

EFFECTIVE PROPOSAL WRITING

How to build-up a fundamental skill for
your career as a researcher

SESSION 2

PART 2. GO PRACTICAL



1. UNDERSTANDING HOW ARE THE APPLICATION FORMS ARTICULATED
2. CONCEPT NOTE, PROPOSAL CANVAS AND ONE PAGE PROPOSAL
3. THE FINANCIABILITY MATRIX AND HOW TO RE-PROTECT YOUR PROPOSALS
4. STORYTELLING IS A MATTER OF ART, PROPOSAL WRITING IS A MATTER OF TECHNIQUE

HOW ARE THE APPLICATION FORMS ARTICULATED

Start planning where to write what

“ MANY ATTEMPTS TO COMMUNICATE ARE
NULLIFIED BY SAYING TOO MUCH.

ROBERT GREENLEAF
DEVELOPMENT RESEARCHER

PROPOSAL STRUCTURE

1. **Executive Summary**
2. **Organisation description**
3. **Project background**
4. **Problem statement**
5. **Goal and objectives**
6. **Beneficiaries/Target groups**
7. **Proposed methodology:**
 - Partners
 - Project implementation
 - Activities
 - Risks and assumptions
 - Means
8. **Budget**
9. **Monitoring and Evaluation**
10. **Sustainability**
11. **Annexes**

1. Executive summary
2. Presentation of the organisation
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Why is it important:

- It is the **first** part that is read
- Sometimes the **only** part that is read...
- It can be used by the donor to **communicate** to others about your project

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Summary

- What do you propose to do?
- Where?
- Why?
- For whom?
- With whom?
- For how long?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Executive summary
2. Presentation of the organisation
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DO

Write it last
Do it carefully
Keep it short

DON'T

Cut and paste

PRESENTATION OF THE ORGANISATION

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3. Project background
4. Problem statement
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Why is it important?

Purpose: to establish credibility and image of a well-managed organization that meets critical needs in its area of work

Tips

Should not be too long

PRESENTATION OF THE ORGANISATION

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Who are you?

Philosophy / mandate?

History and significant interventions / track record

Expertise in addressing the problem or need

Organisational structure

Major sources of support

Affiliations / accreditations / linkages

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Tips

You need to demonstrate that :

- The project arises from the beneficiaries and/or the local partners
- You know the local context very well
- You have the experience needed to run the project successfully
- You have been successful before

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Tips

A “good” problem should:

- concern people
- be concrete and demonstrated
- be solvable
- come from a demand
- be an emergency or priority

PROBLEM STATEMENT

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Content

Describe the scope and size of the problem

What are the immediate causes?

What are the underlying causes?

What are the effects?

How does it affect people?

Why does it have to be addressed?

Why now and not later?

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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GOALS(or overall objectives):

Describes the long-term goals your project will contribute to.

Project Purpose or Specific Objective:

Describes the objective of your project in response to the core problem.

Expected Results:

Describes the outputs (or outcomes) - the concrete results of your project

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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Objectives should be **SMART**:

Specific = they must meet the needs (problems) identified

Measurable = they should be measured by concrete indicators which should reflect the extent to which they have been attained

Acceptable/Attainable/Achievable = by all involved partners

Relevant = they must be adequate to the project socio-cultural environment and to the policy framework

Timely = must be reached by the end of the project

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TARGET GROUPS/BENEFICIARIES

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- Clearly identify direct and indirect beneficiaries:
 - Direct support to target group
 - Indirect benefits to others
 - How many?
 - Where?
 - Characteristics?
- Specify how and at what stage they will be involved in the project

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- Partners
- Project implementation
- Activities
- Risks and assumptions
- Means
- Why is it important?
- Shows how objectives will be achieved

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Partners

- Clearly divide main partners and other partners
- Provide background information:
 - Goals/philosophy?
 - Area of intervention?
 - Relationship with beneficiaries?
- Cooperation track-record?
- Type of partnership you set up
- Specify each partner's role

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Project implementation

- Rationale for selecting this methodology
- Project implementation structure: roles and responsibilities of all the project stakeholders

Tip

- Use a chart to show the project implementation structure

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Activities

- What will be done?
- How?
- By whom?
- Where?
- By when?

