How to **Effectively Network/Communicate**

in International R&D projects

2011

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networking | guide

Information Technologies to Open Knowledge for Eastern Europe and Central Asia

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The necessary condition for the successful international R&D collaboration between EU and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) countries is the potentially attractive knowledge and know-how for the EU counterparts. But this knowledge could be exploited only with the capacity to share it. This capacity is very much related to the capacities for networking on different levels of project participants (researchers, stakeholders, policy makers, project partners in EECA countries etc) interactions. The lack of networking skills could stay this R&D potential undiscovered.

In broad sense Networking is relationship building among people with similar interests and goals. It involves actively getting to know people – developing an ever-increasing list of connections. Networking is about sharing information, ideas, resources, opportunities.

"How to Effectively Network/Communicate in International R&D projects" guide is designed so that the target audience – EECA countries' participants and stakeholders in international R&D projects – with lack of networking skills – could significantly improve them following the practical recommendations.

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Introduction

The three FP7 Special Support Action clustering projects (EXTEND, ISTOK-SOYUZ, SCUBE-ICT) targeting Eastern European and Central Asian (EECA) countries is an ambitious activity, supported by the EC, have similar objectives to:

- identify the potential for the ICT cooperation between EU and EECA countries;
- raise awareness of the opportunities for this cooperation;
- promote and facilitate cooperation between the EU and EECA countries

Notwithstanding the commonality, the projects have distinct priorities on the objectives and support measures:

- EXTEND focuses on the high level analysis of research priorities for cooperation between the EU and the target region;
- SCUBE-ICT seeks to facilitate policy dialogue between EU and the target region, resulting in policy recommendations to facilitate research cooperation;
- ISTOK-SOYUZ concentrates on building partnerships between researchers (mainly in the framework of FP7 ICT calls) in the EU and the target region.

All three projects (**http://www.eeca-ict.eu/**) coordinate their activities with the aim of maximizing impact, avoiding overlap as well as producing compatible mapping and recommendations on future ICT research cooperation within the scope of EECA cluster.

The necessary condition for the successful international R&D collaboration between EU and EECA countries is the potentially attractive knowledge and know-how for the EU counterparts. But this knowledge could be exploited only with the capacity to share it.

This capacity is very much related to the *capacities for networking* on different levels of project participants (researchers, stakeholders, policy makers, project partners in EECA countries etc) interactions. The lack of networking skills could cause this R&D potential to remain undiscovered.

The concept of networking is quite new for EECA countries. The lack of the networking culture could be explained from different points of view but the main factor is the legacy culture of the former closed centralised “soviet system”. Many post-communist researchers, ICT professionals and policy makers do not have the necessary *interaction skills* even if they are experienced researchers and professionals. Support is needed to nurture new ways of networking within their respective countries and – most importantly with their EU counterparts. The networking culture is the crucial factor for international R&D projects success.

Some barriers for the international collaboration are difficult to overcome due to the deeply rooted cultures of some nations (even in EU level) and they simply should be taken into account. But some others – *networking skills* – could be significantly improved through their understanding, self-analysis, and further coaching. Indeed, nowadays we live in the networking world, and the amount of information flows is incredibly high: personal networking becomes one of the main channels to pass information and to build partnerships.

The role of the cluster project partners both in EU and EECA countries is to create the necessary instruments/tools that facilitate the networking interactions between projects participants (for instance web based competence platform, networking events, delegation tours, policy workshops…) and gain the sustainability of products and services beyond the lifetime of the individual projects. The EECA cluster project partners represent reference points within the EECA region and it is extremely important that the temporary network established in the framework of the clustering projects continues to remain after the completion of formal clustering projects, for the benefit of the future EU-EECA projects. In this respect networking skills are of the utmost importance.

How to read this Guide?

The "How to Effectively Network/Communicate in International R&D projects" guide is designed so that the target audience – with lack of networking skills – could significantly improve their networking skills following the practical recommendations.

The primary target audience for this guide is the EECA countriesr' participants and stakeholders in international R&D projects:

- internal – those organizations who compose the cluster projects consortiums and
- external – those who **provide support** to the cluster projects because they are interested in projectsr' activities and results, those who **provide feedback** and opinion on the project activities and questions; and those who are **future beneficiaries** of the project results.

Chapter 1 "What is networking" provides highlights on the meaning of networking culture. It is the first step for those who are interested in improving their networking skills. It also includes tips on how to take advantages of the networking for researchers on the EU-wide level.

Chapter 2 "Networking/communication gaps" gives an overview on the most important gaps in terms of communication and networking, such as lack of trust between partners, stereotypes, wrong expectations, fears for punishment for honest communication or language barriers.

Chapter 3 describes the process of stakeholdersr' management (networking with stakeholders).

Chapter 4 describes networking skills and examples implemented in the framework of the international R&D project and support actions eg. three clustering projects **www.eeca-ict.eu**. This covers key players in the process, examples of networking activities, required networking skills and roles and required skills of the cluster project partners. This chapter also provides an overview on the most important networking skills required nowadays. It is broken down into two categories: (a) basic networking skills – required for everyone who wants to take full advantage of cooperation with foreign partners, and in particular partners in FP7 projects, and (b) advanced networking skills – required for those who have responsibilities to help to others to network and to cooperate.

Chapter 5 is the most detailed and thus the longest part of this Guide. It gives examples of good practices and provides tips on how to improve the networking skills listed in the previous chapter. This includes understanding the difference in culture, efficiently promoting competencies of organizations and people, participating proactively in the events, making good presentations, communicating efficiently, using web collaboration tools and services, planning an event or a brainstorming meeting, undertaking efficient interviews etc.

Chapter 1

What is **networking**

In broad sense Networking is relationship building among people with similar interests and goals. It involves actively getting to know people – developing an ever-increasing list of connections. Networking is about sharing information, ideas, resources, opportunities.

Depending on goals/interests and social circles there are big variety of different types of networking:

- Personal networking for career advancement
- Business networking is considered as a marketing method by which business opportunities are created through networks of like-minded business people
- Research/knowledge networking, etc

It has become apparent that a vast amount of knowledge exists within the structure of the network itself, and by creating the proper conditions for information to be shared and built upon, we can find new solutions

The reason for creating *a networking culture* is obvious once you look at the current and future direction of research and innovation. Technology and the challenges that must be solved have become so complex that many, perhaps even most, companies can no longer rely solely on their own internal innovative geniuses, no matter how brilliant those people may be.

What is culture?

Most of the numerous "culture" definitions have a common core to what culture is made up of:

- **Material objects**: words or objects that carry a particular meaning like clothing or furniture, etc.
- **Ideas, values, attitudes, and beliefs:** the essence of a culture
- **Expected patterns of behavior**: family social culture, law, etc.
- **A collective phenomenon:** shared by at least two or more people who live in the same social environment.

Innovation is increasingly about having groups of people come together to leverage their diverse talents and expertise to solve multi-faceted challenges that cross multiple disciplines. To make this happen within your organization, and beyond as you move toward open innovation, requires a networking culture that is designed, supported, and modeled by the organizationr's leaders.

Even organizations that are not ready to fully embrace open innovation are finding that employees' mindsets about networking must be stretched as more companies deploy internal R&D functions outside the corporate headquarters and around the world.

Another key motivation for setting up networking initiatives is based on the simple fact that the knowledge of any organisation is inside the heads of the employees. Discovering, managing and distributing this knowledge has always been a

challenge, and now, more than ever, the ability to leverage an organizationr's collective knowledge and experience through virtual and face-to-face networks and communities is critical to research.

Furthermore, establishing the ability to bring knowledge and potential new innovation insights in from external sources demands a strong networking culture supported and modeled from the top.

With the rise of social tools, we've been publicly reclaiming ourselves – publishing blogs, joining social networks, and connecting and sharing information with each other on a global scale. As a result, a shift in values is underway, where privacy, gatekeeping, and the preference for information are being replaced with new expectations of publicity, openness and transparency.

At the organizational level, knowledge is often separated by department. These barriers no longer make sense. In order to take advantage of hidden insights and innovative ideas, there needs to be a way to understand who's who and how to get the information flowing through the proper channels. By creating transparent and open channels, a social learning environment is created, where managers become leaders and facilitators and everyone else become participants.

Connecting with colleagues around the globe via technologies such as web conferencing, social networks, online forums, blogs and wikis is transforming the way we work. Not just technical challenges, but human ones. Collaboration can be difficult enough when we are working face-to-face with others, but putting us thousands of miles apart, in multiple time zones, and in diverse cultural groups needs well developed networking skills.

In his bestseller "Where In the World Is My Team?" Terry Brake introduced six performance zones (six Cs) for global team success: Cooperation, Convergence, Coordination, Capability, Communication, and Cultural Intelligence.

1. Cooperation: the ability to develop and maintain trusting relationships across geographies, time zones, and cultures.
2. Convergence: the ability to maintain a clear purpose, direction, and shared set of priorities.
3. Coordination: the ability to align work through clearly defined roles and responsibilities, shared tools, processes, and methods.
4. Capability: the ability to leverage the knowledge, skills, and experiences of *all* members, and increase the capabilities of the team as a whole.

The Six Cs of Global Collaboration

5. Communication: the ability to generate shared verbal and written understandings across distances via technology.
6. Cultural Intelligence: the ability to develop and maintain a global virtual workplace inclusive of value and style differences.

Research Networking culture in the framework of FP7 is considered as one of the most important aspects of being part of the global research map and of joining a trans-national and thus a multi-cultural project team/consortia. It is now more than ever a "necessary" step towards successful participation in European research projects.

Organisations with a higher *networking level* are usually invited more often to join wining proposals and can find more easily competent partners for their own projects, compared to organisations with lower networking culture. To take advantages of the networking for researchers on EU-level one can follow the tips provided in [2]:

1. Using Contacts from Existing Projects
- This is among the best methods open to those already involved in European funded research. Once you are in, you will have the chance to demonstrate your capabilities and to be a partner in future initiatives. For example events such as focus groups or coordination workshops are organised for participants in projects by technical areas to discuss mutual issues and this is an ideal forum to forge new alliances and generate ideas for a new project.

2. Using Your Own Research / Business Contacts
- You may use your existing business / research contacts to examine the possibility of setting up a research project and / or join consortia that are related to your contacts.

3. Participating in Relevant Research Events
- Conferences, consultation workshops, etc. are key places for networking among participants. Face-to-face meetings are extremely valuable. Info-days (e.g. on FP7 calls for proposals) may have a considerably lower networking potential, but are nevertheless valuable. In general, such events offer a good opportunity to meet representatives of the EU, key persons from organisations which have been participating in EU funded programmes and to promote your competencies ("sell yourself") to them.

4. Participating in Relevant European Technology Platforms (ETPs)
- The European Technology Platforms (ETPs) are initiatives that bring together stakeholders, led by industry, to define medium to long-term research and technological development objectives and lay down markers for achieving them. Each ETP is covering a specific research – technology area. ETPs gather major players operating in the targeted area and can be found on the internet at **http://cordis.europa.eu/technology-platforms/home_en.html**. You can visit the above web-address, identify those ETPs that are of interest for you and visit their websites. This will allow you to identify and contact experienced organisations in the specific areas of your interest, be informed about relevant events and join the Platform.

5. Participating in Relevant European Industrial or Trade Associations

- In some areas such groupings play key roles in formulating the ideas for the program in cooperation with the Commission.

6. Using CORDIS Partner Search

- On this online database (**http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/partners_en.html**) you can record the type of project you wish to join. However this database although large, is horizontal (containing profiles of organisations interested potentially in all programmes and themes of FP7) and allows search only by key words, programme and country. Therefore it is not so useful when performing searches for specific type of organisations and expertise /experience.

7. Using the Services of EU-funded projects that support participation in ICT

- There are numerous projects funded by EC that can provide you with support in joining research consortia in the ICT area. Support may involve information, training and networking activities (through the websites of the projects or through events they organize such as info-days / workshops, seminars, networking events, etc.), web-databases to upload profiles, partners search web-tools, and a variety of other services. Also, the partners of these projects can be quite helpful in assisting you to join research consortia which are under development.

- Specifically for the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) region, three "*support actions*" currently exist, forming the EU-EECA cluster (**www.eeca-ict.eu**)

- Active partner search is provided by IDEAL-IST2011 (**www.ideal-ist.net**). The project assists potential proposers of FP7-ICT to find partners, is supported by FP7-ICT and involves as partners the National Contact Points (NCPs) in FP7-ICT (49 representatives from Member States, Candidate Countries and Associated States, as well as Western Balkan Countries, Newly Independent States and Mediterranean Countries participate in the network; also Idealist collaborates with partners in Third Countries such as China, Brazil, India, Canada, South Africa, South East Asia, Australia, and New Zealand). You may contact the respective NCP and ask them to inform you about relevant partner searches. When a partner search is published, you will receive it automatically, and can view searches online. You can check if the profile of your organisation is close to the one requested. If this is the case, contact the organisation that made the partner search (we suggest both by e-mail and phone if available), send your organisation profile, describe your organisationr's competencies in respect to those requested in the partner search and ask them to participate. The quality of the partner searches results is (on average) higher than CORDIS but you have to act fast as consortia are formed very quickly.

8. Identifying Participants in Recent and Actual Research Projects

- This is an extremely effective way to identify experienced partners. In CORDIS there are online searchable databases that contain synopses of all current and previous projects by technical area. They also provide a list of partners / contractors per project. So it is possible for example to find all previous projects in a specific area for a specific organisation. Or it is possible to identify past and

current projects by setting key words and identifying the participants (partners / contractors), etc. (**http://cordis.europa.eu/search/index.cfm?fuseaction= proj.advSearch**).

In context of the three clustering projects[1] we define the *networking culture* of the different groups of the projects participants (including researchers, stakeholders, project partners in EECA countries etc) as the ability to

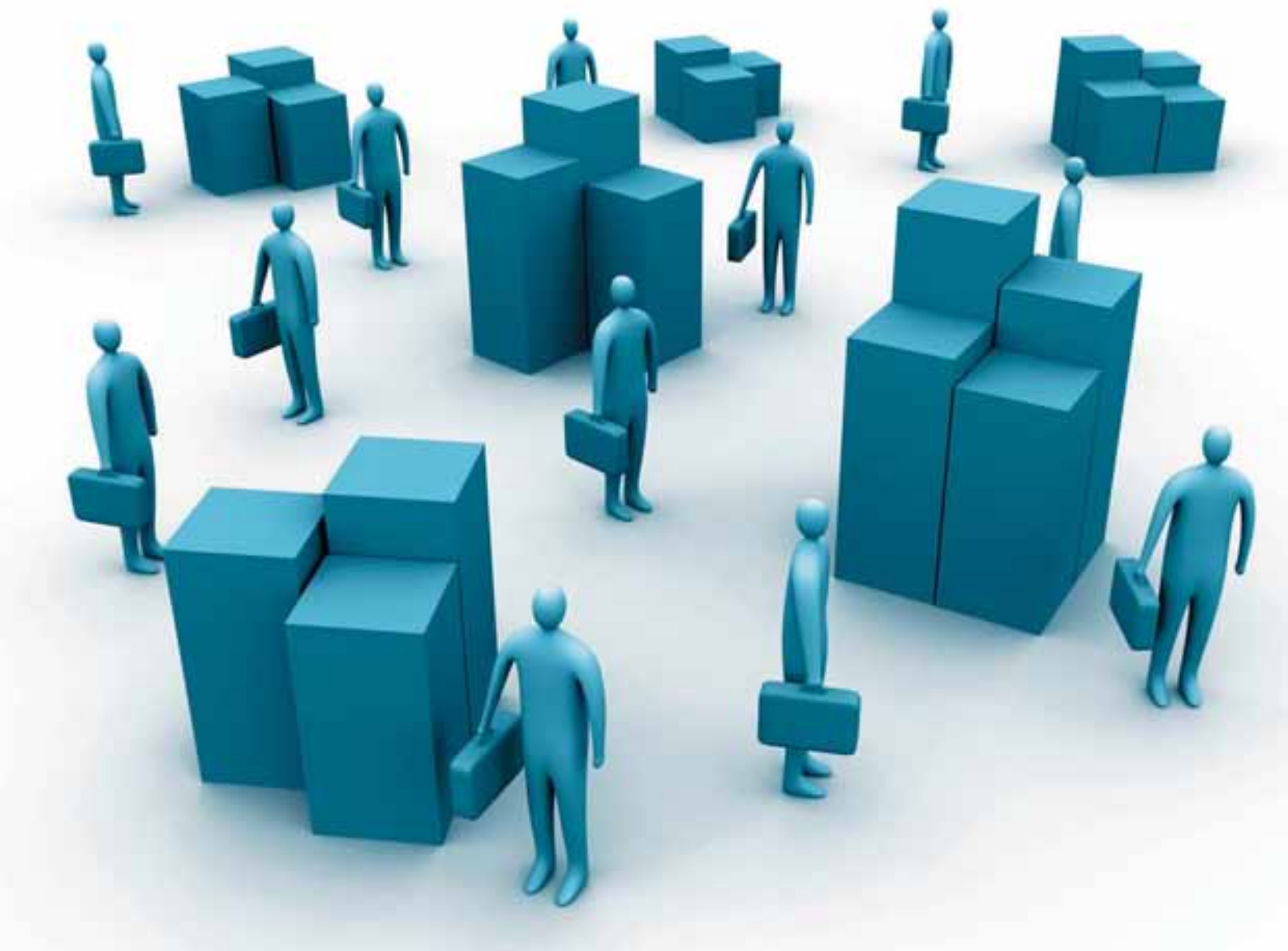
- share their personal and institutional knowledge,
- learn, apply and to share new knowledge gained through interactions with others.

This ability becomes apparent through the set of specific *networking skills*. People are given time and means to network. Frequent opportunities are provided to help individuals polish their personal networking skills.

[1] This definition could be applied also for other international R&D projects

Chapter 2

Networking/ communication gaps



The lack of *networking skills* could be considered as a strong barrier for effective networking. Not everyone is a natural networker. But almost everyone can become good at it with proper training in such networking skills as proactive participation in event, brainstorming, writing effective emails, etc.

When we look at collaborative FP7 research project with multicultural and geographically-dispersed teams, involving EECA researchers, one needs to take into account also other barriers connected with legacy culture of the former closed centralised "soviet system". For instance representatives of foreign companies describe breakdowns in cooperation with Russian researchers in terms of communication problems and perceive those problems as a result of interpersonal misunderstandings and the soviet mentality of scientists. Just to illustrate this typical problem of preconceptions one Russian scientist made the following comment [2] on the situation: "*Russian scientists have a lot of negative experience of dealing with foreign (commercial) partners. The main problems are that foreigners do not treat us seriously. They come to exploit our intellectual resources. Therefore, there is nothing strange that Russian people do everything to make this process more difficult, apart from the `normal' difficulties related to Russian legislation and the hierarchical system within the institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences*."

