Writing the scientific proposal
Wednesday 20 May 2020, 2.30 – 4.30 pm

**The proposal is a collaborative action between the Experienced Researcher and the Supervisor at the beneficiary institution**

GF: the Supervisor at the Host Institution needs to be involved too!

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The blank page panic!
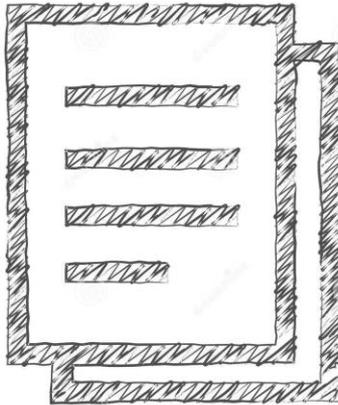
DON'T PANIC

EC Template for the scientific proposal

Annotated Template by UNIVR Grant Office!

http://docs.univr.it/documenti/Documento/allegati/allegati930851.pdf

➢ Win the blank page panic!
➢ Clear structure for your proposal
➢ What to stress and how to write it

The document will be used by the evaluators!

➡ Use the template and address all points and suggestions! They correspond to **award criteria** for evaluators!

The template has **formatting rules** and **page limits**: respect them!

✓ Remove instructions from template
✓ **No cover page** and summary
✓ Only current template (2020) is admissible!
✓ Footnotes only for literature references and count towards the page limit

Template
Part B1
(max 10 pages)

1. Excellence
2. Impact
3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation

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Section 1

Excellence

1.1 - Quality and credibility of the **research/innovation** project; level of novelty, appropriate consideration of inter/multidisciplinary and gender aspects

1.2 - Quality and appropriateness of the **training and of the two way transfer of knowledge** between the researcher and the host

1.3 - Quality of the **supervision** and of the **integration** in the team/institution

1.4 - Potential of the researcher to reach or re-enforce a position of **professional maturity/independence** during the fellowship

Organisation of Section 1.1

✓ Introduction

✓ Objectives

✓ State-of-the-art

✓ Research methodology and approach

✓ Originality and innovative aspects of the research programme

✓ The interdisciplinary aspects of the action *(if relevant)*

✓ The gender dimension in the research content *(if relevant)*

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Try to summarise the main features of your proposal in few lines

The Why – Motivation
- Why is this proposal important for the research area?
- Why is this proposal important for the ER career?
- Why is this proposal important for the HO/S?

The What – Main scientific result(s) of your project
- The topic(s) of the project
- The research goal(s)
- The main research results

You can use these tips also to write an abstract of the project!

The Who – Key actors involved
- The Experiences Researcher (ER)
- The Host Organisation(s) (HO)
- The Supervisor(s) (S)

Review this summary once the proposal is finished!

Among the most common reasons that lead to a **bad evaluation** of a project proposal are:

➢ The **lack of clarity** about the objectives of the proposal
➢ A **too vague definition** of the project objectives that makes it difficult to believe they will be achieved or that the described impact will be delivered
➢ A **weak link** between the objectives identified in the call and the objectives set out in the proposal

How to find objectives?

DEFINE THE PROBLEM/S AND SUBSTANTIATE THE NEED FOR STUDY

You should be in a position to answer the following questions:
- What is/are the problem/s you intend to explore?
- Can the proposed research improve what now 'is'?

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Objectives must be few!

➢ The ER commits himself/herself to achieve these goals: not many, not too ambitious

