



ADVISORY BRIEF

# A Pharma Operations Lens on Commercial and Medical IT Project Support

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## Introduction

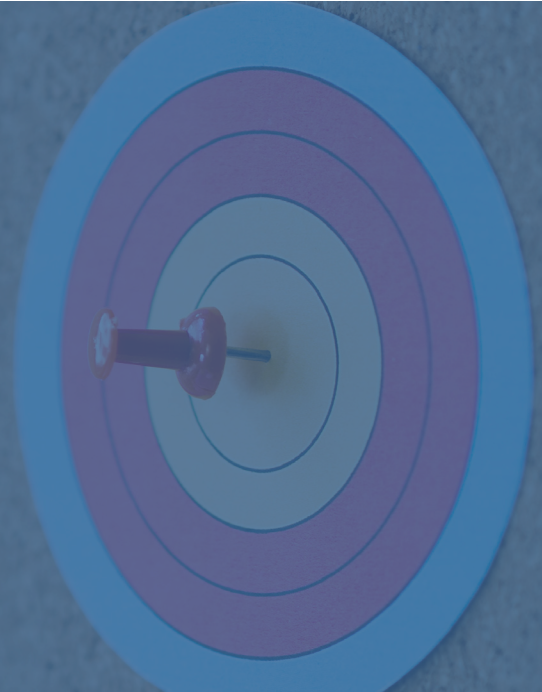
Improving partnerships is a crucial aspect of successful organizations. However, many companies face challenges in aligning their Commercial Operations and Information Technology teams. These conflicts often lead to inefficiencies in processes, resources and functionality, which ultimately impact the overall capabilities of the organization. To address these challenges, companies have implemented various strategies to enhance collaboration and alignment. Our observation suggests that the key to resolving these issues lies in fostering strong relationships between the teams.

During our conversations with industry professionals, TGaS Advisors, a division of Trinity Life Sciences, found that understanding how Commercial Operations perceives the role Commercial and Medical IT (CMIT) should play when supporting projects was a common concern. To gain insights into this matter, TGaS leveraged its network of Commercial Operations teams. The purpose of this advisory brief is to share the findings from our survey and offer recommendations for improving CMIT project resourcing processes. The data used in this brief is derived from survey responses provided by professionals working in Commercial Operations within the pharmaceutical industry.

## Overview of the Survey Data

TGaS collected responses from 37 professionals in Commercial Operations within the pharmaceutical industry for this survey. The data obtained offers valuable insights into the current landscape of IT project resourcing in these organizations. It sheds light on aspects such as the presence of formalized processes, the alignment of IT resources and the satisfaction levels with IT involvement.

We conducted the survey across various Commercial Operations teams, including Data Management, Insights and Analytics, Omnichannel, Marketing Operations, Learning and Development and Market Access. Our aim was to understand how these business partners approach collaboration with CMIT.



The survey encompassed questions on the following topics:

- » The existence of defined processes for initiating support
- » The alignment of CMIT resources
- » The criteria for partnership and outsourcing
- » Strategies for managing perceived IT deficiencies
- » Satisfaction levels with IT involvement
- » Collaboration approaches
- » Involvement in platform management

