10 SIMPLE RULES TO WRITE A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

SUSANNE HOLLMANN

BABETTE REGIERER

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Never give up!

- Susanne Hollmann
- German
- Chemist and Biochemist by training,
- After Diploma a few years in pharmaceutical industry, PhD in Biochemistry, Post Doc in academia and industry.
- Since 2004 Scientific Management. Founder ofseveral companies and associations. SB-Science Management.
- Today: Consulting and training in proposal writing, project management and scientific management. Evaluator in FP7 / H2020 and iBMBF. German delegate and member of ISO TC 276, Head of the COST Action CHARME.
- Approx. 75 Mio funding from national and international funding agencies.

10 POINTS TO CONSIDER AND TO CLARIFY

1. Why do you apply for funding? - Identify the funding instrument

2. Check eligibility - Check the deadlines - Read the documentation

3. Know your funder! - Study the mission of the funder and the evaluation process

4. Read the guide for applicants - Follow the provided template structure!

5. Build your team - no friendly turn!

6. Build your narrative - WHY - WHAT – HOW?

7. Identify your aim and ~~its~~ objectives - Are they SMART?

8. Check completeness and conformity - Have you addressed all aspects mentioned?

9. Review and adjust!

10. Submit in time!!!!

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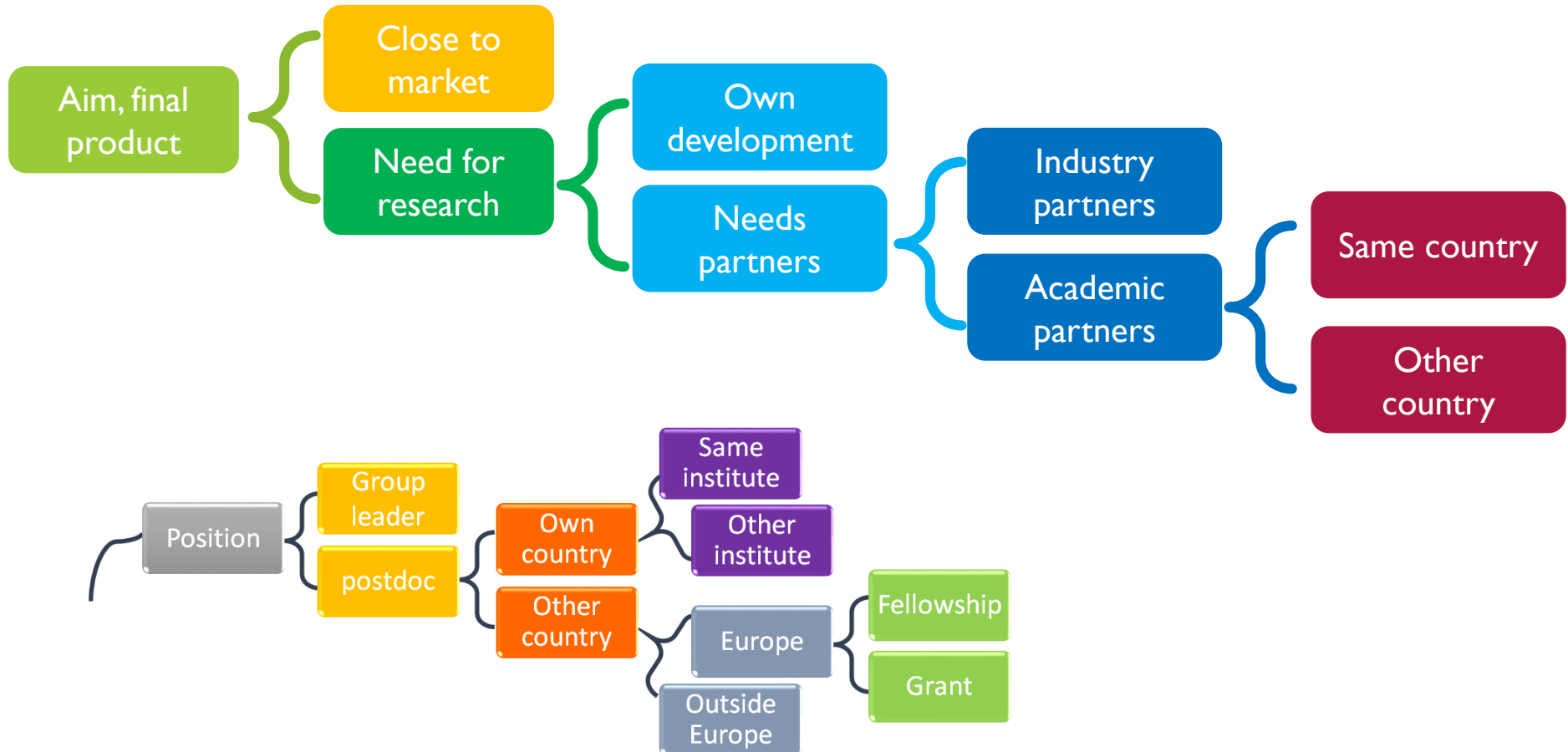
THE PURPOSE OF YOUR PROPOSAL

