



Reality check in the project management of EU funding

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A talk addressing workload, focuses, impacts and outcomes of project management (hereinafter PM)

Two FP7 projects serve as objects for investigation. In the Earth Science sector NACLIM is a large scale collaborative project with 18 partners from North and West Europe. NACLIM aims at investigating and quantifying the predictability of the North Atlantic/Arctic sea surface temperature, sea ice variability and change on seasonal to decadal time scales which have a crucial impact on weather and climate in Europe.

PRIMO from Political Science is a global PhD program funded by Marie Curie ITN instrument with 11 partners from Europe, Eurasia and BRICS countries focusing on the rise of regional powers and its impact on international politics at large.

Although the two projects are granted by different FP7 funding instruments, stem from different cultural backgrounds and have different goals, the inherent processes and the key focus of the PM are quite alike. Only the operational management is at some point distinguished from one another. From the administrative point of view, understanding of both EU requirements and the country-specific regulations is essential; it also helps us identifying the grey area in order to carry out the projects more efficiently. The talk will focus on our observation of the day-to-day PM flows – primarily the project implementation – with few particular cases: transparency issues, e.g. priority settings of non-research stakeholders including the conflict in the human resources field, End-User integration, gender issues rising up during a monitoring visit and ethical aspects in field research. Through a brief comparison of both projects we summarize a range of dos and don'ts, an “acting instead of reacting” line of action, and the conclusion to a systematic overall management instead of exclusively project controlling.

In a nutshell, the talk aims at providing the audience a summary of the observation in management methodologies and toolkits applied in both projects, our best practices and lessons learnt in coordinating large international consortia.