➢ Describe the scientific work, expected outcomes and state-of-the-art for all the objectives of your project
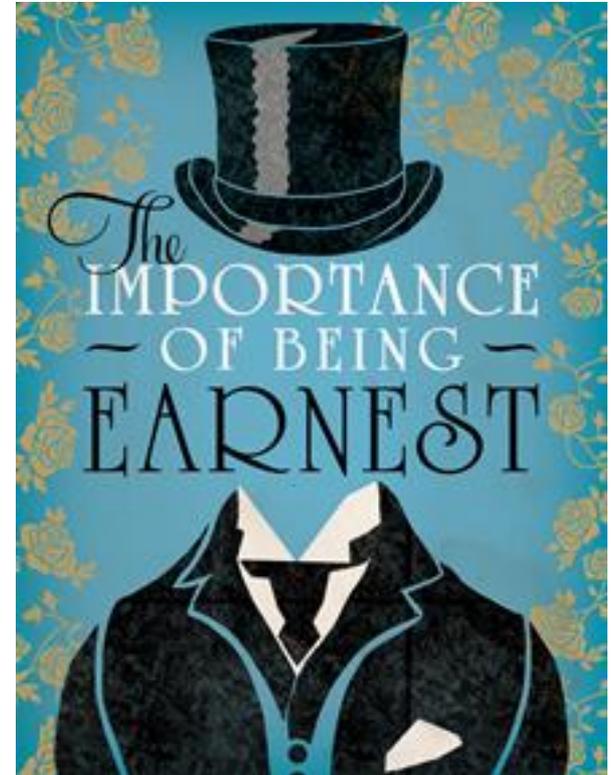
Objectives must be SMART!

- ✓ **S** = **Specific**: *'What specifically needs to be done to reach the global objective?'*
- ✓ **M** = **Measurable**: *'How will you know when the objective has been successfully met?'* (use qualitative or quantitative indicators)
- ✓ **A = Achievable**: *'Can the objective be accomplished within the established timeframe and planned human and physical resources'?*
- ✓ **R** = **Relevant**: *'Is it instrumental to the scope and impact set out in the call, and to the fixed GOs?'*
- ✓ **T** = **Time-bound**: *'Will it be accomplished within the target date?*

✓ Formulate the main question of your research project

✓ Expose the available positions (with their strong and weak points)

✓ Don't go too back in time! (Unless you work in historical context)

✓ Stress the stalemate situation or the difficulties in choosing one of the main available positions expressed by the scientific community

References to bibliography

- ✓ Methodological steps (sequential phases, thematic areas)

- ✓ Research methods and how they are connected

- ✓ Different approaches and traditions (for humanities)

- ✓ Key concepts

- ✓ Protocols, experimental plans, pilots, activities of testing and demonstration

- ✓ Eventually, make use of graphs and table

✓ Why is your research project original or innovative?
✓ How could it bring the investigation beyond the actual state of the art?

Refer to the state of the art

Originality, novelty and innovation might refer to:
✓ Basic / fundamental concepts and ideas
✓ Methodologies/approaches
✓ Final expected results

You do not have to mention them if NOT relevant to your research activity!

**Gender dimension in the research content**
- ✓ Not referred to gender-balance in the staff and policies for gender equality
- ✓ Referred to the sex and gender factors that might influence the research outputs
- ✓ In research activities where human beings are involved (e.g. as subjects or end-users), gender dimension is always relevant

Gendered Innovation website
http://ec.europa.eu/research/swafs/gendered-innovations/index_en.cfm?pg=home

Interdisciplinary aspects of the action
Aspects of different scientific disciplines that you will face during the project (e.g. mathematics, computer science, engineering, social sciences, etc.)

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- ✓ Explain what **new knowledge** the experienced researcher will gain during the fellowship at the hosting organisation(s) and how it will be acquired
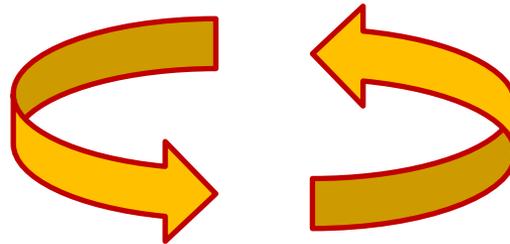
- ✓ Outline the **previously acquired knowledge and skills** that the researcher will transfer to the host organisation(s)

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What will the HO and Supervisor give you?
- ✓ counselling and guidance services
- ✓ network of Supervisor's collaborations
- ✓ Help finding funding and/or recruitment opportunities after the MSCA Fellowship

New knowledge acquired ➔ List and describe **training events and courses** you plan to attend, including scientific topics and transferrable skills

