



Project management case study

You have been hired by the VU to do research into the use of antidepressants among students. This research is part of a larger European study and is not a doctoral research project. For this study a representative group of 250 students has to be interviewed, using a semi-structured questionnaire. Each interview takes about one hour. In addition, for each participating student a blood sample needs to be taken and analysed. You will only be able to do one part yourself, either the interviews or the blood sample taking, and for the other part of the study you will be working together with a research bureau in Heerlen, that is leading the project from the Netherlands. Your own supervisor is working at the VU on a similar research.

To write the definitive questionnaire and to determine the blood analysis a kick-off meeting is being planned with all foreign partners in Stockholm in three weeks time. Furthermore, there will be two meetings with the foreign partners about the data analysis and the draft report.

The printed report will be presented at the European Commission in exactly one year. You have a budget for the trips abroad and a budget of €2500.00 for other costs.

1. Make a choice for either conducting the interviews or taking and analysing the blood samples.
2. Plan a schedule.
3. Present the planned schedule to the group in 5 minutes.

Extra:

Group 1: State the possible risks in this project and the planned course of action in the case of these risks becoming reality.

Group 2: Pay attention to the division of labour among the various parties. Who is doing what?

Group 3: What financial expenses do you expect to incur? Consider how best to deal with your budget. Where can you save money? What do you need a financial buffer for? How do you want to use the money that might be left over?

* Elective for all groups: how could this research be used as a first step in a PhD project? What actions would you have to take to make that happen?