



L-Università
ta' Malta

Empowering Research Success: The Research Grants Finance Management (RGFM) – Pre- Award Overview

Mihaela Neagoe
28th May 2026



Core Functions of RGFM Pre-Award



Draft **budgets** that maximise fund utilisation and enhance competitiveness within consortia



Ensure lead partner applications receive tailor made support



Proactively identify potential **implementation challenges** within proposal content to prevent risks

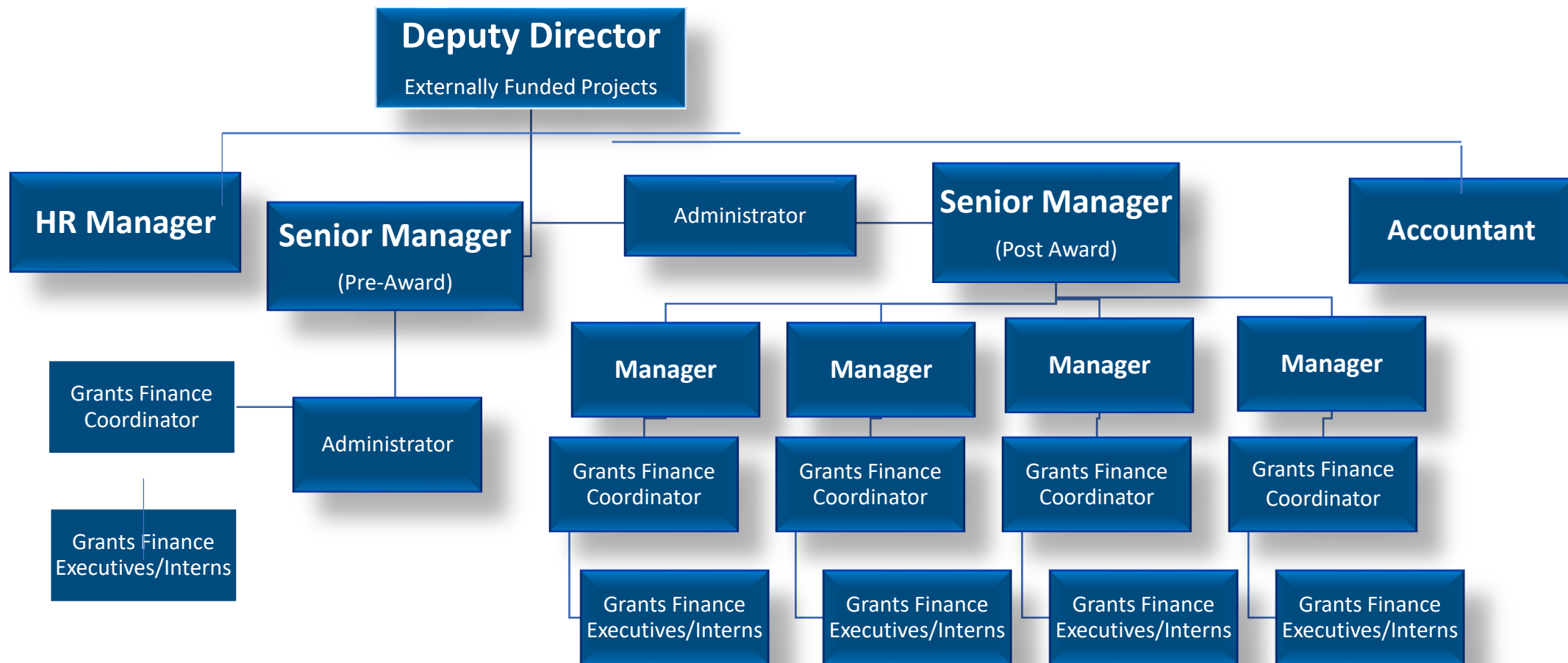


Assess financial implications of **collaboration, sponsorship, and consortium agreements** to align expectations



Enhance overall **budget quality and readiness** to support successful funding outcomes

Streamlined RGFM Organisational Structure



RGFM collaborating with various departments within the UM



Research Support Services Directorate
Human Resources and Development Office



Finance Office
Legal Office



International Office
Corporate Research & Knowledge Transfer Office

Optimising The Project Life Cycle for Success

Pre award team

1

Proposal Preparation & Submission

RGFM ensures budgets are precise and in line with the guidelines to maximise funding potential

2

Evaluation & Negotiation

Funder reviews proposals
RGFM supports budget clarifications and discuss with PI in case of budget cuts

