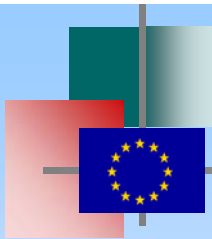# Steps & tips to prepare a successful proposal

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Minsk - February 2008

NIS-NEST
New & Emerging Science
and Technology in NIS countries

Key steps

Before submission

After submission

1 **Getting Ready**

4 **Evaluation & Ethical Review**

2 **Establish Consortium**

Submission

5 **Contract Negotiation & Signature**

3 **Prepare Research Proposal**

6 **Management of the Proposal**
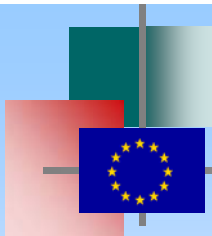
Minsk - February 2008
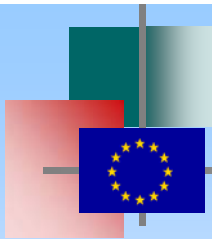
1 **Getting Ready**

Know:

- **The funding body** (**Europe**): read Green papers, White papers, Action plans, all relevant policy papers on European strategies;

- **The Framework programme** and the **specific programmes :** be aware of the priorities, of the participation rules, …

- **Your subject:** relevant documents, *i.e.* **text of the call**, **work programme**, funding schemes, etc.

- **Yourself: what do you want to do?** what are your strengths and your weaknesses. Play to your strengths!

- **The evaluation process :**

Know how your proposal will be evaluated before you write it

Promote your research activity

Calls Service

All calls are published in the **Official Journal** of the EU and the **CORDIS FP7 web site.** They give you access to:

- **Call fiches**

- **Call texts**

- **Work programmes**

- **Participation guides**

☞ All documents can be downloaded or sent by e-mail

2 Establish Consortium

What is a project?

A project is **a unique set of coordinated activities**, with definite starting and finishing points, undertaken by an individual or organization **to meet specific objectives** within **defined time**, **cost** and **performance parameters**. *From ISO 10006.*

What is an EC project?

❑ **Partnership**; partners will depend of each other, jointly responsible;
❑ **Foreigners** with different cultures.
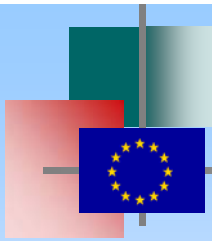
Partner Search

- Via current project partners

- Via Cordis partner search

- Via EoI data base (beginning of FP6)

- Via NCPs' network as Ideal-IST partner search for ICT

- Via Commission events in your area

- Via current project data bases as CORDIS Projects

- Via brokerage events

- Etc.
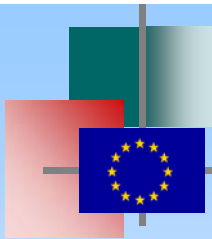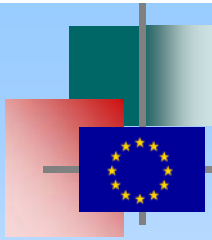
3 **Prepare Research Proposal**

<u>Six key points:</u>

❑ **Formulate (an) appropriate research objective(s);**

❑ **State your (research) objective(s) clearly in your proposal;**

❑ **Develop a realistic research plan;**

❑ **Frame your project around the work of others;**

❑ **Format, brevity, grammar and spelling are important;**

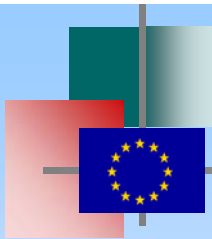❑ **More common reasons for failure of proposals.**

Structure of a proposal

Part A: In part A you will be asked for certain administrative details that will be used in the evaluation and further processing of your proposal. Part A forms an integral part of your proposal. Section **A1** gives a snapshot of your proposal, section **A2** concerns you and your organisation, while section **A3** deals with money matters :

- Section **A1**: Summary
- Section **A2**: Participants (a form per participant)
- Section **A3**: Budget

