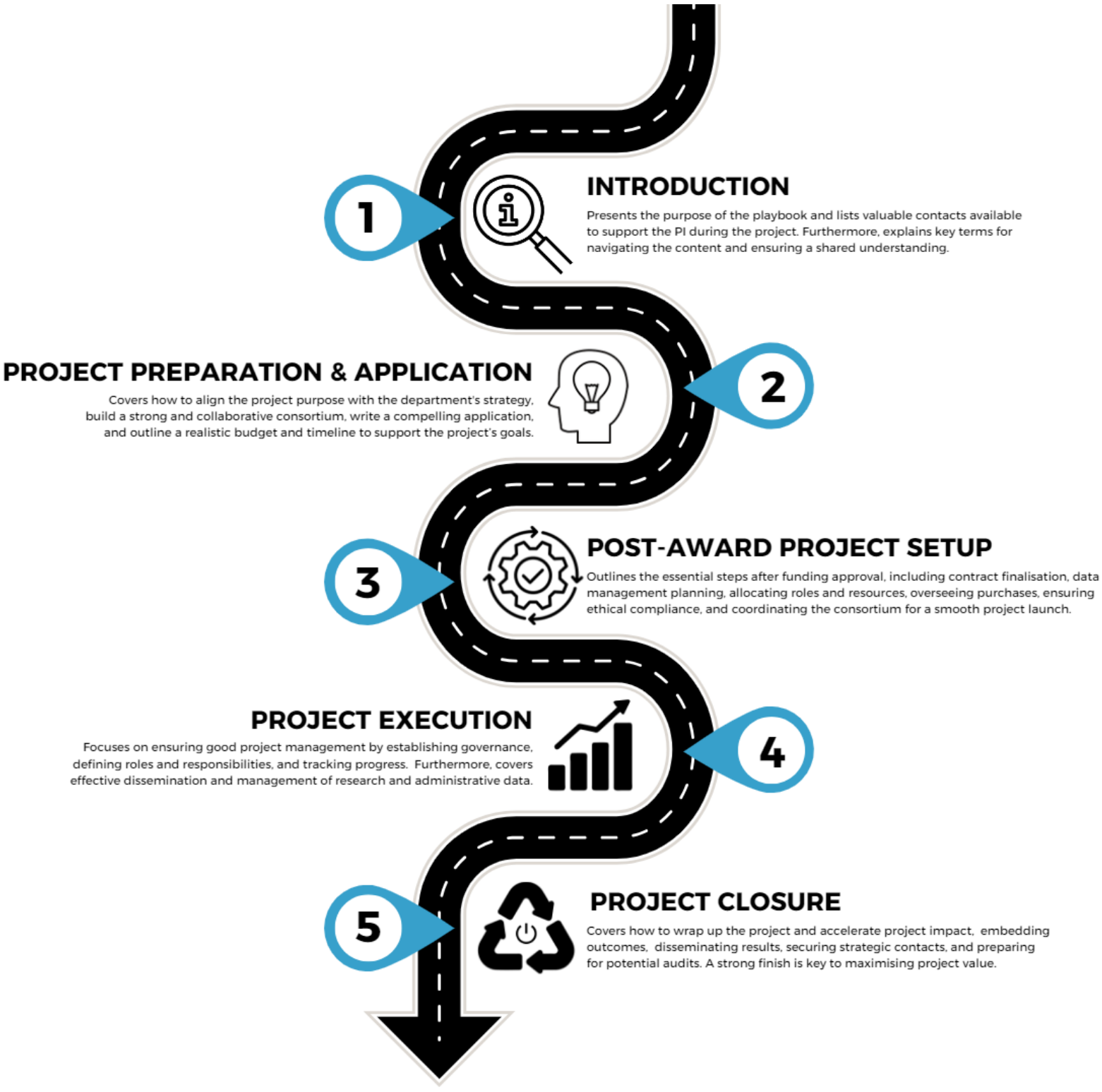
THE PROJECT PLAYBOOK

FOR PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
AND TECHNOLOGY
AARHUS UNIVERSITY

SUMMARY

The illustration below serves as a summary of the contents found in The Project Playbook for Principal Investigators. It highlights the key steps in effective project management that support successful project delivery.



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Acronyms & terminology

Acronyms	Long form	Covers the alternatives
AU	Aarhus University	
BTECH	Department of Business Development and Technology	AU Herning
CA	Consortium Agreement contract	
DMP	Data Management Plan	Joint or shared data controller agreement
DPA	Data Processor Agreement	
ERDA	Electronic Research Data Archive (Open data)	Research data storing
FC	Financial Controller	
GA	Grant Agreement contract	
IP	Intellectual Property	
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation	
PM	Person Months (Metric for the time/hours personnel are assigned to a project)	
PMO	Project Management Office	
PI	Principal Investigator	Project Supervisor, Project Owner, Grant holder
PO	Project Officer (Contact at the funding body)	
RSO	Research Support Office	
SIF	Sensitive Information Facility	Research data storing
TTO	Technology Transfer Office	
WP	Work Package	