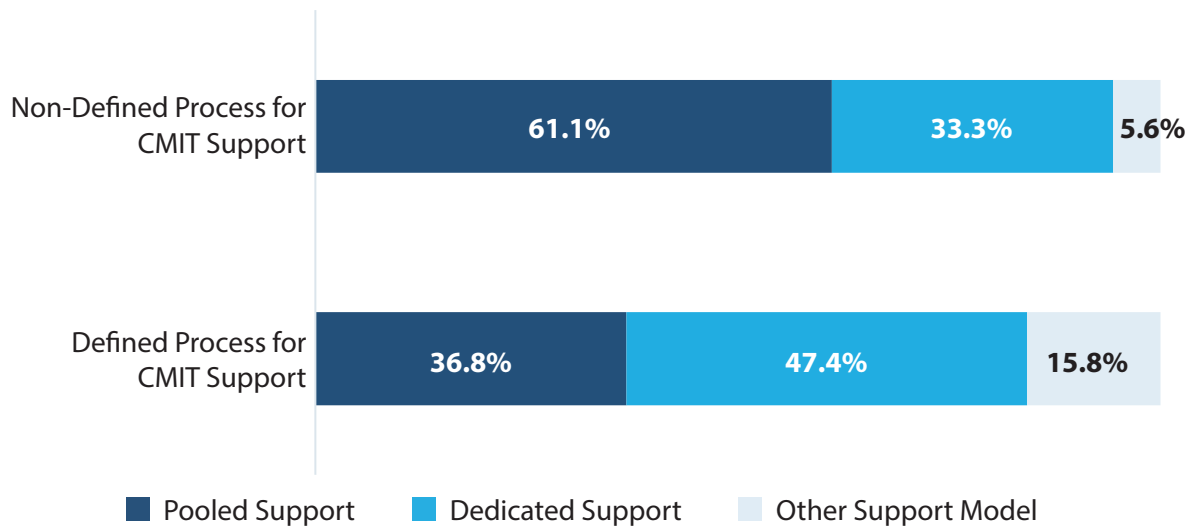
By gathering this information, we aimed to provide CMIT leaders with an understanding of perceptions and facilitate enhanced engagement for technology-enabled projects

## IT Project Resourcing

According to the survey findings, more than half of the respondents have a formalized, documented and defined process in place to initiate support from the CMIT team. This suggests that there is a need for improvement in terms of standardizing this process across organizations.

Figure 1 below illustrates the variability in the alignment of CMIT resources. It compares the utilization of pooled resources, dedicated resources and other models. This data highlights the different approaches taken by organizations in allocating their CMIT resources.

**Figure 1. Resourcing Based on CMIT Engagement Approach**



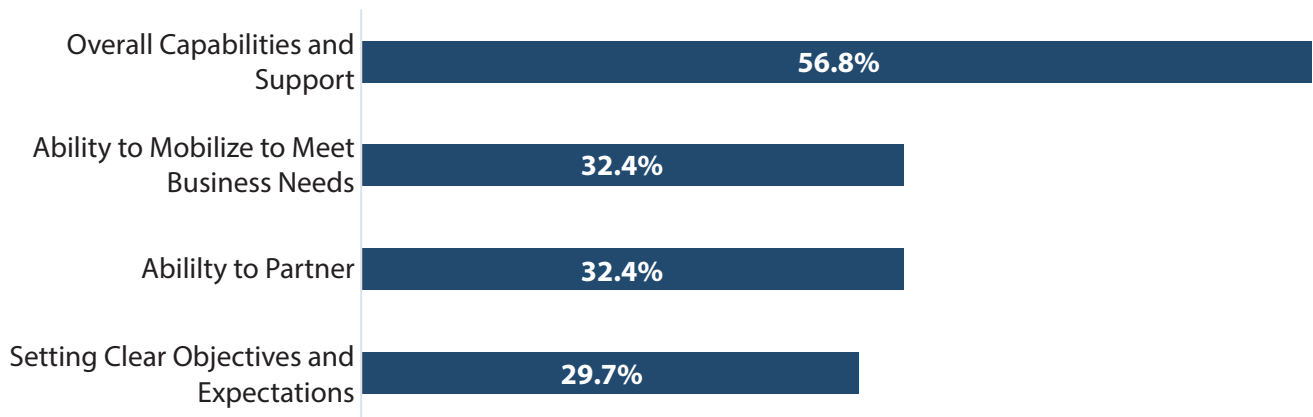
In general, organizations that utilized pooled IT resources were less likely to have a defined, formalized and documented process for initiating support. On the other hand, those companies that did have a defined process in place leveraged IT support models that included a combination of pooled support, dedicated support by function/application and dedicated support by business unit.

## Criteria for Outsourcing Projects

The survey examined the criteria used by organizations to determine when a project should be outsourced. The most commonly utilized criteria, as reported by Commercial Operations teams, include the expertise needed, resource availability and investment. Figure 2 below provides an illustration of how these criteria were ranked in terms of importance.

