FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME 7

NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS SYSTEM IN BIH

D4.4A

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR ESTABLISHING FP7 LEGAL AND FINANCIAL HELPDESK OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Project

"Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening of Science and Research in BiH"

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1. The Role of FP7 Legal and Financial Helpdesk of Bosnia and Herzegovina (LFH)

The process of establishing the NCP system in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) began in 2005 and has gone through three evolution phases. Its final phase ended in mid 2010 when the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH (MoCA) nominated seven National Contact Points (NCPs) and eleven Focal Points as well as Programme Committee Members.

Even though the current NCP BiH system has significant operational potential to fulfil its mission and set up a solid communication platform with its clients (academic institutions, local researchers, SMEs, NGOs, etc.), there are opportunities for improvement of the NCP's working methodology, communication tools it is using and competences and skills of the NCP staff.

The NCP system should, by its professional nature, strive to improve communication ways with its customers and the quality of offered services, particularly in the areas such as:

- Administrative and scientific management of FP7 projects;
- Financial, legal, IPR and related issues of FP7;
- Building project consortium;
- Technical and financial negotiations with the European Commission (EC);
- Financial reporting to the EC;
- Comprehensive overview of FP7 opportunities for local researchers and research organisations;
- Delivery of information regarding new calls for proposals, advanced partner search.

During the last period, most requests from local researchers to the NCP BiH office were related to these critical areas of FP expertise. One of the most effective tools to respond to those requests is to develop a service known as "FP7 Legal and Financial Helpdesk".

Therefore, FP7 Legal and Financial Helpdesk Service of BiH should have the role of a simple and useful info-consultative service of NCP BiH system which has to provide timely and adequate technical support to different end users in the process of preparation and implementation of FP7 projects (expertise on the whole project cycle).

LFH operational guideline has to describe the fundamental Helpdesk performance, such as:

- Role of "FP7 Legal and Financial Helpdesk of BiH- LFH";
- Tasks and functions;
- Level of services offered;
- Structure of LFH and its operational capacities;
- Operational procedures.
- Communication design of LFH and related communication tools.
- Role of different NCP actors within LFH.

2. Tasks and functions of the LFH

LFH is an integral part of NCP system in BiH. So in general the LFH should inform the local research community on the principles and objectives of FP7 and provide technical assistance to different types of NCP customers.

The specific tasks of the Legal and Financial Helpdesk would be the following:

1. Accurate and useful information on all potential possibilities for participation of local researchers in FP7 (overview of FP7 thematic and programme opportunities).

2. Clear overview of the structure and objectives of FP7 programme as well as of other EU RTD programme open for BiH (COST, EUREKA, CIP).

3. List of FP7 legal basis (legal and financial, MGA and Consortium Agreement, EC Guides, EU regulations, etc).

4. Overview of the information on horizontal challenges of FP7 projects – i.e. administrative and financial management of FP7 projects or proposals, through their evaluation and implementation

5. Guidelines and useful information regarding partner search and building a project consortium.

6. Detailed instruction regarding complete project cycle (preparation of project proposals and PART A and B; cost models in FP7 and project budget preparation; EPSS; evaluation process; negotiation with the EC; rights and duties of project partners; internal and external project management; audit; reporting to EC).

7. Complete insight into IPR law and legal procedures (EU and national)

8. National aspects of financing FP7 projects (VAT refund, labour legislation, public procurement, accounting practise, etc)

9. News and links (FP7 and other EU RTD programmes)

10. Technical assistance for preparation of project proposals and implementation of project activities.

3. Level of LFH services and target groups

During the previous period in FP7, as well as in FP6, NCP BIH system recognized several target groups of LFH end users (in addition to individual researchers). Based on organisational type, the following institutional target groups could be identified as LFH end users:

- Higher education institutions (public and private);

- Research institutes;

- SMEs and SME associations;

- Large industry with RTD capacities;

- NGOs performing research;

- Public sector (specialised agencies, public institutions, etc.)

- State, entity canton/district and local governments;

- Professional associations and clusters

LFH is a specialised service of NCP BiH system and therefore it has to adjust its services to the need of different target groups of end users. According to the experience of LFH clients, it is possible to differentiate the following categories of end users:

- "**Researchers FP7 beginners**" – individual researchers or research organisations with no or very low level of previous experience in FP7 and other EU RTD programmes.

- "**FP7 champions**" –researchers or research institutions with successful participation in two or more FP projects, having a good level of knowledge and experience for preparation of FP7 project proposals and implementation of project activities, independently or with minor assistance of LFH.

