


# How to find partners and prepare competitive proposal

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**INCO-NET EaP Training for NCPs**  
**Minsk**  
**14-15 April 2014**

# From Idea to Contact- Action Plan

- Preparation of calls
  - Opening of Calls
  - Application deadline
  - Evaluation of applications
  - Evaluation Results
  - Negotiations
  - Grant agreement
- 
- Idea
  - Framework of the idea
  - The specifications of topics
  - Finding Partners
  - Tasks and Roles
  - Project structure, metrics
  - Submission of the proposal...

# From the idea to the project (before the deadline)

Activity	Timeline (week)
Idea	- 20
The opening of calls	- 12
Preparation of abstract	- 11
Partner search	- 10
Consortium building	- 8
Distribution of tasks	- 6
Preparation of the project	- 3
Project submission	- 1

# How to find partners

# Who can participate?

- Any undertaking, university or research centre or other legal entity, whether established in a Member State (MS) or Associated Country (AC)\* or third country
- **International organisations** and **participants from third countries** can participate only if in addition to minimum consortium requirement
- Participants from **high-income countries\*\*** are normally not eligible for EC funding

\* presently: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, (Switzerland), Turkey. List given in the guide for applicants

\*\* USA, Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao, Vatican, San Marino, Andorra, since H2020 – Russia, India, China, Brazil, Mexico

# Partner differentiation

## Group A

Has project idea and  
would like to be the  
**coordinator**

## Group B

Has project **idea** but  
does not want to be the  
coordinator

## Group C

Does not have an idea  
but would like to be  
**beneficiary**

# If you have a project idea and you would like to be the coordinator

- **Analyse the needs of your project: Try to find the BEST partners**
- **Your partner should**
  - be eligible
  - answer the needs of your project
  - have complementary skills
  - produce an added value for the project
- **Take into account:**
  - Project type
  - Minimum and maximum budget
  - Special requirements in WP
    - Involvement of SMEs
    - Cooperation with third countries
- **Where and how you can find the best partner?**
  - Screen you own existing international contacts
  - Use the network of national contact points or similar networks (EEN, IGLO)
  - Publish or disseminate your partner search
  - Attend information days, brokerage events etc

# If you have a project idea but you do not want to be the coordinator

Define clearly your project idea and **try to find the MOST EXPERIENCED coordinator & consortium**

- Again check the eligibility criteria (type of the institution, geography...)
- Screen the former coordinators (CORDIS)
- Screen you own existing international contacts
- Use the network of national contact points or similar networks (EEN, IGLO)
- Attend information days, brokerage events
- Screen best practices (CORDIS)



# If you do not have an idea but you would like to be a beneficiary

- Describe yourself : **MOTIVATION LETTER**
  - Check if you are eligible for the call
  - Try to find the coordinators, call your friends & colleagues
  - Define: your potential contributions to the project and the consortium
  - Screen the existing projects
- and again...
  - Screen you own existing international contacts
  - Use the network of national contact points (partner profile tools)
  - Publish your profile

# Partner search tools

# Community Research and Development Information System (CORDIS)

<https://cordis.europa.eu/partners/web/guest/home>

The screenshot displays the CORDIS website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'About CORDIS', 'Contact', 'Search CORDIS', and 'Legal Notice', along with a language dropdown set to 'English (en)'. Below this is the CORDIS logo and the text 'Community Research and Development Information Service'. A breadcrumb trail reads 'European Commission > CORDIS > Partners Service > Guest > Home', with a 'Sign in' link. A horizontal menu contains several categories: Home, News and Events, Funding Programmes, Projects and Results, Top Stories, research\*eu magazines, Research Partners (highlighted in blue), and National and Regional. Below the menu, a red horizontal line is drawn. The main content area is titled 'EU Research Partners' and features a section 'Looking for research partners?' with the text 'You can:'. A red arrow points to a search box containing the text 'Search for partners' and a 'Search' button. Below this, there are several links and statistics: 'Query more with an advanced search', 'Browse these active profiles and collaboration requests to build your network:', '7062 Partner profiles', '150 Open FP7 Calls for Proposals', '4727 Partnership requests', '1001 Proposing project', '3726 Offering collaboration', and '293 Groups'. To the right of the search section is a 'Log in to create or update your profile' box with fields for 'Username:' and 'Password:', a 'Log in' button, and links for 'Forgot your username or password?' and 'Not yet registered?'. At the bottom right, there are social media icons for RSS, Twitter, and Facebook.

