



Megaprojects: Shaping the Research Agenda

Does size really matter?



Megaprojects (sometimes known as 'major projects' or 'complex projects and services') are extremely large-scale investment projects typically costing more than EUR 0.5 billion. Megaprojects include power stations, oil and gas extraction plants, highways, bridges, railways, seaports and even cultural events such as the Olympics. Megaprojects are united by their extreme complexity (both in technical and human terms) and by a long record of disastrous delivery. To insure that megaprojects can be designed and delivered successfully is not only a commercial necessity but also a societal imperative!

But how do we research megaprojects? Do we need new theories to cope with their complexity? Can we simply adopt the same ways of investigating these phenomena or do we need new research methodologies? When we are considering megaproject management research, does size matter?

The aim of this symposium is to highlight the current experience of researchers grappling with these issues and to use the expertise of the EURAM attendees to guide future efforts in this highly societally impactful field. At the end of the symposium, it is hoped that a much clearer research agenda for investigating megaprojects will have emerged.

Symposium Chair



Professor Naomi Brookes holds a chair in Complex Project Management at the University of Leeds, UK and the Action Chair of the ESF funded MEGAPROJECT COST Action (www.mega-project.eu) MEGAPROJECT is a network of over 50 multidisciplinary researchers from across Europe to provide guidelines for the effective design and delivery of megaprojects. Naomi will use the findings of this network to provide a series of provocations for the symposium in considering a megaproject research agenda.

Invited Speakers



Professor Terry Williams is the Dean of Hull University Business School in the UK. He is a pre-eminent thought leader in the world of project management. He has led seminal project management research projects funded by bodies such as the Project Management Institute and the UK's EPSRC. His contribution will focus on the modeling of the behavior of complex project consideration of positive feedback, acceleration, the effect of human factors, and the implications of ambiguity, power and politics



Professor Amrik Sohal is a globally respected operations management researcher based in the Department of Management at Monash University, Australia. He will use the experience of the recently completed Dubai-Fujairah Highway in the United Arab Emirates to consider 'decision-making' amongst the key stakeholders and the influence they have on megaproject outcomes¹. Aspects of each stakeholder's power, urgency and legitimacy are examined with respect to the major milestones of a megaproject.

Symposium Facilitator



Candida Viera is a highly experienced project management professional who has specializes in developing the skills of global project teams. She has over ten years experience in projects in the global logistics sector culminating in her role in DHL working across the whole of Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Candi can deliver in project management interventions in five languages and is pursuing her own part-time doctoral research in project management with Aston University which makes her an excellent facilitator for this symposium!

¹ This work has been undertaken with his colleagues Moza Tahnoon Al-Nahyan, Professor Yaser Hawas and Professor Brian Fildes.