

Managing ICT projects in FP7 – exchange of best practices

Consortium building and proposal writing

Anastasius Gavras, Eurescom
gavras@eurescom.eu



together anywhere, together anytime



Building

- Develop a core of a very few essential partners whose wisdom experience and skills you value and whose commitment you can count on.
- Know what skills you need
 - Skills database
- Know your project
 - Recognise the good principles you base it upon – and keep them!
- Be wise
 - The best predictor of future behaviour is current behaviour (commitment, responsiveness, ability to contribute)
- Be firm
 - Let them know whose project it is, gently take control
 - Make it clear that permission to join is a right to be earned
- Be patient
 - Only accept new members into the project when you are sure of their value.
- Be human
 - Meet each other. It forces people to show commitment and lets you get to know each other. (Can you work with these people?)

Learning

Accept you need help but choose your helpers wisely

It is easier to exclude people from the consortium now than it will ever be again.

Stick to your principles – it leads to a cogent and self consistent project.



Preparing

- Meet each other
- Get to know “who knows what”
- Recognise the elephant
 - And don’t try and eat it at all once
- Get native English speakers to proof read the English

Learning

Involving experienced proposal writers was invaluable.

Answer the question

Get a good project manager



Getting started

- Acknowledge the basic dynamics of groups
 - Forming
 - Roles and responsibilities unclear
 - Leader has lots of control and responsibility
 - Storming
 - Decisions don't come easily
 - Vying for position
 - Norming
 - Roles and responsibilities becoming clear
 - Performing
 - Team strategically aware
 - Diminished dependence on leader
- Recognise there are teams within teams; help them to go through these phases.

Learning

Teams form best when they meet in person

If you can, arrange a task on which all parties must jointly work

Teams are continually forming and continually need to meet up



Monitoring progress

- Embrace the theory and practice of project management
 - Be grateful for deliverables and work packages
- Pre-arrange regular meetings schedules
 - at task level, and at a consortium level
- Use audio conferences
- Put key people on speed dial. Call them regularly, pick up the phone, talk to people

Learning

Work-packages and tasks are necessary for reporting but nothing focuses the mind like an imminent deliverable.

Email for all its uses is rubbish. Use the phone more, and meet people.



If I knew then what I know now

Best decisions

- Initiating the idea
 - It lets you set the scope
- Strictly control entry to the “inner sanctum”
- Value differences
- Bringing in a professional project management company as coordinator
- Developing external advisory committee

Worst decisions

- Budget all the money
 - Build in contingency
- Under-estimating the “language” barrier
 - We should have allowed more time for the norming stage



Summary

- Consortium building is tough
 - People are human
 - Be patient
 - Stick to sound principles
 - Apologise when wrong
 - Recognise and embrace diversity
-
- Stand back occasionally, marvel at what the consortium have achieved.



Thank you!



together anywhere, together anytime