

# CHALLENGES OF THE 7<sup>TH</sup> FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

STATISTICS, CONCLUSIONS AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROPOSERS



EXCERPT FROM THE HITCHHIKERS' GUIDE TO FP7



# Challenges of the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme

Conclusions and recommendations for proposers in light of  
the new regulations and results of the first round of calls

Excerpt from the

## **Hitchhikers' Guide to FP7**

[www.eustrainingsite.com](http://www.eustrainingsite.com)

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## 1. Introduction

These notes are based on the Hitchhikers' Guide to FP7 published by Europa Media PSC. The overall aim of the Hitchhikers' Guide is to review and summarise some of the new elements in FP7 applications and understand how these new rules affected the success rate and overall interest for the first round of FP7. The following few pages provide a brief overview that I hope will prove to be useful to potential FP7 applicants. Unfortunately the Hitchhikers' Guide is only available for participants of Europa Media events.

Currently I am negotiating a Grant Agreement on several FP7 projects so I will also add my impressions on how negotiations go and how they are affected by the new financial and administrative rules throughout the guide. This study is primarily meant for project proposers, who intend to brave the next round of FP7 calls, but could be interesting for decision makers as well.

## 2. Pseudo-changes in the framework programme

In early days of FP7 communication "simplification" was a main issue and a mainstream communication term. We learnt how the financial issues would be simplified by eliminating cost models and we learnt how the Contract Preparation Forms (CPF) would be eliminated. Now it is the moment of truth and yes indeed CPFs have been eliminated. No more contract – no more CPFs. We do, however, have a Grant Agreement and accordingly Grant Agreement Preparation Forms (GPF) to be filled in. As the principle is exactly the same (providing additional administrative/financial information in order to draft an agreement between the Commission and the Beneficiaries) and the process itself has not been simplified we cannot really talk about actual change here. There are some other examples; just for the sake of interest here are some examples of the changes that do not make any difference (pseudo-changes):

| No more...                                  | This is what we have instead   |
|---|--|
| „IPs and STREPs“                            | Collaborative Projects<br>Large-Scale Integrating<br>Small-medium Scale Targeted                                   |
| “Coordination Actions”<br>“Support Actions” | Coordination and Support Actions.<br>You have to differentiate between<br>“Coordinating type” or “Supporting type” |
| “Instruments”                               | Funding Schemes  |
| “Audit Certificate”                         | Certificate on Financial Statement<br>(not compulsory anymore)   |
| Contract, Contractor, Proposer, etc.        | Grant Agreement, Beneficiary, Applicant, etc.  |

These changes affect terminology only and most of them seem futile. It is, however strongly advised for those submitting a proposal under FP7 to use these new terms in the proposal itself, as this would help to make the impression that you know what you are talking about. When discussing IPR issues refer to “Background IPR” (new FP7 term) instead of “pre-existing know-how” (FP6 term). Those, who already participated in FP6/FP5 will find that the changes from FP6 to FP7 are much less radical than the changes from FP5 to FP6.

(more in the “Hitchhikers' Guide to FP7”...)

### 3. Actual changes in the Framework Programme

#### 3.1. Administrative issues

The removal of the Collective Financial Responsibility and the removal of a need to submit an annual Audit Certificate (unless the cumulative EC contribution for any reporting period reaches 375 000 EUR) makes participation much more attractive, especially for SMEs. There is only a very small price to pay for all this: 5% of the contribution goes into the guarantee fund. There is still a Collective Technical responsibility, meaning that the partners must complete the work of a defaulting partner.

In terms of finances the situation is also much better now. Generally speaking the biggest beneficiaries of the new rules are the SMEs, although the new set-up is better for all organisations. The rate of EC contribution to the budget has increased from 50% to 75% (SMEs, universities) but also large industrial corporations are much better off as demonstration actions are now financed up to 50% (previously it was only 35%). Universities and research bodies will need to adjust to the concept of not having 100% funding with AC model, but rather only 75% funding (but can claim 60% transitional flat-rate or actual overheads). This is much, much better although it will take some time for some of their financial departments to figure out internally the rules of co-financing (especially in case of full-time personnel).

