Final Report

of the exploratory study on

Governance Structures in Projects and Programmes

by the GPM/pma/spm special interest group

PM goes Boardroom

conceived and conducted by

Christian Rudischer

kindly supported by

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Who we are

The *PM goes Boardroom* group was launched in 2014 by seven project management experts from Germany, Austria and Switzerland and formally constituted as a tri-national special interest group by *GPM*, *pma* and *spm* in 2017. We work at the interface between project management and senior management with the aim of investigating and improving the cooperation between PM and general management. The group currently has 11 active members.

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Any feedback, question or comment is highly appreciated. Please let me know if you re-use study results or parts of this report.

A very special thank you

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to all those who helped in promoting the study over their networks;
and finally to all the participants: without your input this report would not exist.

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1 Background and motivation

The relevance of the governance level (sponsor, steering committee) for the success of a project as well as the success of an organisation as a whole is undisputed among practitioners and has been documented in numerous studies (cf. Standish 2012, Komus 2015, Joslin/Müller 2016, PMI 2018). However, empirical data on who actually assumes these roles and how they are performed is lacking.

This exploratory study is an attempt to close the gap. While giving first insights how governance structures in projects and programmes in the D-A-CH region (Germany, Austria, Switzerland) can be improved, we also want to stimulate further research, including academia.

2 Methodology

2.1 General methodological considerations

Given the limited financial and human resources of the special interest group, its transnational orientation and the exploratory nature of the study, it was designed as an online survey only.

For each specific project or programme, information was collected on

- the type and size of the project/programme,
- the person in the role of project/programme sponsor and his/her manner of performing that role,
- the staffing of the steering committee and its mode of operation.

All information was anonymous. Questions regarding the sponsoring organisation or potentially sensitive data (e.g. budget, performance) was deliberately omitted in order to spare participants any confidentiality issues.

2.2 Structure of the online questionnaire

The online questionnaire comprised 18 questions:

Data on the project/programme

Q1. Are you describing a project or a programme?
Alternatives: Project, Programme, Other (please specify)

Q2. Is the project/programme completed?
Alternatives: Yes, No, No answer

if completed (Q2):

Q4. How long did the project/programme run?
Answer: total duration in months

if not yet completed (Q2):

Q3. For how long has the project/programme been running?
Answer: duration so far in months

Q4. And how long is the total duration planned?
Answer: total duration in months

Q5. Is/Was the project/programme performed for internal purposes or delivered to a client?
Alternatives: Internal, External (client), Other (please specify), No answer

Q6. Which of the following categories best describe the deliverables?
Options (select one or more):

- Organisational development
- ICT
- Construction
- Logistics, relocation
- Product development, innovation
- R&D
- Marketing, event management

- Other (please specify)

Q7. Which phase(s) of the investment life cycle did the project/programme cover?

Options (select one or more):

- Acquisition
- Analysis, study
- Design, concept
- Implementation
- Maintenance, improvement
- Replacement, migration, relaunch
- End of life, liquidation, divestment
- Other (please specify)

Q8. How many companies/organisations were involved in the project/programme (part of the project/programme organisation)?

Answer: Number of organisations

Data on the organisations involved

if more than one organisation involved (Q8):

Q9. What is the relationship between the companies/organisations involved?

Alternatives for each additional organisation:

- Client of the sponsoring organisation
- Contractor of the sponsoring organisation
- Partner co-operating with the sponsoring organisation
- Other
- No answer

Data on governance

Q10. Does/Did one person assume the role of project/programme sponsor?

Alternatives: Yes, No, No answer

if sponsor exists (Q10) and more than one organisation involved (Q8):

Q11. Which of the organisations involved did the sponsor belong to?

Alternatives according to Q8 & Q9

if sponsor exists (Q10):

Q12. Which of the following best describes the position/function of the sponsor in his/her organisation?

Alternatives:

- C-level executive
- Business unit manager (division manager, regional manager)
- Responsibility for a group of products (product manager)
- Responsibility for a project portfolio (portfolio director)
- Responsibility for a business process (process owner)
- Finance, accounting
- HR
- Marketing, sales

- Operations
- R&D, innovation
- Customer service
- Procurement
- IT
- Legal, compliance
- Organisational development, change management
- Communications, public relations
- Other (please specify)

Q13. How frequently did project/programm manager and sponsor meet?

Alternatives:

- every week
- every other week
- every month
- every 2 – 3 months
- every 4 – 6 months
- in case of an exceptional event only
- never
- no answer

Q14. Is/Was there a governing body specifically for this project/programme (team of sponsors, steering committee, project board, ...)?

Alternatives: Yes, No, No answer

if governing body exists (Q14):

Q15. How many meetings of this governing body have taken place (so far)?

Answer:

- number of scheduled meetings
- number of ad-hoc meetings due to exceptional events

Q16. How many people does this governing body comprise?

Answer: Number of members

Q17. Which of the organisations involved does each of the members of this governing body belong to and what best describes their respective position/function?

Alternatives for each member:

- *organisation according to Q8 & Q9 and*
- *position/function as in Q12*

Q18. Which authority and/or duties does/did each member have within the governing body?

Options for each member (select one or more):

- defines requirements / objectives
- provides budget
- provides key personnel
- represents the interests of the sponsoring organisation
- represents the interests of users („senior user“)
- represents the interests of customers

- represents the interests of other stakeholders
- is accountable for the delivery of project/programme output („senior supplier“)
- is accountable for the realisation of benefits
- is accountable for the business case
- represents the project/programme to senior management
- nominates the project/programme manager
- accepts project/programme deliverables
- acts as primary point of contact for the project/programme manager
- chairs the meetings of the governing body
- has final decision-making power within the governing body
- plays a reporting or advisory role only

Finally, respondents could give additional explanations allowing better interpretations of their answers.

2.3 Technical implementation

The questionnaire was implemented using the open source application LimeSurvey.

It responded dynamically in several respects:

- The answers to Q1 & Q2 guided the phrasing of all other questions and answer options.
- The answers to Q8, Q10 and Q14 controlled the relevance of subsequent questions.
- The answers to Q8, Q9, Q16 and Q17 influenced the sub-questions or answer options of Q11, Q17 and Q18.

For technical reasons, maximum values had to be defined for Q8 & Q16. The number of organizations involved (Q8) had to lie between 1 and 10, and the number of members of the governing body (Q16) had to be within the range of 2 to 20.

2.4 Encouraging participation

The main target group of the survey were project (management) offices, as they can provide information about several projects and programmes. However, other persons working in projects or programmes could also participate in the survey.

Participation in the online survey was encouraged by a number of means:

- flyers distributed at the PM Forum (Nuremberg, 22&23/10/2019) and personal invitation in two lectures/workshops by group members as well as in coffee-break discussions;
- flyers distributed at pma focus (Vienna, 30/10/2019);
- notices in the pma newsletter (6/9/2019 and 3/12/2019);
- notices in the GPM newsletter (19/9/2019 and 21/11/2019);
- notice in the spm newsletter;
- invitations via other mailing lists and social media channels, e.g. by the GPM special interest group Project Management Offices, Vienna University of Economics and Business, UAS BFI Vienna;
- personal invitations by group members.

3 Sample

3.1 Survey period

The questionnaire was online from September to December 2019.

3.2 Sample size

During the survey period, data was collected on 233 projects and programmes. In 89 cases, respondents quitted before question 10, so that no information relevant to the subject of the study was given. These data sets were eliminated from the sample.

The remaining 144 data sets form the basis for this report. Due to some questions remaining unanswered or not relevant in certain constellations, the sample size varies from question to question as follows:

Question	relevant in … cases	number of responses	response rate
Q10	144	141	98%
Q11	80	78	98%
Q12	110	107	97%
Q13	110	104	95%
Q14	144	134	93%
Q15	98	94	96%
Q16	98	98	100%
Q17	98	94	96%
Q18	98	64	65%
explanations	144	30	21%

Table 1: Sample size and response rate per question

For all questions but the last one and the optional explanation at the end, the response rate exceeded 90, mostly even 95 per cent.

3.3 Sample structure

Organisational forms (Q1)

Of the 144 responses used in this analysis, almost 74 per cent describe projects and 25 per cent describe programmes. In two responses, the organisational form was indicated as o*ther: portfolio*, but in both cases a defined duration and sponsor were also stated. These two *portfolios* will thus be classified as programmes.

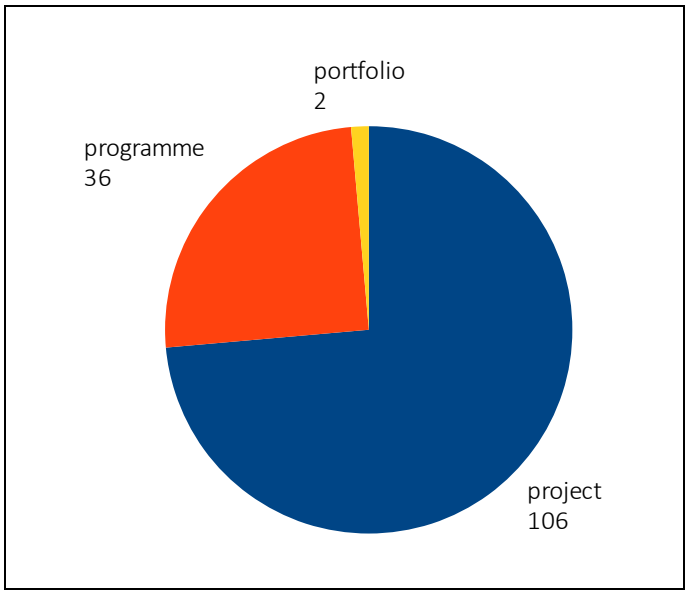

Figure 1: Organisational forms (Q1, n=144)

Duration (Q4)

The projects' durations are in the range of 4 months to 6 years with a median duration of 18 months. Programmes run for 2 to 10 years with a median duration of 43.5 months.

Cumulative distribution curves are shown in Figure 2.