Tips

- Be as precise as possible
- Cluster activities by expected result
- Use a work plan to summarise

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Example: Training

- How many persons?
- For how long? Starting when?
- Which methodology will be used (seminars, in-house training, ad hoc courses, etc.)
- Why is the training necessary?
- Which new skills will the trainees acquire?

Year	Year 1						
Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Activity 1							
Activity 2							
Activity 3							
Activity 4							

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Risks/assumptions

- Risks are external factors that could potentially jeopardise your project and are beyond your control
- Assumptions are things you are expecting to be a certain way

Why is it important?

- It helps assess the factors which could jeopardise your project
- It helps examining the project for completeness and consistency

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Means

Human resources:

- Explain the responsibilities and tasks of each key person in the project.

Material resources:

- Give an explanation of the most important budget lines
- Justify vehicles

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Budget spreadsheet

Budget explanations and justifications

Tips

Prepare it using your action plan

Don't inflate the budget

Carefully follow donor's requirements

Divide your budget into years

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Why is it important?

Monitoring: to assess whether your project activities are on track

Evaluation: to assess whether your project is effective, efficient, has an impact, is relevant and sustainable

Contents

- What will be monitored and why?
- By whom?
- How often?
- Using which tools and methods?

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Institutional sustainability

Technical sustainability

Socio-cultural sustainability

Financial sustainability

Why is it important?

Because donors want to be sure that their investment will not be lost at the end of the project and that you are already planning the phasing out of the project

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Glossary

Maps

Statistics/ policy documents

Proof of registration and tax benefits for donors

Financial statement

Composition of Board of Directors

List of major donors

Annual report, brochures & publications

Specific studies or evaluation reports

Memorandum of agreement with partners

Letters of support

Pictures, case studies

Other...

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Tips

- Refer to the appendices in the proposal (see appendix a), but....
- If something is crucially important, write it in the proposal!
- Add a table of contents for the appendices
- Put the appendix number on the top of each page “appendix no xy”
- Separate each appendix by a coloured page

WRITING THE PROPOSAL H2020

1: Excellence

1.1 Objectives

1.2 Relation to work programme

1.3 Concept and approach

1.4 Ambition

2. Impact

2.1 Expected impacts

2.2 Misure to maximase impact

a) Dissemination and exploitation of results

b) Communication activities

3. Implementation

3.1 Work plan – work packages, deliverables and milestones

3.2 Management structure and procedures

3.3 Consortium as a whole

3.4 Resources to be committed

4. Individual participants

And cover page!

- Title of proposal and
- List of participants

1: Excellence - 1.1 Objectives

Describe the **specific objectives** for the project, which should be clear, measurable, realistic and achievable within the duration of the project

Objectives should be consistent with the expected exploitation and impact of the project (see section 2)

1: Excellence - 1.2 Relation to work programme

Indicate the work programme topic to which your proposal relates, and explain how your proposal addresses the specific challenge and scope of that *topic*, as set out in the work programme

1: Excellence - 1.3 Concept and approach

- Describe and explain the overall concept underpinning the project. Describe the main ideas, models or assumptions involved. Identify any trans-disciplinary considerations
- Describe the positioning of the project e.g. where it is situated in the spectrum from 'idea to application', or from 'lab to market'. Refer to Technology Readiness Levels *where relevant* (See General Annex G of the work programme)
- Describe any national or international research and innovation activities which will be linked with the project, especially where the outputs from these will feed into the project
- Describe and explain the overall approach and methodology, distinguishing, as appropriate, activities indicated in the relevant section of the work programme, e.g. for research, demonstration, piloting, first market replication, etc
- Where relevant, describe how sex and/or gender analysis is taken into account in the project's content

