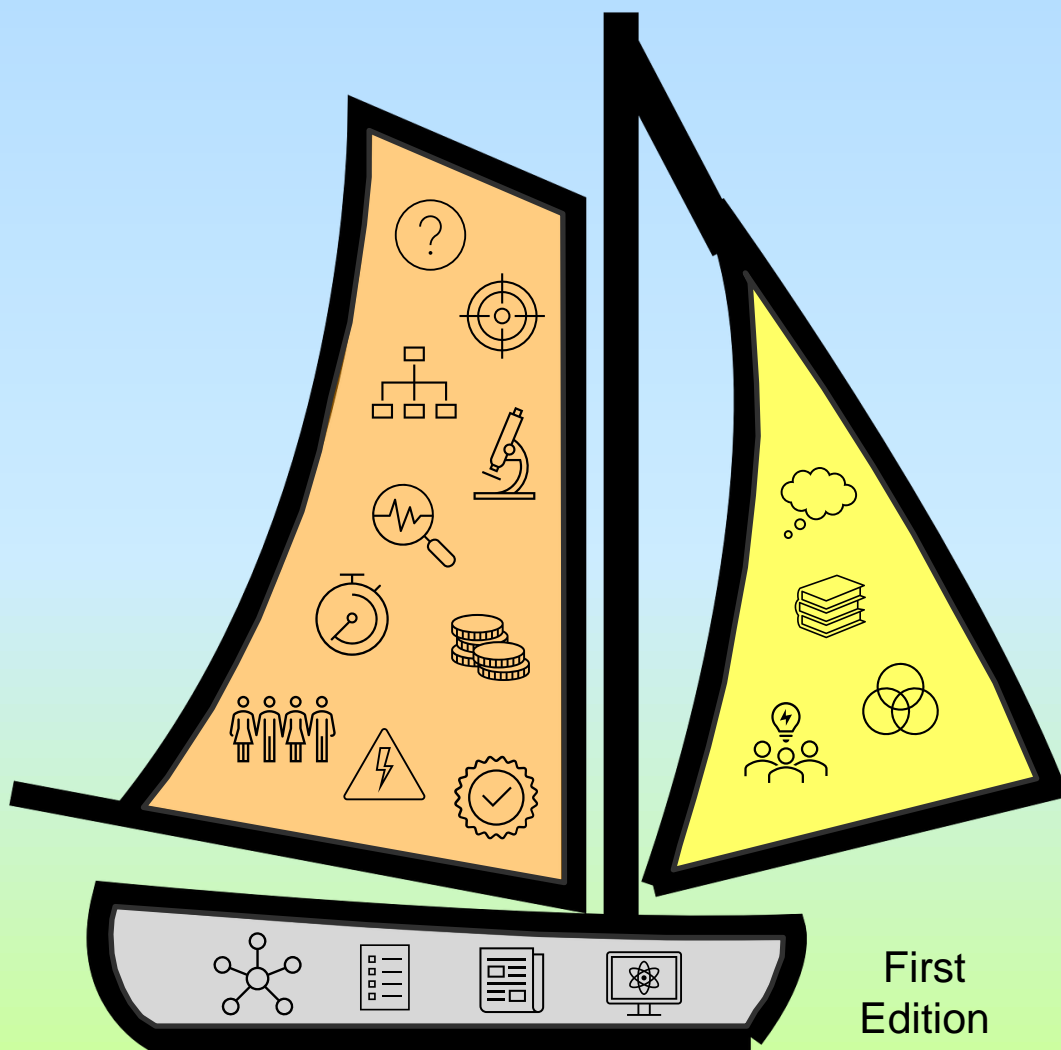


COMPASS GUIDE: How to Plan Your Research Project



First
Edition

Dr Sandra Mandic, PhD, PMP
AGILE Research Ltd.



**Compass Guide
Research Training**
By AGILE Research Ltd.

*To my wonderful family
– husband Philip McKague and children Adriana and Oliver McKague –
for being my Dream Team!*

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Setting the Sails for Your Research Journey

Imagine you are working as a member of a research team in the city council. As part of a road safety campaign, you are being asked to help your colleagues from the transport team find out what city residents think about road safety. You will need to report your findings to the city Councillors within a year.

How would you plan such a project?

Research projects are a specific type of project – often with an unclear scope at the beginning but with specific timelines and frequently with limited (if any) budget. Research projects are also unpredictable by their nature and face many uncertainties. Nevertheless, the fundamentals of project management are as relevant to research projects as they are to other projects.

This Compass Guide book will take you through the fundamentals of research project management and provide step-by-step guidance and templates for planning your project and developing a project plan.

This book will show you how to set up and operate an invisible scaffold (project planning) around the building site (your research project). Once your building (research project) is complete, that invisible scaffold that was essential for successful project completion will disappear. However, the lessons learned about the role and importance of that invisible scaffold (project planning) will remain with you – ready to be used in your future professional endeavours.

Your journey through this book will start with defining your project scope through shaping research objectives, selecting research methods and planning research procedures.

You will learn about developing the project timeline, assessing research project resources and preparing the project budget, identifying risks and risk management strategies, putting together a research team and planning project deliverables.

You will also learn about writing a research proposal, obtaining necessary approvals, securing research funding and ultimately putting together your detailed project plan.

Finally, you will find out about common issues in planning research projects, get tips for keeping your project on track and see examples of a real-world research proposal and a corresponding detailed project plan.

This book has been designed for those who are new to research (such as current and future research students and research staff) as well as for professionals involved in research projects outside academia. This book is also a valuable resource for experienced researchers and research student supervisors to help teach others how to plan their research projects.

Fortunately, it is never too late to learn and improve how you and your team plan – and ultimately deliver – on your research projects. But the sooner, the better. Happy learning and enjoy your research journey!

