A successful Application

The view from 20 years of evaluations

Prof. Dr. Ing. Frank Atzler

Overview

- **Description of the call and evaluation procedure**
- **The Application**

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First shot, only shot, excellent shot

- there are usually no grant negotiation phase → proposals are evaluate as submitted

- there are no modifications recommend

- shortcomings are reflected in a lower score for the relevant criterion

- **do invest your time in "good writing"**

- **you are trying to convince "somebody" to give you a lot of money, so tell them as precisely and convincingly as you can, a sound story with a coherent red line and good backing with facts and references**

- **do a thorough literature research** ! If you are a **master in your subject**, and this you should be if you apply for several millions of Euros, you should have the **literature = State of the Art** and a credible idea **where you want to take this idea = Progress beyond the State of the Art** (→ TRL Level according to the call) ready anyway !

- **Do not** use "**literature research**" or "**basic data acquisition**" as one of your work packages. These are prerequisites for your proposal !

- However, you will quote out of your large experience (knowledge of the State of the Art and your large pool of previously harvested data) to back up your proposal !

- do never use unsubstantiated statements or even allegations !

  E.g.: "Though the number of workplace accident events is following over time a downward trend, a significant percentage of them are linked to maintenance activity and equipment failure." no reference quoted → Allegation WITHOUT REFERENCE !

- when there is only funding for 10% of the proposals or less, you must be amongst the "excellent" one´s → above 12,5 to 13 points out of 15. Everything needs to be perfect !

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Description of a call,
Buzzwords to be taken over, Example

Specific Challenge:
In line with the circular economy, lifetime extension can limit high replacement costs of major industrial infrastructures. This can be achieved through refurbishment, re-manufacturing, re-use, upgrading, in-situ repair, improved maintenance and more conservative utilisation of large industrial equipment of the kind used in manufacturing. These actions can significantly extend the useful life of heavy machinery, and improve the return on investment from major capital items.

Scope:
This topic is for demonstration projects to establish the feasibility of lifetime extension of large industrial equipment of the kind used in manufacturing, including modernisation of equipment for data collection and interfaces. Proposals should cover one or more of the following areas:
- refurbishment and/or upgrading of large industrial equipment;
- re-manufacturing and re-use of equipment;
- inspection, functional diagnosis and in-situ repair of damage;
- maintenance and optimised utilisation of large industrial equipment.

These measures can improve the return on investment from major capital items. The scope covers large-scale electrical and/or mechanical machinery in plants rather than electronic equipment, which earlier projects have already covered. Demonstration activities need to take place in real industrial settings and include validation of at least two industrial demonstrators in different sectors, enabling the integration and scale-up of the parameters to other industrial environments. Activities should start at TRL 5 and achieve TRL 7 at the end of the project. The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU between EUR 12 and 15 million would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected Impact:
- Material and resource efficiency increased by at least 10%;
- Life time extension of the targeted large machinery and plants by at least 20%;
- Increased return on investment from major capital items.

Relevant indicators and metrics, with baseline values, should be clearly stated in the proposal.

Type of Action: Innovation Action

The conditions related to this topic are provided at the end of this call and in the General Annexes.

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Page Limits

- The **page limit** for the technical annex is fixed at

  e.g. **70 pages**

- **"Excess pages (which are marked with a watermark) should be disregarded"** → **they will not be read and assessed !**
- **Do not cheat on font size or formatting !**

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Technology Readiness Levels

- **Technology Readiness Levels** (TRLs)

  The bulk of each proposal's activities **are expected** to be **within the indicated range in the call**

  → **read up on the meaning of these terms !** → **what is expected, what do you need to fulfil** (propose to fulfil in the project)

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Proposal scoring → that is what you have to aim at !