1: Excellence - 1.4 Ambition

- Describe the advance your proposal would provide beyond the state-of-the-art, and the extent the proposed work is ambitious. Your answer could refer to the ground-breaking nature of the objectives, concepts involved, issues and problems to be addressed, and approaches and methods to be used
- Describe the innovation potential which the proposal represents. Where relevant, refer to products and services already available on the market. Please refer to the results of any patent search carried out

Criterio	Principali problematiche	Suggerimenti
Clarity and pertinence of the objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obiettivi non chiari • Assenza di una chiara illustrazione delle problematiche da risolvere • Non coerenza tra problematiche identificate e soluzioni • Descrizione del valore aggiunto del progetto 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non tutti i valutatori sono esperti tecnicamente, scrivere in modo semplice e chiaro • Project life cycle - Albero dei problemi – obiettivi • Utilizzare schemi e tabelle sintetiche  • Spiegare perché è necessario il contributo H2020 e quale il valore aggiunto del progetto
Soundness of the concept, and credibility of the proposed methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mercato di riferimento non descritto con chiarezza (analisi dei fabbisogni, il target, gli stakeholder, ecc.) • La metodologia illustrata non dimostra chiaramente la capacità di risolvere i problemi ed i fabbisogni descritti • A volte indicazione di obiettivi troppo ambiziosi e non giustificati 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguere tra beneficiari diretti, beneficiari indiretti • Indicare gli stakeholder e come saranno coinvolti nel progetto • Chiara indicazione dei fabbisogni e di come vengono risolti. Usare tabelle sintetiche (fabbisogno, azioni, situazione ex post, attori coinvolti, ecc.) • Verificare la coerenza tra obiettivi, attività, risultati
Extent that the proposed work is beyond the state of the art, and demonstrates innovation potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non chiara indicazione dell'innovazione del progetto 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descrivere in modo chiaro (<u>attenzione alle abbreviazioni</u>) la situazione attuale e in cosa consiste l'innovazione del progetto • Confronto con concorrenti e prodotti/progetti esistenti • Capitalizzazione di esperienze di progetti europei già sviluppati

2. Impact - 2.1 Expected impacts

- Describe how your project will contribute to:
 - a) the expected impacts set out in the work programme, under the relevant topic
 - b) improving innovation capacity and the integration of new knowledge (*strengthening the competitiveness and growth of companies* by developing innovations meeting the needs of European and global markets; and, where relevant, by delivering such innovations to the markets)
 - c) any other environmental and socially important impacts (if not already covered above)
- Describe any barriers/obstacles, and any framework conditions (such as regulation and standards), that may determine whether and to what extent the expected impacts will be achieved (This should not include any risk factors concerning implementation, as covered in section 3.2.)

2. Impact - 2.2 Measure to maximise impact Dissemination and exploitation of results

1

- Provide a draft 'plan for the dissemination and exploitation of the project's results'(unless the work programme topic explicitly states that such a plan is not required)

For innovation actions describe a credible path to deliver the innovations to the market. The plan, which should be proportionate to the scale of the project, should contain measures to be implemented both during and after the project.

n.b.1. Dissemination and exploitation measures should address the full range of potential users and uses including research, commercial, investment, social, environmental, policy making, setting standards, skills and educational training

n.b.2. The approach to innovation should be as comprehensive as possible, and must be tailored to the specific technical, market and organisational issues to be addressed

2. Impact - 2.2 Measure to maximise impact Dissemination and exploitation of results

2

- Explain how the proposed measures will help to achieve the expected impact of the project. Include a business plan where relevant
- Where relevant, include information on how the participants will manage the research data generated and/or collected during the project, in particular addressing the following issues:
 - What types of data will the project generate/collect?
 - What standards will be used?
 - How will this data be exploited and/or shared/made accessible for verification and re-use? If data cannot be made available, explain why
 - How will this data be curated and preserved?

n.b.1. You will need an appropriate consortium agreement to manage (amongst other things) the ownership and access to key knowledge (IPR, data etc.). Where relevant, these will allow you, collectively and individually, to pursue market opportunities arising from the project's results

n.b.2. The appropriate structure of the consortium to support exploitation is addressed in section 3.3