- (Co-)Finance research and product development

- Pay salaries

- Gain visibility and credibility

- Collaborate with other companies and research groups

- Expand your networks

- Advance and complement skills/knowledge/know-how of your company

- Get access to new resources and technology

- Get access to new markets, customers, applications

- ……...

PROPOSAL WRITING NEEDS INVESTMENT IN YOUR TIME

Your TIME
…is needed for:

- Defining your research idea

- Identifying the right funding program

- Work on demonstrating the viability of your company

- Set up the consortium – Partner search

- Communication

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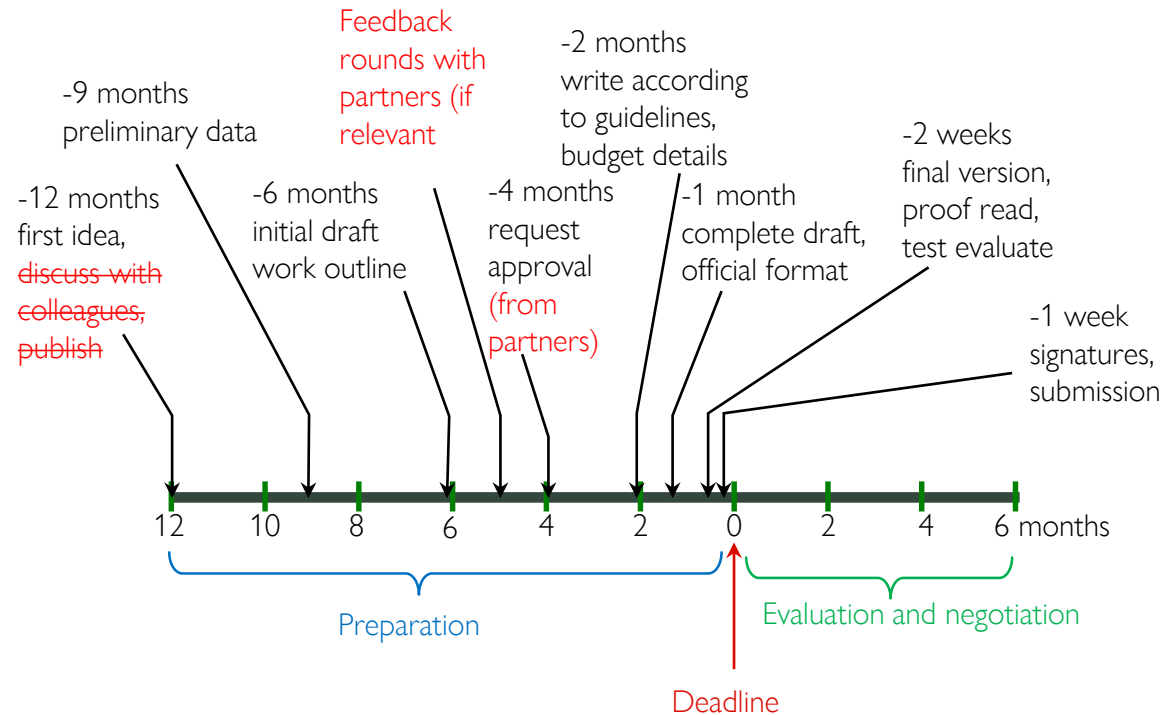management

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BEFORE YOU START TO WRITE…

…..Read the documentation!

- Clarify content

- "Politics" of the program?

