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## **Are We There Yet? Comparative Analysis of Local Georgian Job Descriptions to the Golden Standards**

### **Abstract**

*Human resources department is involved in creation and development of a job description, however only human resources department cannot create this document. The actual supervisor, head of the department or a unit should clarify what the expectations from the person holding the vacancy are. Afterwards the key functions of the job are outlined and other additional activities that can also be done by the position holder are added as secondary functions to the position. Human resources department provides detailed instructions of how the job can be done properly as well as analyzes the similar position in the industry and internationally in order to ensure the job description corresponds to the common internationally accepted or industry accepted golden standard. The study compares selected positions in the field of marketing and management and identifies the differences of local job description to the golden standard, outlining the gaps and recommending the areas of improvement for human resources specialists creating and developing job descriptions. Believing that existing job descriptions in the fields studied lead to inefficiency of the working process in the organizations studies, the article proposes recommendations to develop the job descriptions so that the commonly accepted golden standards are adopted in order to help make organizational processes make the functions of each position more efficient.*

**Key words:** *Job Description, Performance Review, Human Resources Management.*

### **Introduction**

Human resources management facilitates proper allocation of valuable human resources and helps identify opportunities for internal movement and advancement of proven talent, a talent inspired by ideas that can help solve problems and meet organizational objectives. Ideally the candidates join the company at a starting position and enjoy an enthusiastic and extended growth experience, with a growing level of job engagement, satisfaction and productivity as they move up the career ladder to perform and reach high proficiency. Job satisfaction can be defined as “the attitudes and feelings people have about their work” (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014), which influences “the extent to which an individual’s abilities match the requirements of the job” (Kozlowski, 2012)

Feelings towards a job depend on “what the latter has understood when evaluated what the job is about and what responsibilities the job entails” (Robin and Judge, 2013). When organization clarifies its vision and creates a detailed strategy to accomplish its mission the next step is determining what kind of human resources it needs to employ and for what roles. The job descriptions in the organization are created to clarify the requirements of the role and the expectation of the organization towards the performance of the job holder (Marsden, Caffrey, McCaffrey, 2013). Job descriptions work best when they are made a part of the performance review, which helps checking the alignment of individual’s goals to the ones of organization. (Michele Gapes, 2018)

Job descriptions bring advantage to the both the recruiter organization and the prospective candidate by providing further details about the position and responsibilities while communicating the expectations about the levels of education and experience required to succeed in a given position (Christine Whelan, 2021). For organization the documents provide a clear picture of business structure and where exactly the position fits, what professional training and development, as well as performance management measures are needed for a certain position. On the other hand, the job description “enables employees to get acquainted with a job” (Brannik, Levine & Morgeson, 2007). According to Robbins (1996) JD provides “a formal relationship between an employee and an organization”. With the help of a well written job description an employee can follow the steps “to perform duties within the norms of an organization” (Statt, 2004).

In order to discuss the job description one first needs to define job analysis. This is a “process of systematic inquiry to discover and document the essential nature of the work” (Brannick et al, 2007). It identifies work behavior and the knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics needed to perform those work behavior. Only after the analysis, human resources specialists in the organization start crafting the job description, which provide insights into the overall objectives, roles, responsibilities, limits of the authority, reporting/peer relations, critical success factors and competences for the respective positions within the business unit. (Chyekok Ho, Chinseng Koh, HR Due Diligence, 2012).

The purpose of job description is to define key activities of the job, specify knowledge, skills and abilities that will be expected from the incumbent (Dessler, 2013), provide a basis for evaluating the qualifications of a given individual to predict success in the given role without extensive training and supervision. (Wallen et al, “Principles and Practice of Clinical Research”, 2018). Sometimes job descriptions do not actually describe the kind of person who might be able to do the job, rather it is needed to develop a personal specification (Chris Rowley, Wes Harry, Managing People Globally, 2011) to be advertised as a vacant position in the organization.

Suggestions when composing and positioning job description include knowing what an organization needs but also envision the future so that the description is a living document that can be modified with the changing nature and requirements for the job (Whitney Johnson, 2020). It is of utmost importance that every job presented by an organization is demonstrated and communicated as a quality opportunity of meaningful work, personal growth and impact. Composing JD can be time consuming, but they clarify the expectations of the role of the position, therefore help avoid the potential conflict when either party perceives the requirements differently. When you hire an individual whose values align with the purposes of your organization, it’s a win-win, so the best practice suggests that the job descriptions are a tool to invite the talent to apply.