- ✓ *Training-through-research* ➜ **individual personalised project**
- ✓ Training for **developing scientific skills**: new techniques, instruments, research integrity, 'big data'/'open science'
- ✓ Training for **developing transferrable skills**: entrepreneurship, grant preparation, patents applications, management of IPR, project management, task coordination, etc
- ✓ Inter-sectoral or interdisciplinary **transfer of knowledge** (e.g. through secondments)
- ✓ Taking part in the **research and financial management**
- ✓ Organisation of **scientific/training/dissemination events**
- ✓ Communication/outreach activities
- ✓ Training dedicated to **gender issues**

A **Career Development Plan** should not be included in the proposal, but will be part of the action's implementation in line with the European Charter for Researchers. The Plan should be established jointly by the supervisor(s) and the researcher. In addition to research or innovation objectives, this plan comprises the researcher's training and career needs, including training on transferable skills, teaching, planning for publications and participation in conferences.

It is part of implementing the project!

It will be the first thing to do during your project

Qualifications and experience of the supervisor(s)

The level of experience on the research topic proposed: publications, participation in projects, patents, international collaborations (in the topic!)

Experience in supervision/training:
- role in doctorate programmes, number and quality of supervised PhD students and Post-docs, excellence of researchers who used to work in the centre/lab of the supervisor
- education for PhD students, classes, courses at advanced levels
- referee for PhD thesis

In GF you need to distinguish between hosting organisations

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Hosting arrangements

Integration in the research group
- ✓ participation to lab/centre meetings
- ✓ introduction to researchers working in the host organisation
- ✓ integration in the research interests of the host organisation
- ✓ ...

→ Present the networks and relations at European and worldwide level of your supervisor

Here it is necessary to distinguish among the host organisation (beneficiary), the host organisation in the third country (only for GF), the host organisation of the secondment (if any).

In this section you have to demonstrate that this project is a **"good investment"** for the European Commission in terms of enhancing the career of the funded ER **during the fellowship**

- ✓ Demonstrate your experience and talents
- ✓ Show the new skills and competences you will acquire during the fellowship
- ✓ Demonstrate that the fellowship will enhance your maturity and independence

Growing Up

Mention professional results you achieved in the past

- ✓ funded project
- ✓ awards
- ✓ teaching activities
- ✓ etc

… and report them in your "Curriculum Vitae"!

Research track record in the field of your proposal
→ highlight your **independent thinking**
→ mention your **leadership capacities**

Prove them with
- ✓ your articles as a first or unique author
- ✓ supervision of students
- ✓ project management activities
- ✓ organisation of conferences
- ✓ leadership of research groups
- ✓ prizes
- ✓ etc

Section 2

Impact

2.1 - Enhancing the **future career prospects** of the researcher after the fellowship

2.2 - Quality of the proposed measures to **exploit and disseminate** the project results

2.3 - Quality of the proposed measures to **communicate** the project activities to different target audiences

➢ Impact of the project on the career perspectives **after the end of the fellowship**

➢ Explicitly outline your **career goals**

➢ Short-medium term impact = 2-3 years after the fellowship

➢ Long-term impact = 5 years after the fellowship

1. Increased scientific production
2. Improved scientific production (higher impact factors, better journals…)
3. Improved Funding ID
4. Better professional position (academy / industry)

Results: *any tangible or intangible output of the action, such as data, knowledge or information, that is generated in the action, whatever its form or nature, whether or not it can be protected, as well as any rights attached to it, including intellectual property rights*

Dissemination: *disclosure of the results by any appropriate means (other than resulting from protecting or exploiting the results), including by scientific publications in any medium*

Exploitation: *use of results in further research activities other than those covered by the action concerned, or in developing, creating and marketing a product or process, or in creating and providing a service, or in standardisation activities*

"Communicating EU Research & Innovation. A guide for project participants"
http://bookshop.europa.eu/it/communicating-eu-research-innovation-pbKI3212366/

What are the results you plan to transfer

… And to whom!

Dissemination activities - examples

➤ Publication of research findings on journals, monographs, …
➤ Presentation in scientific conferences (papers and posters)
➤ Presentation on other media (e.g. project website)
➤ Presentation to specific target groups (e.g. end-users, policy makers, …) through participation in fairs/exhibitions and other public events, production of policy briefs, …
➤ Distribution of the project data (if relevant)

Presentations at conferences, journal papers and other events can be both dissemination and communication activities! Try to avoid repetitions

Open Access Policy

Provide policies for Open Access to Publications and Research Data (mandatory!)