- Eligibility and partnerships

- Are signatures or letters needed?

- Adequate Time-line

- One or two step evaluation process?

- Online submission or mail?

- …. be sure when the deadline is!

TIMING OF THE PROCESS

"There is no lifeline if you miss your deadline"

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KEY FUNDER INFORMATION

- Information about the program

- "Politics" of the program

- Timeframe and deadlines

- Online submission or email

- Is your company eligible?

- Financial frame?

- Information about formalities/documents to be submitted

- Signatures for letters needed? From partners…

- Potentially: Agreement with your management board

- One or two step evaluation process?

- Who are the reviewers?

Switch perspective:

Put yourself in the reviewer's shoes

KNOW YOUR FUNDER!

Your project proposal

The funder's aims

Your project's aims
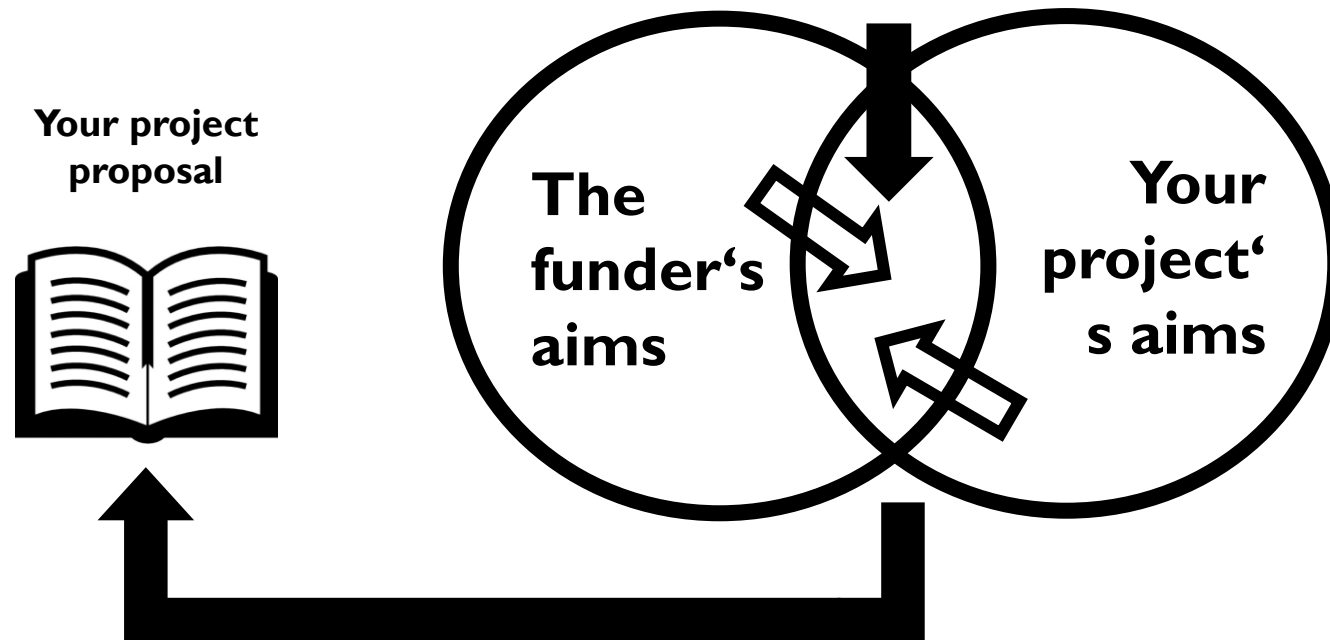
- Who are the reviewers?

- Evaluation process?

Read the guide for applicants!

