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How to choose a good dissertation topic? In 10 steps

Minh Ha-Duong

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Research & Innovation Consulting Hub, Academic Task webinar

How to choose a good dissertation topic ?

In 10 steps

Dr. Minh Ha-Duong, CIPRED/CNRS

Friday 1 Mar 2024

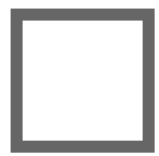


What is a *good* topic ?

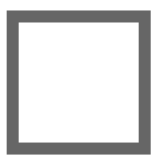
It aligns 4 stars



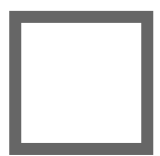
Student



Topic



Finance



Viewpoint A



The student

A good thesis is a finished thesis

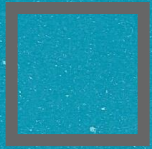
Feasibility #1 criteria (time/budget/quality/scope trade-off)

Master-level topics can be risky

Motivation #1bis for PhD

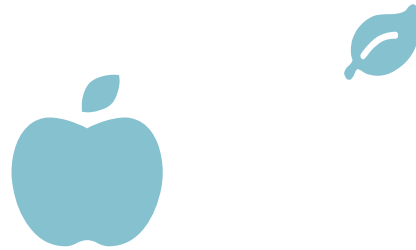
1. Reflect on personal interests and academic past

Viewpoint B

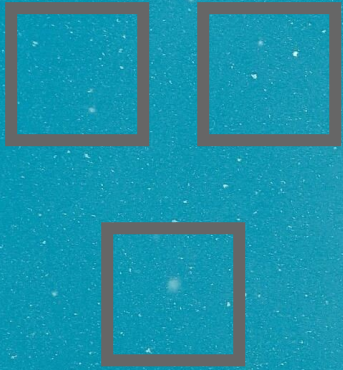


The science

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

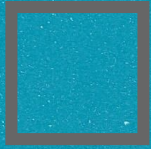
Publish or perish

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

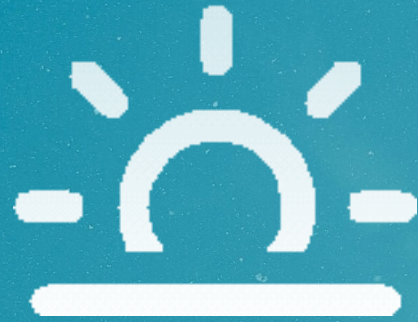
Ressources

Finance

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

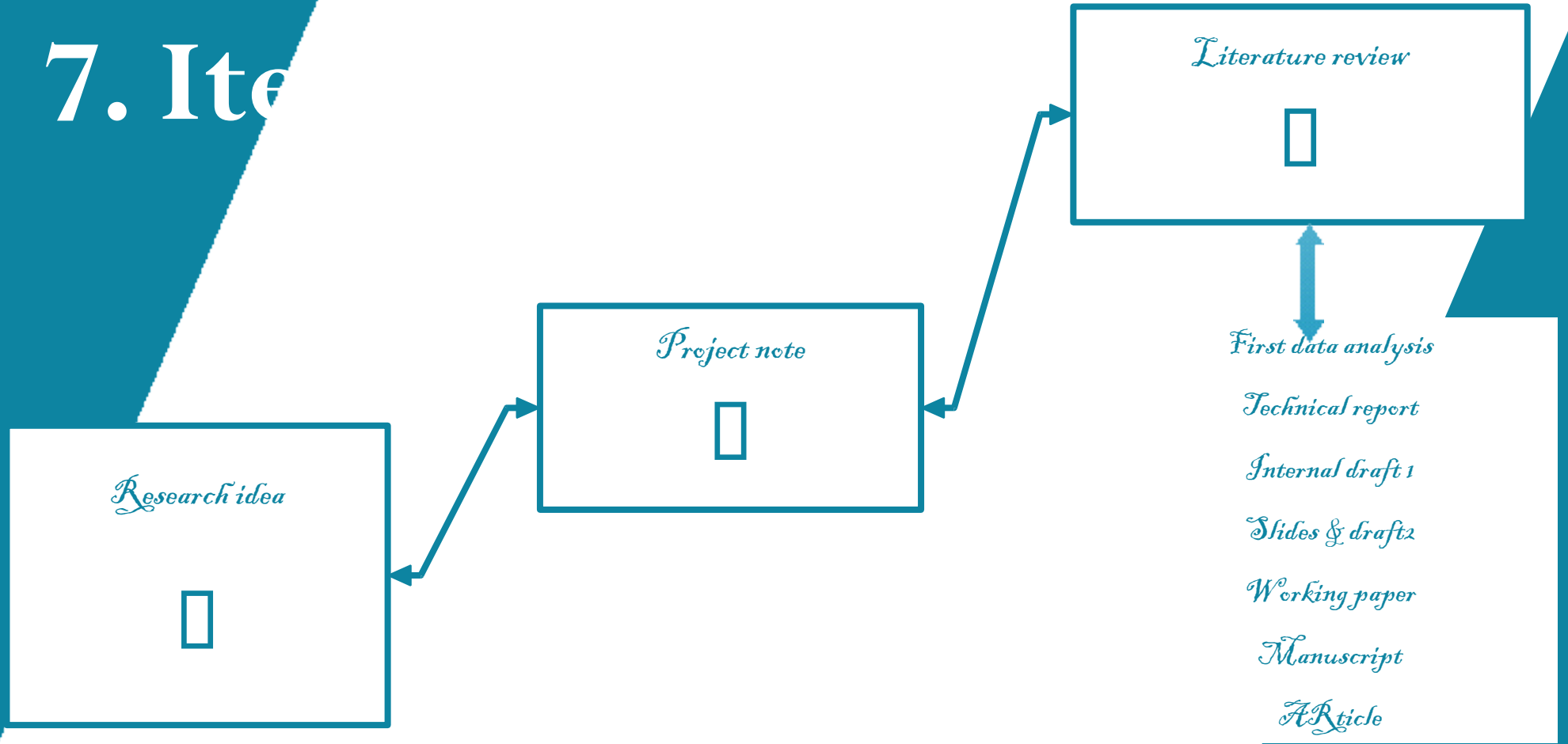
Office space: tight but not an issue

6. Align funding with career goals. *Industry /
academic funders have different programs*

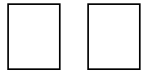


How to produce it ?

7. Itē

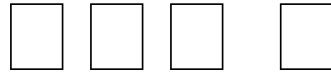


Write proposal



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**