Open access refers to the practice of providing online access to scientific information that is free of charge to the end-user and reusable

Open Access to Publication and to Research Rata
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/cross-cutting-issues/open-access-dissemination_en.htm

Open Access to Publications

Open access publishing Gold road	**Self-archiving** Green road
Article is published in an Open Access journal (= everybody can read it for free)	After the article is published you store a copy in an institutional repository (if necessary after an embargo period) (= everybody can read it for free, eventually after the embargo)

IRIS at UNIVR https://iris.univr.it/

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Open Access to Research Data

Refers to the right to access and reuse **digital research data**

➢ Statistics, results of experiments, measurements, observations resulting from fieldwork, survey results, interview recordings and images

Mandatory, unless
✓ It endangers privacy or security
✓ It is against your commercialisation plans and IPRs
✓ It jeopardises the project
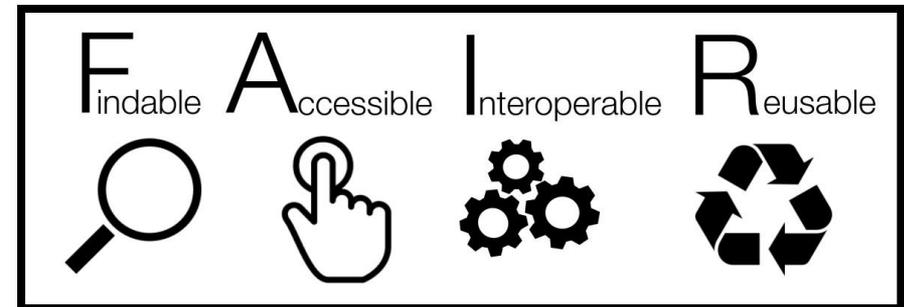
Exploitation of the project results

If some results **are further exploitable during or after the project**, you should mention them or mention this possibility

Examples

➢ Further research, product or service development, licensing, joint venture, spin-off, standardisation activities

Commercial exploitation ➡ sketch a short business plan / business analysis

If you are going to exploit a project result, you do not have to publish it and therefore no Open Access obligation arises

BUT, **IPR issues** might arise
➡ take them into account!

European IPR Helpdesk - "Fact Sheet - IP management in Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions"
https://www.iprhelpdesk.eu/sites/default/files/newsdocuments/FS_IP_management_in_MSCA-H2020_v1.0.pdf