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NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL (NERC, 2015)

"Arial 11 or other sans serif typeface of equivalent size to Arial 11…

Arial narrow and Calibri are not allowable font types and any proposal which has used either of these font types within their submission will be rejected"

Rejection rate based on font size alone:

4%

"FIRST FILTER" SUCCESS RATES IN REAL WORLD

"...out of the 850 applications to EMBO's fellowship programme each year, some 150 are unfinished and thus immediately ineligible."
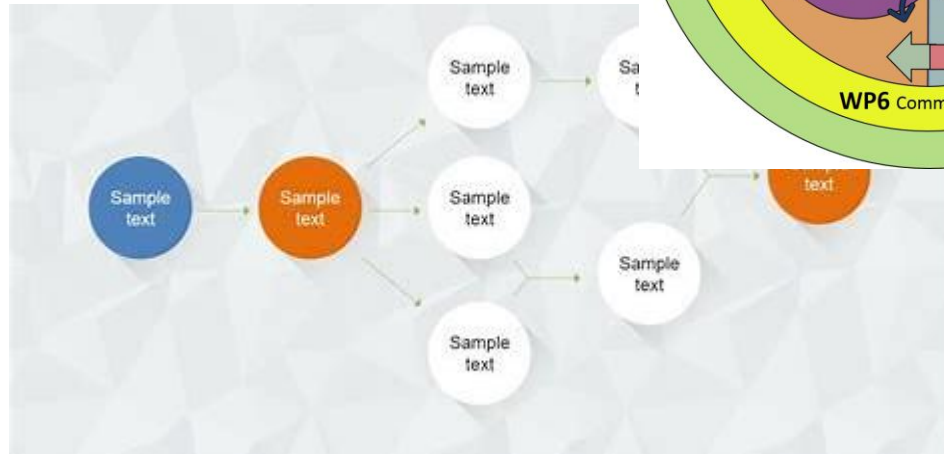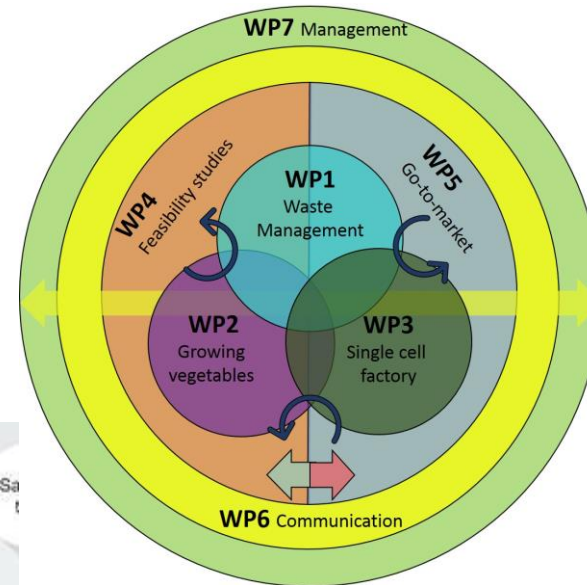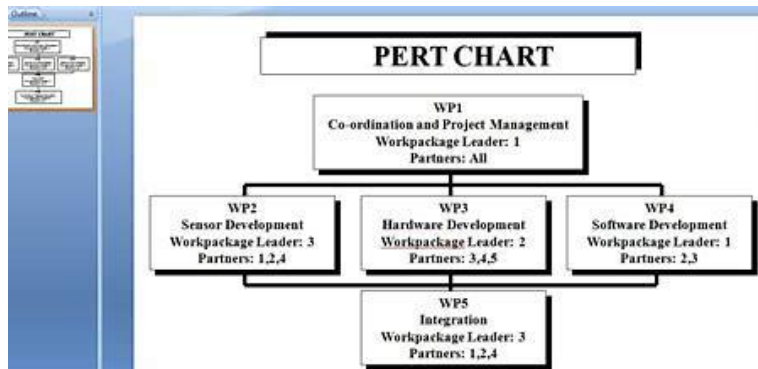
"Got to get a grant" Karen Kaplan Nature 16 Feb 2012

"I was astonished to find that in one agency, about 25% of research grant applications were incomplete."

"*The Art of Grantsmanship*", *Jacob Kraicer* (former Director of Research Grants at HFSP)

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PERT CHART

WP1
Co-ordination and Project Management
Workpackage Leader: 1
Partners: All

WP2
Sensor Development
Workpackage Leader: 3
Partners: 1,2,4

WP3
Hardware Development
Workpackage Leader: 2
Partners: 3,4,5

WP4
Software Development
Workpackage Leader: 1
Partners: 2,3

WP5
Integration
Workpackage Leader: 3
Partners: 1,2,4

WP7 Management

WP4 Feasibility studies

WP5 Go-to-market

WP1 Waste Management

WP2 Growing vegetables

WP3 Single cell factory

WP6 Communication

Sample text

Sample text

Sample text

Sample text

Sample text

Sample text

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SECTIONS OF A PROPOSAL

1. Title & Acronym
2. Abstract / Summary
3. Aim and Objectives / Research Approach
4. Introduction / Background / State-of-the-art
5. Relevance and Impact
6. Work plan / Implementation
7. Budget
8. CV / expertise
9. Capacity of the participating organisations
10. (Ethics issues)
11. (Letters of commitment)

