**GUIDE FOR EVALUATORS**

[](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/marie-sklodowska-curie-actions)

**Marie Sklodowska-Curie Action COFUND**

**Call 1: Deadline 31 October 2025**

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# INTRODUCTION

## IRIS IN BRIEF

The **Interdisciplinary Research In Societal challenges Postdoctoral COFUND (IRIS)** is a European postdoctoral programme, COFUNDed by the Université libre de Bruxelles, Vrije Universiteit Brussel and the European Commission within the framework of the **MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE actions** (Horizon Europe).Through this programme, **36 international postdoctoral researchers** will be recruited, 24 at ULB and 12 at VUB. The program period will take place between 2025 and 2030 and will launch **two calls**, for each of which IRIS will offer 18 positions **open to all fields of research**, according to a bottom-up approach. During the fellowship, IRIS postdocs will benefit from an environment that fosters academic growth and well-being. Fellows will engage in optional secondments and short visits, take part in the IRIS management committee, and have 30 months to fully carry out their interdisciplinary research projects.

IRIS’s research programme hinges on two themes: interdisciplinarity and regional priorities, addressing the six societal challenges of the Brussels-Capital Region (BCR). IRIS research projects will exemplify solutions in the applied context of the BCR but are intrinsically linked to pervasive European needs, thereby guaranteeing the participating researchers European-wide career options.

The programme’s training framework is built on three key pillars: Foundations, Consolidation, and Transition, each designed to develop fellows’ RTDI skills, expand their professional networks and enhance their future employability. The IRIS postdoctoral training programme goes beyond conventional academic training, offering tailored support for the transition from recognised to established researchers, equipping fellows for diverse career paths, and incorporating policy engagement and advocacy skills to enable fellows to create tangible societal impact and prepare for meaningful careers.

Candidates must contact their potential advisor before submitting their application in order to discuss available capacity for supervision and appropriate research infrastructure.

The present Guidelines for Evaluators are compliant with the code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers, the European charter for researchers and with the ethical procedures and regulations of the European Commission. The evaluation of postdoctoral proposals is carried out by three independent external evaluators (peer-reviewers) and then ranked. The Selection Committee—co-chaired by the ULB Vice-Rector for Research and Innovation ULB and the VUB Vice-Rector for Research Policy is composed of volunteers including academic members of both university research councils, representatives from 2 of the non-academic associated partners and advisors from HR and ethics committees –will review the ranking lists and consensus reports, ensuring proper procedures were followed and applying ex-aequo criteria if needed, before finalizing the selection. Ethics experts in the selection committee will review the ethics self-assessment checklists and evaluators’ comments of the ranked projects. The evaluation and selection process will comply with the requirements of [2024 MSCA COFUND Guide for Applicants](https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/da9f7ca3-c732-4e8b-ae66-61533a2f6e3c/library/13450c5b-42a9-438e-b0b2-4f118e846959?p=1&n=10&sort=modified_DESC).

The experts evaluate eligible proposals on a personal basis, not as representatives of their employer, their country or any other entity. They are expected to be independent, impartial and objective, and to behave in a professional manner throughout the process. For this reason, a summary of the evaluation reports will be communicated to the applicants in order to justify the funding decision (without revealing the evaluator’s identity).

Before commencing their work, evaluators will have to read and accept a non-disclosure agreement of confidentiality and conflict of interest (Annex I of this Guide for Evaluators). This agreement requires experts to maintain strict confidentiality with respect to the entire evaluation process, during and after the evaluation.

Under no circumstance may an evaluator attempt to contact an applicant on his/her own account, either during the evaluation or afterwards.

All eligible applications are evaluated against the criteria established by the IRIS Call for Postdoctoral Fellowships. Evaluation is performed individually and remotely by the peer-reviewers and by the Selection Committee, according to the Evaluation Grid provided[.](https://civis.smapply.io/)

Under the terms of this agreement, the experts must disclose beforehand any known conflicts of interest, and immediately inform the IRIS Project Management team/European Science Foundation (ESF) if such conflicts become apparent during the course of the evaluation and will take whatever action is necessary to eliminate such conflicts, as described in the present Guide for Evaluators.

## CALL 1 TIMELINE

A diagram of steps and steps

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Call opening**: 1 July 2025 at 14.00 CET   
**Call closing**: 31 October 2025 at 17.00 CET   
**Eligibility check**: 1 November 2025 to 14 November 2025   
**Evaluation by external international experts**: between November 2025 and March 2026  
**Results to applicants:** 6 to 10 April 2026   
**Start of projects**: 15 July 2026 (earliest) to 15 November 2026 (latest)

Any change in this expected timeline will be announced in the IRIS COFUND website.

# CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EVALUATORS

* The task of an evaluator is to participate in the confidential, fair and unbiased evaluation of each proposal according to the criteria of the IRIS programme. The evaluator must invest her/his best efforts to do so and subsequently deliver a high-quality work.
* The evaluator works as an independent person. Such a person is deemed to work in a personal capacity and, in performing the work, does not represent any organisation, entity or country.
* The evaluator must use appropriate, non-discriminatory language related to evaluation of proposals.
* The evaluator commits him/herself to strict confidentiality and impartiality concerning his/her tasks. If an evaluator has a direct or indirect connection with a proposal, or other interest in any way connected with a proposal, or has any other allegiance which may impair his/her neutrality with respect to a proposal, the evaluator must declare such facts the team implementing the evaluation process as soon as he/she becomes aware of such circumstances. The IRIS Management Team and the Selection Committee will ensure that, where the nature of any relation is such that it could threaten the evaluator’s neutrality, he/she will not participate in the evaluation of the respective proposal and, if necessary, the competing proposals.
* Evaluators may not discuss any proposal with others, including other evaluators and members of the Selection Committee.
* The ESF will be in charge, supported by the IRIS team of the whole project evaluation. The selection of the projects will be ultimately responsibility of the IRIS committee. Evaluators may not communicate with applicants. No proposal may be modified during the evaluation process.
* Evaluators will log their evaluations through the tool provided on evaluation portal.
* The evaluator will be held personally responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of any documents or electronic files sent, including the returning, erasing or destroying of all confidential documents or files upon completing the evaluation as instructed. Evaluators may seek further information (i.e.: on the internet, specialized databases, etc.) for the purpose of completing the examination of proposals. Evaluators must not disclose the contents of proposals or information on applicants to third parties (i.e.: colleagues, students, etc.).
* Evaluators are required to comply strictly with any rules defined by the IRIS Selection Committee to ensure confidentiality of the evaluation. Failure to do so may result in the exclusion from current and future evaluation processes.

# HANDLING OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

By reading and accepting the code of conduct for evaluators, and after reviewing the project summaries, the evaluator will notify the ESF team of any possible conflict of interest.

## WHAT IS A CONFLICT OF INTEREST?

Conflict of interest can be direct or indirect. In a direct conflict of interest, an evaluator is involved in at least one of the following or similar situations regarding at least one of the postdoctoral projects for which evaluation is requested within the same Call for proposals:

* A person is an applicant, a team member, or consultant in one of the proposals, or was involved in the preparation of such a proposal.
* A person is in a kinship relation with any of the persons involved in the proposal.
* A person has a personal interest or direct financial gain and would therefore benefit from one of the proposals being funded or not funded.

**A person in a direct conflict of interest cannot participate in the evaluation process.**

In an indirect conflict of interest, an evaluator is involved in at least one of the following or similar situations:

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| --- | --- |
| − | A person has some other professional/business relation with at least one of the proposals |
| − | A person is a competitor to the proposal in a scientific or business sense |
| − | Persons who have been in a student/professor relationship with the person involved in the proposal, having less than 5 years of scientific autonomy or in any other professional relationship in the last 3 years. |
| − | A person who has co-authored publications with the project bearer in the last 5 years. |
| − | A person that may have any other relationship with a project bearer affecting his/her impartiality. |

# EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF PROPOSALS

The evaluation of the application file consists of an eligibility check, a remote expert evaluation (triple peer-revision), and a review of the Selection Committee.

## ELIGIBILITY CHECK

Once submitted the applicant will receive an email of acknowledgment of receipt of proposal. Eligibility criteria for each proposal are checked before the evaluation begins. Eligibility is checked by the IRIS Project Management Team (PMT). Within the IRIS Call for Postdoctoral Fellowships, a proposal will only be considered eligible if it meets all of the following conditions:

Eligible applicants are experienced researchers:

* Holder of a doctoral degree at the date of the Call deadline, 31 October 3025,
* Candidates cannot have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Belgium for more than 12 months in the three years immediately before the Call deadline.
* Holders of a PhD degree with maximum 8 years of full-time research experience since obtaining the PhD (applicants can calculate research experience deducting periods of: maternity/parental leave, compulsory national military service, long term sick or family care leave, and procedures for obtaining refugee status)

Full-time equivalent research experience is measured from the date when a researcher obtained the degree allowing him or her to embark on a doctorate. This needs to be proven by the employment (or equivalent) contracts.