Part B: Scientifc work and project management

- Section **1**: Scientific and/or technical quality, relevant to the topics addressed by the call
- Section **2**: Implementation
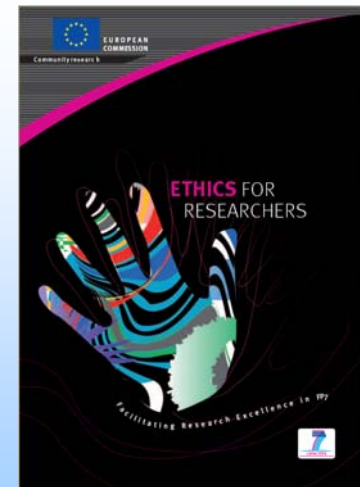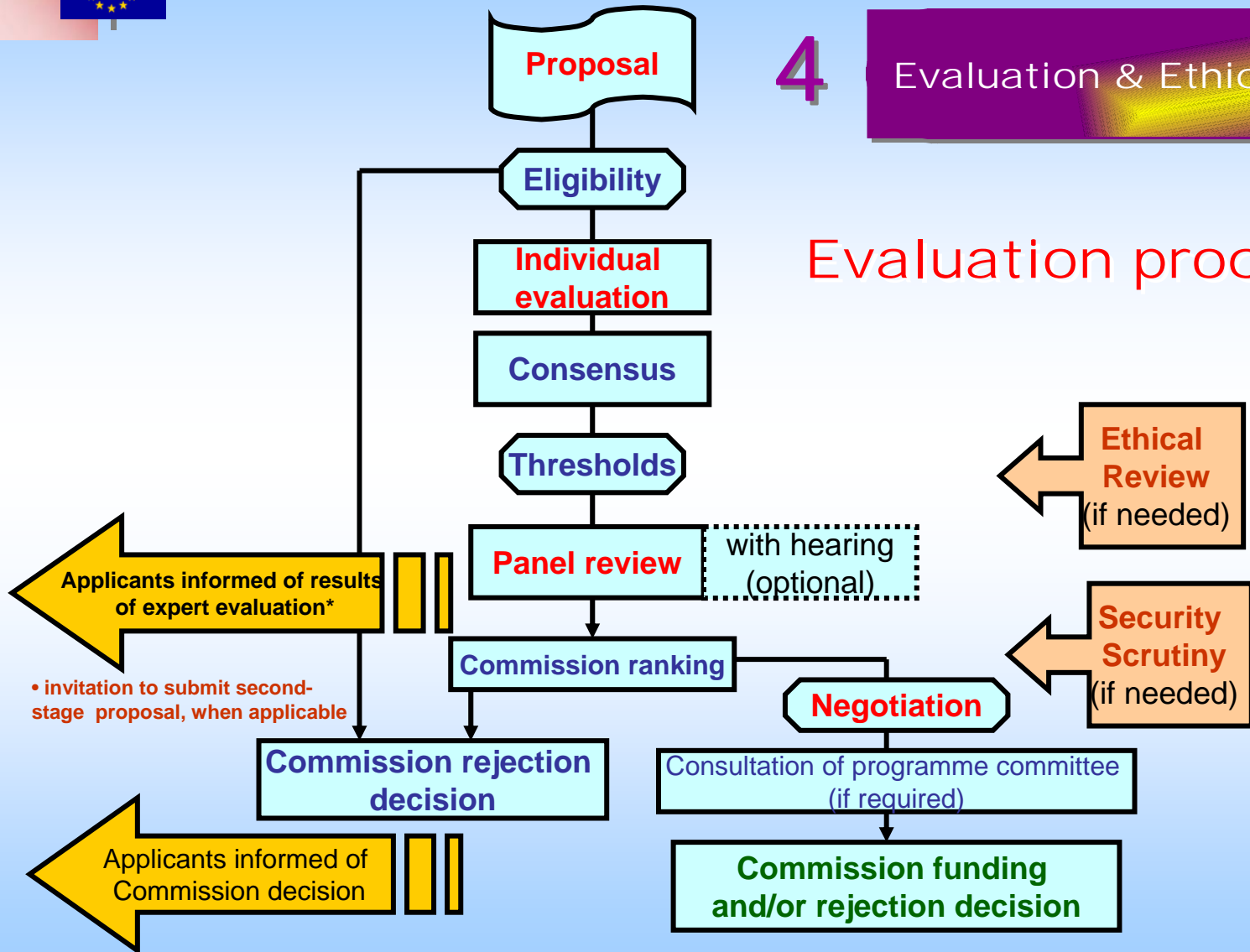- Section **3**: Impact
- Section **4**: Ethical Issues

