Offering/Course Code

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT&IMPLEMENTATION

Responsible university	Ruse
Partner university/universities	Udine, Nova Gorica
Course coordinator	Nataliya Venelinova nvenelinova@uni-ruse.bg
TTA Module	M3 – Specialisation
Target group	Academic, administrative and technical staff
Course type	Short course
Format and delivery method	Online
Language(s)	English
Schedule / dates	05.11-06.11. 2026
Frequency	4 lessons
Time zone	Central European Time (CET))
Duration / ECTS	8/9 hours.
Venue or online link	https://meet1.uni-ruse.bg/b/exm-tp3-enq
Name and email for additional information	alicia.betts@udg.edu

Teaching team

Name and surname
Assoc. Prof. Nataliya Venelinova, PhD Dr. Nataliya Venelinova is an Associate Professor at the University of Ruse "Angel Kanchev", Bulgaria, with extensive experience in higher education,

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research management, European project development, strategic planning, public communications, and regional development.
Her professional career combines academic teaching and research with leadership and coordination roles in universities, public administration, and internationally funded projects. Dr. Venelinova currently serves also as Research Projects Coordinator of the University of Ruse. Her previous and concurrent professional experience includes:

- Research management: Operational management, monitoring, quality assurance, and risk management of university research and innovation activities.
- Academic teaching: Teaching at the University of Ruse and the National Defence College "G. S. Rakovski", covering project management, crisis communications, public relations, business negotiations, and emergency management.
- Public administration: Senior management and expert positions at Ruse Municipality, including Head of the European Integration Department, responsible for EU-funded projects, regional development, and international cooperation.
- Consultancy: Strategic planning, project preparation, cost-benefit analysis, and evaluation of investment and development initiatives.

She holds a doctoral degree in Public Communications and Information Sciences, with research focused on national image and public relations, and a Master's degree in European Studies. Her academic output includes more than 70 publications, 3 monographs, teaching materials, and textbooks.

Name and surname

Assoc. Prof. Vanya Panteleeva, PhD, is a senior lecturer in Financial and Tax Law at the Faculty of Law, University of Ruse. She is a leading expert with numerous publications on public procurement, financial corrections in EU projects, and state resource management. Combining academic depth with practical expertise, she has also been a practicing Attorney-at-Law since 2008, specializing in legal compliance and financial dispute resolution.

Name and surname

Aljaž Rener (Nova Gorica)

After graduation, Aljaž Rener worked in two private consultancy companies in Ljubljana where he gained initial working experience mostly in the field of research and development projects in collaboration with industry. In 2009 he started his independent consultacny business in Goriška region.
Since 2012 he is employed at University of Nova Gorica, currently on the position of Head of International and Project Office. In the last 14 years he was involved in coordination and financial management of all major international projects at UNG (over 70 projects). He organized administrative support for the process of project proposal application and implementation of projects adn grants. In this period, UNG succesfully implemented 6 major

international projects in the role of Lead Partner or Coordinator. Aljaž Rener was financial manager of these projects. At the moment he is memeber of Executive Board of MSCA COFUND Postdoctoral fellowship programe SMASH and of ACROSS,

Name and surname
Marco Sartor is Full Professor at the University of Udine, where he serves as Director of the Executive MBA Program and Rector's Delegate for Lifelong Learning. He is Vice President of the Decision Sciences Institute (USA) and has held prestigious academic appointments at leading institutions in the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Italy, including St. John's University in New York. He has authored over 40 academic papers and several books published by leading international publishers. His research has appeared in highly regarded journals and received multiple international Best Paper Awards. A long-standing member of the international Decision Sciences community, he has chaired major academic conferences in Europe and the United States and served as President of the European Decision Sciences Institute.

Course description
Description of the course
Module 1: Project Development – From Project Idea to Competitive EU Grant Proposal This module provides a practical introduction to developing competitive project proposals for European grant funding, with a particular focus on universities and research organisations. It covers the identification and selection of project ideas, matching funding opportunities, defining objectives, activities and KPIs, building international consortia, and preparing project budgets. Special attention is given to differences between major EU funding programmes, planning the proposal development process, submission procedures, evaluation criteria, common mistakes, and the effective use of AI tools in proposal preparation. **Module 2: Project Implementation, Monitoring and Control – From Grant Agreement to Sustainable Results** This module explores the practical aspects of implementing and managing EU-funded projects, with a focus on universities and research organisations. It addresses project start-up, team organisation, consortium coordination, operational planning, resource management, performance monitoring, quality control, financial and technical reporting, and project closure.

Particular emphasis is placed on measuring results through KPIs, addressing implementation deviations, ensuring compliance with programme requirements, and developing strategies for the long-term sustainability and institutional integration of project outcomes. The lecture also examines the role of AI and digital tools in supporting effective project management.

