How to obtain EU funding

Writing Winning Proposals

Ulrich Boes, URSIT Ltd., Sofia, Bulgaria
EPISTEP Workshop Thessaloniki, 7 December 2007

URSIT
Services in Information Technology

SEERC
SOUTH-EAST
EUROPEAN
RESEARCH
CENTRE

Contents

- Introduction and Background – the European Union

- Requirements: What do we want

- Calls for Proposals: the process

- Calls for Proposals: under the looking Glass

- Finding Partners: Consortium Engineering

- Proposal development in detail

- Conclusions

The Lisbon Objective

By 2010 Europe should become "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. "

- Renewed Lisbon Strategy (2005 Spring European Council)
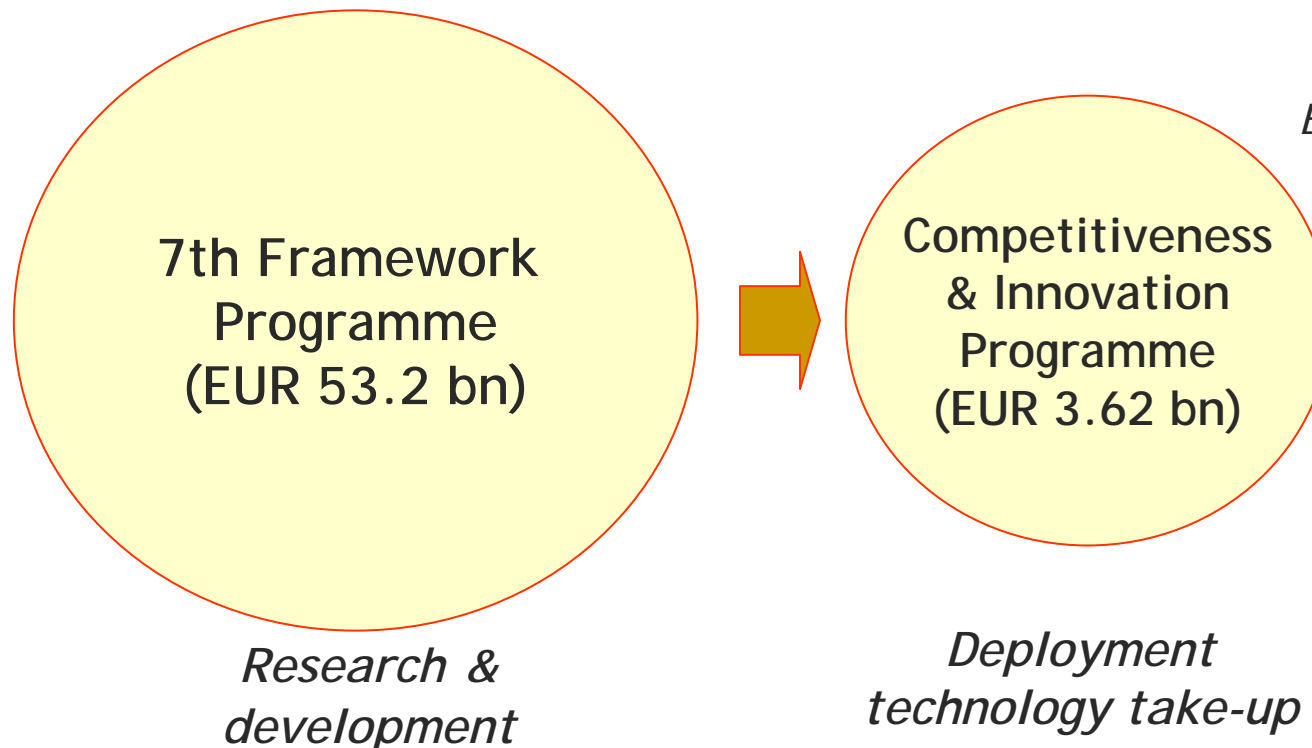- i2010: 'A European Information Society for growth and employment'

Research & Innovation Support Programmes 2007-2013

- *Collaborative R&D (10 themes , ERA-nets,*
  Joint Technology Initiatives)

- *Investigator-driven research*

- *SMEs & regional actions*

- *Mobility*

- *Entrepreneurship & Innovation (EUR 2.2 bn)*

- *IST Policy Support (EUR 0.73 bn)*

- *Intelligent Energy Europe (EUR 0.73 bn)*

7th Framework Programme (EUR 53.2 bn)

Competitiveness & Innovation Programme (EUR 3.62 bn)

Research & development

Deployment technology take-up

What is a EU project ?

