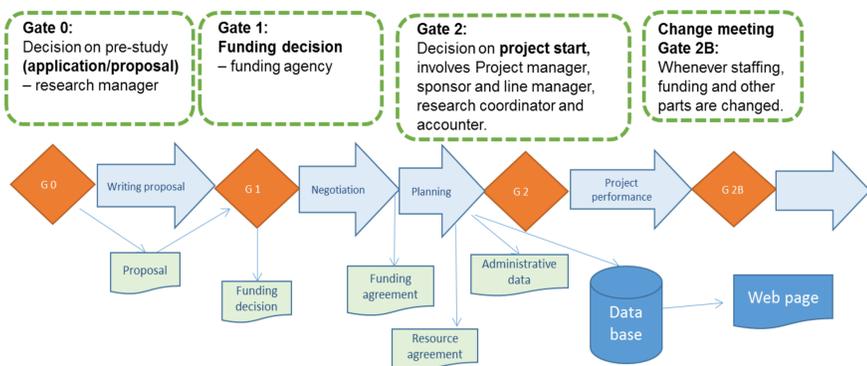# Dealing with complex projects in a research environment

Complexity is not just complicated, it is worse. A complicated problem has a solution, it just takes time and effort to solve it. A complex problem does not have one single solution.

Complexity might usually be addressed by strong organisation, control and monitoring, but the most efficient way is instead to navigate rather light in the archipelago, use different tools when needed and focus on communication between partners and functions. Probably the most important feature is **communication!**
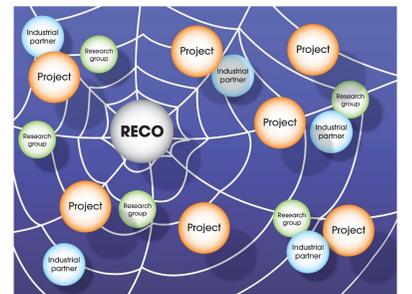
Our PMO - RECO

Many large commercial organisations, as businesses and industries, has established PMO:s as a way to cope with their project portfolios. The size of the organisations in our survey range between SME:s of less than 250 employees to large enterprises with up to 100 000 employees.

At MDH the toolbox is organised, so that different complexities are addressed with different tools:

	Pre award	Post award	Runtime phase
Strategic Initiatives	implementation and administrative parts, impact part		Project management
Calls with many applicants	Running application processes	Negotiation, start meeting, project database and web presentation	Counselling, contact with funding agencies
Singular initiatives	Counselling, contact with funding agencies		Counselling, contact with funding agencies

By adding project management competencies to the research environment,
- the number of applications/ submitted has increased,
- the project portfolio has grown,
- the network has broadened,
- the management has become smother.

The model is both scalable and possible to apply at other research organisations.
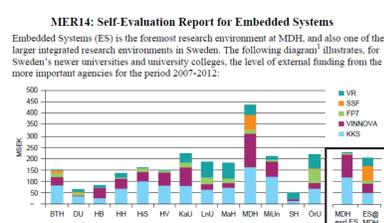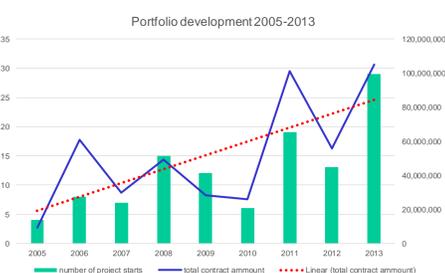
Embedded systems has grown to the research environment with largest share of external funding in the category of new universities in Sweden.

PMO responsibilities

- Project management in large projects
- Workshops, idea seminars, information on funding opportunities
- Support for applications
- Research communication
- Contact with funders and lobbying
- Events & networking, matchmaking, key account management
- Support for processes, budgeting, project tools, agreements, quality assurance of applications

Addressing different kinds of projects

Excellent research requires excellent project management; competencies that match the research. Team set-up rather that one singel person in charge.

Kind of complexity	Pre award phase	Post award phase	Runtime phase
Project environment	Consortium building	Agreement negotiations	Communication, Dissemination, Law
Project content	Lobbying	Project database, web presentation	Monitoring, Deliverables, Milestones, Progress
Project resource	Planning and writing pro-posals, budgeting, man-power, project organization and implementation	Start-up meetings	Reporting Finance

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Mälardalen University is one of Sweden's largest institutes of higher education, with some 13,000 students studying approximately 50 programs and1000 courses. Mälardalen University is situated in the densely populated and expansive region around Lake Mälaren. Most of the University's students are taking courses at one of the two centrally situated campuses in Eskilstuna and Västerås.

Education and research is conducted in engineering and science, the humanities, social science and the caring sciences. The University offers post graduate education in engineering. There is a focused effort to establish strong research also within the humanities/ social- and the caring sciences. The University is environmentally certified and prioritises sustainable community development in all its activities.