

## Transcript- #204 Idea Development Workshop – Call Text Analysis

Speaker 1 2:06

Welcome to the grand the EU funding Podcast. Today we're going to have an experiment looking forward to this. This is part of my short short format. And when you're a podcaster and when you've been running for more than three years, and I have, sometimes you need to try something new, sometimes you need to kick a little bit to the pile of leaves, as I call it, for something else to happen. And before we we share what we're going to do here today. Welcome Anna. Anna Maria, do wonderful.

Unknown Speaker 2:44

Just call you bye Niels,

Speaker 1 2:46

and welcome and welcome back, of course. And welcome back because it was we did a wonderful episode a while ago. And of course, of course, I had to have you back because you are a strong guest on exactly on many things, but especially also what we're going to talk about today. So we're going to we're going to run an idea development workshop, you and me together, audible workshop. And that's a big challenge. We've been working on this for a while in each and our end and we will, we will try to, of course, the purpose is for you are there to get some tools, to get some inspiration on how you can attack a context.

Unknown Speaker 3:42

And we will have three episodes.

Speaker 1 3:46

You have be short episodes. Try to keep it within 30 minutes. And simply, we will attack a horizon call text. And no, we're not going to attack an open call text, because that would be unfair. So, so we're going to attack an old call take. So that's for the for the case of the example, and and then that's the first episode we will analyze the call. Second episode, we will run through your model and the way you you you attack these things, your your thought of a theoretical tool or framework that you use. And then finally, in the third episode, we will run that model on the cortex so you can

see these, these three episodes in in in one context and in a coherent context. And we will try to share a lot of information on the website. So we will share PowerPoint presentation we prepare. Said, We will share a call, text, whatever. So we will do our best for you to be able to go in there and dig into because we know many of you are listening on the way to work or whatever. Of course, you cannot. Sit there and look at things, but if this is of strong importance for you, big importance for you, then you can go in and dig a little further into what we have been working with at the same time as listening to what we do. Now, I've been talking a lot now,

Speaker 2 5:17

no, I know you like to talk a lot, but I like to talk a lot as well. So that's why we have three episodes.

Speaker 1 5:25

And we promised each other we would be good together here to do our best to be shown, but also we would do our best to to for this, you know, to show things audibly. Yeah, because we cannot. It's a sound, and so we can't show you on the screen what we're talking about, but we will. That's why we will put information on the website, not

Unknown Speaker 5:51

and which call are we going to talk about?

Speaker 2 5:53

Yes. So Niels, once again, thanks for inviting me, and maybe just a small remark for people that are listening to us, Niels mentioned that it will be audible, but actually we will try to communicate in this podcast in a way that is user friendly, so that you can envisage actually all the things that we are talking About. So fingers crossed.

Speaker 1 6:21

Just one second I forgot shortly, introduce yourself for listeners who just Yes.

Speaker 2 6:27

Okay, so my name is Anna Maria spits navial. I'm the director and project coordinator at the best consulting we are a Croatian Belgian consultancy company, and what we do is actually two things in the horizon projects, besides the project writing, we also develop business models and business plans for the for the projects and for the exploitation of project results. Because you know how they say, if the product or the service cannot find the market sooner or sooner or later, it will die. So that's why we are here to make sure that it does reach the market. On the other side, my personal and professional passion is also communication and trying to transfer the knowledge and also the messages about the project and from the project results to the greater audience and to the stakeholders of all sorts. So we are dealing primarily with these aspects, and we are also particularly participating actively in the development of project proposals. So I think that's one of the reasons why Niels also invited me today here, yeah, sure,

Unknown Speaker 7:44

you're strong consultant. Yes.

Speaker 2 7:46

Well, we are working. We have, actually a network of more than 130 institutions and organizations across Europe. I would say, in all EU countries, we have at least one or two partners, plus the partners from Argentina, Chile and these kind of countries. And we have been developing multiple proposals, especially with the universities from Spain and universities from Belgium. So I would say that we did manage to get some some experience through the years.

Unknown Speaker 8:26

Yeah, you mentioned about the call.

Speaker 1 8:28

Yeah, let's have, let's, let's have a look at it. And everybody who knows about the horizon calls know that it can be two to two to four pages long, right? So we will do our best to sort of zoom in and give you the most important information so you can follow it.