- **Score between 0 and 5 to each criterion**
  - Granularity: 0.5
  - The whole range of scores should be used
  - Scores must pass *thresholds* if a proposal is to be considered for funding

- **Threshold for individual criteria**
  - 4 for Excellence
  - 4 for Impact
  - 3 for Implementation

- **The total score threshold is (e.g.)12**

- **In many cases only the top 5-10% can be funded from the available budget
  → you have to be in the "excellent" scores in any case → minimum 12,5 to 13 points**
- **Look for particular emphasis on one of the 3 criteria in the call!**

Look for general hints !

Emphasis on e.g.
- **cross cutting topics**
- **gender equality**
- **SMEs………**

- certain subjects, e.g. Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) **integrated across all activities**

- (**Gender dimension** in the content of R&I - question on the relevance of sex/gender analysis is included in proposal templates)
- The strategic approach to **international cooperation** consists of a general opening of the work program, WP, and targeted activities across all relevant Horizon 2020 parts
- Other **cross-cutting issues** may also be included in the WP Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), ethics…; **open access to scientific publications; climate change and sustainable development; standardisation …**

- Suspicion of any form of misconduct (e.g. **plagiarism, double funding**), is reported to EC/Agency staff
  → do not file several proposals to the same call topic, <u>without telling</u> !

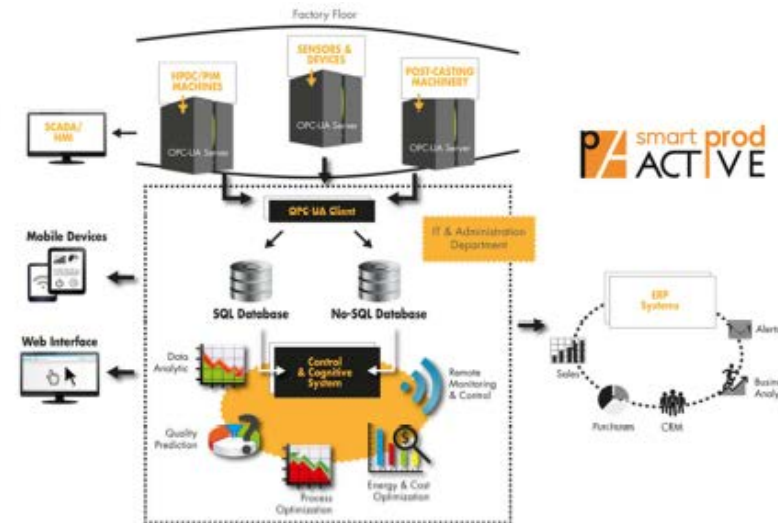- All successful proposals will undergo an ethics review

Read the call description carefully, single out the key words and use them sensibly in the right places !

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Writing

- STICK TO THE PREDESCRIBED OUTLINE (Standard-Gliederungspunkte)
  → EVALUATORS WILL SEARCH FOR THESE TERMS

- keep the introduction short and as much to the point as possible to get you to the actual topic
- however, explain the necessary details and special terms precisely but in brief, in order not to lose the reader
- **avoid** **silly graphics** with no information or content and **far to small text**. The purpose of images is **not** to make your proposal colourful, but to convey real information
- write in a **factual, objective style**, rather than like a market barker (Marktschreier). **Avoid bullshit bingo**, do not excessively use "modern" language and "sexy" features, as well as superlatives: best, largest ever, biggest by far, latest technology, with greates care………
- **evaluators are usually not stupid, so do not insult their intelligence, do not bore or annoy them, do not waste their and your time**
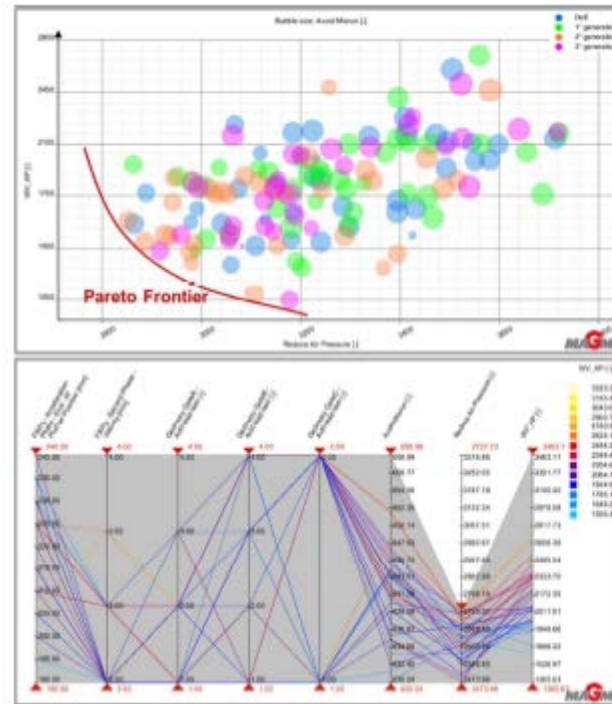
Bad example:

- ACTIVE real-time application of Quality model prediction
- Re-ACTIVE process Cognitive optimization and retrofit
- Fully integrated system in the multi-stages PRODUCTION line
- Centralized PRODUCTION control via Intelligent Sensors Network (ISN)
- SMART and flexible database to acquire and manage the process data
- SMART web-based application for remote control of the process stability, efficiency, energy consumption and cost
- SMART web-service interface with MES or ERP)

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Images and graphs
Information or useless decoration ?

unclear

meaningless

legible only with 200% zoom on a 24 inch screen and completely overcrowded

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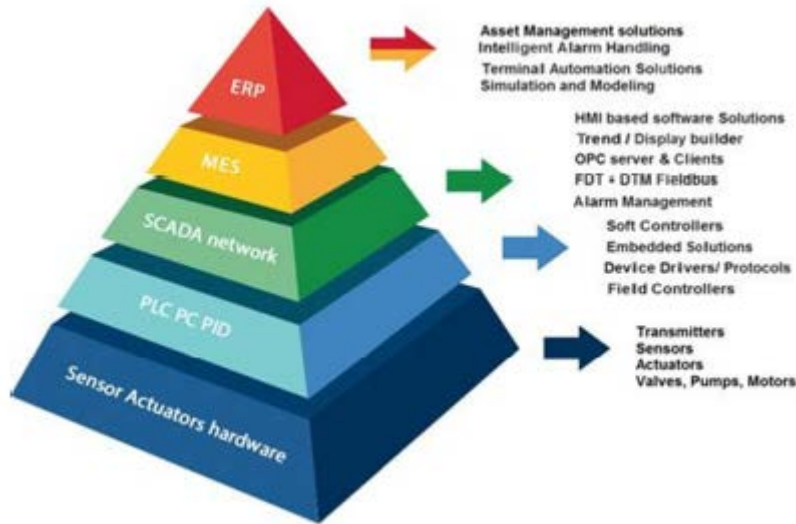
Avoid !

Example:

"The overall objective is to strengthen EU leadership in industrial equipment technologies and strengthen the economic sustainability of the users of these technologies by developing innovative solutions to enable Eco-driven monitoring, maintenance, repair and refurbishment of production equipment, as well as innovative designing of equipment for effective re-use/upgrade or remanufacturing, extending it with innovative services in the scope of the so-called XXXXXXX Systems . This should lead to an increase of availability and optimisation of ecological impact of production equipment and reduction of renovation and repair costs, and, by this, extend the useful life of large equipment, and improve the return on investment from major capital items." → **This is a waste of anyone´s paper and time**

Do never use <u>unexplained acronyms</u>: ……….. ACC, TVA, RAMI4.0, CPS, RAAS, LCA, ………! This is annoying and not informative at all.

You have to tell the reader (to some extent) what you know, i.e. there is always a danger of disclosing knowledge. But you want public money and you have to disclose or provide knowledge to the public for this to some degree in any case !