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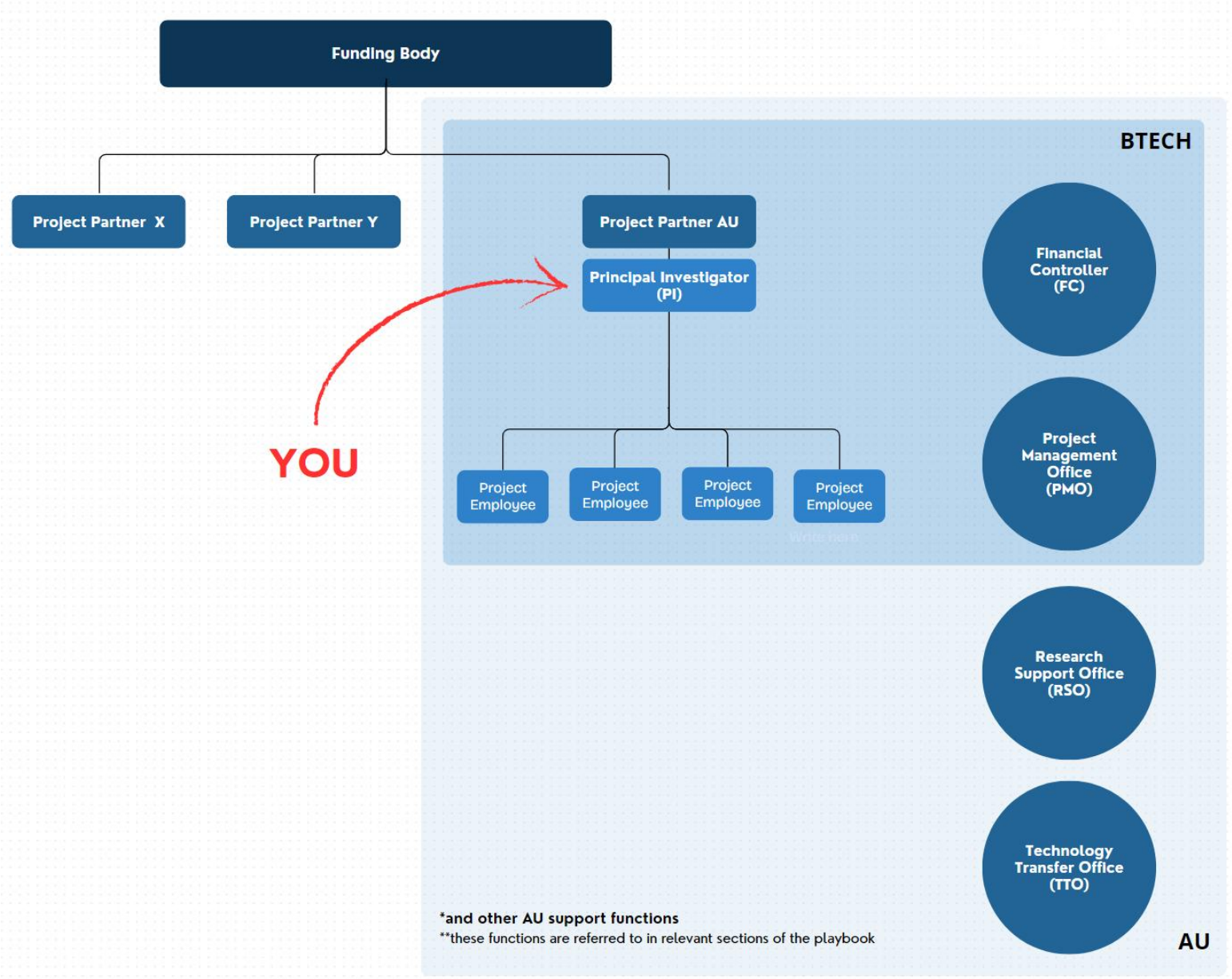
1. Introduction

The playbook provides essential information and resources needed to effectively plan and complete a project. It offers a framework of guidance for all project stages, emphasizing key documentation, terms, and conditions that must be considered when managing a project on behalf of Aarhus University (AU). It is developed and updated by the BTECH Project Management Office to which any questions may be directed.

This project playbook has been developed for Principal Investigators at the Department of Business Development and Business Technology (BTECH), AU. In this context, the term Principal Investigator (PI) refers to the grant holder of an externally funded project.

In the role of PI, you represent AU as a project partner, serving as the liaison between the project consortium (including the funding body, other project partners, and stakeholders) and the university. To support you in this role, BTECH and AU offer various support functions that are available to assist you and your team throughout the project. See the introduction and illustration below for more details:



1.1 Project Management Office (PMO)

The PMO supports BTECH PIs by providing essential information throughout all project stages. PMO personnel are available to address project-related inquiries and direct you to relevant services within AU. Upon approval by the Section Head, dedicated PMO hours can also be allocated to support projects. This project playbook was developed by the PMO.

The PMO offers assistance with:

- Project Management Support
- Guidance on Data Management and GDPR
- Integration of sustainability practices into the project lifecycle and deliverables

- Funding options and feedback on project applications
- Dissemination and acceleration of project results
- Project administration and reporting
- Administration of timesheets

Contact: Project Management Office

1.2 Financial Controller (FC)

The FCs assists BTECH PIs in preparing project budgets and ensures that activities align with budgeted expenses for salaries, operations, overheads, and equipment throughout the project period. BTECH has two FCs, and they also provide support with financial reporting and follow-up as required by project owners or funding bodies.

The FCs will:

- Prepare budgets for proposals not supported by RSO
- Generate projects in the financial system and maintain the budget throughout the project period, in close collaboration with the PI
- Conduct financial checks and follow up with the PI
- Ensure timely financial reporting

Contact the BTECH FCs: Karin Hagelskjær Andreasen and Kirsten Bøwadt Jacobsen.

1.3 Research Support Office (RSO)

The RSO assists researchers in identifying relevant funding sources, preparing proposals, and administering complex EU projects. Support is provided for large, complex applications to Horizon Europe, Innovation Fund Denmark, and major US foundations – find an overview here. Please note that some services requires payment of RSO rate from the Department or project.

RSO offers help with:

- Fundraising and proposal preparation
- Proposal structure, language, and quality assurance
- Workshops, courses, and presentations on national and European grant sources
- Overview of relevant databases and bibliometric analyses
- Support to project administration

Find your RSO contact here.

1.4 The Technology Transfer Office (TTO)

The TTO supports researchers in preparing and negotiating research agreements, including those related to personal data processing in research projects. Please note that TTO must approve all legal contracts related to a project.

