Tips for team building and managing the delivery of funded research projects

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Why me?... Not sure!

I'll share my experiences from NZ and Italy

In Italy

RELUIS 2005-2008 project → Co-leading project with 12 universities developing guidance on displacement-based design.

RELUIS 2010-2013 project → Co-leading project with 11 universities developing guidance on displacement-based assessment.

RELUIS 2014-2018 project → Co-leading project with 7 universities developing guidance on displacement-based loss assessment.

In New Zealand

QuakeCoRE 1 → Co-Leading Flagship 4: Next Generation Infrastructure

RNC Built Environment theme → Vertical infrastructure

QuakeCoRE 2 → IP2: Thriving Residential Communities.

RECAST Project → UC lead.

Project deliverables

… give careful thought to deliverables when forming the proposal → will make project management easier/harder later!

Don't over promise with deliverables – better to over-deliver.
Examples:
RELUIS 2005-2008 project → delivered model code for DBD… didn't promise it.

Example from RNC project:
"June 2022: Expected annual direct losses for code-compliant buildings evaluated. Revised building designs completed to facilitate cost-benefit studies of alternative design and assessment criteria. (Database and Publications)"

Look to identify more than 1 way that a deliverable can be provided (what if a team member doesn't deliver?)

Project programme & expectations set out clearly

Getting everyone together early in project for a group meeting is valuable. Set expectations (even if you know everyone will probably not deliver!)

Be careful about programming during proposals (think about what time you would need and then be conservative).

Circulate programme to team members with clear indication of key points/milestones.

		Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
Definizione degli aspetti generali							
Definizione degli aspetti specifici							
Selezione dei casi studio							
Identificazione dei tipici meccanismi, limiti di deformazione e forme isteretiche							
Valutazione secondo approcci tradizionali							
Valutazione agli spostamenti							
Analisi non lineari							
Individuazione e discussione di aspetti problematici							
Miglioramenti specifici agli approcci agli spostamenti							
Ripetizione delle valutazioni e confronti							
Redazione di linee guida specifiche							
Redazione del codice modello generale e del commentario							

Meetings – a chance for team building!

Seek in-person group meetings at regular intervals
(and offer good long lunches if possible!)

Supplement with on-line meetings

Follow up with one-on-one meetings/phone calls/visits

Use conferences/events to build relationships (should happen naturally)

Be camels!

→ Be ambitious and hardworking.

Lead by example – ensure your own deliverables are clear and you are delivering and discussing your own research in parallel with team members → seeking their feedback and input on your research.

Be Octopus-owls

...Patient and flexible.

(*note that elephants are also perceived as being patient – but only because they move slow... don't be that*!)

Seek help if/when things are going wrong

A variety of things may go wrong during a project…
- Perhaps we have a global pandemic?!?
- Could be a team member not reporting
- Could be difficulty getting engagement from industry or other research groups… etc.
- Meetings simply seem flat or boring?

Reach out to other experienced researchers in the team or simply acquaintances and ask for ideas.
Flag issues with programme funders early(ish) and get their feedback.
Look for opportunities to add or shift resources around.
Remember the big picture!

Learn from your experiences

What management styles have you experienced and how would you do things differently?

If you finish running a project, reflect on what worked and what didn't.

Take lessons into your next research proposal, when forming team, considering deliverables and formulating programme.

In Conclusion: Summary of Ideas for Managing Delivery

Take care when setting project deliverables

Set out programme and expectations clearly

Use meetings effectively (with good lunches!)

Be camel-octopus-owls…

Use meetings/conferences/etc to get to know your team members

Seek help when/if things start to go wrong

Learn from your experiences