

Common evaluation criteria for evaluating proposals

A number of evaluation criteria are common to all the programmes of the Sixth Framework Programme and are set out in the European Parliament and the Council Regulations on the Rules for Participation (Article 10). These are:

- a) “Scientific and technological excellence and the degree of innovation;
- b) Ability to carry out the indirect action successfully and to ensure its efficient management, assessed in terms of resources and competences and including the organisational modalities foreseen by the participants;
- c) Relevance to the objectives of the specific programme;
- d) European added value, critical mass of resources mobilised and contribution to Community policies;
- e) Quality of the plan for using and disseminating the knowledge, potential for promoting innovation, and clear plans for the management of intellectual property.”

Furthermore, in applying paragraph (d) above, the following criteria are also to be taken into account:

- a) “For networks of excellence, the scope and degree of the effort to achieve integration and the network’s capacity to promote excellence beyond its membership, as well as the prospects of the durable integration of their research capabilities and resources after the end of the period covered by the Community’s financial contribution;
- b) For integrated projects, the scale of the ambition of the objectives and the capacity of the resources to make a significant contribution to reinforcing competitiveness or solving societal problems;
- c) For integrated initiatives relating to infrastructure, the prospects of the initiative’s continuing long term after the end of the period covered by the Community’s financial contribution.”

As set out in the Rules for Participation, the calls for proposals determine, in accordance with the type of instruments deployed or the objectives of the RTD activity, how the criteria set out above are applied by the Commission.

The purpose of this annex is to indicate how these criteria shall be applied. In particular, as the Sixth Framework Programme contains a differentiated set of instruments, the way in which each criterion translates into the issues to be examined as the basis for marking proposals will differ. In evaluating against these criteria, the checklists of issues set out in the following pages are intended to be universal for each type of instrument.

Unless otherwise specified in the relevant parts of this work programme, the principal issues set out below (i.e. the main numbered headings) will be given equal weighting

in the evaluation. For each principal issue, a minimum score to be achieved is also indicated as well as a minimum overall score for each instrument. Proposals that fail to achieve these minimum threshold scores shall be rejected. Any departures from these threshold scores are indicated in the relevant part of this work programme.

In addition to the basic checklists below and any specific criteria or interpretations of the criteria required for a call, the following issues are also addressed for all proposals at any appropriate moment in the evaluation:

- Are there **gender** issues associated with the subject of the proposal? If so, have they been adequately taken into account?
- Have the applicants identified the potential **ethical** and/or **safety** aspects of the proposed research regarding its objectives, the methodology and the possible implications of the results? If so, have they been adequately taken into account in the preparation of the proposal?

An ethical check will take place for all proposals during the evaluation. A specific ethical review will be implemented following the evaluation for proposals recommended for funding and which deal with specific sensitive issues or whenever recommended following the ethical check during the evaluation. To this end, additional information on ethical aspects may be requested from proposers to allow the specific ethical review to be carried out. (See below for more details on the criteria to be applied).

When appropriate, the following additional issues may also be addressed during the evaluation:

- To what extent does the proposal demonstrate a readiness to engage with actors beyond the research community and the public as a whole, to help spread awareness and knowledge and to explore the wider **societal implications** of the proposed work?
- Have the synergies with **education** at all levels been clearly set out?

Integrated Projects (IP)

The following set of issues is intended to be a common basis for the evaluation of proposals for integrated projects.

1. Relevance (threshold score 3 out of 5)

- The extent to which the proposed project **addresses the objectives** of the work programme.

2. Potential impact (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the proposed project is **suitably ambitious** in terms of its strategic impact on **reinforcing competitiveness or on solving societal problems**.
- the innovation-related activities and exploitation and/or dissemination plans are adequate to ensure **optimal use of the project results**.
- the proposal demonstrates a clear **added value** in carrying out the work at European level and takes account of research activities at national level and under European initiatives (e.g. Eureka).

3. S&T excellence (threshold score 4 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the project has **clearly defined objectives**.
- the objectives represent **clear progress beyond the current state-of-the-art**.
- the **proposed S&T approach** is likely to enable the project to achieve its objectives in research and innovation.

4. Quality of the consortium (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the participants collectively constitute a **consortium of high quality**.
- the participants are **well-suited and committed to the tasks** assigned to them.
- there is **good complementarity** between participants.
- the **profiles** of the participants, including those to be included later, have been clearly described.
- the opportunity of involving **SMEs** has been adequately addressed.