Speaker 2 8:46

My expertise is more in the direction of the agricultural projects and bio based technologies. So the call that we are introducing here in today's horizon, Miss 2024 soil 0106, Niels will also indicate the link of this call so that you can check it in details if you're interested. But it's actually about harnessing the multifunctional potential of soil biodiversity. In other words, we are investigating the topic of soil and how to make sure that the quality of European soils is in good condition for the upcoming generations. And actually, yeah, that's true, because when we have a call, or any horizon calls, you could see that it's like, three or four pages long, and it has a lot of different information stated, and sometimes it can be very overwhelming. You know, you are not sure whether you are addressing the right subjects, what needs to be taken into account, and so on and so on. So maybe I can just briefly go to the call. Yeah. So first of all, what I like? See from the financial point is actually just to check how big is the budget of the project that can go per each of the project and whether it's just one project that gets financed or more projects. Why is this important? Because we know that there are, let's say, some clusters or consortiums that are that have been already working together, and that might apply, again, to the similar subject. So from that point, it's good to know if you are already losing in start, if it's only one project needs to be financed, or if there is an opportunity that several projects, and let's say clusters of partners, can get approved concretely. In this case, the project was about 8 million of a budget, and the whole topic could actually give a budget to two projects, meaning that we could actually have a competitive market. And this is innovation action. So the type of action is also very important, because it can be research and innovation, it can be CSA, it can be innovation, action, and so on and so on. Each of these have also different types of CO financing, especially for the legal entities of SMEs. So for research institutes and for NGOs, in majority of Horizon projects, it's 100% financed. But if we are talking about SMEs partners, then it can be also 70% financed, which also makes a difference for partners who participate in this one. It was concretely, this case of 70% financing. And then also, for example, there is a kind of, let's say, information that we could also grant third parties, which is also interesting, because sometimes you have calls that where this is not an applicable option, or it can be with only limited budget. So if you are planning to develop something with a smaller number of partners in the core consortium, but with external partners in terms of third parties, then you need to know with how much budget you can actually rely on. So that's why this is very, very important. And then when we know this kind of, let's say, general information, of course, we need to make sure that we understand the context of the whole call, the expected outcomes the end of the project activities, for example, for the expected outcomes over here, they indicate a couple of different actions on the EU level. For example, Farm to Fork strategy, the EU biodiversity strategy. And so

Speaker 1 12:52

maybe, maybe we so here, it's always like this, the expected outcome. It's sort of setting the scene. What context are we talking about? What documents, policy documents, whatever of the white

paper, screens, whatever. Are we action plans? Are we referring to here as a background for this call and should be seen in that context?

Speaker 2 13:16

Yeah, yes. I mean, this is the preliminary step. You know that you have to make the research because, at certain point, in different legal frameworks or different strategies, they wanted to tackle different elements, and with this project, you actually have to find a common ground between these different strategies, even if it's completely contradictory. But just to understand the context within each they are actually trying to get the new results and improve the subject. And another thing, why it's also very important is because you need to find the partners that also have specific experiences that are connected with these kind of strategies or action plans. It can refer to the previous projects that they have been dealing with, or with the experience of the consortium members or the different organizations in which they are also participating. So it's it's different elements, but for example, just as an example. If they want to tackle the Sustainable Development Goals, then you need to understand that throughout the project proposal, you actually have to deal with this kind of SDGs in multiple levels. You know, you will not just mention it once in a text, but you will actually try to see how your actions are dealing with these specific SDGs or any other strategy that they indicate.

Speaker 1 14:51

This is complex. Of course, they hand out 8 million euros. It's a big project when it comes to to this corner agriculture. Uh, so and so. So it's a lot of money, and you can see it in the context already when you start reading here the first paragraph of expected outcome, where they refer to the context and the tie ins, that's, there's a lot of things you need to make sure that you have on top of, yeah, yeah.

Unknown Speaker 15:21

I mean, we are

Speaker 1 15:22

emissions, all, biodiversity strategy, farm to Fort, pestival, CIP, future, nature, restoration, law and so on and so forth. Many things that you can not just say, yeah, there's a reason why they put them, yeah, of course.

Speaker 2 15:39

But I would, I would say that if we really want that the Europe is on top of the research, then we'll work with people who have experience and who are not starting from from zero, but that also have already some experiences from different sectors, and are able to actually Give the added value to the project, but also to the horizon Framework Program. And I don't think it's for nothing that they say that horizon is the leading research program in Europe. So that's why, also the complexity is connected, and there is quite a lot of competition, actually, when we are talking about horizon, I have been working with them for the past 13 years, but you could see from year to year that it's becoming even more competition and it's even more difficult to to get the project funded.

Speaker 1 16:42

All right, let's move into the actual expected outcomes. Yeah.

