Preparing a Successful Project Proposal

Experience sharing from EU – Funded Programs

Netra Bhandari
Göttingen International
Georg-August-Universität Göttingen
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What is a Project Proposal?

A proposal is a **formal, written request** to institutions and agencies for **financial assistance** to implement a project, which provides sufficient information to persuade the reviewer that the proposed work represents an **innovative and effective approach** to the pertinent problem in a given sector. **Funding** is sought, in whole or in part, from government funding agencies, charitable foundations, corporate societies, individuals, and other sources.

- The proposal provides background information on your project by outlining:
  - The specific objectives of the project.
  - The technical approach to be used in solving the problem or developing the product.
  - The anticipated results of the project.

- Project proposals should answer the following questions:
  - Is the problem sufficiently important to justify money, time and effort?
  - Is the project well defined and realistic?
  - Have you outlined a sound approach, including your ability to perform the tasks?

- A winning proposal addresses an important question with an **innovative idea**, is well expressed with a clear indication of methods for pursuing the idea, evaluates the findings, and makes them known to all who need to know.
EU Funding Sources

- With particular focus on Erasmus+ funding possibilities – Separate Slides

Separate Presentation
Before you begin

- It is both “science” and “art”
- Available sources of funding
- Specific calls or program available in the market/
  EU Call for applications - website
- Call for applications
- Program guidelines and deadlines
- Understand your project concept thoroughly.
- Get the details from those in the know - previous experience and information; and
  people/ institutions which are implementing the similar programs
- Or, participating in the similar program as partner.
- Both “Head” talk and “Heart” talk are important.
Before you begin

- Work on the proposal from the program point of view or be donor centred. Always work from the funder’s point of view — be donor-centred.
- Does your request for money align with the funder’s objectives?
- Follow their application process to the letter.
- Use their style, language if feasible.
- Be human—people give to people.
- Funders have different needs and so may require different approaches; BUT
- All proposals have elements in common;
- Information for one proposal may be used for others—prepare a template and “cherry pick” the content;
- Investment of time upfront = long term benefits
Project Proposal Writing Process

Key:
- Know who will probably read the proposal – evaluator/audience
- Tailor each proposal to the respective programs – guidelines
Project Ideas

- Overall strategy of the HEI
- Specific calls or program available in the market/ i.e. call for applications / tenders
- Interest and relevance to the potential faculties
- Previous experience in similar program as coordinator or partner
- Tentative project concept
- Potential partner identification and follow-up
Background research

Matching the criteria with the funding agency and the respective program:

- Objective of the program
- Minimum eligibility criteria – very important
- Geographic limitations – envelope
- Size of the funding
- Application process
- Key deadlines and date (incl. internal)
- Any other restrictions
Establishing Contacts

- Communication and coordination is key to success in proposal development
- Communication with both internal and external participants in the project

How you establish contact?

- Email or phone call seeking information or a meeting, if further info needed Skype or Video-conference
- Prepare one-page concept paper or letter of intent outlining your project
Establishing Contacts

Letter of Intent (LOI): Sometimes, letter of intent or few forms of mandate (agreement) is required by some funding agency—

- Sometimes called letter of inquiry or query letter.
- Similar to a covering letter
- Funding Agency uses letter to screen applications – formal requirement
- Funding agency will review letter and determine whether or not to invite an application or full proposal
- Most of the time – template available, but sometimes can be open
Establishing Contacts

Letter of Intent (LOI):

- On institutional letterhead, signed by the legal representative or most appropriate person i.e. professors
- Max. 1 – 2 pages, concise
- LOI:
  - Introduces your organization
  - Summarizes project and expected results
  - Express the willingness of your organization to participate in the project
  - Support provided by the institution
- Establish contact with the respective department and management board to obtain the LOI on time e.g. with Legal department
Writing the Proposal

- Coordination of the write-up - input from various partners, work package leaders – division of labor

- Give others a chance to read/ review and provide feedback -
  - reader’s point of view
  - find a good internal/external reviewer for feedback/critique
  - Reviewing from the involved stakeholders least a week its due

- Starting proposal two weeks before deadline, while ideas/results still being generated: nonstarter
The Proposal – Key Components

- Cover letter
- Executive summary
- Introduction of the organization/Consortium
- Project description
- Goals and objectives
- Anticipated outcomes of your project
- Strategies, methods, & timelines – project mgmt. & implementation
- Budget
- Other information as may be requested
  e.g. Key personnel; facilities and equipment; subcontracting and consultants
The Proposal – Cover Letter

Cover letter

- Similar content to LOI
- 1 to 2 pages, max — concise
- Signed by “legal representative” — i.e. Rector, Director, or by Faculty
- Brief outline of how your project relates to the program
- Impact/outcomes

Cover

- Title of project
- Date proposed
- Label it as a “Proposal”
- “Submitted to:” name, address, phone, e-mail
- “Submitted by:” (as above)
The Proposal – Executive Summary

Executive Summary

- This is extremely important part of the proposal – the Abstract/Summary is often the first cut in selecting proposals for funding – it’s worth devoting time to it.
- 1 to 2 page stand alone overview – sometimes the words/characters limitation given by the funding agency.
- Summary of issues, approach and impact.
- Anticipated benefits, potential for applications and profit.
The Proposal – Introducing your Institution / Consortium