TTO offers:

- Customized collaborative agreements: assistance to draft, negotiate, and finalize research collaboration agreements with external partners.
- Mandatory legal agreements: data processing agreements, disclosure agreements, and data transfer agreements.
- Fast track agreements: available here.
- A range of templates: available here, under relevant sections.

Find your TTO contact here.

2. Project preparation and application

2.1 Aligning strategy

The objective of BTECH is to conduct research, offer academic programmes, and facilitate knowledge exchange at the highest international level in support of the Aarhus BSS mission and vision.

The overall strategy is supported by the five core values at BTECH:

1. Close internal interaction
2. Innovation
3. Strategic and application-oriented research and development initially rooted in the region but with an international impact.
4. Interdisciplinarity
5. International environment

With respect to research freedom, BTECH prioritises projects that:

- Are anchored internally with more than one VIP (academic staff)

- Align with the core research areas of BTECH (i.e. business development and technology) – consult with your section if in doubt
- Are international projects with local relevance, or regional projects involving local industry
- Have an interdisciplinary nature (within or across sections)
- Involve international collaboration
- Are 100% funded, with some or all indirect costs covered

For new project initiatives or ideas, all researchers are welcome to discuss suitability with the Section Head.

2.2 Building the consortium

Build a network of partners, for example through conference meetings, co-writing of articles and with support from senior researchers in the organization. Focus on the resources and capabilities across the consortium, ensuring that:

- The consortium covers the project topic without relying excessively on expensive suppliers
- The consortium includes an experienced partner capable of navigating the role as overall project coordinator, including project management, legal, and financial capabilities
- The consortium does not include too many partners with conflicting interests (which may slow progress or lead to internal conflict), or with overlapping interests (which may lead to competition over data or publication rights)
- The consortium has considered recruitment activities and accessibility of suitable 'data subjects' - consider including a partner located near the target population i.e., the segment of 'data subjects' you want to recruit.

When building your consortium, we encourage you to keep in mind BTECH's local commitment in the Municipality of Herning and the Region Midt-Vest as the Department continuously works to boost innovation and development in the area.

2.3 Writing the application

- Consider whether your project idea aligns with BTECH's strategy
- Begin early – assembling a strong consortium and preparing a quality proposal takes time and is a collaborative process. You may consider:
    - What collaborative networks already exist at BTECH?
    - What new partnerships do we want to establish?
- Explore available funding opportunities and deadlines
    - Follow AU's advise and tools for your grant proposal here
    - Utilise the AI-tool developed by AU to help researchers find and apply for EU funds
    - Contact the RSO or PMO for further support

- Be aware that some funding bodies use specific platforms and templates for applications and budgets that **must** be used
- When writing the application, note that many funding bodies organise activities and deliverables under “Work Packages” (WPs)
- Notify the Head of Department upon completion of the application and obtain approval before submission
- Notify the FC as soon as the application is submitted to support resource forecasting

2.4 Planning budget and timeline

- Be aware that some funding bodies require co-financing. All such projects must be approved in advance by the Section Head and the FC before submission
- Most funding bodies require a detailed timeline that accounts for the planned progress as part of the application. For European Council and other international projects, the RSO provides a template. For national projects, the FC provides a template
- Ensure your budget includes all relevant components, such as personnel hours, travel, accommodation, conference fees, publication costs, venue hire, catering, and technology procurement
- Notify the FC (and the RSO, if relevant) upon completion of the budget and obtain approval before submission
- Consider AU’s procurement policies as they may affect your project budget and timelines

3. Post-award project setup

Once the funding body informs the PI that the grant has been given, some additional planning must take place before the project kick-off. The sections below provide essential information you need to know in your role as PI. We highly recommend a start-up meeting with the PMO and FC to review this information and discuss how we can best support your specific project. Please reach out to arrange this meeting.

3.1 Finalising contracts & agreements

The need for contracts will vary depending on the nature of the project and the data involved. Generally, the PI must ensure that at least the following agreements are made:

- Grant Agreement (GA) signed
- Consortium Agreement (CA) signed
- Data agreements – such as Data Processor Agreement (DPA) or Joint Data Controller Agreement signed between the consortium partners and/or suppliers (if GDPR applies)

The process of acquiring these agreements requires approval by TTO, followed by signature from the Head of Department at BTECH.

Some contracts can be acquired through AU's selection of predefined fact-track agreements here, whereas other contracts must be drafted on a case-by-case basis by TTO. If in doubt, consult with the TTO.

Ensure signed copies of all contracts are submitted to TTO and saved in your project folder as part of your contract management obligations. This will support legal compliance and expedite future project setup.

3.2 Planning research data management

It is recommended to create a Data Management Plan (DMP), and most funding bodies will require it. The DMP should include:

- Data description including file formats and data classification
- Storage solution plans. Coordinate with BSS IT for setup or procurement if necessary
- Risk assessment and potential mitigation plan
- Ethical approval. This is applicable if required by the nature of the data, the funding body, or the intended publication outlet
- 'Data subject' information, either consent or information obligations
- Registration of empirical data in the AU GDPR record, if applicable
- Considerations for data reuse and open science initiatives

AU Library offers guides and training on data management best practices.

3.3 Allocating resources & assigning roles

The PI must ensure alignment between the project budget and available resources at BTECH. This includes:

- Confirm with the Section Head that sufficient Person Months (PM) are available
- Make a plan for whom to assign to the project and their respective roles
- If recruitment is required, contact AU HR and follow the official process. Please note that all hiring requires approval from the Head of Department.

Identify any additional internal resources needed (e.g. lab access, PMO support, RSO support), and obtain approval from the Section Head
For external resources, see Section 3.4 on purchasing procedures

3.4 Managing budget and purchases

3.4.1 Budget access

Once the grant is awarded and the project budget is registered, a project number is generated for internal AU administration. This project number is essential for all financial documentation of the project.

