

## **Evaluation Guidelines**

### **for the SEERA-EI Pilot Joint Call on**

### **„Research and Skill Building in Scientific Cloud Computing“**

#### **1 Eligibility Check**

The National Contact Points and Call Secretariat check that proposals meet the eligibility criteria as set out in section 2. of the PJC announcement and documents: Guide for Applicants and Pilot Joint Call National Eligibility and Funding Rules.

#### **2 Assessment Grid and Scoring Mechanism**

Below you will find the award criteria that will be used by independent experts to evaluate the quality of each eligible application. The selection is conducted via peer review, so each application is assessed by at least two experts. The application form equally invites applicants to describe and justify their proposal against these award criteria. Applicants are strongly advised to take these into account when preparing the information requested in the application and should ensure that their Application Form adequately covers each criterion.

Each Founding Party nominates at least three reviewers competent for cloud computing. The Call Secretariat nominates three (if not possible, minimum two) reviewers for each project proposal. Evaluators/reviewers are not paid (but a Funding Party may decide to finance its reviewers if finds it convenient or necessary). In principle, the same reviewers nominated to evaluate a project proposal, later are evaluating its progress and generate other reports and the final report for the same project.

The assessment grid and the scoring mechanism shown below have been designed in strict coherence with the provision for award criteria. This will be used by the evaluators assessing the applications submitted to the Pilot Joint Call in Research and Skill Building in Cloud Computing. For each award criterion, the assessment grids list a number of points that the evaluators assessing the submitted proposals will be asked to address and comment on. The list of points to be addressed in the assessment is however not to be considered as exhaustive and, when writing the comments for a specific award criterion, evaluators will be able to address any other issue they feel relevant.

Each section of the assessment form corresponds to an award criterion. For each section experts will give a score based on their assessment of how well the

proposal addressed the criterion, and provide comments justifying the score for the section.

The maximum rating for each category is indicated in brackets on the right. The maximum total points that a proposal may obtain is 15. In principle, proposals, which do not receive 10 points, will not be considered for funding.

Scores are ranged on a scale from 0 to 5 and are defined as follows:

0 - no evidence; 1 - very weak; 2 - weak; 3 - acceptable; 4 - good; 5 - very good

Scores should be specified with one decimal number (e.g., 4.3) with these recommendations:

- 0.0 - No evidence: fails to include a minimum amount of evidence to enable the criterion to be evaluated
- 0.1 – 0.9 fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged to missing or incomplete information
- 1.0 - Very weak: addresses the criterion but with significant or many weaknesses
- 1.1 – 1.9 the criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses
- 2.0 - Weak: addresses the criterion but with significant weaknesses
- 2.1 – 2.9 while the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are some significant weaknesses
- 3.0 - Acceptable: addresses the criterion satisfactorily
- 3.1 – 3.9 addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary
- 4.0 - Good: addresses the criterion with some aspects of high quality
- 4.1 – 4.9 addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible
- 5.0 - Very good: addresses the criterion with all aspects of high quality

Evaluation scores will be awarded for each of the three criteria, and not for the sub-criteria. The overall final score is automatically calculated as a sum of the points given for each award criterion. Evaluators will use the table below to specify their score. They will also give an explanation of given scores in written form for each of criteria.

Award criterion	Score	Total points
Technological excellence (relevance to the call)	0.0-5.0	
Management & implementation quality	0.0-5.0	
Potential impact for development, dissemination and results	0.0-5.0	
Total		

Once the selection process is completed, applicants will receive a detailed evaluation report, with feedback on each award criterion.

### 3 Award Criteria

#### 3.1 *Technological excellence*

Applications need to clearly state the project objectives, their relevance to the thematic focus of the Pilot Joint Call in research and Skill Building in Cloud Computing:

- Studies of need for cloud computing in research in SEE. The expected results range from user community requirements capture, analysis of demands on cloud computing provisioning infrastructures, and specificities of target users.
- Studies of state of the art in terms of middleware and IaaS solutions used in cloud computing - Europe and SEE. The expected results are comprehensive overview of existing solutions, and roadmaps and recommendations for future developments.
- Pilot clouds for SEE – this action is envisaged to support set-up of pilot cloud installations and adequate management solutions for emerging cloud infrastructures in SEE.
- Pilot applications for SEE – this action would involve development of proof-of-principle pilot applications to be deployed on regional cloud infrastructures.
- Studies on requirements for federated cloud computing infrastructures for R&E.