Regarding these two groups, LFH has to develop adequate services that will best suite demands and specific requests of each type of clients. In that respect, LFH will deliver its services in accordance with following service models:

- WEB presentation with the basic information on FP7;

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- News and announcements on potential participation possibilities and similar actions;

- Instructions, training courses, workshops, Power Point presentations and guidelines created by LFH;

- Links, EC guidelines, national and FP7 legal and financial regulations;

- LFH institutional support for preparation of FP7 project proposals and implementation of project activities;

- Specialised LFH services such as: fast partner search, identification of suitable call for proposals and direct engagement of LFH on calculation of project budget, assistance in reporting to EC, etc.

4. Structure of LFH

4.1. Structure of NCP BiH system

At the beginning of the process of establishing the NCP BiH system and search for possible NCP candidates, only eight public universities could respond to the demand for adequately trained staff with necessary experience. Therefore, the NCP structure depended since the very beginning on the geographical distribution of the public universities in BiH.

It should also be emphasized that most of the research activities in BiH was performed at the public universities, and thus the vast majority of the users of NCP services was concentrated in the higher education sector. That was also one of the major aspects which affected the NCP structure,- its close connection with the HE sector.

This was the reason why the NCP BiH system was designed according to the needs of the public universities and their current capacities.

The abovementioned circumstances predominantly determined the structure and functional orientation of the NCP BiH system towards a more decentralised model. The current NCP system in BiH is decentralised with a mixed typology: out of the 7 currently running NCPs, three operate in Sarajevo/ East Sarajevo, two in Banja Luka, one in Tuzla and one in Mostar. Two NCPs operate within ministries[1] while the remaining NCPs work at public universities in BiH[2]. However, it should be emphasized that MoCA, through the "national NCP" retains a strong coordination role and is responsible for the NCP system strategy development in BiH.

4.2. Structure of LFH

Since the Legal and Financial Helpdesk of BiH is an integral part of the NCP service system and its structure has to be coherent with the overall structure of the national NCP system. Bearing in mind the decentralized character of the NCP BiH system, form and function of LFH must be adjusted to the element of geographical distribution of the NCPs and Focal Points.

Furthermore, LFH's operation has to be based on a demand driven model, taking into consideration the needs of end users. The Helpdesk must be user friendly and efficient, easily accessible to clients and provide sufficient communication tools for end users.

The Legal and Financial Helpdesk (LFH) must be very closely connected with the corresponding NCP for legal and financial issues (L&F NCP) who will at the same time coordinate all activities of LFH (*LFH coordinator*) and joint activities of NCPs and Focal Points within this service.
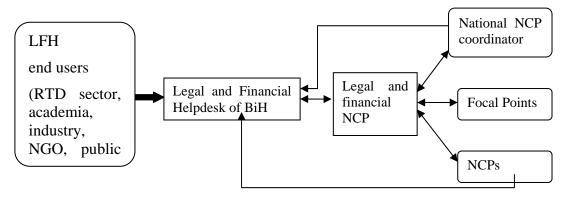
L&F NCP will cooperate with other NCPs and Focal Points in BiH during the implementation of LFH activities. At the same time, they will provide all the necessary support in regular activities of LFH. Considering the previous activities of L&F NCP, the well established network of contacts

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[1] NCP National Coordinator works at MoCA, while the Legal and Financial NCP works at the Ministry of Science and Technology of Republika Srpska.

[2] Universities in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, East Sarajevo, Tuzla and Mostar.

with researchers across BiH and the adequate technical resources of NCP BiH (available communication tools and technical support) it could be expected that there will be no significant obstacles in delivering services to LFH end users.

Chart 1:   Structure of FP7 Legal and Financial Helpdesk of BiH

In order to avoid any negative impact coming from geographical dispersion of NCPs on performance and efficiency of the LFH, it is required to closely involve NCPs in the work of the Helpdesk. In this way, LFH will be able to have good direct communication with all researchers in BiH, which ultimately leads to the achievement of equal geographical and institutional coverage of LFH within BiH by its activities. In this sense, it is necessary to develop further internal communication among NCPs as well.

4.3.   Operational capacities of NCP BiH system

NCP BiH system has on disposal its own server on which electronic database is stored and is daily managed by NCP staff. The running of the NCP web service (www.ncp-fp.ba) is also very important. It is updated regularly and allows NCP BiH system to promptly exchange information with their service users.

All NCPs have active e-mail accounts on the mail server, which enables fast internal communication, thus significantly reducing the decentralisation effect of the NCP BiH system and the geographical dispersion of NCPs and Focal Points.

The biggest advantage of the BiH NCP system, which can be a strong basis for further institutional strengthening, is its human resources: in addition to the seven highly trained NCPs (nominated in 2010), eleven Focal Points operate under the NCP system, providing significant support to its functions. These Focal Points are a sound potential for the future recruitment of candidates for NCP staff in BiH.

