

DEVELOPING PROCESS FOR A RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL

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1. Introduction - General aspects

Previous to set up a research proposal it is necessary to run through a series of stages involving collecting information regarding funding opportunities and general or eligibility conditions within different programmes, subprograms, modules or objectives which are being the subject of the competition.

In this respect it is useful and necessary for the interested parties or the ones that should be interested (mainly researchers) to get research, technological and innovation projects financed. They are the main actors on the research projects market and they need to have permanent right to use updated information concerning the available opportunities to access research funds.

A primary aspect, essential for the research institutes, universities, commercial enterprises dealing with research activities, professional associations, foundations or other organisations dealing or being interested into research activities is that under current circumstances and the economical apprehension, accomplishing the individual research strategies, individual research plans and the competencies or individual interests of each research entity can be done only by a continuous activity involving gathering information and identifying the opportunities and the funding schemes for the RDI activities of a particular domain or the related ones within the research market. This aspect involves a permanent concern of the research entities to get new information and to know in any possible moment which are the RDI programmes organizing competitions or calls for projects at national, regional or local, as well as at European or International level.

2. Conditions required to ensure the efficacy and efficiency of the developing process

A series of conditions are required within the research organization in order to increase the efficacy and efficiency of the project proposal development and of the execution and finalizing process of the project after the founding.

A primary condition refers to the elaboration of a characteristic research, development and innovation Strategy, bringing it up to date on a periodical basis and its adjustment according to the research market evolution. It is desirable that the characteristic strategy to be structured into two parts:

- short and medium term strategy (A);
- long term strategy (B);

A. *Short and medium term strategy* refers to a period of 3-4 years, 4-7 years or even 7-10 years; it is developed taking into account the periods when the national, European or international Scientific Research and Technological Development Programs, short and medium term for economical development Strategies and National Plans in both economical and scientific research fields are being elaborated and implemented.

B. *Long term strategy* is developed in perspective, normally for more than 10 years and marks the research entity development in one or more than one scenario.

Changing the long term strategy is done more seldom than in the case of short and medium term strategy, this happens only in the case when major and important changes occur on the research market.

A second required condition, strongly related to the previous one, is to analyze and operate changes in the organizational structure of the enterprise or to ensure enterprise flexibility and mobility in such way that the characteristic strategies and market juncture, along with the teams and necessary partnerships to accomplish the RDI research proposals and to carry on the financed projects, to be permanently correlated.

A third required condition with a maximum importance is the implementation of a quality management system within the organization and, if not implemented, its certification and permanent improving in such way that all the employees should consistently apply the eight main principles of the quality management in conformity to the SR EN 9000: 2006. In this way the success chances to access funds and to obtain very good results in the research activities are increasingly higher.

The fourth condition required is practicing a valuable management at the highest level of the enterprise, pragmatic and dynamic outside the organization and favorable, stimulant and objective within the organization. The same things apply for all the managers and heads of departments or team leaders within the organization.

The fifth condition required is represented by a permanent instruction and incentive of the researchers and specialists within the organization to permanently participate, in an active and aggressive way, with project proposals submissions at competitions organized in the characteristic field or in connected fields.

Finally *the six condition* required to be successful in winning RDI projects is the permanent identification and organization involvement in the funding opportunities irrespectively on the founding sources.

3. The main stages for project proposal development and participation at the competition

The following main stages are required to be run over from the moment the founding opportunity has been identified until the winning of competition and the founding of the RDI project:

- a) Accessing information regarding the program and the objectives of the competition;
- b) Identification and analysis of the themes and fields of the competition in respect to the particular call;
- c) Analyzing the project proposals with the same objectives and the partnerships within the project proposals which were submitted to the previous competition but were not financed;
- d) Analyzing the individual possibilities to propose and establishing the primary List of themes and potential projects intended to be submitted within the frame of the particular program and competition;
- e) Establishing the number of partners and the team or the research teams for each project proposed;
- f) Establishing the general research infrastructure needed as well as the equipments and the required duties;
- g) Establishing the status of the organization within each partnership either as the main contractor (coordinator) or as associated contractor (partner);
- h) Setting up the dialog with the research units, universities etc., and with the autochthonous or foreign specialists from the previous partnerships, other researchers or research managers in order to develop together project proposals in partnerships;
- i) Making the first draft of the work plan for each project;
- j) Continuing the dialog and finalizing in an interactive way the proposal; each partner input, assignment of the tasks, activities and budget, co financing, due times and finalizing of the workpackages in agreement with all the partners;
- k) Participating at events deemed to increase the image of the research unit within the scientific community (active and continuous participation at scientific events, working meetings within the framework of the Technological Platforms, workshops, etc.);
- l) Final editing of all the documents and annexes required to fulfill the project proposal in accordance to the reference terms and information package.

- m) Submitting the project proposals under the requirements stipulated in the information package or reference terms (on line submission, off line submission or paper submission) at the specific place and address;
- n) Appealing a legal contest to the Contracting Authority if your project proposal was negatively evaluated (not being selected for contacting and funding); in order to obtain a reevaluation of the project proposal the legal contest, done after an adequate analysis of the proposal and the evaluation criteria, should be submitted within the legal period of time allowed by the Contracting Authority;
- o) If the evaluation result is positive, then we proceed with the paper work required by the Contracting Authority in order to sign the Contract along with the financial subcontracts between the coordinator and the contractor partners of the project.
- p) Preparing and launching the first research stage stipulated in the project work plan.

