How to write a succesful proposal

EAP Information Day
26 September 2013

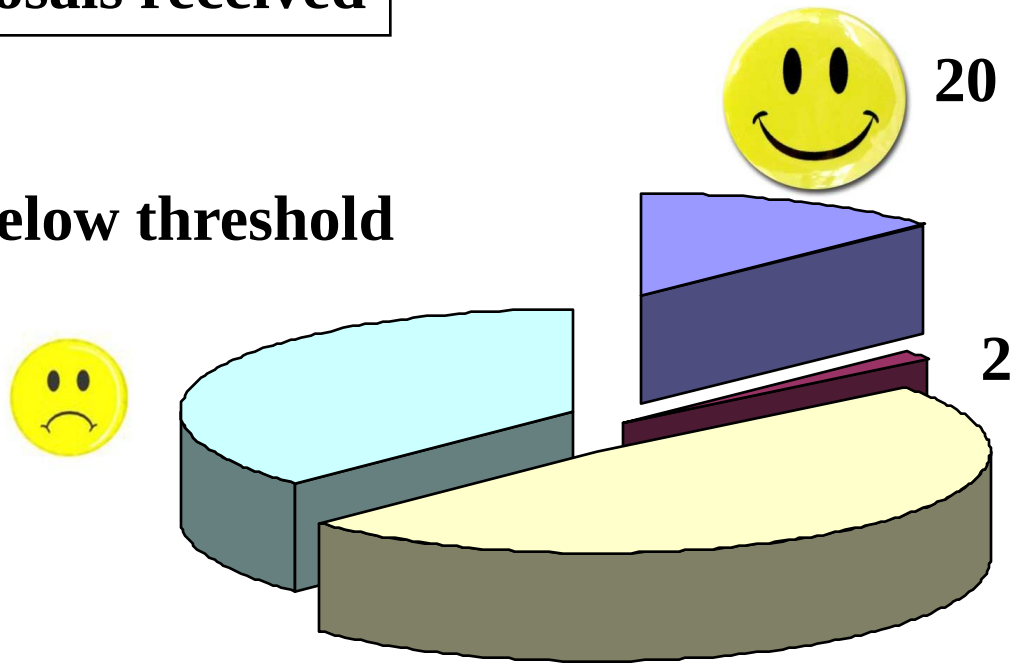
European Commission
Information Society and Media

Outline

1. Introduction: Why not me ?
   Statistics
2. Most common mistakes or omissions
   - Underestimating the importance some evaluation criteria and sub-criteria
   - Lessons from the evaluation of previous calls
     - The example of STREPS
     - Few additional points on IPs
3. Other good reasons for rejection
   - Not respecting the basic submission rules
   - Submitting to the wrong objective
4. Concluding remarks

Why not me ?
Statistics on Microsystems STREP proposals (call 2)

155 proposals received



20 Retained

58 below threshold

2 Reserve list

75 Ranked too low for available budget

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The 3 (and only 3) evaluation criteria

	Threshold	Overall Threshold
 **S&T excellence** 0 to 5	3/5	10/15
 **Implementation and Management** 0 to 5	3/5	
 **Impact** 0 to 5	3/5	

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More: Understanding the evaluation sub-criteria

 **S&T excellence**	1. Soundness of concept & quality of objectives 2. Progress beyond state-of-art 3. Methodology and associated workplan
 **Implementation and Management**	1. Management structure and procedures 2. Quality/experience of individual participants 3. Quality of the consortium as a whole 4. Resources
 **Impact**	1.Contribution to the expected impacts listed in the WP 2. Measures for Dissemination and/or Exploitation 3. Management of IP

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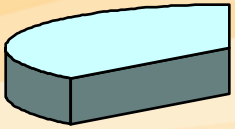


58 proposals below threshold: but where ?

N° of proposals below threshold on →	individual criteria	more than 1 criterion	overall
S&T excellence	42	44	8
Implementation and Management	15		
Impact	16		

The Evaluation Summary report (ESR)

The ESR reflects a consensus between 3 to 5 evaluators

The Commission *"However"* Syndrome:

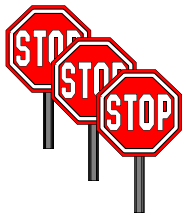
The proposal .. *positive comment* **; "However, ..** *negative comments.*

"**Furthermore,** .. *More negative comments*

S&T excellence (1/3)

Soundness of concept & quality of objectives:

The overall concept is sound and innovative; **however:**

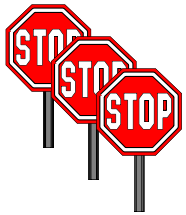


- There are no **quantified** specs for the proposed components – subsystems
- Some **preliminary** target specifications are missing.
- There are no **intermediate** targets at mid-term !
- too easy, some **key parameters** are missing !
  eg: no sensor targets for selectivity, cross-sensitivity, poisoning..
- Too broad, **lacks a lead application** to establish specific targets
- The **objectives** are **spread** over too many areas of research

