Grant applications for PhD students #2

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On the presentation

- Submit questions via chat:
  - I will answer during or after presentation, or after group work.
- Send email to esmari@hi.is if you have serious problems (no sound etc.)

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Overview over day one

1. Recap: Principles for writing grant applications
2. Impact and the value of research
3. Pathways to impact and work-plans
4. On peer-review
5. Group work: Why?

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GRANT WRITING PRINCIPLES

Principles of application writing

1. Respect the objectives of the funder
2. Focus on the future – what you are going to do
3. Approach as a much needed project

4. Be convincing
5. Be personal
6. Approach application as team work
7. Shorten your speech
8. Use simple language

Approaching an application

- Analyze and evaluate the funder:
  - What does the funder want?
  - Are there any explicit objectives with the funding programme?
  - Are the evaluation criteria published? What do they say?
  - Are older allocations published? Are they informative for what kinds of projects are preferred?
  - What kind of evaluation process is used? Who is going to read, evaluate and rank your application?

- Respect the funder:
  - Answer all questions
  - Show respect for the funder's priorities

Scientific value and state-of-knowledge

- Clear focus from the start is crucial: What is this particular project about?
    - What is the *one idea* that glues the project together?
    - Why is it interesting and important?
    - What makes your proposal innovative?
- Put in the context of the state-of-knowledge
- Explain main value in broader terms than your narrow field of research
- Questions: **What? Why and why now? How?**

IMPACT

What is impact?

- Something changes, but what?
- Often in terms of economy, technology or policy.
- I.e. something that is **measurable** and **demonstrable**!
- But: This is a very narrow view.

Impact vs. Value

- Impact:
  - Usually described in terms of change.
  - System changes from state A to state B.

- Value:
  - Usually described with reference to overarching objectives like happiness or democracy.

Societal impact / value of research

- Increasingly important aspect of applications and in evaluation criteria.
  - Iceland lagging behind to some degree.

- Basic question:
  - What is "the good" of your research?
    - Will it – *potentially* – lead to any change in society? I.e. for the better?
    - Does it – *potentially* – have any value to society? I.e. positive value?
  - Not necessary to understand impact in terms of *economic*, *technological* or *cultural* change. More varied approaches also accepted.

Impact, not grimpact!

- How do we identify *the good*?
- Increasingly popular: The Sustainable Development Goals.
  - University of Iceland and the Icelandic Government.
  - Many international funders and organisations.

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← **Tweet**

Bantshire University
@BantshireUni

LATEST: Bantshire drops UN Sustainable Development Goals in favour of new multimillion pound partnership with BP.

12:35 PM · Nov 9, 2019 · Twitter for iPhone

24 **Retweets** 158 **Likes**

Bantshire University Follow
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We throb knowledge. We pulse excellence. Ranked 1st in the UK for canteen facilities (CEF, 2020). Vice-Chancellor Vince Chancelier (He/VC). Parody.

Trends for you

Trending in Iceland
#Iceland

Andri Snær Magnason is Tweeting about this

Show more

Alan Kennedy 🇪🇺 @AEAKennedy · Nov 9
Replying to @BantshireUni
Great news! How will we drive the need to be sustainable if we're not ruining things in the first place, right?

💬   🔁   ♡ 2   ⬆️

Sallyanne Theodosiou @TheodosiouSal · Nov 9
Replying to @BantshireUni

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11 SJÁLFBÆRAR BORGIR OG SAMFÉLÖG

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HEIMSMARKMIÐIN
Markmið Sameinuðu þjóðanna um sjálfbæra þróun

COVID-19

- Universities and research institutes are mapping their contribution to COVID-19.
- Popular in applications (in some of your short drafts as well!).

Alternative impacts

- Epistemic justice

- Empowerment

- Perceptions

- Capabilities

- ...

PATHWAYS AND WORK-PLAN

Research plan and methodology

- If you have an outline of your thesis-in-progress, consider using it as a frame.
  - Proposed chapter division can be a part of the grid for a time plan.
- Focus on the research plan – but include main milestones in your PhD progress (defense of prospectus; final draft; research stays abroad …)
- Methodology – be specific!
  - What sources and material will you work with?
  - Does it require team work or are you working individually?
  - How will you access it and work with it?
  - Are there any ethical problems, problems of access, …

Strategic choice

- Project description and work-plan:

- Separate chapter with work-plan
  – or
- Intertwined with the project description

Doctoral student grant
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3.3 Activity by region