5. Quality of the management (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the **organisational structure** is well matched to the complexity of the project and to the degree of integration required.
- the **project management** is demonstrably of high quality.
- there is a satisfactory plan for the **management of knowledge**, of intellectual property and of other innovation-related activities.

6. Mobilisation of resources (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the project mobilises the **critical mass of resources** (personnel, equipment, finance...) necessary for success.
- the **resources** are **convincingly integrated** to form a coherent project.
- the overall **financial plan** for the project is adequate.

Overall threshold score 24 out of 30.

Networks of Excellence (NoE)

The following set of issues is intended to be a common basis for the evaluation of proposals for networks of excellence.

1. Relevance (threshold score 3 out of 5)

- The extent to which the proposed project **addresses the objectives** of the work programme.

2. Potential impact (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- Europe has a **strategic need to strengthen S&T excellence on the topic** by means of a restructuring of the existing research capacities and the way research is carried out.
- the goals of the network are, in that connection, **suitably ambitious** particularly, in terms of achieving European leadership and acting as a world force on this topic.
- the proposal demonstrates a clear **added value** in carrying out the work at European level and takes account of research activities at national level and under European initiatives (e.g. Eureka).
- there is an effective plan for **spreading excellence**, exploiting results and disseminating knowledge to those outside the network.
- the proposed **approach is likely to have a durable structuring impact** on European research.

3. Excellence of the participants (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the **participants are** currently conducting **excellent research** relevant to the topic of the network or are capable of important contributions to the joint programme of activities.
- the participants are **well suited to the tasks** assigned to them.
- they **collectively have the necessary critical mass of expertise and resources** to carry out the joint programme of activities successfully.

4. Degree of integration and the joint programme of activities (threshold score 4 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the expected **degree of integration** justifies supporting the proposal as a network of excellence.
- the **joint programme of activities is** sufficiently well designed to achieve the expected degree of integration.

- the participating organisations have made a convincing commitment towards a **deep and durable integration** continuing beyond the period of Community support.

5. Organisation and management (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the organisational structure of the network provides a **secure framework for any necessary structural decisions** to be taken
- the **management of the network is** demonstrably of high quality.
- there is a well-considered plan for **promoting gender equality** in the network.

Overall threshold score 20 out of 25.

Specific Targeted Research Projects or Innovation Projects

The following set of issues is intended to be a common basis for the evaluation of proposals for (1) Specific Targeted Research Projects or (2) Specific Targeted Innovation Projects.

1. Relevance (threshold score 3 out of 5)

- The extent to which the proposed project **addresses the objectives** of the work programme.

2. S&T excellence (threshold score 4 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the project has clearly **defined and well focused objectives**.
- the objectives represent **clear progress beyond the current state-of-the-art**.
- the **proposed S&T approach is** likely to enable the project to achieve its objectives in research and innovation

3. Potential impact (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the proposed project is likely to have an **impact on reinforcing competitiveness or on solving societal problems**.
- the proposal demonstrates a clear **added value** in carrying out the work at European level and takes account of research activities at national level and under European initiatives (e.g. Eureka).
- exploitation and/or dissemination plans are adequate to ensure **optimal use of the project results**.

4. Quality of the consortium (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the participants collectively constitute a **consortium of high quality**.
- the participants are **well-suited and committed to the tasks** assigned to them.
- there is **good complementarity** between participants.
- the opportunity of involving SMEs has been adequately addressed.

5. Quality of the management (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the **project management** is demonstrably of high quality.
- there is a satisfactory plan for the **management of knowledge**, of intellectual property and of other innovation-related activities.

6. Mobilisation of resources (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the project foresees the **resources** (personnel, equipment, financial...) necessary for success.
- the **resources** are **convincingly integrated** to form a coherent project.
- the overall **financial plan** for the project **is adequate**.

Overall threshold score 21 out of 30.

Coordination Actions

The following set of issues is intended to be a common basis for the evaluation of proposals for coordination actions.

1. Relevance (threshold score 3 out of 5)

- The extent to which the proposed project **addresses the objectives** of the work programme.