2. Impact - 2.2 Misure to maximase impact Dissemination and exploitation of results

3

• Outline the strategy for knowledge management and protection. Include measures to provide open access (free on-line access, such as the 'green' or 'gold' model) to peer-reviewed scientific publications which might result from the project

n.b.1 Open access publishing (also called 'gold' open access) means that an article is immediately provided in open access mode by the scientific publisher. The associated costs are usually shifted away from readers, and instead (for example) to the university or research institute to which the researcher is affiliated, or to the funding agency supporting the research

n.b.2. Self-archiving (also called 'green' open access) means that the published article or the final peer-reviewed manuscript is archived by the researcher - or a representative - in an online repository before, after or alongside its publication. Access to this article is often - but not necessarily - delayed ('embargo period'), as some scientific publishers may wish to recoup their investment by selling subscriptions and charging pay-per-download/view fees during an exclusivity period

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2. Impact - 2.2 Measure to maximise impact

Communication activities

- Describe the proposed communication measures for promoting the project and its findings during the period of the grant.
- Measures should be proportionate to the scale of the project, with clear objectives
- They should be tailored to the needs of various audiences, including groups beyond the project's own community
- Where relevant, include measures for public/societal engagement on issues related to the project

Engaging with the public is now a priority

focus on communicating results rather than process

PROJECT's corporate image applied on every information and communication material

listen and adapt the messages, tailor communication to different audiences by responding to the matter issues

communication activities should be selective and targeted to maximise the impact

emphasis must be put on "going local" – use project partners, contact local press

focus on people and personalities to give science a « human face »

3. Implementation - 3.1 Work plan

- brief presentation of the overall structure of the work plan
- timing of the different work packages and their components (*Gantt* chart or similar)
- detailed work description, i.e.:
 - ❑ a description of each work package (table 3.1a)
 - ❑ a list of work packages (table 3.1b)
 - ❑ a list of major deliverables (table 3.1c)
- graphical presentation of the components showing how they inter-relate (*Pert* chart or similar)

3. Implementation - 3.1 Work plan


n.b.1 Give full details. Base your account on the logical structure of the project and the stages in which it is to be carried out. Include details of the resources to be allocated to each work package. The number of work packages should be proportionate to the scale and complexity of the project

n.b.2 You should give enough detail in each work package to justify the proposed resources to be allocated and also quantified information so that progress can be monitored, including by the Commission

n.b.3 You are advised to include a distinct work package on 'management' (see section 3.2) and to give due visibility in the work plan to 'dissemination and exploitation' and 'communication activities', either with distinct tasks or distinct work packages

n.b.4 You will be required to include an updated (or confirmed) 'plan for the dissemination and exploitation of results' in both the periodic and final reports. (This does not apply to topics where a draft plan was not required.) This should include a record of activities related to dissemination and exploitation that have been undertaken and those still planned. A report of completed and planned communication activities will also be required

n.b.5 If your project is taking part in the Pilot on Open Research Data, you must include a 'data management plan' as a distinct deliverable within the first 6 months of the project. A template for such a plan is given in the guidelines on data management in the H2020 Online Manual. This deliverable will evolve during the lifetime of the project in order to present the status of the project's reflections on data

