



National and Kapodistrian
UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS

ERC StG Proposal Experience from the Perspective of the PI

Dimitra-Isidora Mema Roussopoulou
University of Athens
October 2011

About Me

- Grew up in US, PhD in Computer Science, Stanford University
 - Assistant Professor of Computer Science, Harvard University on the Gordon McKay Endowment
 - Assistant Professor of Computer Science, University of Crete, Greece & Associate Researcher at FORTH
 - Now Assistant Professor of Computer Science, University of Athens, Greece
-

Proposal Details

- Submitted October 14, 2010
- Title: Protecting and Preserving Human Knowledge for Posterity

FUNDAMENTAL COMPUTING PROBLEM:
Secure, reliable and long-term preservation of
(digital) human knowledge

Proposal Topic

- Choose topic
 - truly interests & excites you
 - has rich set of challenges
 - Ideally in area of expertise
 - Panel wants to see that PI qualified to follow through the proposed work
-

Post-submission Timeline

- Mid-Feb 2011 communication
 - proposal passed to Stage 2
 - Invitation for interview
 - Early March 2011 communication
 - Details of interview sent out, forms arranged
 - Early May 2011
 - Interview
 - Early June 2011 communication
 - Notification of proposal acceptance
-

Proposal Contents

- **State-of-the-art**

- Much like related work section
 - Should be up-to-date
 - Should point out pitfalls

- **Objectives**

- Emphasize novelty of approach
 - Present any results you have thus far to justify:
 - The potential of proposed approach to achieve success
 - Your potential as PI to carry out the project
-

Proposal Contents

- Methodology & Proposed research activities
 - For each proposed activity, what are the **specific** steps you would follow to take activity to completion
 - **Example:** design preservation system for preserving government web sites
 - Measuring frequency of updates to sites
 - Design mechanism to crawl web sites to obtain content
 - Design preservation protocol supporting multiple content versions
 - Analyze effects of system topology on protocol behavior
-

Proposal Contents

- Methodology & Proposed research activities (cont'd)
 - Include other prior work and results of others that may help you
 - For each activity, be explicit as to why it is significant to pursue that activity
 - Helpful to bring it all together in an “Impact” section
-

Proposal Contents

- **Implementation:** Did **not** include deliverables, as matter of principle 😊
 - However, I **did** have a **specific work plan**
 - For each year, the specific set of milestones I wanted to reach;
Example Year 1:
 - 1. Identification of adversarial attack strategies and design of defenses.
 - 2. Implementation of simulator to support PKI-based identities.
 - 3. Extension of simulator to support diversity such as tracing peer nomination history and using both weak and strong attestations.
 - 4. Design of audit and repair protocol for government web sites.
-

Budget

- Ask for what you really need
 - Personnel, travel, equipment, consumables, etc.
 - Judged on scientific excellence, NOT on how little or how funding requested
 - Panel will check you though if they think the work can be done with less money
 - My proposal had to be approved by ELKE of UoA
 - specific salaries set for team members (postdoc, students, PI, etc.)
-

The Interview

- Very positive experience, very polite panel
 - Asked solely on technical content of proposal
 - No mgt questions
 - No budget questions
 - Have heard different experience from other candidates though
 - Questions were representative of the review comments
 - Try to anticipate all questions
 - **Stick to time limit (15 min talk)**
 - I left PI material for end of talk
 - Focused more closely on technical contents
 - Be honest about any limitations
-

Other Tips

- Start early
 - One month minimum
 - Be as specific as possible – spell it out!
 - Several documents may need approval from your institution – gather these early
 - Use your National Contact Point
 - Dr. Cristina Pascual most helpful
 - Provided info on budget, where to stay for hotel, trying to find ERC folks in mid-July
 - Many thanks!!!
-

Thank you & Best of Luck!!

Dimitra-Isidora Mema Roussopoulou



National and Kapodistrian
UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS

European Research Council