2. Quality of the coordination (threshold score 4 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the research actions/programmes to be coordinated represent **clear progress beyond the current state-of-the-art**.
- The **coordination mechanisms** proposed are sufficiently **robust** for ensuring the goals of the action

3. Potential impact (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the proposal demonstrates a clear **added value** in carrying out the work at European level and takes account of research activities at national level and under European initiatives (e.g. Eureka).
- the Community support would have a real impact on the action and its scale, ambition and outcome.
- the project mobilises a critical mass of resources in Europe
- exploitation and/or dissemination plans are adequate to ensure **optimal use of the project results**, where possible beyond the participants in the project.

4. Quality of the consortium (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the participants collectively constitute a **consortium of high quality**.
- the participants are **well-suited to the tasks** assigned to them.
- the project combines the **complementary expertise** of the participants to generate added value with respect to the individual participants' programmes.

5. Quality of the management (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the **project management** is demonstrably of high quality.
- there is a satisfactory plan for the **management of knowledge**, of intellectual property and of other innovation-related activities.

6. Mobilisation of resources (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the project provides for the **resources** (personnel, equipment, financial...) necessary for success.
- the **resources** are **convincingly integrated** to form a coherent project.
- the overall **financial plan** for the project **is adequate**.

Overall threshold score 21 out of 30.

Specific Support Actions

The following set of issues is intended to be common to all parts of FP6 for the evaluation of proposals for specific support actions.

1. Relevance (threshold score 4 out of 5)

The extent to which

- the proposal addresses key issues to defined in the work programme/call, specific programmes or ERA, as appropriate.

2. Quality of the support action (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the proposed objectives are sound and the proposed approach, methodology and work plan are of a sufficiently high quality for achieving these objectives.
- the applicant(s) represent(s) a high level of competence in terms of professional qualifications and/or experience.
- the proposed activities are innovative and original (*if applicable*).

3. Potential impact (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the impact of the proposed work can only be achieved if carried out at European level.
- the Community support would have a substantial impact on the action and its scale, ambition and outcome.
- exploitation and/or dissemination plans are adequate to ensure **optimal use of the project results**, where possible beyond the participants in the project.

4. Quality of the management (threshold score 3 out of 5)

- The extent to which the management structure is credible in terms of professional qualifications, experience, track record and capacity to deliver.

5. Mobilisation of resources (threshold score 3 out of 5)

- The extent to which the project provides for the **resources** (personnel, equipment, financial...) necessary for success.
- the overall **financial plan** for the project **is adequate**.

Overall threshold score 21 out of 30.

Horizontal Research Activities involving SMEs

The following set of issues is intended to be a common basis for the evaluation of proposals for Horizontal Research Activities for SMEs (for (1) Co-operative Research projects - CRAFT and for (2) Collective Research projects).

(1) For Co-operative Research Projects (CRAFT)

1. Relevance to the objectives of co-operative research (threshold score 4 out of 5)

- The extent to which **the proposed project** addresses a specific scientific and/or technological problem or need of a group of SMEs.

2. S&T excellence (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the project has **clearly defined and well focused objectives**.
- the objectives represent substantial **progress beyond the current state-of-the-art**.
- the **proposed S&T approach** is likely to enable the project to achieve its objectives in research and innovation.

3. Potential impact (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the proposed project has **an impact on the competitiveness of European SMEs** and/or **contributes to solving societal problems**.
- the proposal demonstrates a clear **added value** in carrying out the work at European level and takes account of research activities at national level and under European initiatives (e.g. Eureka).
- exploitation and, where relevant, dissemination plans are adequate to ensure **optimal use of the project results**.

4. Quality of the consortium (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the participation of **other enterprises and end-users**, if relevant, **is in the interest of the SME participants**.
- the SMEs are **well-suited and committed to the tasks** assigned to them and to **exploiting** the results.
- the **RTD performers are of high quality** and there is **good complementarity** between them.
- there is a **balanced contribution** by the SMEs, other enterprises and end-users to the project.

5. Quality of the management (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the **project management** is demonstrably of high quality.
- there is a satisfactory plan for the **management of knowledge**, of intellectual property and of other innovation-related activities.

6. Mobilisation of resources (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the project foresees the **resources** (personnel, equipment, financial...) necessary for success.
- the **resources are convincingly integrated** to form a coherent project.
- the **financial plan is adequate**.

