

Project start management

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Project Start-up Phase

- The project start-up phase starts directly after the labelling and finishes when the project has started.
- It is recommended to manage this phase as a separate project
- The main activities in this phase are:
 - Partners must contact their PAs and apply for national funding as soon as possible
 - Plan & monitor this phase based on national application deadlines and expected funding decisions
 - Reorganise the project if necessary and adapt it according the recommendations provided at the FPP evaluation
 - Submit a Change Request and adapt FPP if necessary
 - Agree on the Project Cooperation Agreement and get signatures
 - Install a Project Co-ordination Committee

Limited validity of the ITEA label

- From ITEA 3 Call 3 (labelled on 17 March 2017) onwards, the ITEA label awarded to an ITEA project automatically expires after 10 months when the project has not started within this period, unless the ITEA BSG and ITAC jointly decide otherwise.

- To keep the ITEA label for your project after 10 months,
 - the project should be running
 - and a change request must be submitted and approved in case your project is running only with a small sub-set of partners compared to the original FPP workplan.
 - Inactive partners should be removed from the project 10 months after labelling

FFP evaluation feedback

- Analyse carefully the feedbacks from the FFP evaluation from the Public Authorities (PA) and the ITEA Steering Group (STG) reviewers:
 - PA feedback: take them into account for national applications
 - STG feedback: mandatory improvements must be addressed at a first reporting occasion (e.g. Change Request, Project Progress Report or project review)

- Avoid over-confidence as well as under-estimations based on PA feedback colours:
 - red is a very strong negative signal
 - green is a positive signal, but no guarantee for funding
 - blue has a quite different meaning depending on the country
 - in any case, there is no guarantee!

- Try to get in contact with your PA, to get more detailed feedback on their comments and specific requirements



Communicating with your respective PAs

- As coordinator, ask your national consortium contacts:
 - To check the partner eligibility rules, and force all members of your national consortia to check them and to report accordingly
 - To check the national consortium eligibility rules!
 - e.g. percentage of SMEs, research part and universities, etc.
 - We already had some surprises, e.g. country with a green evaluation but no funding as the consortium was not eligible
 - Eligibility rules per country might change over the years
 - To check for specific project constraints, e.g.:
 - Balance of country participation
 - Funding status of partners in other countries

Preparing your national applications

- Gather ASAP information on the national application deadlines
 - The ITEA Office also gathers information about national application deadlines from the Public Authorities. The information is stored on the project area on the ITEA Community website (under the Tab “ “Countries” you will find a section on “Country date information” providing information about the national Call deadlines
- As project leader and national country coordinator,
 - monitor the funding applications of the national consortia
 - Update the first two columns on in the section “Country date information” that you can find in the project area on the ITEA Community website under the Tab “Countries”.
- As project leader update your international project based on the potential changes at the national level
 - The website data should always be up-to-date, in particular for the list of partners & the national coordinators
 - Submit a Change Request when major changes have occurred



Preparing risks and mitigations

- For several projects, one can expect that some countries will not fund
 - a project reconstruction will be needed

- Restructuring takes time:
 - new task assignments
 - potentially new project leader
 - sometimes search for some new partners, etc.

- The later the restructuring takes place, the harder it will be for remaining partners to get funding:
 - postponed start date (and even uncertainty on the project viability)
 - less remaining budget at country level, etc.



Preparing risks and mitigations

Recommendations:

- Prepare the most probable scenarios: have a plan B, plan C...
 - e.g. what would be the new project structure if all the negative FPP evaluations would become negative funding decisions?
 - if a major player withdraws?
 - including the impact of the project leader leaving (if the risk exists)
 - have mitigations plans ready to be able to react instantaneously to major events
- Make early decisions when uncertainty is low
 - if it's pretty clear some partners won't get funding, already restructure the project accordingly: do not wait
- Fight when there's a chance (or an absolute need), but avoid losing time on a lost cause

Anticipating the project start

- As stated in the ITEA Rules & Regulations:
 - The project start date is defined as the start of the international collaboration.
 - The formal definition of the ITEA start date of a project is the international kick-off meeting, managed by a project partner with the validation of the international project coordinator, where all projects partners are invited
 - A project should start as soon as the main contributors are ready to start, or as soon as the project leader considers the project should start.

Anticipating the project start

- It is considered by default that to start, a project needs at least two different organisations from two different countries, of which one must be a EUREKA Member Country and another one either a EUREKA Member Country or a EUREKA Associated Country, including the project leader (special cases might still apply).
- Public funding is not a pre-requisite to be a partner, an organisation may participate without public funding.
- Project Leaders are due to notify the ITEA programme coordinators of the start dates of their projects, as soon as these dates are known.



Anticipating the project start

- When a project is about to start the project coordinator should initiate:
 - The preparation and signature of the Project Cooperation Agreement.
 - A template has been prepared by the legal representatives of the ITEA Board members and can be downloaded from the ITEA website.
 - The installation of a Project Co-ordination Committee (PCC)
 - Each partner should assign a representative, preferably a higher level manager, for the PCC.
 - The PCC should monitor and steer the project towards its goals.
 - In case of any conflicts in the project the PCC can mediate or even take decisions by means of voting.

Frequently mentioned things to improve

- Clear technical innovation:
 - What is the current technical State-of-the-Art (SotA) in the domain?
 - What is the technical innovation opposed to the SotA?

- Aim for business impact:
 - What are the market opportunities of the different partners?
 - What exploitable results and/or standards do the partners aim for?
 - Direct or indirect participation of user organisations for user requirements and validation is a strong advantage for the project

- Quantify your objectives and achievements
 - Do not only describe what you will realise, but also which improvements and how well you will achieve them
 - Define metrics; quantify baseline & targets



Frequently mentioned things to improve

- Focus the project
 - adapt the targets to the size of the project / of the consortium / of the partners, esp. if some countries are leaving the project

- Ensure a strong lead
 - if needed, by putting some big players or end users in central positions (project coordination if needed)

- Lean management
 - focus on what matters most in terms of outputs
 - select the deliverables that really matter: actual achievements that help getting closer to the business goals

For any question or support:

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Thank you for your attention