Writing a successful NMP-PPP proposal

Experience of an expert evaluator

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PPP Info Day
Brussels - July 10th, 2012
General comments on my presentation

✓ Commission is doing a highly valuable work in producing support documents

✓ How can I contribute to help making successful proposals?

Flashes on my experience

✓ Probably only common sense remark ...but common sense is sometime lost in the rush of the proposal

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Contents

✓ The proposals evaluation process: an OUTLINE

✓ Hints and tips for proposal writers
The proposal evaluation process:
an OUTLINE
The evaluation process

- This process is undertaken by experts selected on the basis of their scientific, technical and commercial expertise.

- Commission officers in charge of running the evaluations need to employ a balance of nationalities, gender and experience for fairness and transparency (the core of the evaluation process).

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The evaluation process

- **State of mind and experience of the evaluator highly affect** the process (fundamentally performed by “humans”)

- **The evaluator is not able to infer** anything that is not **clearly presented** in your proposal

- **Your proposal is in direct competition with the other ones:** it needs to be a more convincing sales **document** than a scientific paper
The evaluation process: PROCEDURE

Submission → Remote Individual Reading → Local Consensus → Panel → Finalisation

**COMMISSION EXPERTS’ ROLE COMMISSION**

- Full Proposal
- Proposal Forms
- Eligibility
- Evaluators (3 Criteria)
- Evaluators (3 Criteria)
- Evaluators (3 Criteria)
- Final selection & Ranking
- Negotiable Proposals
- Reserve list
- Rejection list

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Your proposal will be assigned to between 3 and 5 evaluators who will independently read your proposal.

**IER** = Individual Evaluation Report

**CR** = Consensus Report

**ESR** = Evaluation Summary Report
Hints and tips for proposal writers to prepare a good proposal
A fair evaluation

✓ What do proposers expect from evaluators?
   ... a fair evaluation

✓ To help the evaluators having the best attitude towards your proposal REMEMBER:

- They have little time to read your proposal
- They are humans

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Evaluators have LITTLE time to evaluate proposals

In order to **NOT TIRE** them:

- Use *clear sentences* and *short periods*
- Use *crystal-clear main points*
- Avoid (limit) *buzzwords* and *verbosity*
- Avoid excessive *use of acronyms*
- Use *consistent wording*

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“Human factor”: try to not irritate evaluators

Evaluators *may not be specialist in your specific field but* are highly educated people with a *strong background in setting up and managing research project*
“Human factor”: try to not irritate evaluators

They could **get upset**

- if they **have to suppose the objectives you “really” aim to achieve** due to proposal lack of clarity
- if some concept must be considered “as true” on the base of the assumed authority of the proposers
- **if they have to struggle with inconsistencies** and missing logical links

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Evaluation criteria

✓ **S/T quality (relevant to the topic of the call)**
  - **Soundness** of concept, and **quality** of objectives
  - Progress **beyond** for the **state-of-the-art**
  - **Quality** and **effectiveness** of the **S/T methodology** and associated work plan

✓ **Implementation**
  - **Appropriateness** of the **management structure** and **procedures**
  - **Quality** and **relevant experience** of the **individual participants**
  - **Quality** of the **consortium** as a hole
  - Appropriateness of the allocation and justification of the resources to be committed

✓ **Impact**
  - **Contribution, at the European and/or international** level, to be expected listed in the work programme under relevant topic
  - **Appropriateness of measures for the dissemination and exploitation** of project results and management of IPR

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S/T quality: Objectives

✓ Clearly state what you want to do and don’t try to impress the evaluator with what you want to do

- Define the problem that you intend to solve
- Explain why this knowledge is critical to solve the proposed problem
- Remember that evaluators limit their evaluation to what is presented and not to what could have been presented
S/T quality: Objectives

- **Define measurable objectives.** Are the objectives that define research projects

- **Explain concepts and provide sensible numbers** that are supposed to measure your progress

- **If you give numbers explain:** where do they come out from, what they measure and how you measure them

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S/T quality: Objectives

- If you give increments of *performances in % be sure you have defined the base lines*

- Avoid repetitions (of the same concept)

- Don’t try to sell a “research programme” for a “research project”
  - Research programmes are good for defining roadmaps but do not configure a project

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S/T quality: State of the Art

✓ Your *state of the art is an important source of information*: Evaluators cannot be specialist in everything

✓ *Define the domain to which you refer your state of the art* and why this domain is meaningful for your project

✓ Obviously “*do not cheat*”

✓ *Overwhelming lists of articles* (for the most part written by some of the proposer) *do not carry the information the evaluators really need*
S/T quality: Methods

- Avoid the confusion between “solving identified problems” and “developing new methods for non identified generic problems”

- Among innovative approaches prefer simple solutions (if they exist) to complex ones (that may be just good for publication)
Implementation

✓ Coordinator
  ▪ Describe/explain the skills and expertise of Coordinator to properly perform this role
  ▪ Do not assume that evaluators know it “by default”

✓ Consortium
  ▪ Real motivation, roles and responsibilities of partners are often unclear
  ▪ Avoid duplication of expertise in the partnership
Implementation

✓ Governance
  ▪ Provide a decision making mechanism
  ▪ Delegate powers in the governance structure

✓ Allocation of resources
  ▪ Provide sufficient time/resources for validation (demonstration) of results
  ▪ Avoid unbalance allocation of resources between partners

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Impact

✓ Do not just echo the expected impacts listed in the call text

✓ Do not confine impact evaluation to giving numbers

  ▪ Quantification of impact (Economic, Environmental, Social, ...) is very important BUT do not treat it as a mere question of dropping numbers (often they sound as random shots). Justify how these numbers have been provided and explain the process you envisage to achieve them.

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Impact

✓ Advantages and Disadvantages: enumerate both

- New technologies tend to present **few high advantages** as confronted with existing technologies but **many minor disadvantages** that all together delay their adoption.

- Don't claim as indubitable enormous advantages: it is difficult for the evaluator to understand **why you want to share with others such a gold mine!**
Impact

✓ *Describe *exploitation plans *and identify exploitation responsibilities*
  
  ▪ The industrial partners take part in the project as they are supposed to get business benefits from results/outcomes
Miscellaneous

✓ *Do not do „cut and paste“!!* Write the proposal yourself as much as possible

✓ *Present your key ideas in a few lines* at the beginning of the proposal. BANG!

✓ *Put yourself ALWAYS in the mind of a VERY critical Reviewer*
Conclusion

... how successful is a good proposal?

“Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away”.
—Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

THANKS

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