

Evaluation and ranking of applications



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- tools and methods for efficient call management »

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General aspects of the evaluation of the cofund call

- **Mandatory rules of the EC (Grant Agreement):**
 - 2-step evaluation
 - 1-st step: review at national or trans-national level → process to be decided by the consortium (not controlled by the EC)
 - 2nd step: single international peer review → evaluation by at least 3 independent experts on the basis of the following criteria:
 - Excellence
 - Impact
 - Quality and efficiency of the implementation
 - Proposals must be ranked according to the evaluation results and the selection must be made on the basis of this ranking

Note:

- *The call documents specifying the procedures should be submitted at least 30 days in advance of the launch of the call to the EC officer for validation*
- *The call should remain open for the submission of proposals for at least 60 days*
- *The presences of independent observer is mandatory for the 2nd step of the evaluation*

1st step of the evaluation

- **Types of evaluation:**
 - National (administrative) eligibility check → each agency verifies eligibility of its national participants ONLY according to the administrative rules
 - Pros:
 - Very rapid → no scientific evaluation → almost all projects go to the 2nd stage
 - Cons:
 - Can be applied only for a low number of applications
 - National (scientific) eligibility check → each agency decides individually on the selection of the projects including its national participants
 - Pros:
 - No need to engage transnational experts
 - Each agency can easily apply its national rules
 - Cons:
 - National decision strongly impact transnational project → researchers do not know in advance if their partners will be selected or not. Impacts transparency of the process
 - International peer review → remote or face-to-face evaluation by international independent experts
 - Pros:
 - Decreases the work of applicants as pre-proposals are less detailed than full proposal
 - Allows rapid elimination of projects that do not fully fit in the scope of the call (but such decision must be taken by experts)
 - The applicants receive the decision of peer review international panel that evaluate the pre-proposal as a whole and not individual national criteria
 - Useful when high number of applications is expected
 - Cons:
 - Increases the work of call secretariat
 - More time consuming

1st step of the evaluation – other issues

■ Decision on cut off number (N°of applications that go to the 2nd stage):

○ Can be based on:

- Total budget → for example the total budget of projects selected should not exceed 3x of the total budget of the call
- National budget → the number of projects including specific national partners selected should not exceed 3x budget allocated per agency

Note:

- *Such “individual” decisions impact the other partners/agencies that are involved in the project and therefore should be agreed from the start and described in the call text and guideline for applicants; it is also important that all funders participate to the call with an appropriate budget to fund their research community*
- *Multiple examples show that the success rate of a specific country is not comparable for the 1st and 2nd stage of the evaluation (example: some countries have a high oversubscription rate in the 1st step and very few projects selected in the 2nd)*
- Number of proposals → for example not more than 3x of proposals to be funded go to the 2nd stage
- Score threshold → for example all proposals with score above 10 go to the 2nd stage

■ Widening/inclusiveness concepts:

- Opening of projects for inclusion of new/additional partners from countries with low initial success rate → increases chances of success of such additional research groups and spending of national budgets of relevant countries

2nd step of the evaluation

■ Single international peer review:

- Fully remote evaluation → each project is evaluated by at least 3 independent experts. Includes consensus remote discussion.
 - Pros:
 - Lower costs → no face to face meeting
 - Cons:
 - The variability of scoring of experts may strongly impact evaluation → consensus discussion and final consensus score must be performed!
 - Needs monitoring of the consensus discussion by the call secretariat
 - Remote evaluation combined with panel discussion → independent experts evaluate projects in remote mode and the consensus is made during the face to face meeting

Note: such process may involve a combination of experts, for example experts that evaluate only in remote mode + experts that evaluate the projects and are members of the panel

- Pros:
 - The face to face meeting allows in depth discussion on projects and consultation of the whole panel before the final decision is taken
 - The mix of remote and panel evaluators is useful in case of complex projects where opinion of very specific experts is needed
 - Less work for the call secretariat as there is no need to monitor remote consensus discussion
- Cons:
 - Higher costs → needs organization of F2F meeting

■ **Rebuttal step:** this step may be added allowing response of researchers to the evaluations of experts before the final face to face meeting and decision on projects recommended for funding

- Pros:
 - Highly appreciated by the research community
 - Allows clarification of some issues/misunderstandings in the evaluations of experts and decrease appeals
- Cons:
 - More work for the call secretariat
 - Longer evaluation process
 - Needs clear guidelines for applicants and evaluators (including panel members)

Criteria and scoring systems

■ Criteria:

- Mandatory criteria of the EC:
 - Excellence
 - Impact
 - Quality and efficiency of implementation
- Possibility to add specific sub-criteria that enter under one of the “imposed” criteria → for example addition in impact of criteria targeting EU13 countries
- There is no obligation to use the same criteria in the 1st and 2nd step of the evaluation

■ Scoring system (example):

- Total score for the whole proposal
- Full points for each of the criteria
- Half points for the sub-criteria
- Specific criterion may be given more weight than others

Note:

- *Using of full or maximum half points allows more flexibility at the moment of ranking and choice of projects selected for funding leading to Ex aequo and ranking of groups*
- *In order to improve the comparability of scores:*
 - *The evaluators should receive clear instructions on scoring*
 - *The secretariat may provide an analysis of scoring per expert so they could identify themselves and compare with the others*

Ranking of applications: scoring in blocks

No.	Acronym	Coordinator	Exp1	Exp2	Exp3	Aver	Panel_Vota
63			13	13	15	13,67	14
112			13	15	12	13,33	14
119			12	11	14	12,33	14
135			12	14	14	13,33	14
151			13	15	13	13,67	14
183			14	13	14	13,67	14
196			14	15	13	14,00	14
205			14	14	11	13,00	14
248			14	14	14	14,00	14
255			13	15	13	13,67	14
10			15	13	11	13,00	13
36			14	13	11	12,67	13
213			12	15	11	12,67	13
228			14	10	14	12,67	13
241			15	12	14	13,67	13
100			10	13	14	12,33	12
129			11	14	12	12,33	12
152			13	12	9	11,33	12
155			12	14	12	12,67	12
156			15	11	11	12,33	12
231			12	13	12	12,33	12
31			12	9	14	11,67	11
38			13	13	11	12,33	11
45			13	11	10	11,33	11
46			11	13	11	11,67	11
49			11	14	13	12,67	11
57			10	15	9	11,33	11

Must follow the ranking list

Flexibility zone

Recommended but not fundable

THANK YOU



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