

**Proposal Evaluation Procedures for the Programme
“Quality of Life and Management of Living Resources”**

1. The Evaluation process.

1.1 Pre-Registration Pre-registration of proposals will not be offered.

1.2 Pre-proposal check. Initial pre-checking will not be offered.

1.3 Remote or postal evaluation. All evaluations will normally be performed within the premises controlled by the Commission, with possible exceptions for the Stage One of Generic Activities and for accompanying measures submitted in response to a call for proposals.

1.4 Anonymity. The evaluation of the scientific and technological excellence aspects of shared-cost RTD project proposals, including demonstration projects, will be carried out according to the rules preserving strict anonymity of the applicants. For further steps of the evaluation and other types of action where these rules will not be applied, the evaluation will be conducted in a spirit of anonymity, without regard to identity or gender of the applicants except insofar as the characteristics of the proposer are relevant to the criteria.

1.5. The Evaluation Procedure

It is expected that under a majority of action lines the number of proposals received will be too large to be processed by a single panel¹³. In those cases and others where it is considered appropriate, a two-stage procedure is foreseen.

In Stage One, the members of the panels will individually evaluate Part B of each proposal initially against the first “threshold” block of evaluation criteria for *scientific and technological excellence* (for which the rules for preserving anonymity apply). Once the evaluators have completed their individual evaluation of the first block of criteria for the proposals assigned to them, the first panel session takes place to fix the consensus mark for the first block. Then, for those proposals that pass the threshold for this first block, the evaluators, once again working individually, are given parts A and C of the proposal in order to score the second block of criteria *resources, partnership and management*. Subsequently, in a second panel session, the panel agrees on a consensus mark for this second block and completes the Evaluation Summary Report. Proposals that fail to reach one of these threshold marks will not progress to the next evaluation stage. The consensus evaluation summary report (ESR) for such excluded proposals will normally only be completed under the headings corresponding to the said block(s) of criteria. It will make clear that the proposal failed to reach the required level and was therefore eliminated. However, the same panel might also provide useful feedback on any other relevant aspect of the proposal.

Similarly, for all retained proposals, the same panel might provide comments for use by the Stage Two panel on any other relevant aspect of the proposal. Stage One finishes here.

In Stage Two, all proposals successfully passing through the thresholds of Stage One under a given action line are gathered for further evaluation against the three

¹³ In this annex, the term “panel” refers to a group of at least 4 experts.

remaining blocks of criteria and ranking by a synthesis panel¹⁴. This panel will normally include at least one member from each Stage One panel as well as relevant complementary expertise if necessary (for instance with regard to socio-economic objectives). The basis for this ranking is the score of the proposal, that is the weighted average of the marks concerning the two Stage One blocks of criteria (which the Stage Two panel cannot alter) and of the three remaining blocks of criteria. This weighting is performed according to the table under point 6. The outcome of *Stage Two* will be a ranked list of proposals¹⁵ and an ESR covering the remaining three blocks of criteria for each proposal.

In a final step, a specific ethical review by a panel composed of scientists, lawyers, philosophers and ethicists will be performed to check if the ethical and legal questions raised by those selected projects dealing with sensitive issues¹⁶ are adequately answered.

1.6 Procedure for proposals in Support for Research Infrastructures. The procedure will be identical to that described under 1.5, with the exception that the anonymity rule will not apply.

1.7 Specific procedure for Accompanying Measures Accompanying Measures will generally be evaluated by experts in one stage, possibly via postal evaluation. In the case of small size Accompanying Measures, the evaluation may be carried out without the assistance of outside experts.

1.8 Specific procedure for the Specific Measures for SMEs and for the fellowships. The evaluation procedure, criteria and weightings concerning the above will be defined in the specific annex to, respectively, the *Promotion of innovation and encouragement of SME participation Programme (IPS)* and *Improving Human Potential programmes*. They will nevertheless ensure that specific features to the Quality of Life & Management of Living Resources Programme, such as ethical aspects will be properly addressed.

¹⁴ Each of these panels will gather an appropriate mix of expertise. If the number of proposals received under one or more action lines can be processed by a single panel with all the relevant expertise, Stages One and Two may be processed by the same panel.

¹⁵ Each Stage Two panel will produce one ranked list, covering in general one action line

¹⁶ Such as projects involving the use of human embryos or foetal tissues, or experimentation on non-human primates, as well as any project where the evaluators will express concern with regard to ethical aspects of the research (its objectives, methodology or potential implications)

2. Specific interpretation of evaluation criteria

Several of the fifteen evaluation criteria presented in the Manual of Proposal Evaluation Procedures require further explanation in relation to the specificities of the life sciences and technologies.

Community added value and contribution to EU policies Proposals should be factual in outlining anticipated research results, from which a linkage could be made between reinforced scientific and technological bases, specific competitive advantages for European trade and industry, consumer satisfaction, the citizen's quality of life and the contribution to sustainable development. New data and methodologies would have to be promoted in a variety of fields such as health and safety, risk assessment, measurement and testing, bioresource management, informed consumer choice, ecosystem preservation, equal opportunities vis-à-vis health care provisions or new food habits, etc.