# NCP Network

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/porta>. The page title is "National Contact Points". The main content area includes:

- A paragraph starting with "companies."
- A section titled "NCP Services" with a red bracket on the left. The text below it states: "As the NCPs are national structures, the type and level of services offered may differ from country to country. In general, the following basic services are available in accordance with the [NCP Guiding Principles](#) agreed by all countries:" followed by a bulleted list:
  - Guidance on choosing relevant H2020 topics and types of action
  - Advice on administrative procedures and contractual issues
  - Training and assistance on proposal writing
  - Distribution of documentation (forms, guidelines, manuals etc.)
  - Assistance in partner search
- A section titled "Search for your NCP" with a red bracket on the left. The text below it says: "Find the contact details of your national H2020 National Contact Point or those of your potential partner's country. You can search for NCPs in Member States, Associated Countries and third countries. You can also search for NCPs by thematic areas or functions; for instance, you can look for an NCP who is specialised in Marie Curie actions. Hover over the NCP functions to view the explanation of their specific responsibilities."
- A paragraph: "The third country NCPs listed below were nominated in the context of the Seventh Framework Programme. This list will be progressively updated for Horizon 2020, as necessary."
- A search form titled "Search for:" containing:
  - A dropdown menu for "Select the country" with options: Albania, Austria, Belgium.
  - A dropdown menu for "All functions" with options: Coordinator, Legal and Financial, SMEs. A tooltip for "Legal and Financial" is visible.
  - A "SEARCH" button.
  - A "Sort by" section with radio buttons for: Country, Contact name (selected), Most recent, Organisation.

# Proposal

# Proposal writing

- **Prepare a work plan**
- **Get familiar with rules**
  - Work Programme
  - Guide For Applicants
  - Financial guidelines
  - etc
- **Create an ECAS account**
- **Share the proposal writing between partners**
- **Follow the instructions carefully**
- **Don't be afraid to ask for help and oppinion**
- **Show your application to a friend**

# Drafting the proposal

Three tasks : **coordinating, writing, budgeting** (2-3 persons)

Centralization vs. decentralization

**One leader** to collect all input!

- Circulate the whole draft as often as possible among partners
- Create a core writing team among WPs leaders
- Cite all relevant previous projects
- Read the call for proposals several times (during the drafting)

**Budgeting:**

- Differences between partners?
- Differences in hours allocation?
- Differences in general budget allocation?
- Harmony between hours and tasks!

# The proposal must meet **ALL** requirements of the call, which means:

- It is submitted before the deadline
- You have at least the minimum number of participants
- You have filled in and completed all required forms, both administrative (A) and the description of work (B)
- You have understood the work programme correctly and your proposal corresponds to the call and the topic
- You have used the correct funding scheme
- You have followed all special clauses, limitations and additional requirements written down in the work programme of the call
- Your budget is within the allowed limits



# From the idea to the project (after the deadline)

Activity	Timeline (week)
Proposal evaluation by experts	+ 6
EC Report to the Programme Committee	+ 11
ESR to the coordinator	+12 (max 5 months)
Contract	+ 24 (max 3 months)
The start of the project	+ 26

# Finally

- Abstract is a very important part of your proposal
- Evaluators are allocated ½ day [4 hours] to read, understand and report on 60-100 pages of text!
- Your project idea may be brilliant, HOWEVER, first impressions count!

• **Be aware that it is a competition!!**

# Proposal template

## **Exercise: Brainwalk**

15 minutes for walk, 20 minutes for discussion  
(every group choose an presenter)

- 1. How to be involved in project consortium**
- 2. Self-presentation – DO's and DONT's**
- 3. The characteristics of ideal consortium**
- 4. Biggest barriers**

# Tips and advice

- What you don't write, the reviewer doesn't know!
- The project has to address the call!
- Ambitious but realistic
- Create a schedule and organize your work
- Make your proposal easy to read
- Don't send your application on the last minute

# Tips and advice

- **Write clearly & simply**
  - Don't use jargon/abbreviations/acronyms/obscure terms
  - Evaluator may not be a native English speaker
- **Do not assume knowledge/specific expertise of evaluators**
- **Use diagrams and charts to illustrate your proposal**
  - Pictures are often worth a thousand words!
- **Keep within guidelines for text length**
- **Stay within scope**
  - Refer back to Call Text & WP on a regular basis
- **Ensure proposal does not duplicate previous projects, but builds on them!**

# Tips and advice

- FP is highly competitive: the average success rate is 21% - But it is not a lottery!
- Read the documentation (work programme, call fiche, guides for applicants) - No hidden agenda!
- Prepare yourself in good time
- Check the eligibility criteria
- You must align your proposal with the work programme
  - “Shoe-horning” a marginally relevant proposal into call never works!
  - Don’t forget the ‘expected impact’
- Follow the structure in the Guide for Applicants

# Tips and advice

- Put yourself in the mind of the experts
- Ask a disinterested colleague look at your proposal, using the Commission criteria
- Be clear and concise, and obey the page limits, font etc
- Submit early, submit often!
  - Revise your proposal once it's uploaded in Participant portal
- The experts' evaluation is based on the content of the proposal. So be clear and logical concerning progress beyond state of the art, impacts, methodology, resources, consortia and work planning.