

Research & Innovation Consulting Hub, Academic Talk webinar

# How to choose a good dissertation topic ?

*In 10 steps*

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Friday 1 Mar 2024



**What is a *good* topic ?**

# It aligns 4 stars



**Student**



**Topic**



**Supervisor**



**Finance**



## Viewpoint A



## The student

# A good thesis is a finished thesis

Feasibility #1 criteria  
(time/budget/quality/scope trade-off)

Master-level topics can be risky

Motivation #1bis for PhD

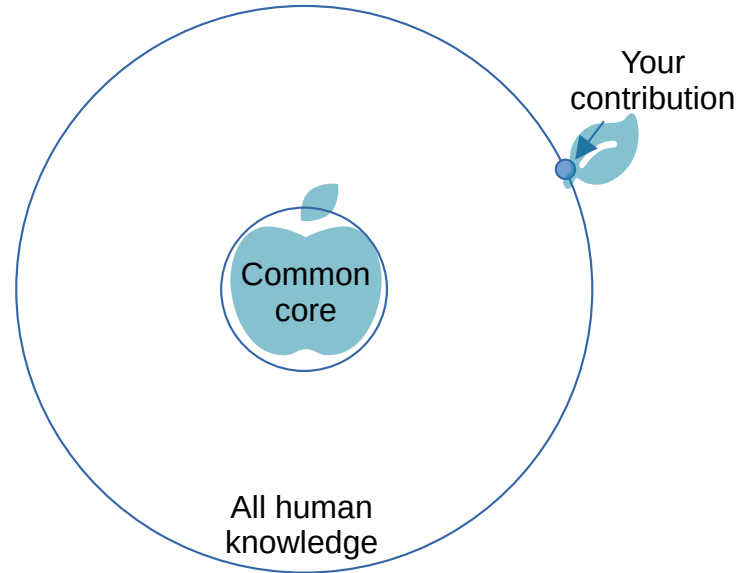
**1. Reflect on personal interests and academic past**

## Viewpoint B



## The science

# Position your contribution at the frontier of human knowledge



**2. Read a lot** to know what has been done (results) and how (methods). Look at good dissertations.

**3. Find a gap.** Replication is contribution.



The  
supervisor

# Publish or perish

Good Master thesis → 1 article  
Good PhD thesis → 3 articles

**4. Quality is all about data (GIGO).**

**5. Get feedback.** Always looking for excellent collaborators (grades, publications). I can always find a tailor-made motivating research topic for you (it may take a few weeks)



## The funder

# Ressources

Finance

Attention: it is worth my time?  
(will the paper get  $>h$  cites)

Office space: tight but not an issue

**6. Align funding with career goals.**

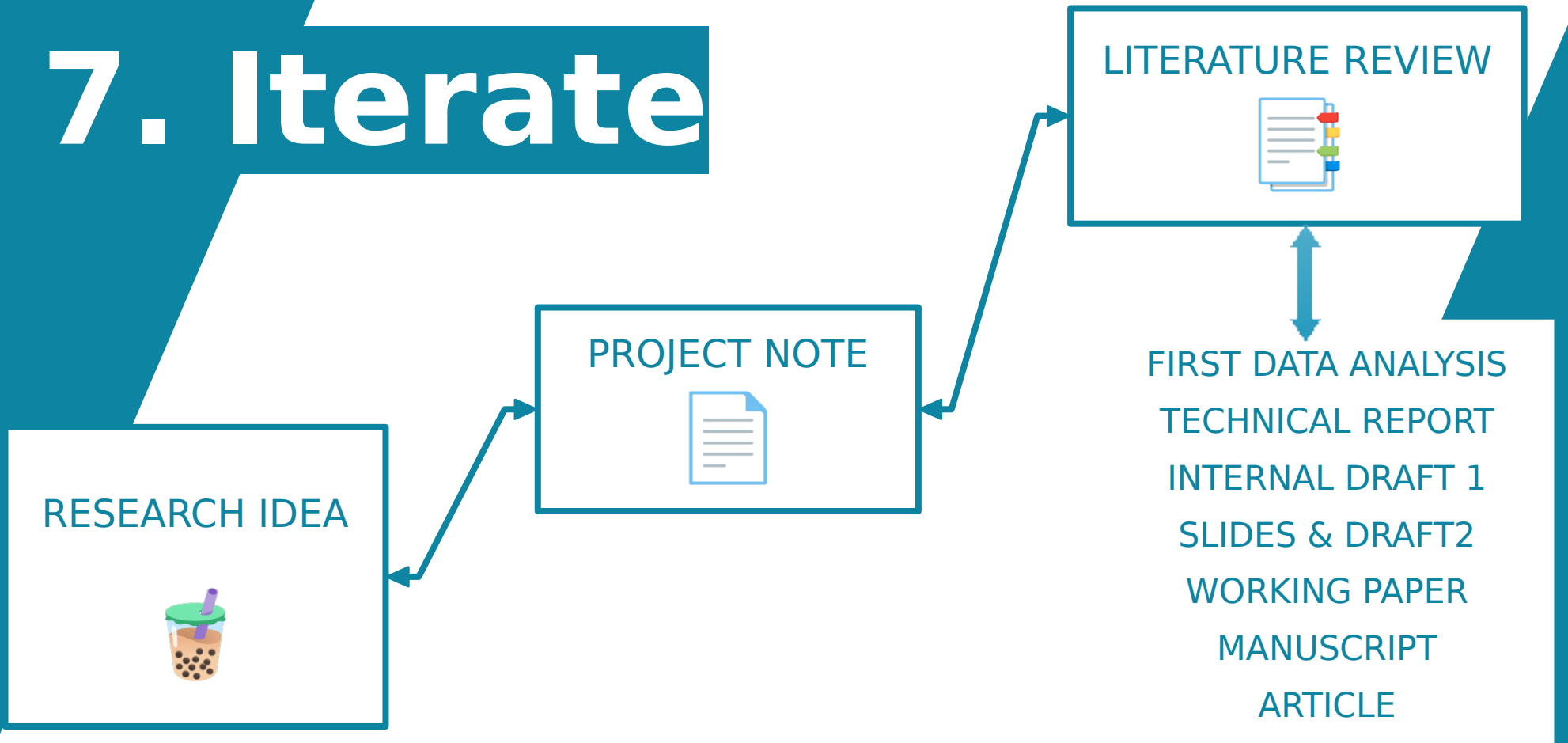
Industry / academic funders have  
different programs



**How to produce it ?**



# 7. Iterate



# Write proposal



## 8. Re-check novelty

Grey literature  
Conferences & workshops  
New but connected



## 9. Use academic style

Research question / hypothesis  
Method  
Implications



## 10. Get formal approval

Departmental guidelines  
Funders conditions  
Signature

# **Time is in months**

**1 month : funded research project seeking someone**

**6 months : Academic PhD funding for Master students**

time\_management

cultural\_sensitivity

writing\_workshops academic\_community

interdisciplinary real-world\_application

stress\_management

work-life\_balance methodological\_rigor

sustainability

future\_research ethical\_considerations

global\_challenges theoretical\_framework

technological\_advancements

public\_engagement skill\_development

language\_barriers risk\_management