

Technical reviews in FP7

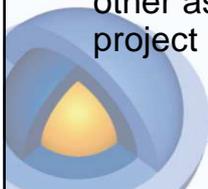
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GEONARDO
STATE OF THE ART AND BEYOND

The Grant Agreement

„The Commission may initiate a technical audit or review at **any time during the implementation of the project and up to up to five years after the end of the project**. The aim of a technical audit or review shall be to assess the work carried out under the project over a certain period, inter alia by evaluating the project reports and deliverables relevant to the period in question. Such audits and reviews may cover scientific, technological and other aspects relating to the proper execution of the project and the grant agreement.”

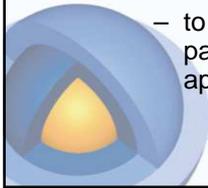


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The Review

On the basis of the reviewers formal recommendations, the Commission will inform the coordinator of its decision (which may differ from the experts' recommendations):

- to accept or reject the deliverables;
- to allow the project to continue without modification of Annex I or with minor modifications;
- to consider that the project can only continue with major modifications;
- to initiate the termination of the grant agreement or of the participation of any beneficiary according to Article II. 38 of the grant agreement;
- to issue a recovery order regarding all or part of the payments made by the Commission and to apply any applicable sanction.



The Objectives of the Review

To assess:

- The degree of fulfilment of the project work plan for the relevant period and of the related deliverables
- The continued relevance of the objectives and breakthrough potential with respect to the state of the art
- The resources planned and utilised in relation to the achieved progress, in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness
- The management procedures and methods of the project
- The beneficiaries' contributions and integration within the project
- The expected potential impact in scientific, technological-, economic, competitive and social terms (where relevant), and the plans for the use and dissemination of results



Further Review objective

- To provide an “outsider’s” view – and suggestions to help consortium reach objectives in an effective way



Results – best case scenario

„**Excellent progress**” (the project has fully achieved its objectives and technical goals for the period and has even exceeded expectations) or „**Good progress**” (the project has achieved most of its objectives and technical goals for the period with relatively minor deviations):

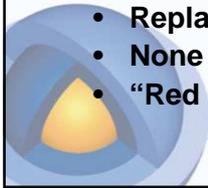
- **All deliverables accepted, no major changes in project direction, (little or no “extra” work)**



Results – worst case scenario

„**Unsatisfactory progress**” (the project has failed to achieve critical objectives and/or is not at all on schedule):

- **Deliverables rejected, extra work, changes in project plan**
- **Extra “paper” review**
- **Extra full review after 6 months**
- **Technical audit at your premises**
- **Removal/replacement of one or more partners**
- **Replacement of coordinator (person)**
- **Replacement of coordinator (organisation)**
- **None of project objectives achieved, deliverables rejected**
- **“Red flag”**: project will almost certainly be stopped



Selection of Project Reviewers

- Must be registered in “expert” database
- Usually (but not always) selected because PO knows reviewers in some other connection
- Sometimes some reviewers have been evaluators of project proposal
- Approval of Reviewers always sought from the consortium (in order to eliminate possible conflict of interest)



The Review Process

- Step 1: Independent work (remotely)
- Step 2: Pre-review meeting
- Step 3: The Review/hearings (Brussels)
- Step 4: Post-review meeting, decision



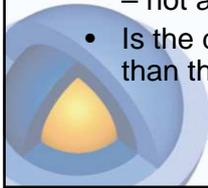
Independent work

- Checking the Deliverables (against the DoW)
- Checking the Project Periodic Report
- Checking additional digital/electronic materials provided by the
 - PO
 - Project Coordinator



Audit-proof deliverables:

- Do the contents match the Description of Work?
- Is it easy to see what work has been done, who did it and what was achieved?
- Is relationship to earlier/other deliverables clear? Obvious that there has not been copy/paste from DoW or other deliverables?
- Clearly labelled (which deliverable, version etc.)?
- Well-structured, good layout, easy to read?
- Too long? Too short?
- Is there an “Executive Summary” that really is a summary – not an introduction?
- Is the document useful for some project purpose other than the formal delivery?



Technical Review Report

1. Overall Assessment

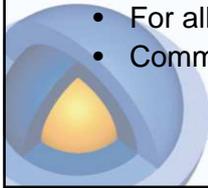
- overall recommendations (e.g. on modifications, corrective actions at WP level, or re-tuning the objectives to optimise the impact or keep up with the State of the Art, or for other reasons, like best use of resources, re-focusing...)
- Assessment of project level progress:
 - Excellent progress
 - Good progress
 - Unsatisfactory progress



Technical Review Report

2. Objectives and Workplan

- Have the objectives for the period been achieved?
- Has each work package (WP) been making satisfactory progress in relation to the Description of Work?
- Have planned milestones and deliverables been achieved for the reporting period? For each Deliverables: Approved/Rejected
- Are the objectives for the coming period(s) i) still relevant and ii) still achievable within the time and resources available to the project?
- For all questions: Yes/Partially/No
- Comments