As a result of the investigation [3] based on the interviews with Russian and foreign audiences the most frequent reasons for the communication problems that arise between Russian researches and their foreign partners have been formulated:

- Lack of trust between partners;
- Stereotypes;
- Wrong expectations;
- Fear of punishment for honest (open) communication.
- Language barrier.

These reasons are also relevant to those EECA organizations (outside Russia) where senior researchers were formed in the USSR and have common soviet heritage. Some of these reasons (for instance stereotypes) could be applied also to the EU researches.

Below we briefly analyse each of these reasons / communication problems.

Lack of trust between partners

The concept of trust may be framed as an expectation of partner's reliability with regard to his obligations, predictability of behavior, and fairness in actions and negotiations while faced with the possibility to behave opportunistically. Trust-building and transparency are nourished by a consistent and continual portrayal of truthfulness, sincerity and commitment. *Building trust* is a critical step in the creation and development of multicultural and/or geographically-dispersed teams.

The success of communication strongly depends on the quality of communication between the partners and their "intimacy" level. Communication depends on how much knowledge the partners are willing to make accessible to each other. The fear

of the risk of losing critical information or know-how due to accidental leakage is particularly high for scientific institutions in EECA (due to IPR problems), and, thus, they are bound to be more protective. Transparency reflects the level of partners' openness and accessibility and is negatively correlated with the degree of protectiveness that each of them elevates vis-á-vis the other. The more transparent the partners are – the more mutual learning and trust is possible.

Once trust between the parties has been established, it must be maintained. Regular communication is needed to keep the relationship alive and trust at a constant level; otherwise, trust spontaneously decays over time, and one needs to reestablish it when the next interaction takes place.

Stereotypes

There are still many stereotypes on both the EECA and EU sides. Stereotypes are over-generalizations that help people to make sense of what goes on around them, but they often interfere with objectivity because they rely on selective perceptions and portions of information which correspond with already-existing beliefs. Stereotypes of the partners can be based on their perception of ethnic, professional, cultural differences as well as on the previous negative experience. They make reality concrete – often incorrectly – and rationalize cultural prejudice.

As people from different cultural groups take on the challenge of working together, cultural values sometimes conflict. There are typical cultural differences, which affect the process of international cooperation and should not be ignored. Partners from different countries often misunderstand each other, especially on the initial phase of the project (and even more important during the consortium building for the coming call) and react in ways that can hinder what are otherwise promising partnerships.

Our perception of other cultures is often formed not on facts, but on cultural references, stereotypes, old myths, and other people's opinions subconsciously gathered during our lives. The more we work with other people, the more we understand that we have misconceptions of other cultures and try to correct them.

Similar is the case of defining characteristics according to "disciplines": we expect a different attitude from a computer scientist than from a psychologist, a humanities scientist, an accountant, a business analyst, a statistician. The problem is: how to cope with this?

- With respect to the country of origin e.g. Germans, Greeks, Portuguese?
- With respect to the profession: consultants, academics, software developers?
- With respect to the position in the hierarchy and seniority: undergraduate students, recently promoted and ambitious junior managers, EU projects' veterans, etc.

For instance in the area of Information and Communications Technologies, people involved in the research, come from different countries, cultures, educational systems, working environments and may also come from different domains and a cross-

over of different disciplines. This is normal – in all professions related with other people that also involve heavy communication, this excessive demand for communication, team working, meetings, coordination, etc, may become an important lasting factor.

We should always bear in mind that the main asset one can bring to this adventurous journey that are European research projects is ***openness*** – in all aspects: although, bare in mind, in the communication with others, in the recognition of (own) faults. Other qualities like dignity, integrity, fairness are very difficult and also dangerous to approach with definitions – at the end you might find yourself on the wrong side. However, openness and the capability to build bridges with people is one that is critical and finds itself at the core of the trans-European collaboration.

The evolution of FP6, and the current state of FP7, is a story of people that despite the fact that they do not share the same culture, were educated in different contexts and in different backgrounds, but through communication, they succeeded in developing tangible results together.

There is no single `best' way to do this – but getting to know one another well, and thus better understanding cultural and linguistic differences as well as different expectations is essential.

Wrong Expectations

Expectations are the driving force in the projects. One of the greatest areas that lead to communication breakdowns and projects' failure is the difference between what participants feel is reasonable to expect from anyone, and what they actually do receive, or think that they have received. If mutually satisfying goals are not established and objectives are not clearly defined, then much of the "gray area" as to what is reasonable for each side is left.

Different parties of cooperation have different explicit or implicit expectations directed towards a project. Expectation mismatch often leads to the situation when partners fail to understand the thinking that is behind the actions of the other side. Essentially, this boils down quite simply to ineffective communication. Therefore, to be successful the project partners should identify, prioritize and manage different expectations of all parties involved. It could be done in different ways.

Important role for the expectations management belongs to the project kick-off meeting[2]. A kick-off meeting has four basic functions:

a) Publicly state the beginning of the project;
b) Outline the project goals as well as the individual roles and responsibilities of team members;
c) *Clarify the expectations of all parties;*
d) Create a commitment by all those who influence the project's outcome.

[2] This event is an important element of EU (Western) project/networking culture, which not common in EECA practice.

In terms of length, the kick-off meeting may last from a few hours to 1–3 days, depending on the scope and characteristics of each project. At least the "core team" should attend the kick off, but quite often it also involves most of the team. The ideal number of attendees, however, should not exceed 15 people. Generally speaking, this is a gathering of the project team, executive management and stakeholders who need to officially recognize the commencement of the project. Project managers know that the kick-off meeting can be understood as a perfect ice-breaker situation where all attendees also gain a common understanding of the project's objectives and priorities.

Although the format of a kick-off meeting varies depending on the size and complexity of each project, it usually consists of several sessions each one focused on a different key topic. For example, some common sessions are the following:

- *Project Framework* This session includes determining what the project statement is (its scope, definition and objectives), and who are the stakeholders. The general schedule and activities are also discussed. The project manager usually goes over the project charter, including the project background, description, milestones and timeline, etc, with the objective of aligning the project with the reality.

- *Team Charter* This session obeys to the purpose of clarifying who the project manager and key project members are, and who does what on the team. Generally, the project manager introduces the organization chart along with the roles and responsibilities of each project team member. It is crucial to clearly explain what is expected of all the concerned parties.

- *Risk Analysis* This session involves a thorough assessment of all the risks that the project team members might face in order to accomplish the project goals. It involves identifying those factors that could jeopardize the success of the project and develop ways to overcome them, as well as a corrective or preventive action plan if needed.

- *Team building* It is always a good idea that the kick-off meeting ends with some kind of team-building activity or exercise aimed at teaching some rules for efficient teamwork. This task is best handled by an experienced facilitator and is usually a combination of physical and mental agility with an emphasis on teamwork.

Given that the start of a project is an important event, notification of the kick-off meeting's occurrence should be formal and in writing. It is a common practice for one or more designated attendees to take notes during the meeting and then write a short document or "minutes of meeting" with a summary of all topics and issues discussed during the meeting as well as the conclusions reached. This document should be distributed to all meeting participants.

Kick-off meetings play an especially important role as a starting point in networking with the stakeholders. They had a "complicity effect" that facilitated the involvement of the stakeholders from the beginning of the project.

Another example of how to avoid wrong expectations is to involve stakeholders in all phases of the project. This is extremely important for two reasons:

- Firstly, experience shows that their involvement in the project significantly increases the chances of success by building in a self-correcting feedback loop;
- Secondly, involving them in the project builds confidence in project results and will greatly ease its acceptance by the projectsr' target audience.

Direct contacts with identified stakeholders also help significantly for:

- **creation of synergy b**etween the project and national initiatives undertaken by these countries
- **undertaking of joint pilot project actions** (planned under the project, such as networking and brokerage events…) that will help to achieve project objectives.

ISTOK-SOYUZ project experience

Regular meetings and updates with national stakeholders in addition to passing them relevant information on projectsr' activities (through project newsletters) took place during almost all the year after the project kick-off in March, 2009. The joint meeting bringing together national stakeholders and providing the possibility to discuss the main project and related national issues have been organized in Russia on January 28, 2010. It summarized the networking and liaison activities with stakeholders in the framework of project implementation in the country during the first months and defined the future cooperation possibilities with them on the remaining period.

Fear of Punishment for Honest (open) Communication

Fear of making mistakes, of delivering bad news and of expressing opinions openly is one of the main communication barriers, because efficient communication means that both good and bad news should be transmitted in the right format and at the right time.

According to recent studies, making mistakes and failure are number 2 and 3 from the list of peopler's most common fears in Western society. At the same time, businesspeople have reported that making mistakes is a fact of everyday life in business, and that they find mistakes to be one of the driving forces of progress, while most scientists admitted that they would prefer to try to correct their mistake before communicating about it to a business partner.

However, it is important to know that in the business world bad news is as important as good news. Bad news has very high value for the business community as information necessary for risk-management. That is why it is important for the project manager to apply risk management. The negative effect of bad news can be reduced by explaining the reasons and communicating sensitively. Half the battle

in communicating successfully is recognizing that the entire process is sensitive and susceptible to breakdowns. One can also notice a similar effect in the research community.

Language Barrier

Language differences are an obvious impediment to effective communication and to building trust. Both EU and EECA partners know that the language barrier is one of the main reasons for misunderstandings. Vocabulary, syntax, idioms, slang and dialects all cause difficulty, but the person struggling with a different language is at least aware when he/she is in difficulty. A more pronounced problem occurs when he/she thinks he/she understands. The person clings to the meaning of a word or phrase in the new language, regardless of connotation or context. The infinite variations are so impossible to cope with that they are brushed aside.

As a result, the presence of high anxiety or stress is common in cross-cultural experiences because of the uncertainties involved. The native of one country may be uncomfortable when speaking with a person from another (foreign) country because he or she cannot maintain the normal flow of conversation and non-verbal interaction to sustain communication. The other person may experience a similar discomfort, with the added tension of having to cope with the alien pace, climate and culture he or she is enclosed within. Additionally, language barriers increase the cost of sharing information in situations when professional translation is needed.

To facilitate communication between the EU and Russia in the context of the Seventh Framework Programme ISTOK-RU project **http://www.istok-ru.eu/** developed a harmonized bilingual taxonomy of ICT.

Unfortunately, there is no accepted ICT taxonomy in Europe. There are taxonomies used by national governments, there are several ICT classifications based on world-wide classification codes such as Universal Decimal Codes and ACM classification, and there are classifications and lists of terms used in EU Information Society Initiatives. The task of finding the basis for the taxonomy is not an obvious one for the European Union. This is partly due to the variety of approaches of ICT decomposition used in Europe.

The problem on the Russian side turned out to be even more compelling. Unlike Europe, Russia does not have ICT classification / taxonomy at governmental level that could be used as a reference point in taxonomy development. Still, there are several approaches to ICT classification supported by different organizations, most notably ministries (Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Communications) and the Russian Foundation for Fundamental Research.

The goal of the ISTOK-RU project was to develop a limited taxonomy that is well-suited for FP7 communication and not an all-purpose taxonomy of ICT. This assumption led to the following conclusion: the taxonomy should be close to the terms and topics that appear in the EC's specification of ICT in FP7 domain. Guided by this reasoning, the ISTOK-RU team selected the most detailed specification of ICT available – the ICT Work Programme (ICT WP) of the Seventh Framework Programme. Later on this taxonomy **http://www.istok-soyuz.eu/images/taxonomy_of_istok-soyuz_eng-rus.pdf** was used by ISTOK-SOYUZ project and EECA ICT cluster projects **http://www.eeca-ict.eu/** as a base for the competence platform allowing ICT researchers to position their competences in according to the ICT FP7 topics.

Chapter 3

Networking with stakeholders

(stakeholders' management)

Usually stakeholders are treated as any individual, group, or organization that influences the project or is affected by it. They can be **internal** to the project management – project team members, staff of project partnersr' organisations. They can be also **external** to the project, e.g., partners, boards, grant-making organizations, consultants, target audiences, professional associations, and the media.

Networking with stakeholders is usually referred to as **stakeholder management.** The importance of **stakeholder management** is to support the project in achieving its goals by creating positive relationships with stakeholders through the appropriate management of their expectations and agreed objectives.

Stakeholder Management is a process which includes the following stages:

- Stakeholder **Identification** – to consider interested parties either internal or external to the project.
- Stakeholder **Analysis** – to recognise stakeholder's needs, concerns, wants, authority in relation with the project.
- Stakeholder **Engagement** – different types of stakeholders are engaged in different ways at various stages of the project, from gathering and giving information, to consultation, dialogue, working together, and partnership.

Contemporary project practice favors transparent, honest and open stakeholder management processes.

For instance in the context of ISTOK-SOYUZ project, **external/national stakeholders are defined** as **external organisations** (usually represented by individuals from those organizations) who:

- **provide support** to the project (involved in the project) because they are interested in the projects activities and results;
- **provide feedback** and opinion on the project activities and questions;
- and those who are **future beneficiary** of the project results (eg. on whom the project can have influence).

A preliminary list of **external/national stakeholders** can be drawn during the kick-off meeting. It varies from region to region but in general includes the following types of the national bodies:

- **Public authorities**: bodies and structures of State power that make strategic decisions, form priorities, implement the State policy and regulation in the ICT area, have impact on EU-national collaboration priorities…)
- **Public R&D institutions**: Academies of Science, universities, research institutions implementing ICT R&D,
- **Foundations:** foundations (mainly public) providing support to R&D projects (including international ones) and further commercialization of ICT developments,
- **Business sector**: the most successful national companies engaged in ICT, and interested in internationalisation of their business

- **Associations:** the most powerful non-governmental self-regulated associations uniting organizations engaged in ICT
- **FP7 National contacts points**
- **Mass-media** specialised in R&D issues

Internal project stakeholders are those who compose the project consortium.

ISTOK-SOYUZ project consortium includes 2 organisations from EU (including project coordinator), and 6 from EECA countries – local national coordinators. Both external and internal project stakeholders have different levels of international projects experience and networking culture. For instance, in ISTOK-SOYUZ project, 2 organisations representing Russia – RTTN and ISPRAS are good in international networking, and experienced partners in FP7 projects, while for other EECA organizations – partners of ISTOK-SOYUZ – the project is their first experience in FP7. So, although EECA partners have the similar role on their national level with regards to project objectives more mature Russian partners have a role to coach their colleagues in different aspects of project implementation including passing to them their networking experience.

Networking in the framework of the clustering projects is realized on the different levels of interactions and in different formats. The table below illustrates the key interactions, examples of the activities and networking skills needed for the effective project implementation, both internally and externally. The main players in this process are: EU-EECA researchers, local stakeholders, local project partners, tasks responsible, project coordinators.

Key players	Examples of activities	Examples of networking skills needed	Examples of project partners role/skills
EU-EECA researchers	– brokerage events, international seminars, conferences	Making good presentation, Proactive participation, Understanding the difference in culture, following up the meetings and contacts established	Planning an event, running/facilitating the effective meetings, support in following up meetings and discussions, writing and distribution of the reports on events conducted, guides on different aspects of the effective participation in international R&D projects, dissemination of the requests for the partners search through the different networks channels, web based communication tools
	– presentation/search abilities on EECA portal (competence platform), CORDIS, IDEAL-IST	Effective presentations of the competencies, usage of web tools for competencies presentations	Consultancy support on competencies presentations, including on-line and through the specific guides

Key players	Examples of activities	Examples of networking skills needed	Examples of project partners role/skills
	– email communication	effective email exchange	
Local project partners- researchers (on EECA level)	Consulting/dissemination info on FP7 issues, brokerage events, internal call for FP7 participation support, ICT 2010 participation	Planning local event, running/facilitating an effective meetings, proactive participation in event	
Local project partners- policy makers (on EECA country level)	Kick-off meetings on local level, informing on the projects progress through newsletters, interview on national ICT policy, open discussion during relevant events	Effective interview, questioning techniques, brainstorming, following up the meetings and decisions (incl. writing meeting notes)	
EU Project coordinator – local Project partners	Planning and monitoring the project implementation, web based tools communication – project intranet follow up,	local project implementation planning and monitoring, effective email exchange, feedback, effective usage of web based tools communication	
Local Project partners/tasks coordinators – local partners in other countries	Planning, coordination and implementation of project events (internal call for proposal, dissemination campaign, etc)	Planning an event, following up meetings and discussions, writing the reports, effective email exchange, feedback, negotiating with mass-media etc	Methodological support from experienced local partners to the less experienced (guides on how to support local researchers, how to organize dissemination campaign on local level, consulting on ad hoc questions etc)
Three cluster project coordinators	Creating synergies and avoiding overlaps, joint implementation of the events and joint preparation of documents	Efficient communications and planning, respect of other project plans and activities negotiations, consensus-building	Building consensus, joint planning, efficient communications, respecting deadlines

These and other networking skills will be described in more details in the following chapters.

Chapter 4

Networking/ communication skills in international R&D projects

Based on the analysis of existing gaps for effective communication/networking between different target groups, the next list of the most important skills have been elaborated upon for the purpose of a more detailed guide/tips development on "how to be more effective in networking" in international R&D projects, such as FP7 projects. They include two sub-groups of skills:

- Basic networking skills, necessary for all players in the networking and communication process
- More advanced networking and organisational skills, necessary for those players who are involved in support of the networking and communication process

Basic networking/communication skills include:

- Understanding the difference in culture
- Promoting competencies of the researchers, teams, and organisations
- Participating proactively in the events
- Making good presentations
- Writing effective emails, providing feedback
- Using the web collaboration tools/services efficiently.

More advanced networking/communication skills include:

- Planning an event
- Running/facilitating effective meetings.
- Making effective interviews, using questioning techniques
- Organising efficient brainstorming meetings
- Following up the meetings and decisions (incl. writing meeting notes)
- Writing the reports
- Negotiating with mass-media (press-releases, press-conferences, interviews, success stories, etc)

The importance/priorities of these skills are different for the concrete EECA stakeholders'. This fact should be taken into account in the process of assessment of their capability to network and further training to overcome the barriers. The table below "audience/skills needed" – the level of the relevance to the concrete audience illustrates this difference.

Stakeholders / Networking skills	EECA researchers	Other EECA external stakeholders (policy makers etc)	Local cluster project partners	Support organizations and multipliers
BASIC NETWORKING / COMMUNICATION SKILLS				
Understanding the difference in culture	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆
Promoting competencies of the researchers, teams, and organisations	◆◆◆	◆◆	◆◆	◆◆
Participating proactively in the events	◆◆◆	◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆
Making good presentations	◆◆◆	◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆
Writing effective emails, providing feedback	◆◆◆	◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆
Using the web collaboration tools/services efficiently	◆◆◆	◆	◆◆◆	◆
MORE ADVANCED NETWORKING / COMMUNICATION SKILLS				
Planning an event	◆	◆	◆◆◆	◆◆
Running/facilitating effective meetings.	◆	◆	◆◆◆	◆◆
Holding effective interviews, using questioning techniques	◆	◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆
Organising efficient brainstorming meetings	◆◆◆	◆◆	◆◆	◆◆
Following up the meetings and decisions (incl. writing meeting notes)	◆◆	◆	◆◆◆	◆◆
Writing the reports	◆	◆	◆◆◆	◆
Negotiating with mass-media	◆	◆◆	◆◆◆	◆

These networking skills are some of the important skills needed to succeed in the project and in the research cooperation nowadays – of course, in addition to being excellent in research itself.

