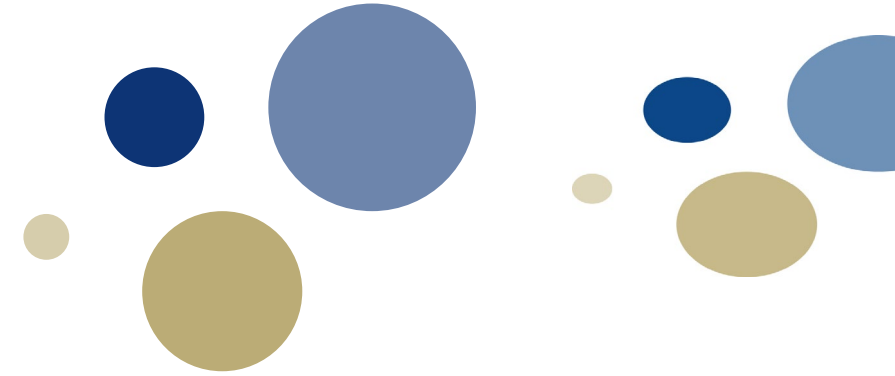




NTNU – Trondheim
Norwegian University of
Science and Technology



The role of Research Managers and Administrators: Strategic and organisational considerations

Seminar on Project management: A local, national and European perspective
Warsaw School of Economics
4 December 2024

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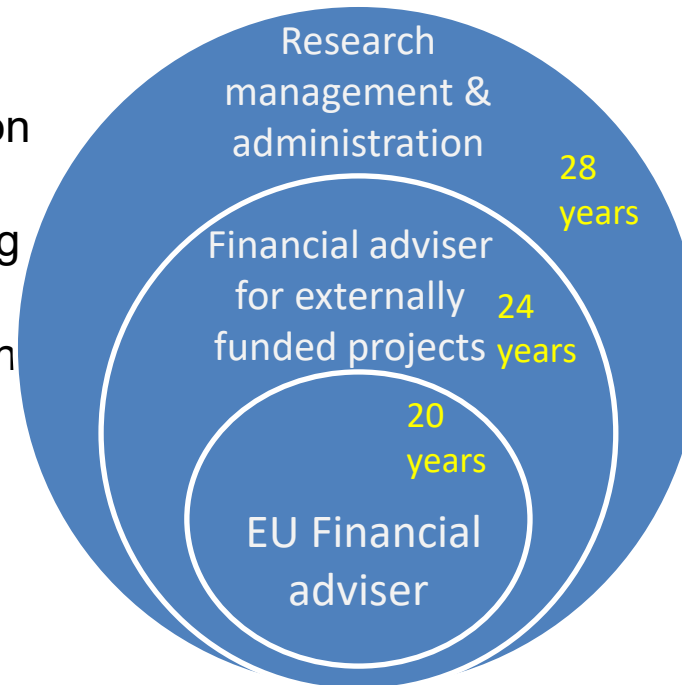
Contents of presentation

- Background
- Focus of this presentation
- Projects in light of NTNU's strategic goals and priorities
- The RMA role and function
- RMA at different stages
- The project life-cycle perspective
- Roles and organisational solutions at NTNU
- Generalist or specialist?
- Hands-on or hands-off role in projects?
- One size fits all?
- The value of internal networking in large organisations
- International sharing of practice



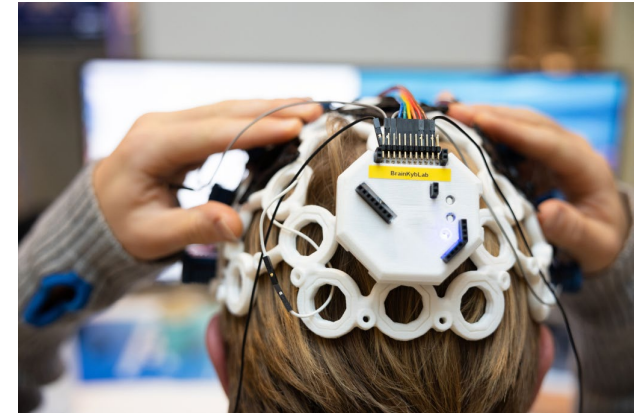
Background – About the speaker

- Member of national reference group for Horizon Europe for Norway (and previously for H2020)
- Active in EARMA (<https://earma.org/>), including 2 periods as elected internal auditor
- Active contributor to the BESTPRAC European network (<https://earma.org/bestprac/>)
 - funded for 6 years as a COST Action
 - now a thematic group in EARMA
- Education:
 - Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Economics and Business Administration
 - Including a specialiation in project management
 - BA in Environmental and Resource Studies and Comparative Development Studies

