

Participating in the 7th Framework Programme
- Maximise your chances of success

Successful proposal implementation: planning your project

Jörg Scherer
European Research and Project Office GmbH
j.scherer@eurico.eu

Training workshop, Rijeka, February 15, 2008

www.eurico.eu

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

EU project management

Project Management

- The wider research management issue
- EU project management in practice
- Overview of managerial tasks
- Measures To Ensure A Successful Project
- Communication & motivation

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

Many open issues for general discussions

Project Management

- How to manage the unmanageable?
- Can research be managed?
- What is the adequate level of project administration for research projects?
- Do we need Science/Research Managers?

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

Project Management in practice

Project Management

“And stop telling me everyone has his own way of doing things !”

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

4

Tailor-made approaches

Project Management

“Suit you, Sir...”

From ready-made, 'one size fits all' to tailor-made, individually different agreements, with wide scope for differences.

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

5

Balancing interests

Project Management

Individual researcher's interest

Socio-economic demands

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

6

Creating favourable framework conditions

Framework Programme

7

Challenges for the consortium

Project Management

- Elbowroom in projects – as a consequence of the paradigm shift starting from FP6 - increases demands on management skills
- Research management activities shift more strongly in the value chain to evaluating and disseminating project results
- Selecting consortium partners is more demanding due to decreased interference from the EC
- Project partners identify themselves less strongly with the project's ideas; this can be a big problem in e.g. Networks of Excellence
- Adjusting project-specific characteristics in the project structure and workpackages
- Including partners (especially SMEs) more in the decision-making process

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

8

Demands on the coordinator

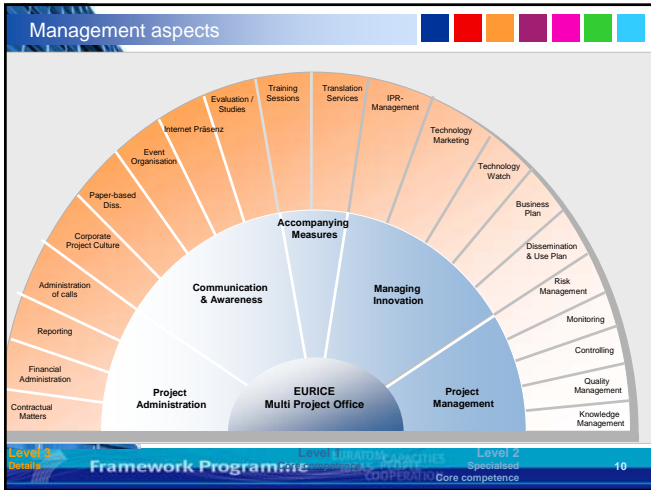
Project Management

- Managing multidisciplinary teams is complex and often very difficult due to the increasing technical specifications of the researcher
- Finding a compromise on the differing interests of universities and industry
- Efficient management is essential to being able to handle the risks of an EU research project and to achieving an valuable end result to the joint work of individual partners
- Striking a balance between macro- and micromanagement
- Must have presentation and negotiating skills

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

9



Measures to ensure a successful project

Project Management

- Project organization and planning
- Project monitoring
- Project management/quality management

→ The foundations of a successful project are laid during the proposal and contract negotiations phases; "faulty positions" are often difficult to correct!

Project organization & planning

Project Management

- Already important during the proposal phase! (selecting dedicated consortium partners, creating a management structure for the project, etc.)
- The organizational structure (project committees) and management plans must be created by the contract negotiations phase **AT THE LATEST!**
- Important decisions left unmade take up valuable project time

Organizational Structure – Project Management/Coordination (I)

Project Management

- Everything often relies on the coordinator (project motor)
- Coordinator's duties:
 - Make sure the legal entities fulfil the necessary formalities to join the Grant Agreement
 - Receive and distribute funding from the Community;
 - Keep accounts in an orderly fashion and inform the Community of distributed funds;
 - Make sure communication between the project partners and the Commission is efficient and correct.

