Procedure involving research contracts with the EU Commission

This is a non-binding translation of the Swedish document ”Handläggningsordning för kontrakt med EU-kommissionen”

Background

The reason for the existence of a formalised administrative system in light of EU-contracts is that they place unique/specific demands on organisations intending to participate. The purpose thus is to provide procedural support in the preparation of work associated with EU funded research projects, with the added goal of safeguarding the quality and efficiency of LiU’s participation in the programme.

Key Principle for Signatories

When participating in EU-funded research projects, Linköping University, and not the individual researcher or institution, functions as the signatory in contracts with the European Commission. Agreements, contract documents, contracts and any changes made to the contract must first be signed in accordance with Linköping University’s delegation of authority (See LiU's regulations: “Regelsamlingen”)

Procedures for applications and contracts with the EU Commission

Researchers are responsible for the following:

* The Prefect and the primary applicant sign the 'Approval of conditions for participation in EU-funded research projects' and that copies of the signed approval as well as the project application are forwarded to Grants Office.

* The project must be issued/assigned a project registration number by the corresponding department under which all associated project documents are to be filed. Note that this is a mandatory step required prior to receiving approval signatures from the Head of Grants Office and the University’s research director.

* All contract documents are to be reviewed and signed by the university’s legal department (representative)

* That all solicited documents, after being signed, are forwarded to the EU Commission, alternatively the project coordinator, and that the documents comply with the EU Commission's conditions.
To inform Grants Office of the application's progress/outcome, and to send a copy of the evaluation results to Grants Office – directly, if not soon, after receiving notification from the EU Commission. This, as well as associated information, is used as a source of valuable information regarding LiU’s participation and in guiding future applications.

The Principal Investigator (primary researcher) holds responsibility in registering and making certain a project documentation is kept up to date.

**Workflow for participation in EU’s Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development**

**Grants Office – single point of service**

Grants Office functions as a portal regarding information for those interested in participating in EU’s Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. Grants Office will inform researchers, finance staff and other stakeholders about the Commission's rules for the program, application processes and projects, and may also be helpful in referring questions further, for example, legal matters to the proper representatives depending on the nature of the query. These two features help extend knowledge facilitation, and assist in providing continuous support for both researchers and institutions prior to application and also during the project.

**The application including budget and agreement between researchers and institutions**

Grants Office provides support for both researchers and institutions during project preparation and review of applications, in accordance with the EU Commission's regulations and, further, in consultation with the researcher and the institution, draw up a budget for the project. The department will prepare the document titled 'Approval of conditions for participation in EU-funded research projects' in conjunction with the application that is to be signed by the researcher and department head. That basically means that the researcher and the department are in agreement regarding the conditions applicable to a possible contract with the EU Commission.

**Grant Agreement Preparation Forms (GPF)**

In cases where the researcher is invited by the EU Commission to contract negotiations, a Grant Agreement Preparation Form shall be established. Grants Office, in conjunction with the department’s administration, assists the researcher with the preparation of the Grant Agreement Preparation Form. This document should be signed according to the LiU’s delegation of authority. Grants Office will inform the legal department that the application has been granted and provides feedback to the researcher regarding impending contract management.

**Consortium Agreement (CA)**

Consortium agreements are drawn-up by the coordinator in consultation with other consortium partners, and are to be signed by an authorized signatory of each party. For those cases where LiU is the coordinator, someone at LiU's legal function shall participate in the development of the agreement. In cases where LiU is a partner, the legal function shall review
Due notice shall be given to the legal function, preferably, once the initial discussions on the consortium agreements within the project have been initiated. The researcher is responsible for keeping the project coordinator informed. At the request of the researcher, someone at LiU’s legal function can, in certain exceptional cases, negotiate and communicate directly with the project coordinator. This assumes that the negotiating platform, according to the judgement of legal services, includes issues that are difficult to resolve without consulting lawyers.

**Researcher affirmation concerning the EU-funded projects**

Since the conditions for EU-funded research projects differ from that of Swedish-financed projects, all researchers involved in the project must sign a document titled "Researcher affirmation concerning the EU-funded projects" in connection with the establishment of the Consortium Agreement (CA) and Model Grant Agreement. The certificate means that the researcher has read and approved the rights and obligations arising in relation to her/him for the two contracts. The principal researcher must also ensure that the document is signed by all concerned researchers and registered and archived at the department.

**Model Grant Agreement (MGA)**

The EU-Commission-approved Grant Agreement Preparation Form results in a Model Grant Agreement. This is standardized and is agreed upon by the European Commission and the project’s coordinator on behalf of the consortium. Other parties accede to the Model Grant Agreement by signing the form and sending the Form A - Accession of Beneficiaries to the Grant Agreement - to the coordinator. Grants Office informs the Economics and Research Financing department (EFA - Avdelningen för ekonomi- och forskningsfinansiering) that the contract has been established.

**Amendments to the contract documents**

Changes made to a project within its duration must be amended, either in revision or included as an addendum to the contract agreements, which further must be approved and signed in accordance with Linköping University’s delegation of authority (See LiU’s regulations: “Regelsamlingen”). Additions and changes to the CA should always be reviewed by the university’s legal representation (department) and then signed/verified at the same level of authority as the original document/agreement.

**Financial Reporting “Financial Statement”**

Financial Statements shall be continuously produced by the financial administration of the institution/department in consultation with the researcher and, if necessary, with support from Grants Office. Reports/statements shall be reviewed and verified by the administrative staff responsible for the project’s finances. All financial reports submitted to the European Commission shall be approved and signed by the financial signatory (ekonomiintendent) or corresponding representative at the institution.

**Certificate on the Financial Statements (CFS)**

Most project types (however not all, and based at certain levels/amounts of funding) require, financial documentation/reports or certificates called "Certificate on the Financial Statements”
(CFS). It is therefore important that all individual principal researchers take note of the EU contract and remain informed regarding specific changes made to the project’s status. Information provided in the “Financial Statement” forms the basis under review, and for which the CFS is issued. Audits are to be contracted and conducted via external/independent financial service experts. Principal researchers should contact LiU’s Grants Office when the CFS is to be issued.

For more information on participation in EU-funded research:


email: grantsoffice@liu.se

Appendix 1: Approval of conditions for participation in EU-funded research projects

Appendix 2: Researcher affirmation concerning EU-funded projects

This document replaces
Handläggningsordning för kontrakt inom EU:s sjunde ramprogram för forskning och teknisk utveckling (dnr LiU-2012-01016)

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