Proposal

4 **Evaluation & Ethical Review**

Eligibility

Evaluation procedure in FP7

Individual evaluation

Consensus

Thresholds

Ethical Review (if needed)

Panel review | with hearing (optional)

← **Applicants informed of results of expert evaluation***

• **invitation to submit second-stage proposal, when applicable**

Commission ranking

Security Scrutiny (if needed)

Negotiation

Commission rejection decision

Consultation of programme committee (if required)

← Applicants informed of Commission decision

Commission funding and/or rejection decision

ETHICS FOR RESEARCHERS

Evaluation criteria

- **Criteria adapted to each funding scheme**
  - specified in the work programme

- Divided into three main criteria:

  - ***S&T Quality*** *(relevant to the topic of the call)*
    - Concept, objective, work-plan
  - ***Implementation***
    - Individual participants and consortium as a whole
    - Allocation of resources
  - ***Impact***

    New for FP7

    - Contribution to expected impacts listed in work programme
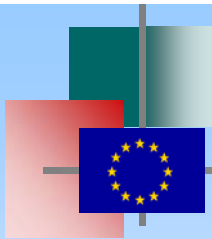   - Plans for dissemination/exploitation
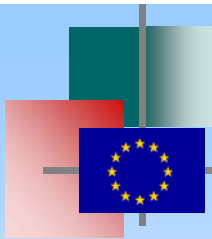
Tips to prepare a good proposal

It is not easy to prepare/write a good proposal:

It takes **time** and **efforts**; it can take several months …

Keep in mind what evaluators are looking for in proposals:

- **relevance**
- **scientific and technical excellence**
- **quality of project management**
- technical credibility of the proposal
- **impact:** added value of carrying out the research at a European level
- strategy for exploitation and dissemination of results
- costs and budget breakdown
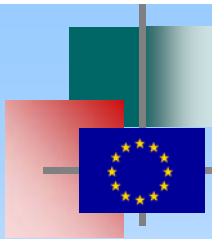- competence and effectiveness of the consortium

5 **Contract Negotiation & Signature**

- Prepare the negotiation phase

- Involve administrative persons from your institution

- Read the (Standard Model) **G**rant **A**greement

- Read carefully the **C**onsortium **A**greement
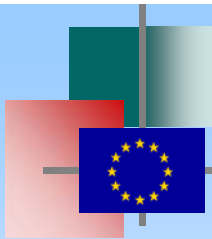
- Visit the **IPR-Helpdesk** web site

**6** **Management of the Proposal**

Roles and responsibilities

- **Coordinator (Project manager):** project direction, cost control, EC contact (reporting)
- WP Leaders: deliver work package results, reporting
- Participants (Contractors): deliver participants contribution
- Administrative: deliver cost statements