Guidelines to the Rules on Open Access to Scientific Publications and Open Access to Research Data in Horizon 2020
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/oa_pilot/h2020-hi-oa-pilot-guide_en.pdf
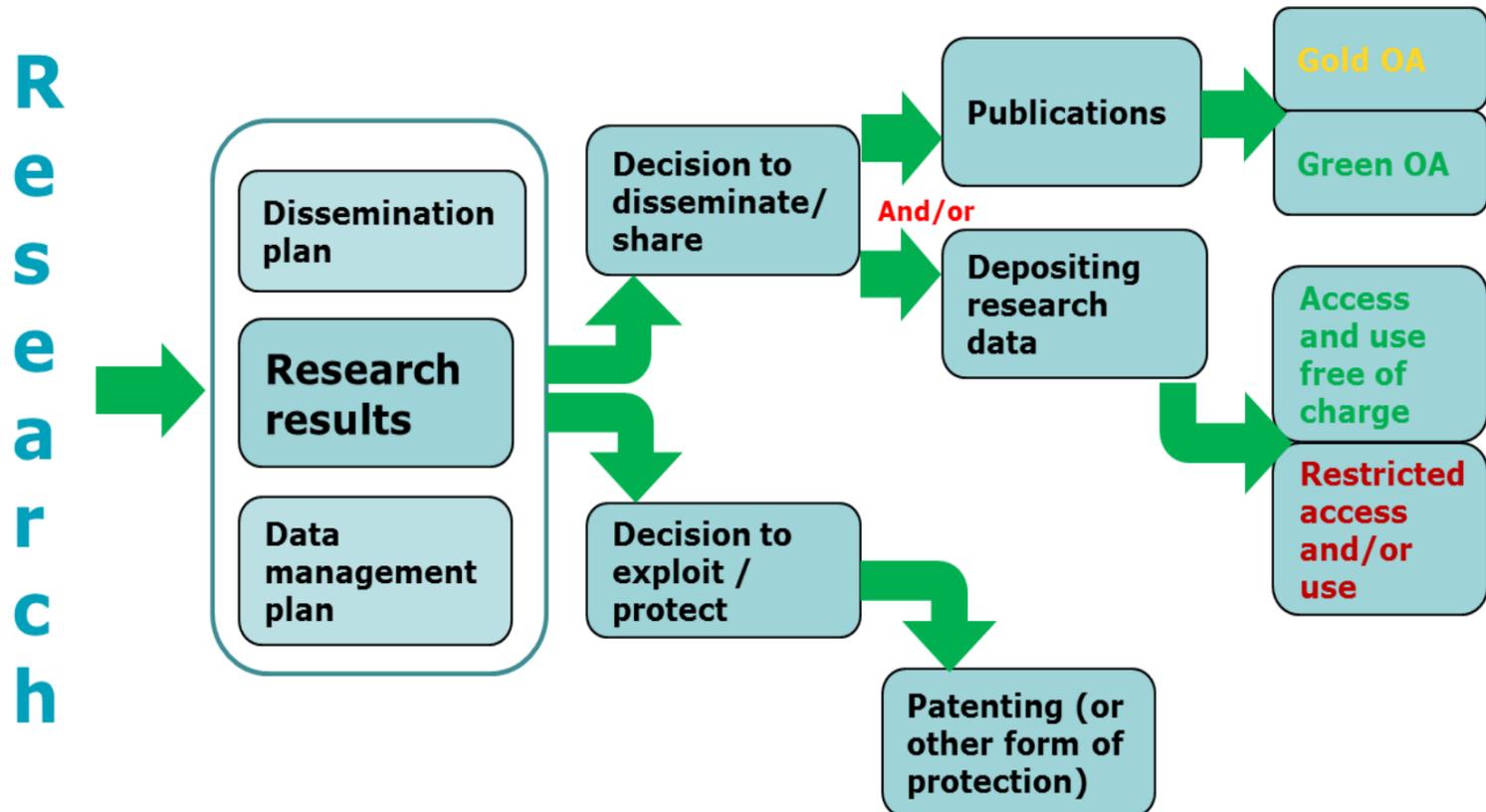
Project **communication objectives are**:

➢ Presenting your project to a general public
➢ Promoting research itself
➢ Enhancing a positive attitude of EU citizens
➢ Giving evidence of the EU support
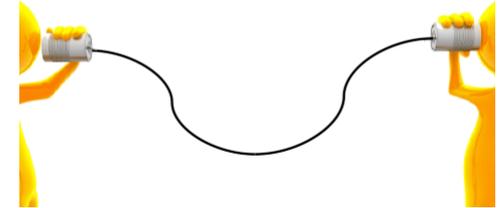
Communication contributes to support dissemination and exploitation

Communication plan

➢ **Who**: what are your target groups?
➢ **How**: shortly describe your activity
➢ **What**: what is the key message?
➢ **When**: when do you schedule this activity?

Section 3

Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation

3.1 - Coherence and effectiveness of the **work plan**, including appropriateness of the **allocation of tasks and resources**

3.2 - Appropriateness of the **management structure and procedures**, including risk management

3.3 - Appropriateness of the institutional environment (**infrastructure**)

Work package: a major sub-division of the proposed project

➢ Coherent sets of activities contributing to expected results that lead to the achievement of the specific objectives of the project

Provide a <u>short title</u>, a <u>period</u> (Month x - Month y) and a short <u>description</u> of the activities.

You could dedicate specific WPs to:

❑ training activities,

❑ management,

❑ dissemination, exploitation and communication activities

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Deliverable: a distinct and relevant output of the project. E.g. report, document, technical diagram, software, video, etc.

Mandatory deliverables:

- **Career Development Plan** by month 6
- **Data Management Plan**, by month 6
  (if you participates in the Data Management Pilot).