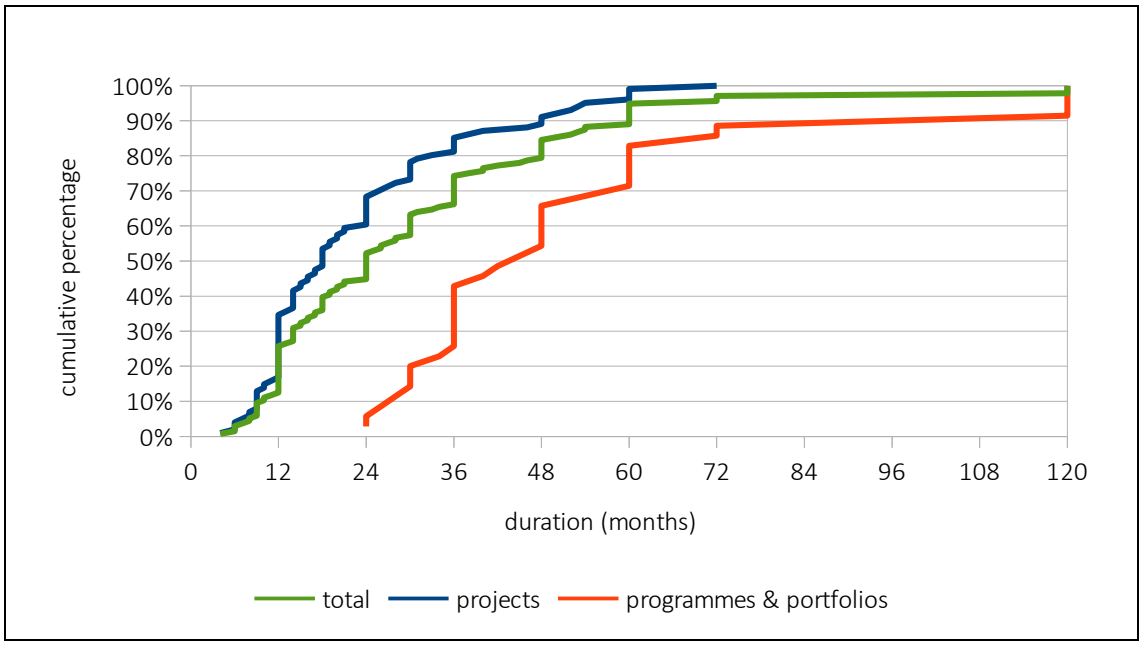

Figure 2: Duration (Q4, n = 136)

Customer (Q5)

About two-thirds of the projects and programmes serve internal goals of the sponsoring organisation, 30 per cent were delivered to external clients. 4 per cent of the cases could not be clearly assigned to one of the two categories (e.g. research grants). There are no significant differences between projects and programmes in this respect.

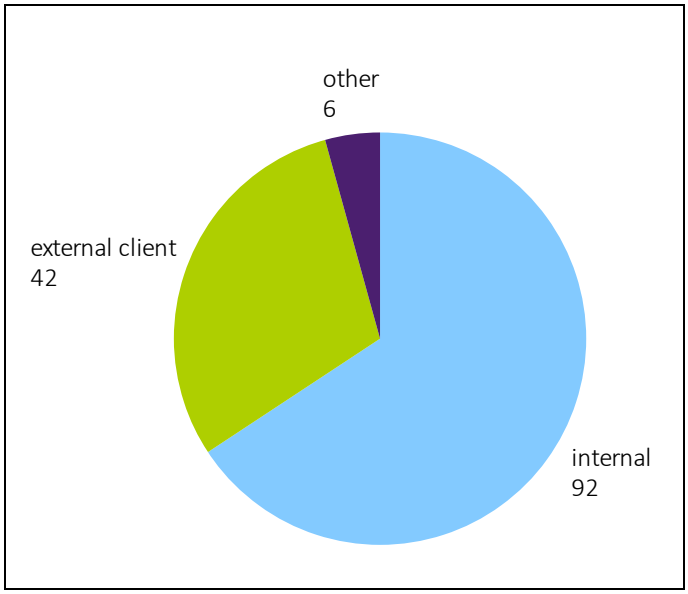

Figure 3: Customer (Q5, n = 140)

Type (Q6)

Regarding the type of deliverables, ICT and organisational topics dominate internal projects and programmes, while those for external clients are most frequently ICT, product development/innovation and construction projects. Figure 4 shows the frequency and the share of external clients for each project/programme type.

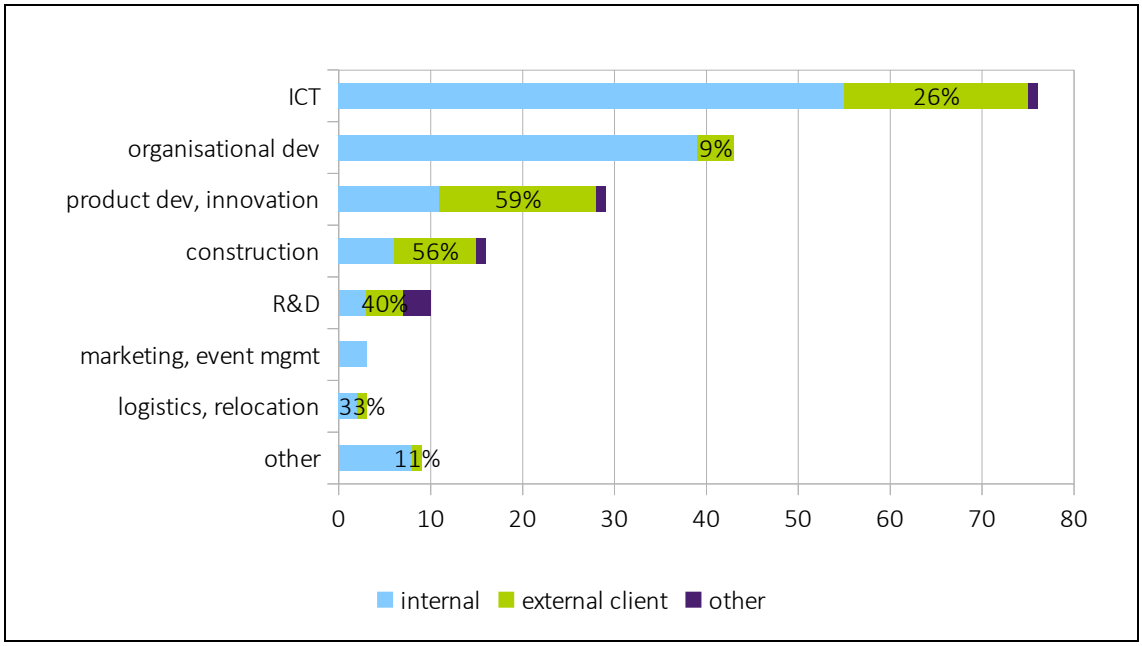

Figure 4: Type and external client share (Q6, n = 140, multiple choice)

Investment Life Cycle (Q7)

All phases of the investment life cycle from acquisition to divestment are represented in the sample, with design and implementation being the most common.

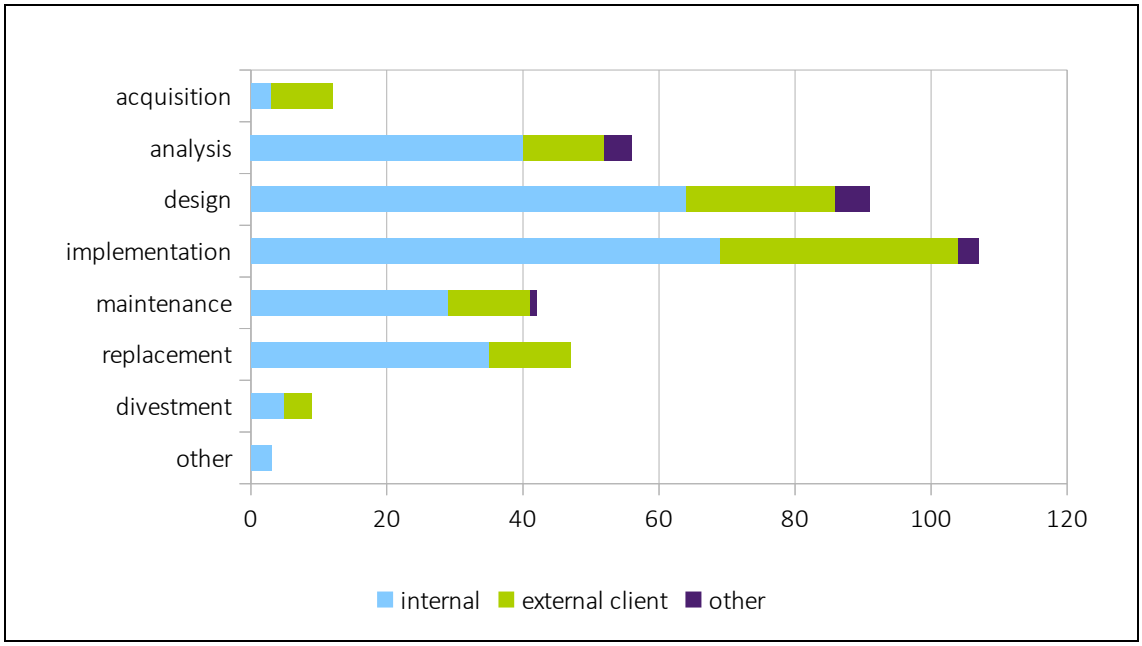

Figure 5: Investment life cycle (Q7, n = 140, multiple choice)

Completion (Q2)

At the time of the survey, around 72 per cent of the projects/programmes were ongoing, 28 per cent had already been completed.

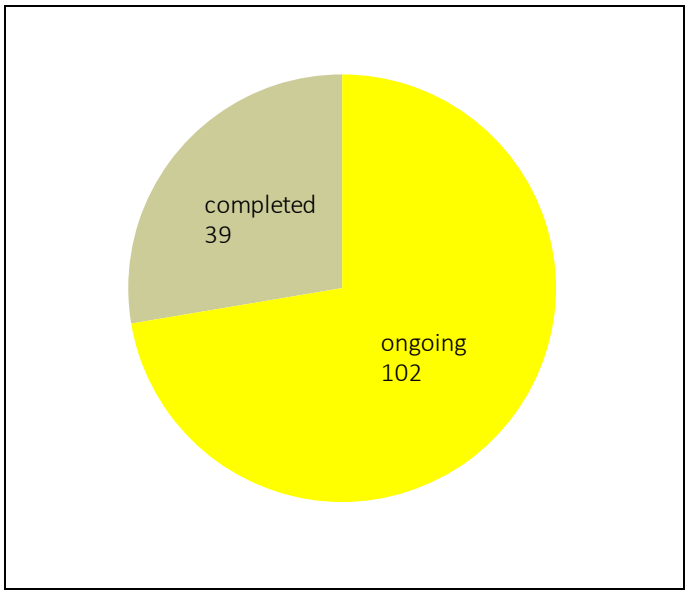

Figure 6: Completion (Q2, n = 141)

3.4 Sampling bias

As pointed out in 2.4, participants in the survey were selected indiscriminately, and the choice of projects/programmes was also left to the participants themselves. (The only request was to select a variety as typical as possible, not to focus on particularly complex governance structures). Furthermore, there is no reliable data on the basic population (all projects and programmes in the D-A-CH region). Identifying a possible sampling bias is therefore somewhat challenging.

The following considerations may help:

- The numerical predominance of projects over programmes as well as the broad range of durations and investment phases correspond at least qualitatively with the presumed structure of the population.
- The fact that internal projects/programmes outweigh those for external customers is in line with other study results (Schoper et al. 2018).
- The high proportion of ongoing projects/programmes shows that the data collected is up to date.
- The very clear predominance of organisational and ICT topics, on the other hand, may rather correspond to the membership structure of PM associations than to the total project landscape. Again, there is no reliable information on this.

4 Findings on governance structures

4.1 Sponsor

Existence of a sponsor (Q10)

In 83 per cent of the projects and 65 per cent of the programmes, one person acts as sponsor. Conversely, this is not the case for one in six projects and one in three programmes.

