Coordination of EU projects

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My experience with EU funding

Postdoc (and later workpackage leader) in FP7 Hardcoat (2005-07) and Interface 2020 (2008-11)

FP7
RadInterfaces (€486k) - Interface Design of Crystalline Materials with Improved Radiation Damage Resistance Based on Multiscale Modelling Concepts, 2011-14
AgriSENSact (€70k) - A new generation of wireless sensors for integrated precise agriculture, 2014-16
Hardalt (€395k): New generation of protective coatings alternative to hard chrome, 2013-16

H2020:
H2020 Marie Curie ITN (coordinator): SOLUTION - Solid lubrication for emerging engineering applications (€3.5m; €465k for CTU), 2017-2021
H2020 FET OPEN ICARUS - Innovative Coarsening-resistant Alloys with enhanced Radiation tolerance and Ultra-fine-grained Structure for aerospace application (€225k), 2016-19

mERANet
Lubricoat (coordinator): (2.0m; €400k for CTU), 2021-2024

Coordination: Pros and Cons

There are two types of collaborative projects:

1 "free topic" – ERC, Marie Curie actions, EIC Pathfinder Open (older FET Open scheme)…
2 Pre-selected topic – typically higher TRL

Pros:

+ "Sell" my idea and steer the project
+ Recognition and esteem
+ Attractive for global pool of talent
+ Salary
+ Money for admin support

+ Quid pro quo (more project invitations)

Cons:

- High administrative load
- High responsibility
- Often low institutional support

- Huge investment with uncertain return
- Salary

I submitted **7 EU collaborative projects** as a coordinator - and won just 2.

Why do we have so few coordinators?

- Limited connection between success in EU competition and career progression

- No connection with follow-up institutional funding

- "Easy" money available (OPVVV, TACR,GACR), so why to bother

- Lack of institutional support in grant preparation

- Ignoring existing experience

Long way to go…