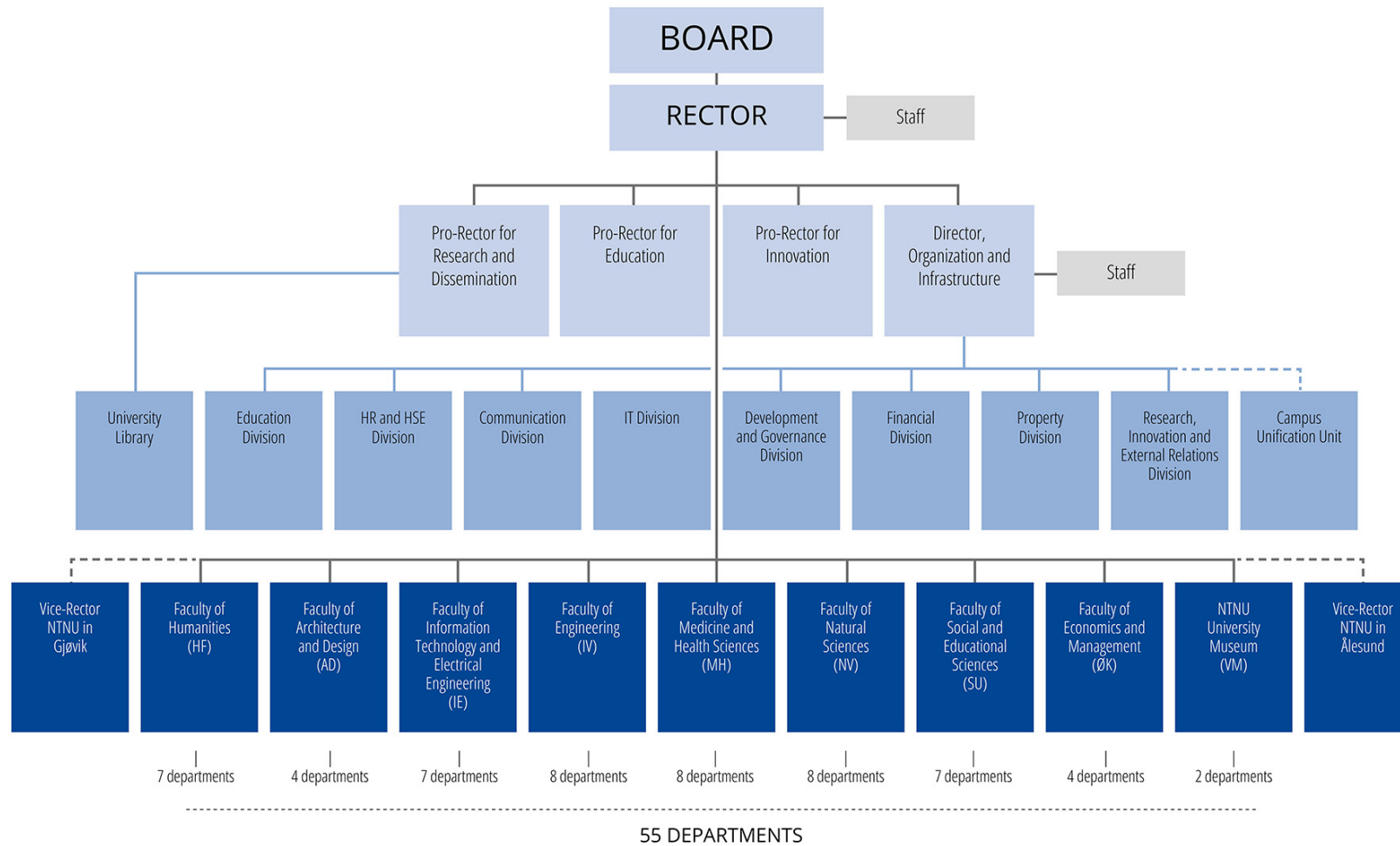


Background – About NTNU

- NTNU – Norwegian University of Science and Technology
- Norway's largest university
- 9159 employees
 - 8054 full-time equivalents (FTEs)
- Annual budget: Approximately EUR 950 million (11 billion NOK)
 - of which roughly EUR 275 million (3,2 billion NOK) externally funded activities
- Close cooperation with SINTEF, an R&D organization with 1800 employees
- Approximately 44 000 students
 - of which more than 4 000 international students
- H2020: 255 grants
- Horizon Europe: 206 grants so far
- NTNU has had the role of Coordinator in 30% of its projects in the EU framework programmes



