ERAdiate

Enhancing Research and innovAtion dimensions of the University of Zilina in intelligent transport systems

www.erachair.uniza.sk

MoTiV

www.motivproject.eu

How to write a RIA proposal from the coordinator's perspective - *Transport domain*

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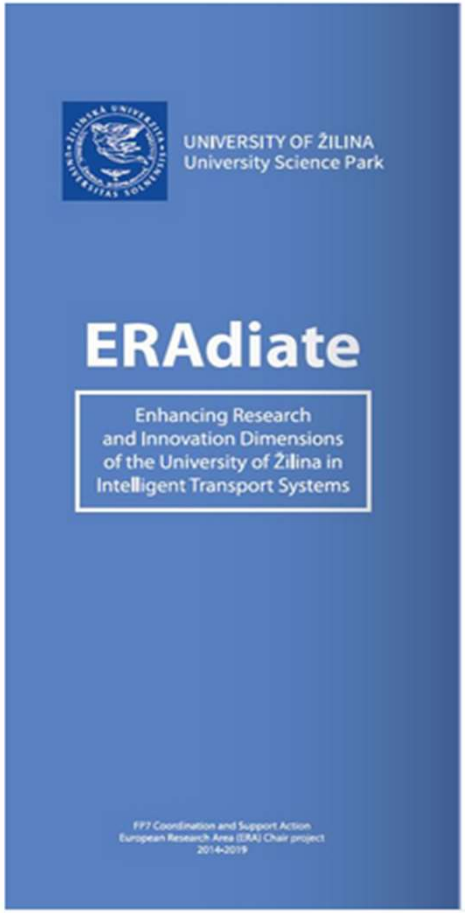
Bratislava, 5 June 2018

Professional Experience: Helsinki, Brussels and Žilina

- Born in Camerino (IT)
- Graduated in Computer Science at the Univ. of Bologna (IT)
- PhD in Cognitive Science at the Univ. of Jyväskylä (FI)
- International research career: Helsinki (10 years), Brussels (5 years) and Žilina (~2 years)
- Interdisciplinary researcher profile combining academic, business and administrative perspectives

About the ERAdiate project

- **ERAdiate is a FP7 pilot ERA Chair project (CSA) on ITS granted to the University of Žilina**
  - 5-year project (July 2014 – July 2019)
  - Small international team of researchers led by the ERA Chair Holder (Prof. Tatiana Kováčiková)



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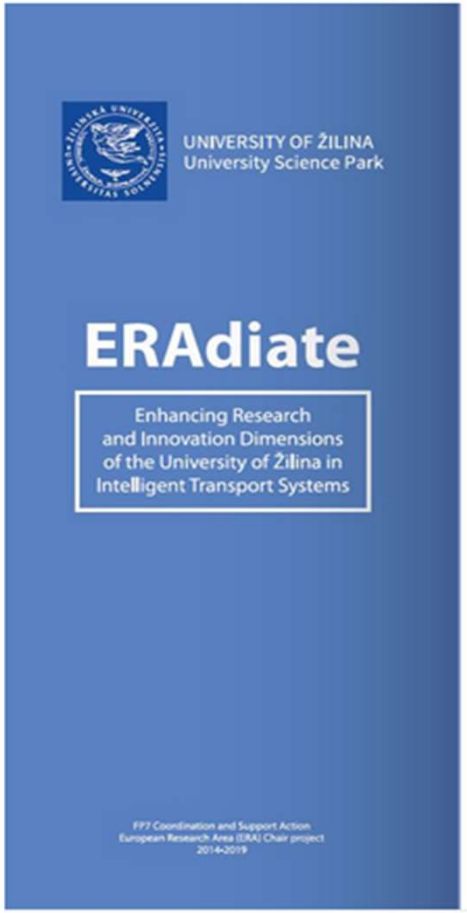
About the ERAdiate project

- **ERAdiate follows the ERA Chairs objectives**
  - Attracting high-quality researchers and managers to universities and research organisations with potential for research excellence
  - Contribution to economic and social regional development
  - Increased success and participation in European R&D programmes
- **ERA Chairs grant does not cover infrastructure and research costs**
  - However, its success is also measured by scientific results (publications, research projects etc)
  - Dilemma: ERAdiate as an R&D “enabler”, “implementer”, or both?