Reykjavík capital area   100 %
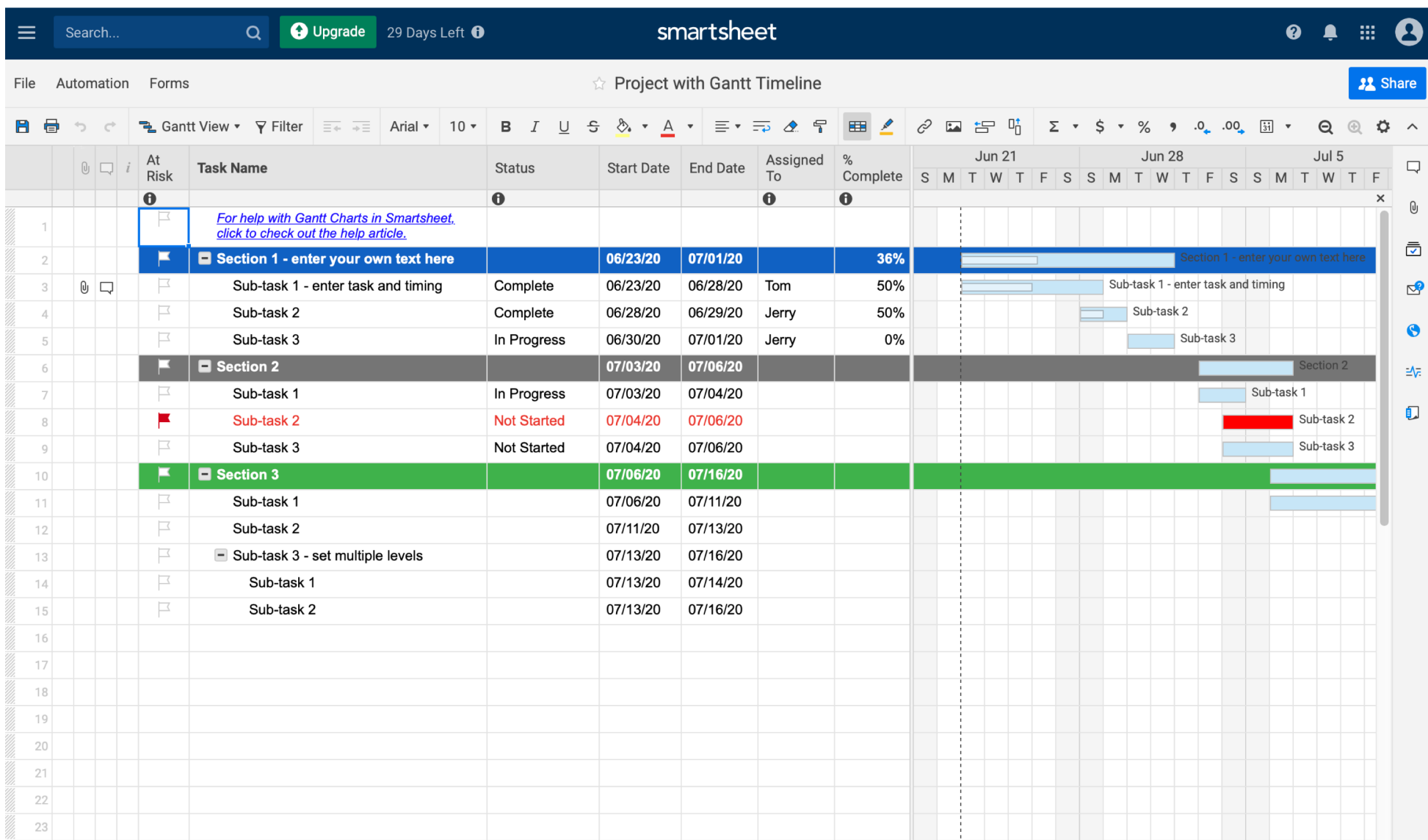
Reykjanes peninsula   0 %

W-Iceland   0 %

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Pathways to impact

- Route from research to society.
    - "Productive interactions".
- Assuming potential societal impact, how do you see the route from research to societal change?
    - Anything goes! (Almost)
- Impact can be *en route* or *after* defence.

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PEER-REVIEW

What is peer-review?

- A peer: in this context = an equal.
  - Main idea: A scientist is best at evaluating the quality of the work of other scientists.
  - In your case: Not true! PhD students being evaluated by your superiors.
- Next week: You will be evaluating each other.

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Some principles

- Understanding: What is the intention of the applicant?

- Generosity: How can you help the applicant along?

- Critique: What could be done better?

- Note: Don't impose your own views!

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GROUP WORK

Group work

- Discuss the **why**.
  - Why is your research interesting and important?
  - Is it going to change anything for the better? If so, for whom and how?

Final step

- Before next week:
  - Write full 5 page proposal.
  - No later than Friday 26 June: email to esmari@hi.is
- 30 June:
  - Peer-review of full proposals.