Organisational chart – NTNU



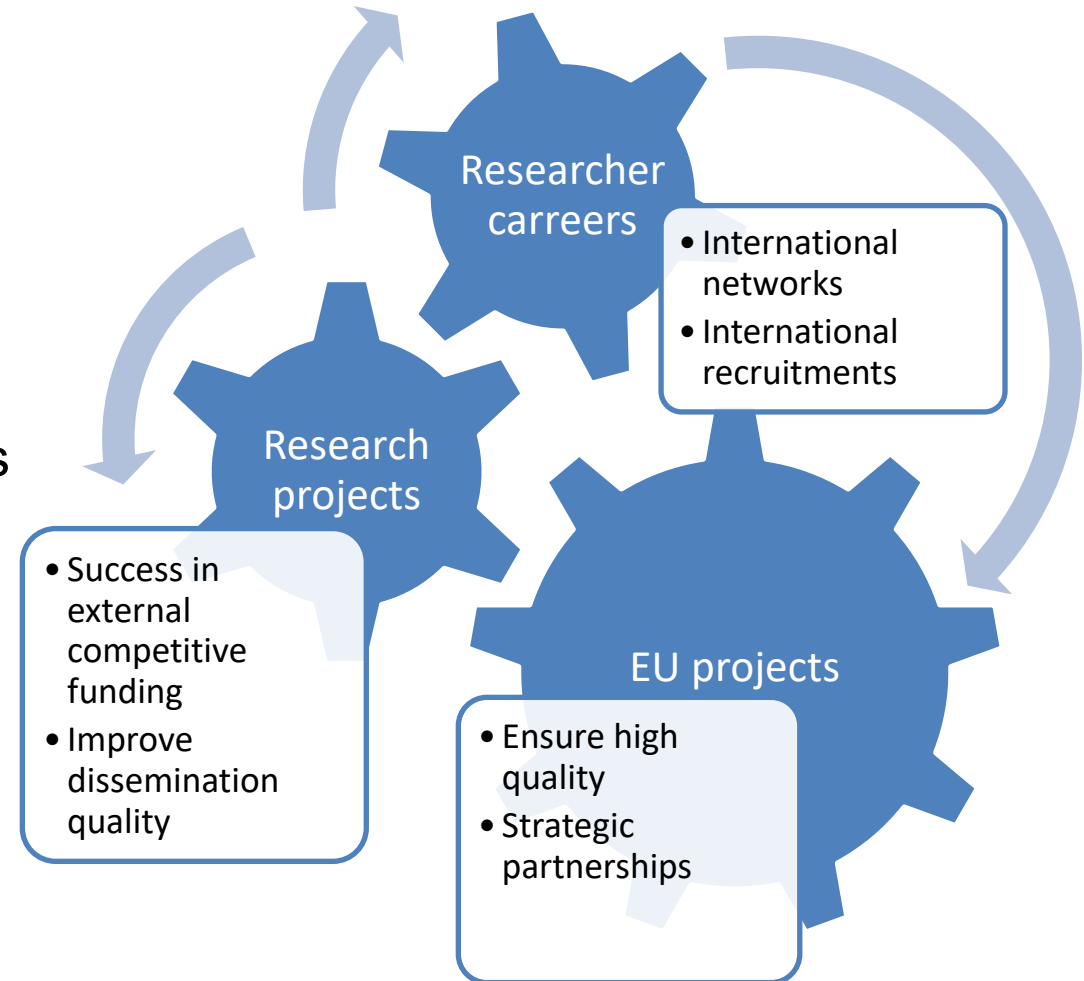
Focus of this presentation

- RMA roles
- Broader RMA functions
- RMA roles in the context of EU projects

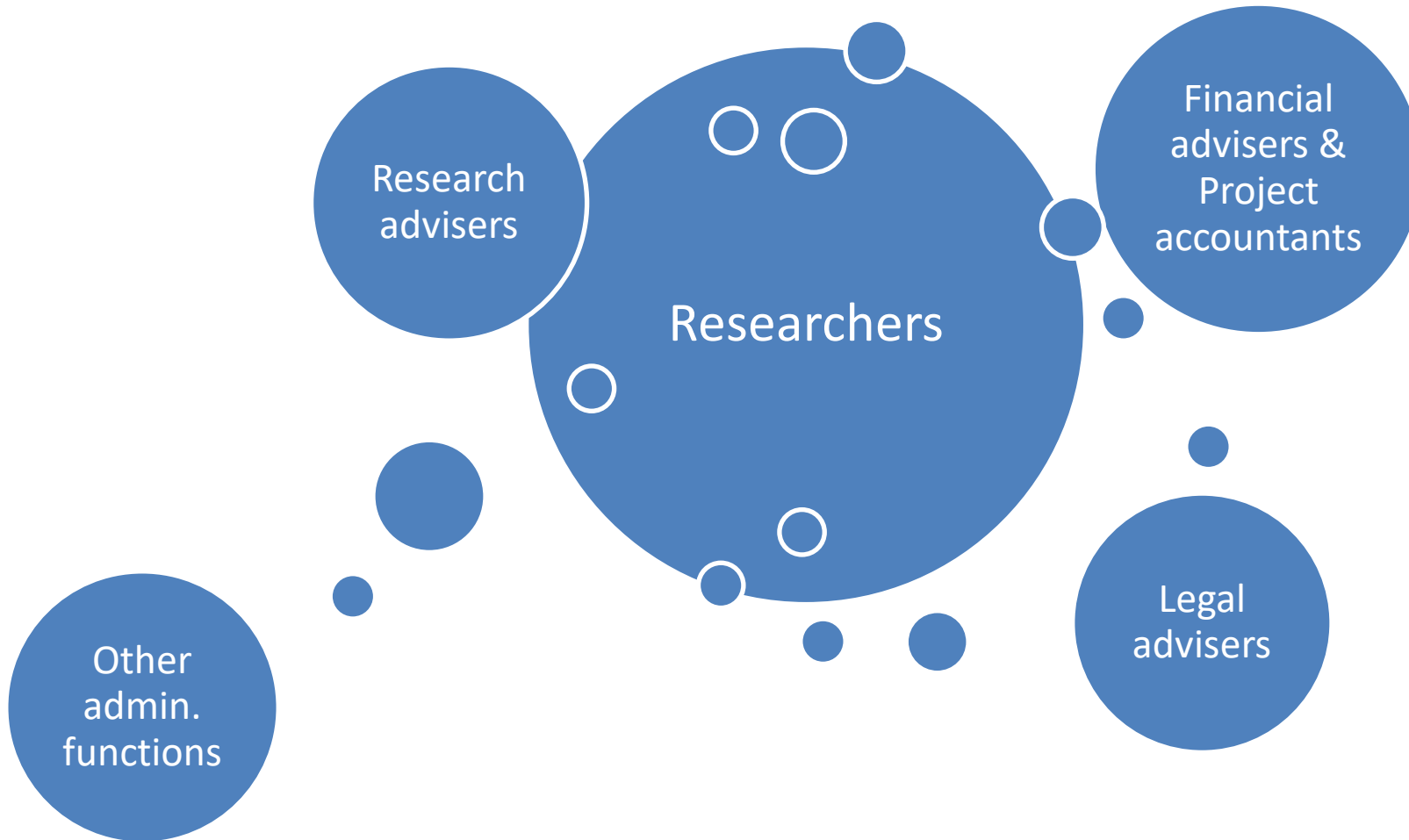


Projects in light of NTNU's strategic goals and priorities

- Vision: Knowledge for a better world
- Internationally oriented, high-quality research university
- Internationally leading academic groups
- Integration of education, research and innovation
- Innovation as a distinctive characteristic
- Clearly visible in society and active contributor to its development
 - Dissemination to society and open science
- Modernized technical and administrative support services
- Priorities in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.



Research management and administrative roles

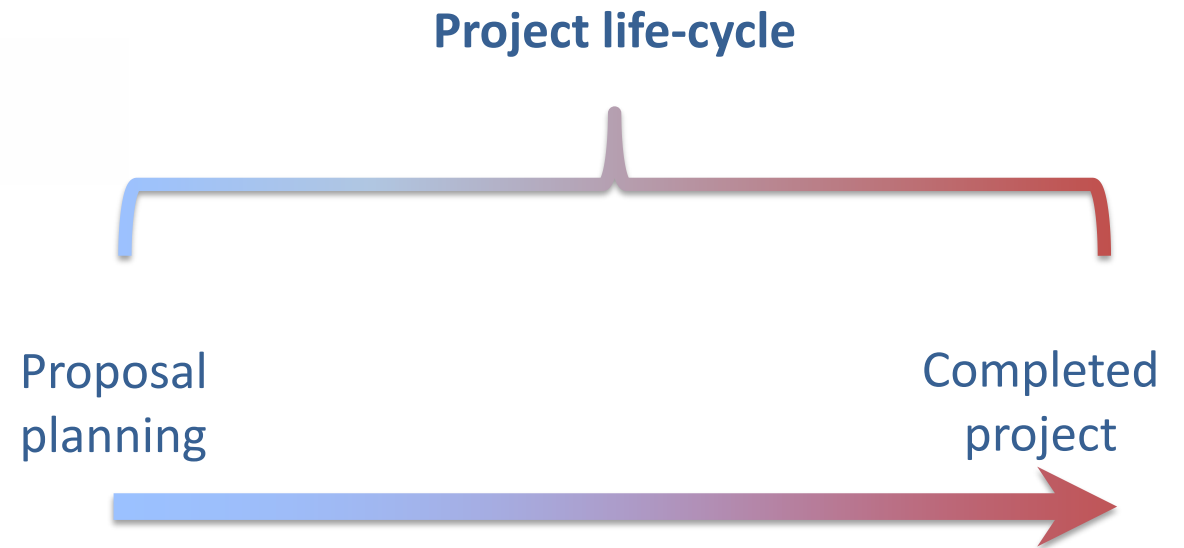
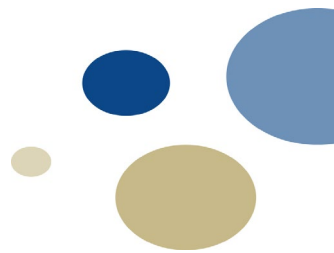


