

	<b>7FP, a review of a project process in 4 stages</b>
	By Enrique Serrano <a href="http://enriqueserrano.es/">http://enriqueserrano.es/</a>

## About

This document explores the process of application, management, monitoring and justification of a European Union project from the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development.

## Application process

Most likely, this is the most important stage of the global process since there is a wide variety of factors and many choices to evaluate. It's the beginning of a long process and a previous analysis of the following main points will contribute to avoid future problems and the best success in stages coming after the project start.

1. Find the **call** your project needs.
  - Wide range of participants is supported.
  - FP7 offers basically 3 funding schemes, (collaborative, network of excellence and coordination&support action), and 4 different objectives that are grouped in categories. These categories have several levels of [subcategories](#) and under them calls are launched regularly.
  - Make sure your project objective meets the call workprogramme objectives.
  - Info days and brokerage events are organized regularly around Europe. Attending will help to understand the call, find/meet partners, show your project ideas in quick presentations, networking, etc.
  
2. Building the **consortium**:
  - Be the lead consortium partner of the project, and find your partners, or be a partner and join a consortium.
  - Register for [CORDIS](#).
  - A minimum of 3 participants from 3 different EU countries or countries associated with the program.
  
3. **Preparing the project proposal**:
  - The project Co-ordinator (leader) will carefully read the information package and documentation required by the call.
  - The Co-ordinator organises meetings where all partners meet and discuss about:
    - i. Work Packages and interactions, activities, deliverables..
    - ii. Budget.
    - iii. Implementation management.
    - iv. Consortium agreements, drafting legal documents (Letter of Intent, Non Disclosure agreements...).
    - v. Dissemination plan and impact.
    - vi. Etc.
  - The Co-ordinator will receive the contributions and budgets from each partner, integrating this information and fulfilling all sections of the application form; the proposal gets ready to be sent.
  
4. **Sending** the proposal from a computer: **EPSS** ([Electronic Proposal Submission Service](#)) is a web based electronic online tool, the channel for submission of proposals.
  
5. **Evaluation and selection** (1 to 3 months)
  - A panel of experts will evaluate the proposals sent, in three categories (scientific content, implementation and impact).

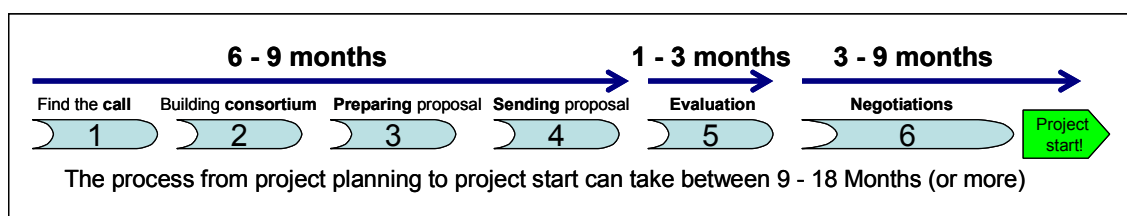
From this point, the project can be approved or rejected.

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6. Negotiation stage (3-9 months); Getting your project approved is great news but still there is important work to do with 2 important documents:

- A **Grant Agreement** with the Commission: the Co-ordinator will negotiate with the Commission (via **PO Project Officer**) issues such as the content of work to be done, the timetable, funding arrangements, rights, etc
- A **Consortium Agreement**, which will be signed between participants and Co-ordinator. This document provides the legal basis for the internal relationship and responsibilities among the beneficiaries, always consistent with the provisions of the Grant Agreement. The Consortium Agreement is signed before the Grant Agreement.

Project starts!



**Fig 1. Application process**

Take in account:

- Financial support from [regional](#) and national governments is often available. This support mainly targets the preparation for the application stage. Pre-award expenditure is not an eligible cost.
- Stay tuned for important info: create [email alerts from CORDIS](#) and subscribe to free bulletins that different regional agencies [offer](#).
- In FP7, missing deadlines means you are out.
- Participant Identification Code ([PIC](#)) is required for FP7 participants
- The more partners, the harder management of the project.
- In a consortium, being the leader (co-ordinator) takes extra responsibility and normally leaders had previous experience by being just partners.
- Get support through your [NPC](#) (National Contact Point).
- Do networking by joining frameworks such as [COST](#) or [ESF](#).
- Projects that lead to an advance in the "state of the art" of certain research area are well seen by the Commission.
- The negotiation process is supported by an online tool ([NEF](#))

### **Management process**

Management is an eligible cost for the Co-ordinator of the project (management costs are about 7% of the overall budget), it means this is a significant task) and includes issues such as changes in the consortium, list project meetings, assisting partners with advice, keep record of all money transfers made to partners, arranging partners meetings, communications and coordination of interim reports, managing agreements, controlling procedures and other incidences/problems that may appear during the project, for instance a change of legal status of one of the participants. All this info is written in management reports.

Basically, the project management is a project leadership.

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These tasks managed by the Co-ordinator are often tasks related to monitoring stage. For instance when a project meeting or workshop has to be arranged (hotel, restaurants, agenda, information coordination...) this also meeting helps the Co-ordinator to monitor.

Other tasks within the management of the project are to give support and coordinate partners with auditing and financial reporting, as well as scientific reporting, that are submitted as periodic reports by the Co-ordinator.

Take in account:

- Management of the project is a core task so it cannot be subcontracted.
- The Co-ordinator has to agree and oversee transfer budget between partners

### **Monitoring process**

This is a necessary process to measure the health and real status of the project in terms of realization; Monitoring shows/minimizes risks of future problems.

Monitoring all partners in the project is a responsibility of the Co-ordinator.

There are indicators to monitor project partners:

- Are deliverables and milestones achieved and met by partners?
- What periodical reports (technical and financial) tell?
- Written confirmation from partners confirming they realised something
- Signed copies of external audits, etc

The Co-ordinator and the project are also monitored by the European Commission via the **PO**. Project can be monitored with reports and performance indicators that the EC provides. The EC may conduct reviews of the progress of the project.

If monitoring a problem is detected, action is required from the Co-ordinator or the PO.

### **Justification process**

This process is a coordinated action among PO, Co-Ordinator and partners, just to verify that things were finally done as were written and agreed, and especially it is a financial audit.

The period of justification starts when the project begins, with yearly basis (as payments are from EC). There is also a final justification with more requirements, happening at the end of the project.

The justification process basically has a financial side and a technical side. Financial side is all about expenditures and how money was spent.

This process is carried with reports that Co-ordinator and partners need to fill and pass to the PO, who will pre-approve or reject.

Technical side of the justification is focused on handbooks, websites, documental, workshop information, research results, etc. Monitoring stage already took some control over this.