The project budget is registered in PowerBI, where the PI can also access it and keep track of project spendings. Twice a year, the PI must approve the budget in PowerBI.

The project number and PowerBI access can be provided by the FC.

3.4.2 Procurement

Collect offers and select suppliers according to AU's procurement process. Be aware that the funding body may have additional documentation demands regarding procurement. It is the responsibility of the PI to ensure all necessary documentation.

If the purchase exceeds 100,000 DKK, and the purchase does not concern items for which AU have a procurement agreement, the process is handled by AU's central purchasing office. Be aware that this could prolong the purchasing process and should be taken into consideration in the project time plan.

Further DPAs or contracts may be necessary, depending on the supplier's role - refer to the TTO section for how to acquire these.

3.5 Securing ethical approvals

Certain research activities within projects require approval from AU's Research Ethics Committee. In such cases, ethics approval must be granted before data collection begins. This requirement applies to any study conducted during the lifetime of the project. Contact the committee to determine if your activity, study or overall project requires approval.

The committee meets regularly, and updated meeting schedules and approval guidelines are available on the AU Research Ethics Committee webpage.

3.6 Aligning the consortium for action

As the PI, you are responsible for ensuring that BTECH's activities, contributions, and objectives as a project partner are effectively coordinated with the broader goals of the project consortium. This involves:

- Operational coordination: Aligning research activities, deliverables, and timelines with consortium partners
- Strategic compliance: Ensuring that all work adheres to the funding body's rules and the consortium's agreed framework
- Collaborative engagement: Participating in decision-making, sharing resources, and promoting interdisciplinary work
- Practical implementation: Translating work packages (WPs), agreements, and governance into actionable tasks

To fulfil BTECH's obligations as project partner, we recommend that you:

- Break down WPs into smaller, manageable tasks to ensure action
- Assign BTECH employees and allocate resources to those tasks
- Set deadlines for the tasks and identify potential risks
- Regularly monitor progress and review outcomes
- Ensure results are integrated into project deliverables and WPs across the consortium.

4. Project execution

When officially starting the project, you may experience the kick-off day as one of the most pivotal moments. The groundwork you have already laid during the post-award setup has shaped the direction of the project, and now it is time to begin the core work.

4.1 Project management

Project management is key to successful project execution as it brings structure, clarity, and coordination to the complex processes. With good project management, the PI ensures that risks are reduced, progress is tracked, and results are delivered on time and within scope.

4.1.1 Setting up governance & structure

Once the project is officially started, it is essential to document all project-related activities—especially those linked to expenses. Establish a clear file structure on AU's internal O-drive, which your FC also have access to. You can access the O-drive on-site AU or via VPN (find a guide here). The project folder should contain:

- Invitations and agendas for meetings, seminars, or conferences
- Meeting minutes with attendance records
- Presentations and files related to WP activities
- Signed attendance lists
- Travel documentation
- Completed timesheets

4.1.2 Understanding the PI responsibilities

1. Project personnel planning: The PI must develop a detailed plan
   - WHO: Which AU staff will be involved in the project
   - WHAT: The number of hours (or Person Months) each person should allocate to the project annually
   - HOW: How hours are distributed across WPs, if applicable
2. Informing the FC: The PI must review the personnel plan with the FC to ensure it aligns with the project budget
3. Informing project team: The PI must brief all assigned staff on their roles, WP responsibilities and allocated hours, and provide each with an individual timesheet and clear instructions on how to complete it.
   - Danish projects: The FC provides timesheet templates and support
   - European Council and other international projects: The PMO provides timesheet templates and support

4.1.3 Tracking deliverables, timeline, & budget

Maintaining an overview of project deliverables and the resources spent is crucial for successful project management and proper reporting. Regular revision of the project timeline, and updating of milestones and activities, will help ensure progression in alignment with the planned WPs.

Use a milestone plan (such as a Gantt chart) to visualise activities and time. A variety of software tools are offered by AU's IT Shop.

The PI must approve the project budget twice a year. The approval process is conducted in PowerBI in collaboration with the FC.

4.1.4 Registering working hours

For certain projects, timesheets are required to document the actual hours worked. Accurate and timely completion is crucial for the FC to manage the project budget and ensure alignment between costs and resources. The PI is responsible for overseeing this process for themselves and their team. If you are unsure whether the timesheet requirement applies to your project, please contact the FC for clarification.

NOTE: Some funding bodies may require specific timesheet templates or impose additional time-tracking requirements. It is the PI's responsibility to obtain and follow any such guidelines from the funder.

4.1.4.1 Timesheet submission

Timesheets must be completed, approved, and submitted to the FC **each month** (unless otherwise agreed). All timesheets must be printed, dated, and physically signed.

Each project employee is responsible for completing their own timesheet. The submission process includes:

1. The timesheet is filled in, printed and signed by the employee – no later than the first week of the following month
2. The timesheet is approved and signed by the PI (the PI's timesheet must be approved by the Head of Department)
3. The timesheet is submitted to the PMO or directly to the FC – no later than the second week of the month

The PI is responsible for collecting timesheets from all employees and ensuring submission deadlines are met. The FC (for Danish projects) or the PMO (for European Council and other international projects) is available to support this process.

4.1.4.2 Timesheet guidelines

Only effective working hours should be recorded. The following must not be registered:

- Holiday, sick-leave, or other absences
- Department meetings
- PhD courses, workshops, and similar activities
- Supervision
- Teaching
- Preparation of applications
- Participation in conferences or networking activities that are not relevant to the project
- Transportation to and from meetings that are not related to the project

- Travel that is not directly related to the project

Calendar entries and absence must align with the timesheet:

- Registered hours must reflect actual work performed and be consistent with calendar activities
- Registered hours must not overlap with holidays or absences recorded in MitHR.

