5G - Call for Projects 2019

Annex II – grant awarding procedures

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1. Evaluation Process

The evaluation process consists of five stages as follows:

Figure 1: Evaluation process stages

1.1. Stage 1: Eligibility check

In this stage, the submitted applications will undergo an administrative check to verify that all formal requirements are fulfilled:

- Submitted before the deadline;
- Contain all information to start performing the evaluation;
- Does not contain information that hurts an eligibility criteria for de minimis support or co-funding within the general bloc exemption regulation (focus on RDI);
- Fall within the scope of the present call for proposals:
    - Respond to at least one of the criteria listed in section 2.1. (section on “service layer”);
- The application is not exceeding 30 pages (annexes excluded).

The capacity to successfully implement the proposed project will be examined based on the responses given in the submitted form. Where needed, the responses will be cross-checked with the attached supporting documents.

SMC will send feedback to the applicants concerning each proposal’s eligibility.

1.2. Stage 2: Evaluation by the Expert Committee

Eligible applications will then be evaluated by an **Expert Committee** (“Comité d’experts”) composed by 4-6 national and international independent experts. It’s members will form an appropriate mix of reviewers with relevant backgrounds (mainly from the areas of research, telecom or business develoment), including, if possible, reviewers with interdisciplinary backgrounds. The committee members are appointed by the Minister for Communications and Media for a duration of 3 years.

The Minister will designate one of the Committee members to act as president. The president convenes the Committee, fixes the time and the agenda of the meetings and directs the meetings.

The committee will be assisted in its mission by a **secretariat** composed by agents from the Department of Media and Telecommunications and Digital Policy, appointed by the Minister. If required, additional permanent experts nominated by the Minister or temporarily appointed experts invited by the president of the committee, can assist the committee during its deliberations.

Expert committee members and any assisting member will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement, not to reveal or share the documents entrusted to them for any purpose. The experts shall also sign a declaration of non-conflict of interest. Should a limited number of conflicts arise during the selection process, these experts will be exempted to reviewing and evaluating those specific projects.

The projects will be assessed on the basis of the information contained in the CfP. For each proposal, at least 2 reviewers are appointed to provide a written evaluation with respect to the award criteria. Reviewers are expected to complete the Review Form shown in Appendix I. Reviewers will be requested to analyse the proposals and to assess their quality against each of the award criteria.

All award criteria should be explicitly addressed, while strengths and weaknesses should be presented in a structured way. All criteria are of equal importance and they are measured on a scale between 0 and 10. Scores greater than 8 should only be reserved for proposals fully and unambiguously convincing of their excellent quality and merit towards a specific award criterion. Scores lower then 3 should only be reserved for proposals that do not respond sufficiently to the respective scoring category.

The final evaluation of the projects will be determined at an **Expert Committee Meeting** that will close the evaluation phase. In order to be able to deliberate, at least 4 members of the committee shall be joining in. The participation can be done by means of electronic communication (video-conferencing).

In order to prepare for the experts meeting, its members will be expected to read the project proposals assigned to them as well as the related remote reviews. Based on the reviews, they complete the "Synthesis Form" (Appendix II) and submit this to the SMC prior to the experts meeting.

For the drafting of the synthesis, the following guidelines should be considered:

- The arguments in the "Synthesis Form" should be based on the arguments provided in the written reviews. The individual comments by reviewers do not need to be repeated. Instead, the Form should clearly state how the individual comments of the reviewers lead to the overall conclusion;
- Conflicting arguments stated in different reviews should be resolved by proposing a justified opinion;
- Experts meeting members should clearly justify their recommendations with solid evidence and examples, where possible;
- Factual information which may have a major impact on the funding decision needs to be checked as per its validity;
- Criticism should be constructive and supported with examples;
- Possible modifications or recommendations to improve the quality of the proposal should be indicated where estimated necessary;
- The "Synthesis Form" and funding recommendation should be comprehensible and duly justified.
- When completing the scoring tables, panel members should refrain from scoring the proposals based solely on the reviewers' scores. Instead, they should aim to base the score on their overall assessment of the strengths and weaknesses highlighted by the reviewers.

- The proposal's final score should be in-line with its accompanying written assessment.

Each experts meeting member will be required to present the proposals assigned to them, focusing on the following elements:

- topic and objectives of the proposal,
- main strengths and weaknesses identified by the remote reviewers, highlighting possible conflicting statements by reviewers,
- overall assessment of the application against the selection criteria and
- funding recommendation.

Projects with scores lower then 3 in more then 1 category should not be suggested for co-funding.

Following the presentation and discussion of all proposals, the experts meeting will agree on the final judgment of the proposals. The judgment is done in writing and the vote is adopted by simple majority of the votes. The judgment of the committee has to be motivated and signed by the members who joined the meeting. Votes can be submitted by electronic means and the signature can be done by a signed letter or by an e-mail.

