Group Assignment

MNI9040

Team members: Ahmad, Gints, Hawke, Musa, Otto

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# Introduction

This document is meant for easily combining all related information in one place and is shared among team members.

Course description: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NJIPsThtjrfMNJHug4oMkzo5vJRbLw9JAnhBUdqBg8c/edit?tab=t.0>

Team registration: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1blGdlGnU7_nZfPnnW4Cwu6gmhjKoINb9hFk1XOj4i7A/edit?tab=t.0#heading=h.rtg9nxhk1uct>

# Task List

This section shows an overview of the tasks in this assignment. This list will be updated during our team meetings.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Done | Deadline | Task | *Comment* |
| x | 17.03 | Specify task with Erkki via email (nr of PIs, etc.) | *Otto* |
| x | 24.03 | List your interviewees (PIs) | *All* |
| x | 24.03 | Prepare 10 interview questions based on syllabus | *All* |
| x | 24.03 | Discuss and agree on interview framework | *During recurring meeting 24.03* |
| x | 11.04 | Conduct interviews | *All* |
| x | 14.04 | Discuss and agree on presentation framework | *During meeting TBD* |
|  | 25.04 | Prepare presentation and slides | *During recurring meeting 14.04* |
|  | 28.04 | Run presentation internally (TEST) | *During recurring meeting 28.04* |
|  | 30.04 | Run presentation in class (FINAL) | *During class 30.04* |

# Interview Preparation

This section is for each individual team member to prepare interview questions and list interviewees before the meeting on 24.03.

## Ahmad

PI(s):

1. Alar Konist
2. Mais Hanna Suleiman Baqain

Questions:

1. In your experience, what are the most reliable or common sources of postdoctoral research funding in our field?
2. Are there particular research directions or themes that you’ve noticed receive more attention or funding lately?
3. What makes a grant proposal stand out in your opinion? Are there certain elements reviewers seem to look for?
4. Do you find that interdisciplinary proposals — for example, those that combine chemical engineering with data science or environmental studies — tend to have a better chance of being funded?
5. What are some common mistakes or oversights you've seen researchers make when applying for grants?
6. How do you usually organize and manage your research projects, especially those involving multiple collaborators or institutions?
7. Are there any tools or platforms that you regularly use for project planning or communication within your team?
8. Do you follow a particular project management approach or framework, or is it more flexible depending on the project?
9. What are some of the most frequent challenges you face in managing research projects — and how do you typically address them?
10. What advice would you give to someone just starting out in terms of managing time, resources, and expectations in research?

## Gints

PI(s): Nils Kändler, Ivar Annus, Kristina Kokina

Questions:

1. What are some potential sources of post-graduate funding available in our field?
2. Are there particular types of projects or topics that tend to attract more funding or attention?
3. How is interdisciplinary collaboration viewed in our field?
4. What are some of the most frequent challenges you encounter when managing projects in our field?
5. How different types of project partners – universities, public/private companies, government organizations, municipalities – influence your PM approach?
6. Are there any particular frameworks that you rely on during project management?
7. Which tools, apps, or platforms do you rely on most for managing your projects effectively?
8. Are there any rules-of-thumb you follow?

## Hawke

PI(s): Kimmo Sakari Lylykangas

Funding Questions:

1. In our field, what sources could we look to for post-graduate funding?
2. Are there certain types of projects/topics that tend to receive more attention?
3. Have you supervised or heard of any recent graduates (0-3 years) who have successfully received post-graduate funding? If so, what was the source and what was the project topic?
4. Is interdisciplinary cooperation appreciated in our field regarding post-graduate projects? If so, is there significant value in pursuing this?

PM Questions:

1. What are the most common difficulties of project management in our field?
2. Are there any theories/models/principals that are crucial for you when managing projects?
3. What tools/apps/platforms do you use regularly for project management?
4. Do you have any overarching principles/practices in project management that you believe can lead to a more successful result?

## Musa

PI(s):

Questions:

1. ...
2. ...
3. ...
4. ...
5. ...
6. ...
7. ...
8. ...
9. ...
10. ...