NOTE: For European Council projects, a dedicated video guide is available on AUs internal O-drive (in the folder O:\BSS_auherning\Project timesheets) to assist project employees with the timesheet process. The O-drive is accessible on-site AU or via VPN (find a guide here). For any questions or support, please contact the PMO.

4.2 Project dissemination & communication

Dissemination focuses on sharing project progress, outcomes, and findings with relevant stakeholders, both within and outside the team. Effective reporting, publication, and dissemination are key to ensuring transparency, accountability, and maximizing the impact on stakeholders and the broader community.

- Fund reporting typically follows set intervals according to the funder's requirements, with a comprehensive final report upon completion.
- Academic dissemination via journal articles and conference presentations is encouraged.
- Note that broader dissemination can bring added value for researchers, AU, and stakeholders. Examples include:
    - Using project results as teaching cases
    - Including project outcomes in BTECH's performance contract
    - Publishing in national or international newspapers or industry magazines

  Ensure your contracts and DMP do not restrict broader dissemination.

4.2.1 Internal communication

The communication needs of your project depend on the size of the project consortium. For multi-partner projects, short and regular meetings help avoid delays caused by interdependent activities. For large consortia, biweekly check-ins are often effective. Recommended actions include:

- Ongoing communication with the funding body to maintain alignment
- Regular consortium meetings to monitor progress and mitigate risk
- Biweekly consortium meetings on status and offering support amongst stakeholders

4.2.2 External communication

Public communication is often outlined in a dedicated Work Package (WP), but smaller communication responsibilities may also fall under other WPs and therefore need to be managed by the PI. Note, that all external communication initiatives must comply with the funder's requirements and communication plan. Communication activities relevant to PIs may include:

- Preparing the ground for upcoming research activities
- Informing and engaging the research ecosystem
- Facilitating collaboration with industry partners
- Recruiting participants (data subjects) for empirical research

Depending on the specific initiative and nature of the project, the BTECH Communication Consultant or Career Consultant can provide local insight and support. Find contact information here.

4.3 Handling research & administrative data

4.3.1 Why data storing and archiving matters

When a research project is nearing completion, a plan for storing and archiving data must be prepared. This serves two primary purposes:

- To ensure the project can pass any future audits (for example, by the funding body or the Danish Business Authority) - by documenting all **administrative and financial data relevant for project audit**
  Note that EU audits may occur up to 10 years after the final project payment
- To demonstrate compliance with responsible research practices, protecting the researcher and the university from accusations of misconduct such as data fabrication, plagiarism, or ethical breaches - by documenting all **research data and research data agreements**

4.3.2 What data to store

There are two categories of data that must be stored throughout the project, each with specific requirements:

4.3.2.1 Documentation for project audit

Includes all supporting materials needed for audit and compliance, such as financial and contractual records (e.g. invoices, payment documentation, payroll, and timesheets), and e-mail correspondence and other files justifying expenditures or agreements. Find an overview of relevant documentation incl. examples online here.

4.3.2.2 Research data and research data agreements

Includes materials related to the empirical research conducted:

- The actual research data (raw, anonymised, or pseudonymised)
- Contracts defining access and ownership rights (e.g. GA, CA, collaboration agreements, DPA, and other agreements that determine data access and IP rights)
- Participant-related documentation on data-subjects (e.g. participant information, consent forms, ethical approvals, risk assessments, privacy notices)

4.3.3 Where to store data during the project

4.3.3.1 Documentation for project audit

Relevant administrative and financial documentation must be stored on AUs internal O-drive, in the dedicated project folder. You can access the O-drive on-site AU or via VPN (find a guide here). Storing the documentation on the O-drive ensures that the FC can access it in case of an audit or other relevant purposes.

- Create a dedicated folder named after the project and use a consistent naming format: [type of data_date_location].
- Transfer the documentation regularly from the project's designated storage solution (e.g., SharePoint, OneDrive) and communication platforms (e.g., Outlook, Teams, Skype) while the project is active. We recommend transferring to the O-drive at least monthly.
- Note: If documentation contains personal sensitive data (e.g., *race and ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for identification, health information, sex life or sexual orientation, or criminal offenses)* it must be archived immediately in alignment with AU's policies for storage of personal sensitive data.

4.3.3.2 Research data and research data agreements

Storage method for research data depends on the data classification (public, confidential, sensitive). AU offers a range of different data storage solutions that align.

4.3.4 Where to archive data after project closure

4.3.4.1 Documentation for project audit

Relevant administrative and financial documentation must be archived in Workzone no later than 30 days after the official project completion. As PI, you are responsible for ensuring that all relevant documents and correspondence are filed in WorkZone.

- To initiate the archiving process, fill out this form and, under "04. State the case type", select "Research project with external funding". It is recommended that you complete this step as early as possible in the project.
- You can either archive documentation in WorkZone yourself or forward the material to the Secretariat Workzone super user (Heidi Maibritt Trampedach Larsen). Regardless of the method, we recommend archiving continuously throughout the duration of the project.
- Once the project is officially completed and all documentation has been archived, you must contact the Secretariat WorkZone super user to request that the case be formally closed in the system.

4.3.4.2 Research data and research data agreements

Before archiving research data, start by reviewing the documents that define how the data must be handled, processed, reused, and archived. These documents will also indicate whether the dataset must be anonymised for longitudinal research, or deleted after a certain period.

You can find guidance via AU's website on personal data and storage and archiving solutions for research data.

NOTE: AU continuously updates its IT infrastructure and offers a range of data storage solutions beyond the standard Microsoft Office suite. For specific needs regarding research data storage or software, contact:

- Your local PMO for an overview
- AU IT for current licence options
- The BSS GDPR coordinator for guidance on data classifications

Current AU data storage options include:

- **Non personal research data:** Use ERDA (Electronic Research Data Archive) for data that can be openly shared.
- **Sensitive personal research data:** Use SIF (Sensitive Information Facility) for the secure storage of personal or sensitive research data. Use of SIF must follow AU's system guidelines.