About the MoTiV project

Key outcome of the ERAdiate project

- **UNIZA Success Story:** currently, the only Research and Innovation Action in Slovakia funded under Horizon 2020 managed by an academic institution

- **EU Success Story:** to our knowledge, the only Research and Innovation Action in Europe granted within an ERA Chair project and coordinated by an ERA Chair team (i.e. contributing to the sustainability of the project beyond EU funding)

Pre-requisites for Excellent Research

Talking about "Ingredients": recipe for success

1. **Be creative**

2. **Enjoy learning**

3. **Be organized**

4. **Be connected**

5. **Be persistent**

6. **Don't be afraid of failure**

Sharing with you my experience with the H2020 MoTiV project

The Idea

Getting a project…where do I start?

- **In my case, the ERAdiate project in ITS provides a well-defined, but also very broad context**

- **The strategy I adopted**
  - Understand the whole H2020 programme (as purpose, structure etc)
  - Search for areas to connect ERAdiate with my expertise and interests
  - Analyse selected Work Programmes and Calls
  - Consider what it is feasible in the given timeframe, both as a single team member and as a team (e.g. 2-3 calls to be addressed in 1 year)
  - Focus on a specific call and start working on it

H2020 Programme and ERAdiate

- **Identify H2020 Work Programmes relevant to ERAdiate:**
  1. "Smart, Green and Integrated transport";
  2. "ICT";
  3. "Energy".

My focus: 1. and 2.

- **Analysis of topics and calls.** In my case, I selected two:
  - MG-8-5-2017: "Shifting paradigms: Exploring the dynamics of individual preferences, behaviours and lifestyles influencing travel and mobility choices" (1-stage RIA, deadline: 1/2/2017)
  - ICT-11-2017: "Collective Awareness Platforms for Sustainability and Social Innovation" (1-stage CSA/IA, deadline: 25/4/2017)

- **N.B.** I joined ERAdiate on 1/9/17 and spent 1 month to "get started". Therefore, choice above was quite ambitious (and risky) as there were only 4 months to the deadline of the first selected call!

Personal Assessment of the Call

- **Very interesting topic,** which would allow me to explore perception and experience of time at a European scale, from an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspective.
  - Personally, no publications and experience in “value of travel time” research

- **Requirement: strong and interdisciplinary team at UNIZA**

- **No expert at UNIZA** with strong background / publication track record on “value of travel time”. However, ERAdiate team member Dr. Dietrich Lehis fulfilled this requirement.
  - The project as an excellent opportunity to develop new research area at UNIZA

Step 1: discussions within the Team

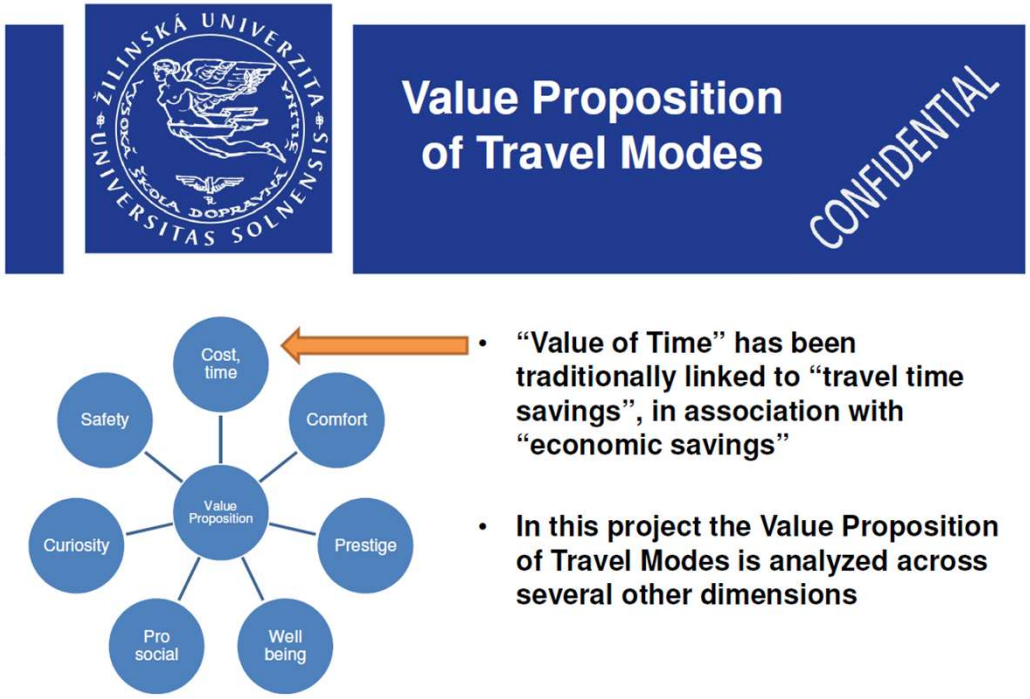
- In a team meeting in October 2016 I presented the idea of preparing a proposal for MG-8-5-2017 with UNIZA as Coordinator

- Focused discussions with Dietrich Leihs, refining initial ideas to build on existing literature and stay within the Topic

- **Tip:** Be creative in this stage, but keep an eye on the Topic to be addressed

Step 2: Developing the Idea

- Even before writing any 1-pager of the proposal, within the team we tried to visually illustrate some conceptual “building blocks” of the proposal



Step 2: Developing the Idea

- **Identify the "Core thesis / Paradigm Shift":** From value of travel time seen as a component of the "economic system" to "personal time value"

Value Proposition of Travel Modes

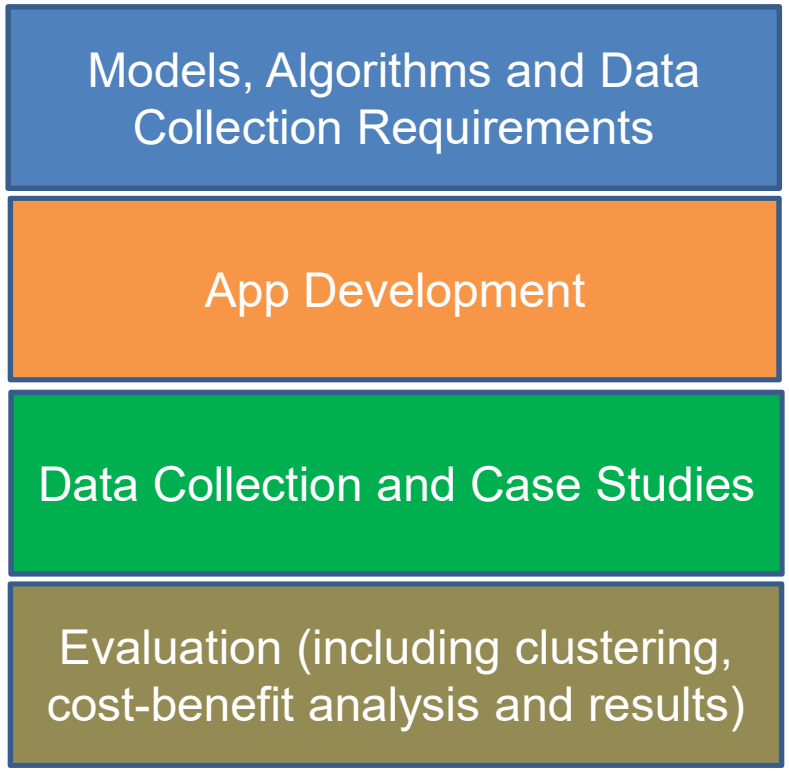
CONFIDENTIAL

The core thesis

- A certain mode of travel is chosen because it promises a personal value for the traveller
  - "I bike because it is healthy"
  - "I use public transport to commute because it is fast"
  - "I drive because it decreases the risk of catching seasonal viruses"
- By gaining knowledge on the perceived value proposition associated to single travels, we can estimate the value of time associated to the travel

Step 2: Developing the Idea

- **Based on discussions, an overall idea of the pillars of the project (to be translated into Work Packages) was already there**