The Gantt Chart

A Gantt Chart helps organize **a plan** to implement a (research) project. It documents **what** is to be accomplished, **who** will be involved and **when** workpackages and tasks will take place and how they will interrelate. It shows at a quick glance **the course of the project**. Additionally it provides guidance for managing the project. A simple example looks like:
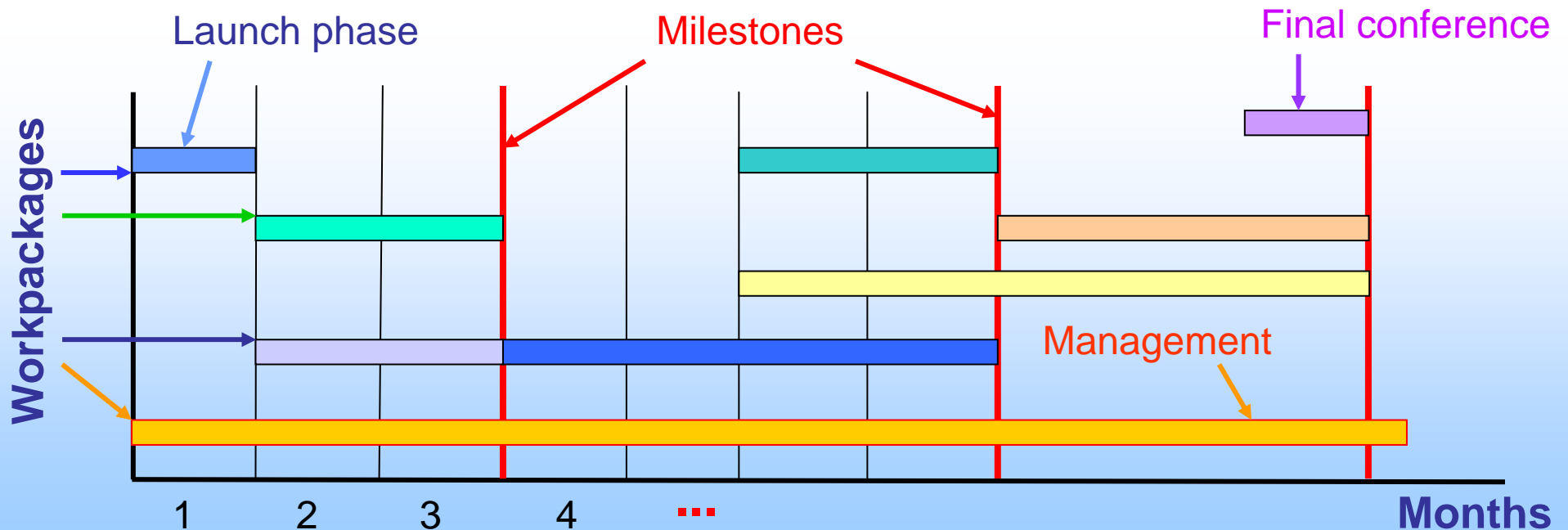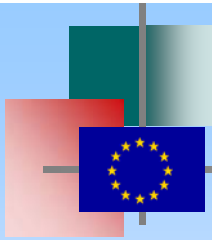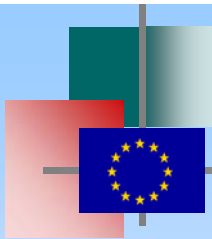
Tips for a successful project management

- **Define clear objectives** and be sure these objectives are understood and shared by all participants (submission; kick off meeting)

- Manage the **project scope**

- **Identify the risks** and take appropriate actions

- Decide before/during the kick off meeting **how problems will be solved** (Consortium agreement, rules for a good management)

