

First Negotiations on the LINK project at the Commission in Brussels

Minutes and first consequences

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1. General issues

- Negotiations have to be finished end of August. After this date the procedures within the Commission take time so that the project will start probably on 1 January 2007.
- All agreements, commitments etc. should be produced in a written form.
- Christos as TO is the first address for all question regarding LINK. Guido and Brigitte should get copies of mails. Brigitte is responsible for forms and financial issues. Guido has an advisory function.

2. Cpf-Forms

First priority has to ensure that the forms show the exact legal name of the partners, not advertising or brand names, in addition also legal addresses and the person who is authorised to sign. A second person should also be included into the forms to ensure that no official documents arrive at the Commission where a person signed who is not introduced as authorised.

Complementary are the legal entity forms. Ms. Happaert of the Commission has sent them to us.

All partners do note that they can't simply agree with the forms, they have to fill them in. Organisations that aren't registered at the chamber of commerce have to provide a "foundation statement", like the public acts which established them.

All mandatory fields in the forms have to be filled out. If it is not possible, something like "not applicable" has to be included, e.g. VAT for public organisations.

Facts have to be verified, e.g. by a copy included, also the VAT number. In the form the Handelsregister or Chamber of Commerce number has to be included. A copy of the site of Handelsregister or something else regarding VAT has to be sent to the Commission (via the coordinator) to show the basis.

To give the information regarding the bank account the best way is to transmit a copy of a bank account.

For private companies a bank guarantee is necessary (at least) if they want prepayments. The costs for a bank guarantee differ a lot. Therefore the partners have to be asked if they want to get prepayments or not.

Forms have to be send by the coordinator to the Commission in electronic form. Sending the signed form on paper can happen in parallel.

Total direct costs (TDC) include subcontracting. Babbie's TDC are 89 + 15 TEURO. The 20 % overhead are calculated from TDC minus subcontracting. The Commission will check, if in the cpfs the actual total costs of the partners (100 % of their costs) or TDC + 20 % overhead (eligible costs) have to be filled in. In the description of work (DoW) and the cpfs we differentiate between actual TDF and eligible costs (TDC + 20 %). ILS will adjust the budget accordingly.

For payments > 150.000 € an audit certificate has to be sent to the Commission. The payments will to be cumulated for this; when not in the first, but in a second period the cumulated sum is higher then € 150.000 the audit certificate has to be send then. At the end of the project all partners (also partners which get all in all less than € 150.000) have to send an audit certificate to the Commission (every time via the coordinator, of course). The expectations of the Commission regarding this audit can be seen from existing templates.

Audit costs as well as costs for bank guarantees are eligible costs. But Christos mentioned that if the bank guarantee is expensive it is waste of money.

There is no reimbursement of taxes. As public bodies cannot get back taxes (VAT), they cannot get reimbursed the respective bills from the Commission. Brigitte mentioned the example that in an audit report there was such an argument. Here there seems to be additional need for clarification because this would mean a clear change.

The contract will be signed by the coordinator only. The contractors sign another form. The coordinator also signs the last form of cpfs for the partners, controlling the validity

Summary

In this phase, partners should

- a) Check the CPF, and fill in everything
- b) Provide prove that they are registered, and if needed a foundation act, vat number or bank guarantee.
- c) Fill in the legal entity form

For details please follow the parallel e-mail.

3. Prepayments

The commission pays in general 80 % of the planned budget of the first 18 months. After the first reporting period (according to Christos once a year, but regarding Brigitte it could also be 18 months. They promised to inform us.) we claim the costs of the first year. The commission calculates again the costs for the next 18 months and gives again a prepayment etc., later on also for the rest of the duration of the project.

If (private) partners need a bank guarantee but do not have one and if nobody else gives a guarantee (e.g. the consortium), the prepayments are reduced by the share of the respective partners. It is due to the consortium to find solutions. If a partner does not want a prepayment but nevertheless will do his work, it is ok. But if a partner does not see the opportunity to work without a prepayment a solution could be that the consortium guarantees for the prepayments, gets the money, and the respective partner will get the money step by step for the work he has done. Responsible for this handling is normally the coordinator. These rules and procedures have to be agreed in the Consortium Agreement.

4. Reports

Christos is worrying if in such a big consortium the work will work well without a strict reporting system. He accepts that we fit deadlines for the internal reports of what is happening in the work packages (if the progress of work is according to the plan, if there are expected delays, if there arise problems and how they can be solved etc.) to the 6 month period of the management committee (MC) sessions. It will be unavoidable to produce these reports and to send them to the core partners in time (14 days) before the MC meetings. We should review if things work well with this procedure. If not Christos wants us to change the system: more frequently reports etc.

The (new) head of unit wants information on what is happening in the project monthly. This information can be rather short: If things go ahead according to the plan, where there arise risks for delay, if other problems occur etc. and can be done by e-mail.