Del. No	Deliverable name	WP	Delivery date
D1.1	Questionnaire grid	WP1	Month 3
D4.1	Career Development Plan	WP4	Month 3
D5.1	Data Management Plan	WP5	Month 6
D5.3	Project website online	WP5	Month 2
D3.1	Final Policy Brief	WP3	Month 24

TIPS

☒ Article on....
☑ Draft of the article on... ready for submission

☒ Final conference
☑ Agenda, or Report with list of participants Proceedings

Milestone: a critical moment in time, like a go/not go moment
➤ Completion of a key deliverable, allowing next phase of the work to begin
➤ Intermediary point so that, if problems have arisen, corrective measures can be taken

→ not every delivery date is a milestone!

Number	Milestone name	Related WP(s)	Estimated date
MS1	All data collected	WP1	Month 6
MS2	First version of the policy / protocol / algorithm / tool / system / software	WP2, WP3	Month 12

Do you already know where you will carry out your secondment?

No! Explain:
- ✓ What kind of organisation? In what sector? In what country (in Europe)?
- ✓ How and when do you plan to find the organisation?
- ✓ How will the supervisor help you in this task?

Yes:
- ✓ Present the organisation, the lab/dept/unit, the supervisor

In both cases
- ✓ When secondment(s) will take place
- ✓ Research AND training activities during the secondment

Secondment ≠ Short visit / Research on field

Only in **Europe** (EU+MS)
Max 3 months
for ≤ 18-months fellowship
Max 6 months
for > 18-months fellowship

If you split the secondment in several periods, explain why

Time (= Allocation of tasks)

- Demonstrate that the **project duration** is adequate: neither too short nor too long
- Demonstrate that for **each WP** you have time enough

Allocation of resources

- Besides **infrastructures and facilities** at the host institutions
- demonstrate the grant (in particular B1 Training and Research Costs) is enough to cover **your costs for research and training** activities

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Work Package	Title	Year 1												Year 2												Year 3											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
WP1	Management						D1.1																		M1.1												M2, D1.2
WP2	Data collection							M2.1									D2.1																				
WP3	Field work							M3.1															M3.2	D3.1													
WP4	Research part x																		M4.1, D4.1															M4.2, D4.2			
WP5	Research part y																								M5.1, D5.1												
WP6	Dissemination and communication					D6.1						D6.2			D6.3						D6.4																
WP7	Secondments																														M7.1						
…	…																																				

Legend Milestone [M] Deliverable [D]

Research activities

Training activities

Dissemination and Communication

Secondment(s)
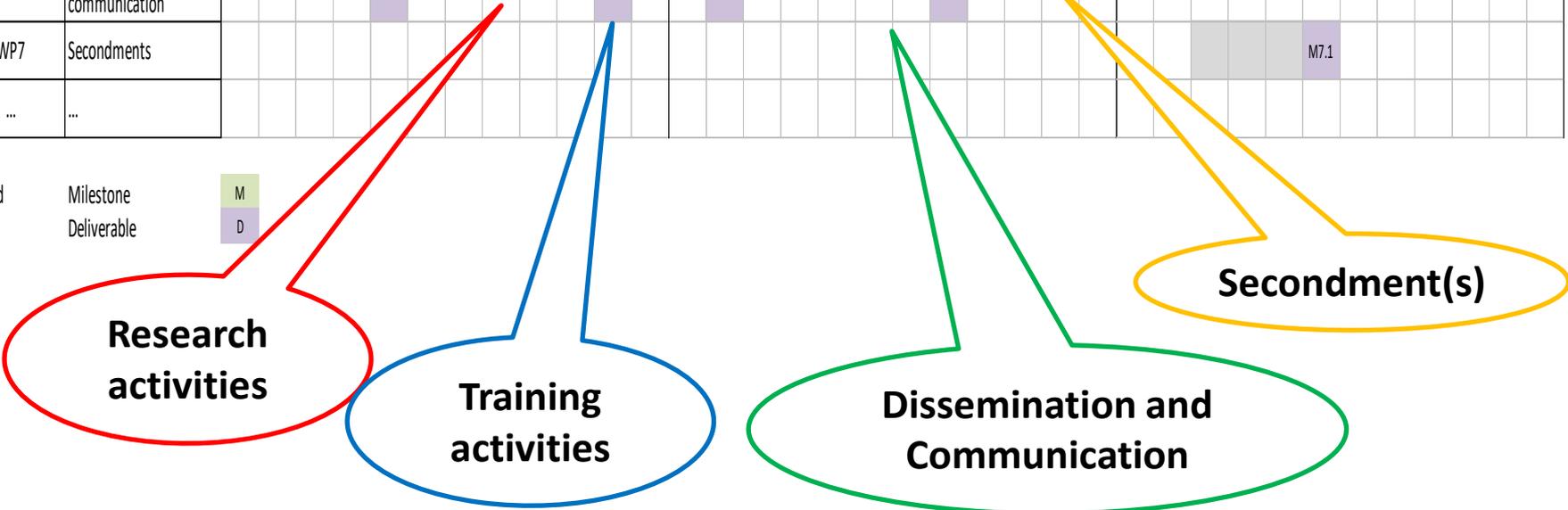
The work plan shall include **interconnected WPs** with defined **deliverables and milestones**, which have to be consistent with project's objectives

