

# Good Practice in proposal writing



**APRE**  
**Agency for the Promotion of European Research**

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*“Space”*  
*“Environment (including Climate Change)”*  
*“Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities”*



**Scientific  
Excellence**

**Implementation**

**Impact**

# Proposal Preparation - Part B: General

## Check List:

- Does the **planned work fit** with the call for proposals?
- Is the application for the right **funding scheme**?
- Is the proposal **eligible**?
- Does the proposed work raise **ethical issues**?
- Does the proposal follow the required **structure**?

## Befor Submission:

- **Agreement** with all members of the consortium to submit the proposal?
- Part B in **pdf**?
- Familiarity with **EPSS**?
- Validated and submitted the last version? Remind: **Validation** check on EPSS!



# Proposal Preparation - Part B: General

## Formal Guidance

*The minimum font size allowed is 11 points. The page size is A4, and all margins (top, bottom, left, right) should be at least 15 mm (not including any footers or headers).*

*Ensure that the font type chosen leads to clearly readable text (e.g. Arial or Times New Roman).*

*As an indication, such a layout should lead to a maximum of between 5,000 and 6,000 possible characters per page (including spaces).*

### COMMON ERRORS:

- Relevance to the call **NOT** convincing
- Proposal written as a Scientific Paper
- Aims & objectives **UNCLEAR**
- Scientific part excellent **but** management and impact underdeveloped
- Page limits **NOT** respected
- Essential parts disregarded
- Template structure **NOT** respected



# Proposal Preparation - Part B: General

## GOOD PRACTICE:

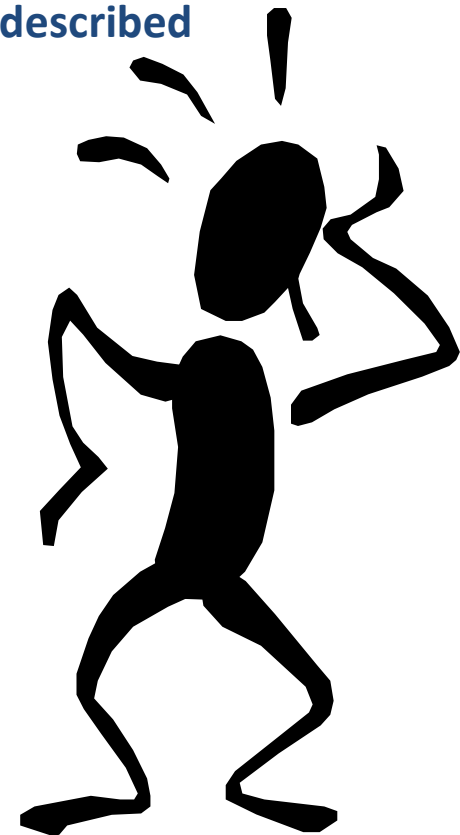
- Ensure the proposal can be read by a non-specialist and it is **understandable**
- Respect **page limits**
- **Explain** abbreviations (use a glossary)
- Use **diagrams** and **tables** if relevant and understandable
- Make the content **accurate, verifiable** and professional
- Do not use **jargon**
- Use **summary boxes**



## 1.1 Concept and objectives

### COMMON ERRORS:

- The proposal only **partially covers the requirements** of the call
- The **objectives are not clearly defined** and the **outcomes not clearly described**
- Objectives too **complex** or too **brief** in the explanation



## 1.1 Concept and objectives

### GOOD PRACTICE:

- Address the key questions:
  - **Why?** What problem are you trying to solve?
  - **What is the European added value?**
  - **Is it a European priority?**
  - **Why now?**
  - **Why you?** Best consortium?
  - **Is the project realistic from a scientific viewpoint?** Which risks?
- Start with a **single high level objective** that will help the evaluator to immediately relate the proposal to the topic of the call