Speaker 2 16:48

So once we know the setup within which to tackle the topic, we focus on the project results that are expected. And over here, normally they mentioned between five and even seven different project results. For example, in this one, they say, specifically, we want to focus the results around the soil and crop health, that we have effective plant soil interactions, exploiting the potential that we have a better knowledge of the relationship of different factors, the availability of integrated best management practices, etc, etc. So the first thing that we mentioned is very theoretical. So in this strategy, this section plan, we want to focus on this or that. In this project results, it's becoming more concrete, you know, because the topic of soil, or any topic you can tackle from so many different angles. But here they mentioned the keywords I would say, which they want to address, like the knowledge, like the tools, the practices, and so on and so on. And what they also mention is, for example, there is a need to develop test and deploy management practices, which is a very crucial element, because it gives us an introduction to the fact that the project itself cannot be only a theoretical project that is done in the lab, on the lab level, or only on the level of the research on paper. So it needs to be really put in the practice

Speaker 1 18:27

on the go out to that field. Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 2 18:30

You have to go in your boots to the field and actually do the work.

Speaker 1 18:36

And here it's here in this part of the context. You always need to take it. You need to look at the small words here. So you need to look so you always have the starting line before you have the bullets. And there you have to read that line and make sure you're you're like, it's what does it say project results are expected. That means this is what you're supposed to do to contribute to all of the of the following outcomes. Sometimes you will have context where they say, I expected to, I don't remember the exact wording, but where you have at least, but they don't expect all of them to be covered. But here it is clear that you have to, that you have bullets and everything have to be addressed.

Speaker 2 19:24

There is no compromise. Like when you want to your kid to go to the bed, there is no compromise they need to go to bed. Yeah, but the thing is, also that's true, sometimes it can be very how to say a punctual and in other words, they will also give you the obligatory part and non obligatory part. But what is really interesting through the experience of a decade, actually, I have always been reading this text once we start with. Are in the proposal at least every two weeks, you know. So we are developing the proposal of for example, for three months. Every two weeks, I will stop, I will read it again, and then I will see if we are going in the good direction or not, yeah.

Speaker 1 20:18

And if it is, yeah, yeah, especially when you're

Speaker 2 20:21

developing the project consortium, you can get in a position where you're so much stressed about about coordination, about the management of partners, about the administrative forms, that you're maybe not seeing the whole picture. So it's very important to see if we are on a good line. Yeah. All right.

Speaker 1 20:42

You so that was the project results. So next step here?

Speaker 2 20:47

Yes, so the next step is the proposed activities. So we know what the result should be, but then how the activities should be organized. And you remember the sentence that I mentioned to you earlier that we need to develop test and deploy management practices, and over here, they actually give us even more information. So they want us to develop and test site specific innovations, you know, tools set up demonstration sites, you know. So it's the same boots from the story before, to assess social, economic and environmental issues. Also organized trainings, knowledge sharing activities, peer to peer learning. So it's a lot of different things, but they are actually, if you read it thoroughly, it's giving you all the necessary information that you need to write the proposal. And of course, there are some additional elements like you need to focus on this or that type of crops, or do it in different pediclimatic conditions and so on and so on.

Speaker 1 21:57

And again, it's a small words you need to focus on now. So you have here. So this is part, this is, of course, this is part of the scope, part of the of the cortex, where there's a funnel, so to say, the scope starts with a paragraph, sort of, what problem are we looking at here? And then it ends with what we're talking about now, the proposed activities to handle that, that issue that has been outlined in the paragraph above, and here it's very you know you have just before in this context, but just before you have the proposed activities listed, you have a small paragraph where you have words you need to you need to pay a lot of attention. So there's a need to develop test and deploy management practices by enhancing soil test will facilitate, for instance, the management of soil borne pestilence. You need to these words. You need to look at what, what, what, where the stress lies. If you have a word like me, need in a text, in a call text, you this is something that you need to pay a lot of attention to. And then then you have the activities listed here. And that's, that's a shoot. There proposed activities. Shoot, so there's no again, no compromise, go to bed. Yeah, the proposal, no, but it's just, it's all these little connecting words, all these it's very important, because it indicates what you have to do.

Speaker 2 23:30

Yeah, yeah. This is true. And especially because sometimes you want to, or you have a consortium that is capable of doing some elements, but maybe not all of the elements. So you're trying to avoid these kind of proposed activities on the level of like, okay, we have a very experienced consortium, but it's never working, you know? And another thing that is very important is the

methodology or the terminology that they are using, because, for example, if they are saying that it's a demonstration size, then we will not propose the living labs, you know, because it has a completely different context, even on the EU level, what is demo site and what is the Living Lab? So you really have to focus on what they are searching for.

