

RISE 2014 – Strengths of Funded Applications & Weaknesses in Reserve Applications

Summary of the top five awarded proposals:

Overall Rank	Duration (mths)	# Participants
1	48	4
2	48	9
3	36	6
4	48	12
5	48	5

Criterion 1. Excellence

Section 2.1 Quality, innovative aspects and credibility of the *research* (including *inter/multidisciplinary aspects*)

Please develop your proposal according to the following lines:

- *Specific objectives and the relevance of the research and innovation project to the scope of the call and in relation to the "state of art".*
- *Methodological approach highlighting the types of research and innovation activities proposed and their originality.*
- *Inter/multidisciplinary types of knowledge involved, if applicable.*

Highlighted Strengths of Successful Applications:

- The goals, objectives and actions of the proposal are very well designed and structured.
- The research programme is highly multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral.
- Innovative aspects and credibility are convincingly presented and are supported by a very detailed presentation of the state of art relevant to the project goals.
- The approach focuses on research and skills optimization to face important challenges in the research area.
- The proposal is excellent in terms of technological content.
- The proposed topic has interdisciplinary character and the methodologies proposed are adequate.

Highlighted Weaknesses in Reserve Applications:

- The innovative aspects of the proposed research are insufficiently articulated.
- The state of the art in terms of the research area is not convincingly demonstrated.
- The level of novelty of the proposed methodology is relatively limited.

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Section 2.2 Clarity and quality of knowledge sharing among the participants in light of the research and innovation objectives

Please develop your proposal according to the following lines:

Approach and methodology used for knowledge sharing.

Highlighted Strengths of Successful Applications:

- The approach of knowledge transfer to the seconded researchers is very precisely described in terms of the type of knowledge to be transferred, knowledge providers and beneficiaries, and includes all sectors.
- The training objectives and methodology are clearly specified.
- The knowledge sharing methodology and approach is excellent and with clear benefit to all the stakeholders and participants.
- The proposal is excellent in terms of research to market transfer of knowledge and practice, which is particularly important for the research programme.

Highlighted Weaknesses in Reserve Applications:

- The knowledge sharing strategy is not fully convincing:
 - The participants' interactions are not sufficiently emphasized in terms of content and expertise provided to reach the project's objectives.
 - The inter-sectoral dimension of the proposed networking activities is limited.
 - The contribution of each participant in the planned activities is not properly outlined.
- There is an over-emphasis on exchanged ERs giving lectures, and on research tasks as opposed to transfer of knowledge objectives.

Section 2.3 Quality of the interaction between the participating organisations

Please develop your proposal according to the following lines:

• Contribution of each participant in the activities planned, including the participants' interactions in terms of content and expertise provided to reach the project's objectives.

• Justification of the main networking activities.

Highlighted Strengths of Successful Applications:

- The mechanisms for interaction amongst the participants, both academic and non-academic organizations, are presented in detail and are highly credible.
- The main expertise of the partners clearly demonstrates complementarity and synergies in this area.
- Most of the participating researchers have already collaborated in the past and are experts in their respective research fields.
- The participants have more than adequate capacity to achieve the goals of the project.
- Mobility plan is detailed, table for knowledge exchange between partners is clear and well justified.

Highlighted Weaknesses in Reserve Applications:

- The justification of the networking activities lacks detail including specific actions and planning.

Criterion 2. Impact

Section 3.1 Enhancing research- and innovation-related human resources, skills, and working conditions to realise the potential of individuals and to provide new career perspectives

Please develop your proposal according to the following lines:

- *The research and/or innovation project contribution to realising the potential of individuals providing new skills and career perspectives.*

Highlighted Strengths of Successful Applications:

- Research and innovation is embedded in a coherent value chain, enhancing the skills and potential of the individuals involved.
- The proposed training programme is very well designed to enhance knowledge transfer and skills acquisition of the project participants.
- Both ERs and ESRs will benefit from the exchange programme.
- The skills and the working conditions to realize the potential of individuals are very well demonstrated and are convincing.
- The proposal demonstrates very good potential for the development of new career and employment perspectives of the fellows.