- ❑ Projects are collaborative undertakings
- ❑ Several partners from several EU countries
  - ❑ Different cultures and languages
- ❑ Coordinator and several partners
- ❑ European dimension
- ❑ Long term orientation
- ❑ Financing from European Commission is a grant to part of the project cost

Why do we want to get funding ?

- Funding for something that was planned to do

- Development of advanced technology

- Access to advanced technology

- Collaboration with key players/customers

- Access to a new market/geographic area

- Development of an international standard

- Marketing and/or technological intelligence

- Increasing company experience and potential

- Receiving money

Contents

- Introduction and Background – the European Union
- Requirements: What do we want
- **Calls for Proposals: the process**
- Calls for Proposals: under the looking Glass
- Finding Partners: Consortium Engineering
- Proposal development in details
- Conclusions

From the Idea to the Project

- Framework Programme
- Calls and call information
- Proposal development
  - Partners
  - Proposal structure
- Submission
- Evaluation
- Contract

Find a call

ALL FP7 calls on one page: 'Find a call'

Click here

Work Programme

- Provides further details of the topics

- Expected impact statements at the level of the topic or research area

- Details of funding scheme(s) to be used

- Any specific eligibility or evaluation criteria

- Information on future topics –as basis for future consultations

Evaluation Process

yes

Eligibility Check?

Individual reading

Consensus

Panel (with Hearings)
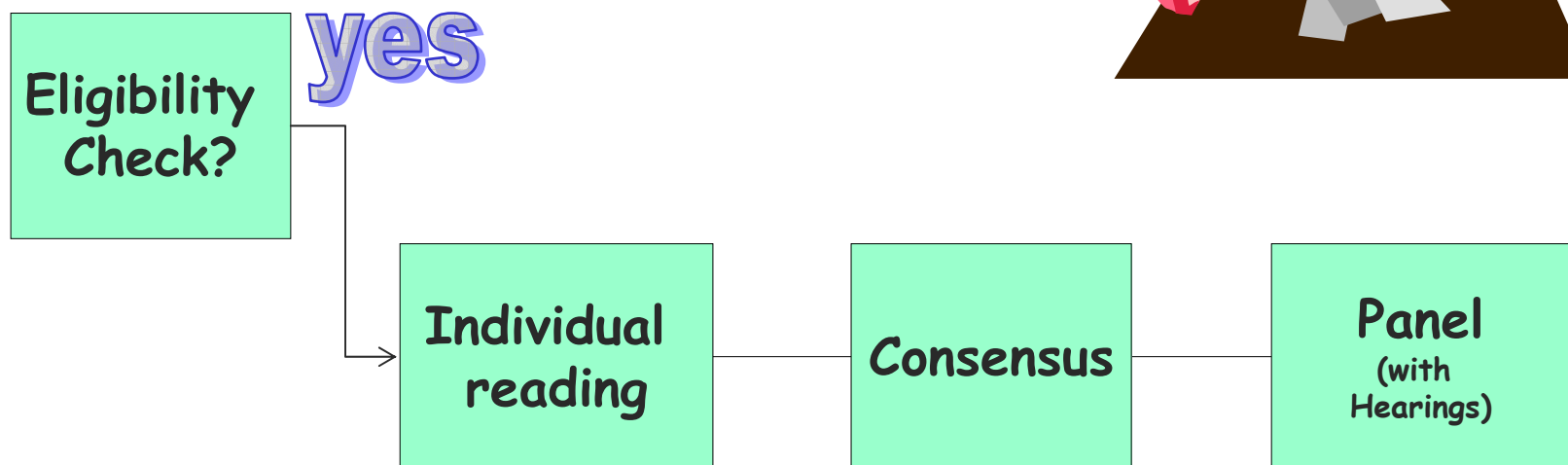
Evaluation Process

- **Difficulties to hire evaluators**
  - Availability
  - Conflict of interest
  - Academia and consultants
- **Evaluators read a proposal in ~ 2 hours**
  - Evaluation criteria
- **Consultation meeting**
- **Rapporteur's report**
- **Panel meeting**