4.3.5 Retaining & deleting archived data

4.3.5.1 Documentation for project audit

Once all relevant project audit documentation has been archived in WorkZone, it is no longer the responsibility of the PI. From that point forward, the FC and the Secretariat assume responsibility for its long-term retention and compliance. This requires archiving to be completed no later **than 30 days** after the official project end date.

4.3.5.2 Research data storing timeframe

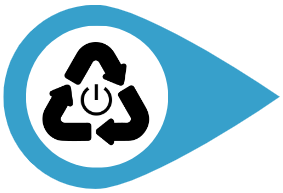
The timeframe for retaining research data after project completion varies:

- **Minimum requirement**: 5 years after the last publication, in line with AU's Code of Conduct for Research Integrity
- **Maximum retention**: Defined by legal agreements, GDPR requirements, or the data classification. This may extend up to 25 years or longer, as long as the research topic remains relevant

If the dataset still holds value for the university, it should not be deleted. As an alternative, consider transferring it to the Danish National Archives (Rigsarkivet). Learn more about that process here.

When deletion of the data is required, you must:

- Review the dataset's legal documents (e.g. DMP, contracts, consent forms) to determine whether deletion is required, and if so, when and how it should occur
- If the dataset contains personal data, notify Fortegnelsen (AU's GDPR record system) of the deletion, as they maintain the official records of registered datasets



5. Project closure

Reaching project closure signifies that project activities are formally completed and the project is officially concluded. At this stage, it is crucial to verify that the original objectives have been met and all loose ends are addressed. By properly closing out the project, the PI not only ensures compliance but also a record of the project success, which can be valuable for future projects and evaluations.

5.1 Accelerating project impact

Accelerating project results at closure requires different strategies depending on the focus of the project being academic research or industry collaboration. Regardless, strategies should align with the funder's objectives, support BTECH's goals, and advance the PI's academic or professional trajectory.

5.1.1 Academic research project

Focus on results in terms of publications, dissemination, and securing future research. Acceleration activities should aim to maximize scientific impact and long-term knowledge dissemination. Activities could include:

- Prioritize Key Publications: Focus on high-impact journals and use preprint servers.
- Leverage Conferences: Present findings to boost visibility and strengthen collaborations.
- Open Access: Consider open-access publishing.
- Engage Stakeholders: Share insights via policy briefs, webinars, or discussions.
- Secure Follow-Up Funding: Seek continuation grants, postdoc funding, or spin-off opportunities.

5.1.2 Industry collaborations

Focus on results in terms of practical implementation, commercialization, and impact-driven deliverables. Acceleration activities should aim to emphasize practical applications and industry impacts.

- Deliver Actionable Insights: Provide executive summaries and implementation roadmaps.
- Optimize Knowledge Transfer: Conduct workshops or training sessions to ensure that industry partners can apply results and create best practices for easy adoption.
- Fast Prototyping: Finalize proof-of-concept and streamline testing with industry partners.
- Strengthen IP & Commercialization: Secure patents and explore licensing or spin-offs.
- Maintain Strategic Partnerships: Establish follow-up projects and leverage industry contacts for funding.

5.2 Embedding learning & outcomes

- Select and preserve key research results, materials, and tools
- Ensure knowledge is anchored with senior researchers to support continuity
- Integrate project insights into ongoing and future research initiatives
- Maintain relationships with strong consortia and project partners
- Translate project outcomes into relevant teaching content

5.3 Completing the DMP

Depending on the type of data and project, the final steps in the Data Management Plan (DMP) may include:

- Anonymising datasets for longitudinal research studies
- Archiving datasets for a minimum of 5 years after the last publication, in alignment with AU's code of conduct (see sections above for more information about archiving data)
- Minimising or deleting unused project data – be aware to preserve audit-relevant data and archive it in WorkZone
- Transferring datasets to open-access repositories to ensure future usage and collaboration, provided that the DMP, contracts and participant consent allow it.

5.4 Planning final dissemination

When the project has ended and results are available, it is beneficial for all stakeholders to have a strategy for sharing these results. Effective dissemination can be career enabling for the researchers involved, strengthen AU's reputation and ability to attract funding in the future, as well as being beneficial for the funding body as they can demonstrate societal impact of their investments. This synergy should already be considered at the proposal stage, as many funding bodies support the allocation of time and resources for dissemination within the project. Ideally, dissemination should include both academic dissemination (e.g. conferences and publications) and broader societal outreach through teaching, media, and stakeholder engagement.

A final dissemination report may be required by the funder. Depending on the deliverables, documentation may include publications and conference presentations, media coverage and social media activity, and outreach events and stakeholder engagement.

5.5 Capturing strategic business contacts

Business contacts are a vital asset for BTECH. To maintain and expand these relationships, all PIs are encouraged to systematically save the contact information of the companies they have collaborated with. This supports your own network, enables future collaboration across departments, and contributes to strengthening BTECH's links with the business community. It also improves internal coordination and increases the long-term impact of our projects.

To support this effort, you may use the following template message as part of your project closure:

> *Subject: Thank you for the collaboration*
> *Dear [Name],*
> *Thank you for the great collaboration – it has been a pleasure working with you. I hope we will get the chance to work together again in the future.*
> *To stay updated on the latest opportunities and activities at BTECH, you are very welcome to follow our department's LinkedIn profile: AU Herning.*

Additionally, you can explore potential projects and collaborations through our project portal and reach out to our Career Consultant if you are interested in receiving early information about new industry collaborations or discussing tailored cooperation opportunities that fit your company's needs.
All the best,
[Your Name]

5.6 Preparing for potential post-project audit

After the completion of an EU-funded project—and up to ten years following the final payment—the project may be selected for an EU audit. If selected, the PI or the Head of Department will receive a letter detailing the timing, location, and procedure for the inspectionp.

