



CAPSTONE PROJECT GUIDELINES

The Capstone is an opportunity for you to demonstrate the application of the knowledge, skills and abilities strengthened through participation during CFPC. Your assignment is to conduct a financial analysis to address a strategic challenge for your cooperative and formulate a recommendation for your leadership.

Deliverable: The deliverable is a minimum of 1,500-words articulating the challenge, operating environment, strategic approach, analytic approach, assumptions, solutions, findings and recommendations.

Step One: Prior to Coming to Madison

- Participants should consult with their management, leadership or board to identify a critical business need, challenge or issue the cooperative is facing that requires financial analysis.
- Be prepared to briefly describe your project idea and your initial thoughts on how you would like to approach the problem.
- Don't create work for yourself! Try to select a project that is part of your portfolio.

Your project may evolve as you progress through the program.

Project Examples – Successful participants have focused on some of the following areas:

- Development of a non-electric subsidiary;
- Establishment or update of a financial policy;
- A construction project or plant investment;
- A strategic change to the organization, operations or product offerings;
- A move into a new market;
- A technology or software investment;
- A staffing or resource allocation decision;

Step Two (Required): Complete the Project Matrix

Participants will complete the project matrix throughout the course of the week. The purpose of the document is to help participants identify their course of action. Participants will submit the matrix for feedback and approval prior to completing the capstone.

Participants will share their matrix with instructors for feedback. We also encourage participants to share the matrix with their management prior to developing their capstone to ensure alignment on objectives and approach. Participants should come to Session 2 (Dulles) prepared to give an update on their progress.



Step Three: Capstone Development and Submission

The final product should be a minimum of 1,500 words in length. The outline and structure of the document should follow the project matrix and include all elements.

For non-CEOs, your manager should determine your target audience. CEOs should consider their Boards the target audience.

Participants are encouraged to submit additional details from their analysis and supplemental reports and presentations prepared for management, leadership or the Board in an appendix.

Evaluation

Your project will be evaluated by financial experts at CFC and NRECA. You will receive a written report documenting project strengths, as well as recommendations and considerations. If your Capstone meets the requirements, it will be accompanied by your certificate.

Participants who do not meet the requirements will be provided with an evaluation and asked to resubmit.

Disclaimer

Acceptance of a Capstone Project constitutes acknowledgement that the participant has satisfied the learning requirements for completion of the certificate. NRECA and CFC are not responsible for and make no representation or claims regarding the information, analysis, and recommendations presented in the project or any resulting decisions made by the cooperative or its Board.



Project Matrix

The Challenge:

- What is the opportunity or challenge the cooperative is facing?
- Predict what might happen if the current situation continues.

The Operating Environment:

- What factors at the co-op might influence your analysis and recommendations?
- Are there any environmental or operational factors that might impact your analysis and recommendation?

Analytic Approach:

- What financial measures and/or analysis will you use to take a critical look at the challenge or opportunity?
- What multiple scenarios should you model to ensure your recommendation is sound and minimizes risks?

Strategic Approach:

- How will your capstone fit the strategic vision of your cooperative?
- What impact will your recommendation have on the members?



Project Matrix

Assumptions:

- What assumptions are driving your approach?

Business Impact

- What are the risks the cooperative might encounter pursuing a project or course of action?

Solution Options:

- Identify and describe potential solutions.
What sources of data will be used to support the business case?

Recommendations:

- What is the best course of action and how does it align with the business need, goal and objectives?