The RMA role and function

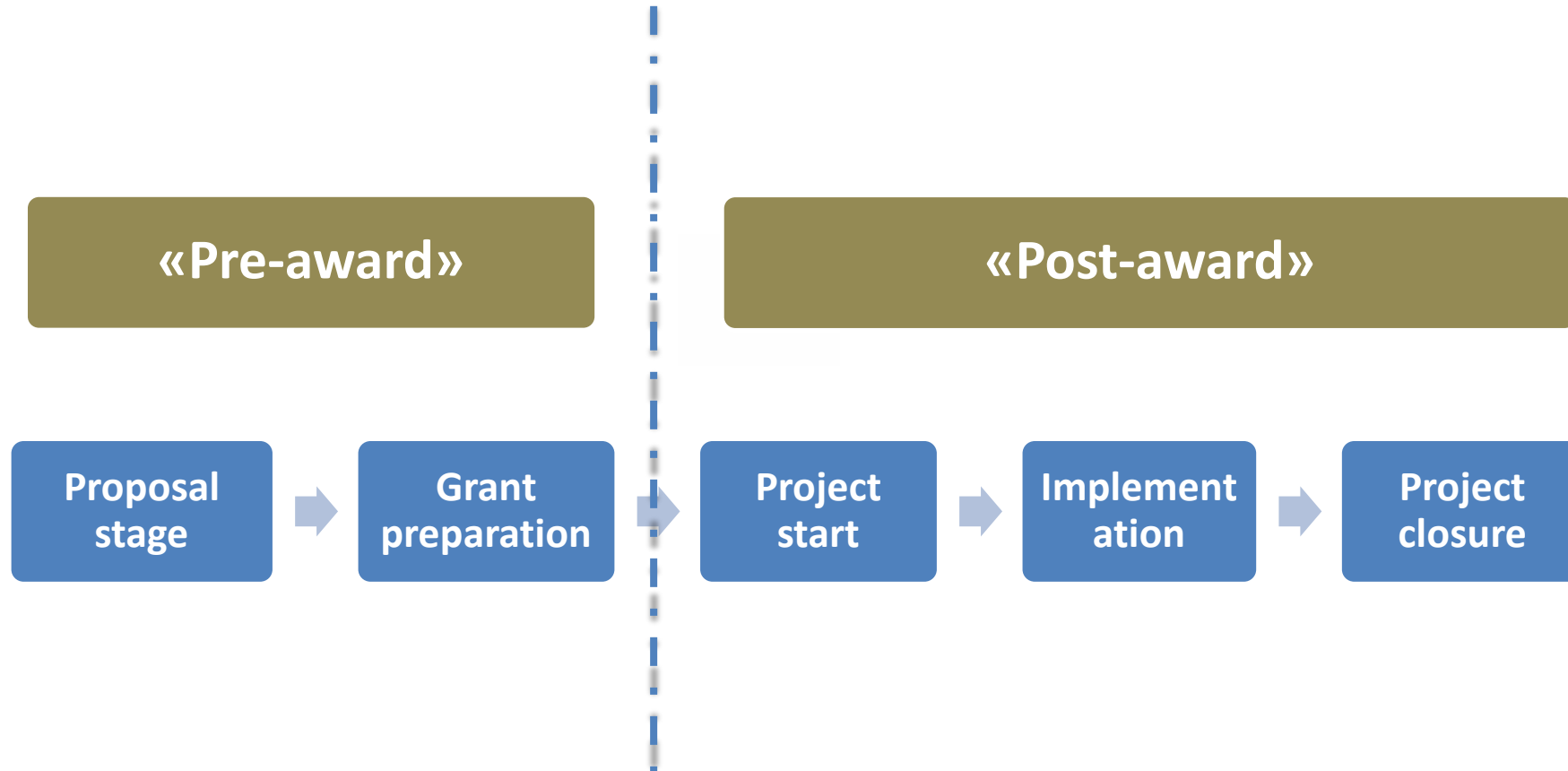
- The "core" RMA (Research Manager and Administrator) function
 - Dedicated to facilitating, managing and/or administrating research
 - Typically working exclusively on these tasks
 - NTNU: Research advisers
- The broader administrative functions that research relies on
 - Legal RMA
 - Financial RMA
 - Other administrative functions
- Project management
 - Hands-on managing of specific projects and project portfolios
 - A discipline in its own right
 - Skills, methods, tools, certifications



RMA at different stages

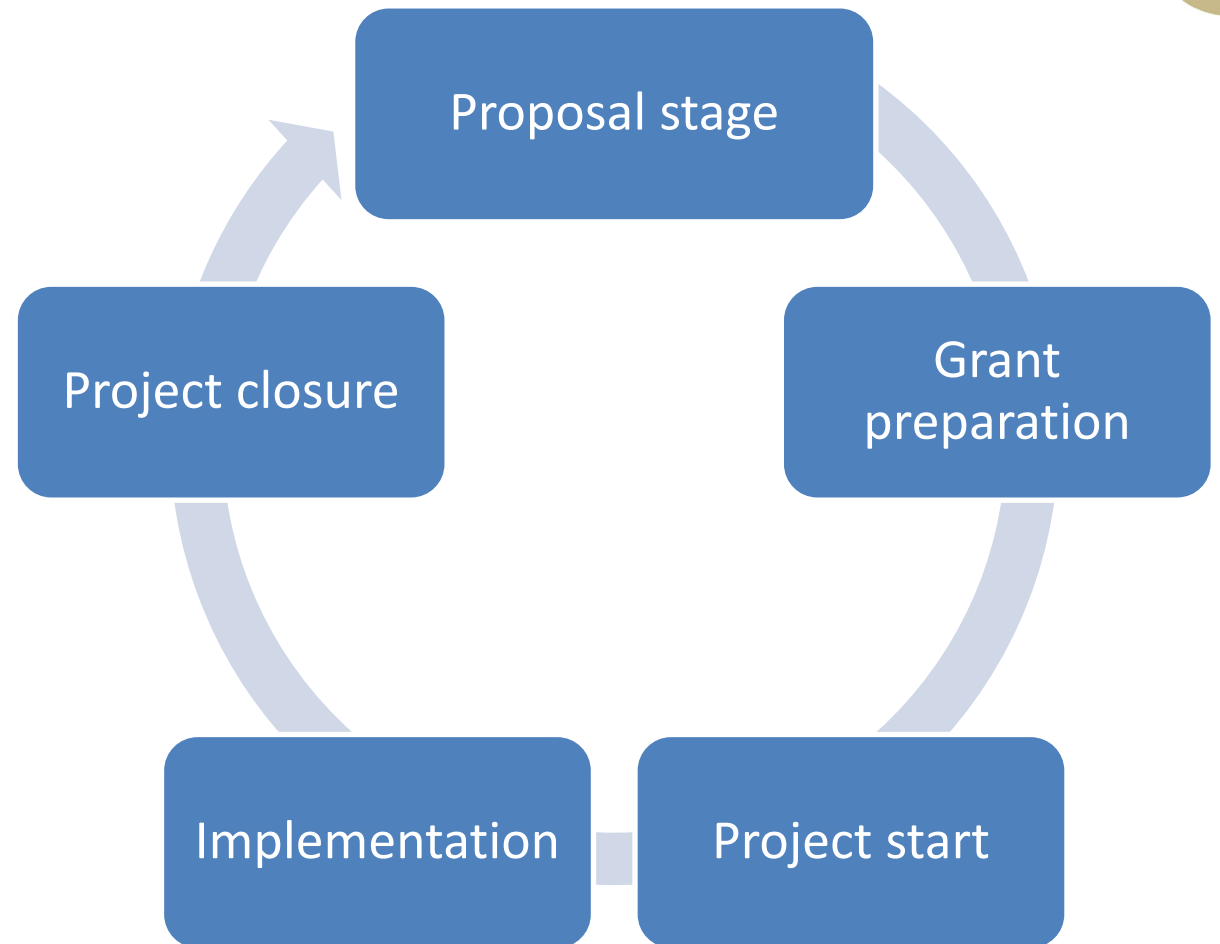


The project life-cycle perspective



The cyclical project life-cycle perspective

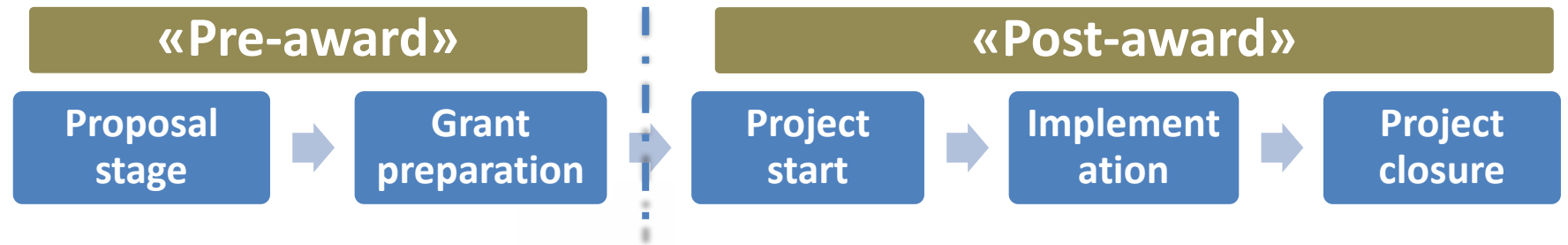
- Feedback loop
- Utilising knowledge and experience from all stages
- Bringing knowledge and experience from later stages into earlier stages
 - For future projects