5.6.1 Example of audit for a European Commission project

The following is an extract from a typical audit notice letter:

> *"During the visit, there will be a closer review of the project's plans and documentation for implementation, results achieved, checking of the approved project accounts for underlying annexes in the form of invoices, payment documentation, salary documentation, time records, etc. The purpose is to examine whether the documentation for costs and implementation of the project is in accordance with the contract and the program's rules. It is assumed that all basic annexes will be present at the visit, including all sub-annexes to internal and external annexes... Please ensure that relevant staff will be available during the visit, i.e. for interviews and questions. Agenda attached."*

It is recommended that the PI is aware of potential audit topics from the start of the project to help ensure that all relevant documents are stored and saved in a way that is accessible to project employees and the FC.

5.6.2 Possible audit topics (non-exhaustive list)

5.6.2.1 Presentation of the project - results and the organization (PI responsibility)

Presentation of the project

- Roles and responsibilities of all members of the project. This includes each project member who worked on each work package. Description of who did what in alignment with the responsibilities described in the WPs.
- Some form of documentation for actual work for the project. This can be connected to WPs, deliverables, dissemination, travel records, etc.
- A record of each meeting that was held concerning the project. This can include meeting minutes, where the date and attendance were kept for each project meeting.
- Case reports, energy reports, final reports, academic articles, case videos, website blogs and other communication that can support the project's dissemination requirements.

- Attendance lists with signatures for any project activity that may have included external attendees, such as conferences, seminars, workshops, etc.
- Milestones and results of work packages, milestone status reports, and evaluation from the project office at the funding body.

Project document organization containing all agreements, assessments, and official documents that were written and maintained during the run of the project.

- Signed Consortium Agreements, General Agreements, and all updates to those agreements that may have occurred during the lifetime of the project.
- Risk log created by lead partner that documents any and all risk assessments before the beginning of the project and during the lifetime of the project. A log of all risk assessments that were completed before the project began. Typically, these were written in conjunction with the Research Ethics Committee and TTO.
- Data Management Plan, including the initial document and all updates. Ensure that the updates include author and date in which updates occurred.
- Documents and communication with other departments within AU, including TTO, DPO, Procurement, etc.
- Procurement documents, including any bids received, bids rejected, and documentation from AU Procurement indicating approval of selected partner. Pay attention to agreements of interests and partnerships between AU and suppliers.
- Description of the IT set up of the project.
    - This can include programs for project collaboration (e.g. TEAMS) and in which data was stored and processed for the project (e.g. Microsoft Suite, SPSS, NVIDA, etc.)
    - Includes who were supplied IT equipment and which machines belonged to whom
    - How data was stored- O: Drive, Workzone, etc.
    - It is essential to document where data was stored, who had access to data, and if any personal, sensitive, or confidential data was processed as part of the project. Please see section above about data storage and processing.
- Archiving plan for the project- please see above section to ensure compliance with requirements

Evaluation reports from external evaluator, project officer of funding body. These typically are uploaded into the project dashboard of funding body and includes dates, notes, and signature of evaluator.

5.6.2.2 Communication requirements according to project funding program

- The project must document compliance with any branding requirements, such as the EU Program Logo displayed at the entrance door in the workspace
- Description of the project on website and social media pages
- Statement of financial support in communication material and all publications

- Please note whether communication arrangements are required for a large project (>10 million EUR)
- This AU whistleblower scheme must be made available to all project employees
- GDPR and communication regulations in AU must be documented – more information in here General information.