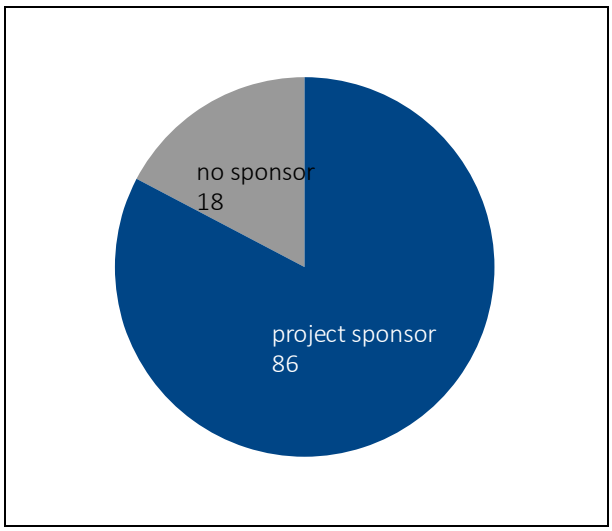

Figure 7: Project sponor (Q10, n = 104)

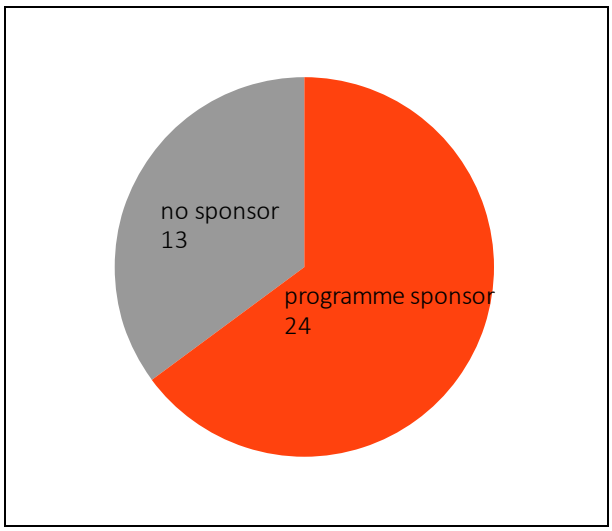

Figure 8: Programme sponsor (Q10, n = 37)

Possible explanations for the absence of a (distinct) sponsor are:

- There is a steering committee which, as a whole, acts as sponsor.
- The project/programme spans multiple organisations which share the sponsor role among themselves.

One of these two constellations (steering committee, multiple organisations) applies to 28 of the 31 projects/programmes without a distinct sponsor, albeit the explanations cannot be verified in each individual case.

Position or function (Q12)

One out of three sponsors is a C-level executive, almost one out of four heads a business unit. Combining these two groups, 57 per cent of all sponsors bear overall business responsibility. As expected, this share is higher for programmes (70 per cent) than for projects (54 per cent). As shown in Figure 9, product, process or portfolio managers are found significantly less often in the sponsor role; of the functional managers (department heads) acting as sponsor, IT managers are the largest group. The latter corresponds to the high proportion of ICT projects in the sample (cf. Figure 4).

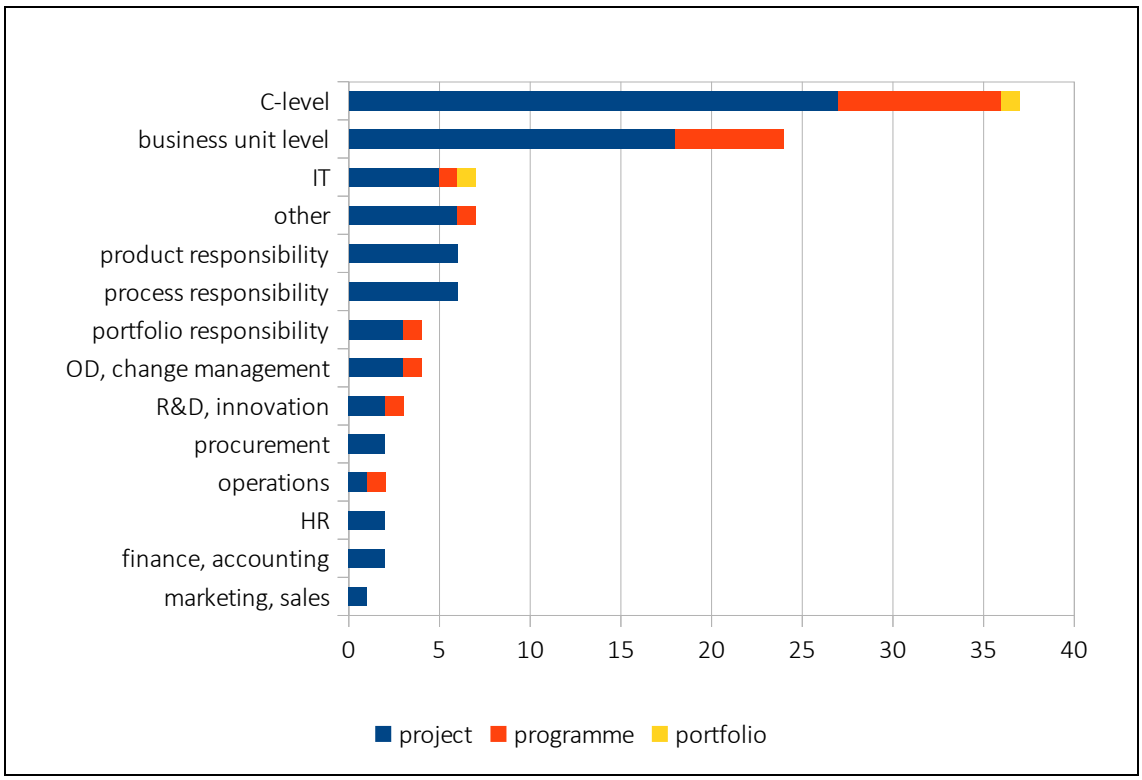

Figure 9: Position or function of sponsors in their organisation (Q12, n = 107)

As expected, functional managers are primarily found as sponsors of projects and programmes within their functional scope of responsibility. However, managers with overall business responsibility still prevail in all types of projects and programmes:

position or function of the sponsor	**total count**	**project or programme type** (one or more)							
		OD	ICT	construction	logistics	product dev.	R&D	marketing	other
C-level	37	18	17	6	1	4	2	2	2
business unit level	24	5	15	2		5	2	1	2
product responsibility	6	3	4			1			
portfolio responsibility	4		3	1		1			
process responsibility	6	2	4						
finance, accounting	2		2						
HR	2		1	1					
marketing, sales	1		1						
operations	2		1	1					1
R&D, innovation	3					**3**			
customer service	-								
procurement	2	1	1	1		1			
IT	7	1	**6**						1
legal, compliance	-								
OD, change management	4	**4**	1						1
communications, PR	-								
other	7		1	1		1	3		1

Table 2: Position or function of sponsors in their organisation by type of deliverables (Q6 & Q12, n = 107)

Sponsor meetings (Q13)

In 80 per cent of all projects and programmes with a distinct sponsor, meetings with the sponsor take place at least once a month, in a further 15 per cent they take place every 2 to 3 months and only in 5 per cent sponsor meetings are not held at all or only in case of exceptional events.

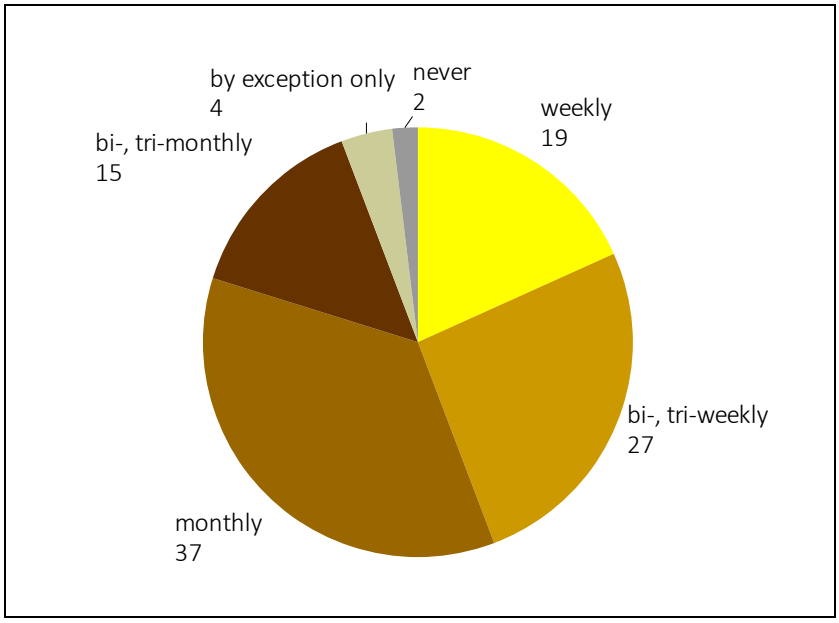

Figure 10: Frequency of sponsor meetings (Q13, n = 104)

Meetings are less frequent with C-level executives (67 per cent at least monthly, 6 percent never) and more frequent with functional managers (86 per cent at least monthly, 14 per cent only for exceptional events).

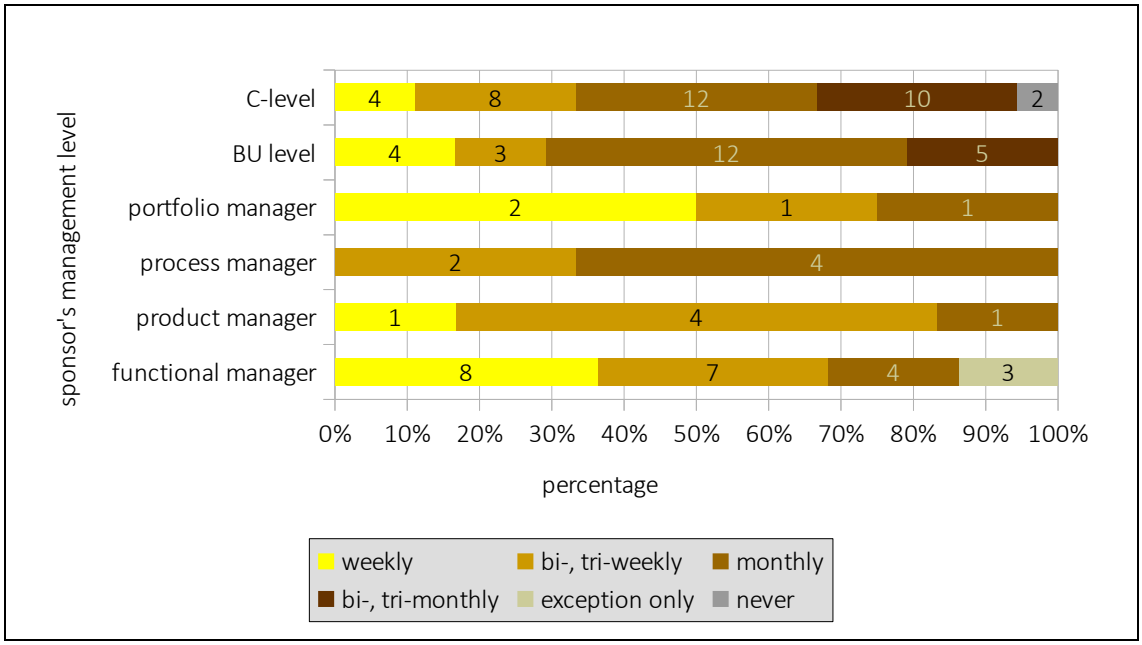

Figure 11: Frequency of sponsor meetings by management level (Q12 & Q13, n = 98)

4.2 Steering committee

Existence of steering committees (Q14)

Steering committees exist in two out of three projects and in over 90 per cent of all programmes.