Overall threshold score 21 out of 30

(2) For Collective Research Projects

1. Relevance to the objectives of Collective Research (threshold score 4 out of 5)

- the extent to which **the proposed project** addresses a specific scientific and/or technological problem or need of large communities of SMEs.

2. S&T excellence (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the project has **clearly defined and well focused objectives**.
- the objectives represent substantial **progress beyond the current state-of-the-art**.
- the **proposed S&T approach is** likely to enable the project to achieve its objectives in research and innovation.

3. Potential impact (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the proposed project has an impact on the **competitiveness of large communities of European SMEs** and/or contributes to **solving societal problems**.
- the proposal demonstrates a clear **added value** in carrying out the work at European level and takes account of research activities at national level and under European initiatives (e.g. Eureka).
- dissemination and training plans and, where relevant, exploitation plans are adequate to ensure **optimal use of the project results**.

4. Quality of the consortium (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the industrial associations or industry groupings are committed to disseminating the project results, to the training of managers of SMEs and SME associations and, when appropriate, to **exploiting the project results**.

- the 'core group' of **SMEs** are **committed to exploiting** the project results.
- the **RTD performers are of high quality** and there is good **complementarity** between them.

5. Quality of the management (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the **project management** is demonstrably of high quality.
- there is a satisfactory plan for the **management of knowledge**, of intellectual property and of other innovation-related activities.
- the '**core group**' of **SMEs** associated to the project will contribute from the definition phase of the project to the dissemination of the results obtained.

6. Mobilisation of resources (threshold score 3 out of 5)

The extent to which:

- the project foresees the **resources** (personnel, equipment, financial, etc.) necessary for success.
- the **resources are convincingly integrated** to form a coherent project.
- the **financial plan for the project is adequate**.

Overall threshold score 21 out of 30.

The ethical review of proposals

In accordance with Article 3 of the Framework Programme and Article 10 of the Rules for Participation, the evaluation procedure includes a check of any ethical issues raised by proposals. A specific ethical review of proposals involving sensitive ethical issues may take place after the evaluation and before any selection decision by the Commission. For this purpose, an ethical review (ER) panel may be convened.

The ER panel assesses the following elements:

- The awareness of the proposers of the ethical aspects of the research they propose
- Whether the researchers respect the ethical requirements of the 6th Framework Programme
- Whether the relevant European Directives are respected
- Whether relevant national laws and regulations are respected.
- Whether the proposer is seeking the approval/favourable opinion of relevant local ethics committees
- Whether the relevant international conventions and declarations are applied¹

For research involving human beings, the ER panel assesses in particular:

- The information which is given to the participants (healthy volunteers, tissue donors, patients, etc.)
- Measures taken to protect participants' personal data (including genetic data) and privacy
- Recruitment criteria and means by which the recruitment is to be conducted
- Level of care offered to participants

For research involving human embryonic and foetal tissues and cells², the ER panel assesses in particular:

- The procedures for obtaining informed consent
- The source of the human embryonic and foetal tissues/cells.
- Measures taken to protect participants' personal data (including genetic data) and privacy
- The nature of financial inducements, if any.

¹ Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, signed in Nice, 7 December 2000
Convention on Human rights and Biomedicine – Oviedo, 4.04. 1997 - Council of Europe
and the Additional protocol on the prohibition of Cloning of human beings (1998)
Universal declaration on the Human genome and human rights - Unesco - 11 November 1997
Declaration of Helsinki (in its latest version) - World Medical Association
Convention on the Rights of the Child – United Nations - 20 November 1989
Amsterdam protocol on an animal protection and welfare

² It should be noted that restrictions on such research apply. In its statement to the minutes of the Council meeting of 30.09.2002, the Commission stated that "...pending establishment of the detailed implementing provisions, it will not propose to fund such research, with the exception of the study of banked or isolated human embryonic stem cells in culture...".

For research involving animals, the ER panel assesses in particular:

- Whether the proposers are applying the ‘Three Rs’ principle: Replacement, Reduction and Refinement, and in particular:
 - ◆ Are animal experiments replaced by alternatives whenever possible?
 - ◆ Is animal suffering avoided or kept to a minimum?
 - ◆ Is the creation of transgenic animals and/or animal cloning justified from an ethical point of view? Is animal welfare guaranteed and are the principles of biodiversity respected?