9. Include sufficient expertise in financial management Although the financial rules have been simplified in Horizon 2020, financial management of projects is still complex and often underestimated by Project Coordinators. If the Project Coordinator does not have the required experience it is wise to include institutional financial departments or an external specialised party.

10. Be mindful of cultural differences International consortia bring skills from multiple research and cultural traditions to projects. This leads to diverse and valuable insights. To this end, it is worth recognising cultural differences and understanding how they can complement each other to move the project forward instead of becoming a barrier.

Research management in Horizon 2020 is people business! It is time consuming yet worth the effort, as high quality research management is significantly correlated with project success as perceived by survey respondents in the before mentioned study.

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How to successfully manage a Horizon 2020-funded project

10 practical tips on research project management

High quality research management is essential not only for smooth grant applications and project implementation, but also for the financial and scientific success of the project. But what is high quality research management? Ten key aspects are given below. These characteristics are based on a quantitative analysis of more than 3,000 projects from the 6th and 7th Framework Programmes and 30 in-depth case studies of such projects. For more comprehensive descriptions, please refer to the full study report.[1]

10 tips for excellent research management

1. Closely adhere to the call text when developing your project Projects that closely adhere to the call texts turn out to be more successful. So successful projects start from a thorough analysis of the grant call itself. Within Horizon 2020, call texts are less detailed and wider in scope as compared to previous Framework Programmes. Nevertheless, the call text is the most important guideline for setting up a first outline of the envisioned project. Always keep in mind what is being asked for in the call and what is needed to best accomplish it.

2. Good consortium building is based on merits Based on the envisioned project outline, a consortium should be built on the basis of merits. This implies that the identification and inclusion of a consortium partner should be primarily based on a proven track record on the specific task(s) appointed to the partner, rather than on existing relationships. Do not hesitate to build a consortium even if only a few partners are acquainted to each other at the start of collaboration. Our data show that such projects are relatively successful.

3. Dedicate sufficient time to management of the project Be aware that internal communication in the consortium, meeting project milestones and quality control of deliverables take up most of the time of the Project Coordinator. Therefore, do not compromise on resources dedicated to project management (7% of the total project budget). The Project Coordinator should not necessarily conduct all these tasks alone. Dividing and delegating tasks is recommended, preferably along the lines that are established during the grant proposal phase of the project. For example, tasks and responsibilities regarding quality assurance, evaluation and validation could be decentralised to the level of work package leaders.

4. Focus first on people, instead of formal tools or structures Research management is a people business and should ideally not rely on formal tools or hierarchical management styles. It is advisable to use an all-inclusive and consensus-based management style. Also, use simple, straightforward management structures with clearly defined roles and responsibilities throughout the project. These roles and responsibilities should be given based on proven competencies for the role, not because of status or hierarchical reasons.

5. Trust is key Excellent projects share a high level of trust among the partners *at the end* of the project. As many consortium partners may be new to each other at the start of the project (see bullet 2), it is essential to invest in building and maintaining trust throughout the project. To this end, frequent communication within the consortium is crucial; regardless of the mode of communication.

6. Establish a good working relationship with the project officer Our data clearly show that it also improves the quality of the FP6 or FP7 project. Communicate pro-actively with the European Commission project officer about relevant aspects of your project, such as expected deviations in project results or consortium composition. Invest in a good working relationship and inform the project officer well in advance and in an informal manner instead of waiting for formal reporting periods. This allows for a more flexible and tailored approach with less administrative burden for both the consortium and the project officer.

7. Be prepared for changes in consortium composition About one third of all consortia change at least one partner during the execution of the project. This is an example in which pro-active communication with the project officer is advisable.

8. Intellectual Property (IP) agreements should meet the needs of all partners IP issues are a major determinant of project success and are often the reason for partners to leave the consortium. Note that different organisations (e.g. research institutions and businesses) may have very different IP interests. The Horizon 2020 IP guidelines are leading. However, keep in mind that these might not always be in line with specific interests of each partner. High-level IP agreements are usually insufficient to manage IP issues during the project execution phase. It is therefore advisable to agree upon the outline of the IP strategy with (the legal departments of) all consortium partners early on in the grant application process. A detailed IP strategy that is tailored to and acceptable for each consortium partner should be included in the European Commission Grant Agreement.

[1]http://ec.europa.eu/research/evaluations