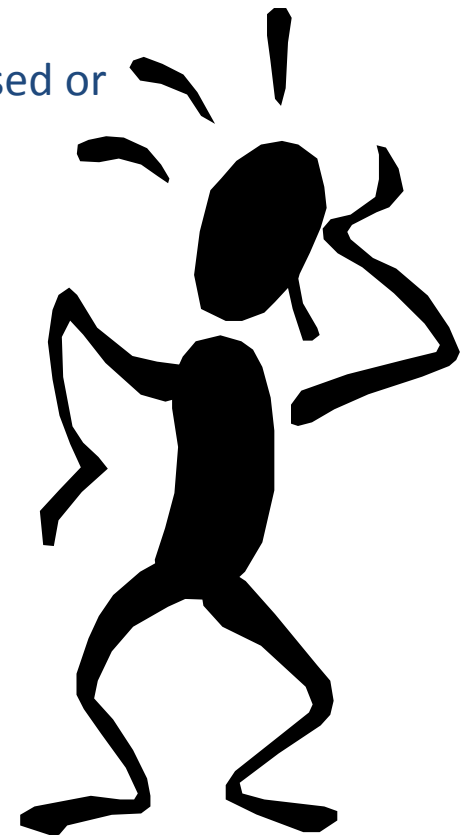
### What is the evaluator looking for?

- **Quickly understand what the proposal is about**, objective, scope and relevance to the call (Abstract & beginning of first section)
- **Project Idea matches with the call** – refer to the call text and expected impacts listed in the work programme

## 1.2 Progress beyond the state-of-the-art

### COMMON ERRORS:

- **State-of-the-art** not properly covered
- Some of the **methodological** issues not clear and detailed enough
- **Innovation** is rather limited (in concept, methodology, technology used or solution proposed)
- **References** of the **literature** are rather limited, missing or outdated
- **Strategy** needs clarification



## 1.2 Progress beyond the state-of-the-art

### GOOD PRACTICE:

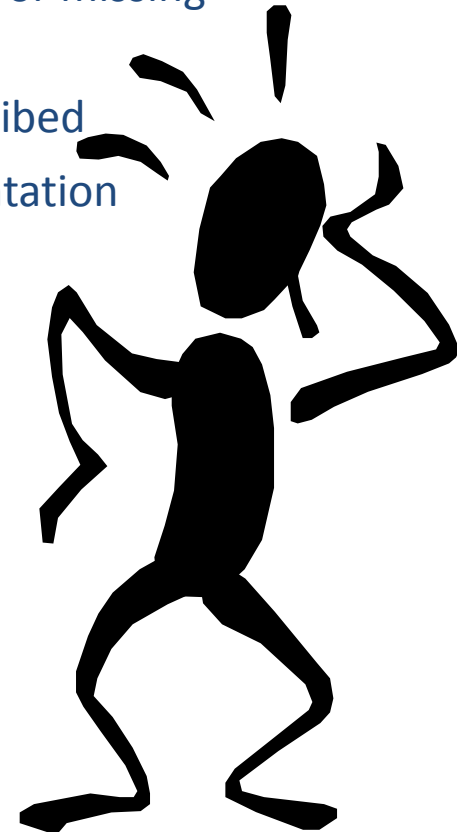
- Sound **description** of the state-of-the-art in science & knowledge in the specific area
- Mention related **EU-funded work** (previous and current) – describe how the project is different/better
- Indicate **gaps** in the state-of-the-art that prevent the achievement of the objectives targeted by the project
- Indicate how these gaps will be filled
- Clear **methodology**



## 1.3 S/T methodology and associated work plan

### COMMON ERRORS:

- **Links** between objectives and tasks are too weak or not clearly defined
- **Risk section and quality control inadequate**, insufficiently described or missing (risk management, risk strategy, contingency plan)
- **Risk assessment** and **contingency plan missing** or not properly described
- More **detail** necessary in **WPs, methodology** and **tasks** for implementation
- **Integration** between **WPs** not properly described or missing
- **Deliverables** need revision (**too many** or **not timed efficiently**)



## 1.3 S/T methodology and associated work plan

### GOOD PRACTICE:

- **Appropriate number of WPs** depends on the size and complexity of the project
- The proposal should contain **Gantt** and **Pert** charts consistent with the workplan
- **Ensure personpower** effort for each partner  
(no **under** or **over-estimations**)