In respect to the principles of the document entitled "Guiding Principles for Setting Up Systems of National Contact Points (NCP systems) for the Seventh Framework Programme for RTD (FP7) [3]" and especially the part related to the required capacities of each NCP system, it can be clearly stated that currently the NCP BiH system meets all required elements and has full operational capacity to:

- Inform domestic public about importance, nature, principles and objectives of EU Framework Programme and exchange experience with colleagues from Europe;

- Provide technical assistance to different types of clients/customers (SMEs, academia, industry, etc.);

- Act as independent organisation, dedicated to its mission and avoid any kind of conflict of interest; and

- Act with complete confidentiality regarding the information which comes into its possession.

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[3] 12/12/2007/European Commission, DG RTD A1

5. Demands of LFH end users

In June 2010, the NCP BiH staff conducted a survey among some 60 researchers working at the BiH universities. They were asked to fill in a questionnaire of seven questions in order to identify demands and expectations of national researchers from LFH services. At the same time, the questionnaire was made in two versions, with minor differences. One version was forwarded to the researchers "FP7 beginners" while the other one to "FP7 champions".

All answers of FP7 beginners can provide very useful guidelines for work of the NCP Office and especially LFH Service. After summing up all the answers[4] a number of important conclusions can be drawn:

- There is a low level of prior awareness about the concept and importance of the FP7 programme despite the fact that dozens of info days dedicated to the promotion of FP7 and other EU RTD programs were organised by NCPs during previous years (only 5% of researchers "FP beginners" consider themselves well informed about the FP7 programme)

- Of concern may be the fact that as many as 52.5% of respondents indicated that they were not aware of the function and actions of the NCP system in BiH, while only 2.5% stated that they had been informed in an excellent way.

- The survey revealed that 55% of respondents (*researchers-beginners*) visit the NCP BiH website rarely and almost never, while only 15% of them have visited it regularly and every month.

- The analysis of the first groups of responses clearly indicates that the NCP system in BiH has to make additional promotional efforts and reach the research community by using all available communication tools, especially the web-based services, in order to persuade the FP7 researchers-beginners to visit the NCP website

- There is certain communication gap between the NCP BiH and its clients at this moment, considering that all respondents stated in this survey that although the content of the www.ncp-fp.ba was very useful, they visited it rarely.

The second group of answers, referring to the ranking of communication tools that "FP7 beginners" prefer, could provide strong guidelines on optimal LFH communication design:

- The respondents ranked Mail and the Individual (face-to-face) consultation (42.5%) as the most important communication tools, followed by the group presentations, training, and phone and Web-based services.

- Most of respondents did not consider the option of FAQs and Newsletters important, while opinions were divided regarding the communication via FP7 info days.

The last group of responses indicates the content of technical assistance expected from LFH:

- Out of 9 possible suggestions, the researchers pointed out their need for assistance in the field such as: FP7 financial rules, quick partner search, project management and implementation and EPSS system.

- Researchers-beginners consider that they do not need LFH help and assistance on issues like protection of intellectual property rights, the process of negotiating with EC, reporting to the EC and audit of projects.

- Similar answers were given to the last question regarding "*What kind of assistance researchers expect from FP7 NCP in terms of financial and legal rules*"; comments such as "…a timely and professional indiscriminate assistance, interpretation of FP7 rules, assistance in drafting the budget, etc."

- On the other hand, replies of "FP7 champions" indicate that they prefer Mail and Web-based services as the main communication tools, while they ranked "EPSS" and "Rules for FP7 project implementation" as the most critical issues need for assistance of LFH.

Based on this short analysis, several recommendations can be provided:

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[4] See Appendix I for more details

- LFH, as an integral part of NCP BiH service-system, has to be organised in very simple manner and offering a wide range of services for beginners and for experienced researchers.

- LFH assistance and LFH info-service have to put its focus on issues such as preparation of FP7 project proposals (identifying the suitable calls and topics, EPSS system) and rules for project implementation, using mail and web as main communication tools.

- Finally, NCP BiH system and LFH have to upgrade their web content in order to raise its visibility (promote intensively web page within the research community).

6. Communication design of LFH and related communication tools

The communication tools for the LFH must be designed in a way to ensure that all services for local researchers are provided efficiently and promptly. Under this framework, it is crucial that interaction/communication between Helpdesk and end users is balanced, thus avoiding misunderstandings and bureaucratic frictions that would slow down the operation and the "time of delivery" of LFH services and activities.

The design of the Helpdesk should be constructed around the principle of "cyclic communication rings[5]". Thus, the Helpdesk communication procedure needs to follow some predetermined principles in order to reduce the burden on LFH coordinator and supporting NCPs, and at the same time offer to the clients user friendly and on time services.

Based on the above, the FP7 Legal and Financial Helpdesk of BiH should use the following communication tools:

I)   Web-based services

- It is required to create on the web page of NCP BiH system (www.ncp-fp.ba) a separate sub-page titled "*FP7 Legal and Financial Helpdesk Service of BiH – LFHBiH ([www.fp7helpdesk.ba)](www.fp7helpdesk.ba)*". structured as follows:

1)   About LFH (Information and Contact Details)

- The Legal & Financial Helpdesk provides information on horizontal challenges of FP7 projects in the areas of administrative and financial management of FP7 projects or project proposals, through their evaluation and implementation to follow up, including new and relevant information about events taking place.