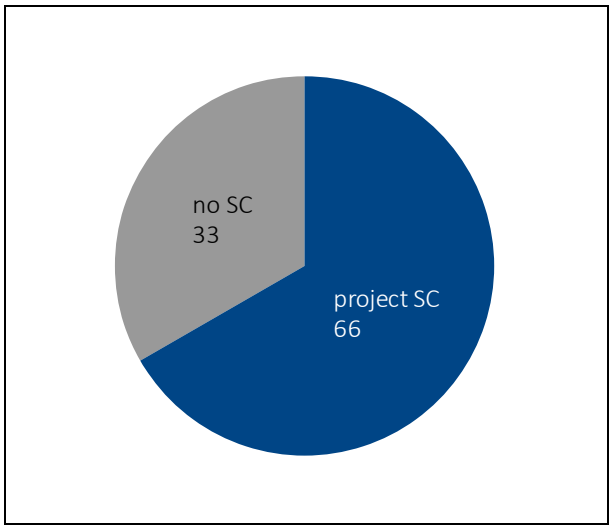

Figure 12: Project steering committee (Q14, n = 99)

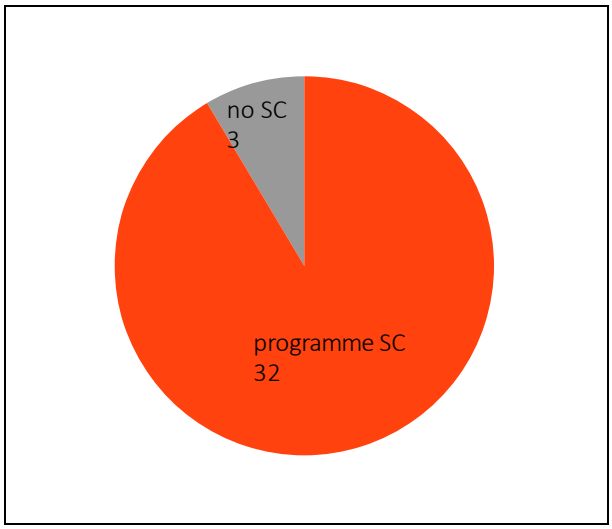

Figure 13: Programme steering committee (Q14, n = 35)

Combining the answers to Q10 (Is there a distinct sponsor?) and Q14 (Is there a steering committee?) shows that the majority of projects and two out of three programmes have both a distinct sponsor and a steering committee (SC). For projects, a further 29 per cent only have a sponsor, 12 per cent only a SC and 5 per cent have neither. For programmes, 26 per cent have a SC without a distinct sponsor and 9 per cent have neither a sponsor nor a SC. The alternative of a sponsor without SC does not apply to any programme in our sample.

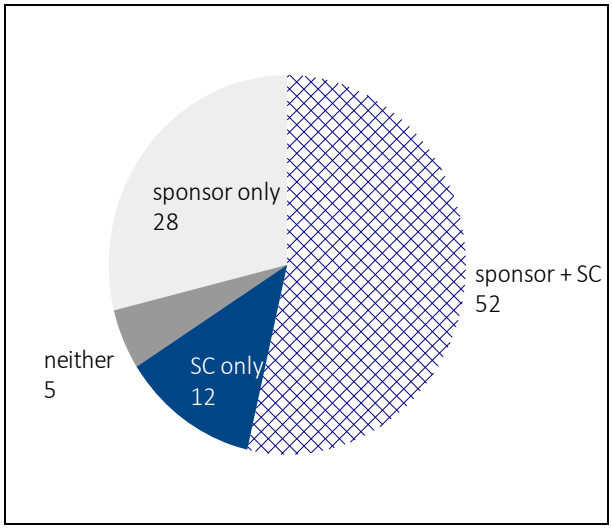

Figure 14: Governance structure in projects (Q10 & Q14, n = 97)

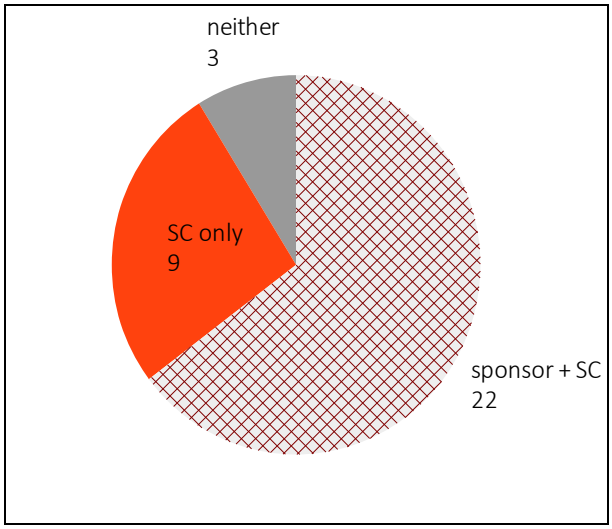

Figure 15: Governance structure in programmes (Q10 & Q14, n = 34)

Thus, of the 131 projects and programmes for which both Q10 and Q14 have been answered, 6 per cent have neither a distinct sponsor nor a steering committee. A detailed analysis of these 8 projects and programmes without any governance structure does not show a consistent pattern:

- 5 are projects, 3 programmes;
- 6 are internal, 2 have external clients;
- various project types and investment phases;
- 1 to 7 organisations involved.

In conclusion, the study results do not yield a universal explanation for the complete lack of governance structures.

Size (Q16)

The majority of steering committees (over 60 per cent) have five to eight members, the median being seven people. Almost no steering committee in our sample has fewer than 4 members, but there seems to be no upper bounds - even the technical maximum of 20 SC members was reached in several responses.

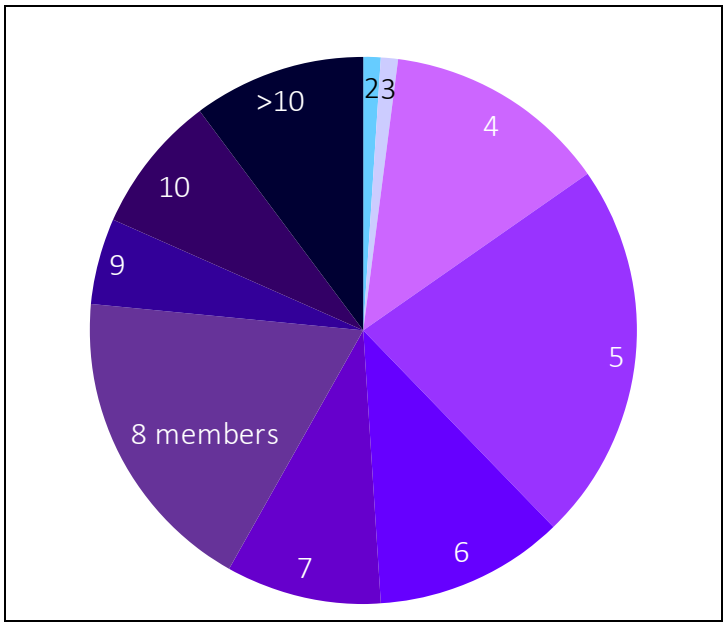

Figure 16: Size of steering committees (Q16, n = 98)

Staffing (Q17)

For 94 steering committees, the exact composition was specified in our study, so there is data on almost 600 SC members. This data shows that the top management levels also prevail in steering committees: On average, there is one C-level executive and 1.5 business unit heads in each steering committee. Together, these two groups represent almost 40 per cent of all SC members. A further 20 per cent are product, process or portfolio managers, and the remaining 40 per cent functional managers (department heads). Of the latter group, IT managers alone account for over one third; they are thus almost as common in steering committees as the C-level, which again corresponds to the high proportion of ICT projects in the sample (cf. Figure 4).

The "average steering committee" has 6.3 members and is composed thus:

number	position or function
1,0	C-level
1,4	business unit level
1,2	product, process or portfolio manager
0,9	IT manager
1,3	other functional manager
0,5	other member
6,3	**SC members total**

Table 3: Staffing of the “average” steering committee

Detailed information on the positions and functions represented in steering committees is given in Figure 17 and Table 4. Similar to the sponsor role (cf. Table 2), functional managers are mainly found in steering committees of projects and programmes within their functional scope of responsibility.

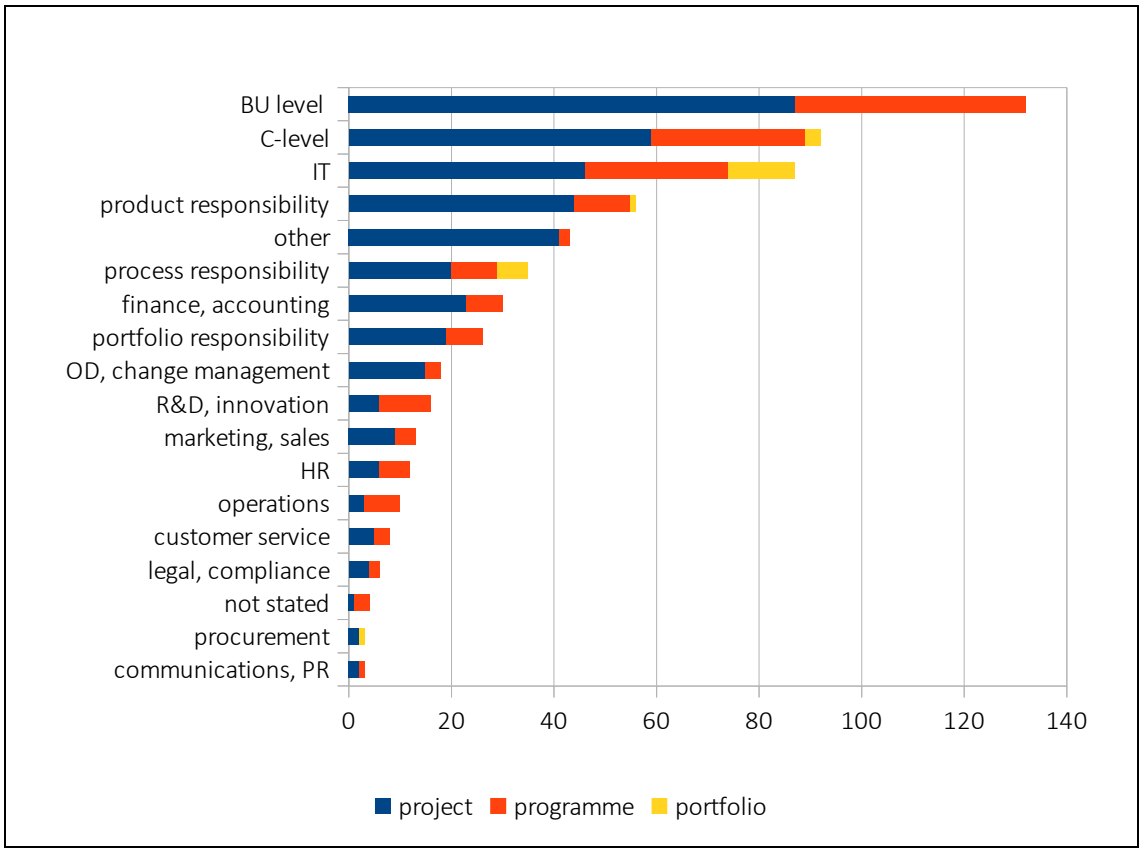

Figure 17: Position or function of SC members in their organisation (Q17, n = 94 SC)

Meetings (Q15)

There are two types of steering committee meetings: scheduled ones (planned well in advance) and ad-hoc ones (requested at short notice due to exceptional events). Over 80 per cent of SC meetings are scheduled, just under 20 per cent are ad-hoc.