Highlighted Weaknesses in Reserve Applications:

- The human resources development potential is described generically, without clear planning.
- At 1 month long, ESR secondments are deemed too short to create an impact in terms of providing new skills and career perspectives.

Section 3.2 To develop new and lasting research collaborations, to achieve transfer of knowledge between research institutions and to improve research and innovation potential at the European and global levels

Please develop your proposal according to the following lines:

- *Development of new and lasting research collaborations resulting from the intersectoral and/or international secondments and the networking activities implemented.*
- *Self-sustainability of the partnership after the end of the project.*
- *Contribution of the project to the improvement of the research and innovation potential within Europe and/or worldwide.*

Highlighted Strengths of Successful Applications:

- The project clearly demonstrates a very strong potential for long-term collaboration between leading academic and non-academic organisations.
- The project has the potential to stimulate the interactions between participants through training events, workshops and joint research activities that are included in the exchange plan.
- The proposal will contribute positively to develop long-lasting research collaborations between EU and TC countries building on already existing links.
- The self-sustainability of the partnership is likely achievable after the end of the project.
- The capacity of the project to improve the research and innovation potential, at the EU level is very high.
- The overall impact of the proposal on the sector is exceptionally valuable and relevant to existing EU policies in the area, which are high in the EU agenda.

Highlighted Weaknesses in Reserve Applications:

- The proposal does not demonstrate the potential for the extension of long term collaborations beyond the existing ones.
- The impact of the project on improving research and innovation potential at the European and global levels is weakly justified in the proposal, or is limited by too narrow a focus and lacks a more translational focus.
- It is evident that some partners have been made to fit into the project but with a weak connection.
- As most of the partners have already participated in previous collaborations, the added value of the research, in the sense of the knowledge sharing, is not clearly articulated.
- ESR secondments are deemed short to create an impact in terms of knowledge transfer (<4 mths in duration).

Section 3.3 Effectiveness of the proposed measures for communication and results dissemination

Please develop your proposal according to the following lines:

- *Dissemination strategy - targeted at scientists, potential users and to the wider research and innovation community - to achieve the potential impact of the project.*
- *Communication strategy, outreach plan and the activities envisaged to engage the public.*
- *Expected impact of the proposed measures.*
- *Intellectual property rights aspects (if applicable) and exploitation of results.*

The following sections of the European Charter for Researchers refer specifically to outreach and dissemination:

Public engagement

Researchers should ensure that their research activities are made known to society at large in such a way that they can be understood by non-specialists, thereby improving the public's understanding of science. Direct engagement with the public will help researchers to better understand public interest in priorities for science and technology and also the public's concerns.

Dissemination, exploitation of results

All researchers should ensure, in compliance with their contractual arrangements, that the results of their research are disseminated and exploited, e.g. communicated, transferred into other research settings or, if appropriate, commercialised. Senior researchers, in particular, are expected to take a lead in ensuring that research is fruitful and that results are either exploited commercially or made accessible to the public (or both) whenever the opportunity arises.

Highlighted Strengths of Successful Applications:

- The extensive network of participants, which includes both academic and non-academic players, is broad, has depth and the intersectoral transfer of knowledge is clearly evident.
- The structure of the network is designed to guarantee an extended dissemination of results.
- The dissemination strategy to achieve the potential impact of the project is extremely well detailed and convincing.
- Communication strategy, outreach plan and activities to engage the public are very clearly explained.
- IPR aspects and commercial potential/exploitation of results are clearly articulated.

