

Grant Writing: Sharing Experiences and Advice

Large collaborative grants, e.g. MSCA-ITN (Malgosia, Francesca, Antonio, Wouter, Ago)		
<p>Example of a Timeline (for an MSCA-ITN application):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9 months to go: Start! Invite more team members as needed, establish relationships. - 6 month to go: Compile projects draft, who has not submitted should be out. Develop overarching ideas. - 4 month to go: Meet in person discussing projects and interlinking them in detail. - 3 months to go: Final version of projects including training requirements, exchanges etc. - 2 months to go: Training programme tailored. - 1.5 months to go: Fill in online forms, get identification numbers, institutional support etc. - 1 month to go: Collect forms, letters of support from partners and any signatures required. 		
	Good Ideas	Bad Ideas
<i>Project Leader</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delegates clearly, sets deadlines. - Knows the rules and requirements. - Maintains personal contacts. 	
<i>Assembling the Team</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put team together early. - Find industrial partners where suggested! - Allow time to get to know each other, best in a face-to-face meeting about 4 months ahead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't ignore recommendations: they are requirements given the competitiveness of the schemes.
<i>First Steps: People</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish relationship with grant administrators at your institution. - Establish relationship with local EU contacts for H2020. - Have Skype calls and wider meetings in different combinations to get to know the team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't forget anyone who might be of help or needed later.
<i>Defining individual Projects</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand what exactly happens in each lab, how they work, the techniques they have. - Allow 1-2 months to interlink projects. - Know the rules, use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Late changes will cause inconsistencies with interlinked projects. - Enforce/respect deadline for projects!
<i>Fusing into one</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create one whole view of the subject area from the collection of projects. - Begin writing the introduction accordingly. - Keep an eye on length already. - Write into the correct format immediately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't let team members disappear: frequent consistency checks required. - Don't let team members focus on their own project: it's a highly collaborative enterprise.
<i>Work Packages</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use colour coding for these throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't lose the thread like

	the application.	a reviewer would without!
<i>Training Program</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual (project dependent) training needs covered through visits. - Identify common training needs to develop training schools. - Special focus on transferable skills schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't forget to check successful applications! Transferable skills schools are transferable... - Don't forget your institutions' support to recruit trainers and decide on locations.
<i>Impact</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needs to be immediate in the first sentences/paragraphs/pages. - Include figures early on to attract attention. - Use informative and original acronyms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't ramble: condense language. - Don't overcomplicate.
<i>Figures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any graphics enhance the application! Calculate the space they need or save! - To make topic tangible: an overview figure in the introduction! - Organisational (responsibilities) chart - Schematic of collaborations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't forget to be inspired by successful applications.
<i>File Management and Version Control</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project leader is in charge. - Google drive: allows simultaneous editing/writing into the same form. - May not work for everyone: fuse some manually. - Frequent downloads to create locally saved versions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't ignore the comments functions when using google drive, very helpful to tick off jobs. - Don't allow access to master version to collaborators in the last week!
<i>GANTT chart</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create from projects and scientific visits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't create too early. - Frequent proofreading needed for consistency.
<i>Shortening, Formatting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Condense language before shortening content. Be radical towards the end. - Respect relative importance of different parts: research, training etc and achieve equivalent lengths. - Use bold, underline, italics to make important bits stand out and make obvious, reviewers have no time. - Remove spaces and empty lines as well as single words per line ('orphans') to save space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't lose information on collaborativeness. - Don't lose consistency.
<i>Final days</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 days for proofreading by everyone. - People on standby (skype on, check Skype messenger when returning to desk after short absence). - Be very clear about everyone's commitments, absences, availability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't allow last minute changes. - Don't lose touch when you need people to be available.

WT-Open Research Grant (Tina)		
	Good Ideas	Bad Ideas
<i>Process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fill into the online form early: motivating and easy achievement. - Delegate entire sections, e.g. data management plan. 	
<i>Support/Approach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A few weeks to finalise the financial plan: start early and tweak later to get a feeling for what you can get out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't ignore the available help from research Grants Office and their contacts with funding organisation.
<i>General</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be very aware of the remit of the scheme, stress impact and reach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't forget remit of funder in general, even if the scheme is not explicitly referring to it.

Visegrad Grant and Croatian Research Foundation grant (Nadica)		
	Good Ideas	Bad Ideas
<i>Process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First application informed second, successful one: to streamline own writing process, e.g. deadlines, and also incorporating the feedback from first. - Important that everyone believes in the importance of the project idea. - Involve local consultants for fine tuning and polishing, even if they are hard to get. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't underestimate trouble with writing a translation, particularly when late changes are required.

Other, general advice		
	Good Ideas	Bad Ideas
<i>Impact (Marjetka)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use figures, early on! - Use formatting and colours: visually more obvious. - Needs to be immediate in the first sentences/paragraphs/pages. - Use informative and original acronyms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't underestimate trouble with writing a translation (see above). - Don't ramble: condense language. - Don't overcomplicate.
<i>Grants (Wouter)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cofound is a scheme with a high success rate. - 60% cash contribution needed from all partners: arrange early, use creatively! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't be put off by cash contribution!
<i>General (Francesca)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Point out strengths (and sometimes weaknesses). - Mention hot things first! - Think like an evaluator: relevance and entertainment. 	