INSIGHTS INTO MANAGING RESEARCH PROJECTS: FUNDING, COLLABORATION, AND EXECUTION

Group Assignment

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FINDING FUNDING

HOW RESEARCHERS IDENTIFY FUNDING

University Emails / Info Sessions	Networking / Internal & External	Online Searches / Funding Portals	Direct from Ministries / Funders
✔ Emails, timely reminders	✔ Informal expert network (most effective)	✔ Occasional desk research	✔ Interreg, funder emails
✔ Letters from research office, funders	✔ Seminars, senior staff	✔ ETAg, Horizon Europe	
✔ TalTech info sessions (very useful)	✔ Past/ongoing project partners	✔ New European Bauhaus	

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INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION: A POWERFUL BUT DEMANDING STRATEGY

🎯 Why It Matters

- Access to large-scale setups (e.g. Horizon)
- Combines diverse expertise
- Enhances networks & growth

⚠️ Challenges & Risks

- Conflicting goals (innovation vs. practicality)
- Misaligned work cultures (e.g. software teams)
- Delivery risks with external partners

✅ Lessons for Success

- Engage users early
- Assign expert sub-leads
- Match scope with realistic team capacity

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WHAT MAKES A PROPOSAL STAND OUT

- **Clarity & Structure**
  - Clear problem definition, logical flow, measurable goals
  - Defined roles, timeline, budget, and risk plan
- **Innovation & Relevance**
  - Propose something new, pilot it in real conditions
  - Link to EU priorities like Green Deal or digital transition
- **Collaboration & Proof of Capacity**
  - Strong consortium with real commitments
  - Reference past successful projects without revealing too much
- **Language that Connects**
  - Use the evaluator's language: buzzwords + policies
  - Generic but credible — "tick boxes & differentiate

SMART PROPOSAL WRITING

✏️ **Write Early, Write Clearly**

- Avoid rushed/sketchy proposals
- Start writing early (1 year ahead)
- Ensure clarity & call alignment

📃 **Follow the Rules Exactly**

- Match every requirement in the call
- Adjust your idea to fit the format
- Review and tick all boxes

💵 **Plan Budget & Duration Realistically**

- Estimate staff/time by activity
- Don't undercut to win
- High-cost proposals can still succeed

♻️ **Recycle? Sometimes.**

- Use reviewer feedback to improve
- Reapply if call is similar
- Drop the idea if it's not worth it

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DIFFERENCES IN ECONOMICS

- **Funding**
  - Funds often change focus
  - Need to keep up with changes
- **Interdisciplinary studies**
  - Quite common
  - Need to pre-plan the deliverables
- **Stand out features**
  - A novelty or a twist
  - Strong team composition
- **Tips on the application**
  - Fit the project to the call
  - Plan ahead of time

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TECH-SAVVY FUNDING STRATEGIES

Targeted Tech Platforms: Leveraging specialized portals (ETAg, industry-specific channels, national databases).

Industry-Academia Partnerships: Collaboration with SMEs to directly target applied research funding (practical, industry-driven opportunities).

Strategic Networking: Engaging proactively through internal workshops, tech forums, and informal tech communities to identify relevant funding.

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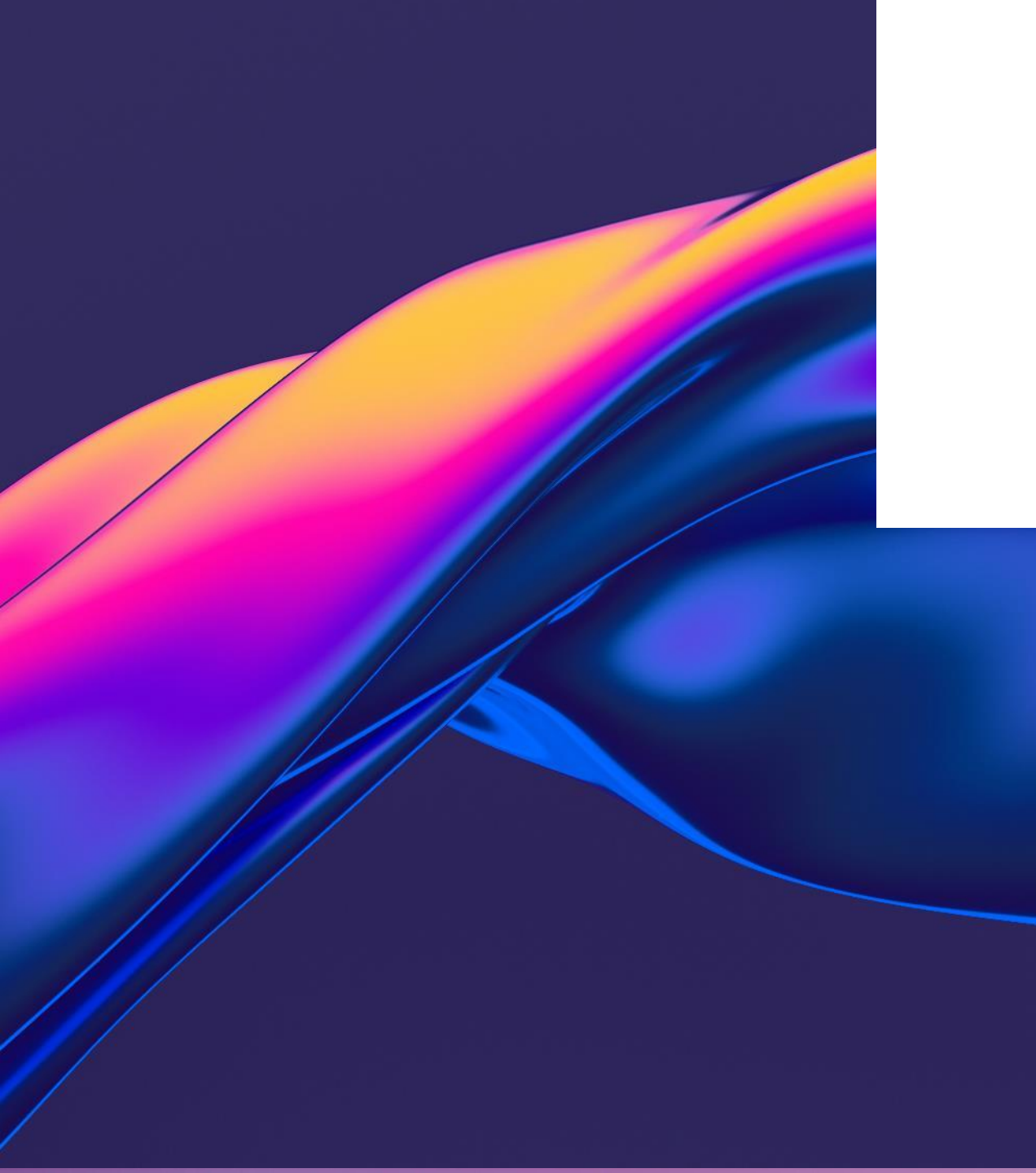
MANAGING PROJECTS