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Avoid !

Do not use conjunctive form: one could…., the work might yield……., one outcome may be….., we may do……,

it is planned to……….., we will try to ……………..

Be clear: you will, you do, you perform,

Avoid descriptive sentences without conclusion: "The sky is blue." → So what ???

The sky is blue. Therefore, we conclude it is day and not night !

Ghostwriter ? → same wording, same buzzwords, use old succesful proposals from which you can "learn" how

to properly write proposals → there are agency boasting this experience

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Google: "how to write an EU proposal"

How to **write** effective **EU proposals** for Horizon 2020

1. Network and make yourself a natural partner for a **proposal**.
2. Apply successful partner search strategies and tactics.
3. Establish trust and build a consortium.
4. **Write** the **proposal**.
5. Follow the **EU** procedure precisely and exactly.
6. Review and improve your **proposal** before submission.
7. Submit and follow up.

How to write effective EU proposals for Horizon 2020
https://horizonbook.eu/

❓ Informationen zu diesem Ergebnis   ⚑ Feedback geben

[PDF] How to prepare an excellent proposal - European Commission
https://ec.europa.eu/.../h2020_ee_info_day_2016_how_to_prepa... ▾ Diese Seite übersetzen
07.06.2017 - All **proposals** considered for funding will undergo an ... Start **writing** the detailed
proposal – Work .... http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020.

How to write effective EU proposals for Horizon 2020
https://horizonbook.eu/ ▾ Diese Seite übersetzen
How to **write** effective **EU proposals** for Horizon 2020. Network and make yourself a natural partner for
a **proposal**. Apply successful partner search strategies and tactics. Establish trust and build a
consortium. **Write** the **proposal**. Follow the EU procedure precisely and exactly. Review and improve
your **proposal** before ...

[PDF] How to write competitive proposals – an EU advisor's perspective
https://www.med.uio.no/klinmed/forskning/.../chilidis.pdf ▾ Diese Seite übersetzen
Which EU programme fits your project idea? - Individual project **proposals** in any field. - Excellence is
the only criterion. - High impact publications. - Quarantine ...

How to write effective EU proposals: A practical guide on getting ...
https://www.amazon.de/How-write-effective-proposals-practical/dp/1514759969 ▾
How to **write** effective **EU proposals**: A practical guide on getting funding for Horizon 2020 | M.R.
Hoffmann | ISBN: 9781514759967 | Kostenloser Versand für ...

How to Write a Project Proposal: the Experts' Top Tips | Assembly of ...
https://aer.eu › Projects ▾ Diese Seite übersetzen
14.12.2017 - In order to **write** a successful **proposal**, partners should first identify the ... ideas EGCT
in Central **Europe**: **example** of Hungary and Poland → ...

| Mi., 4. Dez. | Innovation Conference ... | Brussels Capital |
| Do., 5. Dez. | Autumn Bureau Meeting ... | Brussels Capital |

[PDF] How to write a successful Horizon 2020 proposal in 5 easy steps
www.umc.edu.dz/images/H2020-HOW-TO-WRITE-PROJECT.pdf ▾ Diese Seite übersetzen
of the main purposes of the EU is to bring the region together both ... of the application process – you
are finally ready to start **writing** the **proposal**. Before you ...

Training Course on Proposal Writing for Projects funded by EC & H2020
https://www.european.academy/h2020-proposal-writing
Training Seminar on **Proposal Writing** for Research and Innovation Grants. Developing **Proposals** to
fund projects in Horizon 2020 and other EC Framework ...

[PDF] How to write a good Horizon 2020 project proposal ?
https://www.uib.no/sites/w3.uib.../how_to_write_a_proposal.pdf ▾ Diese Seite übersetzen
How to write a good Horizon 2020 ... Evaluators have to read several **proposal** in a short period ....
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/call.

