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Ranking list from the full proposal evaluation of second co-funded call

Authors : Mr. Wassim SEBAI (ANR), Wassim SEBAI (ANR)

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Project officer: Bernardo Luis ABELLO GARCIA

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Deliverable 7.8 presents the activities of the International Review Panel in order to establish a ranking list of the 24 full proposals submitted to the 2022 Pillar 1 Call based on the evaluation of full proposals. The ranked list was used by the Call Steering Committee to select projects to be funded.

Approval

Date	By
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2023-06-16 15:24:17	Mr. Léonard LÉVÊQUE (LGI)



LEAP-RE

Long-Term Joint EU-AU Research
and Innovation Partnership on Renewable Energy

Research & Innovation Action

June 2023

D7.8 Ranking list from the full proposal evaluation of the Second co-funded call

Authors:

Francois Moisan(ANR), Wassim SEBAI (ANR), Mokhtar Sellami (MESRS)

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

Acronym	Description
WP	Work Package
IRP	International Review Panel
CSC	Joint Call Steering Committee
JCS	Joint Call Secretariat
MARs	Multiannual Roadmaps
PMB	Programme Management Board

Keywords

Full-proposal ranking; International Review Panel



1. Eligibility check

The eligibility checks (national and transnational) was done at the pre-proposal step. In order to ensure that the projects still comply with the national and transnational rules, the eligibility check was done at the full-proposal step.

The transnational eligibility check of each project (compliance with the rules of the Call) was done by the Joint Call Secretariat. The transnational rules are indicated in the appendix 1.

National eligibility checks were done by the funding organisations.

All the full-proposals were eligible after the eligibility check.

2. Evaluation of the full-proposals

2.1 International Review Panel composition

During the first step, 19 experts evaluated the pre-proposals. For the The International Review Panel (IRP) composition of the second step, the Joint Call Secretariat proceed to the revision of the composition of the International Review Panel considering the feed-back of the funding organisations.

The JCS proposed to keep the same evaluators except five of them. The International Review Panel (IRP) was chaired by Mrs Gundula WEBER from AIT / Omnisolar e.U. Mrs WEBER was chosen as a chair woman because: -She does not have conflict of interest in any of the projects evaluated in the second step; -She has good knowledge for the 6 Multi-Annual roadmaps of the call -She already chaired panels. Her gender was also taken into consideration.

Gender	Name	Position	Country
M.	Amjad Moghaddam Anvari-	Aalborg University	Denmark
Mrs.	Anjali SHANKER	IED Group	France
M.	De Lucia Maurizio	Univ Florence	Italy
M.	El-Hadi BENYOUSSEF	CNRST, Polytech	Algeria
Mrs.	Gundula Weber	Engineer (AIT); Mangaging Director (Omnisolar e.U)	Austria
M.	Hassane EL MARKHI	Univ. Fez	Morocco
Mrs.	Iris Nicomedi	ADEME - French agency for ecological transition	France
M.	Kudakwashe Ndhlukula	SADC Executive director	Namibia
M.	Luis Alvez	Fac Eng. Lisbonne	Portugal



Mrs.	Najma LAAROUSSI	HS Techno	Morocco
M.	Pedro RODRIGUEZ	Technical University of Catalonia	Spain
Mrs.	Rekioua Djamilia	University of Bejaia, Electrical departement-LTII Laboratory	Algeria
Mrs.	Sumaya NASSIEP	ESKOM	South Africa
Mrs.	Temilade Sesan	University Ibadan	Nigeria

The IRP includes 7 women (including the chair-woman) and 7 men. 7 members are from Africa and 7 from Europe.

2.2 Training of the IRP

The IRP members had to sign a declaration of involvement and a non-disclosure agreement before they had access to any evaluation document or full-proposal. A Code of Conduct regarding Conflict of Interests was also sent.

As training information, the IRP members received:

- An explanation of the ANR website used to do the evaluation of the full-proposals;
- Guidelines for the evaluation of full-proposals;
- A training session was done on January 27th to recall the objectives of LEAP-RE, the selection process of proposals and the evaluation criteria.

Moreover, during the introduction of the IRP meeting, the evaluation criteria were also recalled.