Scheduled meetings are held by almost every steering committee, only 3 per cent do not plan any meetings at all. Roughly half of all steering committees meet on a quarterly basis, 30 per cent more frequently, 20 per cent less frequently. In addition, almost 60 per cent of all steering committees have ad-hoc meetings due to exceptional events, raising the share of steering committees that meet at least once in three months to almost 90 per cent, and of those meeting several times a month to 30 per cent.

position or function of SC members	total count	project or programme type (one or more)							
		OD	ICT	construction	logistics	product dev.	R&D	marketing	other
C-level	92	**46**	45	5	2	24	**9**		9
business unit level	132	39	**84**	**10**	3	**34**	5		8
product responsibility	56	18	28			**15**	5		
portfolio responsibility	26	4	21	3		4			
process responsibility	35	7	27	4	2	6			3
finance, accounting	30	9	21	3		1	2		2
HR	12	8	12	1					
marketing, sales	13	3	7	1		2			2
operations	10	2	4	2		4	1		1
R&D, innovation	16	2	5			**12**	2		3
customer service	8	2	7						1
procurement	3	1	2	2	1	2			
IT	87	**19**	**78**	2		3			5
legal, compliance	6	3	4	1					
OD, change management	18	**14**	13	1		3			1
communications, PR	3	1	1				1		
other	43	10	25	2		4	1		2

Table 4: Position or function of SC members in their organisation by project type (Q6 & Q17, n = 94)

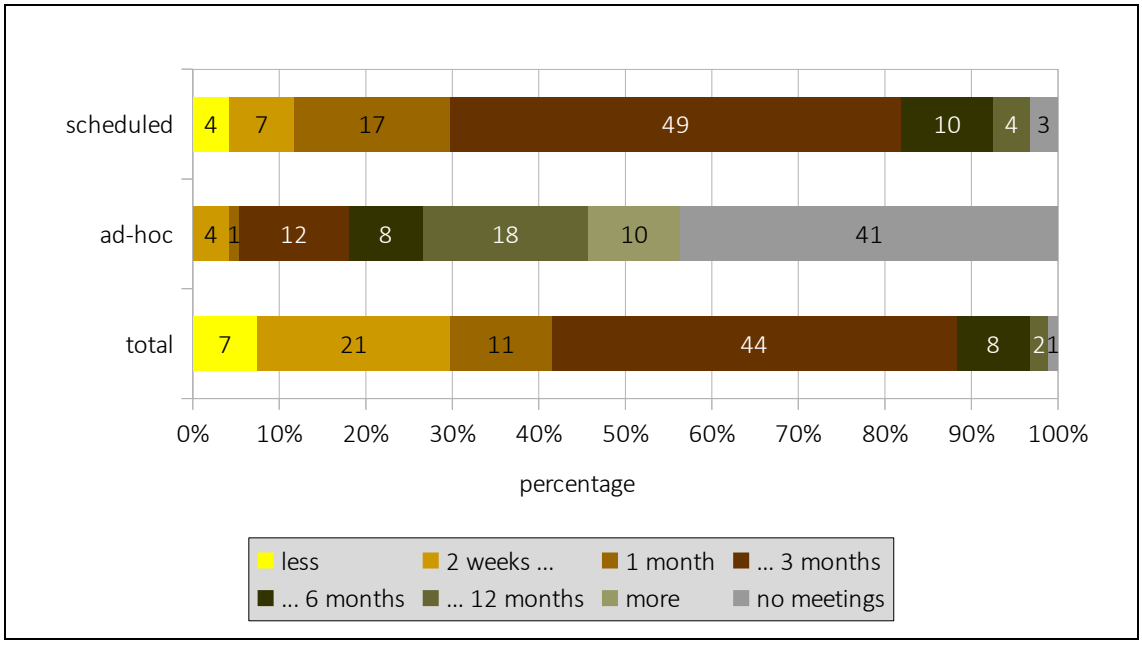

Figure 18: Average interval between steering committee meetings (Q15, n = 94)

4.3 Steering committee work

For 65 steering committees, not only the exact composition but also the distribution of tasks between the members was specified, which provides insight into the way steering committees work and function.

Functional completeness (Q18)

This question listed a total of 17 functions (authorities and duties) to be assigned to individual SC members, allowing the selection of multiple options on both sides (n:m relationship). Figure 19 shows that each of the 17 functions can be performed by one, several or no SC member, depending on the steering committee in question. The last function "accountability (delivery, benefits, bc)" was added in the course of the analysis to identify all SC members assigned at least one of the three functions "accountable for delivery", "accountable for benefits realisation" or "accountable for business case". Differences between internal projects/programmes and those with external clients are shown in Table 5.

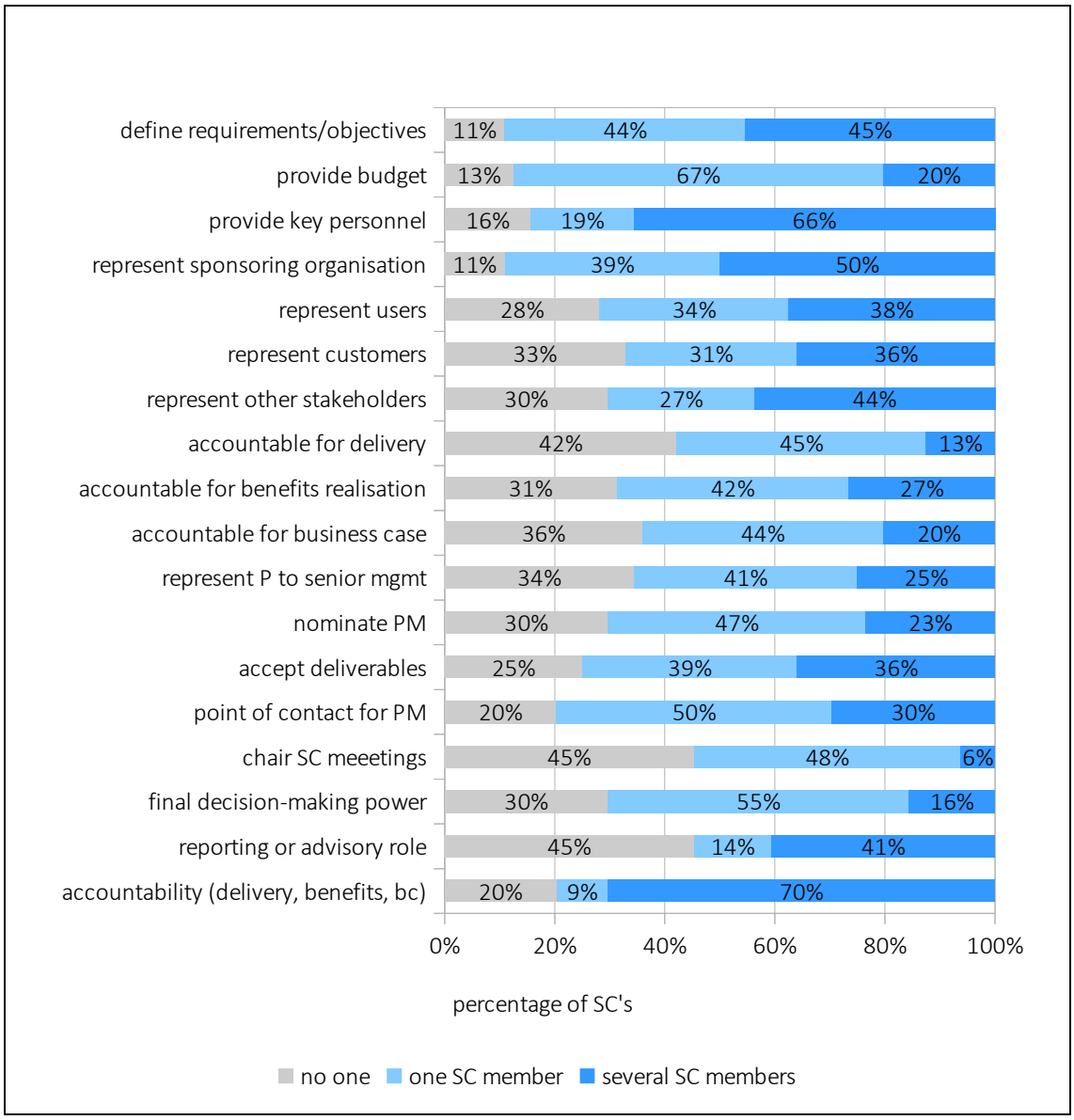

Figure 19: Functional completeness of steering committees (Q18, n = 64)

Key findings of this analysis are:

- Almost 90 per cent of all steering committees include someone who defines the requirement and objectives of the project or programme and provides the resources for it. In two out of three cases the budget is provided by a single SC member, and to an equally large part, several members provide key personnel.
- On the other hand, only 75 per cent of steering committees include someone who accepts the project or programme deliverables.
- In 30 per cent of the cases, the person nominating the project manager is not a member of the steering committee, and in 20 per cent of the cases, the project manager has no primary point of contact within the steering committee.
- The interests of the sponsoring organisation are represented in the steering committee in almost 9 out of 10 cases, while user interests are only represented in just over 7 out of 10 steering committees. The interests of customers and other stakeholders are represented to a similar extent.
- In every other steering committee of an internal project or programme, no one is ultimately accountable for delivery of outputs (senior supplier). Accountability for benefits realisation and accountability for the business case are lacking in 4 out of 10 steering committees each, as is a person representing the project/programme to the senior management of their own organisation.
- In every fourth steering committee of an internal project or programme, all three cases of lack of accountability coincide, i.e. no one at all is accountable for benefits realisation, the business case or the delivery of outputs.
- In 55 per cent of the steering committees, one distinct person has the final decision-making power.
- 55 per cent of the steering committees also include members with only a reporting or advisory role (i.e. without participation in decision-making).

function (authority or duty)	**lacking in**	
	internal projects/ programmes	**client projects/ programmes**
define requirements/objectives	8%	17%
provide budget	6%	33%
provide key personnel	12%	25%
represent sponsoring organisation	14%	0%
represent interests of users	27%	42%
represent interests of customers	39%	8%
represent other stakeholders	33%	25%
accountable for delivery	49%	17%
accountable for realising benefits	37%	17%
accountable for business case	41%	17%
represent project/pgm to senior mgmt	37%	25%
nominate project manager	27%	42%
accept deliverables	24%	25%
point of contact for project manager	20%	25%
chair SC meetings	49%	33%
final decision-making power	31%	33%
reporting/advisory role only	49%	42%
some accountability (delivery, benefits, bc)	24%	8%

Table 5: Functionally incomplete steering committees of internal (n = 49) and external client (n = 12) projects/programmes (Q5 & Q18)

Assignment of authorities and duties (Q18)

Having analysed the extent to which functions are performed by steering committees, we then examined how these functions are distributed among SC members. To this end, a contingency coefficient r_ϕ was calculated for each possible pair of functions (see Table 6). Distinguishing between internal projects/programmes and those with external clients facilitates the interpretation.