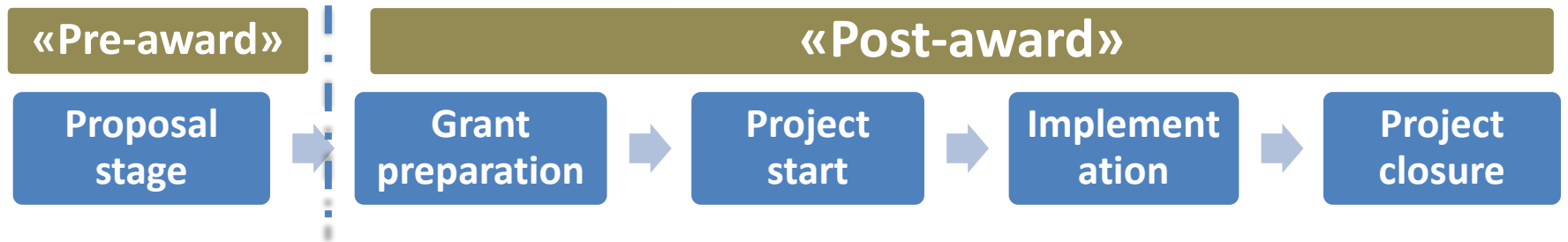
Pre-award vs. Post-award – A general perspective

- Where is the border/transition?

- For some:



- For others:



- Some work on both sides of the divide, others on one side only
 - On an individual level (person by person)
 - On the level of the organisational entity

Research advisers: What do they do at NTNU?

- Organising inputs/comments to funding programmes prior to their publication
- Mapping of funding opportunities
- Matching researchers to calls
- Advice on proposal development
- Proposals coordinated by NTNU
 - Contributions to proposal text
 - Organising reviews of draft proposal
- Participating in the management of Grant Agreement Preparation (GAP)
- Project implementation
 - Advice on management issues
 - In some cases, participating in project management of coordinated projects
- Some degree of specialisation in some cases, in other cases not

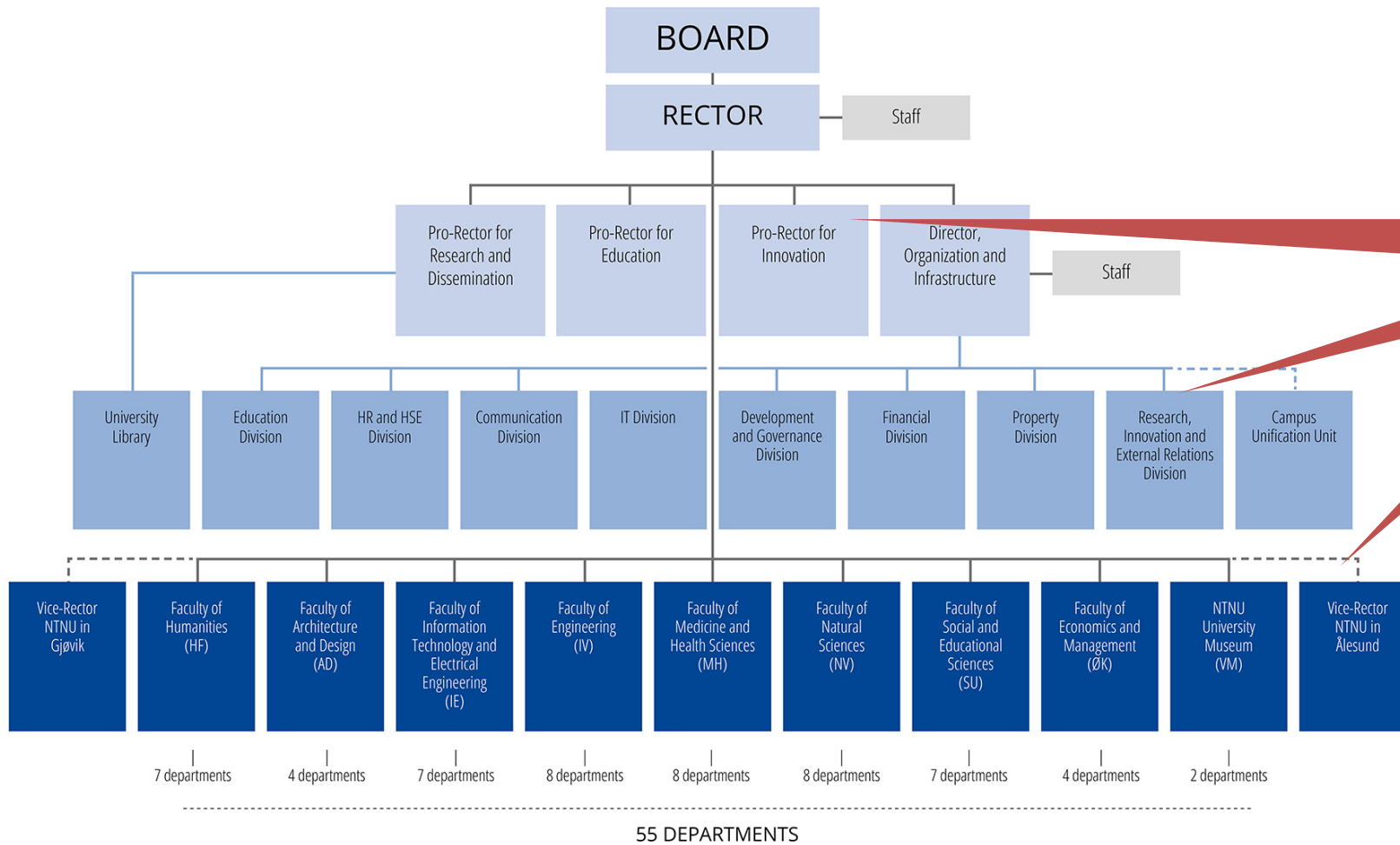


Evolution of the "core" RMA function at NTNU



- Tendency towards increased, more systematic work on:
 - Organising inputs/comments to funding programmes prior to their publication
 - Facilitating researcher participation in international networks
 - Open access, open science
 - Contributions to proposal content
 - Implementation
 - Impact
 - In some cases, more involved hands-on in post-award activities than before