Speaker 1 24:17

Yeah, and Anna, you know, just as well, just as well as I that you will you have, and I have worked with research partners throughout the years where they you would have a research institute, and they said they are writing this, but can we do the thing that we are doing here in the In our we have developed this concept. But that's not, you know, you will have partners that will try to diminish or or try to, can't you read it like this, so sort of fitting their own approach into it, and this just, there's, again, no. Compromise, go to bed. No, no, it has. Then you will have to look at what you do and see that's what you get money for to be able to do that. What? Oh, we need to talk to another research and say, no, no, no, we can do, yeah,

Unknown Speaker 25:20

yeah. So it's, it's just, you know, it's,

Speaker 2 25:23

it's very, very good experiences, yeah, but I think it's very important that you have a good coordinator, very strong coordinator, who can communicate well with partners. You know, sometimes you have to be harsh, but at the end of the day, you are trying just to communicate about the importance of the call and the whole consortium level. And another thing is you have to have a good consultant, you know, because many of the horizon proposals nowadays are being done by the consultants, sometimes also external consultants. And from that point, it's important that you have someone who will say, openly, sorry, we are not putting it inside. It's impossible to connect it, but only after you actually see whether it's possible or not possible to include it. You know, because sometimes it's also, let's say, a kind of game of words. You know, how to introduce something and how to connect it, how to make the connection between the methodology that you're using and the context that they have at this moment. So good communication and combination is essential for this.

Speaker 1 26:37

Yeah. So if we move into the dig a little bit into the text again. Anna, is there anything else in this corner? There's always an end to the texts that sort of you need to pay attention. Yes.

Speaker 2 26:51

So you should actually focus on the whole text. There is not more or less important parts of the text. Is just the whole text that you have to read thoroughly a couple of times throughout the proposal, writing time at the end, normally, they also indicate about the different horizon projects that have been already funded, or different horizon clusters, or, you know, activities that have been already performed. And from my point of view, it's very important, and it's of course necessary, because no one is expecting you to develop, develop something from scratch, but to actually use the results of the previously funded projects and to build up on these results.

Speaker 1 27:38

What I noticed in this text, from my experience. Anyways, it's quite It's an ambitious call. Yeah, you have here, because one thing is that you have what the listed proposed activities, but then you have for you have a further couple of paragraph proposed should focus on arable crops carried out in various pedo climatic zones, benefit both for the conventional and the organic farming. So you have further considerations in this corner. Agroecological approaches should be capitalized, should be capitalized and given due attention. So here we also have a business element in. Then you have a paragraph here that, of course, you have this multi actor approach that's classic for Horizon Europe, right? And then you have the list of organizations that is supposed to join. But then you add, you have an additional sentence on that, which complicates even further your proposal, because the beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties to implement activities in the demonstration sites and encourage end user management. So here you even have, they say May, but when they have put the text in, put a sentence in there, it's because they have, they would like to see proposals that hand out money locally, so which complicates further your the way you the structure of the person. Now, we'll get back to that in a couple of episodes. All right, I just wanted to stress the complexity of this. So sorry, so the end of the context,

Speaker 2 29:25

yeah, it's just about indicating the different projects that have been already funded. It's about different, for example, Joint Research Center, the EU soil Observatory, or knowledge center for biodiversity and so on and so on. And something that has been completely, I would say, weird, five or seven years ago, you know that you're working on your horizon project, and you have your Consortium, and you are producing your database and knowledge. Now it's not the case anymore.

You are in obligation. Actually to connect with the sister project that is funded at the same call or similar calls. You have to continuously communicate with them. You have to exchange the knowledge in a even greater level you know. You have to connect with the services, with the different clusters that are funded by the European Commission, which are working on the same topic, which, in my personal opinion, is something that is really a multi actor approach, you know, because then you cannot only focus on the research aspect, but you also have to automatically see how it can contribute to the development of the legal framework, or also to the implementation of these innovations in the real sector. So it's about the exploitation of the project results. And this is the most challenging part, you know, because you're working with, for example, researchers or technologists or a farmer, but the research that they are doing, they don't perceive it always for the exploitation, you know, I'm producing some research, I'm doing some lab analysis, but how could I put it on the market? Who would be interested? What is really yeah, there. So that's also very tricky part, and that's why the exploitation aspect, the plan for the exploitation strategy is always part of the proposals and parts of the projects. So you have to have it. It's obligatory, and that's it. If you read it all thoroughly and you follow the guidelines, you get close to the project funding, yeah,

Speaker 1 31:44

and it's just so so this is now we have tried to both dig into details, and that's because we need it for when we do the project, the development in the next episodes. But also it's good. We tried to also give you a general sort of scoping, how to read this text, or what to be aware of. So let's say, let's say this is, this is the that's it for the first episode, and we managed to keep it around 30 minutes. Dear listeners. I'm not going to make a full exit here. I'm just going to say looking forward to Presenting the next episode For you, Bye, Bye. You.