2.3 Allocation of full-proposals

In order to avoid conflict of interest, if an IRP member was from the same country as one consortium partner of a project, he did not have to evaluate the project. Then, the evaluation was done by expert who had knowledge and expertise in the main multiannual roadmap/topic of the full-proposal.

All the full-proposals were evaluated by at least 3 experts, sometimes 4. Each full-proposal was evaluated by at least one expert working in Africa and one expert working in Europe.

3. IRP meeting

The LEAP-RE Expert panel meeting chaired by Mrs. Gundula WEBER has been held between 08 and 09 March 2023 in a hybrid format with the chair, 6 experts and the independent observer in Paris and the other experts through a Cisco WebEx Meetings session.

The Panel schedule was the following:

- Introductory plenary session (08 March 1 pm – 1:30pm CET)



► Evaluation of the projects (08 March 1:30pm CET – 09 March 4:00 pm CET)

► Validation of the ranking list and explanations regarding the consensus reports (09 March 4:00pm – 5:00pm CET)

3.1 Roles assigned to the panel

1/Panel members

During the panel meeting, the panel member appointed as «Rapporteur» starts the discussion by briefly summarizing the full-proposal and then gives an opinion of his evaluation. The panel member appointed as co-evaluator is one of the reviewers/co-evaluators of the full-proposal. During the panel meeting he listens first to the Rapporteur of the proposal and presents his own review of the proposal, strengthening the points where he disagrees with the other reviewers.

2/Chair

The Chair leads the Introductory, the discussions among reviewers and the final plenary sessions.

The chair:

- Kept the conversation going during the Panel, ensuring that both rapporteur and co-evaluators received appropriate amount of time to put forward their opinion on the full proposal
- Kept in time during session (15 min for each proposal)
- Ensured a decision is made that member can agree upon
- Ensured a final ranking is made at the end of the session

3.2 Documents delivery for the meeting

A booklet of the projects selected on the first call was provided before the meeting.

At the beginning of the session, the panel members had access to the others preassessments of the proposal they had evaluated.

3.3 Introduction

The Chair of the panel started the meeting with a short speech, then Wassim SEBAI (ANR), made an introductory presentation indicating the panel meeting agenda and objectives:

- discuss the results of the pre-assessments phase and reach a joint position of the Expert Panel when there are discrepancies between the individual pre-assessments
- providing a ranking list to the Steering Committee.

The ranking of the full-proposals is based on the evaluation criteria reminded during the introductory presentation (see appendix 2). Some statistics made from the pre-meeting assessments were also presented. With the lights of these statistics, discrepancies between evaluators in the scores for a same proposal and the use of the evaluation scale for each



panel member has been identified. An average time of 15 minutes was allocated for the discussion of each proposal.

3.4 Conflicts of Interest

The Conflicts of Interest has been identified prior to the assessment work of the experts. When it came to handle a conflict of interest for a proposal to discuss during the panel sessions, the access to the discussions of the panel were blocked for the person(s) involved by this conflict of interest with the online “lobby” functionality of Cisco WebEx Meetings or leave the room for the persons attending the meeting onsite. Once the proposal(s) had been discussed, the person(s) was/were integrated again into the meeting. During the IRP meeting the fact that an expert was from the same country as a member of the consortium of a project was not considered as a situation of Conflict of interest (he was not evaluator of the project). The chair declared no conflict of interest prior to the meeting and during the meeting. Funding organisations were invited to attend the IRP meeting as observer (not taking part to the discussions).

3.5 Results

The rapporteur started by summarizing the content of the proposal and the other assessments of the proposals. The co-evaluators replied to the rapporteur then, the IRP members were invited to participate to the discussion.

After the discussion, the Chair asked the evaluators to confirm if they want to modify or not the scores.