When there is a need to recruit, hire and onboard, the most common approaches are standardized and are lead to misjudgment and error. As a result, the process is costly and eventually does not yield results. Employees expect their job positions to offer them desired indulgence (Armstrong, 2012, R&J, 2013) The failure begins at the very first step, which is writing a proper job description without overinflating the qualifications needed for the job and scaring off the potential candidates that would fit to the job if not held away. The second step is people stuck in pre-defined roles, with no growth opportunities available leading to the disengagement.

Employees have a tendency to be intolerant towards performing duties that they were not aware of (Crawford and Rich, 2016). In case of limited specific information about the job in the description employees are “forced to perform the duties outside the job description” (El-Hajji, 2011) This leads to the job holders failing to understand the real nature of the tasks due to the complexity of the expectations (Armstrong, 2012, Lane 2005, Robin and Judge, 2013).

Poorly written job descriptions can make matters worse because when the employees are faced with the duties that are not mentioned in their job descriptions, they begin to doubt whether they are made for these positions (Lane, 2005, Robin & Judge, 2013) and their familiarity with the jobs begins to decline. A solution for this problem can be found in personalization of the job descriptions. Fitting the job to employees rather than fitting employees to jobs – one of the best ways to maximize engagement (Vivek Bapat, 2018). The author provides advice to make helping others a core responsibility for the altruistic employees, while establishing clear goals for the big thinkers and creating and modifying new positions for the creative employees. It may be wise to create more generic descriptions that emphasize expectations and accountabilities, rather than specific tasks, thereby encouraging employees to focus on results rather than job duties. A more wide-ranging job description is also easier to maintain – it does not require modification with every minor change in duties.

The study compares selected positions in the field of marketing and management and identifies the differences of local job description to the golden standard, outlining the gaps and recommending the areas of improvement for human resources specialists creating and developing job descriptions. Believing that existing job descriptions in the fields studied lead to inefficiency of the working process in the organizations studies, the article proposes recommendations to develop the job descriptions so that the commonly accepted golden standards are adopted in order to help make organizational processes make the functions of each position more efficient.

## **Research Methodology**

The aim of our research is to explore the possible ways to improve the efficiency of the processes in the organization based on development of the individual job descriptions in the company and their comparison to the golden standard internationally or among the industry. We believe that organization of the processes of the work and the distribution of the functions among the positions is challenging, but very efficient way to ensure every position is thoroughly planned. Studied existing job descriptions in the fields reveal the gaps and overlaps of the working process in the organizations decreasing the likelihood of the process being wholesome and complete. The article proposes recommendations to develop the job descriptions so that the commonly accepted golden standards are adopted in order to help organizations determine prioritized functions as well as the link between individual functions that enable the processes to run without interruptions.

The research was done with qualitative approach, aiming to explore the contents of the documents of job descriptions provided by the companies. The exploration involves the detailed study of the documents of job description in order to eliminate legal aspects and specific of the industry or the field, afterwards the documents are discussed during individual interviews with the jobholders and compared to the golden industry or international standard in order to discover the gaps and overlaps in the functions. As a result of the interview discussions specific recommendations are given to the positions, the companies and generally to the field under study. The article proposes improvements for the fields of marketing and management as well as the combined recommendations.

The comparison of the job descriptions locally to the golden standard was summarized in four aspects: working conditions, organization of the process, employee training and evaluation and field specific recommendations. Field specific recommendations are given separately and therefore we do not mention them in this article.

The field of marketing included the range of positions starting from the sales representative, to the customer service positions like service administrator, service manager up to the marketing manager. 13 companies were studied among which ten were international companies and three local companies. The industries the companies operate in were from various fields and included: call centers, realtor, car dealership, cargo and educational services, food industry, tourism and various imports.