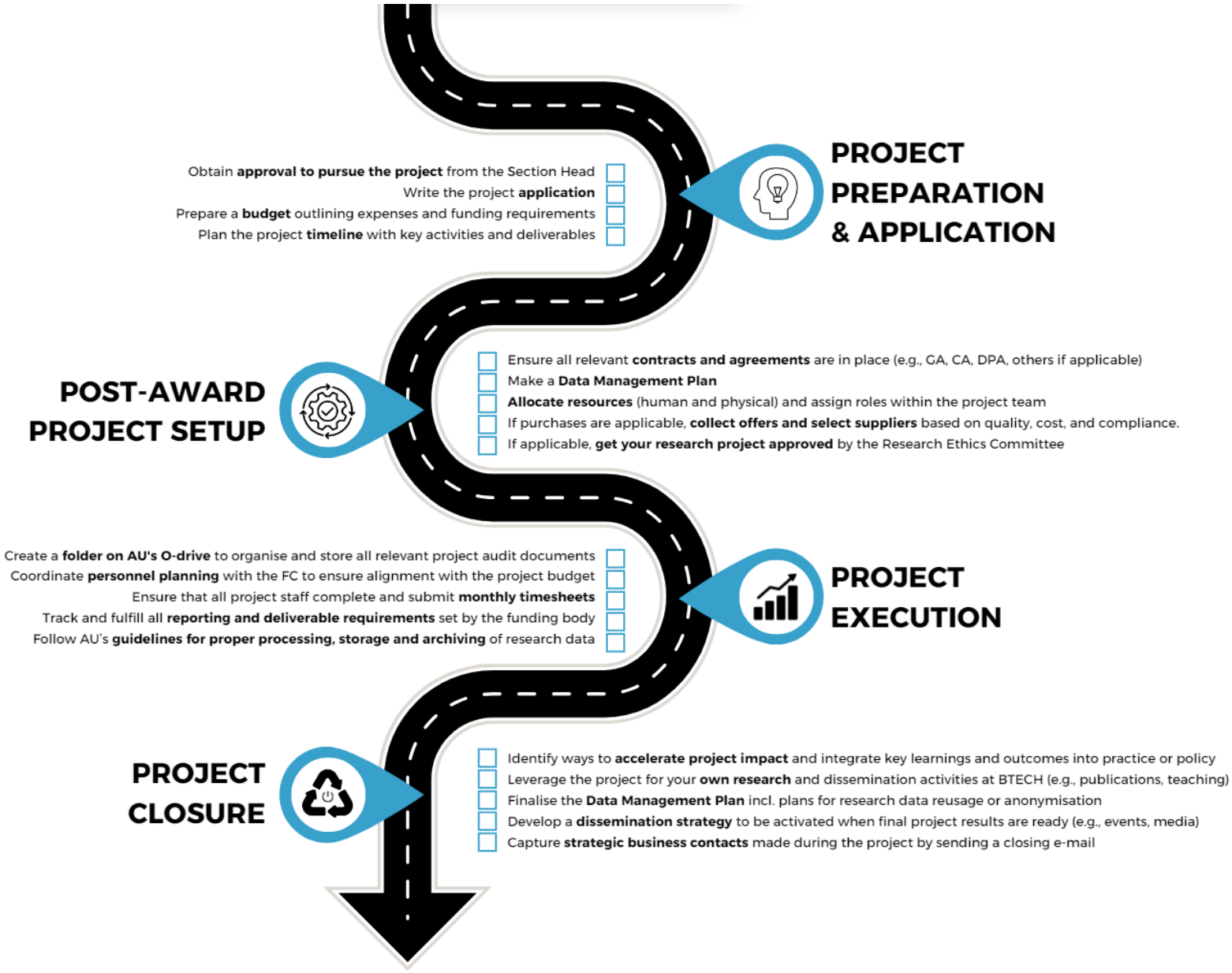
Thank you for reading

This playbook equips PIs at BTECH with practical guidance for managing externally funded projects. As AU's representative, the PI plays a central role in ensuring compliance, enabling collaboration, and making effective use of the available support. The playbook is developed and updated by the BTECH Project Management Office to which any questions and feedback may be directed.

Thank you for your dedication and the valuable work you do. We hope this playbook serves as a valuable resource for navigating your projects and promoting research excellence at BTECH.

Appendix: The PI project checklist

The following checklist is intended to support the PI in navigating the full lifecycle of a project. It serves as a guide to support that critical steps are systematically addressed, helping to ensure compliance with institutional and funding body requirements while also maximising the project's research value and long-term impact.



Appendix: List of contacts

The list below provides an overview of all contacts referenced throughout the Project Playbook.

Person or Unit	Contact information
Career Consultant, BTECH	Find contact information here
Communications Consultant, BTECH	Find contact information here
Financial Controllers, BTECH	Contact Karin Hagelskjær Andreasen Contact Kirsten Bøwadt Jacobsen
Fortegnelsen (GDPR record system), AU	Contact Fortegnelsen
Head of Department	Contact Anders Frederiksen
Head of Section	EngTech: Contact Mirko Presser AIROD: Contact Anne Ballantyne
Project Management Office, BTECH	Contact the Project Management Office
Research Ethics Committee, AU	Contact the committee
Research Support Office, AU	Find your RSO contact here
Technology Transfer Office, AU	Find your TTO contact here
Workzone super user, BTECH	Contact Heidi Maibritt Trampedach Larsen

Appendix: List of resources

The list below provides an overview of key resources referenced throughout the Project Playbook.

Resource	Description	Further information
AI funding tool	Tool developed by AU to help researchers find and apply for EU funds	Sec. 2.3 Writing the application
Audit documentation	Documentation of financial expenditures throughout the research project is important in case of audits	Sec. 4.3.2 What data to store
Data classification	Data collected in research projects must be classified to ensure correct data processing, disclose and storage.	Sec. 3.2 Planning research data management
Data management training	AU Library offers a range of guides and training on data management best practices	Sec. 3.2 Planning research data management
Data subject information	Data collection in research projects will often require legal consent or information obligations	Sec. 3.2 Planning research data management
Data storage solutions	Data collected in research projects must be stored properly according to AU guidelines	Sec. 3.2 Planning research data management

Data risk assessment	Guide to perform risk assessment in relation to data collection	Sec. 3.2 Planning research data management
ERDA (Electronic Research Data Archive)	AU data storage options for non-personal research data that can be openly shared.	Sec. 4.3.4 Where to archive data after project closure
Ethical approval of research projects	Some research projects are subject to requirements for research ethical approval by the Research Ethics Committee at AU	Sec. 3.2 Planning research data management
Fact-track agreements	Collaboration agreement developed by TTO, which contain standard, pre-approved legal terms	Sec. 3.1 Finalising contracts & agreements
Gantt chart	Tool to visualise activities and time often serving as a milestone plan	Sec. 4.1.3 Tracking deliverables, timeline, & budget
GDPR record	Research projects with dataset that contains personal data must be registered in AU's GDPR record. Contact Fortegnelsen	Sec. 3.2 Planning research data management Sec. 4.3.5 Retaining & deleting archived data
Grant proposal tools	Tools and advise on how to write an effective grant proposal	Sec. 2.3 Writing the application
LinkedIn profile, BTECH		
Procurement process	Procurement in research projects must follow AU guidelines	Sec. 3.4 Managing budget and purchases
SIF (Sensitive Information Facility)	AU data storage options for sensitive personal research data	Sec. 4.3.4 Where to archive data after project closure
Timesheets	Some research projects are subject to requirements for documenting the actual hours worked. Guides are available on AUs internal O-drive (in the folder O:\BSS_auherning\Project timesheets)	Sec 4.1.4 Registering working hours
Workzone	System used by AU to store all relevant documents and correspondence by the end of a research project.	Sec. 4.3.4 Where to archive data after project closure
WorkZone archiving form	Form must be filled out to initiate an archiving process in WorkZone	Sec. 4.3.4 Where to archive data after project closure