Criterio	Principali problematiche	Suggerimenti
The extent to which the outputs of the project would contribute to each of the expected impacts mentioned in the work programme under the relevant topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mancato raggiungimento degli impatti richiesti dalla call • Non chiara giustificazione di come vengono raggiunti gli obiettivi • Assenza di azioni per conseguire gli obiettivi dichiarati 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verificare attentamente gli obiettivi richiesti. Una tabella sintetica può aiutare  • Indicare i parametri di riferimento e le modalità di calcolo in modo chiaro e semplice riportando anche le fonti se necessario • Verificare la coerenza tra impatto e azioni (Work Plan). Una tabella di sintesi può aiutare
Any substantial impacts not mentioned in the Work Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A volte il progetto è focalizzato su impatti non oggetto della call 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utile indicarli ma devono essere secondari. • Non enfatizzarli più degli impatti richiesti dalla call
Quality of the proposed measures to Exploit and disseminate the project results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molto spesso del tutto assenti o non chiaramente delineate • Spesso integrato e confuso con piano di comunicazione 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E' obiettivo strategico per la Commissione • Sono attività che devono essere pianificate e sviluppate anche durante la vita del progetto e non solo alla fine o dopo • Un BP è un utile strumento che aiuta a definire la sostenibilità, replicabilità e valorizzazione delle azioni sperimentate • https://www.iprhelpdesk.eu/sites/default/files/newsdocuments/FS-Plan-for-the-exploitation-and-dissemination-of-results_1.pdf
Quality of the proposed measures to Communicate the project activities to different target audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molto spesso del tutto assenti o non chiaramente delineate e generiche • Spesso integrato e confuso con piano di disseminazione 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E' obiettivo strategico per la Commissione • Deve interessare tutti gli stakeholder interessati • E' diversa dalla comunicazione interna al partenariato che viene gestita nel management del progetto • Se utile prevedere l'uso di diversi strumenti, anche innovativi (Fb, Twitter, etc.) • Verificare la coerenza con la descrizione del WP, il budget ed il WP Leader • Una tabella di sintesi può aiutare • http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/go_live/promotion/communication_plan/index_en.htm

3. Implementation - 3.2 Management structure and procedures

- Describe the organisational structure and the decision-making (including a list of milestones (table 3.2a))
- Explain why the organisational structure and decision-making mechanisms are appropriate to the complexity and scale of the project
- Describe, where relevant, how effective innovation management will be addressed in the management structure and work plan

n.b.1 Innovation management is a process which requires an understanding of both market and technical problems, with a goal of successfully implementing appropriate creative ideas. A new or improved product, service or process is its typical output. It also allows a consortium to respond to an external or internal opportunity

- Describe any critical risks, relating to project implementation, that the stated project's objectives may not be achieved. Detail any risk mitigation measures. Please provide a table with critical risks identified and mitigating actions (table 3.2b)

WP 'MANAGEMENT'

INITIAL/FINAL WP

PARTNERS INVOLVED:

- Only Coordinator?
- Coordinator and WP Leaders?
- Coordinator and Project Management Office?
- all?

TYPICAL TASKS :

- Governance
- Communication
- Project meetings (based on the number of partners, criticalities, ecc...)
- Reporting (based on official reporting periods)
- Quality check
- Distribution of EC contribution/Financial issues
- etc...

TYPICAL DELIVERABLES:

- Periodic/Interim Reports
- Definition of quality procedures

TYPICAL MILESTONES:

- project meetings
- Appointment of advisors/external experts

DURATION = project duration

BUDGET= no formal limits, but around 7% of the total EC contribution

1.3.5 Risks analysis and contingency plans

The technical committee, responsible of the project's monitoring activity, will continuously check the project's development taking special care of the risks. The programme is focused on the realization of a new highly reliable, high efficiency, low manufacturing cost HCPV generator: the main risk of the activities is not being able to meet those requirements. The cost of a photovoltaic generator is strictly dependent on the generator's conversion efficiency and thus its energy yield. The higher the efficiency, the lower the cost constrains, so the risk analysis will carefully consider the balance between efficiency and manufacturing cost. The risk analysis must be focused on the development of all the critical parts that affect the generator's performance.

In order to control and minimize the risk, the programme has many check points that enable the easy assessment of the required targets. The WP1 includes the RTD activities regarding all the parts that will be developed and, for each part (the module, the optics, the cell, the receiver, the tracker and the inverter) the deliverables will be evaluated to check their compliance with the project's target. The subsequent development activities (WP2÷WP8) will be continuously monitored to check the effective implementation of the designed results.