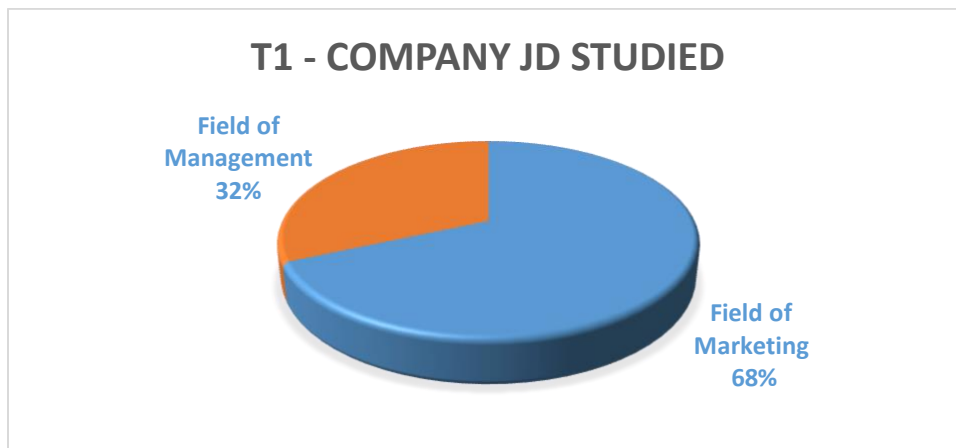
The field of management included the range of positions starting from the project manager, event planner, tour operator and ending with the human resources management specialist and a career counselor. Six companies were studied in the field of management among which five were international companies and one local company. The industries the companies operate in included educational services and tourism industry.

## **Organization of the Study**

For the purpose of the research, the given job descriptions were considered in terms of the legal aspects related to the job and the position. The considered factors during the analysis were the requirements by the law and other regulations of the industry or specific field. The next step in the research was the identification of the expectations of the position, which was studied through the individual interviews held with the position holders in the companies identified. Individual one-hour

qualitative interviews were held with the jobholders in order to further explore the key functions of the position given in the existing job description and performed actually by the position holder. The interviewees were asked to list the functions they performed on daily basis and during the interviews, the golden standard of each position was discussed with the jobholder. During the interviews, the gaps and overlaps in the functions were identified and the reasons discussed. After a thorough discussion of the factors of industry specifics, plausible recommendations for developing of given job descriptions were provided. These recommendations are discussed in the compiled format later in the article.

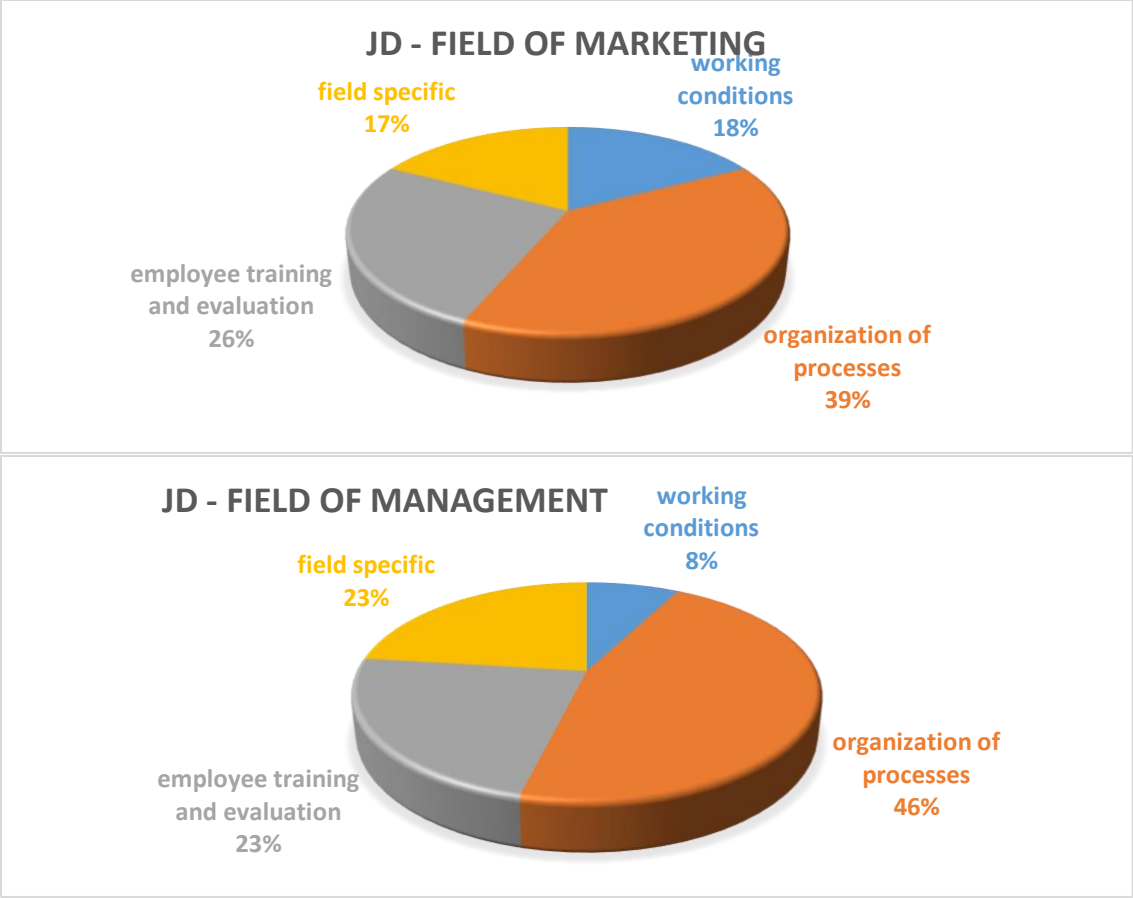
For better analysis, the companies studied were divided into the following categories: the field of marketing 68% and the field of management 32%. The positions within each field were identified and were ranked from the lowest to the top positions in the hierarchy. Individual positions were observed and compared with the industry, as well as the golden standard for the position and the differences were spotted and analyzed. Afterwards the combined analysis was made for the field and recommendations prepared for each field.