Excellence   1

IMPACT   1,5

Implementation   1

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PROPOSAL ELEMENTS

EXCELLENCE = WHAT	IMPACT = WHY	IMPLEMENTATION = HOW
Title + Acronym	Relevance	Workpackages
Aim	Communication	Deliverables
Objectives	Dissemination	Milestones
State-of-the-art	Exploitation	PERT chart
Research concept		Timeline (Gantt)
Prelim. Results		Budget

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COHERENCE OF YOUR PROPOSAL
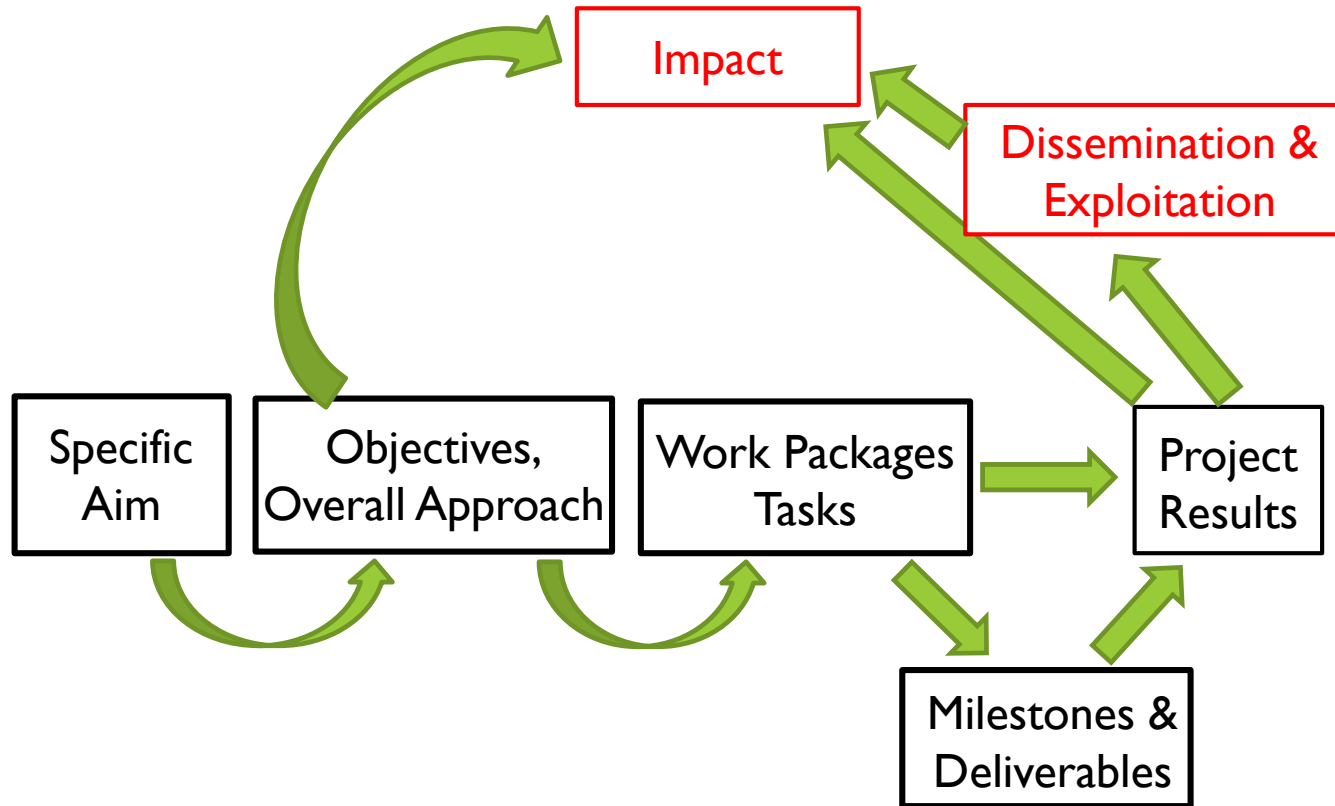
www.fit4health.eu

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AIM

Describes the major tangible outcome of your research project

Key sentence:

- "The overall aim of the planned research is to..."