Example

Hereafter follows a table indicating the risks and related contingency plans:

Ref.	Risk	Likelihood	Severity	Contingency action	Responsibility
HCPV Cell, WP1, WP5	The final cell efficiency being much lower than 45%	low	medium	Stress the efficiency of the optical part to recover the cell's performance loss respect to the target	BECAR, OEC
Optics design, WP1	The optical system doesn't meet the angular performance requirements	low	low	Work harder on the pilot module's assembly line to guarantee a higher precision in the optics and receivers assembly process. Stress the tracker's accuracy	BECAR

3. Implementation - 3.3 Consortium as a whole

- Describe the consortium. How will it match the project's objectives? How do the members complement one another (and cover the value chain, where appropriate)? In what way does each of them contribute to the project? How will they be able to work effectively together?
- If applicable, describe the industrial/commercial involvement in the project to ensure exploitation of the results and explain why this is consistent with and will help to achieve the specific measures which are proposed for exploitation of the results of the project (see section 2.3)
- **Other countries:** If one or more of the participants requesting EU funding is based in a country that is not automatically eligible for such funding (entities from Member States of the EU, from Associated Countries and from one of the countries in the exhaustive list included in General Annex A of the work programme are automatically eligible for EU funding), explain why the participation of the entity in question is essential to carrying out the project

CONSORTIUM AS A WHOLE

FOCUS ON:

➤ MAJOR PARTNERS

- Each partner has a well define role (complementarity – ‘vertical’ partnership)
- Mapping of expertises (table?)
- Highlight different types of partners (Universities, SMEs, Public bodies, etc...)/Geographical distribution(New Member States? Third Countries?...)
- Link project results to partners

➤ Involvement of external *stakeholders*

- Adivisory Committee
- End users: Evaluation Committee

4. Members of the consortium

- 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 of the profile of the persons, including their gender, who will be primarily responsible for carrying out the proposed research and/or innovation activities
- 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
- [any other supporting documents specified in the work programme for this call.]

3. Implementation - 3.4 Resources to be committed

a table showing number of person/months required (table 3.4a)

a table showing 'other direct costs' (table 3.4b) for participants where those costs exceed 15% of the personnel costs (according to the budget table in section 3 of the administrative proposal forms)

Criterio	Principali problematiche	Suggerimenti
Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, including extent to which the resources assigned to work packages are in line with their objectives and deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descrizione dei WP eccessivamente sintetica e non chiara • Non coerenza tra problematiche, obiettivi e output • Non coerenza tra risorse allocate, obiettivi descritti e tempistiche 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non tutti i valutatori sono esperti tecnicamente, fare descrizione chiara, sintetica e completa • Verificare coerenza tra analisi dei fabbisogni, obiettivi, azioni, output • Verificare adeguata allocazione delle risorse
Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk and innovation management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A volte eccessivamente sintetica • Spesso assenza di una adeguata e completa analisi dei rischi. Misure di gestione del rischio generiche 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevedere una struttura snella ma che sia in grado di gestire il progetto e risolvere eventuali problematiche • Risk matrix per tutte le aree del progetto e previsione di un risk plan in fase di attuazione del progetto • Previsione, ove necessario, di come gestire il processo di innovazione (brevetti, responsabile dell'innovazione, ecc.)
Complementarity of the participants and extent to which the consortium as whole brings together the necessary expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A volte sbilanciamento del partenariato verso le tematiche tecniche (p.e. assenza di esperti di comunicazione, finanza, legale, ecc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fare attenzione al partenariato o prevedere l'acquisto all'esterno delle competenze mancanti
Appropriateness of the allocation of tasks, ensuring that all participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfill that role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progetti sbilanciati su un partner e/o su un Paese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilanciare l'allocazione delle risorse tra i partner e tra i Paesi partecipanti sulla base delle loro competenze
(For SME instrument phase 2) Best value for money of subcontracts is assessed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assenza di una procedura di selezione che garantisca il VfM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I sub-contractor devono essere selezionati sulla base di procedure chiare e trasparenti



SUCCESS IS THE ABILITY
TO GO FROM ONE FAILURE TO
ANOTHER WITH NO
LOSS OF **ENTHUSIASM**

WINSTON CHURCHILL (1874 — 1965)