Step 3: Going Back to the Topic

- See if **something was missed, or should be added or skipped**
- Some ideas from the previous steps may be dropped
- Other strategic choices were to make **use of rather "traditional" terminology, but to extend its scope and applications** based on "behavioral patterns" found with the analysis of the data
- Solve controversial issues / different positions within the team
  - In our case, **how to account for ICT** (infrastructure, services) **including "shared mobility"** in the analysis. Solution was found to study "mobility within activities", and "activities within mobility"

Step 4: Shaping Impact based on Idea

- Before developing the scientific part (“Excellence”), shaping Impact is helpful to “frame” the project

EXPECTED IMPACT

1. Deliver a comprehensive overview about preferences, behaviours and lifestyles that influence the urban travel mode choice, the time spent for travel preparation and travelling as well as the value proposition of the travel time. This will enable a cost-benefit assessment of individual mobility behaviour.
2. Identify the influence factors for mode choice and travel time value perception in the context of life style and personal values. The influence factors will be translated to a broader socio-economic and environmental gains such as energy savings and emission reductions for the short-medium term in line with relevant EU policies and strategies.
3. Establish a method to estimate the value of time in mobility contexts, considering different geographical, cultural and economic factors. The findings will contribute to the development of key aspects of sharing economy, such as business models incorporating time banking.
4. Provide evidence to policy decision makers of all levels and mobility solution providers about long term improvements (e.g. on route layouts, schedules, and capacity) in the context of sustainable mobility by creating mobility value propositions.

Getting the right partners on-board

Where to find the “right people”?

- **Start from own international contacts and networks** (with experience in the area)
  - Easier to identify partners among them due to already established “trust” relationship

- **Additionally, meet potential partners**
  - Networking events: in my case, I decided to attend the “ICT Proposers Day 2016”, and the “Social Science and Humanities” (SSH) events, both organized by the European Commission in Bratislava

How much should I disclose about my project idea?

- In brokerage events and other opportunities to present project ideas, a challenge is to find the right balance in information disclosure
- Sharing an idea is much less “critical” that sharing a draft proposal, therefore openness is encouraged
- **Tip:** At these events, the key is not really “selling an idea”, but rather establishing oneself as a trusted partner

Follow-ups

- With each potential partner there is need of follow-up discussions to find “common ground” for collaboration
- These discussions are essential, although very time-consuming
- At some point, it is necessary that a potential partner commits and a niche of contribution to the proposal is agreed

Bilateral or Group Discussions?

- During proposal development, there will be need of keeping partners informed of important issues (e.g. including sharing drafts, requesting contributions)

- There is no general rule, but we have found more effective to privilege bilateral discussions than group discussions at this stage (e.g. feasible when consortium is rather small)

MoTiV Consortium Requirements

- **It must be diversified, complementary and tailored to the Topic that it addresses**

- In MoTiV, need to demonstrate scientific and technological competence, potential for involving end users (data collection) and other key stakeholders (policy), as well as business potential (companies)

- Result: 2 research-oriented partners (UNIZA and Eurecat), 2 technology-oriented partners (INESC-ID and TIS), 2 companies (CoReorient, routeRANK), 1 umbrella organization reaching European end-users (ECF)

