These two people will identify issues and select them for discussion with the Team. They will also consult with the team on possible solutions.
- Each team will consist of 1 member from each institution. In order to be fully inclusive, institutions with campus that are spread far apart may nominate more than one individual to serve on the Team
- It will be the duty of each Team member to ensure that they participate fully in the projects and to communicate decisions and progress to the staff of their institutions
- Additional members may be co-opted to the Teams for the duration of a specific project as and when their expertise is required but they need not remain team members after the cessation of that particular project.
- It is the duty of each institution to ensure that they are represented on the Teams and to inform the Operational Manager of any changes.
- Should a Team member leave the institution, a suitable replacement be found as soon as possible.

Operational Team Governance

Each team member will be appointed to one specific objective area which will have a mandate

Each team member will be nominated to serve on the Team by their own library head. They will then become appointed members to a Team in one specific objective area which will have a mandate clearly stated as above. It is envisaged that these teams will meet and discuss the common challenges facing member libraries and ways to address these challenges. This process could include meetings, workshops or seminars as the means to share ideas, expertise and experiences of both individuals from within the member libraries and outside consultants.

The Teams should be self run and not rely on FOTIM or GAELIC to organise their meetings, however, assistance will be provided by FOTIM staff wherever required. Events that include the arrangement of a workshop or conference or even the need to market to people outside of the GAELIC group will certainly receive the full support of the GAELIC and FOTIM staff. Formal workshops will be the responsibility of FOTIM and funded out of the FOTIM budget, with registration

Each team will have to decide at the outset how it will function and the logistics of its meetings but it is recommended that a meeting takes place at least once a term. It will be the duty of the person assigned to arranging the meetings to inform the GAELIC Programme Manager who will endeavour to attend wherever possible.

Tasks should be assigned to individual team members early in each year to ensure that members are aware of commitments and requirements. It is recommended that some form of written record is kept of the meetings held and the decisions that are made so that these can be submitted to the GGB for reporting purposes.

Routine Tasks:

- Identify new project areas and gather information
- Arrange workshops and discussion for the sharing of ideas and expertise
- Keep GAELIC Programme Manager informed of any developments
- Report back regularly on issues and progress to GAELIC Office for Steering Committee and GAELIC Governing Board meetings.

Challenges:

Under the new structure, the work of the previous Focus Groups continued and replaced by the Operational Teams. Although this new structure is limited to only three main objectives, there is still the need to integrate the work of the old Focus Groups into the new structure and to encourage staff participation and acceptance of this new approach. There is also the problem of potential overlap and duplication of effort especially in the areas of staff training, joint purchasing and the sharing of resources. It will be the role of the GAELIC Programme Manager to act as the means of communication of effort and to ensure that the boundaries are clearly established.

Expected outputs of the Teams

The overall intention of this new objective structure is to ensure greater participation by the member library staff and to deal with issues that are both current and relevant.

The perceived outcomes of this are

- The improvement of overall performance of staff through training and expertise sharing
- Discovering and unlocking individual potential

- Facilitating capacity building and skills updating
- Providing the channels for knowledge sharing and learning
- Setting of benchmarking standards amongst the member libraries and against international examples
- Providing the means for greater interaction and activating joint negotiation strength
- Creating the channels for the discussion of concerns and highlighting of issues
- Including a wider base of participation for all levels of library staff
- Forming the means of greater collegiality between members
- Creating greater exposure of and to African content

Funding

As far as possible these teams and their meetings should be self funded with the hosting institution covering the cost of the meetings. Wherever possible the costs of the meetings should be shared amongst the institutions by ensuring that each institution gets a turn to host a meeting. Teleconferencing or electronic meetings could be considered as an alternative. FOTIM does not cover additional funding for travel costs to attend meetings and this must be covered by individual institutional allocations.

More formal events will be funded through attendance fees which will be set by the FOTIM Office and will differentiate between member and non-member pricing structures.

Accepted GGB May 2009

CW April 2009