

Coordinating a CBE-JU Proposal: Challenges & Lessons Learned

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(Coordinator of **BIOFOODIS** project)

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AGÊNCIA NACIONAL
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Instituto de Investigação da Floresta e Papel



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Who am I?



Joana Oliveira

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Food Quality and Technology research group

PhD in Chemistry, 2009

My goal: To share practical insights on **consortium-building, budget preparation, and proposal coordination.**

Our proposal

BIOFOODIS project

- ✓ Submitted to the call **HORIZON-JU-CBE-2024**, topic **HORIZON-JU-CBE-2024-RIA-05** (“Innovative bio-based food/feed ingredients”).
- ✓ **Consulting company** for the preparation and submission of the proposal.
- ✓ **11 partners** (academia, SMEs and LE) from **7 EU countries** (**2 WIDENING** countries).
- ✓ **Budget of 3.5 M€.**
- ✓ **Very competitive call: 57 proposals** were **submitted** to the topic, **2 funded** projects, and **5** projects on the **reserve list** (including the **BIOFOODIS** project).
- ✓ **Threshold: 15.0.**

The Challenge of Building a Strong Consortium

Finding the right partners

- ✓ The importance of diversity in expertise (**industry, academia, SMEs, end-users**).
- ✓ Balancing scientific excellence vs. practical implementation.

Common weaknesses

- x Too many academic partners, not enough industry representation.
- x Late-stage partner search causing weak work package alignment.

To have the consortium before proposal preparation.

The Challenge of Building a Strong Consortium

Our greatest challenge was **engaging food companies** in the **early-stage** of the proposal preparation.

How we approached it

- ✓ We **hired a consulting project management company** to handle the proposal submission, leveraging their international partner network.
- ✓ Leveraged the **partners' contacts** to enhance networking and collaboration.
- ✓ Ensured partners had a **clear role & commitment**.

The Challenge of Building a Strong Consortium

✓ Roles and Responsibilities: Avoiding Overlaps and Gaps

- ✓ Assigning **clear leadership** (who does what?).
- ✓ Ensuring **work package leaders have relevant expertise.**

Lesson learned: Define responsibilities in **early-stage discussions** to avoid misalignment later.

The Challenge of Building a Strong Consortium

Managing Partner Expectations

- ✓ Not all partners have the same goals (scientific vs. commercial).
- ✓ Keeping partners engaged before submission.

How we approached it

- ✓ Had **regular pre-submission meetings** to align objectives.
- ✓ **Define specific delivery dates** to each task.

Budget Preparation Challenges

Ensuring a Fair Distribution of Funding

- ✓ Industry partners often have different funding rates → Need a balance. RIAs (100% funding rates).
- ✓ **Avoiding conflicts:** Transparency in budget allocation from the start.
- ✗ The same budget has different values in different countries.

Lesson learned: Some partners may drop out if their budget needs aren't met → Have backup plans. **Prepare the budget early in the process.**

Final Lessons & Takeaway Messages

Start Early & Be Strategic

- ✓ Consortium & budget planning should start months in advance.
- ✓ Use National Contact Points (NCPs) for guidance.

Communication is Key

- ✓ Regular check-ins with partners.
- ✓ Clear roles and responsibilities prevent conflicts.

Even a High Score Doesn't Guarantee Funding

- ✓ Consider resubmission with refinements.
- ✓ Keep exploring other funding opportunities.