## Otto

PI(s): Priit Järv (, Tanel Tammet)

Questions:

1. Funding – Could you share the story of your first successful research grant application and what you believe made it successful?
2. Funding – What advice would you give to a new researcher on how to identify the most promising funding opportunities or grants for their work?
3. Funding – When preparing a proposal, how do you go about understanding a funder’s priorities and tailoring your project idea to fit? Can you give an example from your experience?
4. Funding – Grant applications often get rejected. Can you describe a setback or challenge you faced in seeking funding and what you learned from it?
5. Management – What are some key practices or principles you follow to plan and organize a research project and keep it on track from start to finish?
6. Management – How do you approach leading and communicating with your research team (students, collaborators, etc.) to ensure everyone stays aligned and motivated throughout a project?
7. Management – Do you use any specific tools or project management methods to help manage your projects (for example, particular software, scheduling techniques, or regular team check-ins)? If so, how have they benefited your work?
8. Management – Can you share an example of a challenge you encountered while managing a research project (for instance, a delay, a budget issue, or a team conflict) and how you handled it?
9. Management – Research projects can change direction unexpectedly. How do you adapt when new findings or external factors require you to shift your project plans?
10. Management – Have you ever managed a project that involved collaborators from other disciplines or from industry? If so, how did you navigate the differences in working styles or expectations among the team to make the project successful?

# Interview Framework

This section is for the team to mutually prepare the final interview setup during the meeting on 24.03.

## Rough Questions

Finding funding

1. Sources of funding
   1. Scales and intuition – local options, national options, international options
   2. Keeping up with the ongoing calls and proposals – how?
2. Interdisciplinary proposals
   1. Specific knowledge/specialties - join to make a results
   2. Different organisations – knowledge transfer academia -> municipalities
      1. Triple helix concept
   3. Foundational vs applied research
3. Standout features of proposals
   1. Implication of the research – how will it be used? (social sciences extra specific)
   2. How to stand out from proposals? (sharesecrets pleasepleasePLEASE!)
      1. Do you use buzzwords? Avoid buzzwords? Why?
      2. What language do you use?
4. General advice: mistakes/tips/rules of thumb
   1. Estimation of KPIs (how much budget, how long does the project take)?
   2. Recycling rejected project ideas. How much do you reiterate? Why exactly?

Managing projects

1. Tools / Frameworks
   1. Extra effort using these worth it? (Related to scale of the project?)
   2. Difference from the business world?
2. Challenges
   1. Deadline / access to methodology
   2. Risk management –
      1. issues
      2. Team management (disciplinary teams)
3. Advice
   1. 3 DOs and 3 DONTs.

## Final Questions

### Finding Funding

1. **Sources of Funding**

Could you describe how you typically identify suitable funding sources for your research projects, and how do you keep yourself updated with ongoing calls and new opportunities?

1. **Interdisciplinary and Cross-sector Proposals**

From your experience, how valuable is it to engage in interdisciplinary proposals or collaborate across academia, industry, and public sectors? Could you provide an example illustrating either the advantages or challenges you've encountered?

1. **Standout Features of Successful Proposals**

In your opinion, what specific features or practices significantly help proposals stand out positively to reviewers? Could you comment on the use of buzzwords or specific language choices?

1. **General Advice on Proposal Writing**

Could you share your rules of thumb, common pitfalls, or tips you have learned when writing proposals? Additionally, how do you typically estimate practical aspects like budget and duration, and how often do you recycle or adapt rejected project ideas?

### Managing Projects

1. **Tools and Frameworks**  
   What specific tools, frameworks, or methodologies do you use for managing your research projects, if any? How do you evaluate whether investing time in these tools and frameworks is beneficial?
2. **Challenges in Project Management**

What are the most common challenges or unexpected issues you face during project management? Can you share a particular example related to risks like deadlines, resource availability, or interdisciplinary team dynamics?

1. **Advice for Managing Teams**

How do you effectively manage diverse or interdisciplinary teams, particularly when team members come from different academic, professional, or organizational cultures?

1. **Essential Project Management Practices**

Based on your experience, what are three key practices you strongly recommend (DOs), and three pitfalls or actions researchers should avoid (DON'Ts) to ensure successful project management?

# Presentation Framework

This section is for the team to mutually prepare the final presentation setup during the meeting on 24.03.

## Part 1: Funding

*Where to get funding and how*

*Provides an overview of the* ***post-doc level research funding opportunities in your field*** *(who funds and what types of project are currently funded in terms of focus on direction) → ask for key sources of funding in your field and what types of research (supply vs demand; recent trends in topics, interdisciplinarity etc)*

## Part 2: Project Management

*How to manage projects: what are the common approaches, tools and principles (dos and donts)*

***Key principles and practices of good project management in your field*** *→ ask what theories/models/principles and tools/apps/platforms are used in PM*