



dependable evolvable pervasive software engineering group

Lessons learned after some years of proposals (and projects)

Luciano Baresi

Politecnico di Milano

Dipartimento di Elettronica e Informazione



Who I am

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- MOMOCS (STREP, FP6)
- SLA@SOI (IP, FP7)
- MADES (STREP, FP7)

- SeCSE (IP, FP6)
- SMSCom (ERC)
- Cascadas (IP, FP6)
- S-Cube (NoE, FP7)

...

- Discorso (FAR)
- EasyLog (FAR)
- ArteDecò (FIRB)
- D-Asap (PRIN)

Disclaimer

What makes a good proposal

- Scientific and/or technological excellence
- Quality and efficiency of the implementation and the management
- Potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results

Competition and participants

- Competition is becoming tougher and tougher
 - More EU members
 - Economic crisis
- Proposals must be clearly focused on the objective
 - The selling point must be appealing
 - Read the objective very carefully (and try to be creative and innovative)

Many opportunities

- Objectives are not all crowded the same way
 - Objective 1.2 vs others
 - Less participants mean higher success rates
- Objective 1.2 is not the only option
 - Other objectives
 - Other opportunities: ESF, ERC, Artemis, ITEA
- Future and emerging technologies
 - Dedicated calls
 - Open calls

Good consortium

- Good balance of
 - Nationalities
 - Research institutions, software vendors, and demonstrators
 - Domain experts and problem solvers
- No outsiders
 - Key players usually make the difference
 - Deep knowledge of the field/problem
- Limited number of partners
 - Small is better than too big

Good technical goals

- Limited number of well-focused and precise goals
 - Generic and holistic statements do not pay off
- Achievable within the proposed time frame
 - Too visionary objectives are good only in some cases
- Probably the reviewers will not be experts
 - Describe goals in such a way reviewers can understand them
 - Avoid too many technicalities
 - Try to identify the “business value” of proposed objectives

Research institutions

- A few clearly-shaped contributions
 - Never promise you can do everything
 - Quality research, decent prototype tools, and good publications
- Scattered effort is not convenient
- Only be marginally involved in other activities
 - Project management
 - Exploitation
 - Industry-related dissemination

Good management

- Managing these projects is not easy
 - Actual power is limited, but responsibility is shared
- Distinction between administrative and technical management
 - A single person is not usually good at both
 - Technical manager must define, oversee, and enforce the research directions
- Conceivable effort and experience are needed
 - Positive attitude and real control are mandatory
 - Integration is usually a key issue

Prime contractor

- Very complex role
 - First responsible for everything, but also “limited” visibility
 - “Obscure” activities require deep knowledge and professionalism
- Dedicated organization
 - This is why many research groups are not properly equipped
 - PhD students are not good surrogates

Business model

- Potential impact of project results
- Never too much, but realistic and credible objectives
- A clearly defined business model
 - How to make money
 - Real commitment of industrial partners
- Open-source is not the only solution
 - Usual licensed software products
 - Software for free, and paid consulting

Tools

- Big misunderstanding
 - No time and effort for product-like tools
 - Too many single integrated/monolithic frameworks
- Developed software should
 - Help play with ideas
 - Act as proof-of-concept
 - Be good and reliable enough
- Software releases
 - Usually too many

As Reviewer

- Deliverables are
 - Usually too many, too long, and unfocused
 - Many parts are boring and useless
- Presenters tend to exaggerate
- Demos
 - Help waste time
 - Should be better engineered and faster
- Management
 - Usually late
 - Not detailed and precise as it should

Conclusions

- Some trivial and well-known suggestions
- Industry vs. research
 - Room and time for pure research
 - Better distinction
 - More focused, and accessible, programs
- Shorter proposals
 - Longer projects

Questions?



Luciano Baresi

luciano.baresi@polimi.it