Research, knowledge transfer, training, communication and dissemination and management activities
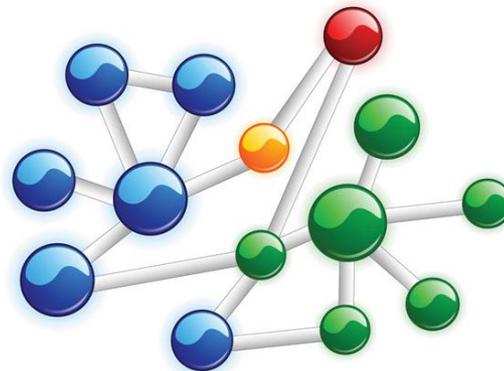
SCIENTIFIC AND TRAINING MONITORING is the main task
of the supervisor together with the researcher
- ✓ Periodic meeting / web-conference with the supervisor
- ✓ Written activity report sent to the supervisor
- ✓ Daily contact face-to-face

For GF or secondments: stay in touch with your main supervisor!
The lab / research team could be involved in the scientific monitoring ➔ **regular lab meetings**

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT is performed by the Secretariat of the Department and by the Research Area at UNIVR
Periodic meetings with the researcher are encouraged!

**Risk**: Any external event that **might happen** with a **negative impact** on your project

Risk Management Plan
List ALL risks related to
research, training and diss/com. activities

For each risk:

- Provide a **short description** (refer to the concerned WPs)
- Indicate its **likelihood** (low – medium – high)
- Indicate its **impact** on the project (low – medium – high)
- Explain the **plan B (contingency plan)**

A good project plan is risky and know how to manage them
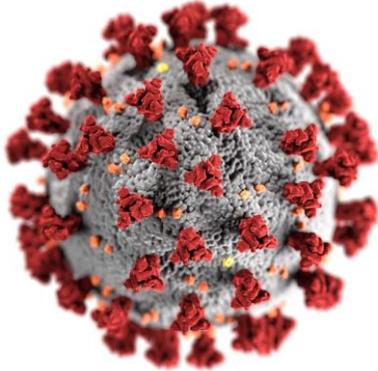
Will the pandemic continue in the future?
How might it impact on your plans?

In any case,
consider it in your Risk Management Plan

Activity	Plan B
Seminars, conferences, and other public events	• Events online • Postpone the event
Research trips and expeditions	• Alternative locations? • Postpone the trip
Delays in receiving the materials	Postpone research activities
Not possible to access the lab / infrastructure	• Work from home • Revision of the research plan (WPs)

Active contribution of institutions

- Stress the **different contributions** of each hosting organisation (beneficiary, partner organisation in the Third Country, host organisation for the secondment)
- Stress the **common scientific interests** between the host institution(s) and the ER

Infrastructures, logistics, and facilities

- UNIVR Interdepartmental Technological Platforms Centre and other **research infrastructures** in the department
- UNIVR **library** system
- **Support** for entry procedures, health insurance, housing, Italian language courses….