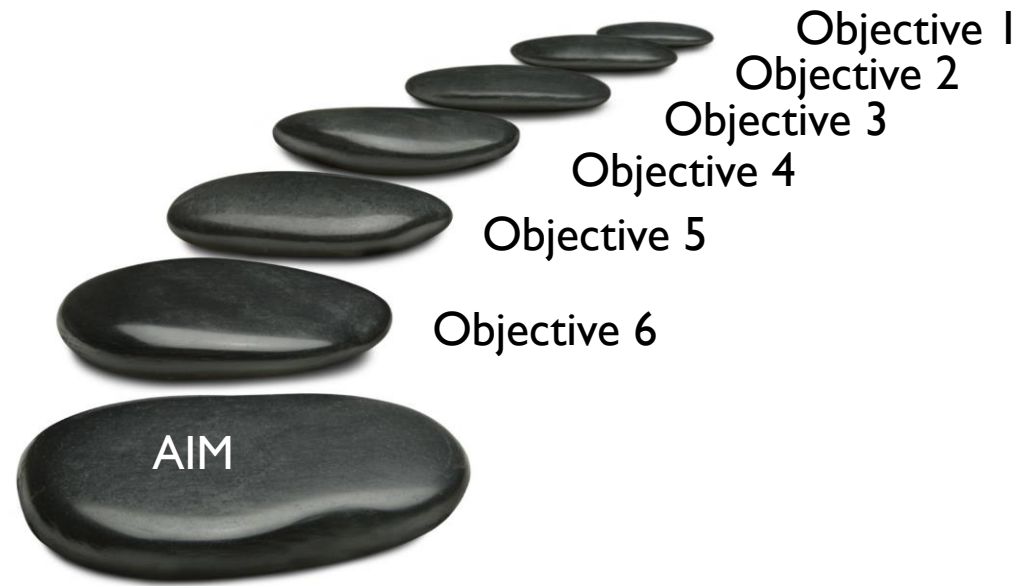Definition of project aim is NOT a project description!

- describes the **destination** - NOT the journey

AIM = final destination

Realistic short-term tasks representing steps to achieve the aim

Objective 1
Objective 2
Objective 3
Objective 4
Objective 5
Objective 6
AIM

?