Technical Review Report

3. Resources

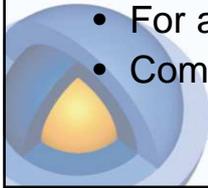
- To the best of your estimate, have resources been (i) utilised for achieving the progress, (ii) in a manner consistent with the principle of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. For both questions: Yes/Partially/No
- If applicable, please comment on large deviations with respect to the planned resources.
- Comments



Technical Review Report

4. Implementation of the Project

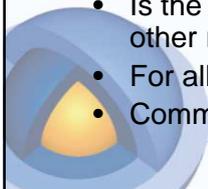
- Has the project management been performed as required?
- Has the collaboration between the beneficiaries been effective?
- Do you identify evidence of underperforming beneficiaries, lack of commitment or change of interest of any beneficiaries?
- For all questions: Yes/Partially/No
- Comments



Technical Review Report

5. Dissemination

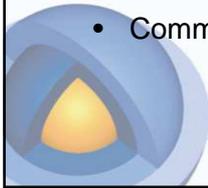
- Is there evidence that the project has/will produce significant scientific, technical, commercial, social, or environmental impacts (where applicable)?
- Is the plan for the use of foreground, including any update, appropriate?
- Have the beneficiaries disseminated project results and information adequately (publications, conferences...)?
- Are potential users and other stakeholders (outside the consortium) suitably involved (if applicable)?
- Is the consortium interacting in a satisfactory manner with other related Framework Programme projects?
- For all questions: Yes/Partially/No
- Comments



Technical Review Report

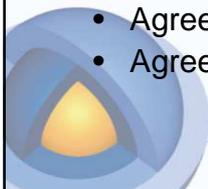
6. Other issues

- Have policy-related and/or regulatory issues been properly handled (if applicable)?
- Have ethical issues been appropriately handled (if applicable)?
- Have safety issues been properly handled (if applicable)?
- Has progress on Gender Equality Actions been satisfactory (if applicable for this reporting period)?
- For all questions: Yes/Partially/No
- Comments, Signature, Date, etc



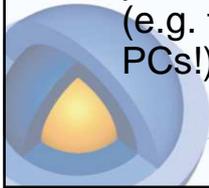
Pre-review meeting

- Meeting of Reviewers before the meeting – exchange of views
- About 20-30 minutes – often in cafeteria
- Introduce each other – may well be none of them have ever met
- For “first time” reviewers – PO may explain a bit about the role/process
- Each gives initial overall impression
- PO asks for any key issues
- Agree on any changes / additions to agenda
- Agree on any important questions to raise



The Review Meeting

- The setup, location, people present
- Be in control!
- Should you have a “rehearsal”?
- Make sure all practical arrangements are perfect (presentations, handouts, storybook, etc).
- All consortium members should (at least pretend) to be interested throughout the day. (e.g. tell your partners not to work on their PCs!)



The Review Meeting

Presentations:

- VERY short overview
- Do not spend too much time on describing the state-of-the-art (reviewers know better)
- Focus on what has been done
- Come forward with any shortcomings that you know the Reviewers have surely spotted
- Be proactive, provide alternative solutions and measures



Post-review Meeting

- Recall issues from pre-review meeting
- Is project still relevant/interesting?
- Are consortium members doing the work they should be doing?
- Agree on overall assessment (“good to excellent”, “satisfactory”, “unsatisfactory”). Should the project continue?
- Any unsatisfactory deliverables? Best to reject – or require extra work in future deliverables?
- Decide on main feedback
- Decide process for writing the final „consensus” report



Possible decision: suspension

- Extra time for (re)producing deliverables
- PO/reviewers may want a closer look at your detailed technical work: the review did not convince them
- They will visit your premises
- Expect a hands-on approach: this is not the time for management presentations; have technical staff available



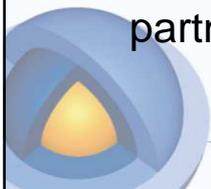
Possible decision: termination

- Commission terminates the project
- Coordinator asks to stop the project, on behalf of the consortium
- Coordinator no longer interested
- Project Coordinator stops communicating with PO (and consortium). Partners forced to communicate directly with PO.
- Consortium fails consistently to respond to review recommendations, including at extra reviews/audits. Severe doubts about willingness/ability to continue.



Procedures to stop a project

- With great reluctance!
- Takes about a year
- Lots of formalities and legal stuff to:
 - Give notice
 - Provide “evidence” of consortium’s failures
- Commission can be flexible concerning financial consequences for “innocent” partners



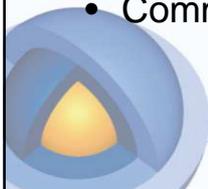
After the review

- If you are unhappy about / disagree with review recommendations: don't fire off an angry email – at least wait until you receive the official review report
- Talk to your NCP
- Alert PO if review report does not show up
- Follow-up recommendations systematically – and report at next review
- Deliver anything that was late



Remember...

- The PO wants your project to succeed – he/she is (cautiously) on your side
- The reviewers may seem less positive – but their job is only to help the PO
- The PO expects you to be firm with your partners – but flexible about adjusting plans to ensure eventual success
- Communicate openly: don't be defensive



Thank You for Your Attention!