We talk to people face to face, and we listen when people talk to us. We write emails and reports, and we read the documents that are sent to us. Communication, therefore, is a process that involves at least two people – a sender and a receiver. For it to be successful, the receiver must at least understand the message in the way that the sender intended.

This sounds quite simple. But have you ever been in a situation where this hasn't happened? Misunderstanding and confusion often occur, and they can cause enormous problems.

If you want to be a good networker, you need to be effective at all points in the communication process and you must be comfortable with the different channels/tools of communication. When you communicate well, you can be very successful. On the other hand, poor communication leads to the failure of your participation in the project. So are you communicating effectively?

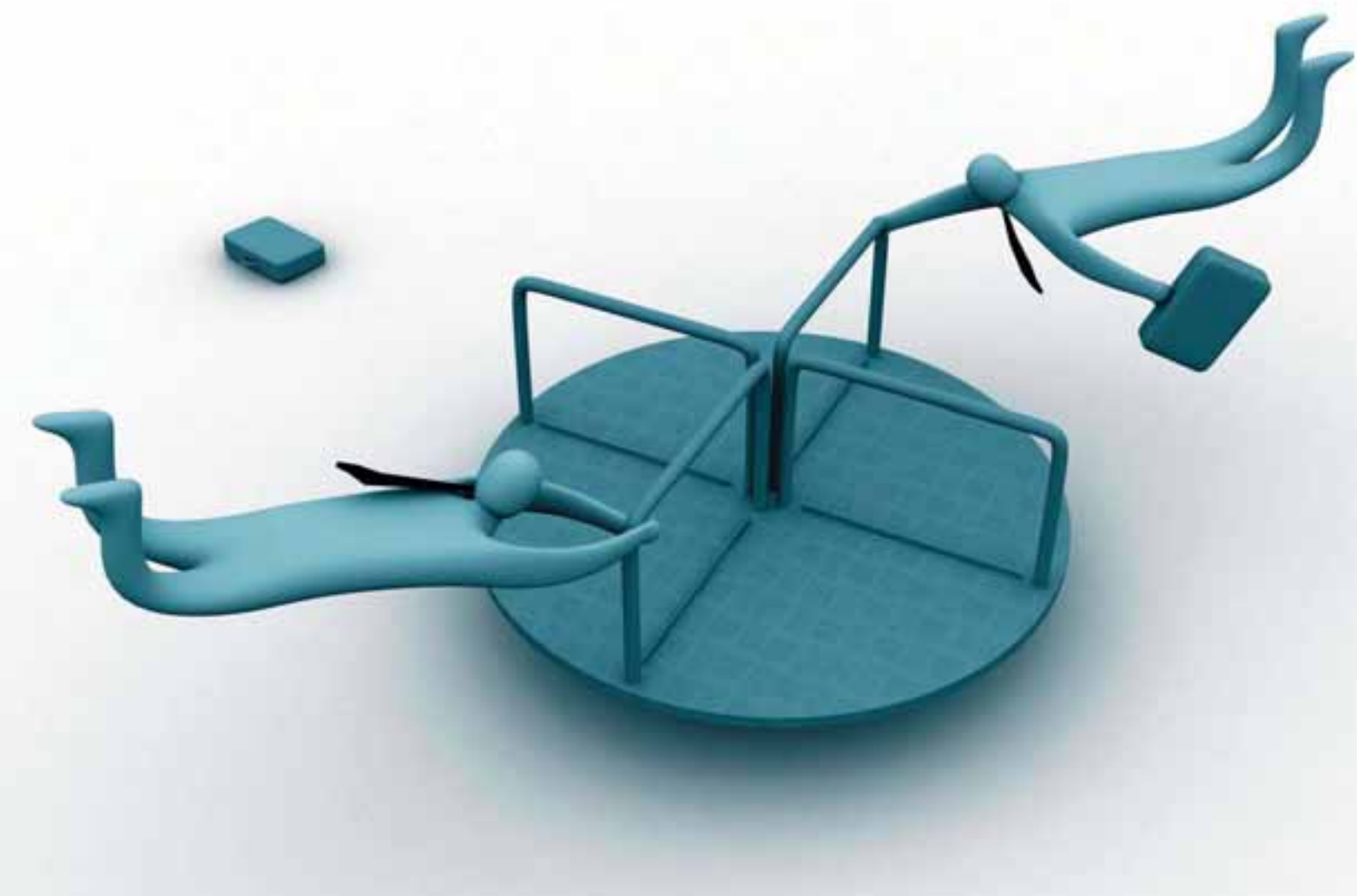
The next Chapter will allow you to understand this. Use it for your self-assessment, regularly ask yourself relevant questions, such as:

- When I write emails, or other documents, do I give all of the background information and detail I can to make sure that my message is understood?
- Do I consider cultural barriers when planning my communications?
- Do I respect the deadlines for feedback?
- Do I hesitate to ask for clarification?
- When I attend the event, do I use it at maximum level of efficiency?
- Do I clearly present the competencies of my organizations or team, so the other potential partners clearly understand the added value of our future contribution to the project?
- Is my presentation clear enough to be understood and used after my speech?
  …

By reading the Chapter below, you will see if you are an excellent networker, or a capable networker who needs to improve some minor elements, or if you are a beginner who need to keep working on your networking/communication skills.

Chapter 5

How to **improve your networking skills:** tips and good practice



Culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster."

Prof. Geert Hofstede, Maastricht University

5.1

Understanding the difference in culture

Traditional projects, as national projects, may be affected by personality conflicts. Cultural differences among project team members may create additional misunderstandings throughout the project life cycle. The impact of cultural factors such as language barriers, time differences, and socio-economic, political, and religious diversity may result in a normative pattern prescribing a range of permissible actions so as to encourage self-interest.

As science and business increasingly cooperates and competes at international levels, project management is also acquiring a multinational focus. Growing numbers of R&D projects are now being developed and implemented across borders – involving public and private-sector partners from various national, cultural, technical and professional backgrounds. While such multinational projects are able to combine the best in expertise, problem-solving and implementation, they also bring together many diverging attitudes to working, interacting with superiors or subordinates, time-keeping and communicating – which can cause misunderstandings and clashes between project partners and stakeholders. Hence it is critical that organizations involved in international projects take into consideration "cultural risks" which, if not consciously recognized, can lead to ineffectiveness.

Five dimensions of culture

What is culture?
Most of the numerous "culture" definitions have a common core to what culture is made up of:

- **Material objects:** words or objects that carry a particular meaning like clothing or furniture, etc.
- **Ideas, values, attitudes, and beliefs:** the essence of a culture
- **Expected patterns of behavior:** family social culture, law, etc.
- **A collective phenomenon:** shared by at least two or more people who live in the same social environment.

One of the leading and broadly accepted studies of cross-cultural management has been conducted by Geert Hofstede [4]. His approach proposes a set of cultural dimensions along which dominant value systems can be ordered. Hofstede collected data, studying the values of people in different cultures, from over 50 countries around the world[3]. The results were categorized under five dimensions of culture which are summarized below. These value systems affect human thinking, feeling, and acting, and the behavior of organizations and institutions in predictable ways.

The set of dimensions reflect basic problems that any society has to cope with but for which solutions differ. The dimensions can be grouped into several categories:

- **Relations between people.** Two main cultural differences have been identified. Hofstede distinguishes between *individualism and collectivism*.
- **Motivational orientation.** Societies choose ways to cope with the inherent uncertainty of living. In this category Hofstede identifies three dimensions: *masculinity versus femininity*, amount of *uncertainty avoidance*, and *power distance*.
- **Attitudes toward time.** Hofstede distinguishes between a *long-term* versus a *short-term orientation*.

In what follows we provide a brief description of these dimensions and consider some cultural problems that might arise when managing an international project. So the five dimensions are:

Power Distance Index (PDI) that is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. A high PD score indicates that society accepts an unequal distribution of power and people understand "their place" in the system. Low PD means that power is shared and well dispersed. It also means that society members view themselves as equals.
Power and inequality, of course, are extremely fundamental facts of any society and anybody with some international experience will be aware that all societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others'. Just for example to compare PDI for different countries[4] — Russia[5] – 93, Greece – 60, UK – 35.

[3] The survey sample all worked in local subsidiaries of a multinational corporation, IBM. Since the only difference within the sample was nationality, this made its differences stand out clearly.

[4] For a list of scores by dimension per country and more detailed information about Hofstede's research, visit his ***www.geert-hofstede.com/***

[5] No data is provided in the source for other EECA countries but we may assume that scores for them are close to Russia due to common historical period

Individualism (IDV) on the one side versus its opposite, collectivism, that is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. On the individualist side we find societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family. On the collectivist side, we find societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents) which continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. The word 'collectivism' in this sense has no political meaning: it refers to the group, not to the state. Again, the issue addressed by this dimension is an extremely fundamental one, regarding all societies in the world.

National differences in Individualism are calculated in an Individualism Index (IDV). The highest IDV scores were found in the United States, Australia, and Great Britain. The lowest IDV scores were found in Guatemala, Ecuador, and Panama. Cultural patterns at work reflect cultural patterns in the wider society. Project managers share the cultures of their society and of their organization with their project teams.

For instance, the ability to communicate “bad news” and to manage performance are considered key skills for a successful project manager in individualist countries. However, in managing international projects involving partners from collectivist societies, one has to bear in mind that discussing a person’s performance or abilities openly with him or her is likely to clash head-on with the society’s harmony norm and may be felt by the subordinate as an unacceptable loss of face. Such societies have more subtle, indirect ways of communicating feedback, such as through the withdrawal of a normal favor or verbally via a mutually trusted intermediary.

Masculinity (MAS) versus its opposite, femininity, refers to the distribution of roles between the genders which is another fundamental issue for any society to which a range of solutions are found.
Masculinity stands for a society in which gender roles are clearly distinct. Men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success. Women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. Femininity stands for a society in which gender roles overlap. However, Hofstede’s data revealed that the importance respondents attached to such “feminine” versus “masculine” work varied not only across countries but also across occupations.

The list of countries in order of MAS (high gender roles distinction at work) shows Japan at the top. German-speaking countries (Austria, Switzerland, and Germany) scored high; the Anglo countries (Ireland, Great Britain, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada) all scored above average. The feminine side (low gender roles distinction at work) includes other Latin countries (France, Spain, etc.). At the extreme “feminine” pole were the Nordic countries including Sweden, Norway. Low MAS countries are characterized by cooperation at work and a good relationship with the boss, belief in group decisions, promotion by merit, lower job stress, and preference for smaller companies. High MAS countries are characterized by challenge and recognition in jobs, belief in individual decisions, higher job stress, and preference for large corporations.

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity; it ultimately refers to man's search for Truth. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are new, unknown, surprising, different from usual. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures, and on the philosophical and religious level by a belief in absolute Truth; 'there can only be one Truth and we have it'. People in uncertainty avoiding countries are also more emotional, and motivated by inner nervous energy. The opposite type, uncertainty accepting cultures, are more tolerant of opinions different from what they are used to; they try to have as few rules as possible, and on the philosophical and religious level they allow many currents to flow side by side. People within these cultures are not expected by their environment to express emotions.

Hofstede's research, which used questionnaires provided to the worldwide employees of IBM, did not include some regions, including EECA countries. However, Hofstede hypothesized that Russian managers would be characterized by high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance, medium range individualism, and low masculinity (low gender roles distinction at work). This should be taken into account when discussing a project with people from Russia, for example, which is scored at 95 on the UAI scale (very formal business conduct with lots of rules, need and expect structure, differences are avoided), you should investigate the various options and then present a limited number of choices, be clear and concise about your expectations and parameters, plan and communicate often and early, provide detailed plans and focus on the tactical aspects of a job or project.

Long Term Orientation (LTO) – This refers to how much society values long-standing – as opposed to short term – traditions and values. This is the fifth dimension that Hofstede added in the 1990s after finding that Asian countries with a strong link to Confucian philosophy acted differently from western cultures. In countries with a high LTO score, delivering on social obligations and avoiding "loss of face" are considered very important.

According to Hofstede's analysis, people in the United States and United Kingdom have low LTO scores. This suggests that you can pretty much expect anything in this culture in terms of creative expression and novel ideas. The model implies that people in the US and UK don't value tradition as much as many others, and are therefore likely to be willing to help you execute the most innovative plans as long as they get to participate fully.
In the table below you can find typical characteristics of the countries/people on each cultural dimension axe (High-Low index value), and some recommendations (relevant to these dimensions) on how to deal with them in the framework of international R&D projects.

	Characteristics	Recommendations
Power Distance Index (PDI)		
High PDI	• Centralized organizations with strong hierarchies. • Large gaps in authority, and respect.	• Acknowledge a leader's power. • Be aware that you may need to go to the top for answers and "stamps" for decisions
Low PDI	• Organizations where leaders and employees are considered almost as equals.	• Use team work. • Involve as many people as possible in decision making.
Individualism (IDV)		
High IDV	• High valuation on people's time and their need for freedom. • Respect for privacy.	• Don't ask for too much personal information. • Encourage debate and expression of own ideas.
Low IDV	• People take more responsibility for each other's well being. • Importance of harmony inside group.	• Respect age and wisdom. • Respect traditions and introduce change slowly. • Try to avoid discussing a person's performance or abilities openly with him or her.
Masculinity (MAS)		
High MAS	• Men are masculine and women are feminine. • There is a well defined distinction between men's work and women's work.	• Be aware that people may expect male and female roles to be distinct. • Avoid discussing emotions or making emotionally-based decisions or arguments.
Low MAS	• A woman can do anything a man can do. • Powerful and successful women are respected.	• Ensure job design and practices are not discriminatory to either gender. • Treat men and women equally.
Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)		
High UAI	• Very formal business conduct with lots of rules. • Need and expect structure. Differences are avoided.	• Be clear and concise about your expectations and parameters. • Plan and communicate often and early, provide detailed plans and focus on the tactical aspects of a job or project.
Low UAI	• Informal business attitude. • More concern with long term strategy than what is happening on a daily basis. • Accepting of change and risk.	• Do not impose rules or structure. • Minimize your emotional response by being calm and contemplating situations before speaking.
Long Term Orientation (LTO)		
High LTO	• Family is the basis of society. • Parents and men have more authority than young people and women. • High value placed on education and training.	• Show respect for traditions. • Reward loyalty and commitment. • Avoid doing anything that would cause another to "lose face".
Low LTO	• Promotion of equality. • High creativity, individualism. • Treat others as you would like to be treated.	• Expect to live by the same standards and rules you create. • Be respectful of others. • Do not hesitate to introduce necessary changes.

Understanding the difference in cultural dimensions is very important for all project participants. But it is of outmost importance for 2 project parties – project leaders and local partners/coordinators.

Leadership

"Like an orchestra conductor, the project leader plays a primary role within the project, a role that also has a human dimension. Project leaders have to orchestrate the projects, find the right musicians, determine who will play what, and most importantly, energize the musicians, create synergies among them and ensure they achieve their potential. Project managers are, therefore, generalists who fully comprehend the company's and its partners' strategic objectives" (Herbert, 2002).

Important criteria for choosing a successful international project leader include:

- Good knowledge of the local culture
- Flexible personality
- Ability to make decisions
- Slight knowledge of the local language
- Good negotiator
- Technically competent
- Sociable personality
- Ability to assess and evaluate personalities.

Global project management can succeed through effective leadership, cross-cultural communication, and mutual respect. Without them, it is destined to fail.

International projects that use effective cross-cultural teams can provide a source of experience and innovative thinking to enhance the competitive position of their organisations, and to resolve potential communication barriers. Multi-cultural projects are becoming the norm. More and more projects are being executed successfully using multicultural teams. To achieve project goals and avoid potential risks, project managers should be culturally sensitive and promote creativity and motivation through flexible leadership.

A local partner

Local project partners[6] were found to be important because they perform as a critical link between the two or more cultures. Their primary roles are important in the networking process throughout the projects life-cycle, translation and culture awareness. Important criteria for choosing a local partner include:

- An acquirement of technical skills in the project's field
- Well respected and trusted by all consortia members
- Is open and willing to understand the foreign culture
- Has a strong network set up in the local country to be able to help identify stakeholders and their agendas

[6] In this context we speak about local partners in the framework of the above mentioned EECA cluster projects. But the text is also relevant to any international project where local partner has intermedium role bridging together different local project participants and their foreign counterparts.

Table 1. Extract from Hofstede's **table of countries' indexes**

Country	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO
Austria	11	55	79	70	
Austria	11	55	79	70	
Belgium	65	75	54	94	
Bulgaria	70	30	40	85	
Canada	39	80	52	48	23
China	80	20	66	30	118
Czech Republic	57	58	57	74	13
Denmark	18	74	16	23	
Estonia	40	60	30	60	
Finland	33	63	26	59	
France	68	71	43	86	
Germany	35	67	66	65	31
Greece	60	35	57	112	
Hungary	46	80	88	82	50
India	77	48	56	40	61
Ireland	28	70	68	35	

Country	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO
Israel	13	54	47	81	
Italy	50	76	70	75	
Japan	54	46	95	92	80
Netherlands	38	80	14	53	44
Norway	31	69	8	50	20
Poland	68	60	64	93	32
Portugal	63	27	31	104	
Romania	90	30	42	90	
Russia	93	39	36	95	
Slovakia	104	52	110	51	38
Spain	57	51	42	86	
Sweden	31	71	5	29	33
Switzerland	34	68	70	58	
Turkey	66	37	45	85	
UK	35	89	66	35	25
USA	40	91	62	46	29

5.2

Promoting competencies of the researchers, teams, and organisations

There are two main strategies to be successful in FP7 and other R&D programs – to focus on preparing your own proposal (and find the right project partners) or to enter research consortia. In both cases you should demonstrate your competencies relevant to the project.

You should ensure that the consortium consists of people and organisations that possess the competencies your project needs and include representatives of different stakeholders (research, business, users, associations, etc.). *Reliability*, *financial stability*, *relevant competence, experience* and *commitment* are very important characteristics of the ideal partner. However, you should be ready to select a partner who possesses only some of the above characteristics.

In any case, you should avoid selecting organisations and people just because you know them or you trust them. You really need partners with the desired competencies that can do the job required. Even experienced proposal writers can fall into this trap and jeopardize their investment of time in a proposal by including organisations for political reasons as opposed to their competencies.

In terms of writing a good proposal, it should be transparent so that each partner has a clear role at work package and task level. Make it easier for evaluators by illustrating partners' competencies and mapping them to the research roadmap required to advance the state-of-the-art. This also helps during proposal development as it highlights each of the partner's roles to each other.

What is competence?