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

13

Organizational Structure – Project Management/Coordination (II)

Project Management

- The coordinator should be the leader, supported by an effective team that together efficiently manages the project
- A "democratic dictator" is definitely acceptable in large consortiums

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

14

Organizational Structure – Other Project Bodies

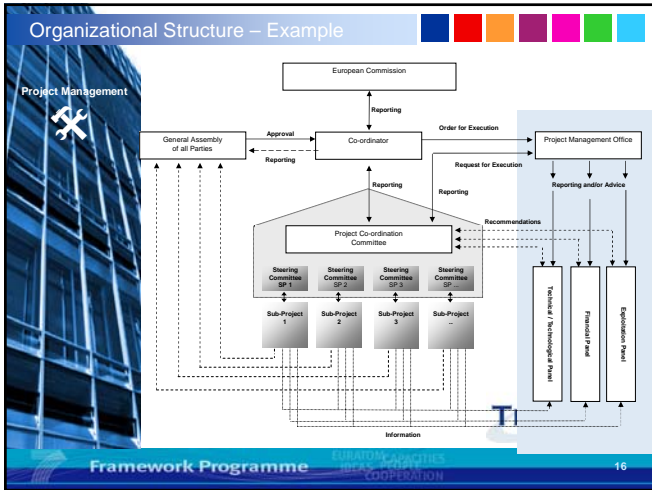
Project Management

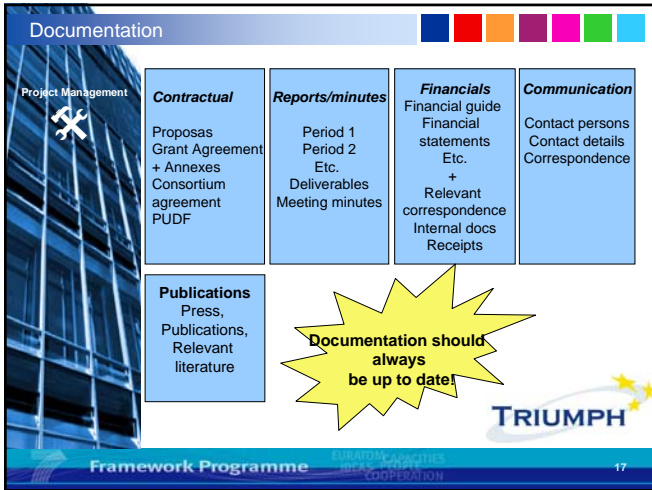
- The responsibilities of all project bodies must be clearly outlined, appropriate for the project and understood and accepted by all consortium partners (stated in consortium agreement):
 - Coordinator
 - Project Management Office: professional back office that supports the Coordinator in day-to-day management
 - Project Coordination Committee: management and coordination body for the project
 - Workpackage leaders can be a further organizational level that assume partial responsibility for their work packages
 - General Assembly: consists of one representative per partner institution; highest decision-making authority that handles all matters of crucial importance
 - Advisory Boards with external multipliers

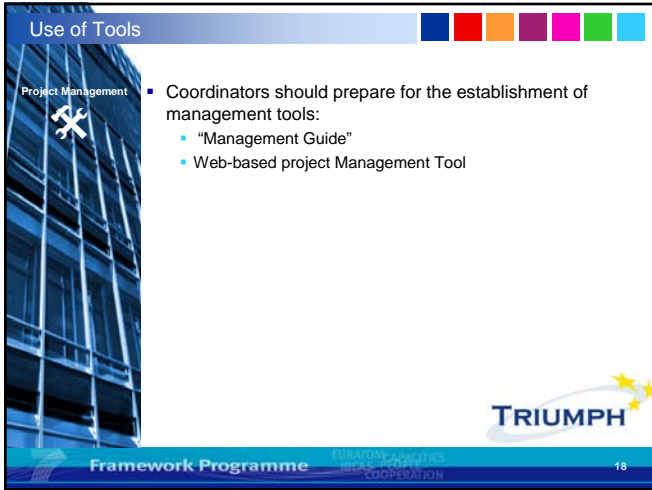
TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

15







Tools – Project Handbook

Project Management

- Regulations, standards and templates by the coordinator that aren't covered by EU guidelines or contracts
- Layouts for project documents (Deliverables, Presentations, etc.)
- Communications standards
- Specific rules/workflow (e.g. Deliverables)
- Software to be used
- Partner rights and obligations
- Expanded regulations on publications
- Anything else related to the specific demands of the project

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

19

Project Management tool example „Project Angel“

Project Management

A dynamic service regularly adapted and modified during a project life-cycle

The diagram shows a central circle labeled "ProjectAngel" surrounded by ten hexagonal nodes, each representing a function: Networking, Project Administration, Project Bulletin, Document Repository, Meeting Calendar, Workpackage Overview, Service Center, Reporting, Monitoring, and Communication & Project Management Guide. The nodes are arranged in a circular pattern around the central hub.

Framework Programme

20

Project Management Tool

PMG: Document Repository - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address: https://nl.lundserver.de/secure/infopages/index.php?N=630

Members Area

ProjectAngel Bulletin

Document Repository

- Contracts: All information concerning the ProjectAngel contract, the Consortium Agreement and financial documents.
- Deliverables: Review the list of deliverables. Upload/download document files to the repository.
- Reports: Here you can find the official versions of the periodic progress and management reports.
- Dissemination Materials: Review of and contribution to papers, articles, press releases and posters related to the ProjectAngel Suite.
- Meeting Materials: All documents related to project meetings, such as meeting minutes, presentations, etc.