## Conclusions and Recommendations

Job description should be an important part of HRM process, because it is the responsibility of a company to present true and fair view of the position provided in accordance to the golden standard in the industry. The important aspect that we considered while the research was the common understanding of fairness towards the candidate and the jobholder. Here we provide the comments on the positions individually and later present a combined table of the differences identified for the given field. The differences are presented in the form of what is missing in the local context, as well as the features of the local market that are different from global market and the advantages of the above mentioned. Below is a chart of combined differences of the local and golden standard which identified the areas of improvement for the given fields studied:

Combined Recommendations for Human Resources Professionals Creating and Developing Job Descriptions in the field of Marketing and Management



The comparison of the job descriptions locally to the golden standard was summarized in four aspects: working conditions, organization of the process, employee training and evaluation and field specific recommendations. Field specific recommendations are given separately and therefore we do not mention them in this section.

Working conditions include the process of agreement on the terms and the entry into legally binding relations. Especially in the marketing field, sales positions, we discovered that the entry in the legal relations does not happen at the beginning of the performance of the job but after a certain result is being demonstrated by the salesperson. In the management positions, there is also no definite trial period after which the candidate signs the contract of employment.

We believe that more safety measures should be included so that the employee has a job security, enters legally binding agreement and gets the payment for performance as s/he begins to perform the functions in the job description of the given position. Another very important aspect of the work conditions observed during the comparison was the compensation of the overtimes and holidays. Individual companies studied had internal regulation regarding the missed days of work due to the holidays and the way the overtime is compensated, but for more clarity as the golden standards mostly imply is to include this information in the job description as an emphasis of key performance indicators that go with given positions.

Organization of the processes of the work and the distribution of the functions among the positions is challenging, but very efficient way to ensure every position is thoroughly planned. Human

resources departments or specialists in the organization should analyze the processes that are ongoing in the organization and the function gaps and overlaps need to be considered. Considering each individual job description will not be complete with the check of the linkages between the positions and here we do not mean the reporting or the supervision relations only.

Job Descriptions need to be reviewed in a form of a package when it comes to a specific process in an organization. During the analysis of the comparison of the local job descriptions and the international golden standard we came across the supporting positions. These are the positions that ease the function of the primary position by performing routine and technical activities that would allow the primary position to think and act more strategically and focus on the quality of the performance delivered. Here we identified difference between the fields of marketing and management in terms of the approach the support positions are designed.