Organisational locations – Research advisers and administrators

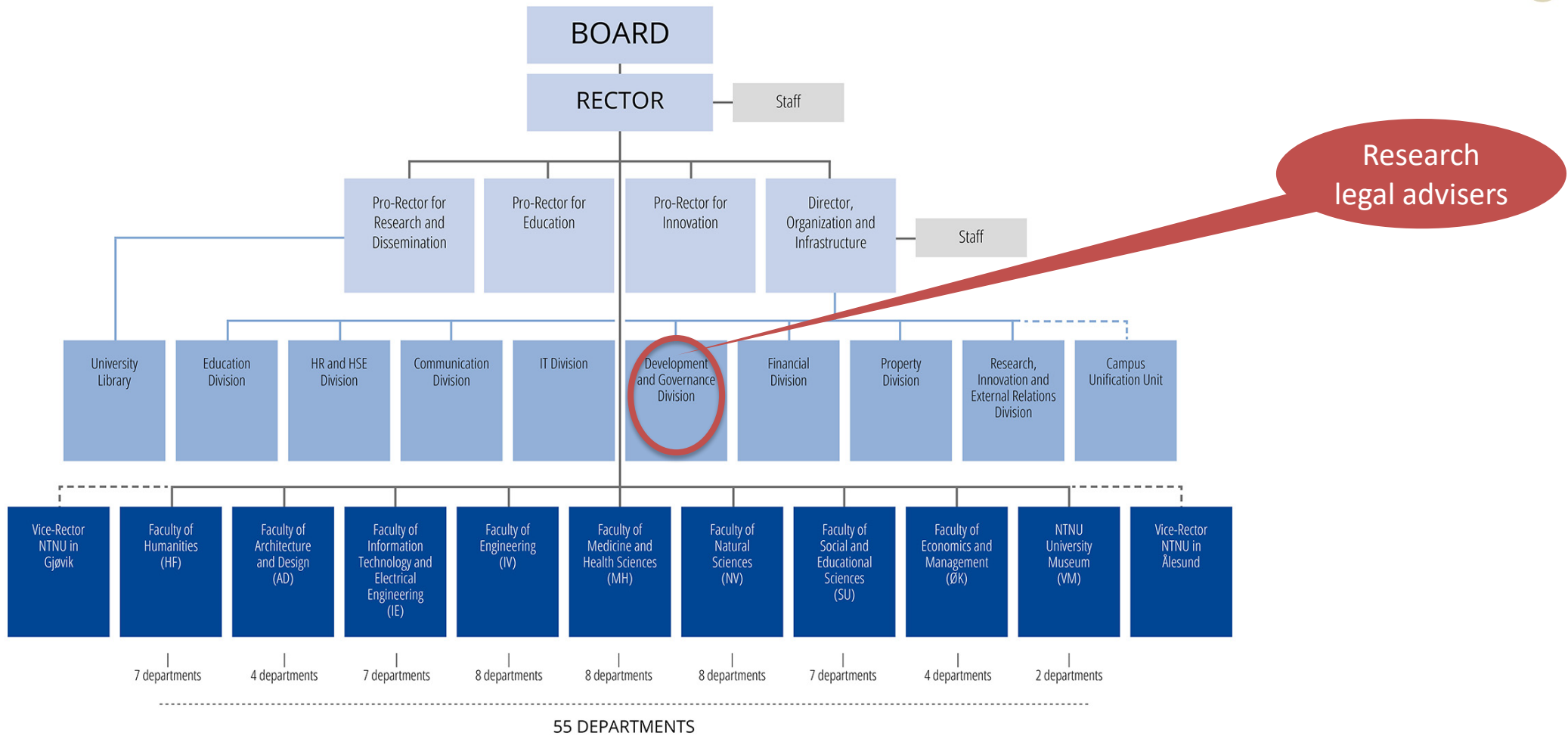


The legal RMA function at NTNU

- Contract templates
- Advice on Grant Agreement amendments
- Advice on and review of contracts
 - MoU (Memorandum of understanding)
 - NDA (Non-disclosure agreement)
 - CA (Consortium Agreement)
- Advice on legal issues
 - Issues affecting NTNU
 - Issues affecting consortia in projects coordinated by NTNU



Organisational locations – Research legal advisers



The EU financial RMA function at NTNU

- EU Financial advisers
 - Advising all categories of stakeholders
 - Internal stakeholders
 - Partners in proposal and projects coordinated by NTNU
 - External communications and negotiations
 - Partners
 - Coordinators
 - The EC
 - Auditors
- EU Project accountants (financial officers)
 - Carrying out the practical financial tasks for EU proposals and projects
 - First point of contact for the researchers
 - First point of contact for internal departments
 - First point of contact for partners in consortia coordinated by NTNU

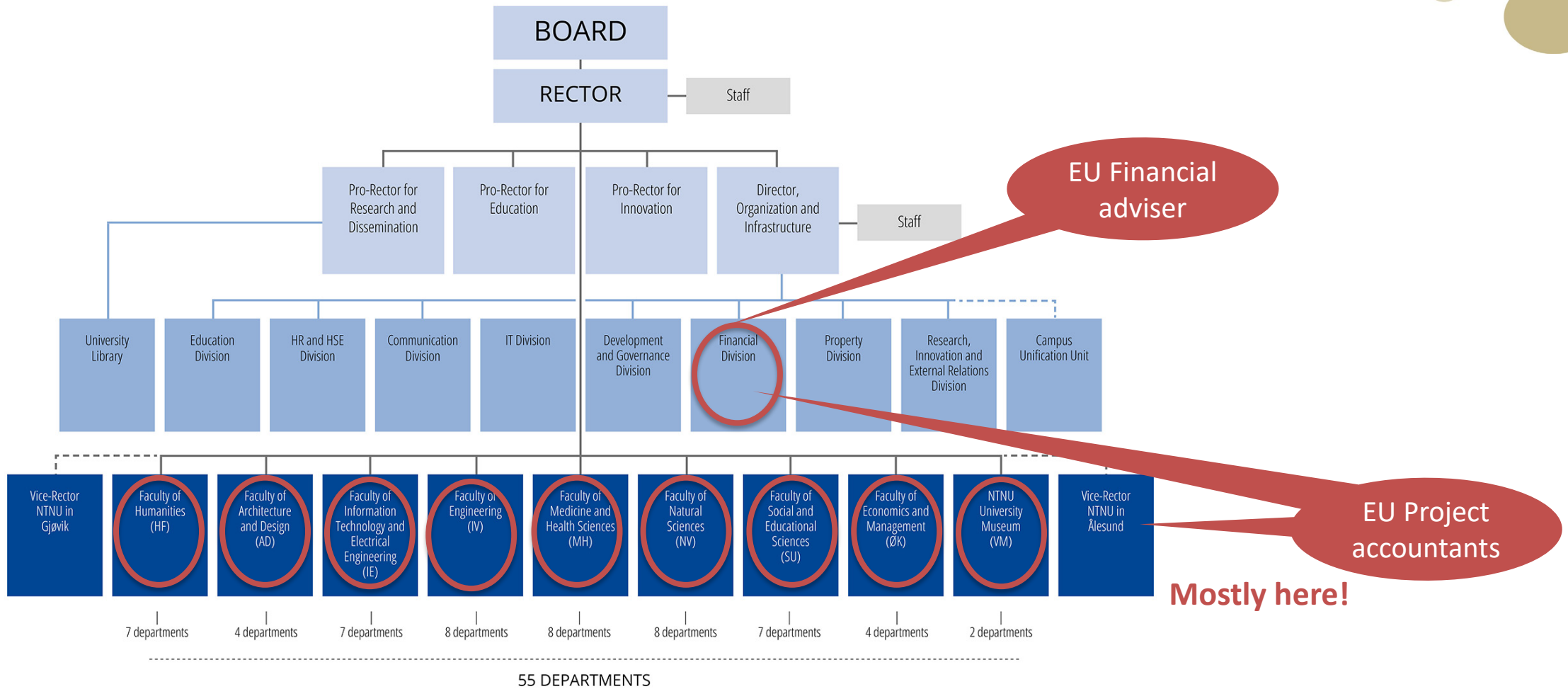


EU Financial advisers: What do they do at NTNU?

