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

Successful proposal implementation: planning your project

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EU project management

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

Many open issues for general discussions

- 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?
And stop telling me everyone has his own way of doing things!

Suit you, Sir…

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

Balancing interests

Individual researcher's interest

Socio-economic demands
Creating favourable framework conditions

Challenges for the consortium
- 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

Demands on the coordinator
- 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
Measures to ensure a successful project

- 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

- 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)

- Everything often relies on the coordinator (project motor)
- Coordinator’s duties:
  - Make sure the legal entities fulfill 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.

Organizational Structure – Project Management/Coordination (II)

- 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

Organizational Structure – Other Project Bodies

- 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
**Organizational Structure – Example**

- **Project Management**
  - Co-ordinator
  - Project Co-ordination Committee
  - Steering Committee
  - SP 1
  - SP 2
  - SP 3
  - SP ...
  - Sub-Project 1
  - Sub-Project 2
  - Sub-Project 3
  - Sub-Project ...

- **General Assembly**
  - of all Parties

- **Technical / Technological Panel**
- **Financial Panel**
- **Exploitation Panel**

- **Documentation**
  - Contractual Proposals
  - Grant Agreement
  - Annexes
  - Consortium agreement
  - PUDF
  - Publications
  - Press
  - Publications
  - Relevant literature
  - Reports/minutes
  - Period 1
  - Period 2
  - Etc.
  - Deliverables
  - Meeting minutes
  - Financials
  - Financial guide
  - Financial statements
  - Etc.
  - Reimbursement
  - Correspondence
  - Internal docs
  - Receipts
  - Communications
  - Contact persons
  - Contact details
  - Correspondence
  - Reports/minutes
  - Period 1
  - Period 2
  - Etc.
  - Deliverables
  - Meeting minutes
  - Deliverables
  - Meeting minutes
  - Deliverables
  - Meeting minutes

- **Use of Tools**
  - Coordinators should prepare for the establishment of management tools:
    - "Management Guide"
    - Web-based project Management Tool

- **Documentation should always be up to date!**
Tools – Project Handbook

- 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

Project Management tool example

"Project Angel"

A dynamic service regularly adapted and modified during a project life-cycle
Tool-Modul: Financial Project Controlling

Comparison of planned and actual costs

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<th>Total Actual</th>
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Project Management

- Communication Culture
- Motivation

Communication Culture – General Requirements

- Exchange of information should be
  - Clear
  - Non-ambiguous
  - Complete
- Dimensions
  - Internal + external
  - In writing + oral
  - Formal + informal
  - Vertical + horizontal
- Attention should be paid to
  - Choice of communication media (should be appropriate to the given occasion, e.g. formal = letter, day-to-day communication = e-mail)
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

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

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
Motivation By The Coordinator/Steering Committee

- 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

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

- 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)

Specific Challenges And Recommended Solutions (I)

- 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
Specific Challenges And Recommended Solutions (II)

- 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)

Typical Problems

- “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

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

- 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

Thank you for your attention

Further information

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