It is easiest to define competence as "the ability to perform activities to the standards required in employment using an appropriate mix of knowledge, skill and attitude". All three aspects must be present if someone is to be effective in the workplace/project. Therefore to become competent you need to increase not only your knowledge, but also your understanding of how that knowledge can be applied, your skill in applying it, and the underlying professionalism to apply it safely and appropriately.

There are also definitions of generic skills (such as communication) and behaviors (such as attention to detail or team-working), which sit alongside the more specific technical aspects to form an overall picture of competence for a role. The complete bundle of descriptions makes a competence framework.

Building competence frameworks can be a complex process requiring much analysis and verification. It is best if they are benchmarked against similar roles in other organisations or sectors to ensure completeness and consistency. In many areas, this work has already been done and there are a large number of existing "recognised" frameworks that you can draw from to provide the basis for your personal competence profile. You may be familiar with some of these such as UK-SPEC, OSCEng and SFIA, but there are many others, usually sector or role specific frameworks that you can use. In the table below you can find an example of standard competencies for physicists:

Example of standard competencies for Chartered[7] Physicists

Chartered Physicist
The competencies are to be attained are as follows. These need to be interpreted within the context of your career and will differ in detail for physicists in research, teaching, engineering, etc. It is recognised that the degree of emphasis on specific competencies will vary between different occupations.

1) General and Specialist Knowledge in Relation to the Practice of Physical Science
You should have the ability to:

a. maintain a sound theoretical approach to the introduction of new and advancing theories
b. apply a lateral approach to problem solving, and to evaluate data critically, drawing logical conclusions
c. exploit emerging theories, so as to enhance current practice and knowledge
d. demonstrate an interest in broader developments within the Physical Sciences, and make a contribution to your profession outside your direct work environment

[7] The source: http://www.pd-how2.org/6_4.htm. The Professional Development Partnership (PDP) is made up of the professional development teams from IMechE, Institution of Engineering and Technology, IOP and RAeS with aim to bring a unified approach for professional development to their members, organisations and the industry as a whole.

2) Theoretical and Practical Methods in the Analysis and Solution of Problems

You should have the ability to:

a. identify potential projects and problems
b. conduct appropriate research and appraise possible solutions
c. plan and implement solutions
d. evaluate solutions and make improvements

3) Technical and Managerial Skills

You should have the ability to:

a. plan and prepare a project to effective implementation
b. create and carry out an action plan to make effective use of all resources (such as people, time, finance) and demonstrate foresight in carrying out tasks
c. develop the capabilities of staff/people for whom you are responsible, e.g. students or assistants, to meet the demands of changing technical and managerial requirements
d. plan and implement a quality control and assurance framework
e. exert appropriate influence and effective leadership qualities

4) Communication and Interpersonal Skills

You should have the ability to:

a. communicate clearly and effectively with others at all levels, both by oral and written methods
b. present and discuss concepts, ideas and plans convincingly and objectively with your superiors and others
c. participate effectively within a team
d. apply negotiation skills

5) Professional Conduct

You should have the ability to:

a. behave towards peers with integrity and honesty
b. observe rules and regulations relating to your professional practice
c. be aware of and sensitive to health, safety and environmental issues
d. show sensitivity and, where appropriate, observe confidentiality in verbal and written communications
e. carry out the continuing professional development necessary to ensure competence in your future career

Many frameworks exist that are relevant to engineering and technology professionals, including the more universal capabilities such as management, inter-personal skills and professional behaviors. There are also many sector specific ones, such as the Safety Critical Systems framework, the Management Standards, Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA).

Competence frameworks for organisations

The use of competence frameworks to support all functions related to the recruitment, development and management of human resources is now truly embedded in recognised good practice. Having a competence framework tailored to and integrated within your business processes, can co-ordinate and support these activities such that you are constantly aware of the available talent within your organisation, can plan, track and monitor the effectiveness of performance management, succession and career planning, recruitment, project team deployment, and learning and development; and can more effectively meet the demands of regulatory compliance.

Your choice of framework is entirely yours. Many, larger organisations create their own, although usually starting from an existing, benchmarked standard, which is subsequently adapted and tailored. Even this can require a significant investment of resources, but the benefits soon justify the initial outlay, and creating a culture where competence is considered a key measure will encourage all staff to contribute to maintaining and developing the standards.

Where possible we would always recommend using an existing framework to represent your competencies if one is available. In the framework of different programs and even projects there are special tools developed for organisation's /person's presentation. Usually it refers to the partners' search for the project or different competitions. Below you can find some examples.

The EECA ICT Competence Platform (**http://www.eeca-ict.eu/index.php/en/competence**) is an online competencies framework offered through the **EU-EECA Gateway on ICT research and development** portal. It is conceived to promote ICT competences and to provide information about potential partners – ICT experts and organizations of the EECA region and Europe.

The tool offers the opportunity for ICT researchers to:

- Identify ICT information sources
- Compile available ICT knowledge and expertise
- Promote ICT research competencies

- Identify regional key players to form future collaborations via a search engine mechanism

Through the Competence Platform, the users would be able to promote themselves and to find adequate answers to the following questions:

- Which activities and competencies exist in EECA countries in the ICT R&D area?
- Who are the suitable contact persons and/or organizations for a specific technology?
- What pieces of information, documents, and projects are already available on a certain ICT topic?

There are more than 2600 experts registered and their number is constantly increasing.

The ISTOK-SOYUZ project organized an internal call for a proposal in five targeted project countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine). The aim of the call was to select at least 15 teams with strongest ICT R&D collaboration potential from the five targeted countries, and to provide them with personalized hands-on support in order to increase number of ICT partnerships under FP7.

The proposals were examined by the Call Committee using the following key selection criteria/competencies:

- motivation for participation in the 5 and/or 6 ICT FP7 Calls and availability of the applicant's competencies concerning the subjects of the. 5 and/or 6 ICT FP7 Calls
- readiness for international cooperation – knowledge of ICT international market as a part of their own business – ICT technologies, knowledge about EU teams – leaders in the same science-technical sphere and working relations with such teams.
- interest to join the existing European consortiums with high science-technical level ICT R&D competences
- need of a relevant partner (-s) and/or coordinator for an international consortium (for those teams which may suggest their own ideas for collective solution of the EC problems in ICT sphere).
- needs of hands-on support which might be provided by the ISTOK-SOYUZ project.

The ISTOK-SOYUZ internal call was announced on 15th of April, 2009 with the deadline on 15 June, 2009. In April-May a wide information campaign was ran in the EECA target countries. The information about the ISTOK-SOYUZ project and the internal call was presented for more then 2 000 ICT specialists in the target countries. As a result, 45 applications were submitted for the call (28 from Russia, 7 from Ukraine, 6 from Belarus and 4 from Kazakhstan). The call evaluation committee examined applicants and selected 16 teams as winners. Hands-on support for these teams was given by ISTOK-SOYUZ experts. They helped winners to submit 8 proposals for the 5th ICT Call.

5.3

Participating proactively in the events

Events – scientific conferences, courses, meetings and symposia – are essential for every scientist; from delegates discussing hot issues and opinions, through to networking and collaboration; events provide a platform for learning and advancement.

There are some key factors to success for participation in scientific events.

- **Good preparation**, well in advance of the event, means that you are well informed and well equipped to deal with the demands of the situation. Big events usually have their own websites with extended ICT services which help you not only to learn about an events agenda and activities but even to create your own participation plan. With so many presentations and posters it could be a bit overwhelming deciding which to go to. The event website offers a tool where you can search and browse all the abstracts by key words or presenters. Even more, it will plan an itinerary for you based on your interests! It's like have your own personal assistant! Once you have found the ones you would like to go to, read a little background information about key people in your field. Google them and prepare thoughtful questions.
  Prepare in advance promotional materials about you and your organisation, including business cards, leaflets, project ideas etc, short presentations

- **A positive approach** means that during the event you are outgoing and proactive in searching for partnership building opportunities, rather than waiting for the potential partners to find you. Now that you have picked out key scientists and colleagues that will make great contacts seek them out and strike up a conversation! Think of a few questions and go from there. If your conversation goes well, it may be appropriate to ask for the person's email address in case you have future questions.

- **Active listening.** The role of listener is an important role during the event, no matter if it is a personal contact or speaker's presentation. But active listening is the skill you need to develop by yourself. It helps you ensure that you hear the other person, and that the other person knows you are hearing what they are saying. It takes a lot of concentration and determination to be an active listener. There are few tips to follow:

- **Pay attention.**

Give the speaker your undivided attention and acknowledge the message. Recognize that what is not said also speaks loudly. Look at the speaker directly, put aside distracting thoughts, avoid being distracted by environmental factors, refrain from side conversations when listening in a group setting.

- **Provide feedback.**

To understand what is being said may require you to reflect upon it and ask questions – "What I'm hearing is…" and "Sounds like you are saying…" are great ways to reflect back. Ask questions to clarify certain points: "What do you mean when you say…" "Is this what you mean?" Summarize the speaker's comments periodically.

- **Defer judgment.**

Interrupting is a waste of time. It frustrates the speaker and limits full understanding of the message. Allow the speaker to finish and don't interrupt with counter-arguments.

- **Respond Appropriately.**

Active listening is a model for respect and understanding. You are gaining information and perspective. You add nothing by attacking the speaker or otherwise putting him or her down. Be open and honest in your response, treat the other person as he or she would want to be treated.

- **Follow up contacts**

There are many face to face contacts at science events. Keeping records of contacts provides the opportunity to follow-up and possibly generate new projects. Don't forget to connect with people you met after the event by email with personalized note: "It was a pleasure to meet you in xxxx. Hope your stay went well…" – and a reference to a specific thing that you talked about and agreed.

In annexes 1,2 you can find

1) an example of the short guide for the EECA countries representatives' participation in ICT 2010 event prepared and distributed by ISTOK-SOYUZ project before the event,

2) template for the report on the participation in ICT 2010.

5.4

Making good presentations

Effective oral communication is an important – but often overlooked – skill in scientific and academic endeavors. There are very few people having a natural talent for delivering outstanding presentations. On the other hand, practice can carry most of the rest of us into the 'very good' level of presentation skills.

Questions to think about when preparing a presentation

1. The type of talk you will be expected to give:
   - will this be a brokerage event, a seminar discussion, or a more formal presentation?
   - different talks have different purposes; the intent of a conference presentation is not the same as of a brokerage event. When in doubt, ask for guidance from your host.
2. The composition of the audience:
   - will you be speaking to a general audience or specialists?
   - how many people are expected to attend?
   - is this likely to be a friendly audience? An interactive audience?
3. The time allotted for the talk:
   - the longer the talk, the more freedom you will have to explore the topic
   - a short talk needs to be very clear and to address the topic directly
   - is question time included?
4. Expectations for information content:
   - is there a specific purpose for having you give a talk? Clarify the expectations beforehand and plan to address them during the presentation.
   - will you be presenting novel concepts to this audience, or building upon their prior knowledge? Either way, make sure you cover the basics clearly, and early in the talk, to avoid losing the audience.

The principles below for use when formulating a talk should be applied whenever you are faced with making a public presentation.

Place yourself in your audience's position.

- Your audience is most interested in the ideas you present that can be applied to their own work. Try to ask yourself what kind of a talk you would expect based on the title of the event, if you were in the audience.

A presentation must *summarize*.

- You may have as little as 10–20 minutes to give your presentation. It probably took you weeks, months or even years to fulfill the project upon which your presentation is based. Because your work took so much of your time, it is entirely understandable if you are ego-involved with your work. There's nothing wrong with being proud of your work; in fact, if you're not proud of your work, something is wrong. However, don't let your pride lead you into thinking that your audience must absorb each and every detail of your work. If you try to present too many details in a short period of time, your audience will quickly tire. Try to stress concepts, methods, approaches, and conclusions, and use details to illustrate these ideas. Try to approach your presentation as a marketing effort: a good summary should convince your audience of the merit of your ideas and motivate them to further explore the details presented. Don't assume the audience will be familiar with basic concepts that form the foundation of your talk. Outline these concepts briefly but clearly early in the talk to avoid confusion.

If your presentation is well-structured, a reporter with no technical knowledge of your subject could report what you say.

- One good way to measure the structure of your presentation is to ask yourself how a technically unknowledgeable reporter would report what you say. What headline would the reporter choose? If he/she wrote a one-paragraph summary, what would he/she say? If he/she wrote several paragraphs, would he/she say the most important things? If your presentation is well-structured, he/she would.

Your audience's interest level will be highest at the beginning and the end of your presentation. Therefore, a good introduction and a good summary of conclusions are of paramount importance.

- There's a time-honored formula for giving a good talk:
  - Tell them what you're going to tell them.
  - Tell them.
  - Tell them what you told them.
- Your audience's attention will be high at the beginning of your talk. No matter how good your presentation is, your audience's attention will diminish somewhat during the body of your talk. However, when you say the magic words "in conclusion," their attention will rise again. Use this knowledge to make your big points at the beginning and end of your talk, and keep things moving in the middle.

Use slides to visually reinforce your spoken words.

- At any given point in time, your audience will have two senses with which to absorb your presentation: sight and sound. Don't overemphasize the importance of the spoken word; give equal importance to visual aids. One good criterion for measuring the quality of your slides is to go through them in sequence and ask whether your major themes are apparent with no spoken words. Similarly, a good criterion for measuring the quality of your spoken words is to try your talk with no slides. If your spoken words and slides are both strong individually, then all that remains is to be sure they are properly coordinated.

Have a good reason for showing each and every slide you use.

- For each slide you use, ask yourself "Why am I showing this slide?" Having done so, ask yourself whether the slide achieves your objective in the best possible manner. For example, if your reason for showing a table of results is to illustrate several key values, you may find that you have to point out these values, in order to distinguish them from values of little or no interest in the table. If so, you would be much better off if you designed a slide that shows only the important values and reinforces the spoken words you would use to describe the significance of the results.

Space your slides evenly over time.

- For a typical presentation, the average time per slide should be 1–3 minutes. If you flip slides too frequently, there's not enough time for ideas to sink in. This can be extremely frustrating for your audience. On the other hand, if you talk about a single slide for more than several minutes, you strain the attention span of the audience. Practice the timing of your presentation. If you find that you spend more than several minutes on a single slide, consider making several more detailed slides.

Practice your presentation, but don't read it or memorize it.

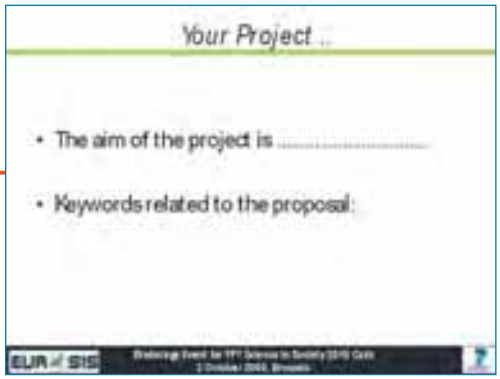
- Practice is essential; however, if you practice too much, or read or memorize your presentation, all spontaneity is lost, and your presentation will be boring. A presentation is not a speech or an oration, but rather, a talk with your audience. Practice your presentation to the point at which you can give it without notes.

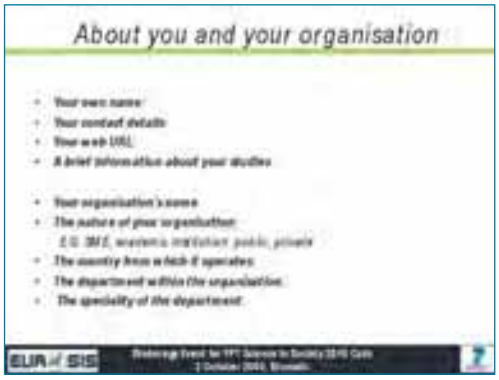
Question and answer sessions often follow a final summary and are very productive if managed properly.

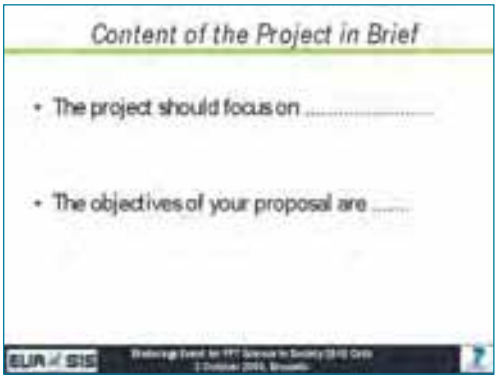
- You should encourage questions from the audience if time or format permits, but be prepared to answer them. If you do not know the correct answer to a question, don't try to fake it. You should refer the question to someone who can answer it correctly or make a note to yourself to obtain the answer later. When you do, contact the person or persons who asked it as soon as possible. This makes an excellent door opener for follow up calls.

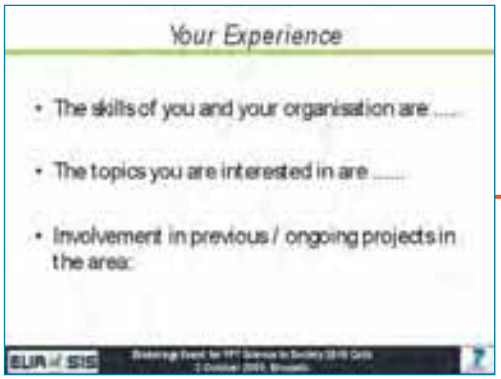
For some events organizers urge you to use special PowerPoint template.
For instance during the brokerage event Project Idea presenters are given a **5 – 7 minute** (!) timeslot. Below you can find an example:

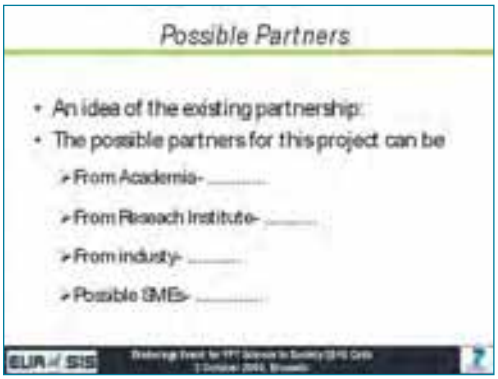

science in society
Project Title
Name of the Speaker


Your Project ..
• The aim of the project is .....
• Keywords related to the proposal:


About you and your organisation


Content of the Project in Brief
• The project should focus on .....
• The objectives of your proposal are .....


Your Experience
• The skills of you and your organisation are .....
• The topics you are interested in are .....
• Involvement in previous / ongoing projects in the area:


Possible Partners
• An idea of the existing partnership:
• The possible partners for this project can be
➢From Academia- .....
➢From Research Institute- .....
➢From industry- .....
➢Possible SMEs- .....

5.5

Writing effective emails, feedback

As email is the prevalent form of communication for many project participants and stakeholders, it gets a lot of attention: how to handle your email, how to empty your inbox, email etiquette, and more. But perhaps not enough time is spent learning about how to communicate with email. And more specifically, how to communicate clearly and concisely, two crucial aspects of communication that are often overlooked.