Workpackage Overview

Meeting Calendar

Service Centre

Communication

Reporting Tool

Project Monitoring

Who is Who

Document Repository

Start

Communication Culture – best practice

Project Management

- Respect different ways to communicate among people with different cultural backgrounds, but make sure to establish efficient communication structures that are acceptable for all partners
- Transparent communication structures
- Name contact persons and representatives
- Define standards, but leave room for informal exchange of information
 - Internal communication (working group)
 - External communication
- Non-ambiguous identification of the addressees for e-mail messages
 - Mail distributors
 - Message Board

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

25

Communication Culture – Best practice

Project Management

- Use the project homepage as your communication center:
 - Current, easily-accessible databanks with contacts, functions and addresses (homepage)
- Large projects should create an internal newsletter that informs all partners about progress in all areas of the project

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

26

Communication Culture – Consortium/EC

Project Management

- Coordinator is the link between the consortium and the Commission; all communication to the Commission goes through him
- EU Scientific Officer – remember: give and thou shalt receive
- How it should be:
 - Precise, succinct reports
 - Punctuality in submitting Deliverables
 - No major deviations from the work and finance plans
 - Promptly communicate any problems or deviations and include a possible resolution

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

27

Motivation By The Coordinator/Steering Committee

Project Management

- Create a Corporate Identity (logo, homepage)
- Design meetings as "events" to motivate partners about the project
- Motivation often dips after a certain period ⇒ Coordinator must promptly intervene
- Recognize different kinds of partners and respond to them accordingly. For example:
 - The Follower (joined up 'just cause' – is content to simply follow along)
 - The Perfectionist (work/reports are perfect – just way overdue)
 - The Lone Wolf (after a while just does their own thing and forgets about the project)
- Consistently impose sanctions for any unacceptable behaviour

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

28

The Three „Inter-Levels“ of an EU Project Consortium

Project Management

- **Intercultural**
 - EU Member States: Founding Members, New Member States Candidate countries
 - Third Countries
- **Inter-institutional**
 - Research: Universities, Research Institutes
 - Industry: Big Industry, SMEs
- **Interdisciplinary**
 - Representatives from different fields work together toward a common goal (or goals)

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

29

Specific Challenges And Recommended Solutions (I)

Project Management

Different (but legitimate) interests of the partners

- Universities: interested in publications
- Industrial companies: interested in exploitation
- Identify and eliminate possible conflicts during the proposal and contract negotiations phases
- Adjust publication regulations and intellectual property rules in the consortium agreement accordingly

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

30

Specific Challenges And Recommended Solutions (II)

Project Management

- Varying levels of experience in implementing and/or participating in EU projects
 - Project Management Office can assist partners with less experience (support even during the proposal phase!)
- Vacation time in different countries affects reporting
 - No reporting due for August
 - Specific agreements with projects including Third Countries (Asia, South America)

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

31

Typical Problems

Project Management

- "Sleeping Partner"
- Late or no reaction to inquiries
- Company is taken over/goes bankrupt
- Contact changes
- Over-/Underspending by partners
- Partners achieve no or qualitatively poor results/"Deliverables"
- Deadlines are not met (project may have to be extended)
- Unexpected costs/new activities
- Additional „proposals“ made to the EC
- Frequently changing Project Officer
- Personal disputes between project partners are taken to the consortium, wasting valuable time

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

32

Typical Problems

Project Management

While you can't prevent every problem,
you can have plans in place to resolve them ...

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

33

Lessons learned

Project Management

- Don't "blow up" the consortium; every project partner should have a clearly defined role; PM rule: doubling the number of partners increases management demands tenfold
- Read and use contract documents
- All levels of management must recognize and accept their responsibilities (even workpackage leaders)
- Generate visibility and a sense of mutual identity (motivation); be sure to include every partner
- Important: transparency in operations and decisions
- Important: Paraphrase all reports/protocols
- Understanding and a sense of humour make things much easier

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

34

Thank you for your attention

Further information

Jörg Scherer

European Research and Project Office GmbH
 Science Park 1 / Stuhlsatzenhausweg 69
 66123 Saarbrücken

Tel.: +49 681/95 92 33 60
 Fax: +49 681/95 92 33 70

j.scherer@eurice.eu
<http://www.eurice.eu>

TRIUMPH

Framework Programme

35
