About the process, resources and working in groups

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Agenda

• Something about the process of the thesis project
• Something on resources
• Something on working in groups
The Process

Idea Phase

Problem analysis phase

The problem processing phase

Evaluation & reflection

Initiating problem

Problem formulation

Conclusion

The Products

Project proposal
Group contract
Supervisor contract

Problem analysis
Problem formulation
Project limitation
Action plan
Midway seminar

Project report
Process description
Project Proposal

• Working title (expresses the project idea)
• Formulation of the initial project idea/problem: “I am/We are surprised that…”, “Can it really be right that…”, “It seems wrong that…”
• An intuitive description of the academic reasons behind the chosen project idea. What appears to confirm the actual existence of it? Why do you consider it a problem and for who is it a problem?
• An assessment of what you already know about the problem – and what do you think you still need to know
• Draft a Problem Tree
3) Problem tree

**Objective:**

- To structure and systematise the context in which the problem should be seen in.
- The problem tree is especially useful in the problem analysis phase where ideas and concepts are difficult to organise.
- The problem tree can be developed further during the project work as the group gets more knowledge and can also be used to maintain the overview in the project process.

**Presentation:**

- Formulate the central problem (not subject)
- Causes and consequences are randomly written down
- Causes and consequences should be structured and logical relationships are interlinked with lines
Now it is time for a meeting with your supervisor.

• To discuss your proposal
• To discuss roles and mutual expectations resulting in a supervisor agreement consisting of a description of:

*Form and content of supervision*

*Meetings (venue, prior notice, duration, agenda, participation)*

*Written contributions (form, extent, deadlines)*

*Timeframe for the project*
**The Process**

- **Idea Phase**
  - Initiating problem

- **Problem analysis phase**
  - Problem formulation

- **The problem processing phase**
  - Conclusion

- **Evaluation & reflection**

**The Products**

- Project proposal
  - Group contract
  - Supervisor contract

- Problem analysis
  - Problem formulation
  - Project limitation
  - Action plan
  - Midway seminar

- Project report
  - Process description
Problem Formulation

It is a problem for Danish forestry that profits have been falling in recent years due to falling world market prices for timber. This makes it necessary to look for new sources of income outside traditional forestry. One possible source of new income might be the growing of truffles in the Danish woods. Summer truffles (Tuber aestivum) grow wild in Denmark, but whether they can be successfully cultivated under Danish conditions has not yet been put to the test. It is also uncertain what quantity might be harvested, and whether it would be sufficient to provide a real alternative source of income for Danish forestry.

The goal of the project is to investigate whether it is possible to cultivate truffles in Denmark, and whether this is economically feasible.

The following questions will need answering:

1. Whether suitable locations can be found in Denmark with the necessary climatic and soil conditions for cultivating truffles?
2. How should a truffle plantation be set up, and what costs will be incurred?
3. What is the expected yield from truffle cultivation, and can the initial investment be recovered over an acceptable pay-back period?
Figure 5.3. Problem Analysis.

Problem formulation which consists of:
- A short concrete text expressing the condensed essence of the analysis – formulation of the problem/problematic situation
- The overall/general objective or goal with the project
- An argued/motivated list of all the necessary questions and tasks which have to be answered and solved/carried out to reach the goal

Delimitation
(to argue and motivate for the limitations)

Choice of methods
(which methods do you need to use to be able to answer the questions and solve the tasks expressed in the problem formulation?)

Plan of action
Time and activities
+ A tentative outline of the report
• Again it is time for a meeting with your supervisor to get feedback on the problem formulation and your plan of action
Make sure that you take advantage of the resources that are available to you:

- Supervision
- The library
  http://www.library.science.ku.dk/search_find/study_resources/
- The Project Support (and@ifro.ku.dk)
Working in groups?

• You can do your thesis in a group with up to four participants
• I recommend you to work in a group
• You can even form groups across study programmes
• Read about the rules for working in groups: https://kunet.ku.dk/study/agricultural-economics-ma/Pages/topic.aspx?topicid=28f141f2-59ea-45b4-8641-7976ee784ccf
Group agreement

1) It is important to formulate rules about times for meetings, preparations for meetings and cancellations for meetings.

Agrees  Disagrees
1---------------2------------3---------------4-------------------

5

2) Decisions in the group are made by the majority.

Agrees  Disagrees
1---------------2------------3---------------4-------------------

5

3) There should be allotted time at the group meetings for chats about stuff that does not have anything to do with the project as well as time for drinking coffee and eating cake.

Agrees  Disagrees
1---------------2------------3---------------4-------------------

5

4) All members of the group are expected to contribute with the same amount of work in the project work.

Agrees  Disagrees
1---------------2------------3---------------4-------------------

5

5) It is most appropriate to wait with the discussions about the levels of ambitions (size, scientific level and learning goals) until the report has to be written.

Agrees  Disagrees
1---------------2------------3---------------4-------------------

5

6) It is the supervisors/teachers responsibility and task to direct, steer and leads the group and secure that everybody learn.

Agrees  Disagrees
1---------------2------------3---------------4-------------------

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7) Those group members who talk most must control themselves and put a lid on.

Agrees  Disagrees
1---------------2------------3---------------4-------------------

5

8) An agenda has to be made ready before each meeting in the group.

Agrees  Disagrees
1---------------2------------3---------------4-------------------

5

9) Each member of the group is only responsible for ones own learning. Whatever the other members might learn is up to them.

Agrees  Disagrees
1---------------2------------3---------------4-------------------

5

10) The best way to learn about cooperation and working together in a group is when there is an open discussion about each member’s role and function.

Agrees  Disagrees
1---------------2------------3---------------4-------------------

5

11) It is just as important to discuss feelings as it is to discuss content and scientific issues.

Agrees  Disagrees
1---------------2------------3---------------4-------------------

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12) Every meeting should be finished off with a short evaluation in which the group reflects on the meeting and whether everything that was planned actually got covered well enough.

Agrees  Disagrees
1---------------2------------3---------------4-------------------

5
Check your meetings

It was nearly impossible to follow the agenda

Only few team members contributed and there was no joint effort

More than one person talked at the same time and everyone had their own agenda

Nobody tried to make the team follow the agenda

The team decisions are inferior to decisions by individual team members

The agenda was followed – no deviations

All team members contributed and there was a joint effort

One person talked at a time and everyone related to what had been said earlier

Some interfered when needed and showed the necessary leadership

The team decisions was of a higher quality than decisions by individual team members