**Template for PhD project description**

This template has been approved by the PhD committee of the Department of **XX**. All PhD project descriptions should adhere to the template, effective from January 1, 2020.

The PhD thesis is an independent, scientific work that meets international standards regarding academic level, method, and ethical requirements.

The PhD degree at the Department of **XX** is a supervised study requiring a project description for admission to the PhD programme. The project description is a joint proposal to be approved by the PhD candidate and the supervisors. By signing the application for admission to the PhD programme, the doctoral candidate and supervisors also approve the content of this project description.

The main purpose of the project description is to ensure that the project has scientific relevance, a suitable workload for the project period and clear milestones. The project description should be detailed enough for the PhD Committee at **XX** and the MN Faculty to assess research goals, scientific challenges, incremental milestones and publication plan. It also forms the baseline for the third semester evaluation and any later evaluations

The project description should be between 4 – 10 pages, and should contain the following elements:

**1. Project title**

**2. Main objective and summary of the project**. Present the main objective and a brief summary, explaining how you intend to attain your goal. This part should include a list of planned publication titles and authors.

**3. Project background and scientific basis**. Provide a brief survey of existing research efforts and scientific basis, with references to scientific literature. If your project is a part of a larger research effort requiring coordination, explain specifically your planned contributions within the larger framework.

**4. Research questions and scientific challenges.** Outline your research questions and scientific challenges, both for the broader thesis and for each planned publication. Explain their scientific foundation and your approach to address them. Describe your ambitions of reaching beyond the state-of-the-art and how to reach these goals.

**5. Scientific method.** Outline your method for reaching your scientific goals. Describe how you are planning to use empirical, analytical or other methods for your research. Please state how these methods relate to the expected scientific contributions of the thesis. If applicable, describe the source of your data.

**6. Expected impact.** The description should address impact of your research on

* your field of science
* methodology
* environment
* society

If your project does not have any impact on one or more of the points above, this shall also be stated.

**7. Ethics.** Describe any ethical challenges related to your research and (potential) ethical issues of the impact of the results of your research on the society (cf. research-ethical guidelines of the Norwegian Research Ethical Committees1,2). Check if your project requires notification to the Data Protection Official for Research3. Candidates doing fieldwork abroad should check if they also have to register their project with the applicable authorities there and if the collected material is intended for molecular work follow the requirements of the Nagoya protocol4.

**8. Project timeline.** The project timeline will be used in connection with the third semester evaluation and must include verifiable milestones. Outline a research plan for EACH semester including

* course-work
* scientific contributions
* planned publications (preferably indicate publication channel(s) as well)
* mandatory/teaching duties (25%; when applicable)
* planned visits to other research institutions (national or international; when applicable).

**9. Project organisation and cooperation.** The principal supervisor should provide an overview of knowledge / expertise each supervisor will contribute, how they collectively cover the academic field of the project, and how the members of the supervisory team will cooperate. One should also describe how the support of the candidate will be maintained if one of the members has to vacate her/his post and therefore has to be replaced. Finally, the robustness of the research group should be addressed; i.e., how other academic staff and their PhD-students and PhD projects support the new project and how the new project fits into the ongoing research activity.

**10. Cooperation with external parties.** Some projects have significant contributions from non-UiO partners, like partial external supervision of the PhD candidate, or part-time employment of the student by an external partner. For each external partner, the required standard agreement concerning the completion of PhD education in cooperation with an external party has to be signed by the external party and UiO, and submitted as part of the PhD application. The agreement includes a list of specific contributions committed by the external party. The project description may contain further details about the planned cooperation, e.g., potential for innovation for the external party.

**11. Literature references.**

1[The guidelines of the National Committee for Research Ethics in Science and Technology](https://www.etikkom.no/en/ethical-guidelines-for-research/guidelines-for-research-ethics-in-science-and-technology/).

2[A guide to Internet Research Ethics](https://www.etikkom.no/en/ethical-guidelines-for-research/ethical-guidelines-for-internet-research/).

3[Data Protection Official for Research](https://eph-uio.uhad.no/ephorte/https:/nsd.no/nsd/english/pvo.html).

4[About the Nagoya Protocol](https://www.cbd.int/abs/about/).