3

Grant Agreement Signing

RGFM verifies contractual terms, ensuring compliance before finalising GA/CA agreements. Opening of project vote



4

Project Execution

Ongoing monitoring and financial support

5

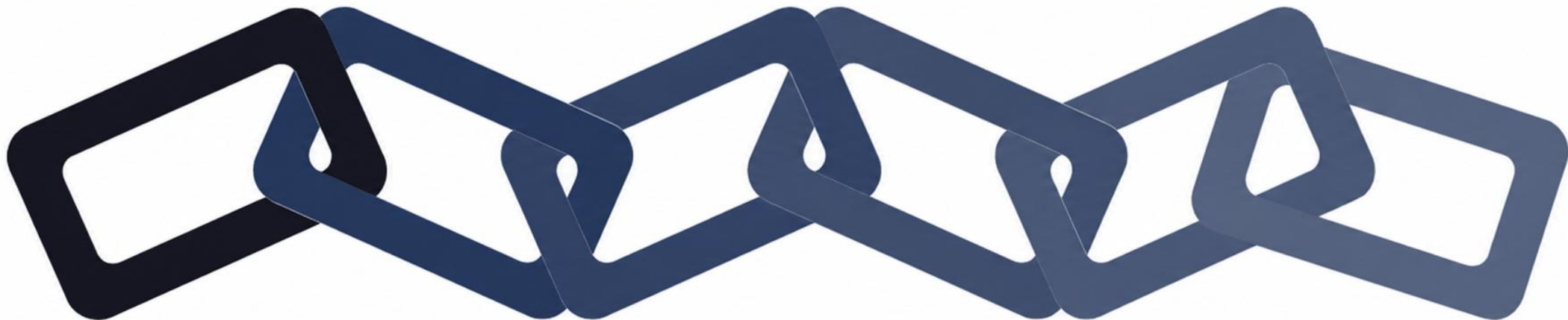
Reporting

RGFM coordinates accurate and comprehensive reporting to fulfill funder obligations and closeout procedures.

