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User Selection of first Open Call

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Abstract

This document describes the call preparation, publication, and evaluation of the first Open Call in OFELIA.

The competitive call was conducted in accordance with the “Guideline for Coordinators planning a competitive call for additional beneficiaries in an ICT Integrated Project or Network of excellence” that was published by the EU[1]. The information and advertisement strategy preparing the Open Call is documented along with the procedure of selection of the reviewers, the actual evaluation meeting and the first steps to integrate the new partners into the existing consortium.

21 proposals were received by the deadline of March 30, of which only two could be funded.

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Imprint

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Executive summary

The evaluation report was produced in accordance with the “[Guideline for Co-ordinators](#)” and the “[Guidelines for Applicants](#)” [1][2]. It describes in detail the process that was implemented for setting up, executing and evaluating the outcome of the first Open Call in OFELIA.

The evaluation resulted in a ranked list of proposals, of which OFELIA intends to have the first two funded, namely the proposals named “EXOTIC” and “VERTIGO”.

The procedure has been implemented for the first time, and several questions that came up in the process are discussed in a conclusion chapter.

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Abbreviations

OFELIA	OpenFlow in Europe – Linking Infrastructure and Applications
DoW	Description of work

1 Preparation and publication of the call

Following the guidelines of the two documents that the EU provided to the project coordinator the call was set up to close March 30, 2011, i.e., at the end of the project month M7¹.

The call text was published on February 9, 7 weeks before the closure date. On the same date, the first advertisement for the call appeared in the February edition of IEEE Communications Magazine (see Figure 1). Further publications of (smaller) advertisements appeared in the German newspaper “DIE ZEIT” and the supplement for higher education of “The Times”, UK. The project partners also used their channels and newsletters to disseminate the announcement of the call.