Proposals that surpass the 10-limit page plus 1 cover page for the Research and Training Project will not be eligible for evaluation.

## TRIPLE PEER REVISION

After the call closing date, each external expert will have to evaluate and score the eligible proposals submitted, according to the criteria and questions on the reviewers’ evaluation form (template provided as Annex 2 at the end of these guidelines). The IRIS Selection Committee will rank the proposals based on the consensus of the three independent experts. In the case of a discrepancy of more than 30% or an inability of the evaluators to agree, a fourth expert will evaluate the proposal.

After the call closing date, all eligible proposals submitted will be evaluated by three interdisciplinary, independent and international experts according to the criteria on the evaluation form (annex 2). The evaluation criteria are **Excellence**, **Impact** and **Implementation** with a respective weight of 50, 30 and 20 % in the final score. Each sub-criteria includes the “**aspects to be taken into account**”.

The Selection Committee will receive a ranked list of all proposals based on their scores. The IRIS team will then split this list into two: one for proposals with ULB as the Home Institution, and another for those with VUB. The threshold to be considered for the grant is 75/100.

# SELECTION OF EVALUATORS

The evaluators will be identified from European and international organisations and will be selected to fit the scientific scope of the submitted proposals. A balance of nationalities, gender and expertise will be sought, making sure that the panel represents an international group of scientists. This will ensure impartiality during the evaluation of the applications.

Each application will be sent to three (3) independent external experts specialised in the scientific domain of the proposal. In some cases, as described above, an additional expert evaluator may be required in case of discrepancy.

The selection of the experts is based on the following criteria:

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| − | Adequacy of the disciplinary and thematic fields of the experts identified with the topic and two main disciplines of the submitted projects; |
| − | Relevance of the expert's profile in regard to the programme's objectives and the nature of the submitted projects (participation in interdisciplinary and intersectoral research, participation in international project selection committees...); |
| − | Scientific renown, assessed through number of citations greater than 500 for hard sciences  (Web of Science), academic career superior to that of the candidate's, editorial responsibilities and awards; |
| − | Active publication track-record in the specific field with several peer reviewed publications over the last ten years; |
| − | Confirmation that the experts have (i) never co-published with the candidate (ii) have not co-published neither with the candidate’s Postdoctoral nor with the local host at IRIS host (ULB or VUB) in the five years prior to the evaluation process. |

The experts will not be affiliated to the current institution of the candidate or to any of the institutions targeted by the candidate in their research project, the experts will be from other countries and they will sign a declaration of confidentiality, impartiality and absence of any conflict of interest with the project to be evaluated. The ESF will pay attention to reach a gender balance in the experts solicited for double-peer revision of the projects.

The external experts will receive the complete application file together with an evaluation sheet (Annex 2) and this guide for evaluators. They will also receive a briefing on ethics guidelines and NOW bias training.

# SCORING AND WEIGHTING

The experts will evaluate the proposal “as is”, i.e. not considering its potential if a series of modifications were made. Scoring corresponds to the following options (decimal values of 0.1 possible) as in the guidance below

* 1. **Scoring of proposals by external experts**

Following the MSCA criteria scoring for each section must be in the range from 0-5.

**0 -** The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information. [*score between 0 and 1.0 out of 5*]

**1 -** Poor. The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses. [*score between 1.1 and 2.0 out of five*]

**2 -** Fair. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses. [*score between 2.1 and 3.0 out of five*]

**3 -** Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present. [*score between 3.1 and 3.9 out of five*]

**4 -** Very Good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present. [*score between 4.0 and 4.4 out of five*]

**5** -Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor. [*score between 4.5 and 5.0 out of five*]

**(minimum threshold to be ranked 75%)**

Use the **whole range of scores**. **Use 3** (Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.) **as a starting point** and develop arguments to justify grading the application higher or lower. Please consider the explanations next to the grading scale. Justify any grade by expressing **strengths and weaknesses** (with the term ‘because’, at least for the critiques). **Comments need to be consistent with the given grade**, e.g. a score of 4 corresponding to “The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present” requires a justification by strengths and weaknesses.

