



MINAM Launch Event 24 January 2008

Key points of a proposal to be successful, the view of an evaluator



Success factors of project proposal

- Fundamentals
- Outstanding topic
- S&T excellence
- High impact
- Concise description
- Consistent structure
- Clear deliverables
- Addressing risks
- Nicely written
- Other factors



Fundamentals

Addressing the objectives of the call

- General objectives of the programme (e.g. NMP)
- Objective of the area (NMP)
- Specific CALL topics (NMP)

For the evaluator

- Evaluation time of a proposal 2-3h!
(reading, understanding, valuing)

For the applicants

- The proposal will be in a competition,
it should not be a scientific paper!



Outstanding topic / targets / objectives

- At a first glance, can everybody identify the **outstanding** value of your proposal?
- Ambitious targets are the key to be successful, they must zero in on new dimensions, incremental improvements are not sufficient, real objectives have to be defined, no dreams!
- Show the real breakthrough, underline clearly there is more than only a nice improvement of performance. (cost reductions (< 50%) alone are not a breakthrough)
- Explain why this topic is addressed, show the real need! (a continuation of ongoing work has little chance)
- Why should this project be funded?
- Why is this a flagship type of project in your portfolio?



S&T excellence

- A sound solution path and a clear structure of the proposed work underlines your competence and expertise!
- Benchmarking of the proposed results with the state-of-the-art, has to deliver the information necessary to evaluate the crucial significant invention or innovation above the state-of-the-art.
- Conflict free: not all experts have the same understanding or will agree with your way to address the topic or how the objective can be reached.
Prevent such situations if you know already of such different opinions.
- Describe with convincing arguments why your solution path is the right one and why the chosen approach will lead to the expected results.



High impact

- The impact of the project must be far in excess of “business as usual” of the enterprises and must lead to extraordinary values.
- Describe the relevant benefit for the partners from industry and science.
- Why should this topic be addressed, is there a real need or only a continuation of ongoing work?
- Demonstrate the impact to strengthen innovation, show the innovation potential for the future!



High impact (ff)

- The different impacts (scientific, economic, social) must be described qualitatively and quantitatively!
- Convincing exploitation and dissemination description. (knowledge gain, training, publications, conferences, ...)
- Why the European dimension is **the** solution?
- If appropriate address the ethical issues!



Concise description

- Understandable solution path, describe the key elements of the proposal, do not go into details, no “text book style description”. (Remember, the evaluator has only 2-3 h to evaluate a project)
- Be firm and binding with your wording! (Prevent: may be, it would be desirable to ..., etc.)
- Describe the decision structure and benchmarks for decisions quantitatively and qualitatively.
- Also a generalist has to understand your message, evaluators have different backgrounds such as from industry, from science, from technology, ...



Consistent structure

- The structure has to underline, that the objectives are achievable within the proposed time frame, the proposed resources, the knowledge of the project team, etc.
- The proposal has to be a consistent story, not a patch-work and a puzzle for the evaluator!
- Are the objectives of the project addressed in:
 - the solution path,
 - the work programme of the project and by
 - the deliverables of the Work Packages.
- The Work Packages have to address all objectives, not more and not less.



Clear deliverables (qualitative and quantitative)

- The deliverables are the output of the project, not more and not less. (Measurable values)
- They need to be specified carefully and consistent with the objectives.
- The specification cannot stop at the qualitative level, quantitative information is a must to take decisions at Milestones and to impartially evaluate the results at the Milestones.
- Don't forget the target costs of the final deliverable and its market price, if appropriate. (Target costing)



Risks

- Describe the bottlenecks and how to overcome them. (solution path, alternatives)
- Make sure that feasibility studies or proof of principle are **existing** and you have access to them, citation of literature is critical.
- All important risks need to be addressed and a contingency plan has to explain it.
- Define for each “bottleneck area” a Milestone with clear decision parameters.

Without high risk no funding at the European scale!



Nicely written

- A nicely written proposal is not sufficient.
- The content and the consistency of the content of the proposal is key!
- Industry has to define specific objectives and must be the driving engine from the application side! (if adequate)



Other factors

- A good spirit of the evaluation team
- The Call-Budget and budget of the proposal must correlate, the claimed amount needs outstanding arguments!
- Size of the proposal, to read and understand
> 50 pages in 2-3 h is a real challenge for the evaluator
→ test it with a colleague not involved in the proposal

Remark: Stage 1 proposals have 10 pages!



Final remarks

With only writing a proposal, it will not become successful.

It is the content that evaluates the proposal and brings it into a good position of the ranking list.

To hire a proposal writer will thus not consequently lead to a "successful" proposal.



Innovation means seeing
what everybody sees and anticipating
what no one has anticipated

Thank you for your attention

You can download this presentation: www.cma-ecnoe.net

Let us meet at the Brokerage!