The evaluation criteria

Proposals are evaluated on three criteria

- Scientific and technical quality
- Implementation
- Impact

Each criterion is given a score out of five

A threshold of 3/5 must be achieved on each criterion

An overall score is calculated for each proposal by simple addition

A threshold of 10/15 must be achieved on the overall score

The scoring scale

0   The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing   or incomplete information.

1   Very poor –
The criterion is addressed in a   cursory and unsatisfactory manner.

2   Poor
There are serious inherent weaknesses in   relation to the criterion in question.

3   Fair
 While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses that would need correcting.

4   Good
The proposal addresses the criterion well, although certain improvements are possible.

5   Excellent
The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor

Selection

- **Evaluation Summary Report (ESR)**
  - ► Evaluation result: Marking and Priority order of proposals by experts
- **Commission Decision on selected proposals for funding**
  - ► As successful proposal – the Commission will invite you for negotiations
  - ► After successful negotiation - you will sign the grant agreement and start the project

Contents

- Introduction and Background – the European Union
- Requirements: What do we want
- Calls for Proposals: the process
- **Calls for Proposals: under the looking Glass**
- Finding Partners: Consortium Engineering
- Proposal development in detail
- Conclusions

ICT Work Programme, Objective 1.6

Objective ICT-2007.1.6: New Paradigms and Experimental Facilities

Target outcome

a) **Advanced networking approaches to architectures and protocols**, designed to cope with increased scale, complexity, mobility and requirements for security, resilience and transparency of the Future Internet coupled with their **validation in large scale testing environments** based on a combination of physical and 'virtual' infrastructures.

b) **Interconnected test beds** addressing novel distributed and reconfigurable protocol architectures; novel distributed service architectures, infrastructures and software platforms; and advanced embedded or overlay security, trust and identity management architectures and technologies. Test beds for systems that provide trusted access to e-services with users requiring no administration and security skills.

c) Coordination and support actions for: i) standardisation and conference support; ii) co-ordination with related national or regional programmes or initiatives.

Expected Impact

- Strengthened European position in the development of the Future Internet.

- Wider take-up of technological developments in networks and service infrastructure facilitated by a comprehensive validation of the technological and service choices.

EF

ICT Work Programme, Objective 1.6 (2)

- Global consensus towards standards and strengthened international co-operation through interconnected test beds and interconnection capabilities offered to third countries.

- Higher confidence in the secure use of the Internet through test beds enabling trusted access to e-Services.

Funding schemes

CP, NoE, CSA

Indicative budget distribution[12]

40 M€:

- CP 36 M€ of which a minimum of 12 M€ to IPs and a minimum of 15 M€ to STREP
- NoE 3M€
- CSA 1M€

Call

FP7-ICT-2007-2

Understanding the work programme

- **Questions:**
  - Match our idea – Work Programme text?
  - what does the European Commission want?
- **Extract the keywords, decipher the meaning**
  - Interpretation and definition
- **Background information**
  - Information days
  - Earlier projects
  - EC - initiatives

Interpretation of Objectives 1.6

- **Target Outcome**
  - Results and achievements of the project

- **Expected Impact**
  - Long term strategic result, influence of the project on Europe

- **Funding scheme:**
  CP (STREP and IP), NoE, CSA

- **Budget**
  - At least: 2 IPs, 4 STREPs, 1 NoE, 1 CSA

Target Outcome a)

a) **Advanced networking approaches to architectures and protocols**, designed to cope with increased scale, complexity, mobility and requirements for security, resilience and transparency of the Future Internet coupled with their **validation in large scale testing environments** based on a combination of physical and 'virtual' infrastructures.

What?   **Why? (Need)**

How? (Approach)

Questions:
1. What is the Future Internet?
2. What are virtual infrastructures?

Expected Impact

To be proven and explained in the proposal !

- Strengthened European position in the development of the Future Internet.

- Wider take-up of technological developments in networks and service infrastructure facilitated by a comprehensive validation of the technological and service choices.

- Global consensus towards standards and strengthened international co-operation through interconnected test beds and interconnection capabilities offered to third countries.

- Higher confidence in the secure use of the Internet through test beds enabling trusted access to e-Services.

