

Project Management at Eurice in a Nutshell

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Introduction

Efficient project management is the basis of every successful project. Presumably, everybody would agree on that. But what exactly is “project management”?

There are different facets of project management ranging from administrative grant management, and scientific management to an **impact-oriented project management**.

While the formal and administrative requirements of grant management have been simplified in Horizon 2020 and are most likely to be even more simplified in the future, professional and efficient project management remains important to the successful implementation of large research endeavours.

More and more, the focus of research projects will be on the outcomes and efficient exploitation of project results. Establishing a basis for a productive working culture from the start and monitoring the project progress and results constantly, will foster better results and enhance visibility of the project’s outcomes.

In our opinion, project management is clearly more than checking the formal/administrative correctness of project implementation.

The three pillars of project management

We have identified three major aspects of management for research projects:

- Grant Management
- Scientific Management
- Impact-oriented Project Management

These are, of course, complementary aspects of project management and all facets of “management” share some common elements and overlaps. Close interaction is desirable. However, each form of management should be clearly attributed to an individual/institution in a project as a clear attribution of tasks facilitates communication, workflows and implementation.

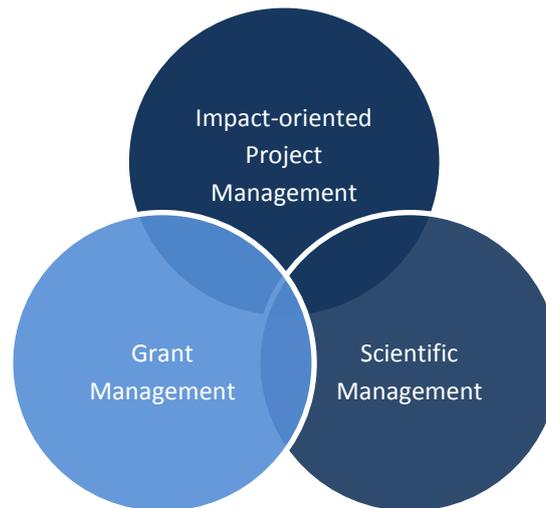
Grant Management	Scientific Management	Impact-oriented Project Management
 <p>Administration/EU office at coordinating institution + administrations/EU offices at partner institutions</p>	 <p>Coordinator</p>	 <p>Professional project management partner</p>

In general, these three management pillars should focus on the following major tasks:

Grant Management: administrative support (such as preparation of financial reporting, legal agreements, etc.) and helpdesk for administrative issues (technical support, clarifications), project documentation systems (templates, drafts, online tools), interface to the European Commission

Scientific Management: assessment of scientific progress, definition of technical Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), quality control of scientific results

Impact-oriented Project Management: central monitoring of all project activities, deliverables and deadlines, quality assessment and risk analysis, development and implementation of standards and processes, preparation of reports and collection of data about project progress, conflict management, trouble shooting, horizontal activities such as the implementation of communication structures, assessment of results with regard to their exploitation potential and dissemination management



Impact-oriented Project Management as a central part in research projects

A professional project management partner brings many benefits to a project. It establishes itself as a neutral non-scientific institution among the scientific partners thus creating a basis for a trustful cooperation.

In detail, the tasks of a neutral project management partner will cover the following:

At the start:

A strong project management partner will get highly involved from the start. Specifically, they will:

- set up structures and a time frame
- define roles
- develop communication lines
- assess risks
- define critical checkpoints and project goals

...and thus build the basis for efficient work in the project.

During project implementation:

- develop and implement standards and processes
- monitor progress, activities, deadlines
- analyse risks and implement contingency plans, if required
- adjust the project schedule and implement steps to keep the project on track
- control the quality of results
- define checkpoints (milestones)

- evaluate outcomes and foster adequate exploitation of results
- resolve conflicts among partners with proactive problem management
- plan, organise and follow up project meetings
- provide all partners with tailor-made tools to facilitate project monitoring and reporting

A professional project management partner with strong crosslinks to dissemination/exploitation activities is a plus for successful project implementation to guarantee that the maximum is made of the project outcomes.

At the end of the project:

- ensure that the project outcome is properly communicated
- ensure that the project results are properly exploited
- follow up on further research opportunities

The benefits of involving a neutral project management partner

- ✓ **One neutral partner that pulls the strings and reconciles all partners' interests**
- ✓ **Fair cooperation between all partners**
- ✓ **Trustful entity which all partners can approach without prejudice**
- ✓ **The PM partner does not itself pursue any exploitation interests**
- ✓ **Professional PM leads to better results and a higher impact**
- ✓ **Clear communication lines and allocation of responsibilities improve overall team work**

Eurice – a professional (multi) project management office

As already described, professional project management has not only proven to bring substantial added value to a project, it will become even more important in the future as the European Commission funding will depend more and more on successful outcomes and exploitation of project results.

In more than 16 years of project management in scientific projects, Eurice has gained vital experience and developed general project management standards for EU-funded research endeavours that proved to work well. Setting clear structures and communicating timetables with a focus on the project progress, Eurice notably improves the day-to-day-work in the project consortium while always keeping the dissemination and exploitation of project results in mind.

We are:

- ✓ **Proactive** – we are continuously evaluating the progress of the project, checking whether Key Performance Indicators and milestones have been achieved and detecting problems early enough to take appropriate contingency measures to keep the project on track
- ✓ **Neutral** – we are not a scientific partner in the project and do not pursue any exploitation interests ourselves. Instead, we are there to act on behalf of all partners and to foster a good cooperation among the consortium
- ✓ **Approachable** – we are there for the entire consortium – at all times – since we are not only one but a team of 40 experts who continuously share their experiences
- ✓ **Impact-oriented** – we know that the success of a project depends on the outcomes and we are there to foster the exploitation of project results
- ✓ **Experienced** – our interdisciplinary team shares their expertise and experiences from different projects and cooperates closely