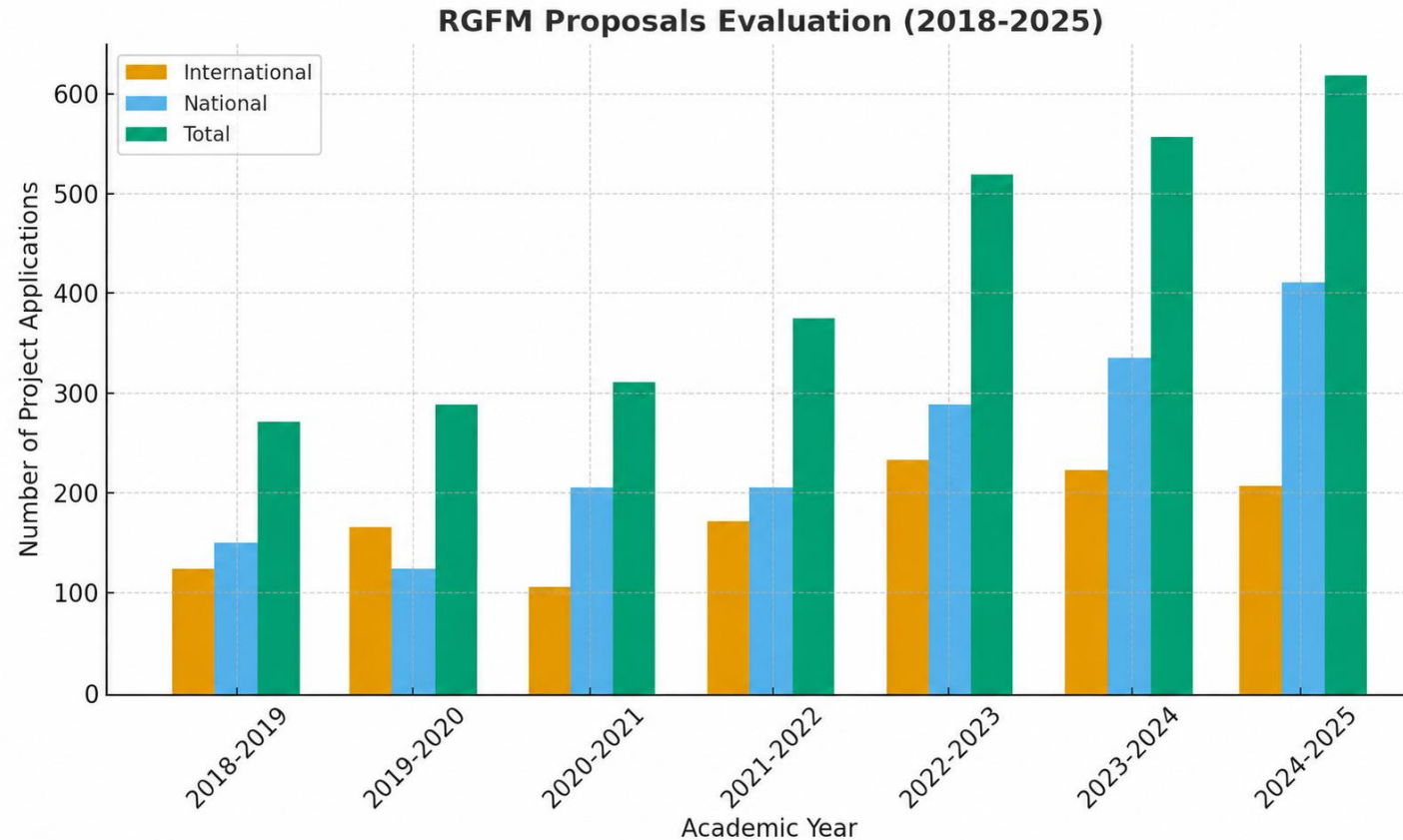
6

Post Closure

Financial matters are fully completed and documented



RGFM Proposals Evaluation (2018–2025)

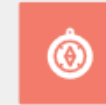


Optimising with Internal deadlines

Enhancing review efficiency, resource allocation, and applicant support



Streamlines review workflows to handle increased volume of project proposals efficiently



Ensures timely applicant support by setting clear submission deadlines



Improves resource allocation by enabling proactive planning and workload balancing



Maintains **high standards in proposal quality** through structured preparation periods

Streamlining the Proposal stage

■ Review and Preparation of Budget Documentation

- RGFM examines call documentation to identify relevant rules and requirements
- Budget templates are prepared by the team

■ Budget review

- Verify compliance with procurement policies and funding regulations
- Assess person-months effort for adequacy and consistency with project scope
- Confirm co-financing arrangements if required by the call/programme

■ Project Vote and Documentation Management

- Create draft project vote
- Save Project Review document in the project folder for transparency and audit trail

■ Post-Award Preparation for Project Transition

- Organise relevant post-award information in a dedicated Handover Folder
- Ensure smooth project transition upon approval

Signature of Grant Agreements



Circulate Grant Agreements internally among **RGFM, Legal, KTO, and HR** through a **RGFM** review for vetting



Pre-award team checks that **starting dates, awarded amount and project durations** match approved project plans



Ensure all terms comply with the **Call Guidelines** and institutional policies



Identify exceptions where negotiation is permitted despite generally fixed terms



RGFM collaborates with the HR Manager to obtain the principal investigator's signature on the ad hoc contract prior to Grant Agreement signing



Live vote is opened once Grant Agreement is signed by all parties. Handover meeting between Pre-Award & Post-Award is organised where necessary

Signature of Consortium Agreements

RGFM collaborates with Legal to draft Consortium Agreements for UM coordinated projects

Drafts are circulated among partners for feedback

Finalised agreements are prepared for official signatures

For when UM is a partner, RGFM and Legal evaluate incoming agreements and provide detailed feedback

Pre award team facilitates obtaining the legal representative's signature on the final version of the CA

Collaboration Agreements

Collaboration Agreements
Differ From Competitive
Calls And Are Initiated Via
Principal Investigators'
Networks With Ministries Or
Other Entities

Drafted By UM's **Legal
Office**, These Agreements
Follow A Standardised
Framework Plus A Tailored
Agreement Structure

The **Knowledge Transfer
Office** Initiates These Rather
Than RSSD

Funding Utilisation Is Strictly
Governed By Terms Outlined
In The Signed Agreement

Project Votes Are Opened
Following Agreement
Signing

Thank you for your attention.

If you have any questions, now is the right time to ask!
Contact me on the details below for further info:

 **Mihaela Neagoe**
Senior Manager – Pre-Award

(+356) 2340 4999



mihaela.neagoe@um.edu.mt

This presentation incorporates AI-generated visuals, reviewed and adapted by the presenter.