

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

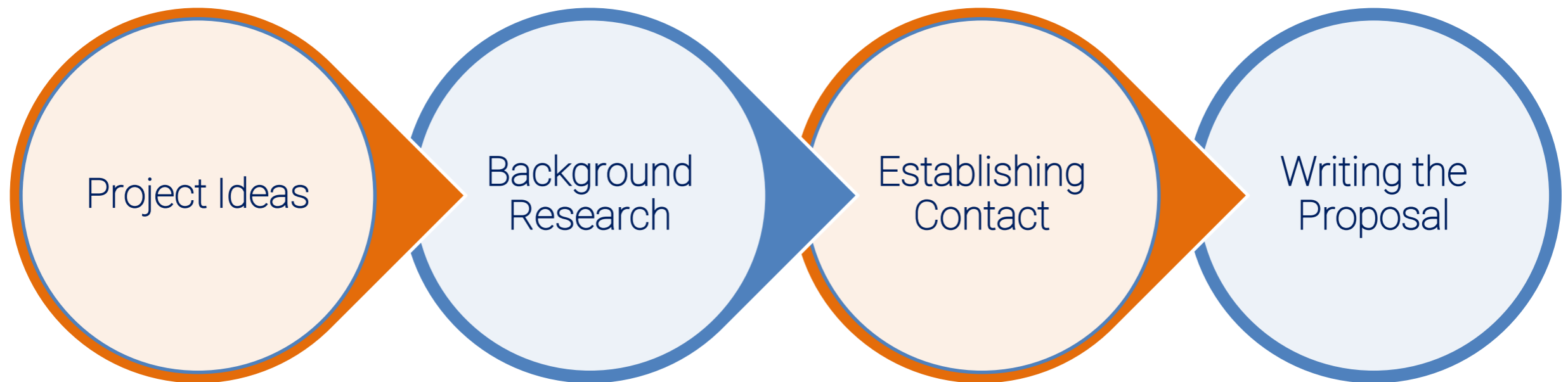
- It is both “science” and “art”
- Available sources of funding
- Specific calls or program available in the market/
EU Call for applications - website
- Call for applications
- Program guidelines and deadlines
- Understand your project concept thoroughly.
- Get the details from those in the know - previous 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 programs 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



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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.to
- 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



The Proposal – Project Description

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

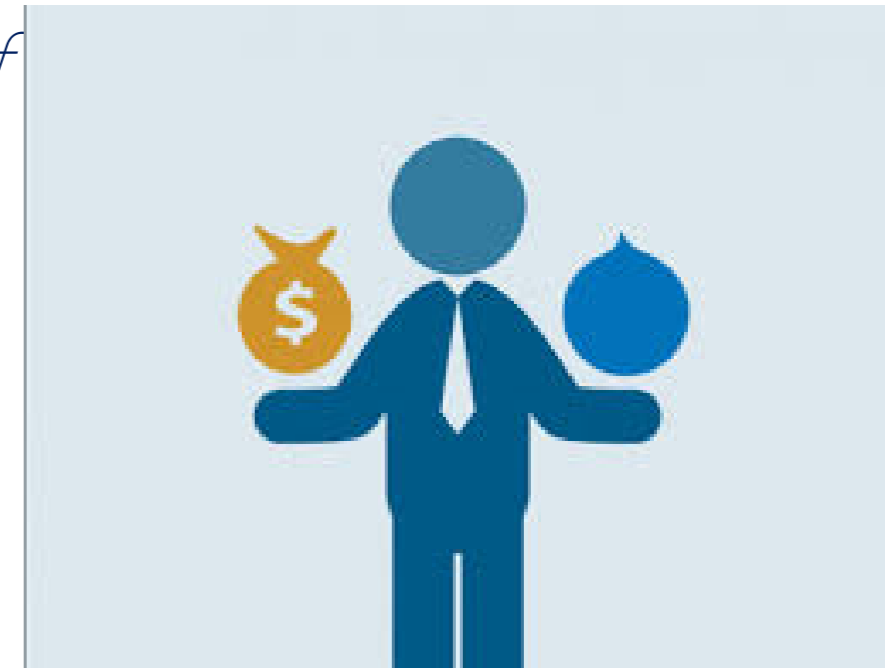
Why it is so important?