Ex-aequo criteria, in the following order of priority:

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| 1. Priority will be given to the projects that have scored higher in the excellence criterion, then in the impact criterion and then in the implementation criterion. |
| 1. Priority will be given to proposals where feedback to policy has been clearly outlined in the impact section. |
| 1. Priority will be given to proposals where the fellow contributes to maintain the gender balance supervisor or co-supervisor teams |

**The ESF project manager will ensure the quality of the peer-revisions, in particular that they are sufficiently justified in the comments.**

## DETAILED EVALUATION CRITERIA

## EXCELLENCE

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| **Excellence is divided into 2 major sub-criteria and is about:**   * Scientific quality (40%) * Applicant qualifications and motivation (10%) |

## SCIENTIFIC QUALITY

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| **What to evaluate:**   * Quality and relevance of proposed interdisciplinary **research plan** * Clear and relevant interdisciplinary **methodology** * Integration of **interdisciplinary** aspects * **Originality/innovative** nature of the project (in relation to state-of-the-art) * **Gender and diversity** aspects addressed and relevant to the research * **Open science practices** implemented as an integral part of the proposed methodology. If not considered appropriate in the context of the proposed work, whether this is sufficiently explained and justified in the proposal |

## APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS AND MOTIVATION

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| **What to evaluate:**   * Research **experience and results** (awards and funding, publications, presentations, participation in workgroups, …) * Demonstrates **capacity** to undertake project (including identifying possible trainings required) * **Motivation** for project objectives and choice of societal challenge(s). |

The gender and diversity aspects relate to the research question, methodologies and activities, and not to gender balance in the teams in charge of carrying out the research.

Data generated by projects funded by public means should be publicly accessible in digital databases provided there are no legal, ethical, copyright or other issues ([**Horizon Europe open research data policy**](https://horizoneuropencpportal.eu/sites/default/files/2025-04/task-3.6-open_science_brief.pdf)[**)**](https://www.snf.ch/en/dMILj9t4LNk8NwyR/topic/open-research-data). Evaluation of the research data management is related **to the points addressed in the research plan.** Open science practices should be assessed as an integral part of the proposed methodology and how the choice of practices and their implementation are adapted to the nature of the work, in a way that will increase the chances of achieving the objectives.

* If the proposal has appropriate justifications for not including open science practices, it should not be penalised. However, if open science practices are not sufficiently addressed, it might be considered as a shortcoming.

Reviewers are asked to consider the scientific qualifications of applicants based on their entire research output (including, when applicable, datasets, software, prototypes, etc.), in addition to research publications. The entire research output of the applicant can be evaluated through the ORCID account that is included CV. In this context, the scientific quality and relevance of a paper is deemed much more important than publication metrics or the reputation of the journal in which it was published. The scientific quality and relevance of selected research outputs may be assessed directly by the sources provided by each applicant in the section "Major achievements" of the CV.

In general, the evaluation should consider the background of the scientific discipline and the net academic age of each applicant.

## IMPACT

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| **Impact has 3 sub-criteria and is about:**   * The relevance of the proposed project to the call * Knowledge transfer * The fellow’s career development |

## RELEVANCE TO THE IRIS CALL

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| **What to evaluate:**   * The proposal responds to one (or more) of the 6 societal challenges of the Brussels Capital Region Smart Specialisation Strategy . |

## KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

**Dissemination** means public disclosure of the results by appropriate means, whereas **exploitation** is the use of results, e.g. for commercial purposes or in public policymaking.

**Communication measures** and public engagement strategy: the aim is to inform and reach out to society and demonstrate the activities performed, and the utility and benefits the project will have for citizens.

The dissemination, exploitation and communication measures have to be concrete and proportionate to the scale of the project.

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| **What to evaluate:**   * Soundness of publication, **public engagement**, dissemination plan. * Identification of long-term impact(s) on society, science and the economy. |

## THE IMPACT ON THE FELLOW’S CAREER.

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| **What to evaluate:**   * Potential impact on **fellow’s career**, * commitment to **interdisciplinary** research, * relevance of (potential) **inter-sectoral** collaboration |

## IMPLEMENTATION

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| **Implementation has 2 sub-criteria and is about:** Coherence of the work plan including milestones and deliverablesFeasibility of the project |

## COHERENCE OF THE WORK PLAN INCLUDING MILESTONES AND DELIVERABLES

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| **What to evaluate:**   * Quality and effectiveness of the **work plan**, including deliverables and milestones * Appropriateness of the **effort assigned to work packages** (WP), including timing and duration of the different WPs * Whether a **Gantt chart** is included (mandatory) and whether it is consistent and complete in relation to the whole work plan (taking into account WPs, scientific deliverables, milestones) |

