Expectation alignment sheet

This sheet is meant to clarify expectations of supervisors and PhD students at the beginning of a PhD project. Suggested use: Fill in this sheet, set up a meeting with your supervisor and discuss your answers. This sheet is also meant as a conversation starter. Not every point is relevant at the start of your PhD, but certainly worth thinking/discussing about at some point during your PhD. About some of the points the opinion of the supervisor is really important, so make sure to make use of this opportunity to talk about it. This will make you more aware of the supervision style of your supervisor. Of course you are welcome to add any questions you might want to add. You might like to summarize the outcome of the meeting and be able to look back on it when you need it. In case of any problems, Steffi can be consulted.

1) Is the topic of your PhD clear from the start? How much freedom do you have to choose a promising topic within your PhD project?
2) How to proceed if you want to change the direction of research?
3) Is the PhD project part of a bigger project? If yes:
    a. What are the links to other PhD projects?
    b. What is the aim of the project within the whole project?
4) Who will be on my PAC? Who might be a good external PAC member?
5) Which university would be good to enroll (if not clear yet)?
6) What do you need help with and from who?
    a. finding a starting point,
    b. keeping track of progress (setting SMART goals),
    c. time management,
    d. planning project / experiments / model simulations,
    e. keeping focus,
    f. literature research,
    g. presenting/writing skills,
    h. prepping for conference,
    i. creative blocks / being stuck on problems,
    j. planning research stay,
    k. self-evaluation,
    l. dealing with stress / pressure,
    m. …
7) What do you want to learn during your PhD?
8) *Which expertise / skills should I (already) have?*
9) Do you think a regular get-together with your supervisor would be helpful? If yes, how often? How available is the supervisor for suddenly arising problems? Is the possibility there for just walking in the office of your supervisor?
10) What kind of feedback do you expect on the project (general/detailed feedback)? *programming: script and help from supervisor or just a link. Writing paper: Supervisor writes everything for you or just gives general comments. Progress: detailed to-do list from your supervisor or general outline / publishable units. …*
11) Which methods might be useful?
12) Who could be important for your PhD project (in- and outside the institute)? Who knows more about necessary resources/facilities?

13) What are my responsibilities in the group?
teaching, instrument operator, guests, …

14) Is there any ownership of data/anything else involved in the project that you should know about?

15) Are there any things outside of the PHD that you'd like to do?
organize an event, being a PhD representative, Equal Opportunity officer, Works council, …

16) How do I find a topic and a contact for the research stay?

17) For third-party funded positions:
   a. What are the constraints of the research stay?
   b. How closely related to the project does the topic have to be?
   c. How much funding is available for research stay, conferences, summer schools, …

18) What is the role of the supervisor in networking / introducing to other relevant scientists in the field?

19) Are there any summer schools, courses or conferences (or anything else) you or the supervisor really want you to attend? Do you know where to find relevant summer schools, courses or conferences?

20) How involved do you think your supervisor should be in the writing process for papers/thesis? How involved does the supervisor want to be?
Proposing journal, structure of content, outline, focus, which figures, most important conclusions, …