TOOLS & PRACTICES FOR MANAGING RESEARCH PROJECTS: WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T?

🔧 Tools That Work

- MS Project, Excel for tracking
- Mendeley for references
- M-Files for document control
- Teams & Miro Board for collaboration
- Visio/draw.io for planning

🤝 Process Over Tools

- Regular meetings keep momentum
- Clear roles & deadlines = smooth workflow
- Team alignment sometimes replaces formal tools

⚠️ Tool Challenges & Lessons

- Agile & Waterfall not always suitable
- Surprise outcomes & last-minute delivery
- Choose tools that match project complexity

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WHEN PROJECTS DERAIL: REAL CHALLENGES FROM THE INSIDE

Challenge	Real Example	Coping Strategy
Deadline Disruptions	Partner delays, equipment issues, illness	Risk planning, buffer periods, flexibility
Coordination Conflicts	Partners act off-schedule, e.g., sudden demands	Reallocate roles, open team communication
Budget & Procurement Gaps	Unplanned procurements and stretched budget	Pre-planning, close tracking, realistic scope
Team Motivation & Load	Some members remain passive or inactive	Delegate clearly, monitor contributions
Cultural / Org. Differences	Diverse organizations and expectations	Align early, clarify shared project goals

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MANAGING DIVERSE TEAMS:
BEST PRACTICES FROM EXPERIENCED PIS

📞 **Clear Communication**

- Regular follow-ups and meetings
- Organize workshops to bridge gaps

📧 **Concise Messaging**

- Keep emails short and focused
- Prioritize important points only

📁 **Structured Leadership**

- Set project structure from the start
- Define meetings, timelines, and roles

👥 **Delegating with Expertise**

- Appoint team leads for specific domains
- Delegate tasks to experts to ease management

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DOS AND DON'TS:
FOR SUCCESSFUL PROJECT MANAGEMENT

🟩 DOs (What Works)

- ☑ Set clear goals & timelines
- ☑ Hold regular check-ins & workshops
- ☑ Use calendars, meeting minutes, and tracking tools
- ☑ Keep a pragmatic vision of the end result

🟥 DON'Ts (What to Avoid)

- ❌ Don't assume deadlines are understood - reinforce them
- ❌ Don't expect perfect execution - allow time for setbacks
- ❌ Don't rely too heavily on one person - have a backup
- ❌ Don't drift off-goal - avoid distractions and scope creep

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DIFFERENCES IN ECONOMICS

- **Tools**
  - Quantitative research methods
  - Empirical and econometric analysis
  - Simulation studies
- **Challenges**
  - Same as other fields
  - Lack of oversight
- **Management advice**
  - Additional roles in the team are necessary
  - Admins to keep track of progress and budget
- **DOs and DON'Ts**
  - Create support channels for administrative tasks
  - Double check the progress reports

TECH-SAVVY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Dynamic Tools & Techniques: Utilizing agile-inspired methods (Scrum, Kanban) to manage complex IT-driven projects.

Communication as Core: Prioritizing frequent, structured communication across diverse teams to ensure alignment and clarity in goals.

Resource Optimization: Explicitly managing and allocating human resources to address typical academic project challenges—time conflicts and resource availability.

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