

How big is too big or how many partners are needed to build a large project which still can be managed successfully?

Daniela Henkel and Anton Eisenhauer

GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel, Germany (dhenkel@geomar.de)

During the last decades, the number of large research projects has increased and therewith the requirement for multidisciplinary, multisectoral collaboration. Such complex and large-scale projects pose new competencies to form, manage, and use large, diverse teams as a competitive advantage. For complex projects the effort is magnified because multiple large international research consortia involving academic and non-academic partners, including big industries, NGOs, private and public bodies, all with cultural differences, individually discrepant expectations on teamwork and differences in the collaboration between national and multi-national administrations and research organisations, challenge the organisation and management of such multi-partner research consortia. How many partners are needed to establish and conduct collaboration with a multidisciplinary and multisectoral approach? How much personnel effort and what kinds of management techniques are required for such projects. This presentation identifies advantages and challenges of large research projects based on the experiences made in the context of an Innovative Training Network (ITN) project within Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions of the European HORIZON 2020 program. Possible strategies are discussed to circumvent and avoid conflicts already at the beginning of the project.