- Our experts are here to support you through all the project phases, from consortium building and project preparation to submission, implementation and management of your project.

- The LFH Service offers the possibility of direct phone or face to face interaction with potential applicants, etc.

- For more information please contact:
    - Desk 1 – expert
    - Desk 2 – expert

- Please browse through the various areas of our website to find out more about our services.

2)   News & Events

- News on upcoming calls, info days etc (with relevant links) as well as information and news on currently running FP7 projects

- Changes in regulatory and financial aspects (EU and national legislation)

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[5] The "cyclic communication rings" principle means that on the periphery of the communication ring (schedule of LFH communication tools to be used), is the communication service that is first offered for service users, as the final cyclic ring, while in the center of the ring is the last one offered and requires the most direct involvement of Helpdesk personnel.

3) Documents & supporting material

- Useful EC documents (specific programmes, participation rules, *Guide to Financial Issues.* Guide to IPR, Guide for EC Grant Beneficiaries, Guidance Notes on Project Reporting, etc.).

- General Documents & supporting material

- Documents & supporting material for SP Cooperation

- Documents & supporting material for SP People etc.

- A second distinction could be made through EU and national legislation and basic principles (VAT refund, national and international legal status of IPR, labour legislation, patent protection system, etc.).

4) Apply for FP7 grants

- Here, all project phases (project cycle) can be described in detail, with additional documents and advice. LFH will provide initial information on the entire process (from finding project partners to final report and audits). Basically here we have an A – Z guide. The section can also have PPT instructions and presentations and other on-line materials, training kits etc.

- Eligibility (what the eligibility criterion for a project participant includes and what the terms and rules are);

- Information on different project types;

- Information on partner search;

- Information on preparation of an application and project proposal submission (EPSS);

- Information on project proposal review;

- Information on contract negotiations prior to conclusion of a contract with EC;

- Information on Consortium Agreements;

- Information on internal & external management;

- Financial Guide (costs, budget, cost categories, staff, subcontracting, third party in project, financial reporting)

- Information on project completion & audits

- Rules on period to keep project archive

- Protection of Intellectual Property Rights

- List of FP 7 Auditors

5) Get in touch – stay online

- News alerts (general or specific ones for thematic areas). It is necessary to establish subscription and mail notification through mailing list.

- Online LFH (send requests and receive personalised answers)

- Free online resources to facilitate access to information on intellectual property rights.

6) Get direct support from LFH

- Announcement of organisation of different events by LFH (workshops, training courses, seminars, road shows, etc.).

7) Quick partner search option

8) Links

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- Direct links to FP7 legislation (http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/find-doc_en.htm; www.finance-helpdesk.org ; www.ipr-helpdesk.org).

9) FAQ section

10) Glossary of most important FP7 legal and financial terms

Content must be arranged as simply as possible, without excessive visual load and easy links to requested documents or answers to questions.

II) FAQs

FAQs – Frequently Asked Questions is a communication tool to be developed gradually, as LFH develops its own internal database of related questions from users and answers. At the same time, LFH must ensure not to overload the content of this tool by pointless or irrelevant issues.

III) E-mail

E-mail communication is one of the most important communication tools[6] for NCPs and should thus be treated with maximum attention in the process of designing LFH actions. An online email interaction system (online LFH) upon subscription must be offered to end users.

NCPs should practice LFH mail communications whenever it is possible.

IV) Phone

In addition to e-mail, another very important and intensive communication tool with clients is telephone interaction, especially during the period of technical preparation of project proposals and submission of applications to EC, and consequently there is an increase in the number of researcher's requests to NCP, when researchers tend to maintain phone interaction with NCP office. Contact detail list of LFH coordinator and NCPs and Focal Points will be published on LFH web site.

V) Face-to-face communication

Direct contacts with LFH clients should be practiced only in exceptional cases, in accordance with prescribed operational procedures and predefined priorities of LFH.

VI) Specialized training courses and workshops

Two to three times a year, LFH coordinator shall, in cooperation with the national NCP coordinator and other NCPs, organise specialised training courses and workshops devoted to subjects that are most interesting for researchers and other LFH clients (project management, financial rules of FP7; IPR issue in FP7; the budget calculations in the project proposal, implementation of project activities, etc.).

LFH coordinator and supporting NCPs should put additional effort to create optimal and good design of first two communication rings (web services and FAQs) which will be easy-to-consult and offering various information and useful links.

LFH communication design should direct the FP7 beginner researchers to use the first two communication tools mainly, while for FP7 champion researchers it may allow options for extensive use of other communication models (tools of the fourth and fifth communication ring).