- Brief introduction of your organization
- Organization past experience managing program relevant to the program
- Organization networking and contacts with regards in the region.
- Past achievements and impacts

Never assume that funding agency/ evaluators may know your famous institution, but assume that they do not really know your institution or understand what your institution do. If it is consortium project do not forget to highlight all the above issues for all the partners. Maybe coordinating institution will have more to share, but each institutions should be highlighted.
The Proposal – Project Description

Project description may include:

- Goals and Objectives
- Expected Outcomes
- Human resources required — staff, assistants
- Strategies, methods and timelines
- Monitoring and evaluation
The Proposal – Project Description

Goals & Objectives

Goal — your vision statements

- Broad ideas beginning with phrases like:
  - To enhance . . .
  - To provide . . .
  - To improve . . .
  - To advance . . .
The Proposal – Project Description

Goals & Objectives

Objectives – how the goals will be achieved?

- Measurable
- Qualitative vs. quantitative
- Clear, distinct beginning with phrases like:
  - To increase/decrease . . .
  - To reduce/eliminate . . .
  - To recruit/update
The Proposal – Project Description

Outcomes – Value addition

- The results of an activity
- The impact of a service
- Measurable - how will you know you’ve achieved your goal?
- “Tangible” and “intangible” benefits
- Return on investment (ROI)?
- Value added to the program
- Uniqueness - how will it make a difference
Human Resources

*Why it is so important?*

- Who will be leading the project?
- Qualification and expertise of the people involved
- Outline experience, special skills
- Division of tasks among the involved partners and staff
- Key contact persons for various work packages or at partners *e.g. academic and administrative contacts*
The Proposal – Project Description

Strategies, Methods and Timelines

- Outline your approach and methodology
  - How will the project be carried out?
  - Any innovative approaches? Always Plus
- Ensure your project’s goals, objectives and strategies/methods relate to each other
- When will things get done?
The Proposal – Project Description

Monitoring & Evaluation

*Why it is so important?*

- Who will be doing it? – external and internal
- When? - frequency
- What data will be collected and how?
- How will success be measured?
- Mandatory for few project
- Quality assurance
The Proposal – Budget

- Keep it easy to read, clear – *in case of narrative budget – justification for equipment, tools, or as when required*
- Budget corresponding to the project’s outline
- Budget distribution to the specific action (WP) and partners
- Co-financing and contribution by the institution and consortium partners
- **Sustainability** – *what happens after the project funding is over.*
The Proposal – Tips

Who should/could write your proposal?

Someone who:

- knows your project well
- is passionate about the project
- has excellent writing skills
- has time to focus

External writer who specializes in writing proposals. She/he can be briefed by those knowledgeable and passionate about/leading the project.
The Proposal – Tips

- Keep things simple – the content of your proposal far outweighs the packaging
- Keep it professional – the proposal represents you
- Customizing proposal according to funding agency need
- Frame your request in positive terms and how your work will make the difference.
- Avoid in-house jargon, colloquialisms, and define all acronyms
The Proposal – Tips

- Use of active voice
- Use spell check plus grammar and style check functions on your computer – then proof read again
- Be concise but not at the expense of essential contents
- Number all pages
- Begin early – give yourself lots of time to prepare, to review, to consult and to redraft.
- Get your proposal in on time.
- Check the details/ external proof reading
Thank you!
Group Work – CBHE Project Concept

• Project Title / Name
• Budget
• Duration
• Goals and objectives
• Consortium composition (Potential Partners)
• Activities/ Workpackages
- Promoting the Virtual Education System at KRI

- Budget € 500,000
- 2 Years

Goals:
* To enhance edu. Level
* To facilitate educational Services
* To economize time and financial costs

Objectives:
* Experts to be pioneered.
* TOT by external experts.
* Building suitable infrastructure.
* Modernizing edu. platform.
Partners (Potential)

* EPU
* SU
* DPU
* UoR
* KISSR
* MHESR

Program Countries:

* Göttingen Univ.
* Bielefeld Univ. of Applied Sciences
* Masaryk Uni
* Groningen Uni
- WP 1: Analysis & Research (All + Măzești)
- WP 2: Development (All + Groningen)
- WP 3: Implementation & Reim (All)
- WP 4: Quality Plan.
- WP 5: Management (DPU + Bielefeld)
- WP 6: Dissemination (KISSR MHESR)
Enhancing Entrepreneurship
Short-term Courses for Senior Students

Budget: € 300,000
Duration: 2 years
Goals and Objectives:
- To train, equip, prepare senior students of (Charmoo, Sulaimani, Halabja, SPU) universities.
- Train (40) students, 10 from each university to attend 4-8 weeks training at Göttingen and Uppsala, Sweden.

Consortium: CHU, SPU, B UOS, UGH + Göttingen + Uppsala
1. Web design
2. Marketing Advertisement
3. Multimedia 3D Animation
4. Visual Effects
5. Event Management/Hotels
6. Project Management

Dissertation:
Result announced on university websites

(International Conference)

Outcome: 40 students trained, completed short-term course and found jobs.
Work Packages:

1. Exchange visit of Partner country University IRG+CDC Staff to visit programme Country universities to kick workshop meeting.

2. Programme Country visits to Partner country.

3. IRG+CDC announce/applications Shortlist/interview/selection of targeted audience (10 Senior Student from each Partner Country university).

4. Designing training & selection of Programmes of the following: