

RISE – Strengths of Funded Applications & Weaknesses in Reserve Applications

Summary of the top five awarded proposals:

Overall Rank	Duration (mths)	# Participants	#Third Country Organisations	# Non-academic
1	48	16	8	4
2	40	13	1	8
3	48	9	0	5
4	48	12	2	3
5	48	12	3	5

Criterion 1. Excellence

1.1 Quality and credibility of the research/innovation project; level of novelty and appropriate consideration of inter/multidisciplinary, intersectoral and gender 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.*
- *Gender aspects (both at the level of secondments and that of decision-making within the project)*

Highlighted Strengths of Successful Applications

- A well prepared **state of the art description** is given, showing the relevance and necessity of innovative growth and development in the proposed field.

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- The research and training objectives are **clearly presented** with regards to the state-of-the art.
- The approach focuses on **research and skills optimization** to face important challenges in the research area.
- The proposal target is **highly innovative**. It will transfer a very complex and sophisticated technology, originally developed in the academic setting into robust and low-cost systems suitable for the private market in Europe and globally.
- The proposal is well focused and carefully planned, deals with a very topical and significant theme addressing a **relevant and timely research area for the EU**. The main purposes are clear and well described.
- The proposed solutions are very innovative taking into account parameters that were not receiving sufficient consideration before and **well supported by an excellent methodology**.
- The proposed project has **inter/multidisciplinary key features** using various technical techniques and involving specialists in this area, etc. with the interrelation between their expertise having a clear added value.

Highlighted Weaknesses in Reserve Applications:

- The innovative aspects of the proposed research are insufficiently articulated.
- The innovative nature of the project has not been explained thoroughly enough as the proposed research has not been fully linked to the state of art in the field.
- The level of novelty of the proposed methodology is relatively limited.
- The research method does not provide a clear explanation of the interaction between the different work packages, lacking of focus due to the large number of heterogeneous tasks and the significant dispersion of resources.

1.2 Quality and appropriateness of knowledge sharing among the participating organisations in light of the research and innovation objectives

Please develop your proposal according to the following lines:

- *Effective knowledge sharing is apparent as each partner possesses knowledge and experience that the other partners lack.*

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 approach and methodology used for knowledge sharing is excellent and in line with the project ambitions and complexity. The consortium adequately gathers relevant partners. Each working group includes both academics and non-academic organisations with a strong field experience.
- The proposal is excellent in terms of research to market transfer of knowledge and practice, which is particularly important for the research programme.

- **Effective knowledge sharing** is apparent as each partner possesses knowledge and experience that the other partners lack.
- The strategy for attracting young people to science and engineering is well-planned.
- The project will employ **appropriate mechanisms for knowledge sharing** (e.g. workshops, summer school, and meetings) between institutions and most notably between industry and academia.

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.
- The knowledge sharing among the participants is not sufficiently described, and does not provide enough detail regarding the specific activities to be developed by each secondment.
- The goals of the annual workshops are not sufficiently described in terms of networking and knowledge transfer.
- Limited information is provided on how the knowledge will be spread between the partners, since it does not explain the methodology used for knowledge sharing and the presentation of interactions is confusing and not sufficiently consistent.

1.3 Quality of the proposed 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.
- Most of the participating researchers have already collaborated in the past and are **experts in their respective research** fields.
- The interaction scheme between the organizations, in terms of expertise, work packages and activities, is adequate and clear.
- The role of exchanged researchers and the goals of the exchanges are well defined and adequate to achieve the project objectives and ensure a very good transfer of knowledge between disciplines and participants.

- High quality of the interactions between the European participating organizations owing to their previous common operation in different research Projects of the European Commission. The already established high quality of interaction will be enhanced by the present enterprise.
- The **planned secondments are clearly detailed** and fully justified.

Highlighted Weaknesses in Reserve Applications:

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

Criterion 2. Impact

2.1 Enhancing the potential and future career perspectives of the staff members

Please develop your proposal according to the following lines:

- *The project contribution to realising the potential of individuals and to 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.
- Both **ERs and ESRs will benefit** from the exchange programme.
- As the consortium possesses **complementary competencies** (theoretical, applied and industrial), the participating researchers will enhance their own expertise and gain new expertise in other domains. This will improve **innovation capacity** and provide **new career perspectives** for the participants of the project, in particular the ESRs.
- The project demonstrates potential **positive impact on the future career prospects** and career development of the researchers and opportunities for further development.
- The potential of the proposal to enhance human resources is convincing, in particular considering the emphasis made in supporting Early Stage Researchers. The development of new technologies offered to the private sector will increase the job opportunities and the career perspectives.
- The project topic is very suitable for **enhancing research potential and skills** by applying high-level techniques to different domains of expertise in a motivating international environment. The proposed project also enhances significantly the research and innovation-related working conditions. Furthermore, by exposing the decision-making process models to the industry sector and end-users, the project very well contributes to enhancing the researchers' careers. A dedicated procedure is thoroughly outlined, and justification and performance indicators are detailed.