1.3. Stage 3: Interministerial Commission

The evaluation results by the "Comité d'experts" will be then discussed by an **Interministerial Commission** ("Commission interministérielle"). The Commission is composed by 6 effective members:

- One representative of the Minister for Communications and Media;
- One representative of the Minister of the Economy;
- One representative of the Minister of Finance;
- One representative of the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development;
- One representative of the Minister for Spatial Planning;
- One representative of the Minster for Digitalisation.

The members of the Commission will be nominated by the Minister for Communications and Media, based on the proposals from the represented Ministers. The duration of the mandate for its members is 3 years. In case of anticipated end of the mandate of a member, the new member will be nominated to fulfil the remaining period of the vacant mandate.

Each effective member is assisted by a substitute member, nominated like the effective member. The substitute member can join the effective member to the meetings and, in case the effective member is unavailable, replace him.

The representative of the Minister for Communications and Media presides the meeting. He convenes the Commission, fixes the time and the agenda of the meetings and directs the meetings. In case of need, the Commission can appoint representatives from other ministries and administrations as well as external experts.

The Commission disposes of a secretariat composed by one or several agents, designated by the Minister for Communications and Media, and who ensure the management of the Commission.

The Commission meets as often as required by its mission. The Commission meets on the invitation by its president. The invitation contains the agenda of the meeting.

In order to form its recommendation, the Commission will define coefficient points in such way that:

- Each project by default has 1 coefficient point;
- The 2 best projects per domain of activity get 1 additional point (agriculture, industry, transportation,…), independently from the applicants who submit it;
- The 3 best projects per lead applicant get 1 additional point.

Each project hence ends up with a coefficient of 1, 2 or 3 points. The score given by the Expert Committee is then multiplied with this coefficient to form the final score for each project.

Based on the final score, the Interministerial Commission will set up a recommendation ("avis") that lists the projects according to the following groups:

- Projects proposed for co-funding
- Projects proposed for a reserve list
- Projects proposed for rejection.

The list will also include recommendations per project, as regards as modifications suggested, special measures to foresee, or considerations regarding the impact on the environment (e.g.: EMF).

The recommendation covers the amount of cofounding evaluated by the Committee. The decisions on the recommendations are taken by simple majority of the votes expressed.

On the initiative by the president, the recommendation can be formed by written means. The president may decide in this context whether, after a delay fixed by him, a missing recommendation by one member can be considered a positive recommendation on a particular project.

1.4. Stage 4: Grant awarding

The Minister for Communications and Media and the Minister of Finance will issue the **final grant decision**. Based on the preceding steps (Committee and Commission), the decision of the ministers will list the projects according to the following groups:

- Projects retained for co-funding.
- Projects retained for a reserve list
- Projects retained for rejection.

The list will also include recommendations and/or requests per project, as regards as modifications, special measures to foresee, or considerations regarding the impact on the environment (e.g.: EMF).

The Department of Media, Communications and Digital Policy will send feedback to the applicants concerning each proposal's final grant decision.

1.5. Stage 5: Grant formalisation

Finally, the Department of Media, Communications and Digital Policy will formalise the financial support by issuing grant agreements for those projects retained for funding.

- Future beneficiaries may be asked to modify / detail their project based on the comments collected in the previous stages;

- The Department of Media, Communications and Digital Policy will proceed with a due diligence check to clarify those details that might not yet be fully explained during the preceding stages. The due diligence check may contain some of, all of, or more than the following checks:
    - Check of the actual beneficiaries (“registre des bénéficiaires économiques »)
    - Check of the financial capacity ;
    - Check of honorability ;
    - Check of the support letters ;
- Co-funding will only be done for duly signed and returned grant agreements. In principle, no prefinancing is foreseen.

2. Appendix I: Review criteria

The criteria will vary depending on what the consortium is proposing, and which aspects of the criteria list can be applied. In principle, all criteria listed below will apply unless it can be shown that one or more will not be applicable.

- Project scope and objectives
  - Understanding and relevance of the project scope and challenges to CfP objectives;
  - Clarity and pertinence of the objectives ("SMARTness" of indicators).
- Expected outcomes
  - Soundness of the concept ("SMARTness" of indicators);
  - Clarity of the added-value given by the public co-funding.
- Level of Innovation
  - Level of innovation documented in the proposed idea;
  - Ability of the idea to lead to new products, services or processes.
- Expected impact (assess the potential contribution to)
  - Economic benefits;
  - Environmental impacts (including EMF exposure / radiation and health issues);
  - Impact on governmental priorities;
  - Social impact (quality of life, social inclusion or exclusion, jobs creation, education,…);
  - Effectiveness to exploit and disseminate the project results;
  - "SMARTness" of indicators.
- Service Information
  - Soundness of the solution;
  - Clarity which technical characteristics of modern mobile communication networks are met;
  - Needs, challenges and technical opportunities clearly described;
  - Business opportunities and market opportunities clearly described;
  - Clarity of the innovation that should come out of the project;
  - Extent to which the proposed solution is beyond state of the art.
- Network information
  - Clarity of the description of technical solution (architecture, topology);
  - Clarity which network characteristics of modern mobile communication channels are met;
  - Extent to which the proposed solution is contributing to a step change in regards of modern mobile communication networks;
  - Network's capacity to host the proposed project;
  - Network's ability to host future projects and scale up;
  - Clarity in the description of the network security.
- Project implementation
  - Quality and efficiency of the implementation
  - Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan
  - Clear description of WPs, tasks and deliverables
  - Resources assigned to WPs are in line with the objectives and outcomes
  - Complementarity of participants' roles (when relevant)
  - Planned schedule
    - Is it reasonable?
    - Overall duration
- Budget and financing
  - Is it well explained?
  - Are the budget volumes well justified?