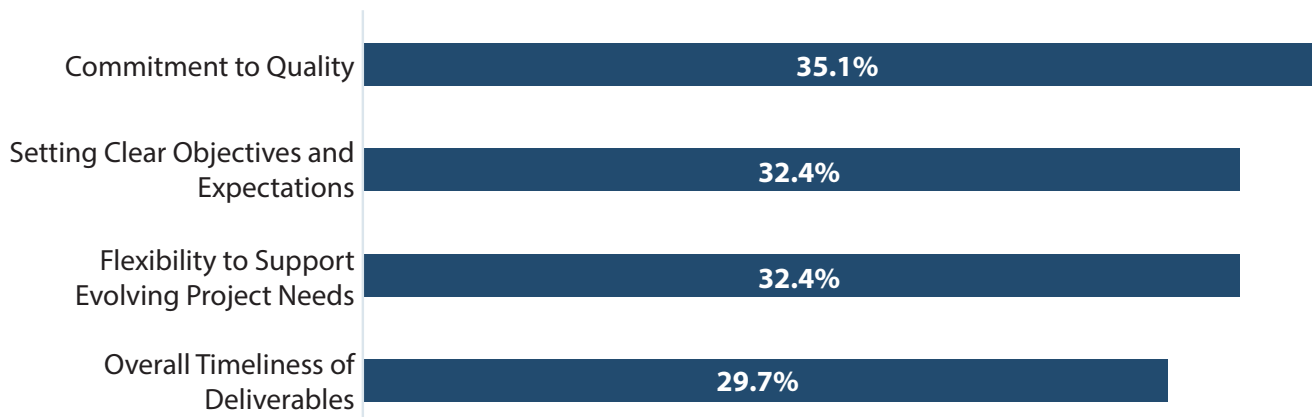
Not surprisingly, the highest-rated criteria was having the overall capabilities and support. This demonstrates the significance placed on ensuring that the outsourced partner has the necessary skills and resources to successfully execute the project.

**Figure 2. Highest Rated Criteria for Outsourcing Projects**



Other important criteria, although ranked lower by respondents, included commitment to quality, setting clear objectives and expectations, flexibility to accommodate evolving project needs and the overall timeliness of deliverables (Figure 3).

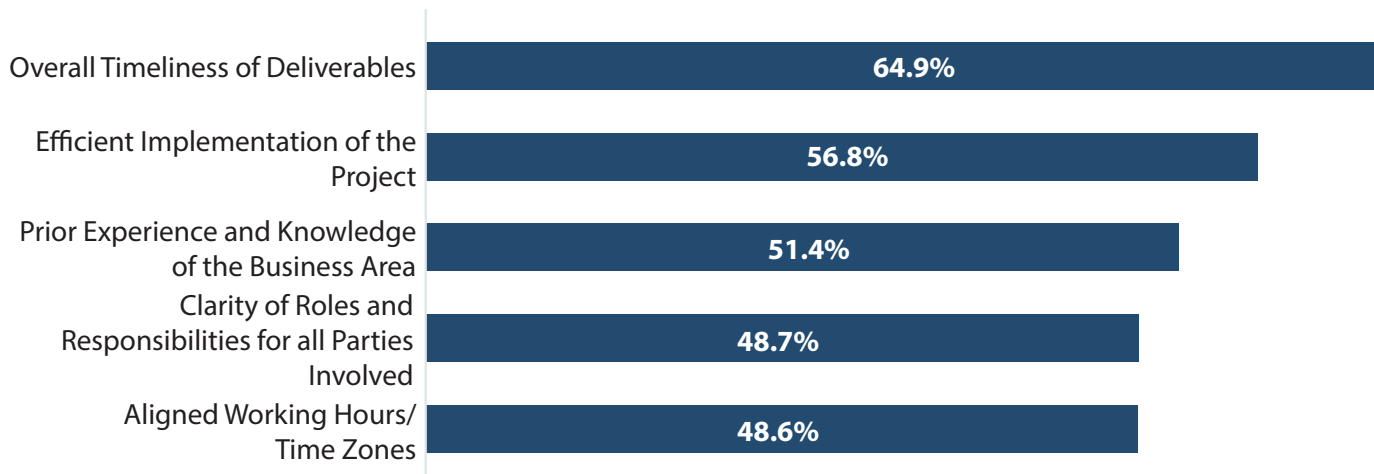
**Figure 3. Mid-Priority Criteria for Outsourcing Projects**