- Competitiveness and European products
- Use of the results;
  Validation = it should work
- Acceptance by the Internet community or Industry
- Acceptance by users

Contents

- Introduction and Background – the European Union
- Requirements: What do we want
- Calls for Proposals: the process
- Calls for Proposals: under the looking Glass
- **Finding Partners:Consortium Engineering**
  - **How to find partners**
  - **Definition of the role of the partners**
- Proposal development in detail
- Conclusions

How to find partners

- Contacts during existing/previous projects
- Business or technical contacts in Europe
- Cordis partner search
- Ideal-IST active partner search
- Supporting projects (EPISTEP)
- Information days
- European Technology Platforms
- Participation in an ETP
- Specific activities of certain technical areas

Consortium Value Chain

```
┌─────────────────────┐
│     Researcher      │
└─────────────────────┘
           │
           ▼
┌─────────────────────┐
│     Developer       │
└─────────────────────┘
           │
           ▼
┌─────────────────────┐
│     Integrator      │
└─────────────────────┘
           │
           ▼
┌─────────────────────┐
│  Service Provider   │
└─────────────────────┘
           │
           ▼
┌─────────────────────┐
│        User         │
└─────────────────────┘
```
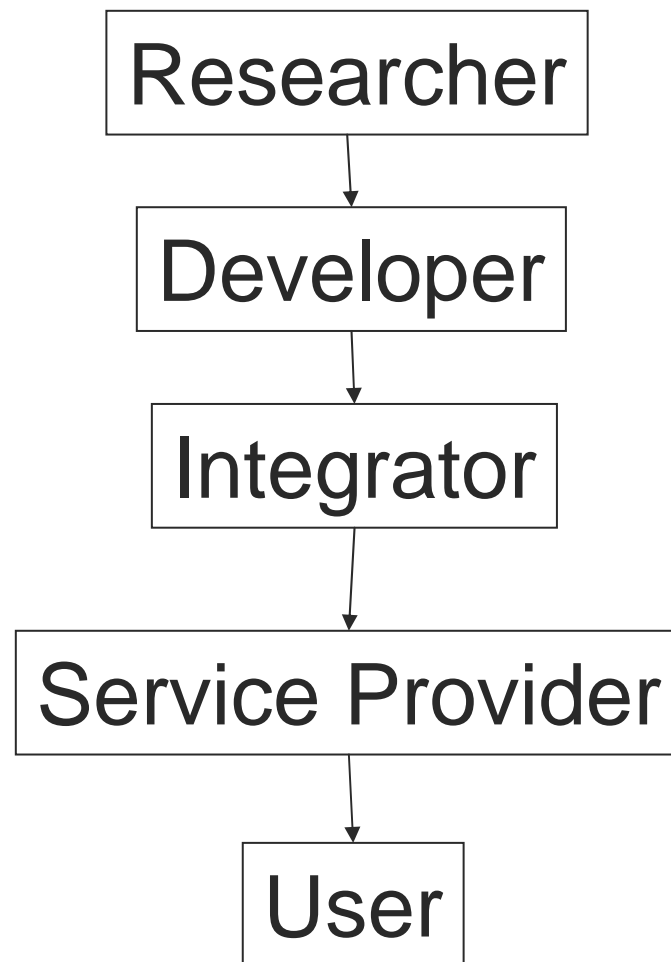
- Partners have to be selected to accomplish all tasks in the project
- Each partner must have a well defined role in the project
- According to its expertise

Contents

Proposal time schedule

~ 4-6 months

~6-9 months

Idea!

Form consortium ← Add partners

Write proposal

Submit to Brussels

Pass evaluation?