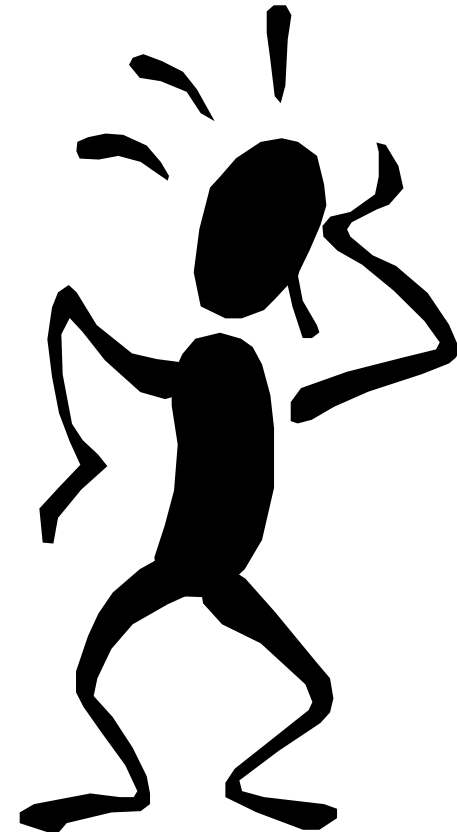
### What is the evaluator looking for?

- **Rationale** for the implementation **methodology**
- **Rationale** for the **approach** proposed in the project
- **Assessment** of the **technical risks** and **contingencies**
- **Credible workplan** meeting objectives without being too simplistic or too complex
  - Ease of **monitoring**

## 2.1 Management structure and procedures

### COMMON ERRORS:

- All **management** tasks concentrated on **one partner**
- Management structure **overcomplicated**
- **Advisory Board** is **required** or role should be better clarified



## 2.1 Management structure and procedures

### GOOD PRACTICE:

- **Implementation** should describe:
  - how the project will be **managed**
  - the **decision making processes**
  - **internal communication** within the consortium
  - **resolution of conflicts/crisis** mechanisms
  - **legal, scientific** and **ethical obligations** management
- Clear and convincing description of the **quality** and **skills** of key **individuals**
- **Project Decision-making bodies** description and mechanisms
- Clear **IPR management strategy** (both for academic and industry)



### What is the evaluator looking for?

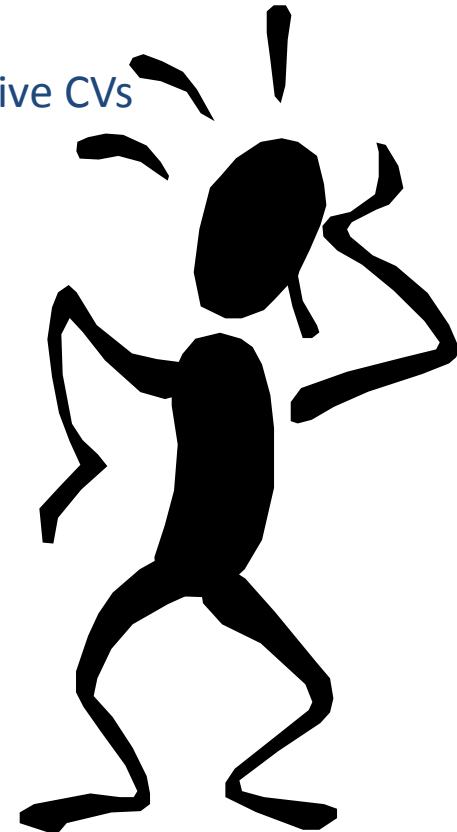


- Concise, complete description of **Management structure** and procedures
  - Well **qualified individuals**
- Convincing description of **internal communication flow** and involvement
- effective **oversight mechanism** including **independence** (Ex. Advisory Board)

## 2.2 Individual participants

### COMMON ERRORS:

- No **short profiles** of individual participants are provided
- **Too many references** and publications
- **Too much detail** with not relevant information on partners or extensive CVs not respecting page limits



