

Guidelines for the NADEL Project Assignments

(Binding for the Executing Organisations, the Project Managers¹ and the Students)

NADEL provides the participants of the Master Programme in Development and Cooperation (Master of Advanced Studies, MAS) with an assignment in a project or programme of development cooperation. The aim of this “on-the-job-training” as project assistant is to perform a clearly defined task, to get to know the complex work reality of development cooperation on site and to gain work experience in this field.

The prerequisites to take up an assignment are the following:

- the successful completion of the study semester,
- sufficient knowledge in foreign languages (depending on the country of assignment: English, French, Spanish) and
- medical fitness.

Start, duration and content of the assignment will be stipulated in an agreement between the organisation responsible for the assignment, the project manager, the student and NADEL. The present guidelines form an integral part of the agreement.

1. Organisation of the Assignments

- Following the selection procedures for the admission to the study semester, the students receive a form by e-mail on which they state their academic and professional qualifications as well as their interests and preferences with respect to the project assignment.
- The assignment contains learning as well as achievement components. The nature and extent will vary according to the existing academic and professional experience respectively and the terms of reference. The major task of the assignment must be clearly defined and present a useful contribution to the project. Furthermore, the project manager must provide professional support during the assignment.
- Content, start and duration of the assignment are determined individually. The duration is between 8 and 10 months. The financing (flight, living allowance, insurance) is provided through grants by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).
- NADEL discusses all incoming proposals for an assignment with the particular student. As the organisations in development cooperation can keep up their proposals only for a limited period, the students are expected to take a decision regarding a proposal as soon as possible (the students will be notified about the deadline during the study semester).
- Should proposals for an assignment, submitted to the student in the form of a brief description of the project and the tasks to be carried out, not be considered for realisation, they are then returned to NADEL to be forwarded to other students if appropriate. This procedure facilitates the overview regarding the placement of assignments as well as the dialogue with the organisations.
- Preliminary dialogues and the written correspondence regarding a possible assignment will initially be conducted between the organisations and NADEL. As soon as concrete fields of

¹ The project manager can appoint a team member to supervise the student during the assignment. It is important that the responsibility lies with one person and that all people concerned are informed accordingly. To allow for easy reading, the term “project manager” will be maintained throughout this document.

activity become apparent and potential candidates have been identified, they will be included in the negotiations.

- Priority for the placement of assignment is given to those proposals that have been received as a result of NADEL's contacts. With its network extended over many years, NADEL endeavours to arrange for assignments with organisations that accomplish work of high professional quality and provide a solid organisational and personal surrounding. In exceptional cases it is possible for students to propose possibilities for an assignment. In this case, NADEL requires the relevant form containing information on a) the country of assignment, b) the organisation and the project, c) the field of work and d) the length of the assignment. NADEL will then thoroughly examine and decide if the proposals meet the specifications (see "Organisation of the Assignments") and if the required professional quality as well as the organisational and personal stability is ensured. In the event of a positive decision, these assignments will be funded in the same way as those identified by NADEL.

2. Preparation of the Assignments

Individual preparation

The student discusses the proposals received with a member of the NADEL team in order:

- to examine the terms of reference and to clarify the comprehension regarding the task foreseen;
- to situate the work within the institutional and operational surroundings;
- to clarify the methodical aspects of the task;
- to obtain advice on instruments and working aids that could be useful to fulfil the task.

Terms of reference (TOR)

The definition of the tasks will be submitted by the responsible organisation in the form of terms of reference. A detailed examination of the terms of reference in order to clarify the understanding of the tasks and of the objective of the assignment before leaving is a prerequisite for a successful stay.

NADEL preparation course

This course (5 days) is compulsory for all students and will be conducted during the study semester. It imparts basic knowledge of the Project Cycle Management (PCM) and serves to clarify specific questions of the students regarding their assignment. Amongst others, the students will be given exercises in methodical questions on PCM, Capacity Development and Organisational Development on which they will work during their assignment.

3. Realisation of the Project Assignment

The organisations will provide the students with a suitable workplace on site. At the start of the assignment, the project managers will introduce the students to their fields of activity and to the members of the organisation and the partner organisations. The employment title of the students during the assignment is "*Projektassistent(in)*" in German, the translation being "Project Assistant". It is important for the project manager and the student to agree on an employment title that is in accordance with the activities of the student and the usage of the local language.

During the first four weeks of the assignment, the students together with their project managers work out the final version of the terms of reference (TOR) and a work plan. Should the need for adjustments arise, these can be made at a later stage by mutual agreement. The project managers grant the students the necessary assistance to meet the TOR and the work plan.

4. Reporting during the Assignment

Final version of the Terms of Reference and a detailed Work Plan

By May 15 2019, the project assistant submits to NADEL (Marie-Laure Müller) the following documents:

- (a) a final version of the terms of reference (signed by the project leader)
- (b) a detailed work plan combined with a timetable
- (c) a short overview (1 to 2 pages) of the first weeks (work experience, settling in)

These documents must be prepared in cooperation with the project leader.

Interim Assessment

By July 31 2019, the project assistant together with the project leader will prepare an interim assessment to be sent to NADEL (Marie-Laure Müller) using as reference frame the terms of reference and the work plan. It will contain a review of the past months and an outlook on the work plan tasks for the remaining time until the end of the assignment.

Assessment of the Project Assignment

At the end of the assignment, the project assistant and the project leader will together fill in a questionnaire, using a template provided by NADEL. This template for the report will allow for a quantifiable appraisal of all NADEL assignments.

5. Finalisation of the Assignment

Following the end of the assignment, the students should have debriefings with the executing organisations, in which the question about the mutual evaluation of the student's performance should be addressed. Also, discussions with members of the NADEL team will take place, in which knowledge acquired during the assignments with regards to content and methods are analysed and appraised. In the first instance, NADEL is interested in the abilities gained in specialized knowledge, knowledge in development policy, knowledge in the methods and instruments used in development cooperation, experience in the realisation of development activities, social and intercultural competences.

NADEL is ready to provide assistance with the organization of an event for the students to exchange their experience during the project assignments. However, the initiative and the responsibility for the realization of such an event lie with the students.

6. Work Report and Essay on Development Policy

Work Report

The work report records in writing the relevant activities and results of the assignment, as they were agreed in the terms of reference. Form and content of this report will be discussed between the project assistant and the project leader at the start of the assignment. The work report is primarily meant for the use of the project and partners, respectively the executing organizations.

Essay on Development Policy

The essay deals with a topic that is a relevant issue in the country of assignment, respectively the work environment of the students. The topic should also be of interest regarding development policy. For the purpose of research and first drafts five workdays are foreseen during the assignment. Whenever possible, the students should be allowed to consult experts as well as available documents on site. The finalisation of the essay is carried out upon return from the assignment; approximately five additional workdays and a timeframe of four weeks are foreseen for this purpose. NADEL is responsible for the appraisal of the essay. All the essays will be published on the NADEL homepage.