Particularly, in the field of marketing we discovered that supporting positions mainly continue the technical details of the sale and finalize the deal once the primary position has agreed on all the details with the customer. Concern about having this support function is that the primary function of sales does not get to receive a feedback once the deal goes through and therefore there is no improvement in the performance if needed. And the final concern is about the transfer of the accurate information about the process of the negotiation that the primary position was involved in to the supporting position, which in the cases studied gave a possibility to distort the information and eventually the interviews revealed that the primary position had to interfere in order to finalize the deal. In the field of marketing we do not see the benefit the supporting positions provided discussed from the job descriptions analyzed and believe that unless the reporting and information exchange components are well described, the supporting positions will not add value to the selling process in the given organizations.

As for the field of management among the supporting positions discovered we identified many overlaps in the positions. When analyzing the job description of an assistant manager, the functions of the position were not clearly differentiated from that of the manager so that the superiority would be spotted, and as for the functions of the position of administrator as a supporting position for the manager were still as general as the ones of the manager. In the cases studied the supporting position was responsible to fulfill the full range of functions of the primary function and when it came to the primary function the position functions expanded as far as interfering with other departments like marketing, finance and in some cases to very details of design and decoration, which is no way the job of a manager or even an event planner, which is an administrative position that overlooks different professionals' performance to plan, organize and implement an event fit for the specifications provided in advance.

The recommendation for the field of management in dealing with the supporting positions is to ensure the administrative functions are identified based on the job specifics and they are removed from the primary position, giving the primary position clear supervising functions and reducing their involvement in other departments to a degree of the exchange of the information and opinions.

Employee training and evaluation is a uniform problem in most of the job design processes, most of the job descriptions do not involve the training and development opportunities, just the functions that need to be performed. Even international standard does not give specific details about

the training and development, but they include the obligation of the position to engage in professional advancement activities and it definitely is included in the performance criteria.

We discovered that the field of management offers the chances of training and development to the extent of introducing the position holders to the organization, its values and regulations and some cover the industry to help the positions understand better and be more efficient. However, the interviews revealed that there is no focus on the skills development that are general to the position, like managerial skills, communication efficiency or the process planning and optimization skills that our respondents would like to have developed as an investment and the attention the organization is willing to provide to its employees.

In the case of field of marketing the training and development is not at all integrated in the job description, being a required qualification and experience for the job stressing that with no proven record of sales it is impossible to get the job in the first place. Almost no training is provided to the sales force in the cases studied except the general integration of the employees at the company, therefore we recommend including the training and development in the job description and binding the company to provide the opportunities for professional advancement, possible promotion and career ladder within the job descriptions.

## **I. Positions Studied in the Field of Marketing**

The combined analysis of the differences in positions in the field of marketing include working conditions, investment in employee training and development, organization of the work and processes and the specific aspect of the field of marketing, in our case the understanding of the customers.

Working conditions for the positions should be reviewed in terms of the compensation, overtime and holiday payments made to the employees and these payments should be made in accordance to the golden standard, as well as the employee development, training and investment in them should be a part of the compensation package that employee receives in return to the functions performed under the given position. Contractual agreements should be made in time and include possible choices of employment format, like freelancing and flexible work schedules.

Employee evaluation systems should be developed within organizations and compared to the industry standards providing for clear criteria for evaluation set and agreed upon with the position holders. The targets for positions in the sales and marketing field should be agreed with the employees and the system of bonus in forms of key performance indicators should be built. The evaluation should be expanded to all interested parties and system like 360 degree evaluation should be enacted as an inherent part of the job performed. Self-assessment component practice of the 360 degree evaluation, being crucial for the assessment should be integrated as the responsibility of the position holder on regular basis.

Significant improvements should be made to the organization of the work and the distribution of the functions among the positions. Human resources departments or specialists in the organization should analyze the processes that are performed in the organization and the function gaps and overlaps need to be considered. Supporting positions should be analyzed in terms of their value and some of the



functions integrated, while in some cases the supporting positions eliminated to avoid double tasks or the gaps between the tasks which lead to inefficiency of the positions and underperformance.