Correlation between functions (mean square contingency coefficient) external client internal	define requirements/objectives	provide budget	provide key personnel	represent sponsoring organisation	represent interests of users	represent interests of customers	represent other stakeholders	accountable for delivery	accountable for realising benefits	accountable for business case	represent project to senior mgmt	nominate project manager	accept deliverables	point of contact for project manager	chair SC meetings	final decision-making power	reporting/advisory role only
define requirements/obj.			0,0			**0,5**											-0,3
provide budget	0,3		0,0														
provide key personnel	0,1	0,0		0,2		0,1	0,1		-0,3	0,0	0,1		0,0	0,1		0,1	0,2
represent sponsoring org	0,1	0,1	0,3			-0,1	-0,1							0,1			-0,2
represent users	0,2	-0,2	0,0	0,0													
represent customers	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,1	0,3		0,2		0,3					0,0			-0,2
represent stakeholders	0,0	-0,1	0,0	0,2	0,1	0,2								-0,2			-0,1
accountable for delivery	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	-0,1	-0,1	0,0										
accountable for benefits	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,3	0,1	0,2	0,2	0,2									0,0
accountable for bc	0,2	0,0	0,1	0,3	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,2	**0,4**								
represent to senior mgmt	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,3	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,2	0,3	**0,5**							
nominate PM	0,3	0,3	0,1	**0,4**	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,3	0,3	0,3	**0,5**						
accept deliverables	**0,4**	0,2	0,2	0,4	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,4	0,2	0,3	**0,5**					
point of contact for PM	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,4	0,0	0,0	0,2	0,2	0,3	0,2	0,4	**0,6**	0,4				
chair SC meetings	0,2	0,2	0,0	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,0		0,4	0,2	0,3	0,3	0,2	0,3			
final decision-making	0,3	**0,4**	0,0	0,2	-0,1	0,0	0,2	0,1	0,3	0,2	0,2	**0,5**	0,3	**0,4**	0,0		
reporting/advisory only	-0,2	-0,3	0,1	0,1	0,0	-0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,1	-0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	-0,1	

Values in the lower-left part are for internal projects/programmes, values in the upper-right part for external client projects/programmes.
Coefficients over 0.4 (moderate correlation) are highlighted in **bold** print. Missing values indicate that the sample data is inconclusive.

Table 6: Correlation between functions (authorities or duties) in steering committees (Q5 & Q18).

Noticeable results for internal projects/programmes include:

- Members who define requirements and objectives often also accept the deliverables.
- The project manager is often nominated by the person who represents the project to senior management or who represents the interests of the sponsoring organisation within the SC.
- Final decision-making power often lies with those who provide the budget.

- Accountability for the business case, for benefits realisation, representation to senior management, nomination of the project management and approval of deliverables are also moderately correlated.
- No correlation ($r_\phi = 0.04$) can be found between budget funding and accountability for the business case: Only 20 per cent of those SC members who provide budget funds are also accountable for the business case, and conversely, only just over 25 per cent of SC members accountable for the business case also provide budget funds (see Table 7).
- More generally speaking, accountability and authority to decide do not correlate ($r_\phi = -0.11$): Of the almost 300 SC members, three quarters participate in decision-making (i.e. are not merely reporting or advising), but only one third are also accountable for either delivery, benefits realisation or the business case. One out of three SC members accountable cannot participate in decision-making at all (see Table 8).

internal		**accountable for business case**		
		yes	no	total
provides budget	yes	13	52	65
	no	36	183	219
	total	49	235	284

Table 7: Budget funding vs business case accountability in internal projects/programmes

internal		**accountability** (delivery, benefits, bc)		
		yes	no	total
decision-making power	yes	60	149	209
	no	30	45	75
	total	90	194	284

Table 8: Decision-making power vs accountability in internal projects/programmes

Regarding projects and programmes delivered to external clients, only very few conclusions can be drawn due to the limited sample size (only 12 steering committees for this question):

- Requirements and objectives are defined by those who represents the customer's interests.
- Accountability and authority to decide are again uncorrelated ($r_\phi = 0.10$): of all 67 SC members, 70 per cent participate in decision-making (i.e. are not merely there to reporting or advising), but only 40 per cent are also accountable for either delivery, benefits realisation or the business case. One out of four SC members accountable cannot participate in decision-making at all (see Table 9).

external client		**accountability** (delivery, benefits, bc)		
		yes	no	total
decision-making power	yes	20	26	46
	no	7	14	21
	total	27	40	67

Table 9: Decision-making power vs accountability in external client projects/programmes

Relationship between authorities/duties in the steering committee and position/function held in the organisation (Q17 & Q18)

Combining the answers to Q17 (position/function of SC members in their organisation) and Q18 (authorities/duties in the steering committee) reveals who typically performs which functions in the steering committee. To this end, the distribution among the various management positions/functions was analysed for each SC function and deviations from the baseline (i.e. the distribution of all SC members among management positions/functions) were identified. Again, statistically significant conclusions (probability of error ≤ 5%) can only be drawn for internal projects and programmes (see Table 10):

- C-level executives often define the requirements and objectives, nominate the project manager and provide the budget, but frequently without also being accountable for the business case. They chair the SC meetings and have the final decision-making power.
- Heads of business units often provide key personnel or represent the customer (even in internal projects).
- Product managers are often held accountable for the business case and represent the project to senior management. At the same time, they often only have an advisory function in the steering committee, i.e. they do not participate in decision-making. Of the 30 SC members accountable without participating in decision-making (cf Table 8), 11 are product managers.
- IT managers almost never represent a project or programme to senior management.

To summarise (and exaggerate), we can draw the following scenario: The C-level defines objectives, provides the budget and makes important decisions, but if the project doesn't pay off, product managers take the blame.

percentage of SC members (baseline)	C-level *17%*	BU level *27%*	portfolio managers *4%*	process managers *5%*	product managers *12%*	IT managers *12%*	others *24%*
define requirements/objectives	**34%**	31%	1%	3%	9%	7%	16%
provide budget	**37%**	31%	2%	3%	5%	8%	15%
provide key personnel	18%	**38%**	4%	4%	7%	15%	15%
represent sponsoring organisation	17%	27%	1%	6%	11%	11%	28%
represent interests of users	21%	26%	3%	6%	17%	6%	22%
represent interests of customers	8%	**44%**	0%	5%	16%	8%	20%
represent other stakeholders	16%	21%	5%	5%	15%	11%	27%
accountable for delivery	9%	18%	3%	6%	12%	24%	27%
accountable for realising benefits	27%	23%	2%	6%	15%	4%	23%
accountable for business case	18%	29%	2%	2%	**27%**	4%	18%
represent to senior mgmt	21%	31%	2%	4%	**25%**	2%	15%
nominate project manager	**33%**	35%	4%	4%	6%	12%	6%
accept deliverables	22%	35%	1%	8%	9%	8%	18%
primary contact point for project mgr	27%	27%	3%	5%	8%	12%	18%
chair SC meetings	**48%**	21%	0%	3%	0%	7%	21%
final decision-making power	**47%**	19%	2%	6%	2%	6%	17%
reporting/advisory role only	3%	21%	4%	4%	**21%**	16%	31%
decision-making w/o accountability	22%	28%	5%	5%	7%	11%	21%
accountability w/o decision-making	3%	13%	3%	3%	**37%**	17%	23%
provide budget & accountable for bc	62%	15%	0%	8%	8%	8%	0%
provide budget w/o bc accountability	**31%**	35%	2%	2%	4%	8%	19%
bc accountability w/o budget	3%	33%	3%	0%	**33%**	3%	25%

Percentage values in each row add up to 100%.
Values significantly higher than the baseline are highlighted in **bold** print,
values significantly lower than the baseline are marked by a dotted underline ($\alpha = 5\%$)

Table 10: Distribution of SC authorities/duties over management levels/functions in internal projects/programmes (Q5, Q17 &Q18)

C-level in steering committees (Q18)

Finally, since every steering committee (statistically speaking) includes a C-level executive (cf. Table 3), an analysis was done specifically for this group as to which functions they perform in steering committees and whether or not these functions would otherwise remain vacant. Only the executives of the sponsoring organisation were considered, not those of clients, contractors or other project partners. Again, a distinction was made between internal projects and programmes on the one hand and those delivered to external clients on the other hand.

In internal projects and programmes, C-level executives play a vital role as SC members (cf. Figure 20):

- In 8 out of 10 steering committees they provide the budget, usually all of it.
- In 7 out of 10 steering committees they define requirements and objectives – partly by themselves, partly along with other SC members.
- In 6 out of 10 steering committees they represent the interests of the whole organisation, accept the deliverables, nominate the project manager and act as their primary point of contact, mostly by themselves.