Interestingly, respondents were divided in their ratings of the overall timeliness of deliverables, with some ranking it in the middle and others rating it towards the bottom when making outsourcing decisions. This indicates that timeliness is not universally considered a key factor in the decision-making process.

Additionally, criteria such as efficient implementation of the project plan, prior experience and knowledge of the business area and aligned working hours/time zones were rated lower in terms of their influence on partnering decisions (Figure 4). This suggests that operational teams have become more accustomed to the trends of outsourcing and/or offshoring projects.

**Figure 4. Lowest Rated Criteria for Outsourcing Projects**



Operational teams considered three key dimensions when making decisions about outsourcing support. The most influential dimension identified was having the required expertise to support the initiative. However, the survey did not explore how these teams determined that their internal teams lacked the necessary ability.

The second most important dimension was resource availability. This factor closely tied to considerations such as the time it would take for the CMIT team to complete the project and when the resources could be committed by the CMIT team to initiate the project.

The third dimension that influenced outsourcing decisions was the investment required. While less common, TGaS observed instances where companies required their internal CMIT teams to bid for projects as part of the request for proposal (RFP) process with external vendors. This process included evaluating resource requirements, timing and project management. The rationale behind this approach was to ensure that internal teams were cost-effective compared to external spending, even though the “investment” referred to the utilization of human capital rather than an expense.

Unfortunately, some respondents indicated that their companies did not have any formal criteria in place for determining when to outsource, highlighting a lack of standardized guidelines within these organizations.



## Satisfaction with IT's Involvement

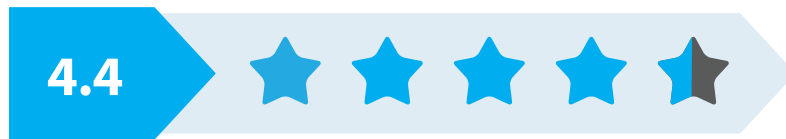
CMIT leadership should consider the satisfaction levels of Commercial Operations teams with IT engagement throughout the various phases of project management, from initiation to closeout. The survey focused on general perspectives rather than specific or recent projects for feedback.

Overall, the data indicated that the majority of respondents expressed neutral satisfaction with CMIT's involvement in project initiation, execution, turnover, performance and control. Two areas showed slightly higher dissatisfaction: project definition and planning and project closeout, including aspects such as communication on punch lists and post-project closeout meetings or documentation. The distribution of neutral responses was surprising, given the importance of successful project turnover and performance. This suggests that while there is room for improvement, these areas may not be the primary factors influencing satisfaction. The Figure 5 below provides a visual representation of this data.

**Figure 5. Satisfaction with CMIT's Involvement by Project Management Phase**



Furthermore, the survey revealed that respondents were generally quite satisfied with the collaboration with CMIT project support (Figure 6), with an average rating of 4.4 on a five-point scale.



Interestingly, when accounting for the resource deployment model used, respondents who had dedicated resources from CMIT indicated higher satisfaction compared to those with pooled resources.

**Figure 6. Satisfaction with CMIT Project Support**



## Approach to Platform Management

In order to gain insights into other factors influencing perceptions of CMIT support and the use of outsourcing, respondents were asked to share their thoughts on the degree to which platform management was viewed as strategic versus tactical. The majority indicated that it tends to be a blend, leaning more towards the tactical side. Only one respondent felt that their company’s approach leaned more towards being strategic. The resource deployment model did not appear to have an impact on these results, as the average scores and distributions were similar.