4. The documents enclosed to a project proposal

The required documents for a general case of RDI project proposal development are the following:

- Form of proposal registration;
- Project proposal description;
- Consortia Agreement;
- Work Plan;
- Logical frame matrix;
- Time table;
- Human resources- Personnel list;
- Total Budget;
- Estimated Cost;
- Responsibility statement;
- Others such as: Abstract, summary etc.

The information package or the reference terms issued by the Contracting Authority specify the manner in which the project proposal documents should be completed.

During the development process of a project proposal, the potential contactor can make use of the aid electronic instruments such as: Gantt diagram, Pert, task planning instrument, resources to be committed, setting up the cash flow analysis template for the project proposal under evaluation etc.

The informatics system enable us to administrate as efficient as possible the funds allocated for research (both from budgetary sources and economical agents involvement), the research human resources, the results obtained from the research projects and to optimize the RDI

activities, based on a software systematic and complex analysis which delivers information regarding the strong and weak points of the RDI system.

Figure 1 presents the scheme of the RDI system activities, which can represent the basis of an informatics system for Launching, Monitoring, and Optimizing the RDI projects.

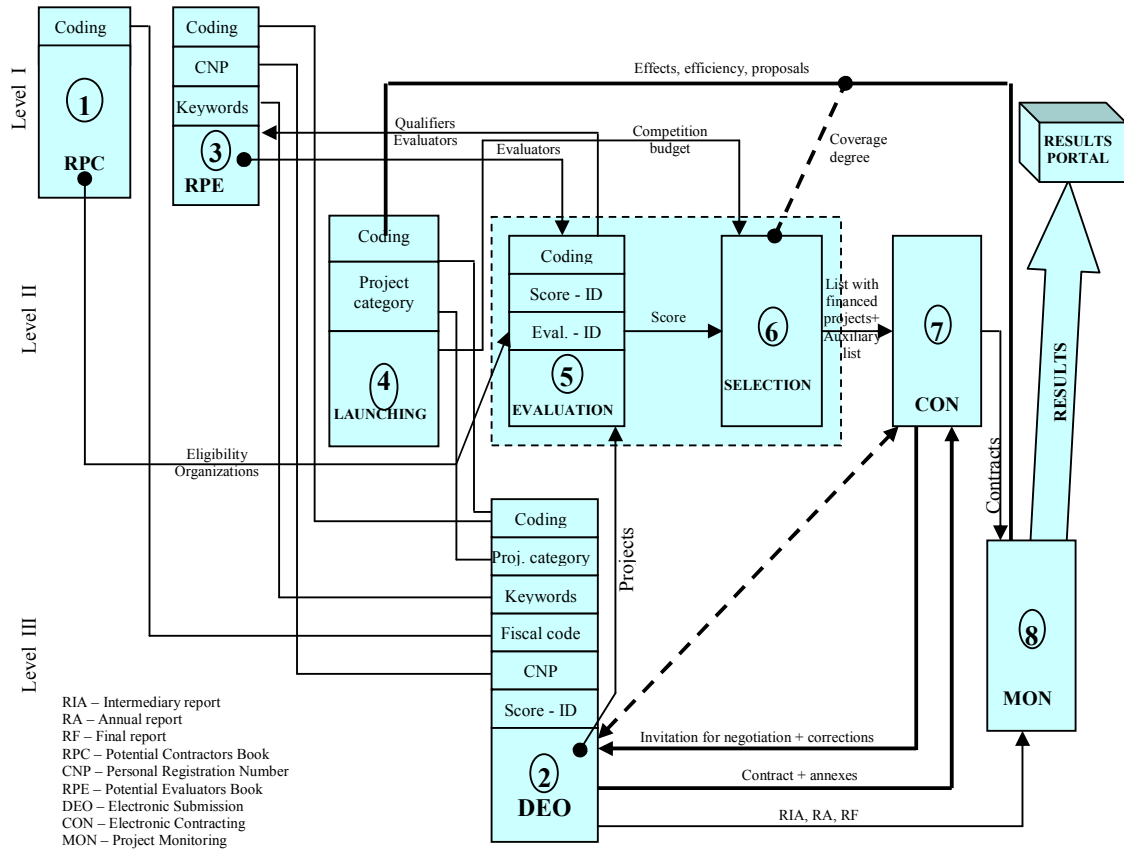


Figure 1. Informatics System scheme for Launching, Monitoring, and Optimizing the RDI projects.

5. Conclusions

To be successful in winning a research project proposal competition irrespective of the founding source (national or the European Union Budget) is necessary to take into account the subsequent aspects:

- the organization should have a dynamic and aggressive attitude, to be permanently present on the founding research opportunities market;
- the six conditions presented in this paper should be simultaneously met (see point 2);
- to run over the research proposal development stages and participate at the competition in a very serious and professional manner (see point 3);

- to elaborate the necessary documents in agreement to the requirements stipulated in the information package of each competition;
- to ensure a valuable management not only at the highest level of the organisation but also within the research teams and groups;
- to ensure all the necessary means to make use of the project results and to ensure their technological transfer into the real economy;
- to motivate and incentive substantially and ethically each member of the research team.

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