Again for all these positive developments there is a very small price to pay: Financial Viability Check for SMEs requesting more than 500 000 EUR. I think this is perfectly logical and offers a reasonable protection of public funds. The current position is that if an organisation fails this check no bank guarantee will be requested but the Commission may insist on replacing the Coordinator or the negotiations will fail. Alternatively the Coordinator may organise a bank guarantee on a "voluntary" basis, which will be enough guarantee for the Commission to continue negotiations. It is another question as to whether in such a case the provision is truly voluntary; we are basically back to where we were in FP6.

These new financial rules have already boosted SME interest for FP7 and it is expected that any EC targets in terms of SME involvement will exceed all expectations. Using the 60% transitional flat rate a classic SME budget of say 300 000 EUR direct costs will result in 360 000 EUR EC contribution. For most SMEs this could be very attractive and if their involvement is increased in those categories that are funded up to 100% (e.g. Training or Dissemination) the rate of EC funding could be proportionately high. It will be an interesting experiment to see if this is really the way of increasing competitiveness and the market potential of research projects and ultimately reaching the goals set forth by the Lisbon Agenda.

Proposal submission is electronic only (which is much easier and so far has been quite successful). The most typical reason for failing to meet formal criteria is late submission. This is perfectly OK and I strongly doubt that any value is lost with those proposals where the Coordinator is incapable of submitting their bid in time. It is also interesting that on the proposal preparation forms only earlier FP7 submissions should be noted (not very relevant for the first call); no reference is needed to be made for a resubmission of an FP6 proposal. This does not seem to make sense, and it would have been nice to see what % of the FP7 proposals in the first round were actually resubmissions from the last calls of FP6. It is not yet clear how the issue of resubmissions will be taken into account during the evaluation, as there does not seem to be a uniform approach to this (always a major issue at the evaluators' briefing).

One final remark on the administrative issues... Oddly enough, the new official supporting documents (e.g. Guide for Applicants) are surprisingly well-written, clear and in some cases I would even use the term interesting. Some of the recommendations and suggestions that are formulated in the new Guides previously had only been available in forms of suggestions and tips by consultants and lecturers of seminars and training courses on FP6/5 proposal development. The straight forward and truly practical suggestions that the Guides contain could be very important for new participants that decide to go forward without the help of consultants.

### 3.2. Evaluation procedure

Introducing the new criteria system that is based on three criteria only has undoubtedly the most profound influence on which proposals are invited to negotiate and which are not. Under earlier framework programmes, although it was also entirely possible that two or more proposals received the same score, the final ranking could have easily been established by giving more 'weight' to certain criteria or by taking into account the horizontal issues. The current system allows for less weighting and accordingly defining the final ranking list is more difficult. This allows for more Commission influence in the decision-making as opposed to earlier systems when the Commission relied entirely on the opinions of the invited experts. This is especially true for proposals that are just on (or near) the threshold for funding.

Feedback to proposers seems to have improved a bit (both in terms of quantity and quality) and usually comments make sense. There are, however, still some exceptions – a clear indication that the evaluators' performance should also be monitored on a continuous basis.

Let's see some more detailed remarks on the three criteria...

#### Scientific and/or Technological Excellence

Qualitative evaluation of Relevance is partly a pre-evaluation point and it is also included in this criterion; it makes no sense losing any points on the proposal not being FULLY in line with the call objectives. S&T Objectives is still the most important criterion as the originality of project concept and the appropriate methodology will be the initial key to the hearts of the evaluators. This section must be razor sharp! A true advantage of remote evaluation is that the increased timeframe allows for in-depth reading and understanding of the objectives of the proposal and the possibility of applying heavy makeup and otherwise common "proposal engineering" techniques so often used under FP6 will not work with the new evaluation procedures.

The work plan of the project including all figures related to work packages, staff efforts, list of deliverables, etc., are also evaluated under this criterion. It is therefore worthwhile to note that these figures and corresponding tables (1.3a, b, c, d) will most likely be cross-checked by the evaluators in the first instance and any errors or inconsistencies - mostly occurring due to hasty work - will be immediately detected. Therefore, all tables must be duly cross-checked before submission. And one more remark for the work plan: Do not forget that these projects are meant to be transnational cooperation projects with a European dimension; therefore, all partners must contribute to several work packages as appropriate.

#### Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation and Management

The role of the individual partners seems to come under increased scrutiny (this again may be the result of the increased timeframe to read through partner profiles and partner contribution to projects). Another impression is that in the proposals I have seen the proportion of participants from the New Member States has increased, which is a very, very positive phenomenon. This can partially be due to the fact that by now several organisations from these countries have established themselves as reliable entities and also many of them are willing to take up coordination roles. Another important issue is that there are more calls for proposals of smaller size (i.e. small and medium scale projects) where "smaller" partners can also contribute. Generally speaking there are more proposals with a generally lower budget, a clear indication that the brainless and heartless IP monsters of FP6 are no longer fashionable. Any geographical imbalances are much more often criticised - this may be a result of a more balanced evaluators' panel working on the proposals. Resources still seem to be a rather marginal issue. Unless there is something really weird (e.g. uniform monthly rates) or major inflation it is only commented on in a neutral or positive way. A word of caution: several evaluators actually use calculators to check figures and they can do the math!

## Potential Impact and Dissemination

Apart of this criterion is linked to the Relevance criterion - if the proposal is fully in line with the work programme the contribution to the expected impacts will probably be high as well. Therefore much depends on the elaboration of the dissemination plan and the exploitation of results. If not covered completely, serious points can be lost here. As the evaluators come from various backgrounds it is strongly recommended to have a "public" and a "business" action in the dissemination plan. The interested public and professional community should be addressed by targeted actions and abundance of free information (FP7 after all is financed from the European Union taxpayers' money). Evaluators from the business sector will conduct a more critical review of any business plans and true commercial exploitation of the results. To have both needs addressed properly is a must!

To sum up, the more extensive use of remote evaluation already seems to have meaningful and beneficial effects. A particular point worth mentioning here is that remote evaluation allows for more time for the evaluators to read and understand the proposals. This could be a serious blow to "professional" proposal writers and consultants. I have heard several cases when groups that were very successful applicants under earlier framework programmes received a cold shower and very low scores, although they were using the good old "blablabla" methods to cover up missing content and average quality. This may lead to an improving quality of projects (as opposed to an improving quality of proposals). If the transparency and objectivity of the evaluation process that was used earlier can be maintained this new system may work very well in the long-run (although initially generating some frustration and disappointment among some proposers due to the high over-subscription rate).

### 3.3. Negotiation

I am currently negotiating several projects simultaneously so my impressions are quite fresh on this. Deadlines are very strict and my first impression is that this time they actually mean it. Project proposals, even of reasonable size (a dozen or more partners), will only have about 3 weeks for sending in the first draft of Annex I, and altogether only about 2 months is available for concluding negotiations. This may be because the Commission is also under pressure to launch the first batch of projects and commit the budgetary resources and also because faster negotiations and the elimination of "red tape" was among the most emphasised simplification processes.

Negotiations under the Security theme seem to come under less pressure (and possible joint calls under this Theme in the future) where the timeframe for negotiations seems to be more flexible allowing extra time. Here, the process may start with a security scrutiny procedure (if the proposal is flagged "security sensitive").

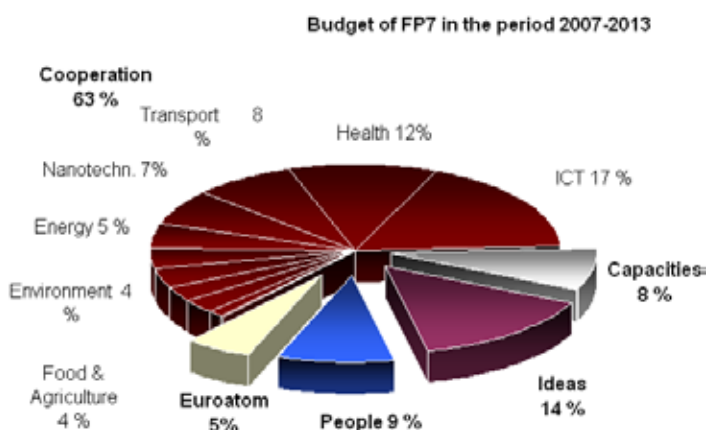
Budget cuts seem less automatic. I have seen several ESRs (including my own) where the maximum amount of EC contribution was set to the level of original funds requested. In comparison to earlier framework programmes, when budget cuts of 10-20% were more or less automatic (although on the other hand you could have been reasonably sure that in the end you would get what had been defined as the maximum amount of EC contribution), now it is also decided in negotiations. This may also be at least partially due to the fact that we are in the first round of calls.