Highlighted Weaknesses in Reserve Applications:

- The strategy for dissemination of results towards the scientific and technological community lacks detail.
- The public outreach strategy is not credibly developed. In particular, activities envisaged to engage the industrial sector remain too limited. Although actions for involving industry are broadly mentioned, no specific tasks are defined.
- Intellectual property rights aspects and exploitation of results are not sufficiently discussed.
- No quantifiable targets for measuring communication and dissemination effectiveness have been defined.

Criterion 3. Implementation

Section 4.1 Overall coherence and effectiveness of the work plan, including appropriateness of the allocation of tasks and resources

Please develop your proposal according to the following lines:

- *Consistency and adequacy of the work plan and the activities proposed to reach the project objectives.*
- *Credibility and feasibility of the project through the activities proposed.*
- *Gender aspects in the planning of the activities.*

Highlighted Strengths of Successful Applications:

- All secondments are specified, allocated to tasks with ER or ESR involved, and support the planned research and innovation activities well.
- The work program is clear, highly detailed and totally in line with project's goals.
- The timeline is adequate to achieve the proposed objectives.
- The allocation of tasks, human resources and budget are balanced and adequate for the proposed project.
- The resources are properly allocated according to each participant's skills and expertise.
- Gender aspects are addressed with appropriate measures

Highlighted Weaknesses in Reserve Applications:

- The role of every partner in each work package is not evident.
- The workpackages and task leaders (persons in charge) are not clearly specified.
- Milestones are not considered in detail.
- The distribution of the secondments (person-months) is unbalanced with some partners assigned a high number of secondments without convincing justification.

Section 4.2 Appropriateness of the management structure and procedures, including quality management and risk management

Please develop your proposal according to the following lines:

- *Project organisation and management structure, including the financial management strategy, as well as the progress monitoring mechanisms put in place.*
- *Risks that might endanger reaching the project's objectives and the contingency plans to be put in place should risks occur.*

Highlighted Strengths of Successful Applications:

- The management structure is well designed, key persons are already identified, and show an excellent level of expertise.
- The monitoring and reporting activities are designed to ensure the continuous control and coordination of project work.
- Risk and contingency planning is suitable with integrated decision making tools as well as information flow and progress monitoring.
- IPR issues are adequately dealt with through an agreement amongst the partners.

Highlighted Weaknesses in Reserve Applications:

- The management structures and procedures are not sufficiently detailed. In particular, the measures to achieve efficient management communication are not adequately specified.
- The decision making mechanism and conflict resolution schemes are insufficiently detailed.
- The periodic reports are scheduled for only once per year, which is limited for the scale and duration of the project.
- Arrangements for practical support for the detached and incoming staff are not sufficiently considered.
- The risk management and contingency plans lack detail or are missing. Personal, technical risks and associated contingency actions are not adequately identified. IPR issues are not properly addressed. Please note: It is not realistic to classify all the risks associated with the project as low risk.

Section 4.3 Appropriateness of the institutional environment (infrastructure)

Please develop your proposal according to the following lines:

- *Availability of the expertise and human resources, to carry out the proposed research project.*
- *Description of the necessary infrastructures and any major items of technical equipment (if required) relevant to the proposed project.*

Highlighted Strengths of Successful Applications:

- The infrastructure required for the development of the project is already installed in the facilities of the network participants and is listed in the project.
- Partners possess the needed infrastructure to deliver the project's objectives successfully.

Highlighted Weaknesses in Reserve Applications:

- The appropriateness of the institutional infrastructure has been insufficiently addressed.

Section 4.4 Competences, experience and complementarity of the participating organisations and institutional commitment

Please develop your proposal according to the following lines:

- *Adequacy of the partnership to carry out the project explaining how participants' synergies and complementarities will be exploited.*

NB: The individual members of the consortium are described in Section 6. There is no need to repeat that information in this section.

Highlighted Strengths of Successful Applications:

- The application focuses on a complementary work team with great individual technical skills and whose synergies ensure an outstanding network performance.
- The publication track records of all the partners are relevant to the project objectives.
- Partners have appropriate complementary skills.