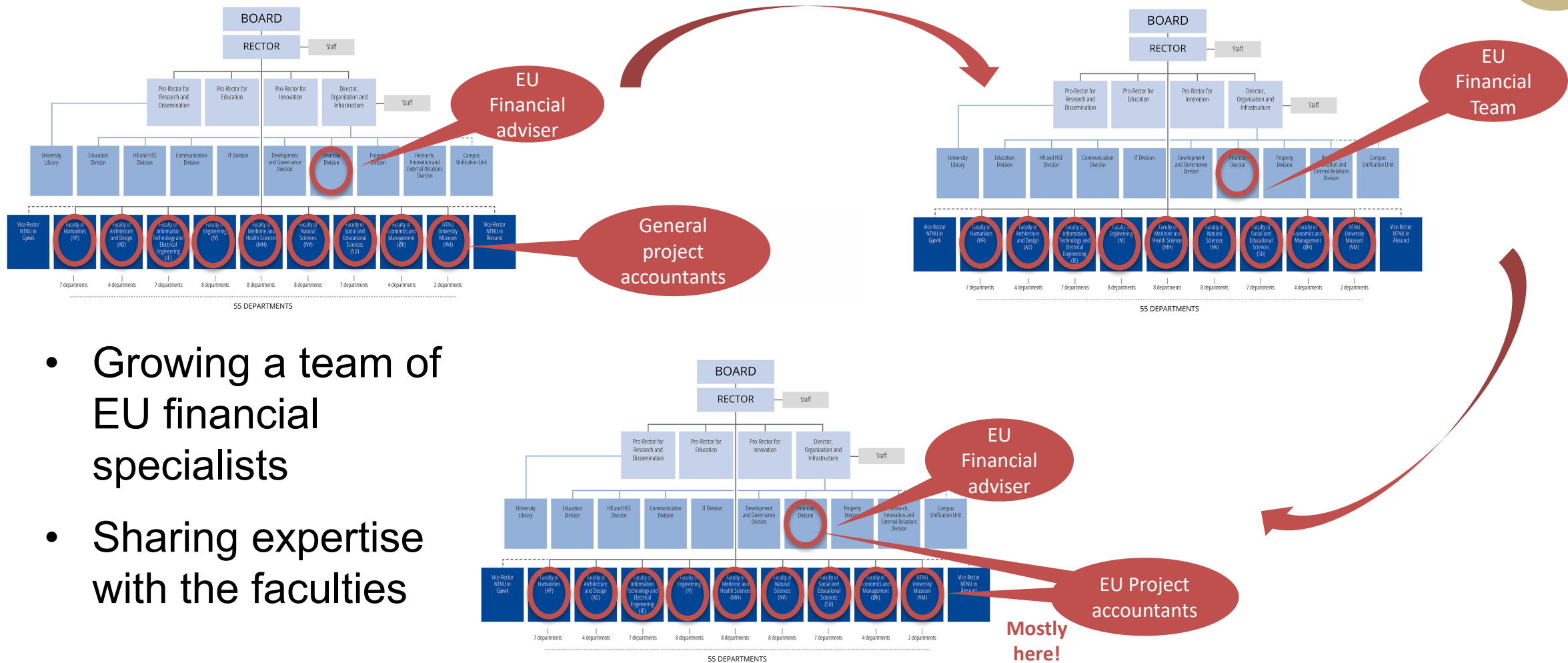
- Explaining rules, regulations and their implications
- Templates (budget tools, report preparation tools, financial parts of contracts)
- Internal standard procedures
- Internal cost calculation methods
- Advice on communication on financial issues with the EU, beneficiaries and coordinators
- Advice on financial issues pertaining to amendments of Grant Agreements and Consortium Agreements
- Completion of financial parts of various related contracts



Organisational locations – EU financial roles



Evolution of the EU financial RMA function at NTNU



- Growing a team of EU financial specialists
- Sharing expertise with the faculties

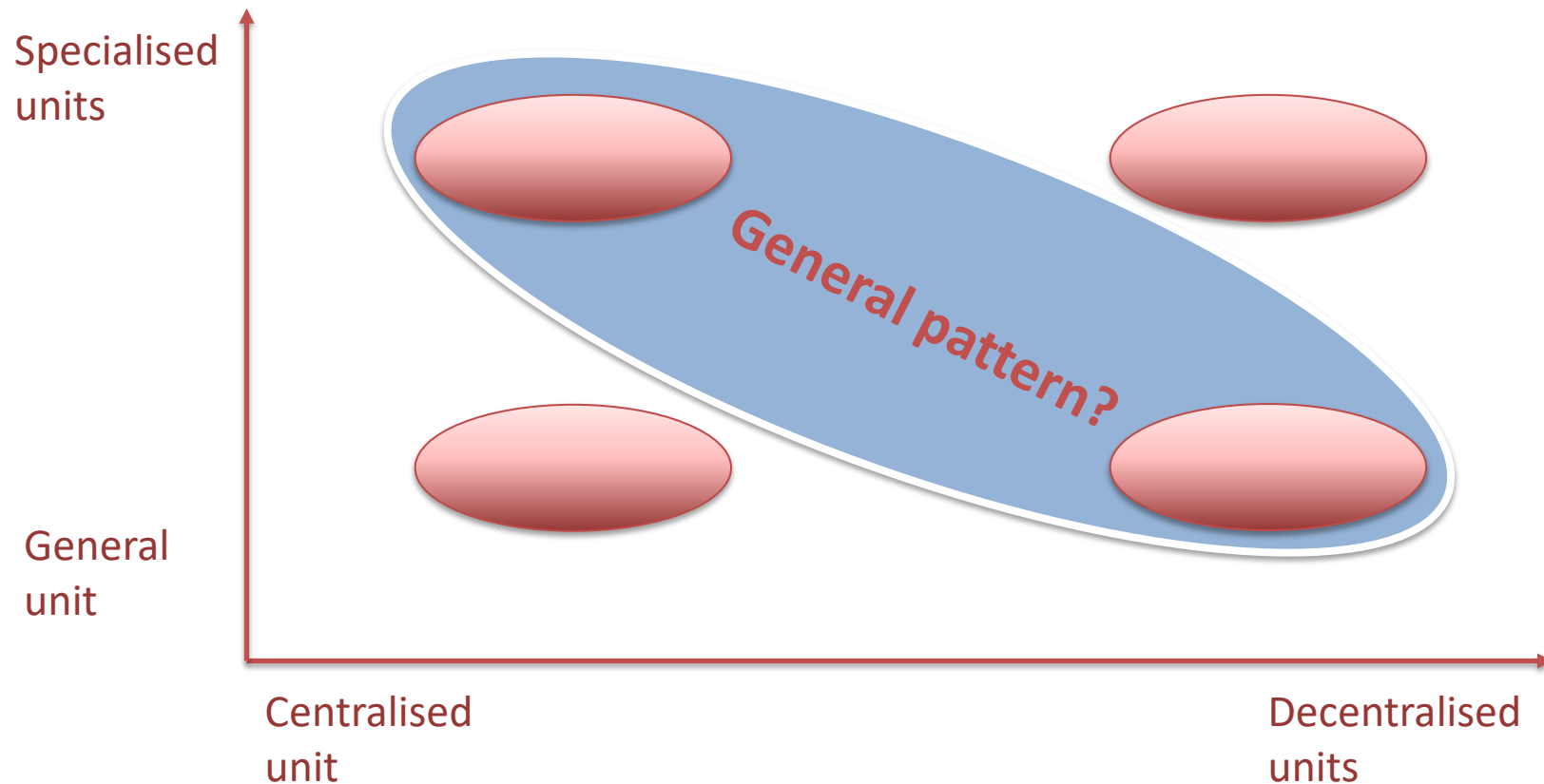
Other research-enabling administrative functions