MoTiV – from Idea to Proposal

Drafting the Proposal

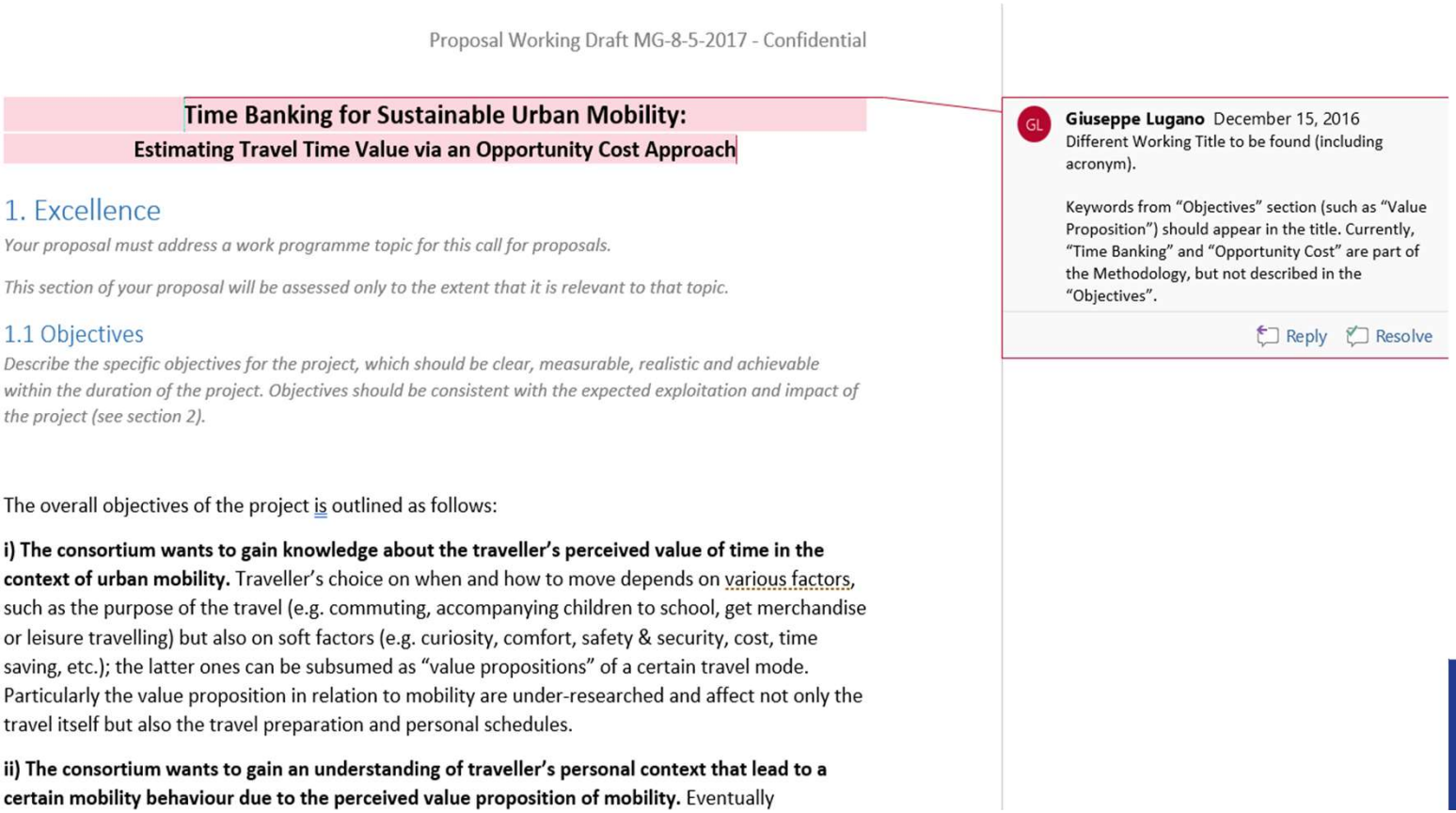
- Once the conceptual building blocks of the proposal and the Consortium are established, it is time for a “deep dive” into Proposal writing

- In the case of MoTiV, this has happened over 2 months (December and January). Normally, at least 4 months should be allocated to this activity

- While writing the proposal, it is important to **consider how it would be implemented if successful**

Follow the Proposal Template

- To maintain focus, it is essential to **follow the Proposal Template** (Word doc gradually filled in with relevant information)



Proposal Working Draft MG-8-5-2017 - Confidential

Time Banking for Sustainable Urban Mobility:
Estimating Travel Time Value via an Opportunity Cost Approach

1. Excellence

Your proposal must address a work programme topic for this call for proposals.

This section of your proposal will be assessed only to the extent that it is relevant to that topic.

1.1 Objectives

Describe the specific objectives for the project, which should be clear, measurable, realistic and achievable within the duration of the project. Objectives should be consistent with the expected exploitation and impact of the project (see section 2).