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.
- It has not been convincingly described how the project will contribute to realising the potential of practitioners with new skills and career perspectives.
- The new career perspectives are not appropriately addressed, without a clear indication of what new opportunities in the job market will be result from this work.

2.2 Developing new and lasting research collaborations, achieving transfer of knowledge between participating organisations and contribution to improving 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 proposal demonstrates potential to develop lasting research collaborations and to contribute to the improvement of the **research and innovation potential at the European and global levels.**
- 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 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.
- The proposal discloses a convincing strategy for **future self-sustainability.** It will develop a number of platforms by means of which it will promote the establishment of a collaborative basis and range of networking links during and after the project ends: it envisages particular links and collaborative networks with certain groups (academic/non-academic), teams and organizations which it names specifically and how they are going to collaborate; it explains convincingly how to **ensure the sustainability of partnerships** to be built after the completion of the project; in addition it describes how this project will contribute to research and innovation within Europe and also how it will reach out worldwide (especially since some of the partners are non-European).

- The proposal effectively describes its potential contribution to **European excellence and European competitiveness** in the field.

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).
- The lack of an industrial partner limits the potential impact on innovation in the academic environment.
- The establishment of new and additional collaborations beyond the already existing one is unclear, and is not supported by a comprehensive strategy that can adequately support the organizations to achieve it.

2.3 Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results

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.*
- *Expected impact of the proposed measures.*
- *Intellectual property rights aspects (if applicable) and exploitation of results.*

Highlighted Strengths of Successful Applications:

- 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.
- Considerable effort is placed on effective dissemination and a **special dissemination manager position is envisaged**.
- The proposal offers a very detailed and well-planned array of measures, activities, platforms for dissemination.
- The dissemination strategy is well **targeted at scientists and end-users**, and is already planned and budgeted for each work package.
- The proposed measures are impeccably crafted along with indicators of success.

- **Intellectual property rights are well addressed**, and a clear and detailed procedure is given, under the responsibility of an exploitation manager

Highlighted Weaknesses in Reserve Applications:

- The proposed measures for dissemination are not described in a sufficient manner.

2.4 Quality of the proposed measures to communicate the project activities to different target audiences

Please develop your proposal according to the following lines:

- *Communication strategy, outreach plan and activities to engage the public are very clearly explained.*

Highlighted Strengths of Successful Applications:

- The proposal presents a **well prepared communication and outreach plan** covering the general public.
- Outreach activities that will impact on the public at large. (E.g. interactive features, etc are planned as part of the outreach activities over and above the academic fields and designing stages).
- The communication strategy includes a very good outreach plan with activities envisaged to engage towards a wider public, also already planned and budgeted in a table.

Highlighted Weaknesses in Reserve Applications

- The communication strategy and the planned outreach activities envisaged to engage the public and enhance the impact of the proposed measures have not been elaborated in sufficient detail.
- The communication within scientific society and general public including school students is not quantitatively described and not supported by verifiable metrics.
- The plans for public engagement are not specific to the research project and the feasibility of accessing local and national media is not explained in enough detail.

Criterion 3. Implementation

3.1 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 issues** are given a thorough consideration, and the appropriate procedure is set in operation.
- The work plan is **coherent, effective and credible**. The work packages are clearly described. The tasks and resources are well presented and properly allocated. The proposed deliverables are adequately represented with brief description and month of delivery.
- The Work Scheme is clear and includes adequate work tasks, deliverables and milestones. In particular: the project provides for four overlapping stages that are well defined and credible in the way they are set up.
- The proposal offers a meticulously detailed presentation of each item of the work package and the secondments involved, how it is set up, and what each stage involves in terms of deliverables
- The work plan is comprehensively described, with detailed tasks, including a specific risk assessment. Very detailed time framework within a chart is given, clear demonstration of interplay between participants and WP's.

Highlighted Weaknesses in Reserve Applications:

- The role of every partner in each work package is not evident.
- The work packages 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.
- The mechanisms for the monitoring of the progress of the project are not sufficiently developed, and they do not address the milestones of the project. The number and timeliness of the deliverables are not sufficiently discussed.