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[6] This toll is ranked as 1th by the degree of priority (together with face-to-face communication) in survey conducted among domestic "FP7 begginer" researchers .

7. Operational procedures

All LFH operational procedures are logically connected with communication tools and with resources that are used in regular work. For each model of operational procedures an appropriate protocol should be designed including time frame for implementation, information on who will carry out the activities and final evaluation of the results achieved. All operational procedures are classified into three groups:

Group I – Communication with clients

LFH coordinator will maintain the FAQs tool in cooperation with supporting NCPs and Focal Points. All questions for NCPs and Focal Points sent via NCP mail server or LFH web-site will be selected by LFH coordinator and posted on LFH web site.

All questions sent via LFH mailbox on LFH web site will come directly on mail address of LFH coordinator (L&F NCP) and he/she is obliged to process them and send a response to the client in a period no longer than three days. He/she can require necessary interpretation or comment from other NCPs via LFH Intranet.

LFH coordinator is responsible for phone communication as well. His/her contact details (phone, Skype) are publicly announced on LFH web site and must be available from 8 to 16 hours on workdays. He/she is obliged to keep written records on all completed phone contacts, in accordance with NCP-QA system applied.

LFH coordinator and other supporting NCPs can arrange face-to-face communication with researchers, regarding technical assistance.

Group II – Dissemination, education and training

LFH coordinator is in charge of designing, updating and maintenance of web-based services for external LFH users. Prior to the public release of LFH web site and the relevant information, LFH coordinator will review and analyze previously prepared material together with other NCPs.

Specialised training courses and workshops devoted to FP7 legal and financial issues will be organized periodically. All NCPs and Focal Points in BiH will perform relevant assessments and analyses in relation to the number of necessary training courses and workshops, suitable timing and potential participants.

It is possible to establish additional operational procedures in order to raise the level of awareness on the FPs among the clients and the general public, such as:

- Publishing LFH leaflets,
- Short NCP-LFH brochures and printed materials, media presentations with a special focus;
- Web and video presentations etc.

Group III – Networking with neighbouring and EU partner Helpdesks

LFH coordinator and other NCPs must have long-term strategic goal of networking and cooperating with other partner FP7 Helpdesks as well as institutions and associations that have similar professional orientation.

8. LFH Intranet design

The aim of LFH Intranet is (1 to create a well-functioning tool for fast exchange of information and documents between LFH coordinator and supporting both the NCPs and Focal Points, and (2) to achieve higher level of information dissemination/awareness and to develop skills of all actors in NCP BiH system in order to be able to provide appropriate technical support and assistance for all LFH clients.

Having in mind these objectives, the LFH Intranet design has to be predetermined in accordance with:

- Future users of LFH Intranet;

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- Tasks to be performed on Intranet network;
- Type and quantity of information posted on LFH Intranet, which will be exchanged among Intranet users.

The best option is to create LFH Intranet homepage where NCPs, Focal Points and LFH coordinator can easily access, through the assigned username and password. The Intranet working area should differ from www.ncp-fp.ba homepage and will be split into 4 thematic/ working parts:

Working plan of LFH

Announcements for all future activities organized by or involving LHF, as well as general working plan for the next period (six months or 1 year), the distribution of tasks between NCPs and Focal Points, etc.

Document library (upload and download area)

- Option for download or upload of various documents, guides, reports, presentations and other materials.
- All collected materials is on the easy-to-read doc-list, clearly indicating who is the author and time of posting.

Forum

All NCPs and Focal Points who have access to LFH Intranet may communicate also with each other in real time and act in working area that is designed for the forum and dialogue. The LFH coordinator should initiate more engagement of NCPs and the Focal Points in joint discussion and comments exchange on this Forum.

Directory and links

All contact and other related details for NCPs and Focal Points having access to LFH Intranet are located in this part of Intranet, including those details which are not visible on the NCP homepage. An option of using specialized links such as www.finance-helpdesk.org, www.ipr-helpdesk.org and others is also offered there.

The NCP webmaster will be in charge of the LFH Intranet administration, technical realization and software management and system control.

9. Responsibilities of different NCP actors

Actors in NCP BiH system are responsible for different tasks within LFH, depending on their position in the BiH NCP system.

9.1.   LFH coordinator

LFH coordinator performs the following tasks:

- Acts as the NCP for legal and financial issues in BiH.
- Coordinates the work of LFH and its activities.
- Provides guidelines for designing LFH homepage and Intranet.
- Communicates with LFH clients.
- Administers and organises web-based services and other communication tools used in LFH.

- Organizes and implements training courses and workshops for LFH customers, together with the NCPs and Focal Points.

- Organises training on a continued basis for the NCPs and the Focal Points in financial and legal related issues of FP7.

- Recommends activities to the NCP BiH system to achieve better dissemination of LFH results.

- Works on networking and establishing partnership relations with similar Helpdesks in Europe.

- Prepares annual reports on the work of LFH.