How many times have you received a rambling and incoherent email? How many times have you hit "Delete" because you have no idea what the person wants and no time to sort through the long message? Do people respond to your emails in the way you want them too? Or do they seem to ignore them, or miss important information? And are you sure that you're making the best possible impression with your emails?

The truth is that people don't have time for long emails, and they don't have time to try to find out exactly what you want. You have to tell them, in as short an email as possible.

Misunderstandings are also a problem, because of the nature of email. People are often ambiguous, and their messages are interpreted differently than they intended, leading to a waste of time and energy.

When you compose an email message, there are some simple rules that you can follow to ensure that your emails make a positive impression, and get you the response you want. Communicate clearly and concisely with the following rules.

1. Respond in time

If you want to appear professional and courteous, make yourself available to your online correspondents. Even if your reply is, "Sorry, I'm too busy to reply you now," at least your correspondent won't be waiting in vain for your reply.

If you want to get help over e-mail, you can help yourself and respond more quickly by formulating specific, focused questions: "Is this a good source?" or "Am I using too much information in this paragraph?" If you send a whole paper with a general request to "tell me what I need to change," the recipient will probably save that for the next time.

For a message that needs an action, you might want to include the deadline to action, such as "Please reply by November 7".

2. Write a meaningful subject line

Email subject line need to do exactly the same thing as a newspaper headline: it grabs your attention, and it tells you what the article is about, so that you can decide if you want to read further. Use a few well-chosen words, so that the recipient knows at a glance what the email is about.

If your message is one of a regular series of emails, such as a weekly project report, include the date in the subject line.

Remember that everyone tries to reduce the amount of "spam" email messages they receive. If you make appropriate use of the subject line, you increase the chances that your email will be read, rather than mistaken for spam and deleted without so much as a glance.

Recipients scan the subject line in order to decide whether to open, forward, file, or trash a message. Remember – your message is not the only one in your recipient's mailbox. Before you hit "send," take a moment to write a subject line that accurately describes the content.

Subject: [Blank]

> Of course, just as it would be ridiculous to publish a newspaper without headlines, never leave the subject line blank. Emails with blank subject lines are usually spam! If you don't put a subject line on your e-mail, you are sending the message that your name in the "From" line is all your recipient should need in order to make it a top priority. That could come across as arrogant, or at the very least, thoughtless. Take advantage of the opportunity to get your recipient thinking about your message even before opening it.

Subject: "Important! Read Immediately!!"

What is important to you may not be important to your reader. Rather than brashly announcing that the secret contents of your message are important, write an informative headline that actually communicates at least the core of what you feel is so important: "Urgent: Deadline for submitting the proposal is one day."

Subject: "Quick question."

If the question is quick, why not just ask it in the subject line? This subject line is hardly useful.

Subject: "Follow-up about Friday"

Fractionally better – provided that the recipient remembers why a follow-up was necessary.

Subject: "That file you requested."

If you're confident your recipient will recognize your e-mail address, and really is expecting a file from you, then this would be fine. But keep in mind that many e-mail providers get scads of virus-laden spam with vague titles like this. The more specific you are, the more likely your recipient's spam-blocker will let your message through.

Subject: "10 confirmed for Friday... will we need a larger room?"

Upon reading this revised, informative subject line, the recipient immediately starts thinking about the size of the room, not about whether it will be worth it to open the e-mail.

3. Focus on a clear message, helping the reader to prioritize

One of the advantages of email compared with traditional letters is that it doesn't cost any more to send several emails than it does to send one. So, if you need to communicate with someone about a number of different things, consider writing a separate email on each subject.

That way, your correspondent can reply to each one individually and in the appropriate time frame. One topic might only require a short reply that he or she can send straight away. Another topic might require more research. By writing separate messages, you should get clearer answers, while helping other people manage their inboxes better.

Often recipients only read partway through a long message, hit "reply" as soon as they have something to contribute, and forget to keep reading. This is part of human nature.

If your e-mail contains multiple messages – perhaps because they relate to the same project – in order to avoid the risk that your reader will reply only to the first item that grabs his or her fancy, you could number your points to ensure they are all read (adding an introductory line that states how many parts there are to the message). If the points are substantial enough, and the topics are of interest to different sets of people, split a longer message up into separate parts so the various stakeholders can delete, respond, file, or forward each item individually.

What do you want your reader to do after reading your message? Answer a simple "yes" or "no" question? Invest time and effort to help you solve a problem? Listen to you and give advice where appropriate? Just file your report in case the information becomes important later?

Will your message require more than one response? Maybe you are submitting a report on a project that's winding down, while at the same time asking for an immediate response to a question about an upcoming project. Consider starting off by saying "I am submitting the report for Project X, and I have a question about Project Y."

4. Avoid attachments

Instead of attaching that huge PDF or Word file, can you just paste the key information into the body of the e-mail message? Can you post the whole thing on your company intranet so that those people who want it can go get it themselves?

To: All Employees
From: John Martin
Subject: A helpful book everyone should read

Hello, everyone. I've attached a PDF that I think you'll all find very useful. This is the third time I sent the file – the version I sent yesterday had a typo on page 207, so I've sent the whole thing again. Since some of you noted that the large file size makes it a bit awkward, I've also attached each chapter as a separate document. Let me know what you think!

Attachments:
Big Honking File.pdf (356MB)
BHF Cover.pdf (25MB)
BHF Chapter 1.pdf (35MB)
BHF Chapter 2.pdf (27MB)
[...]

Okay, how many of us would delete the above message immediately, without looking at *any* of those attachments?

To: Irina Professional
From: Morris Ponsybil
Subject: E-mail tips – a subject for the workshop?

Irina, I came across a guide that has lots of tips on professional communications. Has anyone volunteered to present at the project workshop next month? Let me know if you'd like me to run a little seminar (20 minutes?) on using e-mail effectively.

Below, I'll paste the table of contents from the guide. Let me know if you want me send you the whole thing as a PDF.

Table of Contents
Write a meaningful subject line.
Keep the message focused and readable.
Avoid attachments.

E-mail works best when you just copy and paste the most relevant text into the body of the e-mail. Try to reduce the number of steps your recipient will need to take in order to act on your message.
[...]

5. Give to the attachments meaningful names

If your recipient actually needs to view the full file in order to edit or archive it, then of course sending an attachment is appropriate.

In this case you should use appropriate file name (-s) which tells you what the file is about

Bad example
Attachments:
Chapter 1.pdf (35MB)
Chapter 2.pdf (27MB)

Good example
Attachments:
E-mail tips.pdf (3MB)
Web collaboration tools.pdf (5MB)

6. Proofread

If you are sending a message that will be read by someone higher up on the chain of command, or if you're about to mass-mail dozens of people, take the time to make your message look professional before you hit "send".

While your spell checker won't catch every mistake, at the very least it will catch a few typos. In case you are not sure with your English show a draft to a more experienced colleague in order to see whether the sense is the same as you wanted to express.

Revise for conciseness. As you review, also see if there is a way you can shorten the email, remove words or sentences or even paragraphs. Leave nothing but the essential message you're trying to communicate.

Use Simple English. When the writing is too formal or uses irrelevant technical lingo, it is difficult to understand. Plus, you come off sounding like a legal document or spammer. Neither is good. Write like you talk, using conversational English. Be authentic and realistic.

7. Minimize questions

Ask questions that matter, and limit the number of questions you ask in an email (one or two max). The more questions (especially open-ended ones) asked in one message, the less likely all your questions will be answered.

Also, ask specific questions instead of general open-ended ones. Be reasonable and thoughtful when asking. Don't expect the recipient to solve all our project problems. For example, "How can I become successful with my application?" is too broad. Break them down into specifics and ask the one question that really matters.

You can send additional questions in separate emails. The key is in keeping the line of communication open by not overwhelming the receiver.

8. Identify yourself clearly

Add a good signature to your email. That is, one that includes your name, title, organization, email address, web site, and phone. This is especially true if you're asking people to do something- why making it hard for them to verify your credibility or to pick up the phone and call you?

If you are following up on a face-to-face contact, you might appear too timid if you assume your recipient doesn't remember you; but you can drop casual hints to jog their memory: "I enjoyed talking with you about the project during coffee break."

9. Be careful about Replying To All

If you are not professional in emailing, make sure you know the difference between replying to one person and replying to everyone on the initial message. Suffice to say you will send many emails which you would not want to be seen by everyone. It can be extremely embarrassing to send a personal message for everyone to see – it does happen. Following this tip will save a lot of potential problems.

5.6

Using web collaboration tools/services

Working practices are evolving from traditional proximity or geographical collocation paradigm to virtual collocation paradigm where experts (professionals) have to work together whatever the geographical location of everyone involved. Connecting with colleagues around the globe via collaborative software technologies such as web conferencing, social networks, online forums, blogs and wikis is transforming the way we work.

Collaborative software helps facilitate the action-oriented team working together over geographic distances by providing tools that help communication, collaboration and the process of problem solving by providing the team with a common means for communicating ideas and brainstorming. Additionally, collaborative software should support project management functions, such as task assignments, time-management with deadlines and shared calendars. The artifacts, the tangible evidence of the problem solving process, including the final outcome of the collaborative effort, require documentation, archiving and promotion for potential reuse. This should also include the artifacts of the process itself, such as project plans and schedules noting deadlines and deliverables.

Collaborative software should support the individuals that make up the team and the interactions between them during the group decision making process. Today's teams are composed of members from around the globe with many using their second or third language in communicating with the group. This provides cultural as well as linguistic challenges for any software that supports the collaborative effort. The software should also support team membership, roles and responsibilities. Additionally, collaborative support systems may offer the ability to support such systems as budgets and physical resources.

Brainstorming is considered to be a tenant of collaboration, with the rapid exchange of ideas facilitating the group decision making process. Collaborative software provides areas that support multi-user editing with virtual whiteboards and chat or other forms of communication. Better solutions record the process and provide revision history. An emerging category of computer software, a collaboration platform is a unified electronic platform that supports synchronous and asynchronous communication through a variety of devices and channels.

Collaborative software (also referred to as **groupware**, **workgroup support systems** or simply **group support systems**) is software designed to help people involved in a common task achieve their goals.

Collaborative software concept addresses "how collaborative activities and their coordination can be supported by means of computer systems."

Software systems such as email, calendaring, text chat, wiki, and bookmarking belong to this category. Whereas the more general term social software applies to systems used outside the workplace, for example, online dating services and social networks like Friendster, Twitter and Facebook, the use of **collaborative software** in the workspace creates a collaborative working environment (CWE). A collaborative working environment supports people in both their individual and cooperative work thus giving birth to a new class of professionals, e-professionals, who can work together irrespective of their geographical location.

Being an e-professional is not a profession of its own, but it exists in combination with a business profession such as consultant, engineer, scientist etc. An e-professional is not working in isolation but actively collaborating with other e-professionals within virtual workspaces.

Collaborative software technologies enable an e-professional being part of groups and communities as well as knowledge networks, and being involved in distributed cooperation processes that have not been possible before. The concept of an e-professional is strongly connected with the FP7 consortium work in the framework of project implementation, so the necessary e-skills **http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/ict/e-skills/support/** are the integral part of networking skills required for effective project implementation.

An e-professional:

- Is linked to a normal organisation by employment, but may also act in a self-employed way. The work is often performed at mobile workplace.

- **Is involved in many different projects within groups, communities, projects, and with external partners in different organisations**. Often these projects are constructed around highly complex and creative tasks that require a high coordination effort. The problems to be solved appear suddenly and require access to information/knowledge not known before. Thus, tasks and processes can not be anticipated or planned beforehand. They are of different lengths and complexity levels, involving different support tools.
- Requires the availability of the workplace in different situations, locations and places and the ad hoc availability of a cooperation environment.
- Requires support for the ad hoc identification of other e-professionals based on similar interest and complementary knowledge. Tasks can be solved only gathering and relying on information from different sources (data and people)
- Requires the dynamic ad hoc creation of collaboration with different people and groups.

Nowadays there are numerous ICT products supporting the e-professional work. One can classify them into the next groups:

- Hosted Web Collaboration Environments
- Web Collaboration Software (Groupware)
- Online Classrooms & E-Learning Environments: Hosted
- Online Classrooms & E-Learning Environments: Software
- Scheduling Services
- Unique & Hard-to-Classify Services

Hosted Web Collaboration Environments (SaaS)

These web sites host private workspaces for online collaboration and virtual teams. They offer a variety of business-oriented communication tools and better security than sites designed for public communities. Most are oriented primarily toward asynchronous communication, but some also offer real-time conferencing and instant messaging as well

Few examples of them:

Central Desktop

Easy-to-use group workspace with highly intuitive user interface. Features discussion forums (can be dropped in anywhere), file libraries, calendars, task tracking, etc. Some wiki-like features, as well. Integrated live web conferencing is optional.

CollaborativeWorkspaces.com

Offers online workspaces with a variety of tools, including discussions, chat, messaging, blogs, document sharing, integrated with Microsoft Office.

Facilitate.com

Tools for brainstorming, categorizing and decision making designed to enhance productivity in the meeting room and over the internet.

Google Apps

Free service offering web-based creation and editing of word documents, spreadsheets, and web pages ("Google Sites"). You can use it privately, or share access with any group you specify. Also offers email (Gmail) and shared calendars. Note: you must have control of a web domain to create an account.

Web Collaboration Software

These software packages designed to support collaborative work and intranets can be installed on your own server, behind a firewall. A few examples of them are:

Agora-project
Personal and group calendars, file sharing, instant messaging, email, private forums. Requires PHP and MySQL. Site in French but English could be used in the interface.
Agora software has been successfully used in the framework of **ISTOK-SOYUZ project**.
FirstClass Intranet Server
Designed as a complete intranet server, with forum and e-mail capabilities. Forums can be accessed via a Web browser, but to take full advantage of FCIS requires special client software. FirstClass Intranet is the main tool for the internal work of the largest in the world EU-supported Enterprise Europe Network which unites more than 4000 organisations both in EU and outside. In Russia it represented by the Gate2RuBIN project (**www.gate2rubin.ru**)

Online Classrooms & E-Learning: Hosted

These hosted services vary widely. They have little in common except their educational orientation and some type of forum facilities.

A few examples of them are:
Skillsoft
Provider of enterprise e-learning targeted to business and IT professionals. Live or on-demand classrooms, interactive business skill simulations, certification preparation in many areas.
Isoph
Offers a suite of tools for both e-learning and group work, including discussion forums, real-time conferencing, document sharing, and online courses.

Online Classrooms & E-Learning: Software

These software products for online learning feature some form of asynchronous forum or message board facilities for group discussion.

Few examples of them:
TopClass
A system for developing and delivering Web-based training, including discussion forums.
Web Training Toolbox
A collection of tools for developing interactive training, including forum and chat functions.

Scheduling Services

Few examples of them are:

Doodle

Free service for arranging group activities. Not limited to scheduling dates – for example, you can poll participants about their preferences for activities, food, or anything else.

EventRegister

Comprehensive online event registration software, web-based event management software and payment processing, with a host of other technology solutions. Pricing varies based on your needs and the nature of your business.

Unique & Hard-to-Classify Services

A few examples of them are:

PHPKB

A knowledge based content management software, FAQ builder and PHP script for creating/managing an online or offline help desk, creating article directories, providing online tutorials and other customized uses.

Teamlines

A team activity/process manager that allows you to track a projects status in real time. Available as a hosted service or as licensed software.

Selecting the collaborative software for the project

Different frameworks could be established based on a projects needs and requirements in order to find the best software. But the best framework is the one in which the characteristics are so well defined that they cover all the aspects of collaboration activities and management of the overall project.

The challenge in determining which software to use is having a good understanding of the requirements and tools needed for project development. There are many dynamics that make project management challenging (coordination, collaboration, sharing of knowledge and effectiveness of pm's to facilitate the process). Choosing the right collaborative software is essential to complementing these issues. According to a survey conducted in 2008 to find out what project managers' expectations and uses of project management software are, the features most important to project managers with project management software were:

- Ability to plan sequence activities using CPM/PDM/PERT or Gantt Chart method,
- Produce project master schedules based on project/task breakdown structures, with subordinate details,
- Critical path calculation.

One of the biggest problems in implementing collaborative software of a project is to achieve a high level of adoption from its members. Without clear commitment from project management any groupware implementation risks failure.

5.7

Planning an event

There are good events and there are bad events. You leave bad events wondering why you were even present. Effective ones leave you energized and feeling that you've really accomplished something.

So what makes an event effective?

1. They achieve the event's objective.
2. They take up a minimum amount of time.
3. They leave participants feeling that a sensible process has been followed.

If you structure your event's planning, execution, and follow up around these three basic criteria, the result will be an effective event.

Articulating a clear goal for your event helps in so many ways. If you can explain in a written plan why and what you're doing, your chances for success increase significantly. Your events will be more effective, cost and time efficient, and satisfying for those attending.

Goals

- List a few over-arching goals for this meeting or event. Why is it a worthwhile expenditure of project time and money? What does your project/organisation hope to accomplish? Think about goals such as motivating, educating, planning, communicating, and accomplishing tasks.

Target audience

- Who do you hope attends this meeting or event? What will make this meeting or event worthwhile from their perspective? Do you know how to reach your target audience?

Competing Meetings or Events

- Check calendars and determine if there are other meetings, events, or activities that would draw away your intended audience.

Location and Facilities Analysis

- Where do you propose to hold this meeting? If internally, do you have sufficient space and equipment? If you have a choice of locations, list the pros and cons of each in your plan. Put telephone, address, email and other details for your contacts at these facilities.

Activities Timeline

- Develop a timeline for all the activities that need to be completed to hold a successful meeting or event. For each activity, determine the deadline by which it needs to be done and identify who will be the main person responsible for the activity. Examples of activities include things such as developing budgets; arranging, catering; setting up audio, visual or other technology; printing materials; booking and preparing speakers, etc.

Publicity and Promotion

- Describe your plans for getting the word out about the meeting or event; or for notifying prospective attendees. This can be as simple as sending an inter project memo to as complex as designing and running an advertising campaign.

Develop a Budget

- Use a spreadsheet and develop a budget for your event. It's helpful to sit down with a blank sheet of paper and think through every aspect of your event, then plan your budget. Add a contingency budget (often 10 percent more) for unexpected or unanticipated expenses.
- Once you have a carefully crafted plan in place, you can make the best decisions for the meeting. Your meeting or event will have a greater chance of success and of achieving the goals you identified at the outset. On top of all that, you will experience less stress as the meeting planner. You will be able to think proactively about how to make the meeting run well and not be reactively responding to a series of problems or challenges.