## Feasibility of the project

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| **What to evaluate:**   * Fit with proposed research groups, including integration in the teams/institutions * Research and/or administrative **risks** that might endanger achievement of the objectives, and the **contingency plans** proposed should such risks occur |

**Risk assessment:** please assess whether all possible risks associated with the project and the appropriate contingency measures have been identified, including for instance the risk of the researcher to work in an adverse social/political context (example: safety of the researcher, their family and research participants). If the risks have a severe impact on the implementation and on the project as a whole, please reflect this in the comments

## ETHICS IN THE APPLICATION

Applicants submitting research proposals for funding for IRIS postdoctoral fellowships should demonstrate proactively in their proposal that they are aware of, and will comply with, ethical principles and applicable International, European and national law. As part of their application file, candidates are required to fill the Horizon Europe Ethics Issues questions and if one or more ethical issues are flagged, they will be required to indicate what are the ethical implications of their project and explain how the issues will be addressed. The goal is to assess the ethical aspects of the research objectives, methodology and potential impact.

For awarded projects, ethics experts will identify the projects that require ethical approval at the national level (e.g., with regards to data protection, the conduct of clinical trials and animal welfare). The Ethics Review Procedure will focus on the compliance with ethical rules and standards, relevant European legislation, international conventions and declarations, national authorizations and ethics approvals, proportionality of the research methods and the selected fellows’ awareness of the ethical aspects and social impact of their planned research. The ethics self-assessment and the explanations therein will not count towards the limit of 10 pages of the core proposal, the candidate’s ethics self-assessment will be done via a form on the online submission system.

## ETHICS EVALUATION

At the First Evaluation Stage, the triple peer-revision, **expert evaluators are required to include an ethics evaluation**, in the form of a general comment, indicating, to the best of their knowledge, if there are any ethical issues not adequately addressed. This may include identifying ethical issues not raised in the application, and/or indicating if the measures proposed are adequate for the handling of the ethical issue(s) in question, and reference to the relevant national or international legislation. **Evaluators are required to consult the Ethics Briefings to be able to assess if ethical concerns have been properly addressed.**

− Experts have to screen the proposal for ethical issues;

− Comments related to ethics will be included in the evaluation reports;

− A proposal cannot be penalised on ethical grounds.

## ETHICS BRIEFING

Key sources of EU and international law are the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Convention on Human Rights and its Supplementary Protocols. Another important source is the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).

Main ethical principles:

* Respecting human dignity and integrity
* Ensuring honesty and transparency towards research subjects and notably getting free and informed consent (as well as assent whenever relevant)
* Protecting vulnerable persons
* Ensuring privacy and confidentiality
* Promoting justice and inclusiveness
* Minimising harm and maximising benefit
* Sharing the benefits with disadvantaged populations, especially if the research is being carried out in developing countries
* Maximising animal welfare, in particular by ensuring replacement, reduction and refinement (‘3Rs’) in animal research
* Respecting and protecting the environment and future generations

All applicants were required to complete an **Ethics Issues Form** in the online application platform. **Expert evaluators will see the applicant’s Ethics Self-Assessment as part of the application file.** If candidates replied YES to any question on the Ethics Issues Form, they were required to answer an **Ethics Self-Assessment**, which asks candidates to “describe how the project meets the EU relevant legislation on Ethics and the National legislation and good practices on research ethics”. For more details, please refer to the Horizon Europe “[How to complete your Ethics Self](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/how-to-complete-your-ethics-self-assessment_en.pdf)[-Assessment”](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/cross-cutting-issues/ethics_en.htm) guide.

Institutional ethics clearance (if relevant) was not required at submission stage. For successful proposals only, ethics approval will be necessary prior to the beginning of research activities that are subject to approval. The fellows will then receive guidance by the Department of Research Administration on the procedures to obtain institutional ethics approval and their projects will be monitored to ensure that the ethics obligations deriving from the approval are respected.

**The following fields of research are** **not eligible for funding under Horizon Europe** and cannot therefore be included in proposals:

* research activities directed at human cloning for reproductive purposes
* research activity intended to modify the genetic make-up of human beings that could make such changes heritable (apart from research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads, which may be financed)
* research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purposes of research or stem cell procurement, including the technique of somatic cell nuclear transfer
* research that leads to the destruction of human embryos.

Research on human stem cells (both adult and embryonic) may be financed — depending on both the content of the scientific proposal and the laws of the Member States involved. No funding will be granted for research activities that are prohibited in all Member States. No activity will be funded in a Member State where such activity is forbidden.