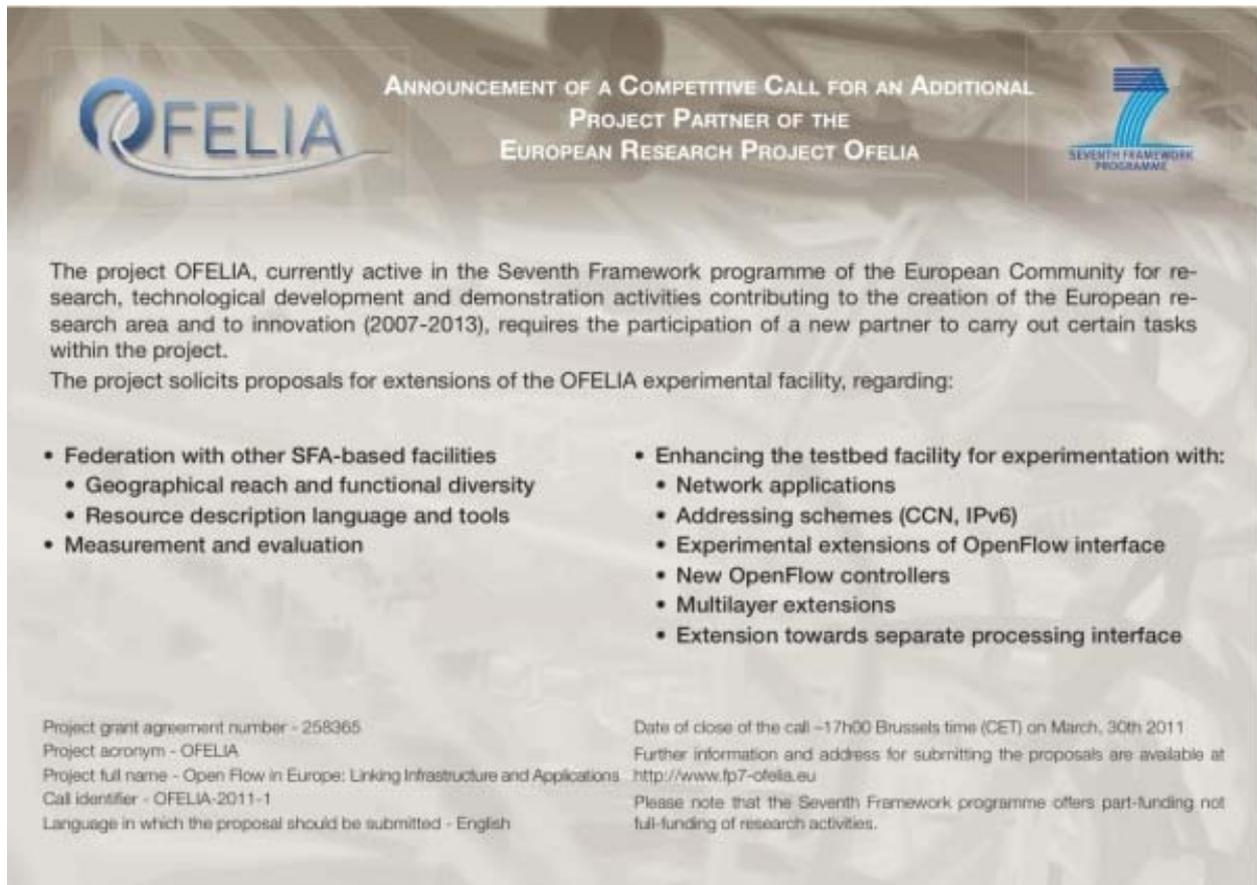


Figure 1: Advertisement as published in IEEE Communications Magazine, Feb 2011 issue.

A web site (<http://www.fp7-ofelia.eu/open-calls/>) offered – apart from a general description of the call process and the call text – [a description of the 5 OFELIA islands](#). An [FAQ section](#) was added that answered incoming questions (through the given email address opencalls@fp7-ofelia.eu).

1.1 Open Call Info Day

An Open Call Information Day was organized in Brussels by the FIRESTATION Coordination Action. Here, three of the FIRE projects of FP7 call 5 (BonFIRE, TEFIS, OFELIA) presented their plans for the Open Calls along with the desired thematic areas for new proposals. In the afternoon, potential proposal authors presented their ideas and discussed them with the representatives of the individual islands. Apart from

¹ The original project start date was anticipated to be September 1st in the Grant Agreement, leading to shift of all deliverables and milestones by 1 month.

F.-J. Westphal (DT) and H. Woesner (EICT) there were also 3 of the 5 island coordinators present: D. Colle (IBBT Ghent), R. Nejabati (UESsex), M. Körner (TU-Berlin). This participation helped when it came to answering detailed questions about feasibility of individual ideas.

After some reluctance of the potentially competing proposers a lively and open discussion emerged from the apparent joint technical interest. This was followed up in the next weeks by individual phone conferences and emails.

1.2 Selection of the reviewers

The selection of the reviewers turned out to be not trivial. The original list of potential reviewers that was the result of a call for nominations inside the OFELIA consortium quickly turned out to be short, as a number of the candidates declared conflicts of interest, because they were planning own contributions. Based on the estimate of ~15 proposals we decided to nominate 5 reviewers as each proposal had to be assessed by at least two reviewers. All 5 reviewers were experienced EU reviewers, a fact that made the review process astonishingly smooth.

2 Evaluation of the proposals

21 proposals were submitted to the email address provided in the call by 5pm on Wednesday, March 30, 2011. The total budget of all proposals sums to 4.81 M€ and the requested funding to 3.54 M€ which means that the call was roughly 10 times oversubscribed. The proposal names and origin are shown in **Figure 2**.