So, when planning an event you need to consider a number of primary factors. They are:

Date	when the event will be held
Venue	where will the event be held e.g. hotel, conference centre etc.
Budget	draft budget – including expected expenditure (and income)
Speakers/ moderators	who is going to speak/run the event
Invitees	who are you targeting to attend the event
Sponsors	can you obtain sponsors for the event and who are they
Timeline	plan timeline for the event including responsibilities for each item
Materials	what information is required to give to attendees
Collation	collation of all material required for the event
Advertising	how are you going to advertise the event? And in what forms e.g. email, newspaper, web
Media	invite media to attend event (if appropriate) or advertising of the event

Planning big events (conferences, info days etc)

Event committee/organizing group. Timeline for event

- Depending upon the type of event, look to plan the event at least 6–9 months before the actual date happens to allow for success. If the event you plan to organize is big enough, a good idea is to establish a special event committee or organizing group. At the initial meeting of the event committee/organizing group you will need to set up a number of objectives and form a **timeline for the event**. It's important to plan the event with plenty of time to allow for all aspects of the event to happen without too many problems. Keep everyone involved in the loop so as all aware of what is happening and what every person is dealing with – to make sure everything is done correctly and within the time frame set. The "dates" on the timeline do not have to be set in concrete, but need to be flexible enough to make sure everything is covered. You should hold a meeting every two weeks with the committee/organizing group, just to check that everything is happening as it should be and everyone understands at what stage of the timeline the event is at.

Events Activity List

- The Events Activity List is a good tool to use when organising functions or trying to structure a timeline in accordance to the different but interrelated groups of tasks. This means nothing is forgotten and it is also a double check from the timeline document. This list should include:

Location

- Details of location including room name, street address, postal address and phone, fax, email details.

Speakers

- Once you have confirmed speakers' availability put all contact details here. Keep them in the loop regarding the event and send them a copy of the timeline for the day of the event (s). It's important that they are aware of their role and what is expected of them by the project. They need to supply you with their requirements for the event. What AV requirements do they have, are they bringing their presentation on disk or laptop? Do they need a data projector etc? What papers/material do they have for the folder (s)? Make them aware that you need this information at least a month (2 weeks) before the event. Do they need accommodation, local flights? Is anyone accompanying them?

Invitations

- You have to decide what kind of invitation you want i.e. printed invitation, electronic email flyer, booklet etc. 2–3 weeks ahead of the event you should arrange follow up calls i.e. someone to ring every single person who has not replied about their attendance to the event. It is time consuming but done properly it can usually increase the number of participants significantly as not everyone replies to invitations.

AV/Computer needs

- Once know what speakers require, need to make sure the venue can supply all electronic needs e.g. data projector, screen, microphone, sound system, special equipment for translation etc. They will have given you pricing on this when you first approached them. Some venues allow you to bring in your own equipment or equipment that you have hired specifically for the event as well.

Publicity

- How are you going to advertise the event/function? Is it by paper, electronically by email or by web? Do you need to invite the press? Decide how you want to advertise your event but make sure that you find out costs before hand. Depending upon the event you can start advertising the event 3–4 months before it happens. Some advertisers may charge, therefore the project/organisation need to make sure there is money in the budget to cover these costs.

Materials

- Folders with event materials need to be designed, printed and compiled 1–2 weeks before the event. Always make 15–20 extra just in case any late arrivals or attendees – better too many than too little. You may need to give a folder to the media people as well. You will have received all information from speakers well in advance and allowed 1–2 weeks for printing of contents of folders as well. Collation of folders can take 2–3 days depending upon what is going in them. Nowadays it is possible also to put the huge amount of useful information onto a CD or flesh. Think about what is necessary for participants to have in paper form (e.g. copies of presentations etc) and what could be put into CD for further usage.
- You also need to make name badges before the event. Name badges usually consist of persons name and organization (it is not necessary to put titles).

Visibility

- Usually the project or organisers have their own banners that can be used to put in foyer or in rooms for each event.

Catering

- Get quotes from different venues – look at cost and what they are offering. Is the food what you want? Can you change any menu supplied? You need to look at these sorts of things. You may have people with special dietary needs – these people need to be catered for, but they should be telling you this before the event (not on the day). Once decided on venue, look through menus and decide what you want to use for the event.

5.8

Running/ facilitating an effective meeting

The definition of facilitate is “to make easy” or “ease a process”. What a facilitator does is plan, guide and manage a group event to ensure that the group’s objectives are met effectively, with clear thinking and good participation.

Effective meeting facilitation is a process of guiding participants through a meeting to achieve stated objectives. An effective facilitator thinks through and manages the meeting objectives, processes, and group dynamics of participants. An effective facilitator encourages all members of a group to participate, draws out ideas and knowledge from different members, and creates buy-ins from the group. He/she enables participants to offer their best ideas and make decisions with commitment and enthusiasm.

Here are 10 tips to successful facilitation:

1. Understand your audience. Find out more about your audience before facilitating a meeting or workshop. Try to understand their concerns and interests in the topic by sending them a proposed agenda or a **short** pre-meeting questionnaire. Doing so will help participants feel more included and create a more positive atmosphere for the meeting. In addition, a benefit to understanding your audience will enable you to discover more useful discussions than the one you had planned.

2. Clearly articulate your purpose and intended outcomes. Your role as a facilitator is to manage discussions of the group and lay the foundation for what outcomes they should expect. Doing so will help your audience anticipate how they can participate in the discussions, take ownership for the meeting and its outcomes, and benefit from this experience.

3. Create a positive atmosphere during the meeting. Create a relaxed and safe environment where all meeting participants feel comfortable to speak up and share their ideas. You can create this safe environment by asking the group to agree on some ground rules for participation, such as speak one at a time, respecting different views, and agreeing on a maximum number of points that each person can make to any one discussion. If all participants agree to these ground rules, they will have shared ownership and shared responsibility to ensure that these ground rules are followed.

4. Show respect for your audience. Recognize each participant's strengths and ideas, and respect their opinions. Value diversity and be sensitive to the different needs and interests of participants. Understand that these differences might be due to years of service with your company, education, profession, gender, or age.

5. Be flexible. Identify possible resistances from your audience, understand their expectations and manage them. Be aware that things can go wrong during a meeting. Be prepared to modify the meeting agenda as appropriate and continue with your facilitation while keeping the purpose of the meeting in mind. Adjust meeting activities to suit your participants and adapt your personal style to the group.

6. Practice active listening. As a facilitator, you listen to what the participants are saying and try to make sense of it. You clarify goals, acronyms, and definitions to ensure a clear understanding for all participants. To foster a sense of trust and openness among the participants, you want to pause from time to time and summarize the discussions, draw conclusions, and identify the next steps. As the facilitator, you are in a unique position to listen to all points of view and integrate ideas.

7. Handle conflicts with assertiveness and sensitivity. If conflicts occur, listen to both parties and paraphrase what they say. Listen to their underlying emotions (e.g., "you seem to feel frustrated, can you tell us more about…") and promote an atmosphere of collaboration instead of defensiveness. Show participants that differences in opinions are valued and respected. Gently guide your participants back to the purpose of the meeting.

8. Manage time effectively. As a facilitator, you need to move the group and cover critical points on the meeting agenda. Prioritize the issues to be discussed on two dimensions: *importance* versus *urgency*. Focus on issues that are of high importance and high urgency first, and then move on to issues that are important but less urgent. To avoid interruptions from dominant participants, assign them to perform specific tasks (e.g., scribing or taking notes for their small group) while still engaging other participants in the room.

9. Produce insightful documents. A key delivery of facilitation is a complete document of the group's insights. With the help of note takers who record the group's input and decisions during the meeting, you can keep track of all the group-generated data and produce a comprehensive report complete with charts and tables. This document can then be shared with all meeting participants.

10. Maintain integrity, professionalism, and authenticity. As a facilitator, you maintain personal integrity and behave confidently and honestly. You model authenticity for the group by showing enthusiasm and openly admitting mistakes and lack of knowledge. You keep your ego out of the discussion as your focus is on the group and on ensuring group success.

Difference between moderator and facilitator

In the meetings, conferences and events "industry" the terms Moderator, Facilitator and even Conference Chairman very often are used in the same context. But are they really the same? And does it really matter to the attendees? The difference between the two can have a profound impact on whether you can meet your event objectives and expectations. Understanding the differences is important also as each requires a different set of skills.

Moderator:

Moderation of meetings, events and networks focuses on keeping the information and communication flow clear and accessible to all who participate. In this sense, **the moderator is an information manager**. In an online environment, s/he monitors the communication flow, makes summaries and digests, approves participants' requests and posts, and even maintains the online environment. The moderator is often quite invisible for those who participate in meetings, events and communities, but nevertheless indispensable!

Facilitator:

On the contrary, the facilitator of meetings, events and networks is much more visible and active. S/he **steers the communication flow and keeps it on track**. In this way, facilitation focuses on including all participants in the discussion, even the ones who are less comfortable with speaking and contributing, ensuring all voices are heard and discussion is vibrant, interesting and useful to those who participate. The facilitator makes it clear to all when milestones as part of the meeting, event, or network/community activity, have been achieved and then moves on to the next milestone. Having good communication skills, the facilitator enables a comfortable and inclusive environment of openness and trust for those who participate.

5.9

Making an effective interview, using questioning techniques

A face-to-face interview is the method most widely used in the research of any topic and based on a direct meeting between interviewer and interviewee. By personal communication it is possible not only to obtain much more information, but also to use visual materials (cards, pictures, packages, logos, etc.) to encourage response. A face-to-face interview should not bore a respondent and ensures full and accurate data.

The main advantage of face-to-face or direct interviews is that the researcher can adapt the questions as necessary, clarify doubt and ensure that the responses are properly understood, by repeating or rephrasing the questions. The researcher can also pick up nonverbal cues from the respondent. Any discomfort, stress and problems that the respondent experiences can be detected through frowns, nervous tapping and other body language, unconsciously exhibited by any person.

This would be impossible to detect in a telephone interview. So face-to-face helps the interviewee to get the desired results and help them to view the expressions of the person to whom they are interviewing. By reading the facial expression of the respondent the interviewer can easily understand what the respondent wants to tell them about any thing.

The main disadvantages of face-to-face interviews are the geographical limitations they may impose on the surveys and the vast resources needed if such surveys need to be done nationally or internationally. Another drawback is that respondents might feel uneasy about the anonymity of their responses when they interact during face-to-face interviews.

Below you will find some recommendations on preparing and conducting face-to-face interviews.

- ***Draft your questions before the meeting***

Depending on the purpose of your interview, you need to ensure:

- you have suitable questions and topics prepared;
- your questions and topics will gather the information or data you need;
- phrase your questions in a way the interviewee will understand;
- you have prompts prepared just in case the interviewee doesn't understand what you mean – but try not to make these too leading; and
- you try to use alternatives to "why" when phrasing questions such as "what", "what reason's and "what made you".

- ***Before you go to conduct your interview*** there are some things you should consider.

Brief your interviewee.

- Make sure they understand why you want to interview them and what you will use their information/views for.
- Let them know how long the interview should take.
- Agree a time and place for the interview – consider a location that is comfortable or familiar to the interviewee.
- Ensure the interviewee has confidence in you.

- ***At your interview***

Break the ice with a little friendly chat if you don't know them already, to help make them comfortable.

Then **recap with the interviewee**:

- why you are interviewing them;
- the purpose of the interview and how you will use their information/views;
- how long it will take;
- explain the confidentiality of the interview; and
- smile – make your interviewee feel comfortable with the situation.

If they are looking uncomfortable look at them in a friendly understanding way, so they remember you're just a person they're having a conversation with, then:

- ask how they feel about the topic;
- reassure them that their answers are valid and confidential; and
- consider if there's a more comfortable way you can word your approach or redirect your questions if need be.

Speak clearly

Let the interviewee know you're listening – reactive listening. Use words and sounds to show this:

- OK
- Oh right
- Really?

Avoid approving phrases that could lead their future answers, like:

- Yes
- That's right
- Absolutely
- You're not wrong

Avoid asking "why?" For example use these instead:

- What reasons…
- What made you…

If you want to find out more about an issue or explore an answer, use phrases and techniques that ask for more information. Such as:

- "Tell me more about that"
- "I'm listening, please go on"
- "Can you explain that to me?"
- "You mentioned xxx, what's that about?"
- Counting to four (pausing to the count of four to give interviewee chance to add more)

- ***At the end of the interview and afterwards***
  - Re-assure the interviewee – recap what the information will be used for.
  - Give your contact details to the interviewee so if they have any worries or questions they can contact you.
  - Thank them for their time.
  - Write up interview notes (if necessary) as soon after the interview a possible, to ensure you remember all the detail.

The technical interviews with high-level ICT experts in Russia and Europe were defined by ISTOK project **www.istok-ru.eu** consortium as one of the concrete inputs for the identification of the ICT priorities and opportunities for ICT strategic collaboration between the EU and Russia. The technical interviews aimed to provide the consortium with a number of important elements regarding the European and Russian needs and priorities in specific ICT fields, key cooperation technologies, interest for the collaboration, eventual barriers for an efficient cooperation.
The ISTOK consortium contacted 25 ICT high-level experts in Russia and Europe. The interview was carried out as **face-to face or telephone meetings**. In Russia was privileged the face-to-face format that can be explained by the fact that telephone interviews are still unusual in the country. In Europe most of interviews were done by telephone.
During the preparation stage the e-mails were sent to all experts in order to present the project and invite them for an interview. The letter contained the interview guide lines. It described interview goals and objectives, procedure, expected results and a detailed questionnaire used during an interview.
The main difficulty the ISTOK team encountered was linked to the lack of "interview culture" in Russia: as soon as the "open to public" principle is announced, the experts declined the interviews. Also, a lot of time was spent to provide exhaustive details on the project, interview objectives etc.

5.10

Organising efficient brainstorming meetings

Brainstorming is a popular tool that helps you generate creative solutions to a problem. It is particularly useful when you want to break established patterns of thinking, so that you can develop new ways of looking at things.

Used with your team, it helps you bring the diverse experience of all team members into play during problem solving. This increases the richness of ideas explored, meaning that you can find better solutions to the problems you face. It can also help you get buy in from team members for the solution chosen – after all, they were involved in developing that solution. What's more, because brainstorming is fun, it helps team members bond with one-another as they solve problems in a positive, distraction-free environment.

Any brainstorming session starts with the issue for which you will seek ideas. The issue will normally be in the form of a goal. It may be the solution to a problem, for example:

"We need to enter into FP7 project in 2 coming years"

The* issue *is what you will brainstorm about. It should describe a need, a goal or a problem.

Since the initial period of the brainstorm session comprises open ideation, the issue should leave room for creativity and wild ideas. Even if those wild ideas are not used, they will inspire less wild and more workable ideas.

Once you have determined the issue, the next step is to review the issue and **decide by what criteria you should judge the ideas generated during the session.** The criteria should reflect the intended implementation of the ideas and the needs of your organisation. For example, if you are brainstorming new product ideas, criteria are likely to include:

- strong profit potential
- low cost to develop and produce product
- good fit with existing product line
- speed of bringing to market

Ideas will be evaluated by each criterion, so it is important to choose criteria that allow ranking on a sliding scale. For example, "can we launch this product by the end of the year?" is a poor criterion as it takes a yes or no answer. On the other hand: "ease of launching product by end of the year;" or "speed of bringing to market (ideally before end of year)" are better criteria.

An ideal brainstorming team should comprise one **moderator** and eight to twelve **brainstormers**. If you wish to brainstorm with larger groups, we recommend breaking the groups up into smaller teams of 8–12 brainstormers and running simultaneous sessions. Where possible, brainstormers should come from as wide a range of disciplines as possible.

If you are running a **brainstorm session via a web application** (e-brainstorming) it is possible to have many more participants. Electronic brainstorming eliminates many of the problems of standard brainstorming, such as production blocking and evaluation apprehension. An additional advantage of this method is that all ideas can be archived electronically in their original form, and then retrieved later for further thought and discussion. Electronic brainstorming also enables much larger groups to brainstorm on a topic than would normally be productive in a traditional brainstorming session.

The moderator manages the brainstorming session itself. He/she starts and stops the session at the appropriate time and manages the evaluation. The moderator does not participate in generating of ideas. A moderator should be an enthusiastic person with a sense of humor and the ability to control the brainstorming session.

Preparations for a brainstorming session are minimal. You need to prepare a space for the session as well as invite the brainstormers. When informing the brainstormers, bear in mind that a brainstorming session should take about 15 minutes of introduction, 30–40 minutes for ideation, 30 minutes for evaluation and discussion and 15 minutes for conclusions. So, plan for a minimum of 90 minutes.

It is often effective **to inform the brainstormers** of the issue to be brainstormed with as little advance warning as possible. This will have them entering the session with fresh minds. It is important to stress, at the invitation stage, that certain things will not be tolerated during the brainstorming session:

1. No bringing prepared ideas into the meeting! All ideas must be spontaneous.
2. No mobile phones or leaving the meeting for any reason
3. No late arrivals! A brainstorm session cannot start until all are present.

Finally, if meetings in your organisation are generally formal, remind participants that brainstorming should be a relaxed affair.

The brainstorming session can be held in any space that is reasonably comfortable, prevents disruption and has a means of writing ideas where everyone can see them. The only requirement is a whiteboard, flip-chart or computer and beamer that will allow the moderator to write ideas as they are suggested. Coffee, water and other drinks are nice touches that help relax participants.

The brainstorming session comprises several components.

1) The introduction should begin with your introducing the issue and explaining its importance. You should also write the issue at the top of the whiteboard or whatever writing space you use.

You should explain that once the session has begun, everyone is expected to shout out ideas while you (or the moderator) write them on the whiteboard. Point out that all ideas, no matter how crazy, undoable or irrelevant they may be, must be heard and will be written down. Remind participants that sometimes ideas that seem crazy at first are, on reflection, brilliant.
Finally explain that when someone:

- criticises an idea…
- says that an idea will not work…
- says that an idea has already been tried…
- criticises someone on the basis of her ideas…
- or says anything that is less than positive about ideas or people in the session…

he/she is highly damaging the quality of the session. It is the worst thing that can happen to a brainstorming session. Ensure everyone understands this.

2) **Ideation.** The moderator should keep track of the time and write down ideas as they are generated. The first ideas proposed will almost inevitably be obvious ideas. Once people run out of obvious ideas, they will begin stretching their minds more. This is when you begin to see more creative ideas come up. Once time is up, inform the brainstormers and compliment their ideas and their participation. Inform them that the next step is the evaluation.

Ideation is what most people envision when they think about brainstorming. In fact, it is only one part of the brainstorming process.

3) Evaluation

The first step of the evaluation is simply to choose ideas which are potential solutions for the issue. Ask the brainstormers to review their ideas for a couple of minutes and consider which are good solutions and which are not. Then ask them which ideas they believe have the most potential. Mark those ideas. You may also cross out ideas which are clearly unworkable. Continue until you have between three and eight strong ideas. If you as the moderator see that the brainstormers have missed ideas that have potential, you may add those ideas.

Once this has been completed, select the first chosen idea. Then go through each of the criteria and rate how well the idea meets the criterion on a scale of zero to five, where zero indicates the idea does not meet the criterion at all and five indicates it meets the criterion completely. There are two acceptable approaches to calculating the scores:

1) Discuss the scores as a group and reach consensus for each score. Write those scores on the whiteboard.
2) Have each brainstormer write her own evaluation scores for each idea. The moderator can then take a survey of all scores, calculate the average value for each idea and write it on the whiteboard.