Additionally, 38% of respondents indicated that they or their teams were highly involved in the day-to-day management of systems, software and technology performance issues, while 14% had limited involvement. This suggests that just over half of the respondents believed they had some level of involvement. This finding aligns with the overall engagement of operational teams in supporting the needs of both business and medical teams. Interestingly, when CMIT resource models utilized pooled support, operational teams perceived themselves to be more involved compared to when dedicated CMIT resources were available.



## Implications and Recommendations

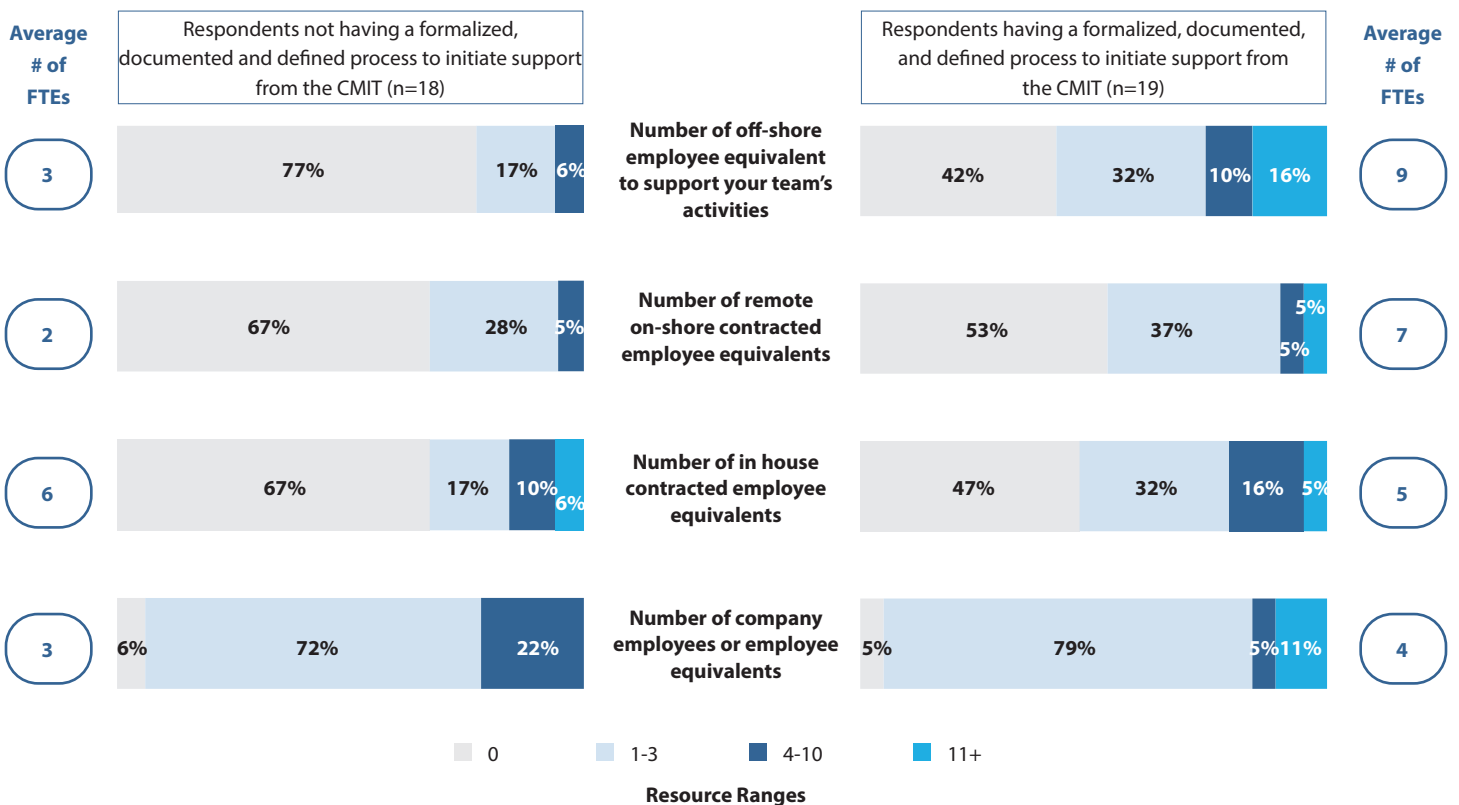
Based on the survey findings, there are several implications and recommendations that can help companies optimize CMIT project resourcing processes.