With respect to proposals' contributions to EU policies, particular attention will be paid to the way projects address the priorities of relevant EU policies or anticipate their evolution in a global societal context, or to the way they provide scientific facts and validation tools in support of EU legislation and its further development.

Where appropriate, policy documents describing in what respect proposals in relevant Actions should be coherent with the implementation and development of specific EU policies and orientations and how this can be evaluated will be included in the information package and made available to the evaluators when their opinion is requested. Because the relative importance of specific criteria within this block may differ according to action lines, these policy documents will also assist evaluators in comparing the relative importance of the criteria within this block. The Commission services will also be available during the second stage evaluation process to provide further explanations on EU policy issues should they be required.

Contribution to Community Social Objectives. The policy documents referred to above will also assist evaluators in comparing the relative importance of specific criteria regarding proposals' contribution to Community Social Objectives, because this importance may differ according to action lines. For example, the contribution of a proposal to employment prospects may be more significant than its contribution to preserving and/or enhancing the environment for one particular action line when for another action line, it might be its contribution to the quality of life, health and safety.

Economic Development and S&T prospect

For projects in the Key Actions, with regard to this block of criteria particular attention will be paid to proposals that, if successful, would lead to useful and/or applicable results in a reasonably short time frame.

3. Interpretation of evaluation criteria for specific Actions or types of projects

	Scientific and Technological Excellence	Resources , Partnership and Management	Community Added value/ Comm. Policies	Contribution to Community Social Objectives	Economic Development and S&T prospects
Specific interpretation for Infrastructures		Involvement of a critical mass of infrastructure operators	Impact on the overall provision of infrastructure services in the field		
Specific interpretation for Demonstration Projects	Novelty of the technology to be demonstrated (new technology or new application of an existing technology). Sufficient level of knowledge to implement the demonstration. Justification of how a demonstration phase is made possible and necessary by the stage of development reached Adequate (realistic) scale of validation. Acceptable and properly assessed risks of failure.	Quality of the management and project approach: Taking into consideration and clarification of all legal and ethical problems (especially intellectual property, regulations, safety) Quality of the partnership: involvement of both technology producers and technology users.			Clear commitment and strategy to exploit the technology or to ensure its exploitation through the project (identification of all hurdles to- and appropriate targets and strategies for dissemination & exploitation). Presence of substantial elements of a contingency plan (i.e., appropriate risk study (technical, commercial, managerial, financial). Dissemination strategies: mobilisation of the most appropriate Extended Audience ¹⁷ and appropriate resources and strategy within the partnership to interact with it.

4. Interpretation of criteria with regard to horizontal aspects of the evaluation

The following aspects of the evaluation are best covered in a horizontal manner either because they refer to more than one evaluation criteria simultaneously (e.g. impact evaluation and representation of potential users) or because they refer to fundamental ethical issues.

Ethical aspects: Proposals must respect fundamental ethical principles including human rights and animal welfare requirements. They should provide the minimum amount of information for reviewers to form their independent opinion on the level of awareness, and the existence of adequate provisions where necessary, as shown by project participants. In particular, research should comply with all relevant national and international laws, conventions and codes of conduct and, where appropriate, have the explicit approval of local or national research ethics or animal welfare committees.

Impact evaluation may refer to the strategic impact of the proposals (which is part of the Economic development and S&T prospects block of criteria), as well as to the proposal contribution to preserving and/or enhancing the environment (which is part of the contribution to Community social objectives). Proposers are thus required to provide, where applicable, all information necessary for the detailed evaluation of the social, economic and ecological impact of their studies and for the assessment of technological risk, and once a project proposal is selected, to seek where necessary, approval from the responsible authorities. In the case of a possible ecological impact, the accuracy of the description of potential risks and of provisions made to deal with them will be an important element in the assessment of the proposal. When research is likely to involve social considerations and affect the public perception of science, the proposal should describe any possible effect on current moral and philosophical issues, and/or conceivable consequences upon such areas as, for example, employment, working conditions, health and safety, public health, environment.

¹⁷ The *Extended Audience* being the ensemble of all potential users, interest groups and other relevant bodies that might have an influence on the adoption of the technology under demonstration

Representation of potential users may refer simultaneously to a proposal contribution to the EU policy towards SME (which is part of the community added value and contribution to EU policies), to the quality of the partnership (which is part of the resources, partnership and management) and to its contribution to Economic development and S&T prospects. Particular attention will be given to the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and where applicable the effective participation, commitment, and support of industry, service providers and end-users in the projects.