Mr. Bean

Rio de Janeiro

Rome

Rio de Janeiro

Rome

Rio de Janeiro

Rome

Plan the trip and buy the tickets → Take the train to Airport → Take the flight to Rio → Go to sugarloaf mountain and take the picture → Rio de Janeiro
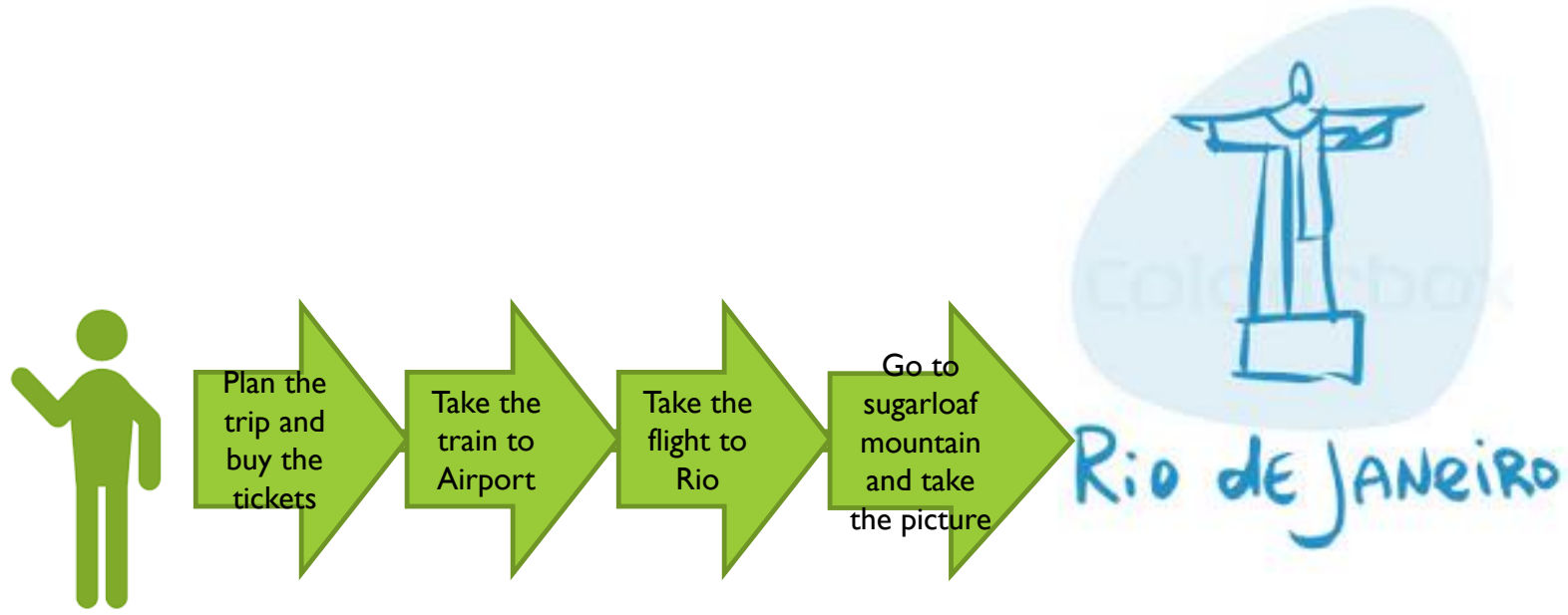
ARE YOUR OBJECTIVES SMART?

Specific
- is your aim well defined? What exactly do you want?
- Is the goal simple and comprehensible?
- Is the target in accordance with Scope and Expected Impact from the call topic?

Measurable
- How is the goal achieved?
- Can everyone clearly determine the goal?
- Are there any indicators or quantifiable parameters for the target achievement?
- How much of it?
- Know if the goal is obtainable and how far away completion is
- Find out when you have achieved your goal

Attractive, accepted (achievable)
- Is there an agreement with all the stakeholders what the goals should be.
- Do you really want to reach the goal?
- Is the goal attractive to others? Is it relevant to your target groups?

Realistic
- Is the goal in the area of the feasible?
- Is the goal realistic within the availability of resources, knowledge and time?
- Is the goal a challenge, but not overloaded?
- What is the risk?

Time-bound
- When will the goal be achieved?
- Enough time to achieve the goal?
- Are also intermediate destinations terminated?

IS THE AIM SMART

"In the next few days, I want to learn as many words of Cantonese as possible"

Specific?

Measurable?

Achievable?

Relevant?

Timed?

IS THE AIM AIM SMART

"In the next few days, I want to learn as many words of Cantonese as possible"	"In one week, I will learn 10 words of Mandarin for ordering in restaurants."

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HAVE YOU ADDRESSED THE IMPACT?

	CHECK
Reducing the size and the duration of the human clinical trials	☐
A more effective human clinical trials design	☐
Leading to a significant reduction in animal testing	☐
Lower development costs and/or shorter time-to-market for new medical products.	☐
Improving prediction of human risks for new biomedical products including medical foods	☐
Improving drug repositioning	☐
Potential of re-use of the developed in-silico models in the chemical testing.	☐
Setting standards for in-silico trials.	☐
Providing libraries of virtual patients for re-use in pre- and post-competitive testing of biomedical products	☐
Cross-cutting Priorities: Gender	☐

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RE-FORMULATION OF YOUR AIM AND OBJECTIVES:

- What should be achieved?

- What is my vision? Why exactly do I want to reach this goal?

- Which approach do I choose?

- What do I need to achieve in the project to use the scope and (later) to achieve the Expected Impact?

- When?

- With whom?

- What are the conditions and limitations?

- What are possible alternative ways of achieving the same?