- The work plan lacks some details concerning methodology (e.g. how the primary data will be collected).
- The reason for the non-academic partner to only receive secondments, but not make secondments is not sufficiently explained.
- The quality management is not supported by verifiable metrics, and the measures for risk management do not address specific research potential problems.
- The monitoring of the project progress is not supported by adequate milestones.
- Some secondments are not sufficiently justified in terms of duration or activities.
- The list of deliverables does not include tangible outputs, beyond minutes, plans, reports and data.

3.2 Appropriateness of the management structures 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 risk occur.*

Highlighted Strengths of Successful Applications:

- The **management structure** is well designed, **key persons** are already identified, and show an excellent level of expertise.
- **A very effective framework to manage the project** is given including an International Advisory and Assessment Committee, an Executive Board and a Steering Committee. That management structure will verify the quality for the product outcomes. There is a clear task distribution between the different committees (including risk management, quality control and assurance, contingency plans, gender issues, etc.).
- The **monitoring of progress**, the **reporting activities** and calendar of meetings are carefully provided in the proposal as well as the financial management process. The processes are designed to ensure the continuous control and coordination of project work.
- Good measures to deal with **gender aspects**.
- **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.
- A good aspect of the implementation plan is that all researchers take part in training and dissemination activities.
- The **consortium commitment to smooth secondments** is reinforced by some organised help towards visitors for easy installation.

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.
- The quality management issues are not adequately addressed. For example, the Management board is described and it is described how it intends to mediate in case of conflicts, but it is not discussed in sufficient detail how it intends to monitor the quality of the project in practice.
- The involvement of the participants in managing and monitoring of the project is not adequately described, and processes for overall evaluation of progress are not sufficiently addressed. Responsibilities lie largely with the coordinator, without devolvement of duties to work package leaders, which is not appropriate for a consortium of this size.
- The management procedures are described in inadequate detail, e.g. the frequency of meetings of the board is not specified.

3.3 Appropriateness of the institutional environment (hosting arrangements, 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.
- The human and infrastructure resources available in the project offer an excellent capability for achievement of the project goals.
- The institutional infrastructure provided by the various partners is shown to be **adequate and appropriate** as it comprises organizational and academic environments furnished with designing - educational - and research facilities (for the study of dementia)
- All the partners have the capacity to raise the announced staff with adequate expertise for their work responsibilities and perfectly in line with the knowledge transfer envisioned during the project.

- The specific tools needed by the proposed project exist within the consortium. The competences of the participating organisations are sound, and suited to the proposed work plan and the multi-disciplinary nature of the project.

Highlighted Weaknesses in Reserve Applications:

- The appropriateness of the institutional infrastructure has been insufficiently addressed.
- The infrastructures of some non-academic participants are only briefly described. Some necessary equipment is not fully described.

3.4 Competences, experience and complementarity of the participating organisations and their commitment to the project

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.
- The competences of the lead participants are excellent and well substantiated. The lead partner is shown to be the leader of the field. In addition, the other participants are shown to possess the required expertise and they are all carefully chosen so that the required complementarity is in place.
- The consortium is constituted by a broad spectrum of **scientific expertise, geographical locations and stakeholders**. The proposal identifies the complementarities among the participants and demonstrates possible exploitations thereof.
- The experience in the addressed segment of the participating organisations is impeccable. The institutional commitment to the proposed work plan is sound.

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.
- Competences and experiences of the non-academic partner have not been specified in sufficient detail.
- The complementarity of the different partners is not sufficiently detailed

NB: Operational capacity will also be checked (See Page 14)

RISE – 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.
- The quality of the interaction between the partners is minimally reported and poorly substantiated for each partner.
- The quality of interaction between the participating organizations is poorly addressed; (for instance: the justification of networking activities and the contributions in terms of content and expertise are not convincing).
- The quality of the interaction between the partners is not well presented in light of the scope of the project. Also, considering that the research programme involves several EU and one TC and both academic and industrial partners, the contribution for each participant is not sufficiently presented.

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.
- Dissemination is described only generically, without giving detailed and specific actions.

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.
- The quality management and risk management are addressed in a poor manner, not comprising potentially conflicting or project-threatening situations. Mechanisms for progress monitoring are addressed insufficiently, without clear project milestones
- It is unclear if participants have the needed equipment for the project purposes.
- Risk assessment is really elementary and critical risks have not been adequately considered. Full risk analysis is missing (mitigation actions are not detailed and not described in convincing manner).

RISE - 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.