Organizations should consider implementing a formalized process for initiating support from the CMIT team. This will ensure consistency and efficiency in accessing support when needed. Additionally, the resource model decisions should be carefully considered, as it can impact trust and engagement with CMIT. The lack of dedicated support may make organizations more inclined to consider outsourced support. However, it is important to address the question of ownership of the vendor relationship to avoid confusion and disconnects.

Moreover, organizations should establish clear criteria for determining when a project should be outsourced. This should take into account factors such as expertise, resource availability and investment. By having these criteria in place, the decision-making process can be streamlined and resources can be effectively utilized.

Figure 7 below illustrates the variability in resourcing across different deployment models and the influence of having a defined and formalized process for technology projects. This data can help organizations assess their own resourcing strategies and consider implementing changes where necessary.

**Figure 7. Defined Process to Initiate Support from IT**



## Conclusion

The survey data offers valuable insights into the perspectives of Commercial Operations regarding CMIT project resourcing. By acknowledging and taking into account the findings presented in this advisory brief, organizations have the opportunity to enhance their CMIT project resourcing processes. This can result in improved project outcomes and foster increased collaboration between Commercial Operations and CMIT. By leveraging these insights, organizations can optimize their approach to project resourcing and drive overall success in their initiatives.

## About the Author



### **Brian Voellmecke | Vice President, Commercial Data Management and Commercial & Medical IT Solutions**

Brian has been a strategic partner and advisor to life science companies of various sizes for more than 20 years. Recognized as an expert in healthcare Commercial Data Management and Commercial & Medical IT, Brian understands the complexities and challenges of healthcare data and technology. Currently he leads offering development for Trinity's Commercial Data and Commercial & Medical IT Solutions as part of the leadership team. He continues to leverage his experiences and partnerships with clients from his tenure with TGaS Advisors and IQVIA. At IQVIA he supported the innovation of data, services and technology offerings ranging from decision support systems, reporting, analytics and anonymized patient-level data. Brian is a graduate of York University in Toronto, Canada, where he earned an Honors BA, double majoring in Economics and Statistics.

## About Our Commercial and Medical Information Technology (CMIT) Solution

Our benchmarking and advisory services offer access to industry experts and the TGaS Client Network, fact-based answers grounded in unbiased comparative information, and practical, actionable advice to achieve operational excellence. We help clients answer the question, "How do/should other life sciences companies do it?" regarding organization structure, resources, processes, people, technology and vendors. Our outside-in perspective enables clients to make better decisions, achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness, track performance and plan for the future.

TGaS is the leader in providing benchmarking and advisory services for commercial and medical areas in life sciences by department and functional area. We offer an exclusive network for Executive Commercial Operations leaders, along with our Emerging Life Sciences Network for pre-commercial and emerging life sciences companies. From interactions with network members, we have seen the need by Commercial and Medical IT leaders for similar services. In response, TGaS launched our CMIT solution to establish a network for industry IT leaders to help answer their question of, "How do/should other life sciences companies do it?"



## About Trinity

With almost 30 years of expertise, a best-in-the-business team and unrivaled access to data and analytics, Trinity Life Sciences is a modern partner to companies in the life sciences industry. Trinity combines strategy, insights and analytics to help life science executives with clinical and commercial decision-making. We serve over 300 pharmaceutical, biotech and medical device clients, helping them develop the right drugs and devices for today's market and optimize them once in market. We have a diverse staff of over 1200 people and 11 global offices across the U.S., Europe and Asia. Ultimately, we know that every decision our clients make impacts a life, and when we help our clients achieve their goals, the world benefits. To learn more about how Trinity is elevating the industry and driving evidence to action, visit [trinitylifesciences.com](https://trinitylifesciences.com).

For more information, please contact us at [info@trinitylifesciences.com](mailto:info@trinitylifesciences.com).