Continue in this fashion until all ideas have been evaluated and have a score. The higher the score, the better the idea in terms of meeting the criteria you set for the brainstorming session.

When you are done, you will have a list of ideas each with a score reflecting how well it meets the criteria. **Generally the top three to five ideas will be the most suitable.**

At the end of the evaluation, the moderator should discuss the top ideas with the brainstormers and note any additional feedback regarding the issue, the ideas and the overall brainstorming session. Any relevant comments should be noted.

Once this is done the organiser of the session should conclude by explaining the next steps that will be taken with the ideas. It goes without saying that the moderator should thank the brainstormers and compliment them on the quality of their ideas.

Then a **final report of the brainstorming session** should be written. It should include:

1) The issue.
2) The evaluation criteria.
3) The top ranking ideas and their scores indicated as a fraction of the total possible score or as a percentage.
4) Any relevant comments raised by the brainstormers at the conclusion of the session.
5) Follow up plans.
6) Names of the brainstormers.
7) List of all ideas raised.

It is worth noting that a brainstorming report is an excellent tool for selling ideas to top management, clients or others. It not only provides ideas, it also provides arguments on why the ideas can be expected to work.

5.11

Follow up the meetings and decisions

(writing meeting notes)

Actions and planning before and during the meeting play a big role in helping you achieve expected, positive, and constructive outcomes. Your actions following the meeting are just as crucial. After the meeting is over, take some time to debrief, and determine what went well and what could have been done better. Finally, prepare the meeting summary. This will be forwarded to all participants and other stakeholders. It is a record of what was accomplished and who is responsible for what as the team moves forward. This is a very crucial part of effective meetings that often gets overlooked. You need a written record of what transpired, along with a list of actions that named individuals have agreed to perform. Make sure someone is assigned to take notes during the meeting.

Why Meeting Minutes Matter?

Meeting minutes are important. They capture the essential information of a meeting – decisions and assigned actions. They keep attendees on track by reminding them of their role in a project and clearly define what happened in the meeting. How many times have your colleagues been confused or in disagreement about what happened in a meeting? With minutes to refer to, everyone is clear.

What most people don't know is that **meeting minutes shouldn't be an exact recording of everything that happened during a session**. Minutes are meant to record **basic information such as the actions assigned and decisions made**. Then, they can be saved and used for reference or background material for future meetings relating to the same topic.

The following recommendations will help you take useful and concise meeting minutes.

Before the Meeting

If you are recording the minutes, make sure you aren't a major participant in the meeting. You can't perform both tasks well. Create a template for recording your meeting minutes and make sure you leave some blank space to record your notes. Include the following information:

- Date and time of the meeting
- The purpose of the meeting
- The meeting lead or chair's name
- Assigned action items
- Decisions made

Example of Minutes Format			
Name of Organization/Project:			
Purpose of Meeting:			
Date/Time:			
Place:			
Present (the list of attendees with their roles in Organization/Project):			
Chair:			
Topic	Discussion	Decision/Action	Person/Responsible
1.			
2.			
3.			
…			
Call or email (insert your name and contact) with additions or corrections to these minutes			

Before the meeting, gather as much information from the host as you can. Ask for a list of attendees, as well as some information on the purpose of the meeting. This way you won't need to scramble to understand what's going on while you're recording notes.

Decide how you want to record your notes. If you aren't comfortable relying on your pen and notepad, try using a tape recorder or, if you're a fast typist, take a laptop to the meeting.

During the Meeting

As people enter the room, check off their names on your attendee list. Ask the meeting lead to introduce you to meeting attendees you aren't familiar with. This will be helpful later when you are recording assigned tasks or decisions.
Don't try to record notes verbatim – it's not necessary. Minutes are meant to give an outline of what happened in the meeting, not a record of who said what. Focus on understanding what's being discussed and on recording what's been assigned or decided on.
Record action items and decisions in your template as they happen – don't wait until after the meeting to pull them out of your notes or you could make a mistake.
If you don't understand exactly what decision has been made or what action has been assigned, ask the meeting lead to clarify.

After the Meeting

Review the notes and add additional comments, or clarify what you didn't understand right after the meeting. Do this while the information is fresh in everyone's mind. Type your notes out in the template you created before the meeting – this will make the notes easier for everyone to read and use.

When you're writing out your notes, use some of the following **tips from the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP) http://www.iaap-hq.org/**

Number the pages as you go so you aren't confused later. Remember, though, that the minute taker is responsible for providing good flow. Don't force yourself to write the minutes in the actual chronological order of the discussion – it may not work.
Focus on action items, not discussion. The purpose of minutes is to define decisions made and to record what actions are to be taken, by whom and when.
Be objective. Write in the same tense throughout and avoid using people's names except for motions or seconds. This is a business document, not about who said what.
Avoid personal observations. The fewer adjectives or adverbs you use, the better. Dull writing is the key to appropriate minutes.
If you need to refer to other documents, **attach** them in an appendix or indicate where they may be found. Don't rewrite their intent or try to summarize them.

When you finish typing the minutes, ask the meeting lead to **review** the document for errors. **Send the final copy** of the minutes to attendees right away. Keep a copy of the notes (and the template) for yourself in case someone wants to review them later.

Hint – ICT solution for effective meeting notes
Special MeetingMix apps **http://meetingmix.com/** gives your meeting a webpage where you can create your agenda and take minutes. You and your attendees can review and add information in one central place.

5.12

Writing the reports

The recommendations below are of general character and should be taken into account in any report writing. Nevertheless some programs may have special requirements which are obligatory. For instance FP7 project' coordinator and consortia members should follow the special reporting requirements – can be found in the **Guidance Notes on Project Reporting**. This document is the guidance note to help the coordinators and consortia to prepare the periodic and final reports requested in Article II.4 of the Grant Agreement. This is a contractual obligation.

Effective reporting (including Deliverables[8], Periodic project reports and Final project report) is one of the main success factors for FP7 project implementation and serves also as one of the main communication tools between different project' parties.

Things to consider [9] while writing the report:
Who will be reading/analysing your report?
Who already has an opinion on the subject matter?
What are you writing about?
What are your objectives?
What does your audience already know?
What are your key points?
What are your findings, recommendations, solutions?
What has made you think this way?
Where is the evidence coming from? Is it relevant and reliable?
Where does it back up your argument?
When does your report need to be completed by?
Why do you think what you do?
How have you analysed your question?
How will you reach your conclusion?
Why have you reached this conclusion?
How will you present your findings?

So, your team has investigated the problem, performed an analysis and must communicate its recommendations by writing a project report. How should you go about composing this report? How can you make sure that the report you submit is read, digested, and understood? Readers would probably find what they need in half the time if everyone simply followed the same format. This is why a standard format – often called the Business Report Format – has been developed over the years. One of the most important reasons to follow a standard Business Report Format is that people reading your report don't usually have a lot of time. Very few, if any, will read every word of your report from start to finish.

- Your reader needs to *get to the point* of your report quickly, and a properly organized report should facilitate this.
- Your reader should be able to follow your document's structure from the top down. *Almost no one will want to read your report through from first page to last in a linear fashion*. Your reader should be able to proceed "top down", by selecting only parts of your report to read in detail while still understanding the purpose and context of other parts to which he/she gives less attention.
- Your reader should be able to choose the level of technical detail he/she wishes to read. A properly organized report will give him/her the option of avoiding technical detail should he/she desire.

Following a standard format also helps you organize all the relevant information. The content of a report can be overwhelming, especially when you have a lot of data. This format ensures that your information follows logical steps that readers will be able to follow and understand more easily. You won't forget anything either, because the format provides you with the appropriate structure.

[8] ***Deliverable*** *is a term used in project management to describe a tangible or intangible object produced as a result of the project. A deliverable (something that can be* ***delivered****)* ***could be a report****, a document, a product or any other building block of the project. A deliverable differs from a* ***project milestone*** *in that a milestone is a measurement of progress toward an outcome whereas the deliverable is the result of the process. For a typical project, a milestone might be the completion of a product design while the deliverable might be the technical diagram of the product.*

[9] *From* ***http://www.mindgenius.com/***

The document structure we recommend for project reports consists of the following, arranged in the order indicated:

- Title page
- Summary
- Table of Contents
- Glossary
- Methodology
- Introduction section
- Main body – Analysis section, optionally divided into subsections
- Conclusions and Recommendations section
- References section
- Appendices

Title Page

Include at least the report name, author name, and date. For the FP7 reporting there is a special template to use.

Executive Summary

Keep this to a maximum of one page. Summarize the problem you're trying to solve, list the most important information or results, and detail any action steps that you recommend.

For many people, this is the only page they'll have time to read. It's therefore a good idea to write it as though it's a separate report, all on its own. Use bullets and numbered lists to highlight important points. Although the Summary is a key part of the orientation section, write it after most of the report has been written. Put the Summary first; write it last.

Table of Contents

Table of contents is essential for a larger document and is a part of the orientation process. The readers use the Table of Contents as a way of quickly finding out what the document contains and how it is put together.

Glossary

The glossary is a list of symbols, abbreviations, acronyms and definitions and is useful if the audience reading the body of the report is likely to be unfamiliar with the ones you use in the report.

Methodology

Describe the methods you used in your research to reach your conclusions. For example, did you talk with focus groups, conduct interviews, search the company archives, or use outside resources like consulting or research firms? Include the details of your research process, and explain why you used the sources you did.

Introduction

The Introduction should present the position before the work began. The reader should be given a clear picture of the problems and why the report is required. It tells readers why they need to read this report, and give a very brief overview of what you're going to cover in the main body of the report.

Main Body – Analysis section
This is the 'heart' of your report. Present your research, and make your case – and remember to put the most important information first.

Conclusion
Analyze the results of your research, and bring everything together. Many people will read this section, so keep it short and simple.

Recommendations
List the actions you think readers should take to solve the problem you're addressing. Ideally, use bullets or numbered points for this list.
This is another highly read section, so be very clear about your opinion. You've done the research, so tell people what needs to happen next. If you suggest major changes, then create a strategy to implement these larger changes on a step-by-step basis.

References section
Sources of information must be included in reports. How extensive this inclusion is varies greatly with each report. Use the same judgment as for other sections:
- What do the readers want or need to know?
- How much detail is required?

Appendices
Appendices contain supporting information that if presented in the body of the report would distract the reader. Details are included in the Appendices; e.g., questionnaires, full lists of participants, summarised data, detailed methods. Appendices are usually numbered, "Appendix 1", or designated by a letter, "Appendix A". Only include one topic per Appendix.

Here are some additional suggestions for writing effective, well-organized reports:
- **Understand your objectives** – Before you begin writing, make sure you clearly understand why you're writing the report – and who will read it.

- **Use a relaxed style** – If possible, keep your writing style fairly informal and easy to read. Be professional, but always keep your readers in mind. If you write the way you speak, they'll probably have an easier time understanding what you're trying to tell them.

- **Keep it concise** – Remember, people typically don't have much time. Aim to keep your sentences short and clear.

- **Use sources and data** – Use statistics, and quote sources whenever you can. People tend to trust numbers more than opinions.

- **Organize your text with clear headings** – Break up your text with headings and subheadings. This makes reading easier, and it allows people to find the information that's most relevant to them.

- **Start with the most important information** – In every section of your report, put the most important information first. Again, remember that most people don't have lots of time. Tell them what they need to know as quickly as possible.

- **Do at least two drafts** – the first draft of your report will get across your meaning. In the second draft, you can refine and polish the way you've expressed it.

5.13

Negotiating with mass-media

This section of the networking guide is mainly oriented on FP7 R&D projects and contains appropriate recommendations[1]. Nevertheless these recommendations are applicable also to any scientific project when it comes to the negotiation with general public with the help of mass media.

[10] See more detailed recommendations on the issue on EU portal
http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/science-communication/index_en.htm

With a view to enhancing the impact of research funded by the EU, and to foster dialogue and debate, the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) grant agreement requires project participants to communicate and engage with actors beyond the research community.

The relevant clauses in the grant agreement are shown here.

General Conditions, II.2, Organisation of the *consortium* and role of *coordinator*
4. Beneficiaries shall fulfill the following obligations as a consortium:
[…]
d) engage, whenever appropriate, with actors beyond the research community and with the public in order to foster dialogue and debate on the research agenda, on research results and on related scientific issues with policy makers and civil society; create synergies with education at all levels and conduct activities promoting the socioeconomic impact of the research.

Plans for these outreach activities should already be outlined at proposal stage and detailed in the projects communication strategy. When it comes to the communications via the "mass media" – TV, radio and the written press, the strategy should include:

- Defining key messages;
- Establishing target audiences;
- Selecting the appropriate modes of communication;
- Tailoring information to the intended outlets;
- Building good relationships with the media

- ***Define your message***

The first step in any communications exercise is to define the message or messages to be transmitted. An evident objective is to focus on positive achievements and the benefits they bring. This requires clear agreement and careful coordination among all parties who may act as spokespersons or information sources for a particular project or network. Inconsistent facts, figures, emphases and viewpoints are to be avoided at all costs.

- ***Target your audience***

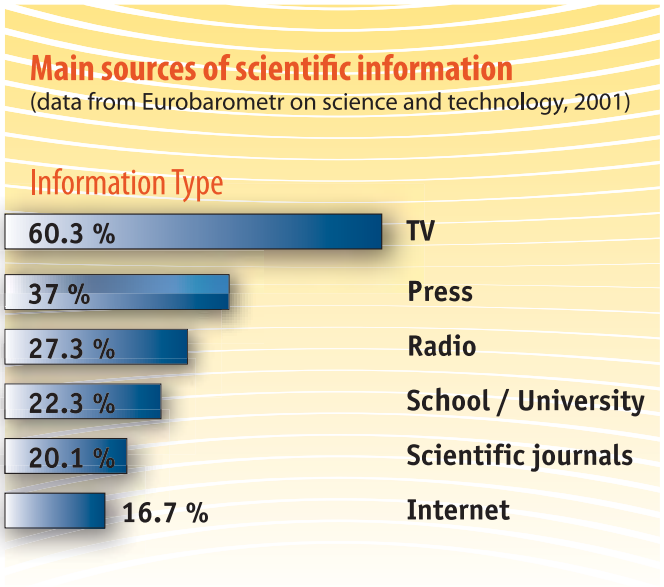
Reconciling the communications goals of the consortium and those of the EU entails addressing a very broad range of recipients. Scientific, technical, business, institutional and governmental audiences are all prime targets. But, because FP7 is supported by public funds, there is an equal responsibility to show citizens that these monies are being spent to good effect. Fulfilling the societal objectives of spreading education and generating an enthusiasm for science also implies a need to reach the public at large, using all available means.

- ***Select your tools***

Peer-reviewed publications, specialist websites and scientific congresses typically form the principal information channels of the research community. By contrast,

60 % of the general public obtains its knowledge of science from TV. Popular newspapers, magazines, radio and – to a growing extent – the Internet also play major roles in informing public awareness and opinion.

Between these two extremes come the business-to-business tools, including: technical, financial and industrial publications; broadcasts; and trade fairs and seminars. All need to be considered in the preparation of a well-balanced communications mix.



Local community-related activities may form yet another route to limited but often strategically important audiences.

Media relations are an indirect form of communication. The direct recipients of a submitted press release, or the attendees at a press conference, are the journalists or editors involved with particular programmes or publications. *Your* ultimate goal, however, is to reach their viewers, listeners or readers. It is therefore essential to ensure that all messages fulfill the criteria necessary to achieve ready acceptance by editors and journalists to maximise the chance of exposure to the actual target audience. Editors exercise independent control over the content and style of the stories they exploit. You cannot oblige them to use all of the material you supply, nor to reproduce the information exactly as you present it. Consequently, you must do everything possible to make your message interesting, timely, comprehensible and unambiguous – and present it in a manner that makes its transfer to the screen, air or printed page as easy as possible.

- ***Produce an effective press release/success stories***

A **press release/success story** is information that is communicated proactively to the media – including TV, radio and electronic publications, as well as the printed press – from which they select the elements they consider to be of interest to their public. They will edit (or expand upon) your story to produce a broadcast item or text that they consider to be most appropriate. See example of success story in Annex 3.

The press-release heading is the first element that addresses the journalist. A good heading is a short heading – two lines is a maximum length. Ideally, it should include an active verb, and employ vocabulary that is in common use and will appeal to readers' curiosity or imagination.

Viewers, listeners and readers – and journalists! – are in a hurry. They need to be able to obtain an overview of a message almost at a glance. So, **provide an introductory paragraph** of two or three sentences to present the content in a nutshell, and to indicate its significance. This should answer the six basic questions – who?, what?, why?, when?, where? and how? – or as many of them as are relevant in the context.

Paragraphs should be arranged in order of declining importance. A good test is to check to what extent, starting from the end of the text, paragraphs can be progressively removed without affecting the essence of the message. This equates to the simplest form of editing for a journalist seeking to fill a limited page space when working under deadline pressure.

An attractive (and good quality) photo greatly increases the probability that a press release will be selected for publication, particularly if it includes a human element or illustrates a striking application (space vehicle, prominent building, healthy plant growth, etc.)

Avoid the use of extensive technical explanations and historical detail in a press release. This information may nevertheless be useful to journalists intending to write more extended stories. Where appropriate, add it as `Notes to editors' at the end of the text – or even supply a separate background article, clearly labeled as such.
When news is also announced directly, at a press conference for example, the press release should be distributed at the place where the event takes place. It can be handed out individually, or with other documents in a complete press pack. This should not preclude a follow-up distribution, as not all of the invited journalists will necessarily attend the event.

Recommendation:
Make use of events: if you are participating in an event such as a conference or exhibition organised by a third party, take advantage of the fact that journalists are likely to be present. Bring your press releases to hand out.

- ***Organise a successful press event***

Press conferences are appropriate to mark a major event or announce important news, where the ability to see results at first-hand, or to question the personalities involved, will bring added value for journalists. Another justification is to give a general briefing about a topic of current or emerging interest. This may not necessarily produce a great deal of immediate press coverage, but will provide journalists with a contextual framework for future announcements. Press conferences can take various forms. They can be open to all journalists, addressed to a targeted panel in line with the subject and geographical area, or reserved for a limited circle of journalists seen as opinion leaders.

This is not the type of operation that should be repeated too often; otherwise it becomes a drain on budgets and dulls the interest of the press. It is vital to weigh the value, and not to abuse the method to announce details that could easily be communicated in writing.

Ensure that the **invitation for journalists** includes all the facts that journalists need to know – who, what, why, when, where, how – and include any additional information that will help convince them to attend.

- Prepare a **press kit** a full set of material for the journalists. This should include press release (s) covering the main message (s) being communicated, relevant back-

ground material, such as specially prepared press fact sheets, relevant publications and possibly brochures as well as handout versions of the presentation slides. Also include CVs of relevant people and a contact sheet to simplify journalistic follow up.
- Prepare suitable illustrations – graphics, diagrams and/or photographs. These can be provided on a CD, or a suitable website address supplied to enable the journalist to download them.

