

# Start with a good idea

- Define the science case of your project
  - why is it interesting?
  - what will you learn from these observations?
  - how will it change our understanding of the field?
- Make the science case as crisp as possible
  - what is the new idea?
  - what makes these observations so interesting?
  - be explicit



ESO Call for Proposals – P84  
Proposal Deadline: 1 April 2009, 12:00 noon CEST

# Bring your idea across

- Your proposal is competing with almost 1000 others
- Oversubscription typically around 3 to 8
  - true for all major facilities
- Define who is your audience
  - (this is similar to a talk)
    - the panel consists of astronomers chosen in wide fields (cosmology, galaxies, ISM and planets, stellar evolution)
      - at most there is one expert of your field in the panel
      - make sure she agrees with what you say

# Bring your idea across

- Make your science understandable
  - make it as simple as possible for the panel to understand your science and proposal
  - get to the point immediately
  - be explicit, do not assume that the panel will work out what you meant
  - it is most likely that you will be the 20<sup>th</sup> proposal to be read during that day ...
  - if the referee does not understand what you say you have lost
    - there is no possibility to check the literature

# Bring your idea across

- Make your science understandable (cont.)
  - avoid jargon
  - avoid acronyms, which may not be clear to everybody
    - what was  $\epsilon$  Eri Ba again?
    - $H_0$  may be understood by most,  $w'$  needs explanation
    - if you need acronyms or special terms explain them
  - avoid complicated language
    - use simple English

# Some technical tips

- Write your abstract first
  - this is the one paragraph that is guaranteed to be read by everybody
  - you have to be able to summarise the excitement in one paragraph
  - revisit your abstract several times during the writing and improve it
- Be as clear as you can
  - you have to get the referees excited as well
    - this is easier for some fields than for others
  - State your goals and plans early and as simple as you can

# More technical tips

- Write a consistent proposal
  - have you selected the best suited instrument for your observations?
  - the exposure times and the target sample have to match your science case
  - there is a good chance one referee will pick up on any inconsistencies
  - exposure times have to make sense, use the ETCs
  - figures (tables) should help the text and be relevant

# More technical tips

- Take the instructions seriously
  - any proposal, which does not provide the requested information, damages itself
  - read the relevant parts of the Call for Proposals
- Do not cheat
  - give all the requested information honestly
  - if the panel catches you, you will have a difficult time in future proposal rounds as well

# Resubmissions

- We all have had proposals rejected
  - and yes, sometimes it really hurts
- Address comments from a previous submission
  - be clear what has changed and how the proposal has improved
- Why did the panel not understand your proposal?
  - this is not only their fault
  - be more explicit, more direct, crystal clear



# Resubmissions

- Continuation of programmes
  - address the new goals
  - explain why you need a bigger sample
  - what has changed since the last proposal?