Proposal Writing | accelopment
www.accelopment.com/proposal-preparation/proposal-writing ▾ Diese Seite übersetzen
Are you planning to prepare a project **proposal** for Horizon 2020 or any other EU funding scheme? We
would be delighted to assist you. Our diversity has led us ...

Horizon 2020 | European funding | Guidance for writing grant ...
https://www.uni-konstanz.de/...writing...proposals/european.../hor... ▾ Diese Seite übersetzen
Weiter zu **Preparing proposals** for Horizon 2020 - As the preparation of a European grant **proposal** is
... You can give the university's EU officer access to ...

Language

- <u>readable</u> English → texts which are odd or difficult to read will not get best marks

- correct grammar and vocabulary (within reason)

- **look for a "sparring's partner" who is able and honest enough to constructively criticise your writing. Most people will only give general comments and avoid criticism → this is not helpful ! → you are applying for millions of Euros, so the evaluator can expect a proper document !**

- Think about **what** you want to say and in **which sequence**, so that your document, your paragraphs and even single sentences are specific (konkret) and have a **common red line**

"Aluminium extrusions are a relevant example of multi-sectorial smart manufacturing. To increase global market competiveness, the sector <u>must face to increase added value</u> to ensure reliability, availability, capacity and energy efficiency…… The supply of large structural class extrusions can provide at same performance, higher strength/weight ratio to reduce the weight……….The access to raw material, is an important item in the production cost structure with tariffs that <u>absorb resources for production process investments in competitive innovation</u>……"

This author tries to **use standing expressions and eloquent language,** but fails on several counts: the sentences are hard to read, the meaning is not easily understood, the wording is long winded.

Translation of the last sentence: → the <u>underlined parts are the important</u> ones:
….there is not enough money for investment, because material is expensive. **This needs to come first !**

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Ghostwriters

- ghostwriters can (probably) deliver the proper outline

- ghostwriters are usually expensive
ghostwriting is like printing money
→ you want several million Euros → the ghostwriter demands his part for the consultancy, **irrespective of success or failure**

- **it is very unlikely that they can write the scientific part → State of the Art and Progress beyond, for you properly**

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Evaluation Criteria

EXCELLENCE	IMPACT	IMPLEMENTATION
• Clarity and pertinence of the objectives	• The **expected impacts listed in the work programme** under the relevant topic	• Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, including extent to which resources assigned in work packages are in line with objectives/deliverables
• Soundness of the concept, and credibility of the proposed methodology	• **Any substantial impacts <u>not mentioned</u> in the WP**, that would enhance innovation capacity; create new market opportunities, strengthen competitiveness and growth of companies, address issues related to climate change or the environment, or bring other important benefits for society	• Appropriateness of management structures and procedures, including risk and innovation management
• Extent that proposed work is **beyond the state of the art**, and demonstrates innovation potential (e.g. ground-breaking objectives, novel concepts and approaches, new products, services or business and organisational models) → **use relevant sources, not only your own !**		• Complementarity of the participants which the consortium as a whole brings together expertise
• Appropriate consideration of interdisciplinary approaches and , where relevant, use of stakeholder knowledge.	• Quality of proposed measures to exploit and disseminate project results (including IPR, manage data research where relevant); communicate the project activities to different target audiences	• Appropriateness of allocation of tasks, ensuring that all participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role

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Operational capacity

- a description of the legal entity and its main tasks, with an explanation of how its profile matches the tasks in the proposal

- a curriculum vitae or description or the profile of the **persons who will be primarily responsible** for carrying out the proposed research and/or innovation activities, including gender (these people should not turn up in too many projects)

- a list of up to 5 relevant publications, and/or products, services (including widely-used datasets or software), or other **achievements relevant to the call content**

- a list of up to 5 relevant previous projects or activities, **connected to the subject of this proposal**

- a description of any significant infrastructure and/or any major items of technical equipment, **relevant to the proposed work**

- if operational capacity cannot be demonstrated at the time of submitting the proposal, describe the concrete measures that will be taken to obtain it by the time of the implementation of the task.