- HR advisers and officers
 - Recruitment of researchers
 - Procedures
 - Administration of recruitments
 - Contracts for researchers
- Procurement advisers and officers
 - Procurement procedures and guidelines
 - Framework contracts
 - Execution of procurements



One size fits all?

- Practice across Europe: A variety of organisational solutions



- Examples:
- Generalised units
 - Research admin' unit
 - Financial admin' division
 - Legal office
- Specialised units
 - International projects office
 - EU office
 - EU financial office

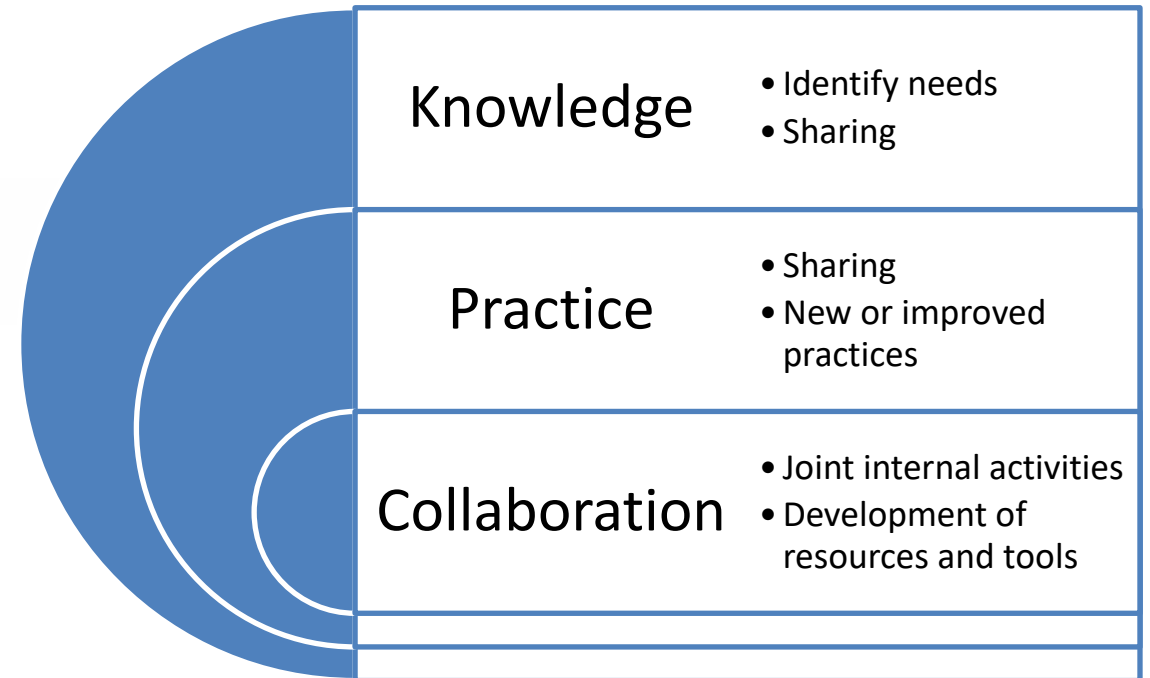
RMA organisational design parameters

- Overall size of organisation
- Degree of differentiation of fields of research
- Degree of decentralisation of administrative functions
- Design of administrative processes
 - What tasks and deliverable are included in each process?
 - Which roles are involved?
- Degree of specialisation of administrative functions
- Hands-on or hands-off role in projects?



The value of internal networking in large organisations

- Internal networking at NTNU
- Internal RMA Forum
 - Mostly Research Advisers
 - Monthly meetings
 - Interaction on a daily basis as needed
- Internal EU Financial network
 - Organised by EU Financial Adviser in the central Financial Division
 - Monthly meetings
 - Internal training activities
 - Interaction on a daily basis as needed



International sharing of practice, experiences and knowledge

- EARMA - European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (<https://earma.org/>)
- BESTPRAC (<https://earma.org/bestprac/>)
 - Network that gathers administrative, financial and legal staff at universities and research-driven institutions who carry out different tasks to support transnational external competition based in (particular EU funded) research projects
- INORMS - International Network of Research Management Societies (<https://inorms.net/>)
 - The 2025 INORMS Congress will be organised by EARMA
 - See <https://earma.org/conferences/inorms-congress-madrid-2025/>
- RM RoadMap (<https://www.rmroadmap.eu/>)
 - Ongoing project funded under Horizon Europe and coordinated by EARMA
- foRMAtion project (<https://www.formation-rma.eu/>)
 - Previous Erasmus+ project
 - Publicly available library of online learning resources for RMAs
- RM FRAMEWORK project (<https://earma.org/news/announcement-rm-framework/>)
 - Aims to support the development of a European qualification system for research management
 - Starts 01.01.2025

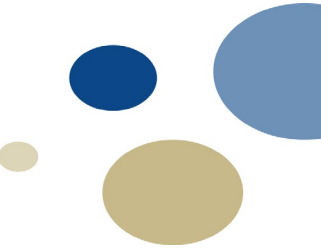


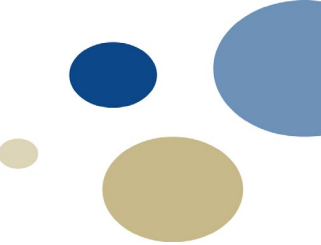
Conclusions

- The management and administration of research is a complex set of tasks
 - Many fields of knowledge and expertise
- There is no "one size fits all"
- Adaptation to each organisation
 - Organisational size and structure
 - Design and organisation of administrative processes
- Adaptation to the relevant funding landscape



Questions?





Thank you for your attention!