### The electronic negotiation system

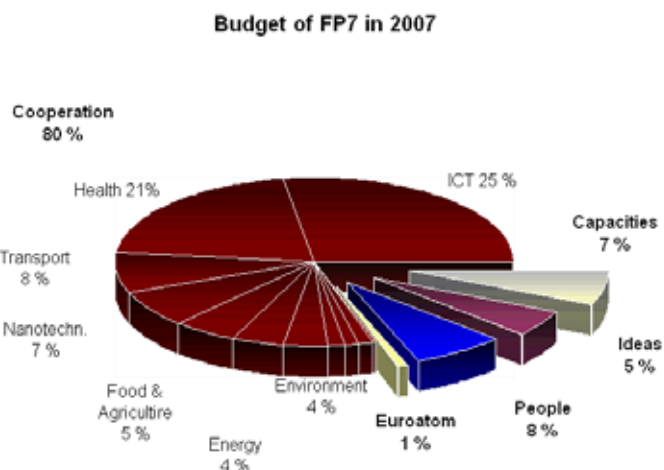
Much of what has been promised seems to be working. Data from the proposal preparation forms is transferred to the GPFs and the status of partners with a recent FP6 contract is set as VALIDATED. The system seems to be very slow at times and prone to errors. It would have been nice to have passwords at two levels, e.g. partners/coordinator. With the current single entry key and multiple access, if a partner accidentally submits the GPFs the forms can no longer be edited; a new key needs to be requested from the Project Officer. This is just one of the few minor difficulties.

### 3.4. A quick assessment of Calls

In financial terms of FP7, in the first round 63 calls have been issued under FP7 up to now and have been allocated 10.7 % of the total seven-year budget with a sum of 5.672,8 million EUR. As it is earmarked, the largest amount, a sum of 4.516,3 million EUR, has been distributed to finance 33 calls for proposals under the Cooperation specific programme, which is about four times more than the amount allocated to the remaining 30 calls for proposals under the specific programmes Capacities (17), People (11), Ideas (1) and Euratom (1). In line with the FP7 priorities, the two most relevant areas seem to be Information and Communication Technology, and Health with a budget of 1.561,1 million EUR and 1.186 million EUR respectively, an amount that covers nearly half of the total budget of the first round calls. However, the budget in ICT is shared among 6 calls; under the Health theme there have only been 2 calls issued so far. In terms of number of calls, Transport, and Nanosciences and Nanotechnologies have been proven to be the most significant fields, under which both have issued six calls with a total budget of 442.960 million EUR and 395.723 million EUR respectively. Speaking for the entire lifetime of the programme (2007-2013), more than half of the total budget of FP7 is dedicated to the Cooperation specific programme, which includes the 10 thematic areas.



Therefore, the Cooperation specific programme is not only where the greatest opportunities exist, but also where the highest competition takes place. One important issue to point out with regards to the Themes of the Cooperation specific programme is the “cross-cutting” (horizontal) nature of some of the thematic areas. This means, opportunities for a proposer, say from the field of space, is not limited to only the Space theme, but space-related topics are called for also within the Environment (e.g. GMES) and Transport (e.g. GALILEO) Work Programmes. Similar examples apply to several other Themes (e.g. Health in Environment, Environment in ICT, Energy in KBBE, etc.). I would highly encourage proposers to check out the Work Programmes of other Themes in addition to their main areas of interest.