9.2. *NCPs*

NCPs have the following tasks in the LFH:

- Contribute to the efforts of LFH (providing thematic or programme specific information, including calls for proposals; individual programme consultations and advisory; contributing to preparation of different LFH papers and presentations).

- Regularly contact with the LFH coordinator and provide him/her assistance in planning and updating web-based services.

- Submit proposals to LFH Coordinator for the FAQ section.

- Assist and participate in the technical organization of LFH training courses and seminars.

- Perform face-to-face meetings, phone contacts and mail communications with LFH end users.

- Notify LFH coordinator on all realized activities.

- Gather information and articles to contribute to the LFH newsletters.

- Actively participate in all LFH Intranet activities, and particularly in the forum.

- Carry out various activities to promote LFH BiH and disseminate its results.

9.3. *Focal points*

Focal points are responsible to the NCP Coordination Office. Scope of their activities covers the region/canton of their respective universities. Their main tasks and responsibilities include:

- Provision of general information and individual support for the participation of researchers in the Framework Programmes;

- Organisation of info-days and other LFH events at the universities and other institutions within the scope of their activities (canton/region);

- Presentation of activities at universities and other institutions within the scope of their activities (canton/region);

- Identification of new LFH customers at the universities and other institutions within the scope of their activities (canton/region);

- Promotion of LFH and NCP BiH activities within the region/canton of their responsibility;

- Daily update of the online database;

- Active participation on LFH Intranet, in case of access granted.

- Contribution to LFH web site (FAQ option) and newsletter and print material contents.

Annex 1:   NCP BiH Survey 2010

Forty questionnaires were collected from researchers and teachers from Universities of Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla, East Sarajevo and Mostar. Below is a brief analysis of their responses.

1) Researchers were offered 5 response-options for the first question of the questionnaire "*How much are you familiar with FP7 program*"; from 1-not enough to 5-excellent. The answers were as follows:

1- not enough	35%
2- enough	22.5%
3- satisfactory	20%
4- good	17.5%
5- excellent	5%

2) In the second question "*How well are you aware of the function and operation of FP7 NCP of BiH?*" the same response-option was offered, and the following results were obtained:

1- not enough	52.5%
2- enough	20%
3- satisfactory	10%
4- good	15%
5- excellent	2.5%

3) The third question was related to the frequency of visits of domestic researchers to NCP BiH website (www.ncp-fp.ba). Here are the results:

Regularly, every month	15%
Once in a couple of months	15%
Semi-annually	10%
Annually	5%
Rarely, almost never	55%

4) When they were asked to consider whether the existence of content such as www.ncp-fp.ba is useful, all respondents answered affirmatively 100%, Yes.

5) Question No. 5 was very important for the LFH future operation in terms of designing training and training for national researchers, and was related to the information necessary for national researchers in order to successfully prepare a FP7 project application (offered the following response: from 1-important to 5-irrelevant). The obtained results are as follows:

Response option	1	2	3	4	5
FP financial rules	47.5%	17.5%	12.5%	2.5%	20%
FP7 legal basis	30%	15%	12.5%	12.5%	30%
EC guiding documents related to FP7 (legal documents, guides, etc.)	35%	22.5%	12.5%	10%	20%
IPR protection	20%	12.5%	5%	25%	37.5%

EPSS in FP7	40%	0%	10%	17.5%	32.5%
Negotiation with EC	25%	25%	5%	15%	30%
Rules on implementation of project activities	42.5%	15%	7.5%	7.5%	27.5%
Reporting to EC and audit	32.5%	17.5%	7.5%	7.5%	35%
Quick partner search	45%	12.5%	12.5%	7.5%	22.5%
Others:	-	-	-	-	-

6) The penultimate question in this questionnaire was targeted on the future requirements of end-users in terms of LFH communication design. Respondents had the option to rank future LFH communications tools by the degree of priority, and to define what mode of communication with the NCP staff was considered most useful (offered the response options of 1-important to 5-irrelevant). The obtained results are as follows:

Response option	1	2	3	4	5
Individual consultation (face-to-face)	42.5%	12.5%	7.5%	7.5%	30%
Phone	30%	12.5%	17.5%	12.5%	27.5%
Mail	42.5%	17.5%	10%	7.5%	22.5%
Data offered on the web site	30%	22.5%	20%	7.5%	20%
Group presentations and trainings	32.5%	20%	10%	22.5%	15%
FP7 info-days	25%	15%	30%	10%	20%
Newsletters	17.5%	12.5%	22.5%	15%	32.5%
FAQs (frequently asked questions and responses)	10%	17.5%	15%	17.5%	40%

Annex 2: Summary of instructions for LFH staff

Interested researchers, research administrators, managers of companies and other clients should be given information on the applied procedures and instructions when submitting an FP7 application, implementing project and reporting to EC.

