



**POLITECNICO**  
MILANO 1863

## **Supervisor Expression of Interest MSCA - Marie Sklodowska Curie Action - (PF) Postdoctoral Fellowship 2024**

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**Department Name:** Dipartimento di Ingegneria Gestionale

**Research topic:** Project Management

### **MSCA-PF Research Area Panels:**

- ECO\_Economic Sciences
- X ENG\_Information Science and Engineering
- ENV\_Environmental and Geosciences
- LIF\_Life Sciences
- MAT\_Mathematics
- PHY\_Physics
- SOC\_Social Sciences and Humanities
- CHE\_Chemistry

### **Brief description of the Department and Research Group (including URL if applicable):**

The Department of Management, Economics, and Industrial Engineering (DIG) of Politecnico di Milano was established in 1990. Its mission is to contribute to the common good and individual well-being through a critical understanding of the opportunities and challenges posed by technology to business and society. The Department pursues its mission with an international reach by creating and sharing knowledge through high-quality education, the quest for scientific excellence, and active community engagement.

We aim at:

- Educating responsible individuals who will shape the future of relevant corporations and institutions to serve society.
- Promoting original, rigorous, and relevant research at the intersection of engineering, management, and economics, focusing on a deep understanding of technology and its ecosystem.
- Contributing to a sustainable and inclusive society by inspiring virtuous business practices and transformational policy measures

With approximately 160 professors, DIG is one of the largest departments of Politecnico di Milano. More information can be found at: <https://www.som.polimi.it/en/>



DIG HumanTech project has been selected and funded by the Ministry of University and Research (MUR) for the period 2023-2027 within “Dipartimenti di Eccellenza” (Law 232/2016), the ministerial initiative aimed at rewarding the departments that stand out for the quality of their research and at financing specific development projects. In particular, the objective of HumanTech is to redefine the relationship between technology and human beings to enable a sustainable digital transition of industrial systems. The project aims to propose new models and processes for the development and adoption of technologies, capable of accelerating the transition towards sustainable, inclusive industrial systems that make individual and collective well-being a priority.

The research group includes Prof. Giorgio Locatelli and Prof. Tristano Sainati.

<https://www.som.polimi.it/en/the-school/about-us/dig/>

### **TITLE of the project: The Dark side of Projects and Temporary organizations**

This Postdoctoral Fellowship deal with the dark side of projects, which includes sensitive, confusing, uncomfortable, challenging, and questionable phenomena, such as corruption, sexism, money laundering, modern slavery, waste of resources, and organizational politics. The dark side impacts people’s lives, questioning the legitimacy of projects as forms of work organization and the political and ideological systems shaping the projects’ context. Project scholars and practitioners need to be aware of the harm the dark side of projects may promote.

The dark side involves myriad topics. Here I introduce some of the most relevant and unresearched topics. The fellow will be free to chose which ones to address in his/her fellowship

Conflict of interest concerns “a situation in which someone’s private interests are opposed to that person's responsibilities to other people”. Unlike other dark sides in projects, a conflict of interest does not require malicious actions by the wrongdoer; it materializes passively whenever the wrongdoer is called on decisions with incompatible vested interests. This phenomenon is frequent in projects, because decision makers are often exposed to multiple interests, in other words, the many individual stakeholder interests and joint interests vested in the project. For example, the project manager might be appointed by a permanent project-based organization but is expected to commit fully to the interests of the temporary project’s organization. As a result, the interests of the two organizations can be conflicting, generating a conflict of interest. Therefore, project governance is particularly important to prevent and resolve conflicts of interest in projects. Relevant research questions about conflict of interests in projects include:

- In which conditions do conflicts of interest materialize?
- What are the most common conflicts of interest?
- What kind of governance reduces the impact of conflicts of interest?
- How frequent and damaging are conflicts of interest for project performance?

Money laundering is the process by which criminals attempt to conceal the source and ownership of the proceeds of their illicit activities; if successful, the criminal maintains control and access to these funds when and where (s)he chooses Money laundering is critical in construction projects because it can be directly associated with all illicit funds in construction, including bribes and incomes derived from frauds, modern slavery, and tax evasion. Research questions, includes:

- How does money laundering influence projects (particularly construction projects)?
- To what extent does money laundering contribute to financing (construction) projects?
- What types of money laundering schemes affect projects and how?



- What measures are most useful in preventing money laundering in projects? Why?

Gender discrimination involves antipathy, negative stereotypes about agentic women, and other genders. This problem is particularly relevant in male-dominated professions, such as the construction industry, one of the most male-dominated industries in every developed society. •

- To what extent does gender discrimination exist in projects and in which sectors?
- What are the forms of gender discrimination in projects?
- What are the effects of gender discrimination at the individual and project levels?
- What are the causes and strategies to move toward gender equality in projects and how do they unfold?

Organizational and Project Power and Politics (OPPP). Currently, “power” and “politics” are value-laden terms viewed as the root cause of the dark side in all organizations, including the project as a temporary organization. If one thinks about power and politics, the connotations that instinctively come to mind are about greed; hubris; abuse; different types of misappropriation of resources; poor, corrupt cultures; and Machiavellian and/or narcissistic personalities that have been blinded by power while being masters of a political agenda and maneuvering.

The relevant questions can be:

- Under what conditions does OPPP give rise to the dark side?
- Are OPPP the antecedents of the dark side?
- How do OPPP contribute to the social inequalities that give rise to the injustices that frame projects and organizations?