Preparation for interview: Potential subquestions to follow up on main questions

The follow-up questions have not been used in the interviews but served the purpose of preparation for the interviews.

1. Scientific Ambition

To what extent did your desire for recognition or visibility in your field influence this project?

- Did you choose this topic because it aligned with a "hot" issue or trending area?

- Was this project shaped by your desire to publish in a specific high-impact journal?

- Did the (expected) visibility of the project (conference attention, potential citations) influence your decisions?

- Was there any tension between pursuing visibility and intellectual interest?

2. Divergence / Interdisciplinarity

To what extent did your interest in exploring new fields or crossing disciplinary boundaries influence this project?

- Was this project situated within your main field, or did it extend beyond it?

- Did you intentionally take a risk in choosing a topic that was unconventional or not well-established?

- How did colleagues respond to your choice to cross "disciplinary lines"?

- Did working across disciplines change how you designed your study?

3. Collaboration

To what extent did collaborators shape your decision to work on this project?

- Who initiated the collaboration — you or someone else?

- What made you decide to work with these specific collaborators?

- Did collaboration influence the research questions, methods, or outputs?

- Were there differences in expectations or priorities between collaborators?

- Would the project have looked different without this collaboration?

4. Mentor Influence

To what extent did your PhD mentor shape this project?

- Was this project directly or indirectly influenced by your PhD training?

- Did your mentor or advisor encourage or discourage this line of research? Or: Do you think your PhD mentor would have encouraged or discouraged this project?

- Did you feel a need to align with your academic lineage/PhD mentor or break away from it/your PhD mentor?

- Did you rely on any theories, methods, or approaches you learned during your PhD?

5. Tolerance for low funding

To what extent did funding (or lack of funding) influence the design and execution of this project?

- Did you apply for specific funding to support this project? If so, how did the funding call shape the project?

- Did the availability (or absence) of funding affect the scope or scale of the study?

- Did you alter your research questions or methods to fit funding criteria?

- Did funder priorities conflict with your own research goals?

- Were there compromises you had to make to secure or maintain funding?

6. Discovery

To what extent did a desire to explore something new or take intellectual risks influence this project?

- Does this project (directly or indirectly) build on your previous work?

- Did you feel uncertain about whether your approach or results would "work"?

- Did you pursue this project out of curiosity or intuition?

- What kinds of feedback or reactions did you get from peers about the novelty of the project?

- Were there points when you questioned whether it was worth the risk?

- What made you stick with it despite the uncertainties?

7. Academia-driven

To what extent were your decisions shaped by institutional or disciplinary expectations?

- Did you feel pressure to work on certain topics because of your position or department?

- Were there institutional incentives or barriers that shaped the project (e.g., publication targets, tenure criteria)?

- Did your disciplinary community shape what was considered "acceptable" or "valuable" research?

- How much freedom did you feel you had in choosing and designing this project?

- Were there specific gatekeepers (journals, reviewers, committees) that influenced your decisions?

8. Society-driven

To what extent was this project influenced by social relevance or societal concerns?

- Did any real-world events or social problems motivate this research?

- Was there external pressure (from funders, media, or communities) to focus on specific outcomes?

- Did you engage with non-academic stakeholders (e.g., policymakers, practitioners, NGOs)?

- How did you balance academic rigor with real-world applicability?

- Was the societal relevance of the project a personal motivation or a strategic one?

- In case the interview is about a project that has already been published and communicated to the broader public: How does/did the public or societal reception of this research motivate you?