

How to write a bad proposal

**Information Event
Ljubljana
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European Commission
Information Society and Media

Outline

1. Introduction: Why not me ?

Statistics on the last call on Microsystems

2. Most common mistakes or omissions

- Underestimating the importance some evaluation criteria and sub-criteria
- Lessons from the evaluation of previous calls on Microsystems
 - 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

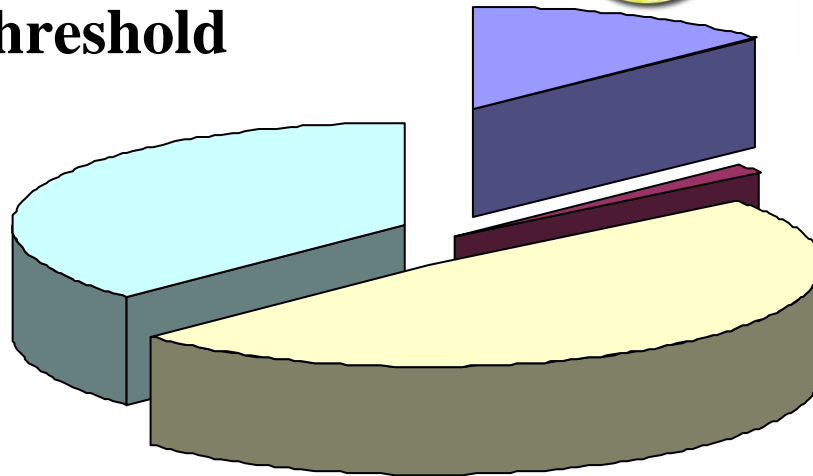
4. Concluding remarks

Why not me ?

Statistics on Microsystems STREP proposals (call 2)

155 proposals received

58 below threshold






**75 Ranked too low
for available budget**



20 Retained




2 Reserve list

The 3 (and only 3) evaluation criteria

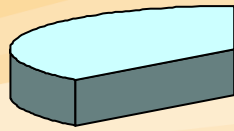
	Threshold	Overall Threshold
 S&T excellence 0 to 5	3/5	10/15
 Implementation and Management 0 to 5	3/5	
 Impact 0 to 5	3/5	






More: Understanding the evaluation sub-criteria

 <p>S&T excellence</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Soundness of concept & quality of objectives2. Progress beyond state-of-art3. Methodology and associated workplan
 <p>Implementation and Management</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Management structure and procedures2. Quality/experience of individual participants3. Quality of the consortium as a whole4. Resources
 <p>Impact</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Contribution to the expected impacts listed in the WP2. Measures for Dissemination and/or Exploitation3. Management of IP





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:**



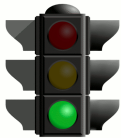
- There are no **quantified** specs for the proposed components – subsystems
- Some **preliminary** target specifications are missing.
- There are no **intermediate** targets at mid-term !
- too easy, some **key parameters** are missing !
eg: no sensor targets for selectivity, cross-sensitivity, poisoning..
- 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:**

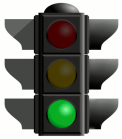


- Too limited to individual components and lacks system overview
- State-of-the-art on competing solutions is not addressed
(some evaluators may be working for competing approaches)
- Some key published patents have been overlooked
- Similar work is published already and not discussed. (remote evaluation)
- 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:**

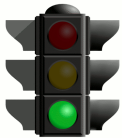
- There are too many non-converging parallel activities !
- The allocation of tasks to individual partners in WPxy is not clear
- The “System specifications” effort WPx is overestimated
- The work on “materials” along the full project duration is not justified
- No clear links between workpackages with 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 !)

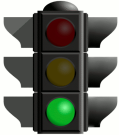
- No procedure to resolve conflicts !! (if no consensus, how will they decide ?)
- Risk management is not described, there is no contingency plan !
- No Gantt chart nor quantified milestones to follow progress along the project duration
- No alternative scenarios after important decision points !
- Management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



- Strategic industrial impact limited



- Lack of industrial involvement to ensure exploitation



- 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”)