- **Plan**, **plan** then **plan** some more

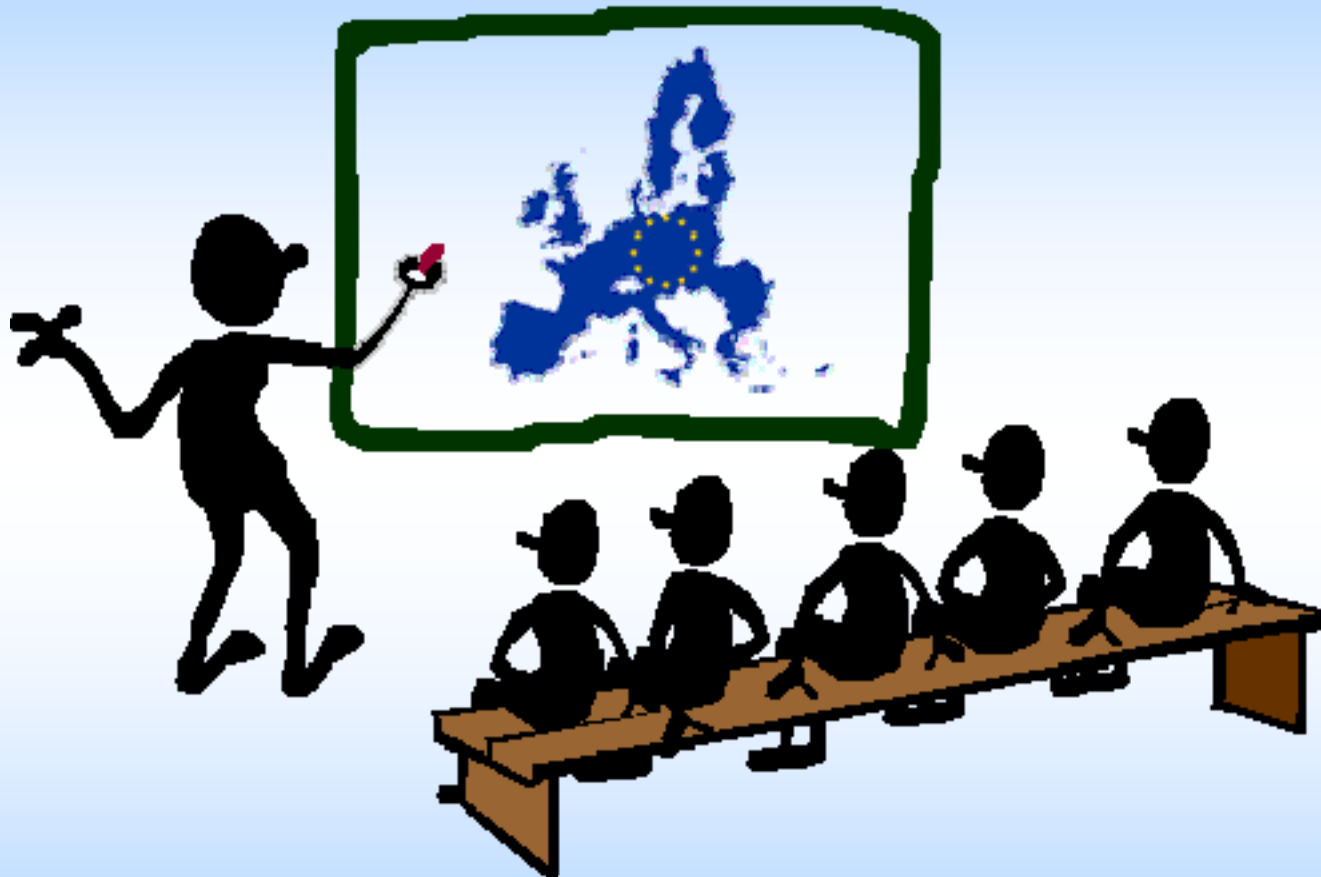- **Communicate** towards all participants and keep the team happy!
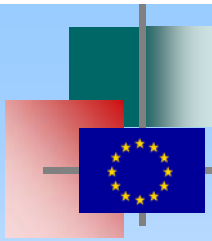
So, be a pro-active participant

- A participant from a third country is a participant as others

- Be **well informed**, so be **well prepared** before contacting potential partners (*esp.* Coordinators)

- **Work closely with the coordinator** and other partners of the consortium to **create win-win situations**

- Try to be **Task leader** or better try to be **WorkPackage leader**

- **Make sure your institution is supportive** and able to follow EC rules *esp.* about EC-funding

- Pay attention to **IPR**

- **Be professionnal and responsive.**

Thanks & Good Luck