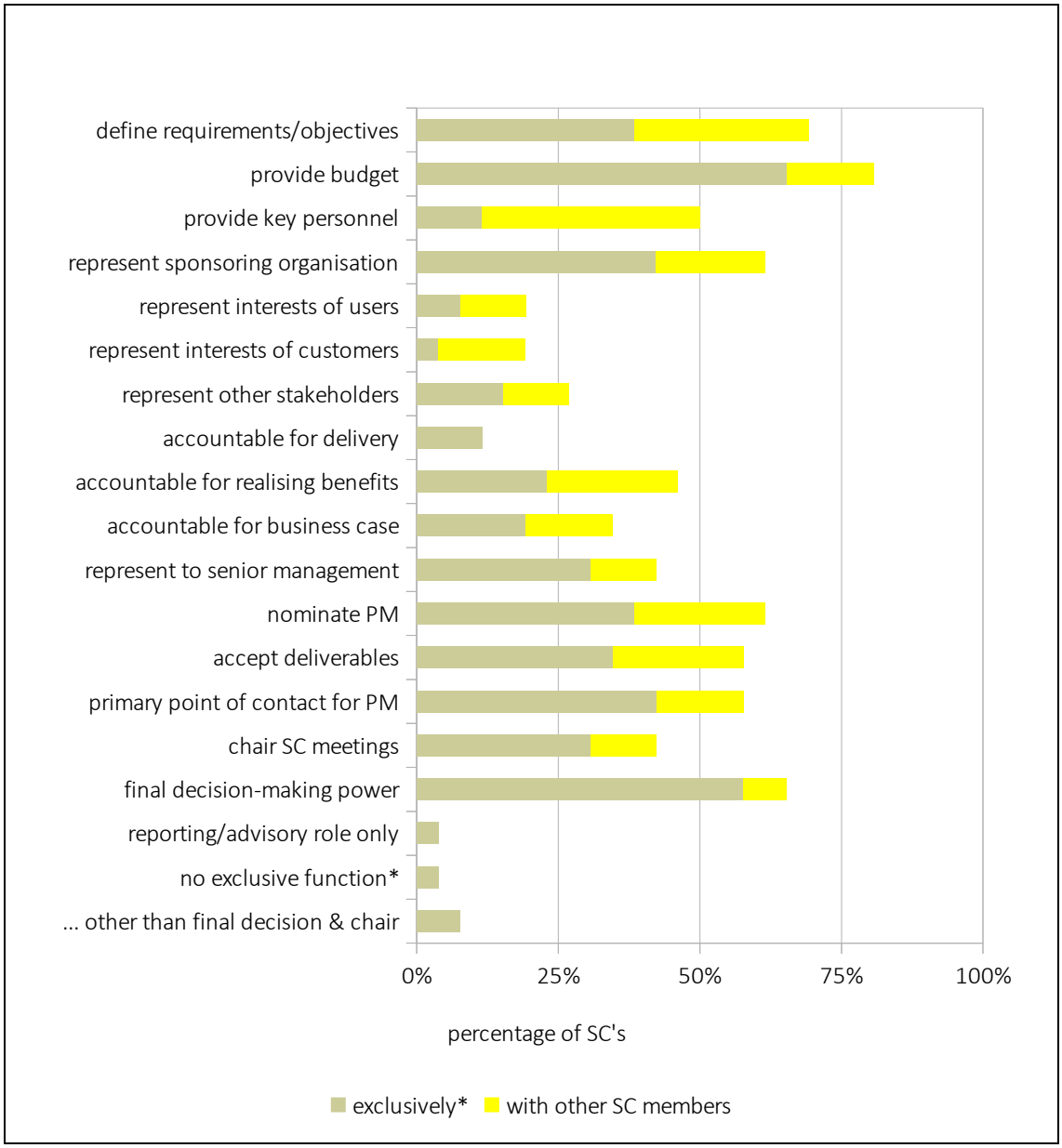

Figure 20: C-level in steering committees of internal projects/programmes (Q5, Q17 & Q18, n = 26)

- In 5 out of 10 steering committees they also contribute to the provision of key personnel and are co-accountable for benefits realisation, but usually they do so together with other SC members.
- Only in 8 per cent of the cases they have no exclusive function apart from chairing the meeting and having final decision-making power.

For projects and programmes with external clients the picture is quite different:

- Generally the exclusive function of C-level executives in the steering committee ends with the final decision-making power.
- Even if C-level executives provide key personnel and represent the interests of their own organisation, so do other SC members.

The rationale behind the C-level's involvement in steering committees for projects and programmes with external clients seems to lie in corporate policy rather than the necessity for the functioning of the committee itself.

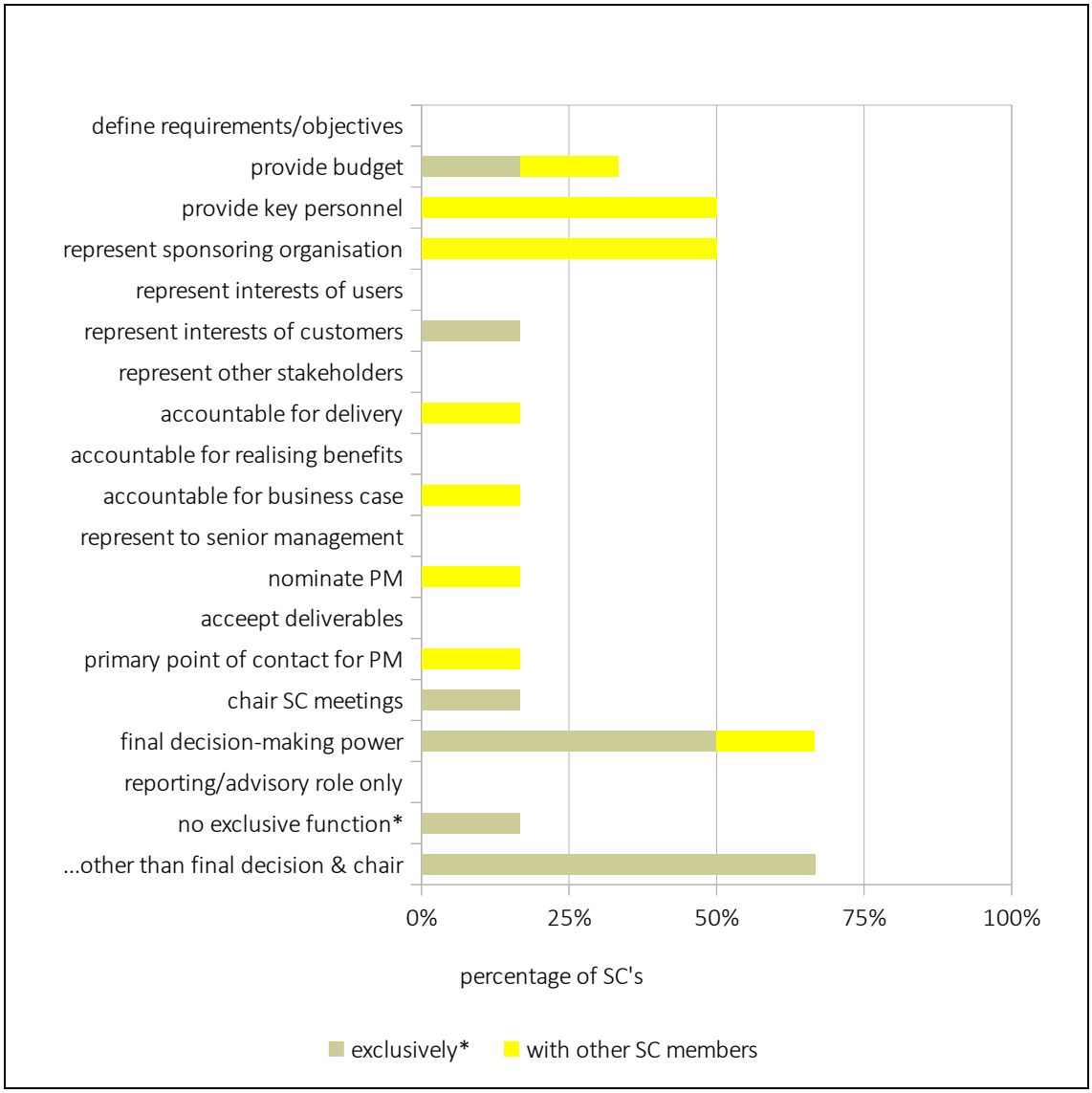

Figure 21: C-level in steering committees of external client projects/programmes (Q5, Q17 & Q18, n = 6)

5 Specific findings for projects and programmes spanning multiple organisations

5.1 General

Multiple organisations in projects and programmes (Q8)

For over 70 per cent of all projects and programmes, the members of the project team represented different organisations, thus forming what is known as an integrated project or programme organisation.

Internal projects and programmes typically span three organisations (median), those with external clients span four:

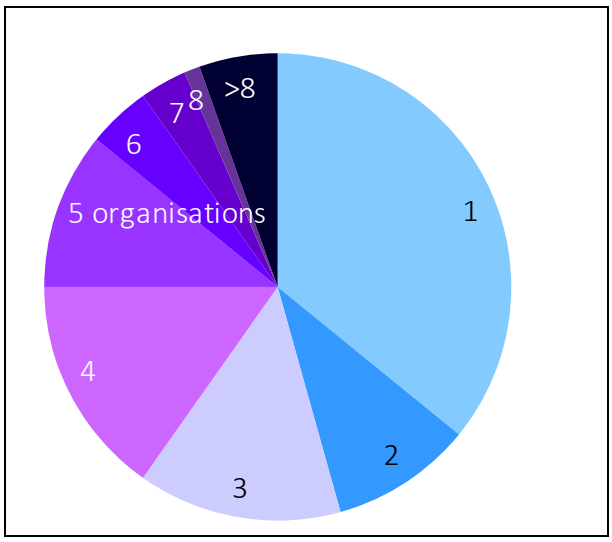

Figure 22: Number of organisations involved in internal projects/programmes (Q8, n = 92)

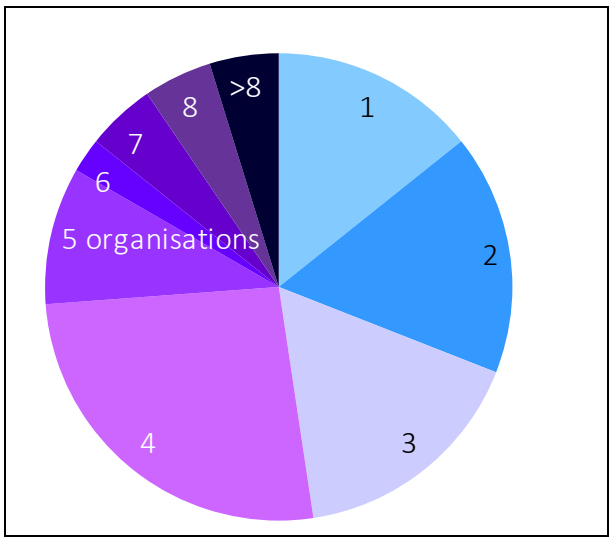

Figure 23: Number of organisations involved in external client projects/programmes (Q8, n = 42)

Integration scenarios (Q8 & Q9)

From the sponsoring organisation's viewpoint, roughly 40 per cent of other organisations participating in a project or programme are contractors, 30 per cent are co-operating partners, 20 per cent are clients and 10 per cent others.

A detailed analysis in Figure 24 shows that 57 per cent of external client projects and programmes include a client representative in the project/programme organisation. Other (sub-)contractors are included equally often, cooperating partners (of the main contractor) are represented in 43 per cent of project/programme organisations. For internal projects and programmes, 46 per cent of project/programme organisations include a contractor representative.

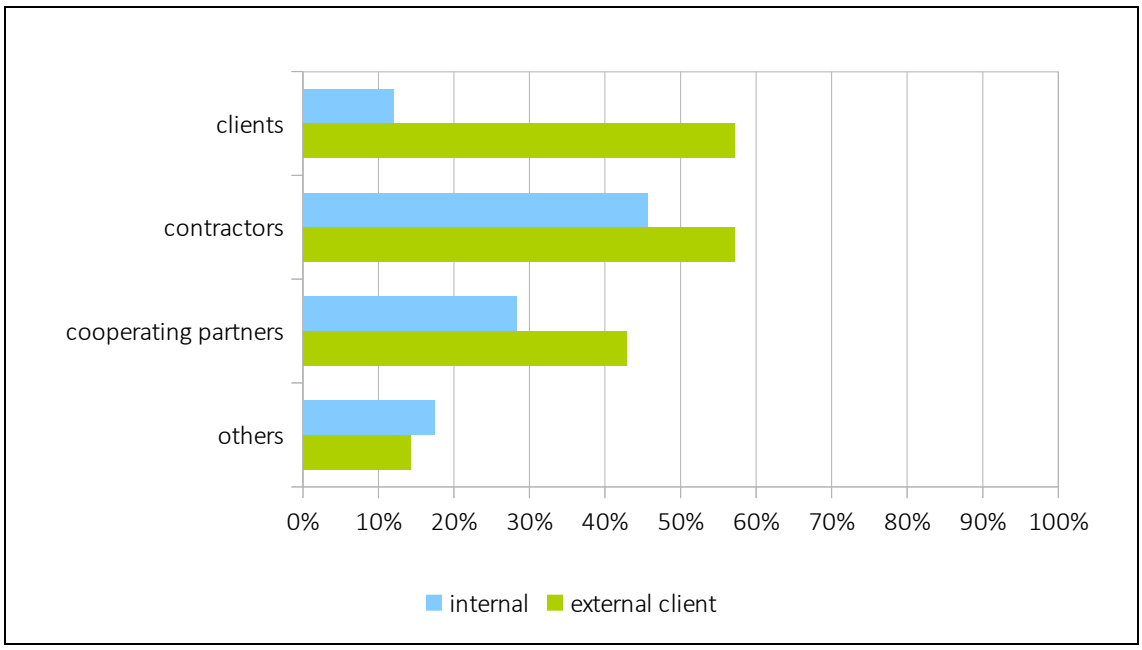

Figure 24: Percentage of project/programme organisations that include other stakeholders (Q8 & Q9, n = 134)

5.2 Governance structures

Sponsor (Q11)

Where there is a distinct sponsor, he or she belongs to the sponsoring organisation itself (internal sponsor) in nine out of ten internal projects and programmes, but only in two out of three projects/programmes with an external client. In 28 per cent of these external client projects and programmes, the sole sponsor belongs to the client organisation, in 6 per cent to one of the other organisations involved.