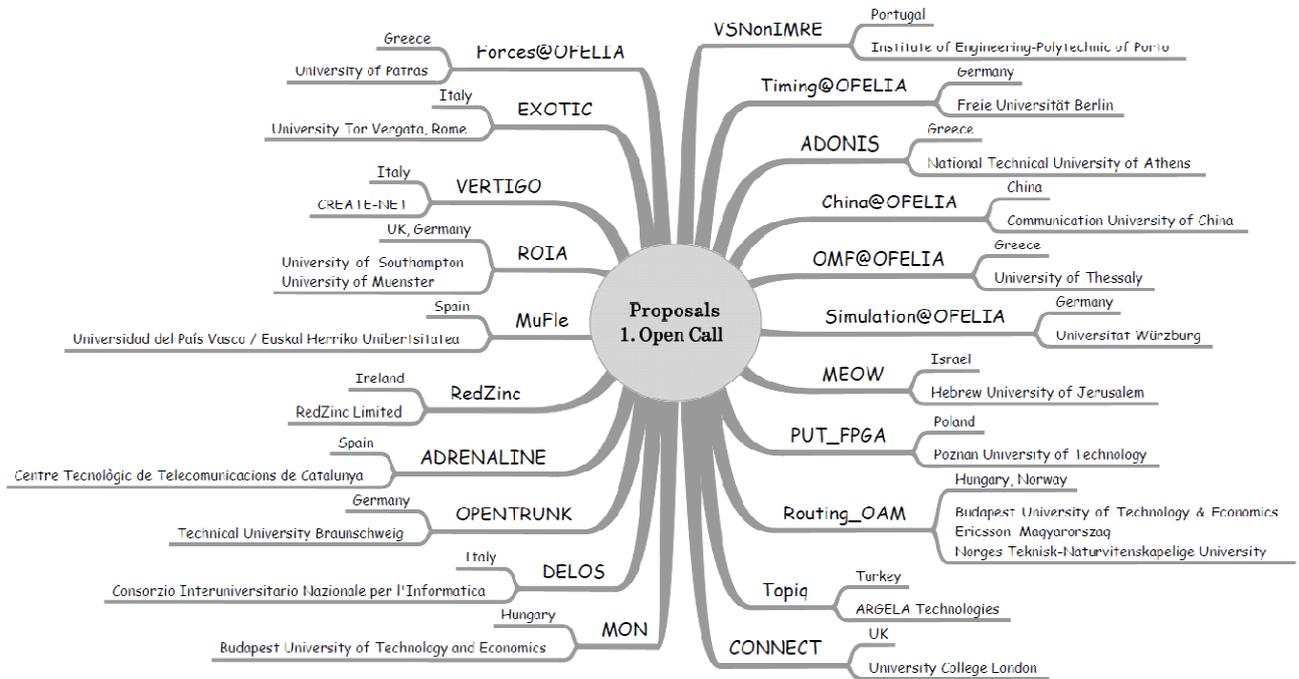


Figure 2: Proposals received for the 1st call. 4 came from outside of the EU, namely Turkey, China, Norway, and Israel.

The proposals were assigned to the alphabetically ordered list of reviewers in the timely order of their arrival, no thematic assignment was attempted. A web tool has been created in order to help the reviewers in their task. Here, additional information like the Description of Work (DoW) of the project and guidelines for the review were provided. Reviewers could log in using personalized credentials and download their respective assigned proposals. The review comments were invisible to the respective other reviewer until April 12, at which point in time the reviews were mutually shown in order to prepare the consensus meeting. This meeting took place in Berlin on April 14, 2011. All reviewers except Prof. Rebensburg could participate, which means that 4 reviewers were present.² In order to give logistic support and answer questions regarding the project, the project coordinator and the WP3 leader participated in the consensus meeting as well. The actual harmonization and the final ranking was prepared by the reviewers alone.

² One reviewer could not attend the consensus meeting, and further discussions were postponed to email. Eventually this reviewer’s evaluation of the proposals were very similar to those of the other reviewers, which made further consensus meetings unnecessary.