Contract negotiations

Project start

© Myer Morron
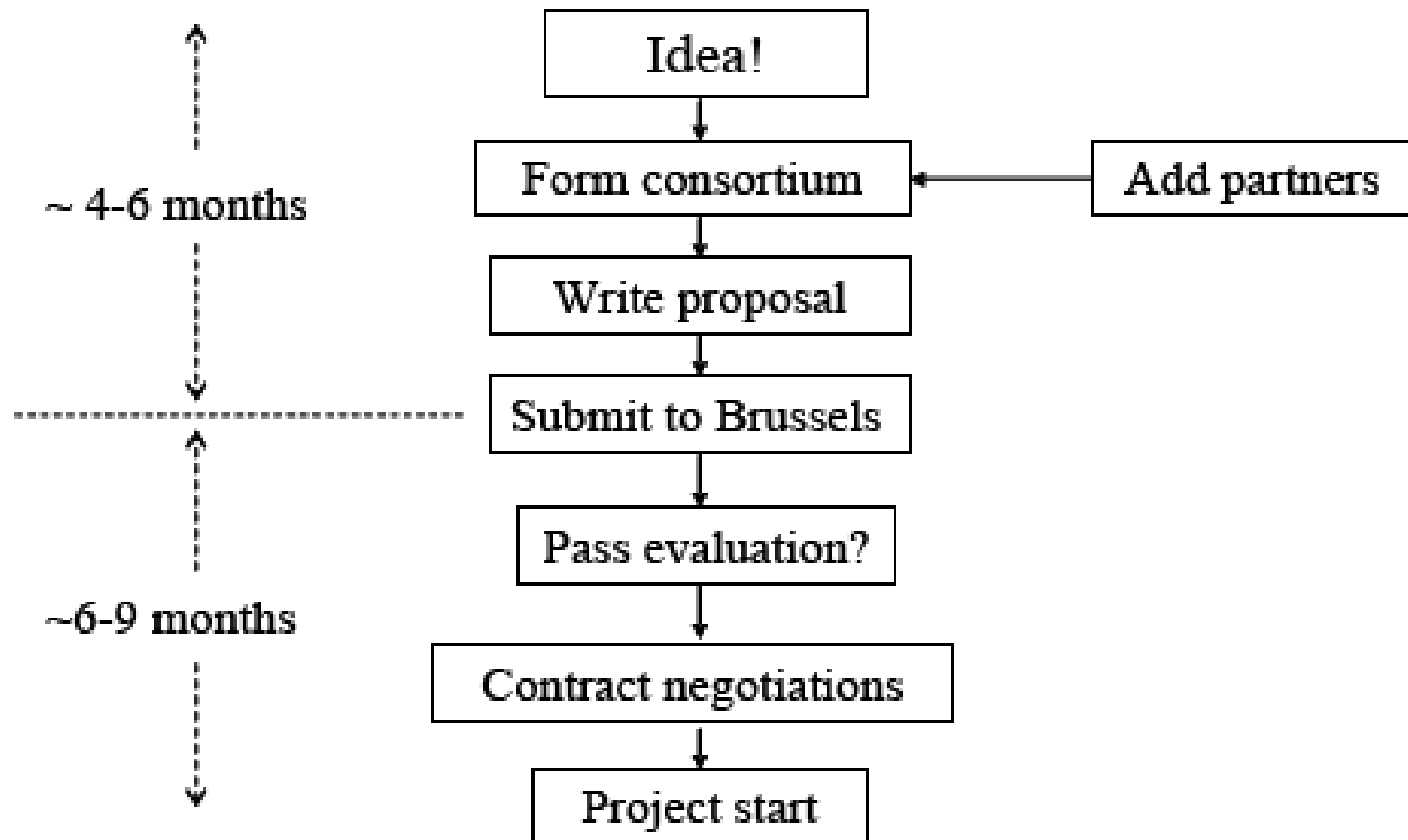
When to start proposal writing

- Do not start too early (loss of momentum)

- Do not start too late (low quality of proposal)

- A start 2 - 4 months before deadline seems to be right

For whom do we write?

Target Audience

- Evaluators
- EC Evaluation coordinator/ Project Officer
- European Commission
- Ourselves

What to write: Part B structure

- Proposal summary page

- Section 1: Scientific and/or technical quality, relevant to the topics addressed by the call

  - 1.1 Concept and objectives

  - 1.2 Progress beyond the state-of-the-art

  - 1.3 S/T methodology and associated work plan

- Section 2. Implementation

  - 2.1 Management structure and procedures

  - 2.2 Individual participants

  - 2.3 Consortium as a whole

  - 2.4 Resources to be committed

What to write: Part B structure (2)