## 2.2 Individual participants

### GOOD PRACTICE:

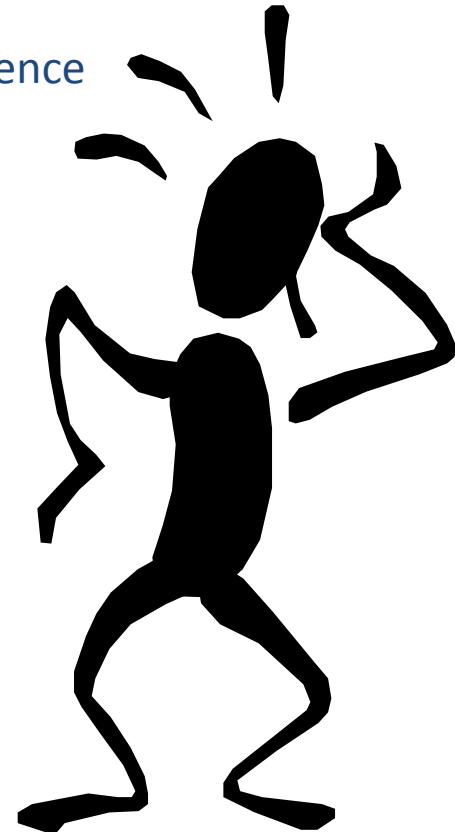
- Provide **concise and relevant information on the partners** and key individuals
- Include only **relevant, important and recent references and publications**
- Provide info on the **skills** of the **Project Manager** and **Project Coordinator** (experience, successful management of international projects)
- Do not mention ALL staff of the organisation (technicians, lab staff) if not relevant



## 2.3 Consortium as a whole

### COMMON ERRORS:

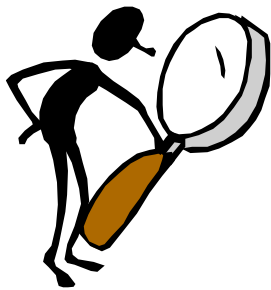
- The **Consortium** is **unbalanced** (geographically or technically), too small or too large
- **Unclear roles** and **responsibilities**
- Lack of **specialised partners**, of expertise in certain domain of experience
- Lack of **integration** in the consortium
- **Limited** European **coverage**



## 2.3 Consortium as a whole

### GOOD PRACTICE:

- **Detail roles, responsibilities and functions** of the partners
- **Avoid** to include partner just for “**cosmetic**” reasons
- Find partners with **good international track records**



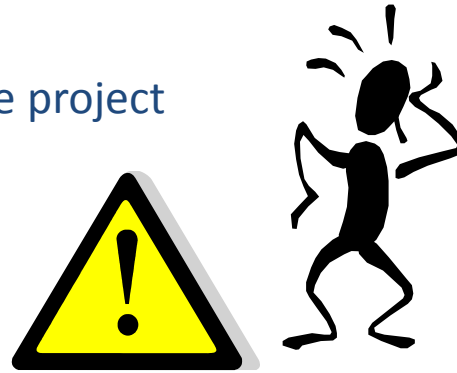
### What is the evaluator looking for?

- Concise description on how the consortium has been built
- Description of how the partners will jointly achieve the objectives
  - Demonstration of the complementarity between partners
- Demonstration that the consortium represents a true collaboration

## i) Sub-contracting + ii) Other countries:

### COMMON ERRORS:

- Too many subcontractors, role not clarified in the project
- Too much budget allocated to subcontractors



### GOOD PRACTICE:

- Minimise subcontracting
- Where subcontracting is necessary mention this and **justify** it
- Show complementarities with EU participants and justify input from non-EU scientists/organisations



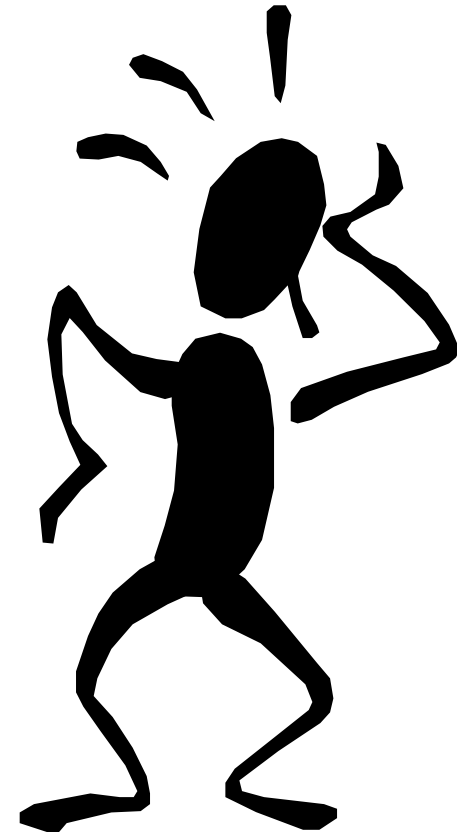
### What is the evaluator looking for?