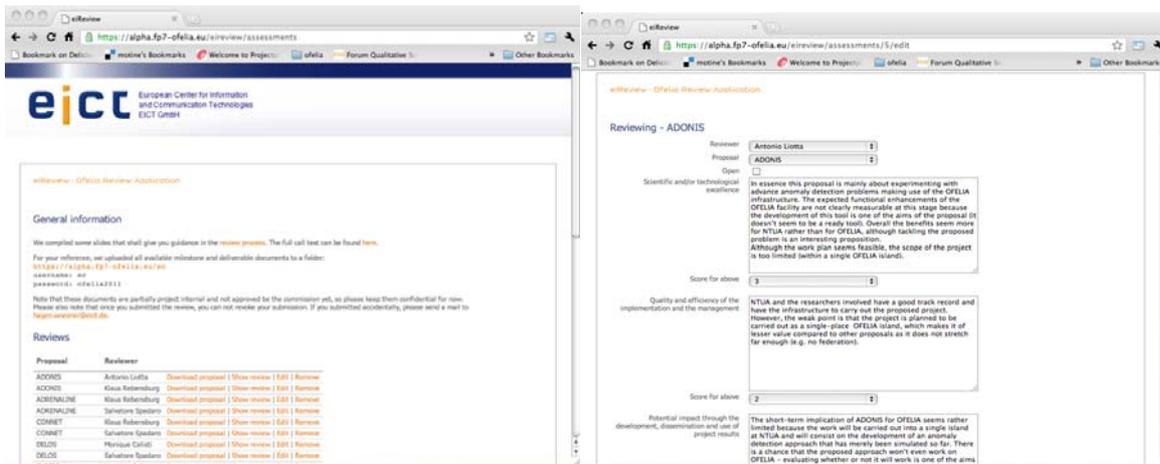


Figure 3: Screen shots of the evaluation web tool *eireview*.

2.1 Summary of the evaluation

The result of the ranking was collected in a table in the review report. The two highest ranked proposals were selected by the project to become new partners. After receiving consensus from the authors the coordinator published the two proposals internally to the consortium and received no objections against the two partners, thus, no commercial conflicts between existing partners and the new partners are being expected.

3 Steps to include the new partners

The evaluation led to two partners that would eventually join the OFELIA consortium:

Additional beneficiary	Proposal Title	Proposal Acronym	Coordinating person
CNIT (Consorzio Nazionale Interuniversitario per le Telecomunicazioni), Italy www.cnit.it	EXtending OpenFlow to Support a future Internet with a Content-Centric model	EXOTIC	Prof. Nicola Blefari Melazzi
CREATE-NET (Center for REsearch And Telecommunication Experimentation for NETworked communities), Italy www.create-net.org	Virtual Topology Generalization in OpenFlow networks	VeRTIGO	Dr. Elio Salvadori

By the time of writing this document, the new partners have been integrated into the Description of Work and the work plan in the NEF tool. Two new WPs were created, one for each selected proposal. An additional number of ~20 person months was introduced into existing work packages in order to integrate the new partners with the ongoing work in OFELIA. This is especially useful for WP4, regarding the construction of two new OFELIA islands in Trento and Rome/Catania and for WP5 for the integration of the new features into the OFELIA control framework.

The new partners are scheduled to start working August 1st, 2011, i.e. 4 months after the closure of the first OFELIA Open Call.

4 Conclusion

Overall, the process of soliciting new partners through Open Calls is promising as it increases visibility of the project as a welcome side-effect. In addition, the definition of the call by the running project ensures that the topics are accurately defined to target specific deficits of the project.

Many issues are still unanswered, like the question of confidentiality of proposals. In the Open Call, one of the objectives is to attract users and to harvest ideas for improving a research facility that is being constructed for all researchers interested in OpenFlow.

The general approach to proposals in the EU context is however to keep them as confidential as possible.

The current plan to get across this barrier is to set up a workshop in autumn that would give the non-winning proposers the chance to present and discuss their ideas and potentially form consortia for next calls, including the second Open Call opening in February 2012.

In the meantime, the workshop has been fixed to take place associated to ECOC 2011 (European Conference on Optical Communication) on September 18, 2011 in Geneva/Switzerland.

References

- [1] http://www.ict-fire.eu/fileadmin/documents/open_calls/Guidance_note_-_project_coordinators_5.pdf
- [2] http://www.ict-fire.eu/fileadmin/documents/open_calls/Guide_for_applicants.pdf