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Examples: Abilities, Progress beyond the state of the art, operational capacity

- **Absence of domain specific expertise is a reason to conclude operational capacity is lacking**

*"The innovation targets the aquaculture industry. Consortium partner no. 3 has a key role in the project, demanding an in-depth specialist knowledge and experience of the sector. **However, this partner does not demonstrate in the proposal any knowledge or experience** in aquaculture, **needed to accomplish its share in the project**, and there is **no plausible way that such expertise could be brought on board in the context of the proposed project** . "*

*"The capacity of partner no. 4 to design a novel/innovative pump **that goes beyond the state of the art is not demonstrated**. While their manufacturing facilities are presented, there is no evidence of their experience in the manufacture of pumps. Such a capacity requires long in-house experience. Their capacity to undertake all the required testing is also not adequately documented in the proposal - they **fail to give detail on the equipment** that will be used."*

- **Disproportionate and unclear outsourcing may be an indication for lack of operational capacity, although as such it is insufficient proof on its own to declare lack of OC**

"We note that applicant X does not provide any evidence of a track record in the specific working field, nor of relevant qualifications of the assigned staff in this field. The proposal allocates a substantial proportion (65%) of the requested budget of applicant X to two subcontractors, which will both perform important tasks in WP3, one of the main work packages, of which the applicant is the lead beneficiary. We conclude that applicant X does not have the operational capacity for successfully accomplishing the proposed action, in particular with respect to WP3 where this is compensated by extensive outsourcing of tasks."

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Examples: Abilities, Progress beyond the state of the art, operational capacity

- **A coordinator without project management experience / competence has to be considered lacking operational capacity**

"The coordinating company **does not demonstrate the capacity to coordinate and manage this complex transnational project***: no previous experience in managing similar projects is documented in the proposal. The one person named in charge of the overall programme coordination will be full-time involved in the implementation of the WP1 and WP3."*

- **Human resources are relevant to operational capacity to the extent that they ensure the availability of sufficient and adequately skilled staff on the project, at the latest at the time of implementation.**

"The profiles of the available staff are up to the task, **however human resources are calculated at the very limit leaving no free resources for daily business or other developments***. The SME has 5 FTE while the project is calculated at 8 person/year. The SME plans to expand the development team from 3 to 6 by 3 hirings at the start. Although the new staff will need some limited time to familiarise, the development team as a whole is expected to be productive from the beginning of the project. It is therefore expected that the capacity to perform the project will be there."*

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Validation, demonstrators, practical demonstration

If you have no practical proof / validation of what you are going to propose by the time of writing of the proposal

- do e.g. accelerated tests to show that you know where you want to go !

- do any kind of sensible testing ! But do some and think about it and document it and describe it in the proposal !

- use other people´s published practical work and sensibly comment on it and reference it → proper evaluation of the State of the Art

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Summary

- do have a **structure** and a **story line**. **"Build" the story, so that the reader can follow. There is nothing more annoying than a proposal where you have to search for each and every relevant part and statement**

- **for each Section make yourself a bullet point list with this structure and story line and only then draft the text.**

- **work with a "sparrings partner" who does have an ability of "writing" and do <u>at least</u> two, better three iterations of improving and shortening the script.**

- **<u>Be specific, clear and short and straight to the point</u> !**
  Do not write general and meaningless statements ! Do not waffle ! Statements should be precise and definite !

- **You have to use examples, references or else to back up your claims !**

- **Keep your text short. If possible do not use the page limit.**
  Do not cheat on font size or font style or formatting (margins !) and do not excessively pack the pages.
  Rather look for an optical appearance, friendly to the eye, which makes it easy to find your way through the document.

- **What you cannot express in 70 pages you cannot express in 100 pages either.**

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