- Joint dissemination and training activities in cloud computing, workshops and intensive trainings.
- Study on leveraging and combining e-Government and e-Science cloud solutions.
- Data protection, security and confidentiality.
- Legal aspects of cloud computing. Legislative requirements for cloud resource sharing within the region.

Points to be addressed in the assessment (non-exhaustive list):

- Reliability of concept and conformity of the objectives, according to the scope of the Pilot Joint Call priority topics and the relevant national or/and regional priorities.
- Soundness of concept and quality of objectives
- Performance and capacity of the proposed e-infrastructure, progress beyond the state-of-the-art
- Quality and effectiveness of the methodology to achieve the objectives of the project, in particular the provision of integrated services.
- Quality and effectiveness of the Networking Activities and associated work plan. The extent to which the co-ordination mechanisms will foster a culture of co-operation between the participants, and enhance the services to the users.
- Quality and effectiveness of the Trans-national Access and/or Services, and associated work plan. The extent to which the activities will offer access to state-of-the-art infrastructures, high quality services, and will enable users to conduct high quality research.
- Quality and effectiveness of the Joint Research Activities and associated work plan. The extent to which the activities will contribute to quantitative and qualitative improvements of the services provided by the infrastructures.

### *3.2 Management and implementation quality*

Applications need to present their project explaining not only what they will do but also how they will do it. The project should have feasible objectives, clearly defined and quantified target groups, a plan for quality assurance, including benchmarks and indicators for measuring progress, and involve all the relevant stakeholders.

Proposals should demonstrate the good relevance of the management methodology. Points to be addressed in the assessment (non-exhaustive list):

- Clarity of the project objectives and their feasibility in the planned time;
- Appropriateness of project outcomes and related activities in consistency with the project aim and specific objectives;
- Demonstrated logical and sound planning capacity (Logical framework matrix and Work-plan);
- Anticipated quality control, monitoring and management of the project (indicators and benchmarks);
- Balanced distribution of tasks and responsibilities among all partners including a substantial role for the partners in the partner country/ies;
- Clear involvement of students or their organisations throughout the project cycle.
- Coherence between the different parts of the project (objectives – activities – resources – budget)

Proposals should demonstrate that the partnership is adequate to carry out the action for the project scope. Points to be addressed in the assessment (non-exhaustive list):

- Quality and relevant experience of the individual participants
- Quality of the consortium as a whole (including complementarities, balance, critical mass).
- Appropriate allocation and justification of the resources to be committed (staff, equipment, etc), by work package and participant.
- The partnership includes all the skills, recognised expertise and competences required to carry out all aspects of the work programme (both technical expertise and experience in project management);
- Skill building, training “on site” of young researchers and system administrators in area of research cloud computing, experience and knowledge sharing;
- There is a suitable distribution of tasks across the partners, consistent with the required expertise and balanced involvement of partners in the activities to be carried out;

- Effective measures have been planned to ensure efficient communication and cooperation;
- The applicant and partners have sufficient staff, equipment and other resources to handle and manage the project and its budget.
- Partner country/ies institutions benefit from a strong institutional and individual capacity building process.

The application should demonstrate that the proposed activities will be implemented and the proposed results and objectives will be achieved, at the lowest possible costs. Points to be addressed in the assessment (non-exhaustive list):

- Reasonable staff costs are planned for each activity.
- Equipment purchase is limited to what is necessary for the implementation of the project objectives and reasonable prices are estimated.
- Daily salary scales provided in Annexes to the call for proposals are respected; the type of task is used to determine the daily rate and not the status of the individual carrying out the work.
- Mobility periods are used efficiently, making best use of time abroad for maximum benefit.
- The budget is not inflated.
- The action is feasible with the defined budget.

The estimated budget needs adjustment in order to ensure compliance with the parameters and guidelines set out in the present call for proposals (correcting for mistakes, eliminating ineligible expenses, etc.).

### *3.3 Potential impact for development, dissemination and results*

The planned impact, dissemination and exploitation of results should ensure optimal use of the results during and beyond the lifetime of the project to a broad range of stakeholders. This is directly linked with the lasting impact of the project on the institutions, target groups and/or higher education system.