LFH clients, before the application process, should be given precise and clear instructions on *consortium building; regulation of mutual rights and obligations of future partners; importance of Consortium contracts or letters of interest; useful links to find partners, etc.*

Highlight the importance of the Work Programme (WP) and give them the necessary information and instructions to identify appropriate activities, areas and topics.

Point to the Information Package and required downloading of the Work Programme and in particular the Guide for Applicants (*relevant information: the type of financial schemes, the maximum budget of the topic, objectives and expected impact of the topic, composition of the consortium, content of project applications A and B part, technical requests of application, PDF format and size of documents, evaluation, etc*).

Provide instructions for determining the PIC number and its validation (direct them to the link: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/appmanager/participants/portal, explain the importance of PIC and how this on-line tool works, explain the procedure for determining the PIC, to give instructions for the validation of the PIC and the determination of the LEAR-a and send the necessary supporting documents to EC in Brussels where information about the institution and the LEAR will be validated.

Explain to customers the function of EPSS, determination of access codes and the role of coordinators and other participants in EPSS, working areas of EPSS and the method of filling out a form, uploading documents on EPSS and sending applications.

Give brief instruction to the client in order to make easier calculation of the budget of the project partner and filling out A3.1 and A3.2 forms; explain the rate categories of operating costs and advise them to choose an adequate rate calculation for overheads; explain the term "Man-Month" and the maximum workload in the project, calculate salaries of researchers in the project, etc.

Explain to the client the structure and form of part B of the application; point at the appropriate Guide for Applicants; the distribution of the project on work packages; content and structure of the Work package; consider the list of deliverables and milestones; review of the chapter of project implementation and whether the management procedures of the consortium are good; consider dissemination plan in the project; in the end, go with the client through the application and check all the elements of an application under a check-list of issues from the Guide for Applicants.

During the implementation of project activities, give useful advice to clients, according to the documents from the link http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/find-doc_en.html: Guide to Financial Issues, Guide to IPR, Guide for Beneficiaries, Guidance notes on project reporting and other documents-guides.

Give the information to clients about the payment modalities for EC grant, certification methodology, and certification of average personal costs and auditing of the project.

During the reporting period, provide technical assistance for filling out Form C.

Annex 3:   FP7 Legal and Financial Glossary

Article 169

Article 169 of the EC Treaty allows the participation of the European Community in the RTD programmes undertaken by several Member States (apart from any Community framework), including the participation in the structures created for the execution of those programmes.

In practical terms, Article 169 foresees the participation of the Community to the joint implementation of national programmes. Therefore the Community does not only support the simple coordination of national programmes but rather participates actively.

Beneficiary/ Coordinator

Consortium participant which concludes a contract with EC and acts as a Project Coordinator.

Call for Proposals

An announcement, in the EU Official Journal and on the CORDIS web-site,

Call fiche

The part of the work programme giving the basic data for a call for proposals (e.g. topics covered, budget, deadline for application etc.).

Certificate on Financial Statement

Certificate used to enable the European Commission to ensure that the costs charged to a European Community funded research project meet the conditions for financial support.

Certificate on Methodology

Additional option in FP7 for some contractors to use certified methodology, but only for personal and indirect costs.

Collaborative projects

For certain funding schemes it is mandatory to form a project consortium. Collaborative project are: small or medium-scale focused project; large scale integrated projects; research for the benefit of specific groups (SMEs, CSOs).

Consortium Agreement

Written agreement signed between project partners.

CA (Coordination actions)

Funding scheme with multinational consortium, aiming at networking and coordination of RTD and innovation activities, dissemination of best practice and establishing of joint information systems or expert groups.

CORDIS (Community Research and Development Information Service)

The Community information service and the EU main web-site for research and development, providing easy and simple access to the information, programmes and helping in promotion and exploitation of the results of research.

Deliverable

15

A deliverable represents a verifiable output of the project. Normally, each work package (WP) will produce one or more deliverables during the project lifetime. Deliverables are often written reports but can also take another form.

Description of Work (DoW)

The Description of Work (also called Technical Annex) is a binding part to the contract (Annex I to the contract or GA).

Direct costs

Direct costs are all eligible costs which can be attributed directly to the project and are identified by the beneficiaries as such, in accordance with its accounting practice and its internal rules.

Dissemination

Other activities in the project with aim to spread message, news or information to as many people as possible.

Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS)

Internet-based application for electronic FP7 proposal submission system.

Eligibility criteria

The minimum conditions which a proposal must fulfil if it is to be retained for evaluation. The eligibility criteria are generally the same for all FP7 proposals and relate to submission before the deadline, minimum participation of partners, completeness and scope of project proposal.

Evaluation criteria

The criteria against which eligible proposals are assessed by three independent experts. The evaluation criteria are general and the same for all FP7 proposals and relate to S/T quality, impact and project implementation (ethical issues and gender aspect are not assessed but have influence on evaluators).