Highlighted Weaknesses in Reserve Applications:

- The partnership brings complementary expertise to the project, however it is not sufficiently clear how the resulting synergies are to be exploited.

NB: Operational capacity will also be checked (See Page 9)

RISE 2014 – Major Issues Leading to Below Threshold Applications

Criterion 1. Excellence

- The originality and innovative aspects of the research are not high.
- The clarity and quality of knowledge sharing among the participants have not been convincingly justified.
- The research methodology is not sufficiently presented in relation to the complexity of the project.
- The research objectives, spread along a wide range of technologies and components/systems, are qualitative and not measurable.
- For secondments of TC researchers to the EU, a contribution is requested, although this is not reflected in Part A of the proposal and it is not motivated in a convincing way.
- The need for a large number of secondments is questionable as the project relies on existing research and data.

Criterion 2. Impact

- The impact of the project's activities on the academic level are not sufficiently detailed to be credible.
- New career paths for students are not well documented.
- The proposal does not explain sufficiently what kind of contribution the envisaged project will have in terms of innovation potential at European level.
- The confidential nature of most of the key deliverables negatively affects the potential impact at EU and global levels.
- The self-sustainability of the partnership after the end of the project has not been demonstrated adequately.
- Dissemination activities are listed but the proposal lacks a clear dissemination strategy.

Criterion 3. Implementation

- The work plan is incoherent.
- The management structure is entirely unfit for purpose.
- The application includes secondments which are not permitted by the rules of the RISE programme.
- The overall number of secondments and the amount of resources needed to perform each task of the work program are excessive compared to the goals and expected results of the project.
- The proposed project leader is already involved in managing other projects and the proposal does not elaborate sufficiently how they will manage multiple tasks.
- Gender aspects (e.g. promotion of gender balance) are not well addressed in the proposal.
- Budget allocation is not explained sufficiently. The proposal is over-resourced in relation to the expected outcomes.
- The risk analysis is superficial and does not consider appropriately the specific technical and non-technical challenges which are addressed.
- Quality management is not sufficiently addressed in the overall methodology.
- It is unclear if participants have the needed equipment for the project purposes.

RISE 2014 - Reasons for Failing Operational Capacity

General Reasons for Failing Operational Capacity:

1. The proposal does not offer sufficient description and evidence of participants' operational capacity (including those of the project coordinator).
2. Participants' capacity to provide training on the topics outlined in the proposal is not substantiated.
3. The research work plan is insufficiently detailed.
4. Activities related to knowledge sharing are presented at a very basic level without necessary details.
5. Secondments are not appropriately shared amongst participants in alignment with the proposed research programme.
6. Secondments are not appropriately aligned with participant capacity.
e.g. A beneficiary with small capacity has been allocated a high proportion of the total secondment person months.

Non-academic beneficiaries:

Many of the proposals which failed the operational capacity check, did so owing to the failure of non-academic participants in the consortium.

The operational capacity of non-academic beneficiaries was found to be questionable on the basis of:

1. A low number of employees/Inadequate human resources.

Who will supervise secondees during their secondment at the auspices of the company?

In the case of a non-academic beneficiary with few fulltime employees, how will the company business be run when an employee from this beneficiary goes on secondment?

2. A low annual turnover.

In several cases the project budget allocated to a beneficiary was higher than the turnover of the company in one year.

3. A new company with no financial history.

A SME / start-up with an annual turnover of 0 will not pass the operational capacity check.

4. A lack of significant outputs in the relevant research field.

Non-academic beneficiaries should demonstrate that they have experience in the appropriate research area. Examples could include publications, patents, trade secrets or an actual product/service that is related to the research area.

5. Not enough space for all declared employees and secondees to work together.

Reviewers took note of the physical space of non-academic organisations (in sqm) and judged whether this could realistically support the proposed number of staff / secondees.

6. Lack of clarity with regards to independent research facilities.

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