- 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

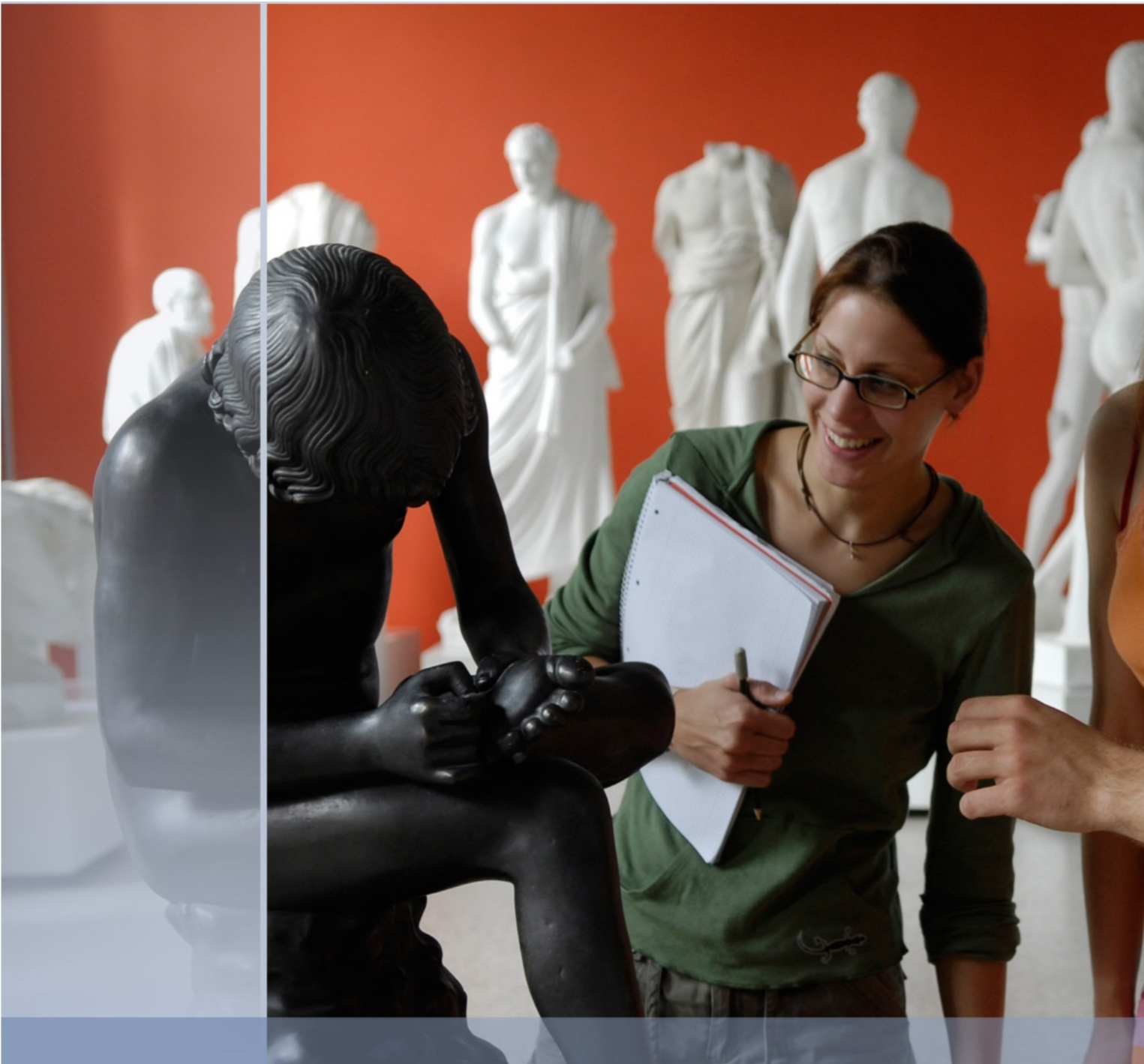
- Keep things simple – the content of your proposal far outweighs the packaging
- Keep it professional – the proposal represents you
- Customizing proposal according to funding agency need
- Frame your request in positive terms and how your work will make the difference.
- Avoid in-house jargon, colloquialisms,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



The Proposal – Tips

- Use of active voice
- Use spell check plus grammar and styl 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!