Evaluation Summary Report

The assessment of a particular proposal following the evaluation by independent experts. This report normally contains both comments and scores for each of the three evaluation criteria.

Ethical review

Ethical Reviews are an integral part of the legal requirements of FP7. The purpose of this review is to ensure that FP7 ethical rules are complied with and that the European Union is not supporting research which would be contrary to the fundamental ethical principles of FP7.

Form C

Annex VI of the Grant Agreement; form for financial reporting in FP7 projects.

Funding scheme

The funding scheme or type of project, i.e. form of financial support within the project by EC.

Grant agreement

The agreement which EC concludes with the project consortium (signed only by a project coordinator).

Grant Preparation Form (GPF)

An electronic form with all administrative and financial information about the project and consortium.

Guarantee Fund

Mutual financial instrument establishing solidarity among project partners. It aims primarily at covering the financial risk of EC or the consortium, which can occurr during the project implementation. The contribution to this fund is 5% of the maximum EC financial contribution to the project.

International Cooperation Partner Countries (ICPC)

Partner countries of international cooperation. List of countries, classified per receipts is at ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/icpc-list.pdf.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs or overheads are all those eligible costs which are not directly attributed to the project activities.

Integrated Project (IP)

Collaborative project which includes several partners (15-20) and focuses on target research. . Expected result is generating new knowledge necessary for the implementation of thematic priorities.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

The rights regarding protection of intellectual property, i.e. the rights referring to protection, dissemination and application of new knowledge.

LEAR

Every legal entity (project participant) nominates one person known as LEAR (Legal Entity Appointed Representative) who is authorized to manipulate legal data in electronic data base.

Milestone

Milestones are critical/control points where decisions are to be made with regard to the next stage of the project.

NEF

Negotiation Facility - online tool used during negotiation process with the aim to collect legal and financial and other data on project participants referring to project proposal.

Network of Excellence

Multinational consortium projects necessary for the promotion of long-term integration of education and scientific and research work and as support for integrated research activities in strategic areas of EU competitiveness. The aim of NoE is to overcome fragmentation of research organizations in EU.

Official Journal (OJ)

Official Journal of EU, link: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOIndex.do.

Overhead rate

Rates of indirect cost calculation (20% and 60%).

Part A

The administrative part of a project proposal which contains only administrative data and project budget proposal.

Part B

The part of a project proposal which includes technical details and data about the consortium

Participants

Participants in the project proposal or approved project - members of consortium.

PIC code

All institutions participating in FP7 are assigned Participant Identification Codes (PIC-9 digits). The PIC is a unique 9-digit number for each organization. The PIC enables organizations to identify themselves faster in all transactions related to FP7 proposals and grants.

Programme Committee

A group of official national representatives who assist the European Commission in implementing the Framework Programme.

Project officer

EC officer who is in charge of communication with the contractor.

Receipts

There are three forms of receipts in FP7: financial transfers or their equivalent to the beneficiary from third parties; contribution in kind from third parties; income generated by the project.

Reserve list

Due to budgetary constraints, it may not be possible to support all project proposals that have been evaluated positively. In such cases, proposals on a reserve list may only be financed only if funds become available following the completion of negotiations of projects from the main list.

Simplified Method

Indirect costs calculation method.

Risk-Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF)

One of FP7 funding schemes. Annex II of the GA allows the European Commission to provide a grant (Coordination and Support Action-CSA) to the European Investment Bank (EIB) to increase the capacity of the Bank to manage risk.

SME

Small or medium-sized enterprises which fulfil the following requirements: employ fewer than 250 persons and whose annual turnover does not exceed 50 million euros and/or annual balance sheet total does not exceed 43 million euro.

STREP

Specific Targeted Research Projects – research projects focused on generating and promotion of new knowledge.

Subcontractor

Subcontractor is a third party in a project, the legal entity that is not the beneficiary of ECGA nor does it sign it.

Support Actions

Type of FP7 funding scheme. Single or multinational consortium project that can be used to fund events such as conferences, seminars, working groups, communication activities, etc. within thematic priorities.

URF

Unique Registration Facility – before signing grant agreements in FP7, project participants have to be validated by EC in terms of their legal status and registration as a legal entity. The principle in FP7 is that the validation of each legal entity is done only once.

Weightings

The scores for certain evaluation criteria may be multiplied by a weighting factor before the total score is calculated. Generally, weightings are set to one; but there may be exceptions and applicants should check the Guide for Applicants, published with the call.

Work package

A work package is a major sub-division of the proposed project with a verifiable end-point - normally a deliverable or a milestone in the overall project. They can further be divided into tasks.

Work Programme

A formal document of the European Commission that sets out the research objectives and topics to be supported financially It also contains additional information such as details and schedule of calls for project proposals, indicative budget and evaluation procedures.

http://cordis.europa.eu/guidance/glossary_en.html - detailed glossary of FP7.