Presentations (see also 6.9) should be prepared in detail with regard to both their contents and length. As with any form of media message, keep the contents simple and the messages clear. Do not go deeply into scientific detail; a media presentation is not a sector-specific scientific.
Make sure that journalists are collected and accompanied during facility visits, with competent people on hand to answer questions – and to ensure their safety. Have available a suitable area for TV or radio journalists to record specific interviews.

Recommendation:
Mail/email press kits to journalists who were on your invitation list but did not attend the event. This could well have been due to circumstances beyond their control.

- ***Build good relationships with journalists***

Do not wait for journalists to contact you. Go to them and anticipate their needs by drawing their attention to key events and particularly interesting developments. When journalists are looking for information, they want to obtain it quickly – perhaps for the next day's article or programme. **Respond as rapidly as possible**, and never leave a question unanswered. If you are unable to react in time, take the trouble to call or email explaining the reason.

Prepare print project' publications

Media coverage can have a high impact, but its effect is transitory and its content is to some extent beyond your control. Printed publications play a complementary role, giving a more permanent record of your messages, precisely as you wish to present them and in a form that can be filed for future reference. Another advantage is that they can be distributed to audiences of your own choice.

Select type of publication

The first step is to determine which type (s) of publication best meets the perceived needs. From this follows the allocation of the budget and the assignment of human resources who are able to carry out the work. The following indicate just some of the main types that could be considered:

A **"flagship" brochure** reflects the status of a project and serves as a prestigious calling card for presentation to influential readers – European policy-makers, national and local authorities, potential partners, investors, industrial end-users, technology licensees, media representatives…

Example of ISTOK-SOYUZ project promo- flyer cover page with logo, slogan

EECA ICT cluster projects' joint newsletter (cover page)

Produced early in the lifetime of a project or network, a brochure can:

- Provide an overview of the consortium, and highlight the reputation/strengths of individual partners;
- Review the background and technological rationale for undertaking the initiative;
- Indicate the targeted results, and emphasise the scale of breakthrough/ innovation expected to be achieved;
- Explain the provision being made for education, knowledge sharing and exploitation of the findings;
- Predict the likely long-term impact in terms of European competitiveness, employment, environmental gain and quality-of-life enhancement;
- Attract interest in association with, and contribution to, an initiative from parties recognising a potential for profitable participation in the fruits of the eventual discoveries; and/or
- Help SME partners, who may not be able to afford such an exercise alone.

A **periodic newsletter** offers the means to report unfolding developments during the course of a project. Depending on the choice of content, it can be circulated internally to inform individuals within partner organisations, and externally to your target audiences.

Typical candidate stories that could be considered for inclusion are:

- Suitably edited versions of project press releases;
- Announcements of progress by single partners or workgroup collaborators;
- Reports on conferences and meetings;
- News of milestone achievements;
- Personnel announcements; and
- Information about forthcoming events.

Newsletters of this nature are often issued three to four times a year – but even an annual publication can serve as a useful update to information contained in a main project brochure.

A case history sheet serves as a concise reference to the nature and scope of a project or to specific deliverables. Typically contained within a double-sided A4 sheet, it forms an inexpensive first-line response to requests for information. It is equally suitable as a handout to site visitors and conference attendees, and as an element for inclusion in press kits or mailed approaches to prospective TV contacts. Converted into pdf electronic file format, it can be posted on your website or used as a moderately sized attachment to email correspondence.

In the scientific context, **posters/roll-ups** are commonly produced to describe individual strands of research at specialist conferences and meetings. However, posters of a more generic nature can be used to introduce complete projects and networks to the wider world. These are necessarily even more briefly than case history sheets, and can provide only the briefest of summaries. In addition to displays at exhibitions and public meetings, they can be supplied to universities and schools with a view to simulating student interest.

- All scientists have a **professional responsibility to communicate** their research to public audiences and to offer appropriate guidance and advice where appropriate. **The popular media is a major channel for such communication** and should be embraced rather than shunned.
- Get help where it is available – your organisation's press or media officer, for example.
- Keep up-to-date with media coverage of science in general and your area in particular.
- Attend workshops, seminars etc. that enable scientists and journalists to meet and discuss relevant issues. Get to know how journalists work and the constraints that they face.
- Where your work is at a preliminary stage or has yet to be published in a peer-reviewed journal, make this clear in interviews.
- If your findings and conclusions differ from those of other established scientists in the field, make this clear. At the same time, don't talk up the "novelty" aspect of your work just to appeal to the media.
- Be especially careful when communicating risks or benefits identified in your research. Always express risk/benefit in a meaningful context that people can understand. Never talk of relative risk without clearly stating the absolute risk in simple terms.
- Where your research has implications for lifestyle changes or public policy, be particularly careful how you describe it. It is here that the maximum potential for distortion can arise. This may be the case when your work focuses on, say, dietary issues, personal security, the state of the environment, etc. Be prepared for social, ethical, political discussion and questions in this context.
- ENGAGE! Seek out opportunities to communicate directly with civil society groups and members and to discuss the implications of your work. After all, in a lot of cases they will actually have paid for it. Maintain and build their trust in what you are doing whenever you can.

From the "Guidelines for scientists on communicating with the media[11]".

*[11] These Guidelines, together with the full MESSENGER report, can be downloaded from **http://www.sirc.org/messenger/** and may be distributed freely. The MESSENGER project was funded as a FP6 Specific Support Action by DG Research – Science in Society, Contract No. 013590*

Conclusions

What is "networking" about? Are networking and communication different issues? How about "social interaction", is this also a part of the networking process, or is this a synonym of networking? How can networking work? How should the individual differences of stakeholders be integrated into their respective workplans and overall cooperation activities? How to asses if our networking skills are sufficient, or should be upgraded? How to make a quick diagnostic of our networking potential, i.e. our willingness and ability to share knowledge and experience on one hand, and to learn from others' experience, on the other hand? How to encourage networking and knowledge sharing? How to create networking culture? How to translate the term "networking", after all?

These questions have been discussed during the review of the FP7-funded projects, ISTOK-SOYUZ, SCUBE-ICT and EXTEND, all aiming to reinforce the cooperation potential between EECA (Eastern Europe and Central Asia) and EU ICT specialists. It became clear that it's not easy to give the answers to those questions. The term of "networking" is pretty recent, and the systematic approach to networking has not been developed yet in Eastern Europe and Central Asian countries. Thus, the present Networking Guide is an attempt to provide some answers to some of the questions concerning networking, and to guide those who would like to learn how to network better and communicate in the international R&D projects.

There is no simple answer to "what networking is". What is clear, is that "networking" should not be understood too narrowly, only as an organisation of events and information / document exchange. Networking is a much larger concept, it is about the stimulation of interaction processes between stakeholders institutions and their staff, between team members, between partners in international projects. Networking, is about our ability to learn, apply, communicate and share knowledge. Networking skills can be improved just like many other personal skills. This improvement will help to create better links with the international R&D community.
The Networking Guide can be used in the training and coaching activities by all of those who are willing to reinforce their networking capacities and to increase efficiency of cooperation between EU and EECA specialists – and this is relevant not only to the ICT area but also to other research topics. All suggestions for its improvements are welcome.

The authors hope that this Networking Guide will contribute to the development of the networking culture in Eastern European and Central Asian countries, and thus will bring its (modest) contribution to facilitation and reinforcement of R&D cooperation between EECA and EU researchers.

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3. Brett A., Mizhinski M., Sigutina M., How to communicate efficiently with your foreign business partners, Practical guide: EUROPEAID/115381/C/SV/RU project ”Science and technology commercialisation, Russian Federation”, 2006

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Annex 1

Short guide on active participation in ICT-2010.

Dear colleagues,
Next week you will take part in the ICT 2010 conference and exhibition.

From 27 to 29 September at Brussels Expo, the ICT 2010 event is the place for discovering Europe's exciting and groundbreaking developments in ICT. This biennial event is the largest in Europe gathering more than 5000 researchers, innovators and influencers who hold the future of ICT in their hands.

Research and innovation in ICT benefits 500 million European citizens and drives the competitiveness of European industry. At ICT 2010, "ICT made in Europe" demonstrated how new technologies meet the demands of today's society and economy as well as those that could arise in the future.

The ICT2010 is a unique gathering point for researchers, business people, investors, and high level policy makers in the field of digital innovation from all over the world. This event **focused on policy priorities such as Europe's Digital Agenda and the next financial programme of the European Union and is to be organized around** key elements:

- The European Commission will officially present its *research priorities* for the **2.8 billion EURO** of ICT research funding to be provided in 2011–2012. Currently EU ICT research funding supports around **15,000 of the best researchers** across Europe every year. The EU ICT budget supports research involving academia (35 %) and industry (40 %). About 15 % of the industry participants are small and medium-sized businesses.
- The ICT 2010 conference will assess the potential of ICT solutions to promote sustainable growth in a **low carbon** economy and the constructive impact of **ICT in the daily lives** of citizens and businesses. These themes will be discussed and debated by leading figures from business, academia and politics.
- ICT 2010 will host dozens of ***networking sessions.*** These sessions are designed to facilitate contacts between researchers and innovators, engineers and investors from all fields of digital innovation.
- ICT 2010 demonstrates over ***100 exhibits*** of the latest advances in digital technologies funded by the EU in seven R&D villages, the Belgian pavilion, the international pavilion, and the SME pavilion.

The key objective of the ICT 2010 is to create an environment capable of promoting communication and networking between researchers, scientists and business people from different countries.

Your personal goal is to find potential partners for the preparation to ICT calls of proposals in the next two years.

How to achieve this goal?

1. The ICT Work Programme 2011–2012 is already available at the EU website (**ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/ict/docs/ict-wp-2011–12_en.pdf**). The Work Programme is however a compact text including bare facts, and at the conference the authors will tell about what is hidden between the lines and which aspects would be of high importance for the evaluation of proposal. Special sessions of the conference will be arranged for each of the objectives of the work programme, where there will be the opportunity to listen to the programmer's authors, ask questions and maybe even present the idea of your project in order to meet the biggest challenge in the preparation of a proposal – to find a fair number of European partners.

We recommend therefore that you *prepare one (or more) project idea to ICT 2010*. It is essential that the idea fit with the subject of the work programme. That is why you should start with the study of this basic document of the Seventh Framework Programme (of course, the question is ICT):

- Download the work programme from the website of European Commission: **ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/ict/docs/ict-wp-2011–12_en.pdf**
- Select the challenges in the work programme you are interested in
- Select the objectives for which you have a project idea
- Outline your idea on an A4 half-page: project goal, expected results, your contact details. Paper version will be sufficient. If someone finds your idea interesting, you will be most certainly requested to send the project proposal by mail. With such a teaser you will not need much time for the preparation to make a text, but just send the document you have prepared in advance.

2. *Take promotional materials about your organization or project*. It is worth taking to Brussels a detailed presentation: your ICT experience, project idea on several slides. If you do not have your notebook in Brussels, you will be able to use our stand for your presentation.

3. At the ICT 2010 exhibition the ISTOK-SOYUZ project together with other partner projects arranged a stand. You have prepared a two-slide presentation about your company and its ICT competences to demonstrate it on the stand. If you need to make an appointment with someone, *let our stand be the location of your meeting*. Address: Zone D in the International Village, Stand number D09. (Map of Zone D **http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/events/ict/2010/exhibition/map/zoned/index_en.htm**)

4. *Plan your participation in other ICT 2010 events*. The conference website allows you to make in advance a list of interesting sessions.

- Log in the website under your username and password;
- Look through a list of conference sessions, select the ones of your interest;
- In the lower part of the page you can put a tick against "Add this session to my Agenda". As a result, your personal schedule of sessions will be formed on your profile page in the section "Agenda".

5. After the conference we will ask you to prepare and send a report on your activity during the event. Please see these documents in advance to know what to expect.

Annex 2

REPORT
on participation in ICT 2010
under financial support of the EU-EECA ICT cluster (FP7-funded projects)

The report should be prepared on English.

Country:
First and Last name of the reporter:
Position:
Organisation/department:
Contact phone:
E-mail:

If someone else from your team participated in ICT 2010, please, specify *(Name, Position)***:**

Short information about ICT 2010 *(Place, Date, Target and Participants of the action)***:**

1. Key objectives and tasks of reporterr's participation in ICT 2010

- Please, give short information about your organization
- State the main reasons for you attending in ICT 2010
- What were your primary objectives for attending this event?
- What ICT competences and project ideas of your team did you plan to present at ICT 2010? Please, specify.

No more 0,75 pages

2. Preparation for ICT 2010

- Did you elaborate a detail plan for your participation in the event? What ICT 2010 actions did you plan to visit?
- Did you have preliminary contacts with your EU partners to meet during ICT 2010?
- What promotion materials do you prepare for dissemination?
- What kind of support did you receive from EU-EECA ICT cluster for participation in the ICT 2010?

No more 1,0 pages

3. Participation in ICT 2010

- What key exhibition stands did you visit? Whom you met with?

Name of stand	Country	Organisation	Names of representatives
Please, mark your response:	This meeting was worth (1 – for not worth; 5 – for excellent):	Agreed next steps: •Agreed to submit common proposal on following thematic •Agreed meeting time or phone/Skype/ e-mail conversation •Agreed to arrange meeting •Exchange information •No agreed next steps Comments, if it`s applicable:	

- What Networking sessions did you take part? Whom you met with?

Name of Networking session:			
Please, mark your level of participation:	•As a speaker •As a listener •Participation in discussion •Meetings with partners •Other:		
Please, mark your response:	This Networking session was worth (1 – for not worth; 5 – for excellent):		
Whom you met with?	Country	Organisation	Names of representatives
			Partner 1
	Agreed next steps: •Agreed to submit common proposal on following thematic •Agreed meeting time or phone/Skype/e-mail conversation •Agreed to arrange meeting •Exchange information •No agreed next steps •Comments, if it's applicable:		
Whom you met with?	Country	Organisation	Names of representatives
			Partner N
	Agreed next steps: •Agreed to submit common proposal on following thematic •Agreed meeting time or phone/Skype/e-mail conversation •Agreed to arrange meeting •Exchange information •No agreed next steps •Comments, if it's applicable:		

- What contacts have you established with partners from EU or/and EECA countries, yet?

Country	Organisation	Names of representatives
		Partner 1
Agreed next steps: • Agreed to submit common proposal on following thematic • Agreed meeting time or phone/Skype/e-mail conversation • Agreed to arrange meeting • Exchange information • No agreed next steps • Comments, if it's applicable:		
Country	Organisation	Names of representatives
		Partner N
Agreed next steps: • Agreed to submit common proposal on following thematic • Agreed meeting time or phone/Skype/e-mail conversation • Agreed to arrange meeting • Exchange information • No agreed next steps • Comments, if it's applicable:		

Please, attach scan copies of signed Letters of Intent for Partnership

4. Results of reporterr's participation in ICT 2010

- What main results were achieved in the framework of ICT 2010?
- How many effective contacts did you establish?
- Did you have possibility to promote your team competences / project ideas?
- Will the ICT 2010 alter your practice/ research/ work?
- Did ICT 2010 meet your primary objectives?
- Please provide description of at least 3 the most interesting impressions from the event

No more 1,0 pages

5. Next steps

- Do you plan to evaluate established contacts? What next steps are you doing?
- Do you plan to prepare common project proposal for ICT FP7 Calls with your partners?
- What kind of support do you need from EU-EECA ICT cluster for your participation in ICT FP7 Work Programme?

No more 0,5 pages

6. Annexes

1. *Signed Letters of Intent for Partnership*
2. *ICT 2010 Expenses Report*

Annex 3

Example of Success Story

Who we are	**KNU** – Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University
The cooperation story	Project: ***"Practical Formal Verification Using Automated Reasoning and Model Checking" (2006–2009)*** **Funding Body:** EU FP6 (Sixth Framework Programme), INTAS **Project budget:** 150 000 EURO **Partners**: Research Institute for Symbolic Computation (Johannes Kepler University, Austria), Research Institute e-Austria (Romania), Glushkov Institute of Cybernetics (Ukraine), Moscow State University (Russia), Vekua Scientific Institute of Applied Mathematics (Georgia). The first INTAS project "Rewriting Techniques and Efficient Theorem Proving" was carried out at the Faculty of Cybernetics of KNU from 1998 to 2000 and the second one – "Weak Arithmetics" – from 2000 to 2004. It is possible to put that the project presented below was their continuation. The project addresses one of the current hot topics in Information Technology. As the complexity of the software and hardware systems increases, and also their use becomes widespread in applications whose reliability is critical (e.g. secure payments, automotive industry), the use of formal and logical methods in the design and verification of such systems is unavoidable. The FP6 of the EC, through its IST programme, also put a special emphasis on the use of formal and logical methods in software and hardware design. That is why the main objective of the project was to advance the state-of-the-art in proving and checking techniques for information systems, and to apply them to concrete industrial problems. For this, by using practical problems for testing the different methods for proving and model checking, the project participants had to develop different efficient techniques and identified the most appropriate ones, as well as the necessary adaptations, improvements, and combinations of methods which are more appropriate for solving industrial problems. This could be achieved by the joining of efforts of several teams having leading positions in the fields of their investigations relating to the project.
What were our main achievements	The special emphasis and the applications of this project are related to the area of improving the reliability of software and hardware design and devices which are used in information technology. The theoretical results include numerous concrete methods for the verification of software and of communication protocols, some of them being specific to concrete areas of applications. The practical results include various tools for: management of mathematical knowledge, natural style interface with proving and checking engines, for proving in special domains which arise in verification and checking, and for verification and static analysis of software. Some of the tools developed in the project are already in use in concrete cooperation with industrial partners, or are available in public repositories. As to KNU, the project permitted also to improve the SAD system (**http://nevidal.org/**) being developed at the Faculty of Cybernetics, KNU.

Lessons learned/Benefits	• An important result of the project is the increased awareness and acceptance of formal and logical methods in industry, which in turn has a benefic impact on the reliability of software and hardware systems and information systems in general. • The partners have a possibility to use the experience from the project, both theoretical and practical, for realizing more efficient tools, including possible commercial ones, and for performing formal verification tasks for industrial users. • The short-term impacts of the project are: • use of the experience of each research teams to improve the quality of investigations; • intensification of cooperation activities in order to submit common proposals for European FP7 calls; • dissemination of common scientific results. • The current project long-term impacts are: • facilitation of the increase of professional experience of all the teams; • creation of a trust relation necessary for future multi-national projects in different branches of IT; • formation of new specialists in the frame of multi-national programs.
What are our research areas of interest	• Ontology; • Foundations of Computer Science; • Artificial Intelligence; • Computational Linguistics; • Natural Language Processing; • Automated Reasoning; • Verification and synthesis; • Mathematical knowledge management; • Software development technology; • Theoretical and applied research in information systems development.
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