

Annex 7: Assessment criteria

The Evaluation Committee will apply the criteria below to assess the quality of proposals.

According to the number of pre-proposals received, the CSC reserves the right to evaluate the pre-proposals. In that case, different set of criteria will be applied for the first evaluation of pre-proposals (first step peer-review) and the evaluation of full proposals

I. Criteria for step 1

If a large number of pre-proposals is received, the Evaluation Committee may evaluate the pre-proposals according the following criteria:

- Fit to the scope of the call
- Novelty of the research
- European added value (including overseas)

II. Criteria for step 2

For the evaluation of full proposals, the Evaluation Committee and external reviewers will assess the proposals according to the following criteria:

1. Excellence (threshold 5/7)

Fit to thematic priorities: Evaluation committee members will assess the relevance of the proposed research against the thematic priorities set forth in the scientific text of the call. Any project that does not fit within the thematic priorities described will not be recommended for funding, regardless of its scientific quality.

Excellence aspects, including European added value, will be assessed by means of the following criteria:

- a) Scientific quality of the proposed research
- b) Novelty / Originality and innovation
- c) Clarity of the hypothesis, theories and/or research questions
- d) Level of inter/multi/trans-disciplinarity
- e) European added value (cf. below for more information)
- f) Relation to other projects

Considering that a given project fits within the thematic priorities of the call, its scientific quality is considered before all other criteria and is a prerequisite for funding.

Interdisciplinary approaches are strongly encouraged, but mono- or multi-disciplinary studies are not excluded a priori; the approach must be adequate to address the question posed.

2. Quality and efficiency of the implementation (threshold 2/3)

- a) Quality and efficiency of the management structure and procedures, its organisation and coordination, including the management and sharing of data.
- b) Quality and suitability of the consortium (including complementarity, balance)

- c) Level of integration and collaboration
- d) Appropriate allocation and justification of the resources to be committed (budget, staff, equipment)
- e) Project feasibility and risk management

3. Impact (threshold 3/5)

The Impact of the proposed research to stakeholders, including policy makers, and engagement with stakeholders will be assessed by means of the 3 following criteria:

1. Approach to stakeholder engagement:

The criteria used to evaluate stakeholder engagement - which applicants and members of the Evaluation Committee are invited to consider – are the following:

- a. Reasons for undertaking or not undertaking stakeholder engagement
- b. Identification of appropriate stakeholders and why they are relevant to the project (what role they could play), and the desired outcomes of engaging with specific stakeholders
- c. Evidence of support from appropriate stakeholders towards the research, and commitment to engage
- d. Methods/activities proposed for engagement and collaborative learning, planning and resources
- e. Evidence that the necessary skills to engage are available in the project team or will be obtained (e.g. through relevant training, or the use of external sources)
- f. Knowledge transfer methods and plans

BiodivERsA produced a stakeholder engagement handbook for researchers to help them to engage with stakeholders all along their research projects.

This handbook is accessible online (<http://biodiversa.org/stakeholderengagement>) and we recommend you to use it when designing your project and preparing your proposal.

2. Policy relevance and importance of the research for solving pressing issues

The criteria used to evaluate policy relevance - which applicants and members of the Evaluation Committee are invited to consider – are the following:

- a. Clear statement of the policy application. Any proposal must contain details which cites the relevance of the research to policy instruments and current legislation. It should also highlight the importance of this work for solving pressing societal issues related to the details of the joint call.
- b. Clearly identified policy makers who are end users of the research results and ways to engage them. The proposal will be expected to identify specific end-user organisations, and, if possible, to name individuals within these organisations.
- c. Arrangements for knowledge transfer.

The **criteria of policy relevance** are explained and detailed in the paper from Gardner, Stott and Vindimian (2013)¹, available in the resources on the BiodivERsA website (<http://www.biodiversa.org/63>).

3. European added value

¹ Gardner S., Stott A. & Vindimian E. 2013. How to assess policy relevance in research projects. BiodivERsA report, available at www.biodiversa.org/254/download.

European added value is the value resulting from the European research project, which is additional to the value that would have resulted from research projects funded at national level. The added value may vary, depending on the type of project, and there can be various answers to this question.

However, there should be clear evidence of added value either directly within the European Union or within within EU overseas countries and territories, or indirect value accrued as a result of, e.g. learning from models applied to countries outside of the EU.

European added value may include: relevance to EU policy statements, legislative framework or management plans; clear added value to national research projects across Europe by linking expertise and efforts across national teams; bringing about comparisons at the local level between researchers who are not used to work together; standardization of methods, general increase of common knowledge in biodiversity relative to the themes of the call, etc.

No additional criteria will be used for evaluation and selection.

III. Scoring system

The two first criteria (excellence and quality and efficiency of the implementation) will be assessed by the scientific experts of the EvC and scientific external reviewers, while the impact criteria will be assessed by the policy/management experts and external reviewers.

A score out of a scale of seven will be assigned to each proposal for its excellence.

A score out of a scale of three will be assigned to each proposal for its quality/efficiency of the implementation.

A score out of a scale of five will be assigned to each proposal for its impact.

Threshold:

There is no shared interest for proposals with a score lower than 5 for excellence; lower than 2 for quality/efficiency of the implementation, and lower than 3 for impact. These proposals will not be ranked, and not be considered for funding.

Ranking groups are defined according to the sum of scores of the 3 criteria (excellence, quality/efficiency of the implementation and impact). The aggregation of this information is made using a file prepared by the Call Secretariat. There is no a priori ranking within the same ranking group. Where two or more proposals rank equal, the Evaluation Committee should establish the final rank.