    - Is the budget adjusted to the requirements of the project?
    - Do all partners have adequate resources to fulfil their assignments? (when relevant)
    - Request respects maximum level of co-funding? (lower than maximum will be considered an advantage)
- Human Resources
    - Quality of the team and previous experience
        - Based on brief Curricula Vitae of key personnel
        - Relevant records of past projects or activities
    - Management capability
        - Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures. (Based on brief description of similar projects and their relevance to the proposed project)
- Risks
    - Are the identified risks relevant?
    - Are all risks identified?
    - Are the measures to mitigate risks appropriate?

3. Appendixes

3.1. Review Form

Project Acronym	
Lead applicant	
Reviewer Code	*To be filled out by SMC:*

The review form is structured in 4 parts. Reviewers are expected to complete each part to the best of their abilities, professional skills, knowledge and ethics.

It is essential that the review is based on coherent and sufficiently detailed comments and arguments to help the panel formulate its funding recommendation and decision.

If you identify shortcomings (other than minor ones), reflect those in a lower score for the relevant criterion

Part 1: Evaluation of the proposal

1. Objectives

Please comment (min ¼ page):

2. Expected outcomes

Please comment (min ¼ page):

3. Innovation

Please comment (min ¼ page):

4. Expected Impact

Please comment (min ¼ page):

5. Service Information

Please comment (min ¼ page):

6. Network Information

Please comment (min ¼ page):

7. Project Implementation

Please comment (min ¼ page):

8. Budget and Financing

Please comment (min ¼ page):

9. Human Resources

Please comment (min ¼ page):

10. Risks

Please comment (min ¼ page):

Part 2: Other considerations (impact on environment, society, ethical questions,…)

Please comment:

Part 3: Overall assessment

Justification of funding recommendation

Why do you or don't you recommend the proposal for funding? (½ - 1 page)

Part 4: Scoring of the proposal

Please apply your scoring for each criterion and for the overall proposal (final score) by marking the check boxes with an 'X'. All scores should be consistent with your previous comments.

Criterion [Individual Expert]	Score (0-10)
1. Projects scope and objectives	☐
2. Expected outcomes	☐
3. Level of innovation	☐
4. Expected impact	☐
5. Service Information	☐
6. Network Information	☐
7. Project Implementation	☐
8. Budget and financing	☐
9. Human Resources	☐
10. Risks	☐

INTERMEDIATE SCORE (out of 100)	☐

3.2. Synthesis Form

Project Acronym	
Lead applicant	

Please refer to the "Selection Guidelines"(especially section 3) before completing this form.

Based on the remote reviews, please write an assessment and justify your statements for the strengths and weaknesses listed. Each evaluation criteria needs to be considered and contradictory reviewer statements should be commented.

The 'Synthesis' will be the discussion basis for the selection panel to make a ranking and take the final funding decision. Jointly with the reviews, the final synthesis will be sent to the applicants.

Part 1: Overall assessment (1 - 2 pages)

Short outline of the proposal:

[including indication of related projects, hosting pioneering zones, the proposed fields of activity the project falls into,…]

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Conclusion:

[as well as copied from the detailed assessment:]

Part 2: Other considerations (impact on environment, society, ethical questions,…)

Part 3: Overall assessment

Part 4: Scoring of the proposal

Please apply your scoring for each criterion and for the overall proposal (final score) by marking the check boxes with an 'X'. All scores should be consistent with your previous comments.

Criterion [Expert Committee]	Score (0-10)
11. Projects scope and objectives	☐
12. Expected outcomes	☐
13. Level of innovation	☐
14. Expected impact	☐
15. Service Information	☐
16. Network Information	☐
17. Project Implementation	☐
18. Budget and financing	☐
19. Human Resources	☐
20. Risks	☐

INTERMEDIATE SCORE (out of 100)	☐

Coefficients [Interministerial Commission]	1+
1. As for domain of activity	☐
2. As per applicant	☐
TOTAL	☐

TOTAL SCORE (intermediate scode x total coefficient)	☐