- ## Section 3. Impact
  - ○ 3.1 Expected impacts listed in the work programme
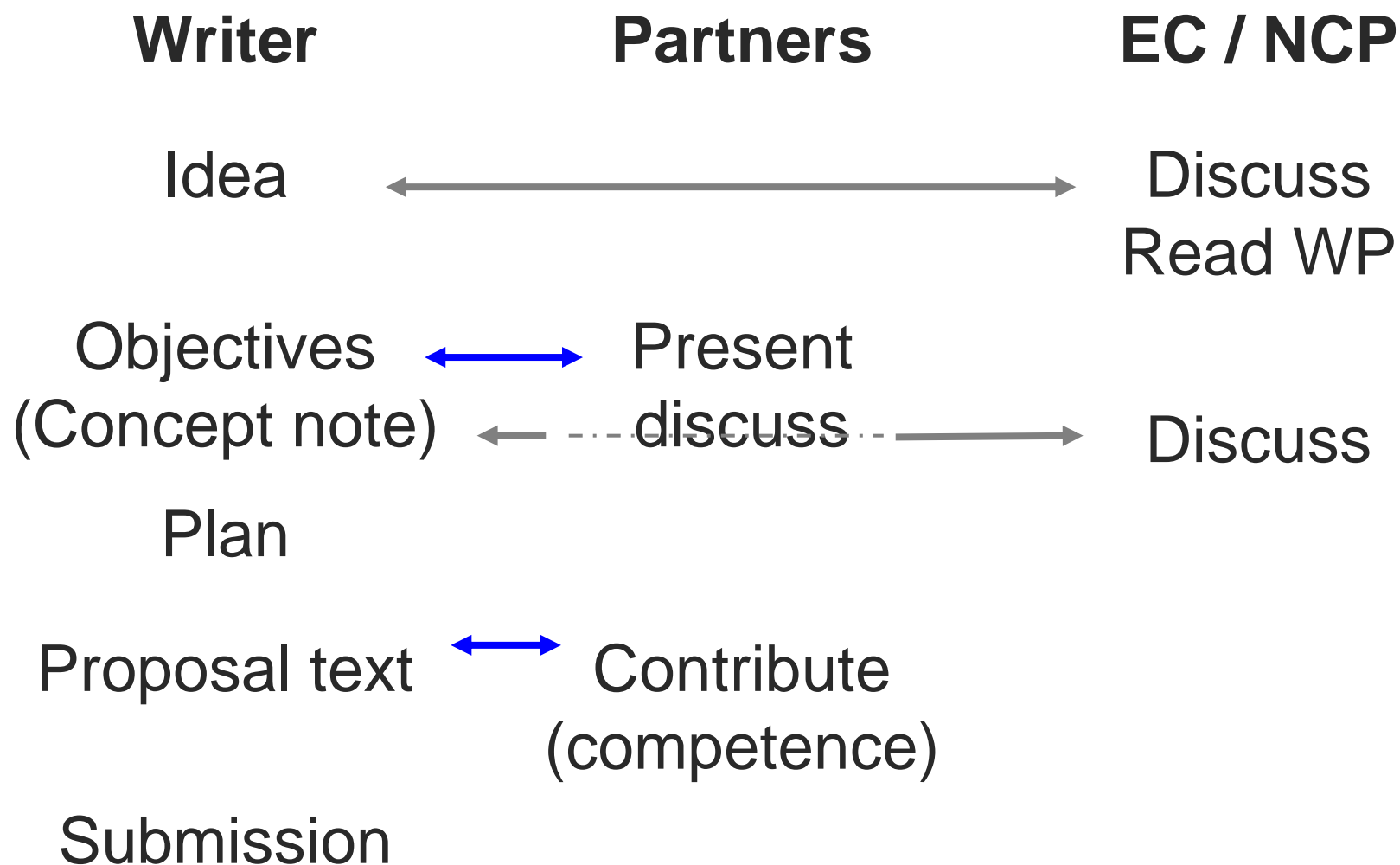 - ○ 3.2 Dissemination and/or exploitation of project results, and management of intellectual property

- ## Section 4. Ethical Issues

Evaluation criteria applicable to Collaborative project proposals (IP or STREP)

S/T QUALITY "Scientific and/or technological excellence (relevant to the topics addressed by the call)"	IMPLEMENTATION "Quality and efficiency of the implementation and the management"	IMPACT "Potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results"
• Soundness of concept, and quality of objectives • Progress beyond the state-of-the-art • Quality and effectiveness of the S/T methodology and associated work plan	• Appropriateness of the management structure and procedures • Quality and relevant experience of the individual participants • Quality of the consortium as a whole (including complementarity, balance) • Appropriateness of the allocation and justification of the resources to be committed (budget, staff, equipment)	• Contribution, at the European and/or international level, to the expected impacts listed in the work programme under relevant topic/activity • Appropriateness of measures for the dissemination and/or exploitation of project results, and management of intellectual property.

The overall process of writing

Writer	Partners	EC / NCP
Idea	⟷	Discuss Read WP
Objectives (Concept note)	Present discuss	Discuss
Plan		
Proposal text	Contribute (competence)	
Submission		

Writing a proposal

The possibilities are:

- One does all for all

- Collaborative process
  - Problem: people from different cultures work remotely
  - No authority
  - Build a core team of people you know

- Meeting of partners ?