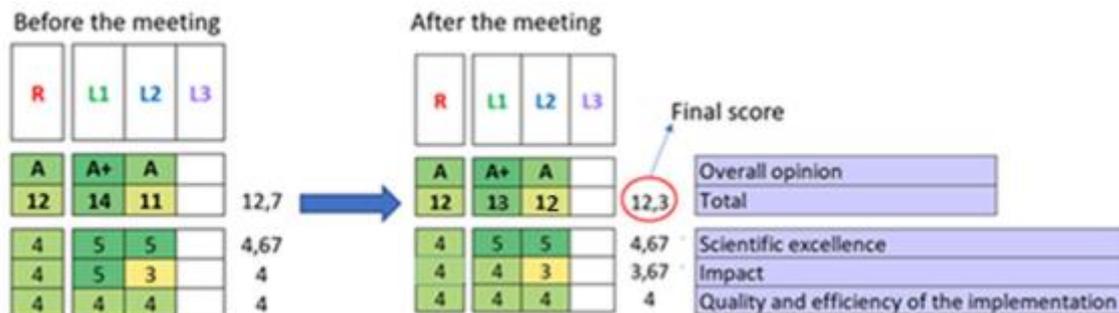


Figure 1. Scoring of proposals. R: scores of the rapporteur, L1/2/3, scores of the co-evaluators

The final score was obtained by adding the average score of the 3 sub-criterias.

The full-proposals were addressed according to the average score of the pre-assessment.

Table 1 : Ranking list of full-proposals

Acronym	Consensus score of IRP	Rank
SWITCH	13,33333333	1
SmartAPV-Fruit	13	2
OPTiMG	12,66666667	3
D3T4H2S	12,33333333	4
MiDiNA	12,33333333	4
BIOTHEREP	12	6
Vil2Bio	12	6
REPTES	11,66666667	7
CombiBioEnergy	11,5	8
TerraCooltech	11,33333333	9
RCLIB	11,25	10
DISH-mGC	11,25	10
SolDryPro	10,33333333	11
SUNRISSE	10,33333333	11
SHE	10,33333333	11
Agri-solar H2	10,33333333	11
PVH2SYSTEM	10,33333333	11
SSG RemPop	10	16
TRIGGER	10	16
OSER	9,33333333	18
SBC4SA	9,33333333	18
EXBIOM	9	20
INTEGRATOR	9	20
SmartSolAccess	7,33333333	24



4. Conclusion

Driven by a good will to conduct its mission in a rigorous, transparent manner and in compliance with evaluation standards, the CSC has clearly defined the various stages and mechanisms leading to classification projects.

The prerequisites for this success were as follows:

- Updating the list of IRP members.
- Organization of an explanatory and training session for IRP members, in particular on the resolution of conflicts of interest but also on the need to put forward the arguments that led to the final score and the confidentiality.
- Allocation of full-proposals regarding the issue of COI and competencies.
- Appointment of an IRP chair who is responsible for coordinating the discussions on the evaluation of each project by hearing a rapporteur and the co-evaluators on the weak points and the strong points of the full-proposal studied.
- Collegial study of proposals for the management of candidates with the same score and on the conduct to be followed.

The projects selection process succeeded to rank the 24 projects submitted at the second step. All the members of the International Review panel provided an evaluation of the projects they were assigned to.

The final ranked list has been sent to the funding organisations the day following IRP meeting (10th March) in order for them to prepare the Call Steering Committee scheduled on 23rd March. The whole evaluation process was supervised by an independent observer who produced a report. The independent observer was named by the CSC.



Appendix 1: transnational eligibility criteria

- A consortium applying to the Call must consist of at least four project partners from 4 different countries (2 from Europe 6 and 2 from Africa).
- At least one partner of the Consortium of each continent (Europe and Africa) should be from a country participating in the Call and eligible to receive support from the relevant participating funder.
- At least half of the partners in a consortium must belong to countries participating in the Call and eligible to receive support from the relevant participating funder.
- Each consortium must include at least one partner from the public sector (academic, public research ...) and one partner from a commercial company located in participating (to this Call) countries
- The coordinator of the consortium must request and be eligible to receive support and be established in a country or region participating in the Call.
- A Lead Researcher can only represent the coordinator in one proposal (i.e. if a Lead Researcher coordinates one proposal, he/she can only participate in other proposals as a researcher/key personnel of a consortium partner).
- Researchers members of the IRP (International Review Panel) or experts of proposals cannot be member of a consortium applying to this Call.
- Researchers employed or affiliated to a funding Organisation cannot apply to the Call except where explicitly authorized.
- Each partner requesting funding MUST comply with the national/regional funding rules and regulations of their respective Funding Organisation to ensure the eligibility of the consortium proposal. Public organisations from African countries/regions not participating in the Call have a limited possibility to be funded and become partner of funded consortia.
- The detail budget is asked at the full-proposalstage using the Excel template "Budget and funding request".
- The maximum funding for each project is 700 k€ and the maximum funding per partner in one project is 300 k€. However not all funding agencies will apply these amounts (see Appendix IV). The funding maximum for one partner 300 k€ will apply for each project but does not accumulate for a partner present in several projects.
- The total funding rate of partners from the same country in a proposal cannot exceed 50% of the full funding of the project.