Module 3: Risk Management Through FMEA provides participants with a practical understanding of Failure Mode and Effects Analysis (FMEA) as a structured approach to risk identification, assessment, and mitigation.

The module begins with a concise theoretical overview of risk management principles and the FMEA methodology, including its key concepts, steps, and applications. Participants will then apply the methodology through a hands-on exercise based on a realistic case, identifying potential failure modes, assessing their risks, and defining appropriate mitigation actions. The course combines methodological rigor with practical application, enabling participants to use FMEA effectively in real-world organizational contexts.

Module 4: Lecture 3: EU Project Finance – Procurement & Financial Corrections

This module provides a practical overview of public procurement requirements, financial irregularities, and financial corrections in EU-funded projects, with a particular focus on universities and research organisations. It explores key EU procurement principles and procedures, common compliance errors, and the identification and assessment of financial irregularities. Special attention is given to the rules and methodologies for determining financial corrections, differences across EU funding programmes, and the financial consequences of non-compliance. Through practical examples and case studies, participants will learn how to prevent procurement-related errors, strengthen internal controls, maintain appropriate documentation, and prepare effectively for financial audits and compliance checks.

Highlights:

Comprehensive EU project lifecycle: Explore the key stages of EU-funded projects, from identifying funding opportunities and developing competitive proposals to implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and sustainability.

Practical proposal development: Learn how to formulate project objectives, structure activities and work packages, establish international consortia, prepare budgets, and address evaluation criteria.

Effective project implementation and control: Develop practical skills in project coordination, operational planning, performance monitoring, quality

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assurance, reporting, and resource management.

Structured risk management using FMEA: Apply Failure Mode and Effects Analysis (FMEA) to identify, assess, prioritise, and mitigate potential project-related risks.

Procurement and financial compliance: Understand public procurement requirements, recognise common financial irregularities, and examine financial correction mechanisms and audit readiness.

Programme-specific perspectives: Explore relevant differences among major EU funding programmes, including Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, Digital Europe, Interreg, and programmes supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund Plus (ESF+).

Sustainability and long-term impact: Learn how to support the continued use, institutional integration, and long-term value of project results.

AI and digital tools: Discover practical applications of artificial intelligence and digital solutions for proposal preparation, project coordination, monitoring, reporting, and quality improvement.

Hands-on learning: Apply concepts through realistic university-based case studies, practical exercises, templates, and examples of good practices and common mistakes.

Learning objectives / expected outcomes

The overall objective of the course is to strengthen participants' knowledge and practical competencies in the development, implementation, risk management, and financial compliance of EU-funded projects, with particular emphasis on universities and research organizations.

Upon completion of the course, participants will be able to:

- Understand the main stages of the EU project lifecycle and the requirements of major European funding programmes.
- Identify relevant funding opportunities and assess the suitability of project ideas against programme objectives and call requirements.
- Develop coherent and competitive project proposals, including objectives, activities, work packages, indicators, budgets, and consortium structures.
- Understand project submission procedures and evaluation criteria, and apply quality assessment methods to improve proposals.
- Organise project implementation through appropriate governance structures, operational plans, resource allocation, and partner coordination.

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- Apply monitoring and control techniques to track project activities, deliverables, milestones, performance indicators, and financial progress.
- Understand the principles of technical and financial reporting, quality assurance, and project documentation.
- Apply FMEA to systematically identify potential failure modes, assess their significance, prioritise risks, and define appropriate mitigation measures.
- Understand the fundamental principles of public procurement applicable to EU-funded projects and identify common procedural errors and financial irregularities.
- Recognise the principles and methodologies used to determine financial corrections and understand the importance of audit readiness.
- Develop approaches for ensuring the sustainability, institutional integration, and continued use of project results.
- Use AI and digital tools responsibly to support project development, implementation, monitoring, and decision-making.

Expected Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, participants are expected to have acquired the knowledge and practical skills necessary to contribute effectively to the preparation and management of EU-funded projects.

Knowledge

Participants will demonstrate an understanding of:

- The structure and requirements of major EU funding programmes.
- The principles of competitive project proposal development and evaluation.
- Project governance, implementation, monitoring, control, and reporting processes.
- The FMEA methodology and its application to project-related risks.
- EU public procurement principles, financial irregularities, and financial correction mechanisms.
- Approaches to project sustainability, exploitation of results, and institutional impact.

Practical skills

Participants will be able to:

- Assess project ideas and select suitable funding opportunities.
- Structure project objectives, work packages, deliverables,

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milestones, and KPIs.

- Prepare preliminary project budgets and consortium responsibility matrices.
- Develop operational project plans and monitoring frameworks.
- Use performance indicators and reporting tools to evaluate implementation progress.
- Conduct a basic FMEA analysis and propose appropriate mitigation actions.
- Identify typical procurement-related errors and potential financial compliance issues.
- Apply checklists and documentation practices that support audit readiness.
- Prepare a basic sustainability plan for project results.
- Use selected AI and digital tools to support project-related tasks.