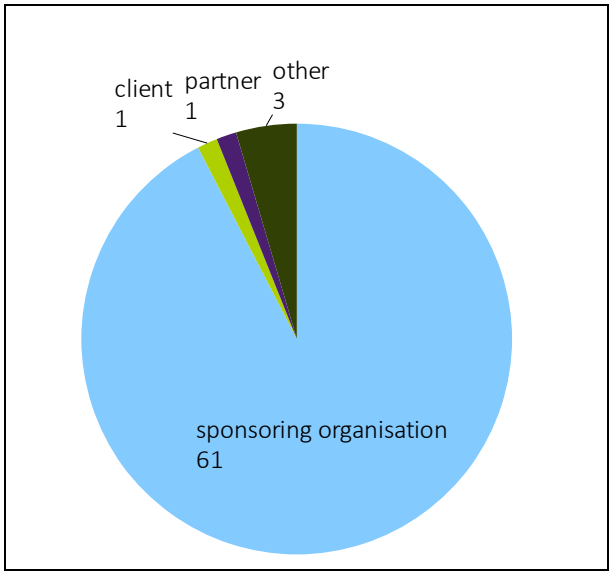

Figure 25: Sponsor's affiliation for internal projects/programmes (Q11, n = 66)

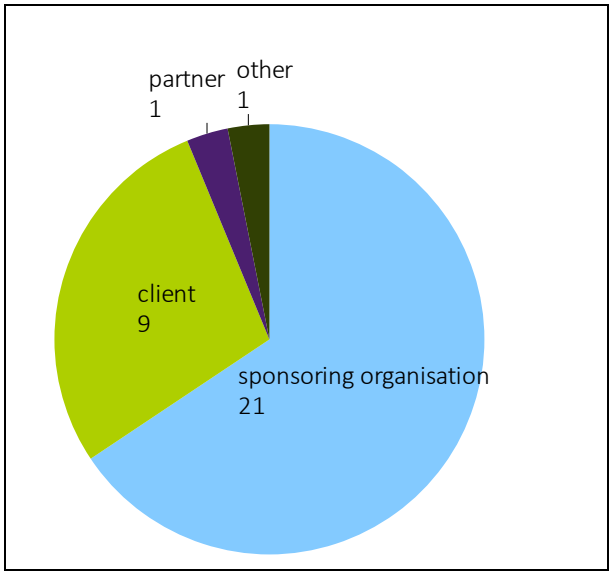

Figure 26: Sponsor's affiliation for external client projects/programmes (Q11, n = 32)

Representation in the steering committee (Q17)

Being part of an integrated project organisation does not necessarily include representation in its governance structure. Figure 27 compares the number of organisations participating in a project or programme (operational level) to the number of organisations represented in its steering committee

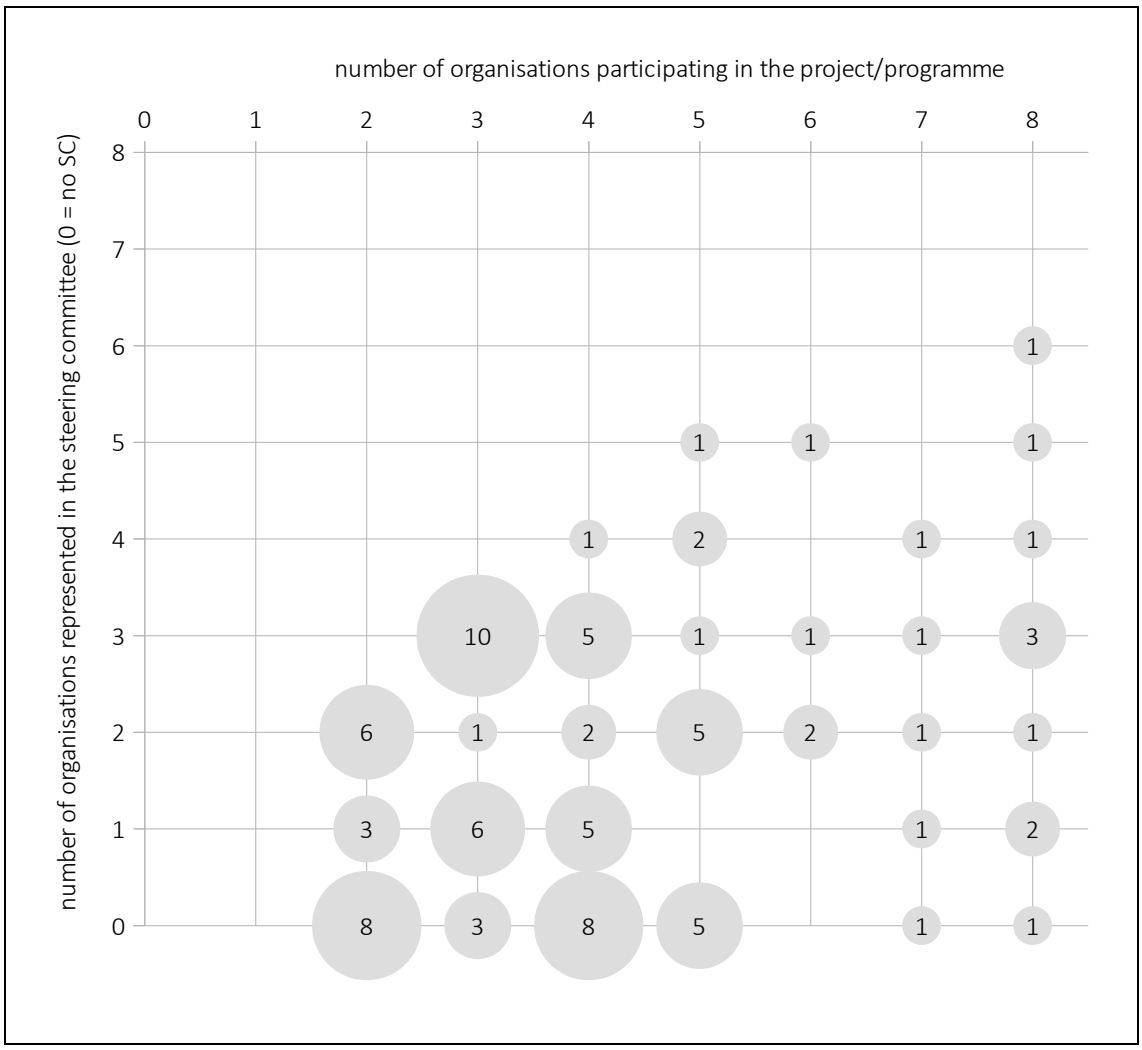

Figure 27: Level of integration at the operational and governing level (Q8, Q9 & Q17, n = 91)

(governing level), the numbers and bubble sizes at each intersection indicating the frequency of the respective combination. The horizontal line labelled “0” covers projects and programmes without a steering committee. The figure shows that projects and programmes spanning two or three organisations often include all of them on the steering committee as well, whereas those spanning four or five organisations usually do not. When more than five organisations are involved, none of the projects and programmes in our sample show full representation on the steering committee.

Which organisations are represented on the steering committee is shown in Figure 28. Comparing it to Figure 24 reveals that clients participating in a project or programme are usually represented on the steering committee as well. By contrast, contractors are part of every other project or programme organisation, but only on one out of four steering committees. A similar situation applies to cooperating partners: They are part of every third project or programme organisation, bun only on one out of five steering committees.

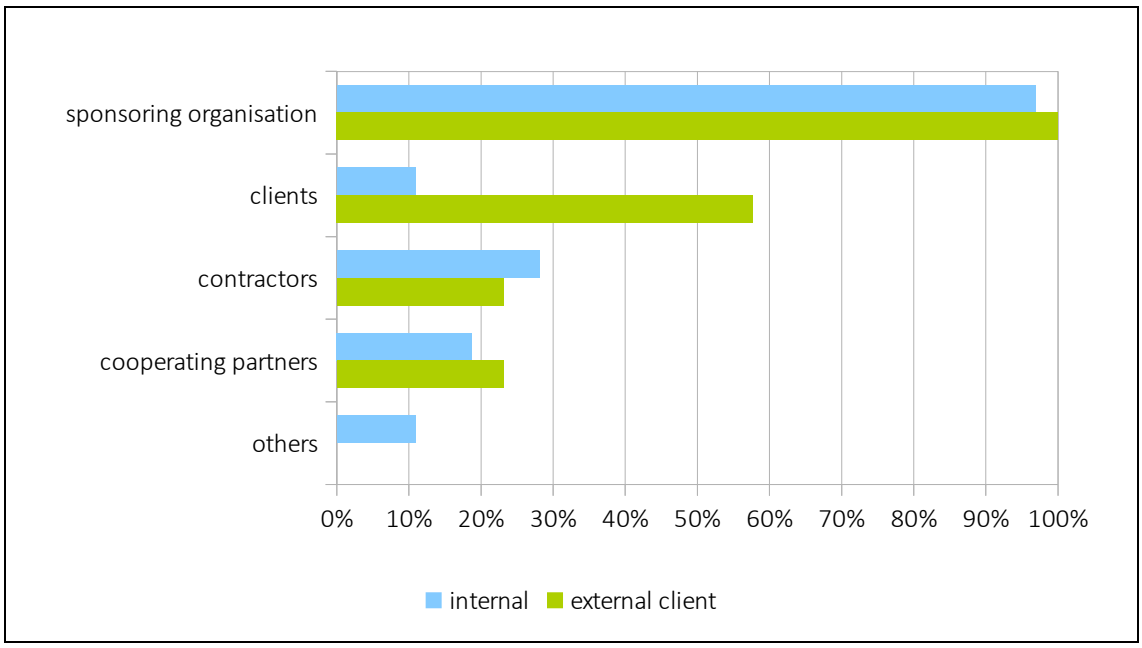

Figure 28: Percentage of steering committees that include other stakeholders (Q8,Q9 & Q17, n = 90)

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