6. Weighting of the evaluation criteria (scale of 1 to 10) and thresholds (scale of 0 to 5)

TYPE OF ACTION	TYPE OF PROJECT	SELECTION CRITERIA						
		Stage One Criteria				Stage Two Criteria		
		Scientific and technological excellence		Resources, partnership and management		Community Added value etc.	Contribution to Community Social objectives	Economic Development and S&T prospect
		Weight	Threshold	Weight	Threshold	Weight	Weight	Weight
All Key actions	R&D project K.A 1	3	4	2	4	1.5	1.5	2
	R&D project K.A 2	3	4	3	4	2	1	1
	R&D project K.A 3	3	4	2	4	1 (2 for area 3.2)	1.5 (2 for area 3.2)	2.5 (1 for area 3.2)
	R&D project K.A 4, 6	3	4	2	4	2	2	1
	R&D project K.A 5	2 (3 for areas 5.2, 5.3 and for fisheries & aquaculture)	4	2	4	3 (2 for areas 5.2 & 5.3)	1.5 (1 for fisheries & aquaculture)	1.5 (1 for fisheries & aquaculture)
	Demonstration project or Combined RTD / Demonstration project	2	4	2	4	1.5	1.5	3
Generic actions	R&D project in areas Chronic and degen. Diseases, Neurosciences, Genomes	5	4	2	4	1.5	1	0.5
	R&D project in areas Public Health, Disabled, Socio-Economics, Ethics	4	4	2	4	2	1.5	0.5
	Demonstration project or combined R&D / Demonstration project	3	4	2	4	1	1.5	2.5
Support For research Infra-structures	R&D project or Demonstration project	4	4	2	4	2.5	1	0.5
All actions	Acc. Measures ¹⁸	4	4	2	4	2	1	1
	Thematic network or Concerted action	2.5	3.5	2.5	4	2.5	1.5	1

In Addition, a threshold of 3.5 for the global mark (i.e., the weighted average of the marks received for the 5 criteria blocks) will be applied to all actions listed in this table

¹⁸ The weightings presented in this table are indicative for accompanying measures: some slight modulation of no more than +/- 10% on any of the weightings might be applied depending on the type of action supported (studies, workshops, publications, etc.)

7. Steps for the evaluation of *Clusters at Proposal Stage* in QoL.

A *cluster at proposal stage*¹⁹ proposal contains as many separate descriptions of part B and C for shared-cost projects as there are component projects, with parts B conforming to the anonymity rules. In addition to these standard B & C parts, an additional specific section presents the objectives, synergies, benefits and expected impacts of the cluster, as well as the interrelation between different component projects. For these “cluster-specific” B forms, the rule for anonymity does not apply. These must not therefore be examined by the experts until all component projects have been examined against the first block of criteria.

All provisions for evaluation apply according to the rules reported in this manual. Sets of parts B & C, assembled according to the individual components of the cluster undergo an evaluation of their compliance with the thresholds. This may lead the Stage One panel to recommend the elimination of any of those components, where any of the two threshold blocks of criteria is not met. The additional cluster-specific parts B & C undergo the Stage One evaluation against threshold criteria, using the procedure established for concerted actions and thematic networks.

- If the cluster-specific part passes the Stage One thresholds, the proposal will be given consensus marks by the Stage One panel for both threshold criteria. A global Evaluation Summary Report (*ESR*) will be prepared. The cluster proposal will then be evaluated as a single entity against the three strategic criteria by the Stage Two panel dealing with the relevant action line, keeping in mind the recommendations of the Stage One panel. If the rejection of one or more component project is recommended by the panel at Stage One, the potential of the cluster to reach the (economic and social) objectives initially set out without that component will constitute a substantial element of Stage Two evaluation. If the cluster proposal passes all thresholds, it will be marked and ranked as a single proposal. The Stage Two panel may also recommend the elimination of any of the component projects on the basis of their evaluation. The global *ESR* used to report the evaluation results will include the individual *ESR* for each individual component project recommended for rejection by the experts as failing to pass the thresholds and the global *ESR* covering the Stage One and Stage Two assessment of the proposal as a whole.

- If the cluster-specific part fails any threshold of Stage One, the whole cluster proposal will be proposed for rejection (and will not progress further in the evaluation). An *ESR* will be prepared which will make clear why the proposal failed to reach the required level for further evaluation. It will include the individual *ESR* for each individual component project, including the one for the Cluster-specific part.

Weighting: If the cluster proposal only contains shared-cost RTD projects, The weighting rules for calculating the proposed project’s overall mark will be the rule used for RTD projects. If one or more demonstration or combined component project is present in the proposal and the panel recommends at least one of these to be maintained, the rule used will be the one laid down for demonstration and combined projects.

Attribution to panel and list: In case of a cluster addressing different actions, the cluster proposal will be attributed to the panel - and ranked in the list - corresponding to the area requested as a priority by the applicant, with the possibility of using experts from other actions on an ad-hoc basis if the scheduling allows. If no preference is expressed, the Commission, using the experts’ advice, will attribute the proposal(s) to the list judged the most relevant.

¹⁹ Further details are available in the *Quality of Life Guide for Proposers*.