Points to be addressed in the assessment (non-exhaustive list):

- Contribution at the European level towards structuring the European Research Area taking into account the Community objective of balanced territorial development for optimising the use and development of the best research infrastructures existing in Europe.

- Appropriateness of measures for the dissemination and/or exploitation of project results and knowledge, for the management of intellectual property and for spreading excellence.
- Contribution to socio-economic impacts.
- Extent to which the planned dissemination and exploitation activities will ensure optimal use of the results during and beyond the lifetime of the project;
- There is evidence that the project will have a tangible impact and multiplier effects;
- Measures are defined and planned to ensure that the expected results of the project will be sustainable in the long term (financially, institutionally, at policy level).

## 4 Selection Process

### 4.1 *Evaluation and selection rules*

The application procedure is specified according to these rules:

1. The application procedure will be in one stage.
2. Any eligible research institution from a country – Funding Party can submit a proposal directly to the Pilot Joint Call Secretariat following the application guide for submissions and using the Call Management System.
3. The Coordinator of the project has to submit on-line the project proposal, in English, via a centralized web-based call management system. The "Guide for Applicants" and the "Evaluation Guidelines" are available on the Pilot Joint Call website.
4. All project proposals submitted will be checked for eligibility. In case of ineligibility, the proposal in question will not be considered for evaluation. If one of the partners is ineligible, the whole proposal will be discarded.
5. The evaluation of the project proposals will be performed by three international independent peer reviewers nominated by Call Secretariat from the list of reviewers provided by Group of Funding Parties.
6. The Scientific Advisory Board will create the ranking of the project proposals based on evaluation reports of peer reviewers and will create the recommendations for funding.

7. The ranking list will be addressed to the Steering Board with recommendation for funding.
8. The Steering Board will make the final decisions regarding the selections of the projects.

#### **4.2 Applications submission process**

- 1) **Submission of the application form and compulsory annexes.** Online submission of the following application package:
  - a) Part A eForm (entered online)
  - b) Part B Project description
  - c) Part C Eligibility related information (one for each partner)
  - d) Part D Mandate (one for each partner, not for Project Coordinator)
- 2) **Eligibility check:** Language of submission, requirements for partnership composition, signature of the legal representative of the applicant organisation, correct application form, duration of the project, complete application pack, maximum grant size and other country-specific data of interest for eligibility checking. Eligibility checking will be done in two stages:
  - a) Preliminary eligibility checking of the draft version of the project proposals. Applicants with a negative eligibility check results will receive an explanation as to the reasons for ineligibility. They will have two weeks to modify their applications trying to comply with the eligibility and funding rules
  - b) Final eligibility checking of the submitted final applications. Applications that do not comply with their national eligibility and funding rules will be rejected.
- 3) **Evaluation of the application against Award criteria:** The application procedure is in one stage. Three peer reviewers are giving their feedbacks and a score based on the Award Criteria: Technological Excellence (relevance to the call), Management & implementation quality and Potential impact for development, dissemination and results. In the context of the award criteria, experts are using the information provided in Part B of the application package (see the document “Guide for Applicants”) and this document.
- 4) **Ranking of application proposals:** The Scientific Advisory Board of the Pilot Joint Call analyses all reports of peer reviewers and analyses all

application proposals in order to check if all Award criteria were properly taken into account and implemented properly. The Scientific Advisory Board may communicate with coordinators of proposed projects in order to clarify some findings of reviewers and may modify scores done by evaluators if found that award criteria were not properly implemented. As the result, the Scientific Advisory Board generates the ranking list of application proposals with comments and recommendations and sends it to the Group of Funding Parties, i.e. the countries that launched the Pilot Joint Call.

- 5) Selection decision:** The Steering Board of the Pilot Joint Call makes the final decision based on the recommendation and ranking of application proposals prepared by the Scientific Advisory Board. The Steering Board also takes into consideration opinions and priorities specified by the Funding Parties before it makes the final decision regarding the selected applications.
- 6) Publication/Notification of results:** The Steering Board of the Pilot Joint Call publishes the list of projects that are selected and approved for funding. All applicants are notified of the selection results.