The overall objectives of the project is outlined as follows:

i) The consortium wants to gain knowledge about the traveller's perceived value of time in the context of urban mobility. Traveller's choice on when and how to move depends on various factors, such as the purpose of the travel (e.g. commuting, accompanying children to school, get merchandise or leisure travelling) but also on soft factors (e.g. curiosity, comfort, safety & security, cost, time saving, etc.); the latter ones can be subsumed as "value propositions" of a certain travel mode. Particularly the value proposition in relation to mobility are under-researched and affect not only the travel itself but also the travel preparation and personal schedules.

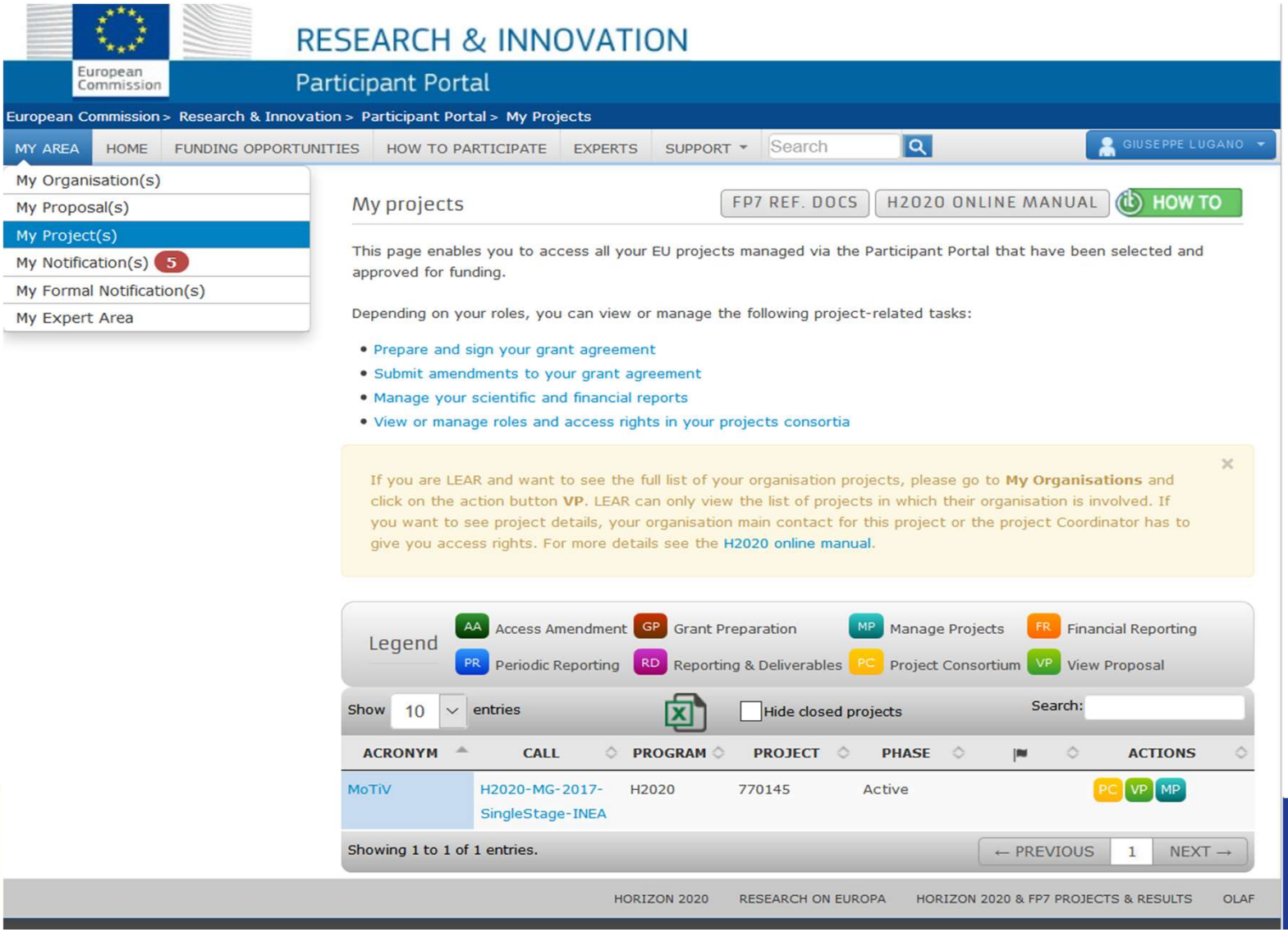
ii) The consortium wants to gain an understanding of traveller's personal context that lead to a certain mobility behaviour due to the perceived value proposition of mobility. Eventually

GL **Giuseppe Lugano** December 15, 2016
Different Working Title to be found (including acronym).