Professional competencies

Participants will strengthen their ability to:

- Participate effectively in multidisciplinary and international project teams.
- Coordinate academic, administrative, and financial responsibilities.
- Make evidence-based project management decisions.
- Apply systematic approaches to quality, compliance, and continuous improvement.
- Support institutional capacity for attracting and managing European funding.
- Transfer acquired knowledge and practical tools to their own organizations.

Prerequisites

The course is designed for university academic staff, researchers, project managers, administrative professionals, and other personnel involved in or interested in EU-funded projects.

No advanced prior knowledge of EU project management is required.

However, participants will benefit from:

- Basic familiarity with university or research project activities.
- General understanding of organisational planning and budgeting.
- Basic digital literacy and experience using standard office applications.
- Working knowledge of English, particularly for reading EU

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programme documentation.

- Previous participation in project preparation or implementation, although this is not mandatory.

For practical exercises, participants are encouraged to bring a project idea, an example of an ongoing project, or a relevant example.

Topics and themes covered

Module 1: Project Development – From Project Idea to Competitive EU Grant Proposal

Main topics:

- EU funding landscape and major European funding programmes.
- Types of EU-funded projects and funding opportunities for universities and research organizations.
- Identification, screening, and development of project ideas.
- Selection of suitable programmes and calls for proposals.
- Analysis of eligibility conditions, programme priorities, and evaluation requirements.
- Development of project objectives, intervention logic, expected results, and KPIs.
- Structuring project activities, work packages, deliverables, and milestones.
- Building international consortia and defining partner responsibilities.
- Organising the proposal development team.
- Project budgeting principles, eligible cost categories, and differences between funding programmes.
- Planning and coordinating the proposal preparation process.
- Electronic submission procedures and administrative requirements.
- Project evaluation criteria and proposal quality assessment.
- Common proposal development mistakes and good practices.
- AI-assisted proposal development and review.

Practical focus: Developing a structured project concept, a preliminary budget, and a proposal preparation plan.

Module 2: Project Implementation, Monitoring and Control – From Grant Agreement to Sustainable Results

Main topics:

- Transition from project approval to implementation.
- Grant agreements, contractual obligations, and project start-up.
- Project governance and organizational structures.

- Roles and responsibilities of coordinators, project managers, work package leaders, and consortium partners.
- Operational planning and implementation scheduling.
- Management of project activities, resources, deliverables, and milestones.
- Consortium coordination, internal communication, and decision-making.
- Monitoring frameworks and performance indicators.
- KPI dashboards and progress tracking.
- Quality assurance and internal control mechanisms.
- Management of implementation deviations and corrective actions.
- Financial monitoring, budget utilization, and resource tracking.
- Technical and financial reporting requirements.
- Project documentation and evidence of implementation.
- Evaluation of project results and outcomes.
- Project closure and lessons learned.
- Sustainability planning, exploitation of results, and institutional integration.
- AI and digital tools for project monitoring, reporting, and management.

Practical focus: Developing an operational project plan, a monitoring dashboard, and a sustainability framework.

Module 3: Risk Management Through FMEA

Main topics:

- Fundamental concepts and principles of risk management.
- Introduction to Failure Mode and Effects Analysis (FMEA).
- Purpose, scope, and applications of FMEA.
- Identification of potential failure modes.
- Analysis of causes and effects.
- Assessment of severity, occurrence, and detectability.
- Risk Priority Number (RPN) and risk prioritization.
- Interpretation and limitations of FMEA results.
- Identification and selection of mitigation measures.
- Documentation of FMEA findings.
- Use of FMEA tables and structured assessment templates.
- Practical application through a realistic project or organizational case study.

Practical focus: Completing an FMEA worksheet, prioritizing identified

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failure modes, and proposing mitigation actions.

Module 4: EU Project Finance – Procurement & Financial Corrections

Main topics:

- Fundamental public procurement principles in EU-funded projects.
- EU procurement standards and applicable national requirements.
- Transparency, equal treatment, non-discrimination, proportionality, and competition.
- Procurement planning and documentation requirements.
- Common procurement errors and compliance challenges.
- Identification and classification of financial irregularities.
- Distinction between administrative errors, irregularities, and financial corrections.
- Financial consequences of non-compliance.
- Principles and methodologies for determining financial corrections.
- Relevant differences between EU funding programmes and management systems.
- Internal control measures and preventive compliance practices.
- Documentation, traceability, and audit evidence.
- Audit readiness and preparation for financial and compliance checks.
- Practical examples and case studies of procurement-related irregularities.

Practical focus: Analyzing procurement and financial compliance cases, identifying irregularities, and applying preventive checklists.

Assessment (optional; based on course type)	
Date	On demand
Type/method	Online test with closed and opened questions or practical case work

Bibliography-webography and further reading (optional; based on course type)

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