An important drawback of the organizations was spotted in terms of helping the jobholders understand the functions needed to be performed conceptually. The cases studied and the organizations reviewed did not support its employees in receiving general knowledge about the industry and the information sharing in the organization. Limited access to the database of client, transfer of the relationship to supporting positions, no or limited possibility to receive customer feedback makes it difficult for employee to understand the general picture in the organization. The limited connection of the positions with other departments like research and development of financial department also reduces the amount of the quality information received which is needed to make strategic choices about how to approach customers. And the last aspect being the involvement in decision-making, which is also limited to only idea sharing with the team.

<p>Working conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Compensation, overtimes, holidays</li> <li>○ Job security</li> <li>○ Employment formats</li> <li>○ Investment in employee development</li> </ul>	<p>Employee Training and Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 360 degree</li> <li>○ Setting targets</li> <li>○ Self-assessment</li> </ul>
<p>Organization of work among positions - Supporting positions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Technical staff</li> <li>○ Brand manager</li> <li>○ Social media</li> <li>○ Customer service</li> <li>○ Finalizing sales</li> </ul>	<p>Understanding the customers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ General knowledge</li> <li>○ Access to databases</li> <li>○ Limited relationship with clients, research and development and financial analysts</li> <li>○ Copywriter – ideas only, no link with executives</li> </ul>

## II. Positions Studied in the Field of Management

The combined analysis of the differences in positions in the field of management include investment in employee training and development, organization of the work and processes and the specific aspect of the field of management, in our case the understanding of the process as a whole.

It is of significant importance to organize the positions in the organization in a way that the organization is managed efficiently and the processes in organization run smoothly excluding the possibility of the delays as well as the overlaps between the positions in the process. Managing a project or an event as well as the department or the organization itself requires wide range of skills and even multitasking so it is very difficult to distinguish among the managerial positions and regulate the degree of their involvement into other field like finance, marketing, legal department or even with the functions of the logistics and the design of the projects and the events. It needs to be very clear where the line between the general knowledge of the field and specific functions of the field is drawn. As in the cases studied by us we encountered additional functions of decorating, planning, dealing with legal aspects or financial reporting as a part of everyday work of a manager, where the emphasis in the description should be made on the coordination and organization of the actual activity for the involving

department or the party instead of performing the task by the manager. However, organizations under study not having enough personnel to fulfill the functions mentioned put a pressure and requirement on the managers to perform these functions, which does not correspond to international, golden standard and which is a deviation from the actual function of managers. On the other hand there are cases of supporting positions that are very similar to the supervisory positions and it is impossible to differentiate them as well. The recommendation to the organization of the work among positions would be towards development of the degree of involvement in performing a certain specific function and delegating it to specific professional and rather enhancing the skills of general management and coordination.

In the field of management based on the companies researched we concluded that companies do engage in training and teaching activities but majority of the training is very general and there are no specific insights taught to the managers of any level. There is also no participation of other department representatives in the training and development. Another very important recommendation to this point is the possibility to responsible autonomy from the part of the manager, which was not observed in the job description and no mechanism of evaluation of the performance developed and set in the organizations. One topic for training that is not included in any of the cases studied is he training for the understanding of the confidentiality matters especially for the managers that work in teams and evaluate the team members as well as the human resources specialists who are aware of the personal information and the decisions on appointment, promotion, hiring and firing of the personnel in the organization.

When it comes to discussing the function of project, event, department or organization managers the primary function to analyze is the planning function, which in its part needs to be properly displayed in the job description. The position as a result of our research is not involved in the part of analysis when the risks for the project or when the stakeholders are analyzed before the planning starts, so the limited or no participation in the actual analysis of the risks or the expectations makes it very difficult to proceed with day-to-day running of the project, event or operations. Furthermore, when the manager is not given a possibility or a requirement to do the contingency planning based on the things that can go wrong during the implementation, the position is limited to just following the instructions strictly. Today with the ever-changing nature of the environment, markets and developments on methods, systems and technology it is unwise to expect a manager to stick to an existing or prior plan.

	<p>Employee Training and Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More needed</li> <li>- Autonomy needed</li> <li>- Confidentiality</li> </ul>
<p>Organization of work among positions - Functions of the position</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wide range of activities (Multitasking)</li> <li>- Additional functions – embassies/insurance/decorations</li> <li>- Supporting positions – administrator vs manager</li> </ul>	<p>Planning process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project planning based on the analysis</li> <li>- Contingency planning for events</li> </ul>

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