Keywords from "Objectives" section (such as "Value Proposition") should appear in the title. Currently, "Time Banking" and "Opportunity Cost" are part of the Methodology, but not described in the "Objectives".

Reply Resolve

Get to Know the EC Participants Portal



Collecting Input from Partners

- **Be specific in the input needed from each partner**
  - Section 1-3 (Excellence / Impact / Implementation)
  - Section 4-5 (Consortium Members / Ethics and Security)

- **Coordinator should ensure coherence** of the whole text, hence adapting collected inputs as necessary

- **Request and consider partners feedback**, but keep in mind overall aim, pillars and structure

Collecting Input from Partners - 2

- Apart from specific proposal content, **discuss with each partner also the following:**
  - WP / Task Leadership (proposal by Coordinator)
  - Estimation of contribution in terms of tasks (PMs)
  - Partner hourly rate, to calculate budget share
  - Other costs envisaged by the partner
  - Any special needs / requests from the partner

- **Coordinator should keep overview**
  - Excel sheets with WPs, Tasks, PM estimation, budget, timeline (Gantt chart)

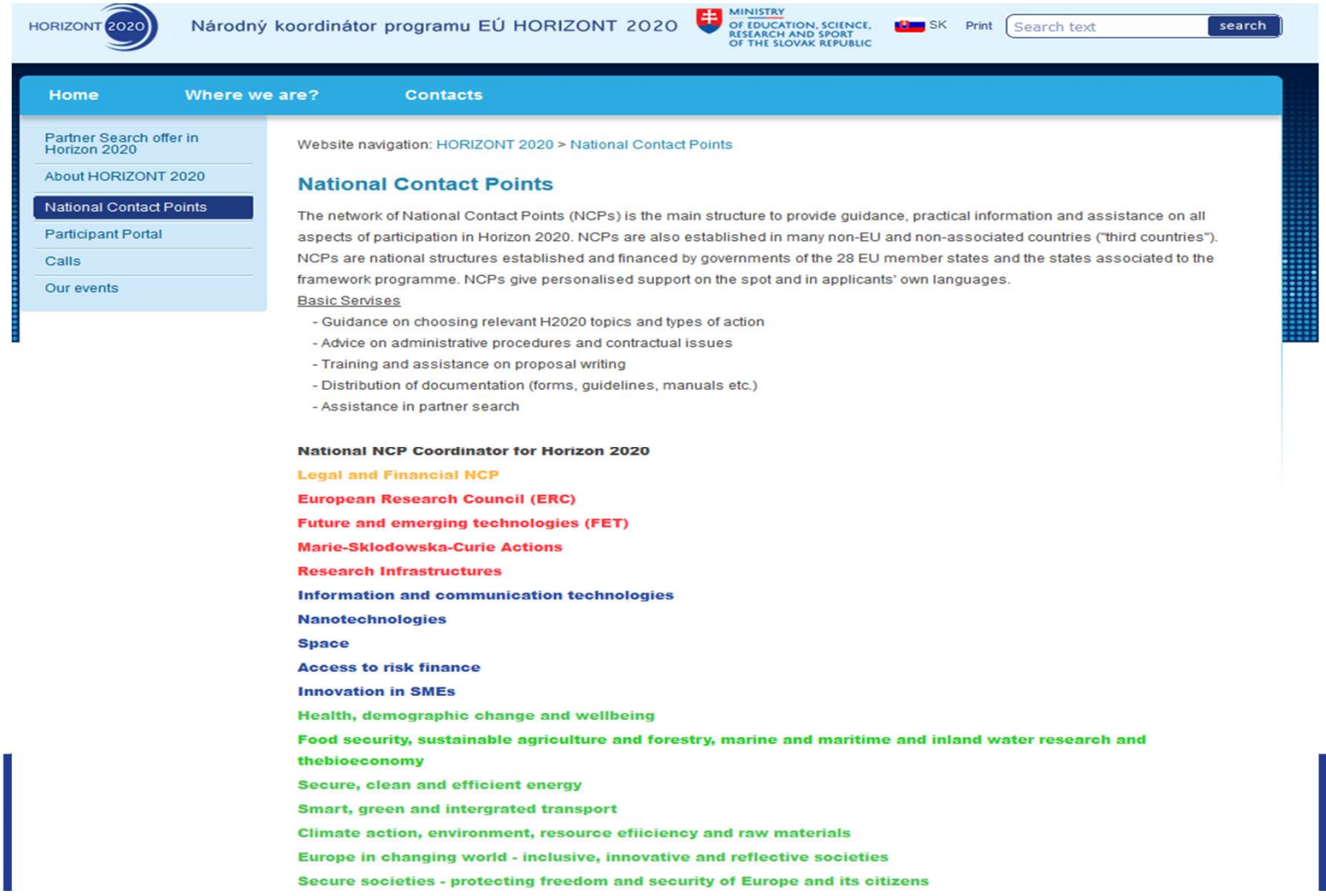
- **Be ready to face criticism and doubts in diplomatic, but firm manner**

