

Suggested structure for a research proposal in the frame of the SEPT doctoral program

Heading: Topic

1. Background and relevance of the study

- Why did I select this topic? Which reference does it have for the problems in my country/for the situation in the SME sector of my country?
- For whom is the topic interesting and why?
- How is the topic discussed in my country/ in my region/ in SME sector?
- What is the goal of my research?
- Justification and importance of the topic

2. Scientific definition of the problem:

- How is the current state of research for my topic?
- What kind of literature exists for my topic and what does it state?
- Which research approaches are relevant for my topic and why?
- Which gaps would my work close or in which way do I contribute to a progress in knowledge of the topic?
- What kind of theoretical model can I develop by myself in order to close those gaps?
- Which links does my theoretical approach with other existing theories?
- What makes my model unique?
- Which concrete question(s) can I ask in order to reach my goal?
- Which answers do I assume on these questions?
- Which hypotheses might be formulated?

3. Methods, survey period and target group of the research

- Which partial questions must I ask and which indicators can give answers?
- How good can I measure these indicators in the reality?

- How high is the probability that I may get satisfying answers for my questions?
- Whom will I exactly ask and why?
- Where will I carry out the survey?
- How many interviews do I plan?
- How does my schedule look like?
- What must my interviews include in order to get the answer for my question(s)?
- Am I sure that I can collect enough material/data in order to achieve my goal?

4. Partner(s) of the research project:

- Which institutions related to my topic- exist in my country?
- Why are these partners important?
- Which role do they play in my country?
- Is it possible for me to contact them? Are they interested in helping me as project partners?

Appendixes

- Questionnaires and/or guides for interviews
- Schedule (e.g.: Bar chart)
- List of main bibliography
- List of abbreviations used in the proposal
- First outline/structure of the dissertation (suggested index)