- One overall responsibility is necessary

Planning for writing - Milestones

- Kick-off meeting

- Date for all partner contributions for Part B at coordinator

- Date for first complete draft

- Date for critical review

- Date for A forms

- Date for final draft and first submission (1 week before deadline)

- Date for final critical review

- Final submission (1day before deadline)

Planning

Proposal topics		Month 1				Month 2				Month 3					Month4				Deadline	Resources [PD]
Task	Responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Week	
Definition of overall and precise objectives	Coordinator																		1	2
Decision on specific proposal type	Coordinator																		3	2
Description of concept of proposal	Partner																		4	5
Background & State of the art research	Partner																		8	8
Business Planning	Partner																		6	5
Identify potential partners, agreement	Coordinator																		7	6
proposal development	Partner																		8	1
Proposal development to 1.																			12	16
Further development, coordination																			15	6
and doc collection	Coordinator																		15	8
Proposal submission	Coordinator																		16	1
	Total																			60

Cost ?

Total 60 PD

Use of Templates

- The basic templates are given by the EPSS/EPD

- Build your own template
  - There is freedom to add own subheadings and own templates for tables etc.

- Add these at the beginning of the proposal process

- Everybody should know exactly what to write where

Template for Concept and Objectives

B 1.1 Concept and Objective(s)

*Explain the **concepts** of your project. What are the **main ideas** that lead you to propose this work?*

*Describe the S&T objectives in **detail**. Show how they **relate to topic(s)** addressed by the joint call, which you should explicitly identify. Identify and indicate where the main focus or **centre of gravity** of the proposal is lying (i.e., in the ICT Theme or in the Security Theme). The objectives should be those **achievable within the project**, not through subsequent development. They should be stated in a **measurable and verifiable form**, including through the milestones that will be indicated under section 1.3 below.*
6 pages!

Evaluation criterion: Soundness of concept, and quality of objectives

Writing Style

- Follow the KISS principle:
  (Keep It Simple & Stupid)
  - Write short and complete sentences

- Follow a logical sequence for the technical texts
  - What: What to do about it (Objectives)
  - Why: What is the problem to be solved
  - How: How are you going to do it (Approach)
  - Who: Who is going to do it (Which partners)
  - How much: What resources are needed to do the job

10 Tips for a good proposal (1)

- **Clear thinking**

- **Address the call theme properly**

- **Be focused on your points**

- **Good tables and diagrams**

- **Structure of the document**
  - Highlighting, emboldening, bullets, summarising

10 Tips for a good proposal (2)

- **The text as presented is evaluated**
  - Do not allow evaluators to guess
- **Conciseness**
- **Rewrite what is taken from the web**
- **Text has to be self-contained**
- **Exploitation has to be convincing**

Examples of hot air

- "Our technological experience allows us to frame, with reasonable accuracy, a plausible high-level architecture demonstrating the main components of a possible implementation of the system."

  ○ *Too many constraining words such as "reasonable", "plausible", "possible" etc.*

- "The financial plan for the project was carefully constructed using best practice methods. We've used both a top-down and a bottom-up approach, with an outcome consistent with both approaches. The plan is consistent with the guidelines of "several tens of man-years and several millions of Euros".

  ○ *It is difficult to know what to make of this – whether to laugh or cry – one thing is sure it does not lead us to have faith that the financial management will be professional.*

- "This industrial sector will potentially enjoy a stronger market position"

  ○ *Pure unspecific, unquantified generalisation.*

Contents

- Introduction and Background – the European Union
- Requirements: What do we want
- Calls for Proposals: the process
- Calls for Proposals: under the looking Glass
- Finding Partners: Consortium Engineering
- Proposal development in detail
- **Conclusions**

Conclusions

- You can learn to present a good proposal in the best possible way,

- But no amount of creative writing will disguise an inadequate proposal

- Important Issues
  - *Thinking*
  - *Presentation of thoughts*
  - *Structure of thoughts*
  - *Competence*
  - *Emotional issues*

- Think of the reader

Questions ?

URSIT
Services in Information Technology

Ulrich Boes

Director

URSIT Ltd.
Musagenitsa, bl. 98 B
entr. B, floor 7, apt. 49
1797 Sofia, Bulgaria

tel./fax: +359 2 870 28 78
GSM: +359 898 536 750
ulrich.boes@ursit.com
http://www.ursit.com

Thank You for Your Attention !