S&T excellence (2/3)

Progress beyond state-of-art:

Progress beyond state-of art is convincingly described; **however:**



- Too limited to individual components and lacks system overview
- State-of-the-art on competing solutions is not addressed
  (some evaluators may be working for competing approaches)
- Some key published patents have been overlooked
- Similar work is published already and not discussed. (remote evaluation)
- Can't assess: they optimise only a subset of the system specs !
- Hey, they're shooting at a moving target, their market size is unrealistic !
  ("The proposers underestimate advances in competing technologies")

S&T excellence (3/3)

Methodology and associated workplan:

The workplan is well described and appropriate; **however:**

- There are too many non-converging parallel activities !
- The allocation of tasks to individual partners in WPxy is not clear
- The “System specifications” effort WPx is overestimated
- The work on “materials” along the full project duration is not justified
- No clear links between workpackages with decision points !
- No feedback between WPs to improve system performance based on the proposed achievement in components !

Implementation and Management (1/3)

Management structure and procedures:

The Management structure is appropriate; **however:**

-Management will have no authority to enforce decisions

(and anyway, decisions come too late !)

- No procedure to resolve conflicts !! (if no consensus, how will they decide ?)
- Risk management is not described, there is no contingency plan !
- No Gantt chart nor quantified milestones to follow progress along the project duration
- No alternative scenarios after important decision points !
- Management is unnecessarily too complex (eg, too many “boards” with same people)

Implementation and Management (2/3)

Quality/experience of individual participants / Quality of the consortium as a whole

Individual partners are well recognized in their respective fields; **however:**

- Too many partners doing almost the same thing !
- Specific expertise on .. is missing
- They'd better have a packaging/test partner
  (rather than trying all approaches towards the same device !)
- The coordinator does not demonstrate experience in managing such projects
- The end-user is weakly committed for specs definition, tests, validation…
- This SME is here for make-up, no role in techno development
- The industrial partners are weakly involved in the work (more "observing")

Implementation and Management (3/3)

Resources:

The overall effort and allocation of resources are reasonable; **however:**

- The effort on WPx is overestimated wrt WPy!
- The effort in management (administrative) is too high for the size of the project !
- There is no table showing the major equipment expenses that are claimed !

Impact (1/2)

Contribution to the expected impacts listed in the workprogramme
Measures for Dissemination and/or Exploitation

- There is a strong potential industrial impact for the proposed systems;

Or: -Dissemination activities are described;

However:

- Although the exploitation for individual partners is well described, the exploitation of the joint result is left open.
- Exploitation plans by the industrial partners are not sufficiently detailed
- The exploitation plan does not take into account competing devices,

specific market segments, target sale price.. for effective exploitation.

(the targeted market size is unrealistic !)

Impact (2/2)

Management of IP

The potential to secure some IP is described; **however:**

- No overall policy for protection of knowledge, handling of IPR... !
- All IP will remain with one partner only !
- Decisions on IPR is left to the consortium agreement !

Integrated Projects - IP: Specific issues

impact

- Strategic industrial impact limited

Consortium

- Lack of industrial involvement to ensure exploitation

Management

- Organizational structure too weak for the degree of integration required

- Critical mass of resources not mobilized
- No financial plan or justification of resources

Other good reasons for rejection

- Not respecting the basic submission rules
  (Read the “guide for proposers”)

- Submitting to the wrong objective
  (Ask us or send a pre-proposal summary)

In conclusion…

- Start from an exciting and convincing idea,

- Understand our understanding of the evaluation criteria,

- Get your proposal evaluated by one of your

"informed non-specialist" good friend,

- Find a good title…

(e.g. "How to write a successful proposal")

Award criteria: Research and Innovation Actions; Innovation Actions

1. Excellence

- Clarity of the objectives;
- Soundness of the concept, including transdisciplinary considerations;
- Credibility of the proposed approach;
- Progress beyond the state of the art.

2. Impact […] extent to which project outputs contribute to:

- The expected impacts listed in the work programme under the relevant topic;
- Enhancing innovation capacity and integration of new knowledge;
- Strengthening the competitiveness and growth of companies by developing innovations meeting the needs of European and global markets;
- Effectiveness of the proposed measures to communicate the project, disseminate and/or exploit the project results, and appropriate management of IPR.

3. Quality and efficiency of implementation

- Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan, including appropriateness of the allocation of tasks and resources;
- Competences, experience and complementarity of the individual participants, as well as of the consortium as a whole;
- Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk management.

Thank you for your attention!

Find out more:

www.ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020

Research and Innovation