### 3.5. Competition in the framework programme - initial results of the first calls

Although competition has always been tough under framework programmes, FP7 has brought along the fiercest competition thus far. Whereas in FP5/FP6 a score of 4 average would have guaranteed your proposal to be successful (in FP5 I had projects that got funded with a 3.5 average) the very narrow topics (where only 1 proposal can be funded) and the 7-10 times oversubscription for FP7 may result in truly excellent proposals being rejected. A proposal with a score of 13 or 14 would deserve funding no matter what and there may still be cases when even these excellent proposals are not invited to negotiate. The Commission, learning from its earlier mistakes, does not seem to force the “merger” of consortia, which leads to only one solution, rejecting otherwise excellent proposals. As the final results are coming out this issue will undoubtedly cause the greatest disappointment and frustration. This is an issue with the broadest implications, because - if not communicated properly - it may result in the loss of European talent and enthusiasm for joint project activities.

| Programme   | Budget               | %          | No. of calls |
|---|----------------------|------------|--------------|
| <b>Cooperation</b>                                | <b>4 516 343 000</b> | <b>79</b>  | <b>33</b>    |
| Information and Communication Technologies        | 1 561 050 000        | 27         | 6            |
| Health  | 1 186 000 000        | 21         | 2            |
| Transport   | 442 960 000          | 8          | 6            |
| Nanosciences, Nanotechnologies                    | 395 723 000          | 7          | 6            |
| Food, Agriculture and Fisheries and Biotechnology | 302 090 000          | 5          | 2            |
| Energy  | 237 300 000          | 4          | 2            |
| Environment (including Climate Change)            | 200 000 000          | 4          | 1            |
| Space   | 34 500 000           | 1          | 1            |
| Security  | 80 300 000           | 1          | 1            |
| Socio-economic sciences and Humanities            | 2 550 000            | 0          | 3            |
| Other   | 69 100 000           | 1          | 3            |
| <b>Capacities</b>                                 | <b>389 634 000</b>   | <b>7</b>   | <b>17</b>    |
| <b>People</b>                                     | <b>428 650 000</b>   | <b>8</b>   | <b>11</b>    |
| <b>Ideas</b>                                      | <b>289 500 000</b>   | <b>5</b>   | <b>1</b>     |
| <b>Euratom</b>                                    | <b>48 650 000</b>    | <b>1</b>   | <b>1</b>     |
| <b>Total</b>                                      | <b>5 672 777 000</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>63</b>    |

Table 1.1 Overview of the first calls under FP7 (source: cordis.europa.eu)

During the first round 56 calls have closed and although seven calls are still open (as of 17 October 2007), it has already been proven that FP7 will be the most competitive framework programme to date. Lets see some examples.

## **Environment**

Under the Environment theme of the Cooperation specific programme the first call closed on 2 May 2007 and covered 72 topics under the Environment Research theme. The DG Research received 600 proposals requesting over 1.8 billion EUR for the call launched with a total call budget of 200 million euro in 2007. The submitted proposals cover a wide scale of research areas from climate change to health related environmental issues. Environmental issues are gaining recognition in the international political sphere as the world becomes more environmentally conscious. This has resulted in strong competition for environment related calls for proposals and only the most innovative proposals have made it through to negotiations. Out of the total 600 submitted proposals slightly more than half, 329 have passed all evaluation thresholds. Furthermore, out of those 329 that have passed the threshold, only around 70 proposals will receive funding, which means, the overall success rate is approximately 12%.

The final selection of proposals is currently being conducted and negotiations are expected to commence in early autumn. The second call with a budget of 216 million EUR will be published on 20 November 2007 with the submission deadline 19 February 2008. The 2008 work programme consists of 50 topics within 10 areas.

## **Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)**

For the 20 objectives of the ICT theme in the Cooperation specific programme 1840 proposals had been submitted involving around 17.300 participants and requesting approximately 7 billion EUR against the available budget of 1190 million EUR. In the mean time, their evaluation necessitated the contribution of almost 1000 (!) experts from over 40 countries.

Taking as an example, a total of 93 proposals were submitted under Objective 1.4 "Secure, dependable and trusted infrastructures", requesting 353 million EUR of EC funding against an available budget of 90 million EUR. The majority of these proposals were Specific Targeted Research Projects (STRP) and Integrated Projects (IP) (64 and 18 proposals, respectively), which reflects the general tendency. Some 90 % of all the submitted proposals under FP7-ICT theme targeted the same two types of activities, IPs (18%) and STRPs (72%).