See list in the annotated template

Template Part B2

4. CV of the ER
5. Capacities of the participating organisations
6. Ethical aspects
7. Letter of Commitment (GF only)

Your CV must be **coherent** with the **whole proposal**:

- data in the administrative form
- your research project (section 1.1)
- your training programme (section 1.2)
- impact on your career (section 2.1)

5 pages indicatives

Applicants **without a doctorate**?
Justify any period of <u>Full-Time Equivalent Research Experience,</u> proven by e.g. a work contract, a schola study certificate.

Any **career gap in research** or **unconventional paths**?
Explain it carefully to be fairly assessed by the evaluators.

Use **full dates**: dd/mm/yyyy

Follow **reversed chronological** order: from now to the past

See all tips in our commented proposal

- **Publications** in peer-reviewed scientific journals, peer-reviewed conference **proceedings** and/or **monographs**.
- Granted **patent**(s).
- **Research monographs, chapters** in collective volumes and any translations thereof.
- **Invited presentations** to internationally established conferences and/or international advanced schools.
- **Research expeditions** led by the experienced researcher.
- **Organisation of international conferences**, including membership in the steering and/or programme committee.
- Examples of **participation in industrial innovation**.
- **Prizes and Awards**.
- **Funding** received so far.
- **Supervising** and **mentoring** activities.

One table to list **all involved organisations** *(1 page)*
plus **one table for each participating organisation** *(1 page each)*
- beneficiary
- partner organisation in third country (for GF)
- partner organisation hosting a secondment (if known)

  - General Description
  - Academic organisation *[yes/ no]*
  - Role and Profile of key persons (supervisor)
  - Dept./Division / Laboratory
  - Key Research Facilities, Infrastructure and Equipment
  - Independent research premises?
  - Previous and current involvement in
    Research and Training Programmes *[Max 5]*
  - Relevant Publications and/or research/innovation Products *[Max 5]*

involve your supervisors to fill in the table

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If you have ticked any ethical issues in the administrative form,
you must describe how you will manage them

1. Compliance with **ethical principles and regulations /laws**
   E.g. GDPR, Data minimization, 3Rs principle...

2. How and when you will get / have already got **ethical approval** from the relevant committees
   - Clinical research → Ethical Committee for Clinical Experimentation (CESC)
   - Research on animals →Ministry of Health through CIRSAL
   - All other topics → Comitato di Approvazione della Ricerca sull'Uomo (CARU)

3. Explain in **detail** how you intend to address the ethical issues and fill in the **table** you find in the proposal template

Guidance - How to complete your ethics self-assessment
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/ethics/h2020_hi_ethics-self-assess_en.pdf

The Ethics Self-Assessment does not refer only to medical/clinic studies!

Always when you:

- involve people (even for an interview)
- collect or manage sensitive or personal data
- import or export to non-EU countries data or material
- activity is risky for health of people or for the environment…

you have an ethical issue to manage

Ethics Self Assessment is not part of the evaluation

BUT

Ethical issues might impact on your project plan and schedule.

The Letter of Commitment is required **only for Global Fellowships**, for the host organization based in the Third Country.

→ No Letter of commitment for secondment!

The letter must:
- have heading or stamp of the organisation
- be signed by a person with signing power
- be up-to-date
- demonstrate the real involvement of the organisation.

Find a template at this URL:
http://docs.univr.it/documenti/Documento/allegati/allegati112353.docx

Thank you

Research Projects Unit
https://www.univr.it/en/organisation/-/ateneo/area-ricerca/planning-and-accountability-of-research-projects-unit

Sciences, ICT and biotechnologies
ricerca.poloSCI@ateneo.univr.it

Life Sciences
ricerca.poloMED@ateneo.univr.it

Social sciences and Humanities
ricerca.poloSSH@ateneo.univr.it

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European Fellowship
(Call 2017)

Global fellowship
(Call 2018)

Rosanna Laking
FunSilting: Functorial techniques in silting theory
(GA No. 797281)

University of Verona
Dept. Computer Science
Supervisor: Lidia Angeleri

Monica Cristini
MariBet: La MaMa Experimental Theatre: a lasting bridge between cultures (GA No. 840989)

University of Verona
Dept. Cultures and Civilizations
Supervisor: Simona Brunetti
The City University of New York Graduate Center (USA)