Dealing with Problems

- **One of the key contributor to MoTiV proposal left the ERAdiate team in December 2016**
- Although much conceptual work was done, major parts of the work had to be done and the team had no “backup” for the experienced member
- I took the responsibility to finalise and submit the proposal, setting this as the only priority at work and allocating to it 100% (and more) of my working time

National Contact Points (NCP)

- **Do not hesitate to contact NCPs for guidance**
  - For Slovakia, CVTI



Internal Reviews

- When the proposal is almost ready, it is important to **carry out "internal reviews" to receive further feedback from colleagues** (reading the proposal from different perspectives)

- Each major version ("milestone") of the proposal draft should be also **shared with Consortium Members**
  - Use online repository to upload and share proposal versions with partners

MoTiV Evaluation Report

- **Total score:** 13.50 (threshold: 10)

Criterion	Mark	Threshold
Excellence	4.50 / 5.00	threshold: 3/5;
Impact	5.00 / 5.00	threshold: 3/5;
Implementation	4.00 / 5.00	threshold: 3/5;

- **Results of MG-8-5-2017: 2 projects approved**

Proposal Acronym	Proposal Title	Duration	Coordinating Institution	Coordinator Country	Number of Participants	Budget Requested	Evaluation Score
MoTiV	Mobility and Time Value	30	ZILINSKA UNIVERZITA V ZILINE	SK	7	1,930,840.00 €	13.5
STARS	Shared mobility opporTunities And challenges foR European citieS	30	POLITECNICO DI TORINO	IT	9	1,805,665.00 €	13.5

Success rate: 6,4% (30 submitted, 2 funded)

Project Implementation

- Succeeding in H2020 project is a reason for celebrating, but it is only the beginning!

- In short time, Coordinator has to address many issues such as:
  - Grant Agreement preparation
  - Consortium Agreement preparation
  - Addressing Ethics Requirements (if any)
  - Developing trusted relationship with EC Project Officer
  - Strengthening collaboration with Project Partners
  - Internal organization (e.g. budget allocation to partners, hiring staff as required, trainings, setup of IT tools)
  - Planning activities in detail, both from scientific and administrative/financial viewpoints
  - Promote the project nationally and internationally

Final Remarks

- **Succeeding in H2020 requires** oneself and a whole team to undergo **a long journey**

- A brilliant idea may come to a single person, but **success (or failure) is a joint outcome**. Team-work is essential

- **Things are connected:** ideas, people, places, professional and personal experiences…

- Even in case of major challenges, do not give up and be ready to defend your idea creatively. **Make things happen.**

- Do not be afraid of competition. **Be ambitious.**

Thank You for your attention!

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