## **ERC Starting Grant: Statistics**

Under the Ideas specific programme, after the first round of the evaluation process of the ERC Starting Independent Research Grant, of the 9167 submitted proposals 559 were selected for round two. It is estimated by the Commission that a bit less than half will be rewarded with the scholarship, which means that the success rate is around 3% under this scheme - pretty low even by FP7 standards. The most successful areas - Physics, Mathematics and Engineering - cover 45% of the 559 selected candidates whereas 37% are educated in "Life Sciences" and 18% in "Social Sciences and Humanities". Gender division indicates a three times more male-dominant at this point with a ratio of 76% of approved male candidates beside the 24% of successful female applicants.

## **Research potential**

8 million EUR was made available under the research potential fund to develop partnerships, exchange know-how and experience, and upgrade research capacities, in the region of the Western Balkan countries cooperating with convergence regions under the Capacities specific programme. This amount is, however, low when compared to the requested total amount of 119 million EUR of the 107 submitted proposals. Because of the large number of submitted proposals, the success rate for this call is only 10,28%, as only 11 of the total 107 projects will be funded by the Commission. The success rate varies according to country; out of the 11 funded proposals seven are coordinated by Serbian, two by Irish, one by Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and one by Croatian institutions.

### Marie Curie European Re-Integration Grants

136 proposals were submitted under the call, which closed 25 April 2007, and of which 114 passed all thresholds. The good news is that the success rate is extremely high and it is estimated that 69% of the proposals that passed the threshold will receive funding from the 14,5 million EUR made available for 2007; the bad news is that while the projects may have passed the thresholds only 7.25 million EUR is available for this first round, as the second deadline for this call is 17 October 2007. Approximately 90 projects are expected to receive funding, but this will only amount to around 81 000 EUR per project, and that is only if the negotiations go extremely well for the proposers.

Although the success rates vary according to the different programmes, the strong competition of the programme is obvious. Good news is that funds allocated to the calls issued so far take only one-tenth of the total budget for the entire seven-year period, so there are plenty of opportunities left to try and get your projects funded.

(more in the "Hitchhikers' Guide to FP7"...) )

### 4. Recommendations for proposers

There is a lot to be said here; my first recommendation would be to all potential project proposers to truly understand the competitive nature of this programme. Under the current schemes there is absolutely no margin for errors. With a few exceptions most proposals are very well put together and the overall quality is high. When a proposal passes all evaluation thresholds it is already an indication that it is of high quality. In other words, if you put together a good proposal based on an interesting idea to be implemented by a nice complementary partnership - it does not have a chance. Almost all proposals are like this, the ones that are above the threshold are even better. I cannot stress enough how important it is that only the best of the best will succeed in FP7 so make sure you do not waste your time putting together a "good" proposal, spend your time creating an excellent proposal.

#### 4.1. General recommendations for organisations concerning participation

I strongly recommend that you have a highly developed strategy and a very clear idea in your head for justifying the effort needed to put together a competitive FP7 proposal. Money should not be the motivation, because if you do things properly each project will cost you about 25-50% of the total budget depending on whether you are a university, SME or large cooperation. Unless you are absolutely sure that you are able to fit the economics of an FP7 project into your organisation's financial plans I suggest that you forget about it.

The following quick cost-benefit analysis can help support the decision:

##### Disadvantages of FP7 projects

- It is a time consuming process with a long wait between making the submission until the final decision, and then completing the project may take years. During this time there might be changes in external circumstances (e.g. economical: price increase, technological development, new solutions on the market, etc.) that may make your project idea obsolete or unrealisable. You are, however, bound in the Grant Agreement to complete the project. Making changes is extremely difficult when the agreement has been signed.
- Working in a consortium has a negative side as well. For example, cultural differences often cause difficulties when implementing the project. You probably don't need all these partners after all. Implementing your idea on your own may ultimately take less time and effort.
- The administrative burden of an EU project is immense. You need a really well prepared staff and a lot of time to fulfil all the requirements.
- ...