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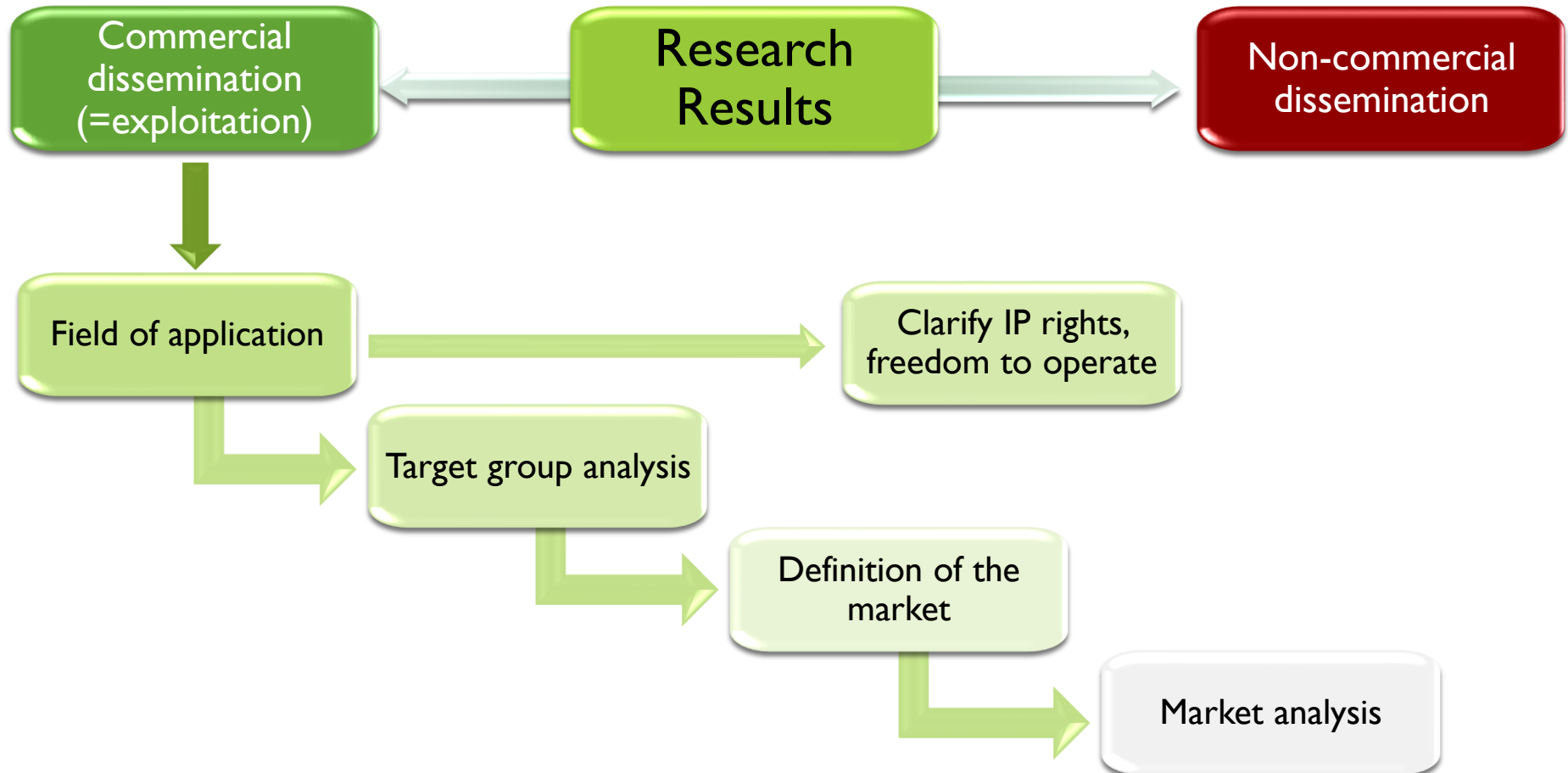
TAKE-HOME

Read the call text!

Respect the deadlines!

Call to clarify!

THANK YOU !

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GRANTS VS. FELLOWSHIPS IN ANY CASE: A CONTRACT WITH THE FUNDER!

	Fellowships	Grants
Who signs the contract with the funder?	Fellowship holder	institution
Responsibility for the project	Fellowship holder	institution
Eligibility criteria	CV, person, selected host institute	Excellence of the institution
Selection	Peer Review + references + interview (sometimes)	Peer Review, rarely has an interview stage
Ownership of Inventions	Fellowship holder	Institution/employer