5. Consortium agreement (CA)

A CA which is signed by all partners is a precondition for the Commission to sign the contract. We have to work it out within our own responsibility. Partners with experience in this field could contribute or overtake this task. ILS is not experienced in this field, so it would be very helpful if a more experienced partner could care for this.

6. Description of Work (DoW)

Christos had not had the opportunity to read the draft of the DoW. Insofar we discussed the DoW using a small presentation. On this basis there were some problems of understanding each other.

Christos announced that we will get his comments after he has read the DoW. He promised that there will be only minor changes.

As a risk for possible delays he sees the lack of a common understanding and definition of intermodality. A clear definition is – so his argumentation – very necessary, as well as a convincing argumentation. The NFP could have an important role here, because they know their national conditions. Ideally there will be a shared glossary from the beginning.

For the development of the mid-term concept for the forum Christos urgently suggests to start this work very early in WP C.2. He does not accept the argument that stakeholders may get irritated if they are confronted very early with a demand for a continuous funding of the forum by the stakeholders. So we have to find a way to start early with (preliminary) plans, maybe including very interested stakeholders, using them to convince others etc. We made clear that from the analysis of processes this is a normal procedure which can support an acceptance building up. Still, we should show that we keep the mid-term strategy in our minds from the very beginning.

One of the points Christos mentioned is that we have to consider when the project can be called a success. What is the output of the project? Although he agrees that the practical results are only visible beyond this project, we should establish what the outcome of the forum should be.

7. Recommendations from the evaluators

The consortium should – so Christos – write a note how to account these recommendations. According to Guido the recommendations are not automatically the demand of the Commission

as well as change the DoW, to reflect the change as made. But it makes the further process in the Commission easier if we show that we include the recommendations.

Regarding the variety of the working groups we offered something like the morphological analysis we talked about before. We have to make clear that we will actually guarantee a big variety. Christos suggested handling e.g. the working groups not as closed shops but let them open for others. They could participate if they are able to fund the effort themselves or if somebody else is reimbursing their cost. The same strategy could be offered for the Political Advisory Group (PAG) and the inclusion of experts from outside of Europe. In the USA for example there exists a programme which reimburses such activity costs. We have to check from whom we could learn and how we could include some international experts. Here we have to include all suitable measures, also including them in the stakeholder consultations.

Regarding the suggestion of the evaluators to start initiatives to build up NFP's in every involved country we will make clear that we will support respective initiatives. We have to make the argumentation in the DpW a little bit clearer to show that we welcome them.

8. Additional demand of the Commission

The inclusion of the ongoing work of the Commission regarding air / rail integrated ticketing is compulsory, but not yet clear, because the state of the Commission in this field has to be checked first. Guido will check and gives us information.

9. Co-operation with the KITE project

The 1st negotiations of the KITE (A Knowledge Base for Intermodal Passenger Travel in Europe) took place on June 21st 2006. The Commission asks for a close co-operation between KITE und LINK. KITE runs over 2 years, so results of KITE can be an input in LINK. The KITE proposal has to be changed especially regarding the state of the art. The consortium has to reduce this. Instead of this broad state of the art KITE has to elaborate a small state of the art which concentrates on things like e.g. cost benefit analysis, specific topics of the KITE project. The broad state of the art regarding intermodality already exists with the project results Towards Passenger Intermodality in the EU. This state has to be updated in LINK.

The database they are building will focus on base data (traffic flows, use of intermodality) and cost/benefits analyses. The commission want to us to integrate this into our project library, so stakeholders can access this data while obtaining information to start an initiative.

KITE proposes a common conference together with LINK. One reason for that is the scientific bias in KITE (primarily researchers are involved). Targeting also the community of LINK could broaden the audience. We will have to check if this combination of the conferences makes sense in LINK; here the conference should take place later, when there are more results available.

Guido will give the KITE and the LINK consortium a written note regarding the relations and interdependencies between the two projects, the avoiding of double research etc. So then we will have a clear basis for the co-operation.

10.2nd negotiation

Christos is very much interested in a combination of the 2nd negotiation meetings of the two projects. The KITE meeting will take place on 7 August 2006. In the afternoon also the LINK consortium should attend. The LINK negotiation will then take place on 8 August.

Christos is also very much interested in meeting more partners of the projects in these meetings. From KITE about 6-7 partners will attend. Christos seems to be content if the core consortium of LINK will attend, minus few e.g. because of holidays.

We have to work hard on finishing the DoW and the forms. So we have to continue this work despite the holiday time.

11.ToDos

Every partner has to fill out the forms and has to transfer copies of the needed documents to ILS according to the parallel e-mail asap. Heike Friedhoff will be in the office till 13 July 2006 and will then leave for holidays till 4 August 2006. All partners are urgently asked to deliver their forms and other documents by 12 July latest.

Workpackage leaders are asked to include the mentioned recommendations and the obligatory demand within the workpackage text. The overall issues will be included by ILS. As Herbert Kemming will be on holidays from 30 June noon till 21 July 2006 Rick will be the contact person for all question regarding the DoW.