##### Advantages of EU projects

- Support is non-refundable in most cases; using EU funds is therefore advantageous compared to getting a loan and support from market sources, because these normally have to be repaid with interest on top.
- You gain access to the resources of your partners: technological resources, their knowledge, IPR, etc. The relationships you form in a project will give a competitive advantage in the future, and it is becoming increasingly important to have established international relationships in today's globalised world.
- You may identify new opportunities during projects, and for example develop intellectual property for subsequent use.
- ...

So think, before you apply and make sure that your FP7 project fits well into your business or research strategies. This is absolutely vital for SMEs, but may also be important for universities, where there are several other funding sources available with less administrative challenges (e.g. grants from national programmes, foundations, industry, etc).

#### FP7 vs. other EU Programmes

Bear in mind that there are other European initiatives, aimed at realizing the objectives of the Lisbon Agenda similar to FP7. Two significant but distinct examples in this connection are the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the Structural Funds. The Commission's intention is that these different programmes complement each other. You might be confused by the abundance of programmes (see Handbook on EU Funds 2007-2013), that is indeed for one typical issue for the proposers to sort out. Generally speaking, research and technological development activities should be targeted at FP7, market oriented activities at CIP, any investment-type activity should be directed at Structural Funds. This judgement should be done on a case-by-case basis by very carefully reading the Guide for Applicants of the programme, grasping the types of activities supported and assessing the project idea within that context.

## 4.2. Pieces of advice for proposal writers

If you believe that FP7 is the right programme for you, here you have a couple of points to consider in order to make your proposal a winning proposal:

- Be up-to-date; be familiar with the Work Programme of the particular Theme you are interested in. The entire Work Programme document (and any related documents such as info on public consultations, the work of Technology Platforms, directives, etc) is important if you want to give the impression of a proposer that really knows what's going on.
- Involve experienced partners in your consortium; the most important feature is balance in terms of expertise and geography.
- Pay due attention to EU policies and other horizontal (e.g. gender) issues (but only if they are truly relevant because it can be counterproductive if you address non-existing issues).
- Partnership and management must be tailored to suit the project objectives and size.
- Demonstrative presentation of the project's goals, necessity and importance, appropriate demonstration of the (scientific) content, always use references.
- Professionally composed text properly formatted, use figures and diagrammes; use EU terms (but do not overdo this).
- Make sure that you properly introduce yourself and your partners. The roles must be very clear. Key staff should be briefly introduced.
- The evaluators still have limited time to read the proposals and they appreciate it if the chapters are concise and to the point. So be clear, to the point and convincing.
- You can directly address the evaluation criteria; the best is if you have some members of your staff (those not involved in its preparation) pre-evaluate the proposal.

And remember: only ambitious projects built around excellent ideas to be implemented by a very strong consortium have a real chance. Being in (or leading) a good Consortium is the most important issue, so here is some good advice for consortium building:

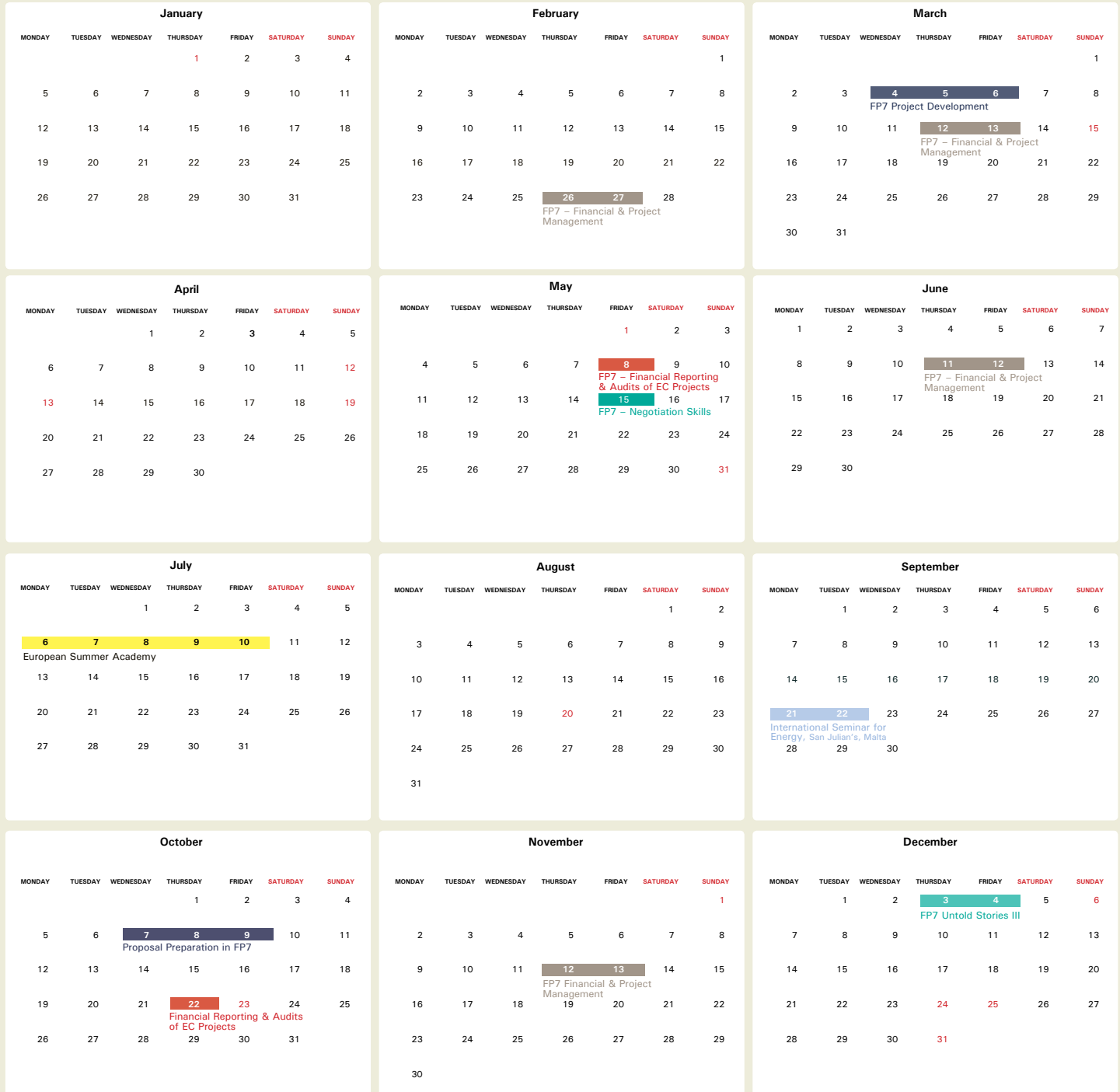
- It is recommended that only partners with good references be included in the consortium. Even if you are looking for a specific expertise or participants from a specific country, make sure that they have related international reference(s). Earlier framework projects are the best.
- It is strongly advisable to establish a consortium 'core': 2-3 persons/institutions responsible for the preparation of the proposal and for the compilation of all required material.
- During proposal preparation a considerable level of coordination is required but it is necessary for the Coordinator to distribute the work among the partners. It is always partner's input and new approaches that can turn a good proposal into an excellent proposal.
- It is useful if the consortium members have worked together on previous projects. This can strengthen cooperation.
- The members of the consortium should be capable of carrying out all activities with respect to the project so that there will be no need to involve subcontractors.
- The activities and experiences of the individual members of the consortium should complement each other but also be unique. There must be a very clear reason why you have a particular partner in your project.

Before you submit a proposal, make certain your partners are reliable and that they are at your disposal. This helps you to eliminate disagreement and serious problems that might occur during negotiations or the implementation of the project. At the first sign of trouble get rid of the problematic partner, there are thousands of others in Europe that are willing to work hard!

(more in the "Hitchhikers' Guide to FP7"...)

## 2009 Course Timeline

Project Management
  Project Development
  Energy & Environment
  Summer Academy
  Specialty
  Audit



Europa Media PSC reserves the right to cancel the courses or change the venue and dates indicated.