- Reasonable and justified sub-contracting of non-core activities
- Added value from outside EU and benefits of the consortium

## 2.4 Resources to be committed

### COMMON ERRORS:

- The allocation of resources needs to be revised (too low or too high)
- Budget allocation **over-dimensioned**
- **Unbalanced** or **inconsistent** allocation
- **Management** costs should be better justified (**too high**)



## 2.4 Resources to be committed

### GOOD PRACTICE:

- Ensure **well balanced budget**
- **Justify** key items **expenditures** (especially high equipment costs)
- **Justify** **human resources** allocation (person-months)
- **Quality** is more important than **quantity**



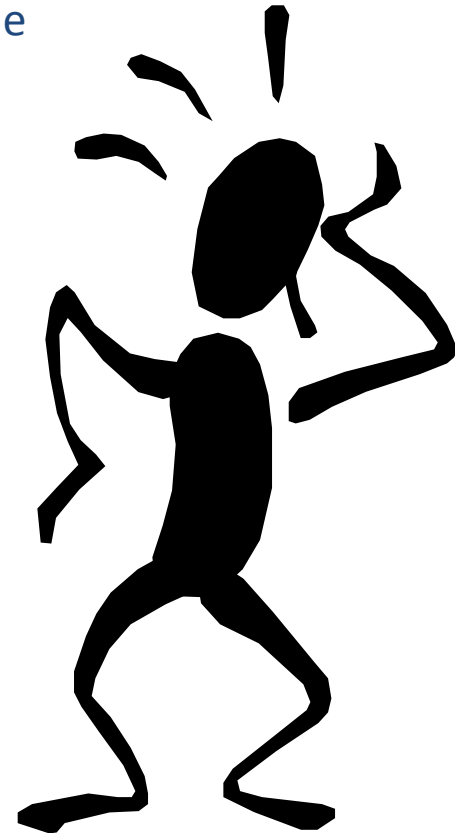
### What is the evaluator looking for?

- A **well-balanced budget** within the consortium and across countries
  - Properly **justified** key **expenditure** items
- **Limited management** costs (up to max 10%)

## 3.1 Expected impacts listed in the work programme

### COMMON ERRORS:

- **Impact is limited** (because lack of information or inappropriate methodology)
- **Objectives are not presented in a clear manner** and this may limit the expected impact



## 3.1 Expected impacts listed in the work programme

### GOOD PRACTICE:

- **Demonstrate** how the project will **fill knowledge gaps** at EU level and create/maintain competitive advantage
- Provide **supporting evidence** (**figures** and **qualitative indicators**)
- Demonstrate **relevance** to European policies



### What is the evaluator looking for?

- Description of how the project will **impact at various levels** (Scientific, economic, policy ...)
- Description of the **bigger picture**

## 3.2 Dissemination and/or exploitation of project results, and management of intellectual property

### COMMON ERRORS:

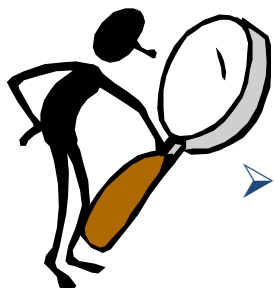
- IPR issues **missing** or **weak**
- **Not clearly targeted stakeholders** or late involvement
- **Weak communication strategy**
- **End-user community is missing** or weak or involvement not demonstrated



## 3.2 Dissemination and/or exploitation of project results, and management of intellectual property

### GOOD PRACTICE:

- Provide **description** of range of **applications** which might arise from the project and how they can be disseminated
- Describe **partners' capacity to exploit results** of the project (inc. IPR management)
- **Identify key stakeholders** and **End-user** groups to be targeted
- Implement **innovative dissemination** techniques



### What is the evaluator looking for?

- Details on how **IPR** will be **managed** and **used** for exploitation
- Credible and comprehensive description of how the **results** will be **disseminated** to stakeholders and **exploited** during and after the project lifetime
- Involvement of End-users

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