Appendix 2: evaluation criteria

Pre-proposals and full-proposals will be evaluated based on three main evaluation criteria: 1) Scientific Excellence, 2) Impact and 3) Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation:

1. SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE

- Clarity and pertinence of the objectives;
- Soundness of the concept, and credibility of the proposed methodology;
- Extent that the proposed work is beyond the state of the art, and demonstrates innovation potential (e.g. ground-breaking objectives, novel concepts and approaches, new products, services or business and organisational models);
- Appropriate consideration of interdisciplinary approaches and, where relevant, use of stakeholder knowledge (**only for stage 2**)

2. IMPACT

- Proposal should take into account societal needs, including one or more of the following aspects: market evaluation, business models for long-term sustainability, and solution deployment as well as the long-term impact on society.
- The extent to which the outputs of the project would contribute at the European and African level to expected impacts in line with the integrated strategy proposed in the Roadmap for a jointly funded AU-EU research & innovation partnership on climate change and sustainable energy (CCSE), especially the impact on renewable energy access in African countries and in Africa context (and not only the enhancement of renewable energy performances at global level);
- Any substantial impacts that would enhance innovation capacity, create new market opportunities, strengthen competitiveness and growth of companies, address issues related to barriers/obstacles, and any framework conditions such as regulation, standards, public acceptance, workforce considerations, financing of follow-up steps, cooperation of other links in the value chain, or bring other important benefits for society;
- Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of IPR), and to manage research data where relevant (**only for stage 2**);
- Quality of the proposed measures to communicate the project activities to different target audiences (**only for stage 2**);
- Supporting the development of non-technological solutions to address environmental, social impact and health safety issues, within, if convenient, a life cycle analysis approach, or the development/deployment of tools, applications, and services enabling to respond population needs;
- When relevant, to what extent the project will contribute to a gender equal societal development.

3. QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

- The effective collaboration and IP co-ownership between the partners in the consortium beyond sharing different tasks or working packages (**only for stage 2**);
- Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, including extent to which the resources assigned to work packages are in line with their objectives and deliverables (**only for stage 2**);



- Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk and innovation management (**only for stage 2**);
- Quality and complementarity of transnational activities by the participants and extent to which the consortium as whole brings together the necessary expertise;
- Gender perspective of research and development content; the participation of females as main researchers in consortium will be part of the note.
- Appropriateness of the allocation of tasks, ensuring that all participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role (**only for stage 2**).
- Value for money : the budget requested regarding the work plan and the research objectives will be part of the evaluation notation

Evaluation scores will be awarded to the three main evaluation criteria and not for the different sub-criteria. Each main evaluation criterion is rated using the 0-5 scale (half-points are not allowed):

0 — The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information (unless the result of an ‘obvious clerical error’).

1— Poor: the criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

2—Fair: the proposal broadly addresses the criterion but there are significant weaknesses.

3—Good: the proposal addresses the criterion well but with a number of shortcomings.

4—Very good: the proposal addresses the criterion very well but with a small number of shortcomings.

5—Excellent: the proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion; any shortcomings are minor.

The threshold for individual criterion is 3. The overall rating is the sum of the individual criterion scores (0-15).

For the evaluation of pre-proposals, the three main evaluation criteria will apply but with fewer sub-criteria (those indicated as “only for stage 2” will NOT be considered).

The overall threshold for pre-proposals will be 9.

The coordinators will receive the results of the pre-proposal assessment including the peer-review reports and will be able to address the evaluators’ questions in the full-proposals.

For the evaluation of full proposals, the overall threshold for full-proposals, applying to the sum of the three individual scores, will be 10. Proposals not meeting the thresholds will not be recommended for funding by the IRP.