# ONLINE EVALUATION PORTAL & SUPPORT MATERIALS

Associated Partner ESF will manage the external evaluation process providing a platform, support materials and act as the point of contact regarding questions in the evaluation process. .

**First Evaluation Stage – Project Evaluation**: This step consists of the actual scientific evaluation form At this step, experts will have access to the whole application file and sections. Experts may download the whole or parts of the application. This section is only visible to experts after both reviewers assigned to the application have completed and submitted the Review Acceptance form. Once all three reviewers have submitted the review on Project Evaluation, the Consensus step becomes visible.

**First Evaluation Stage – Consensus**: This step consists of the consensus among the experts assigned to one application. This section is only available once both experts have finalised and submitted their Project Evaluation review. The content of this section will be part of the evaluation report sent to applicants.

# ANNEX 1 – example of an AGREEMENT OF NON-DISCLOSURE / CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In the framework of the IRIS postdoctoral fellowships programme, I, the undersigned, (*name and surname, professional address*), understand that being involved in the evaluation of applications (hereafter “research projects”) within the IRIS 1st Call for Postdoctoral Fellowships Proposals implies the use of confidential scientific, technical, industrial or commercial information (hereafter “confidential information”) related to the research project(s) I am reviewing which will be communicated to me through written, oral form or any other support.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

I expressly agree and undertake:

* To only use the confidential information for the review
* To neither reproduce nor disclose – in any form – all or part of the confidential information
* To take all preventative measures to prevent the disclosure of the confidential information to a third party
* Not to file a patent application or any other title of intellectual property based on confidential information
* To destroy the confidential Information, and any and all reproduction thereof, upon the completion and submission of the review(s)

However, these provisions of confidentiality will not apply to the information:

* That was lawfully in my possession prior to signing this agreement
* That has come into the public domain other than by a breach of this agreement
* That is required by law to be disclosed

**CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

I also declare and undertake

* Not to be currently working on any important collaboration or being in direct competition with the applicant to review
* Not to take any advantage from my position to profit myself, my relatives, my colleagues, my laboratory or my organisation
* Not to make contact, in any case, with the applicants in the framework of my mission
* To evaluate the research project(s) with equity and objectivity

I commit myself to take all necessary measures to respect the above mentioned obligations.

Date:

Signature:

# ANNEX 2 – EVALUATION FORM

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  | Score 0-5 |
| Excellence  50% | Scientific quality 40% | Quality and relevance of proposed interdisciplinary research plan |  |
| Clear and relevant interdisciplinary **methodology** |  |
| Integration of **interdisciplinary** aspects |  |
| **Originality/innovative** nature of the project (in relation to state-of-the-art) |  |
| **Gender and diversity** aspects addressed |  |
| **Open science practices** |  |
| Applicant qualifications and motivation 10% | Research **experience and results** (awards and funding, publications, presentations, participation in workgroups, …) |  |
| demonstrates **capacity** to undertake project (including identifying possible trainings required) |  |
| **Motivation** for project objectives and choice of societal challenge(s). |  |
| **Impact**  **30%** | Relevance to call 5% | Responds to one (or more) **societal challenges** of BCR |  |
| Knowledge transfer  10% | Soundness of publication, **public engagement**, dissemination plan. Identification of long-term impact(s) on society, science and the economy |  |
| Career 15% | Potential impact on **fellow’s career**, commitment to **interdisciplinary** research, relevance of (potential) **inter-sectoral** collaboration |  |
| **Implementation 20%** | Coherence 10% | **Coherence** of work plan (including milestones and deliverables) |  |
| Feasibility 10% | Feasibility including **fit with proposed research groups** and **contingency** plans for critical risks |  |
| Final score (weighted mean) **Threshold 75%** | | |  |

# ANNEX 3 - SUMMARY OF EVALUATION DO’S AND DON’TS

**The comments should be:**

* Specific to the relevant criterion addressing each sub-criterion.
* Precise and definite.
* Clear, substantial, and concise.
* Consistent with the score awarded, which must reflect strengths and weaknesses.
* Based upon the quality of the scholarly outputs, using upon your personal scientific assessment (e.g. reading) of those outputs.

**The comments must not:**

* Be discriminatory, offending, or inappropriate.
* Be based on assumptions and should not suggest ignorance or doubt.
* Contain recommendations or suggestions to improve the project.
* Contain factual mistakes. Whenever factual statements are made, they should be
* explicitly verified.

**Do not use:**

* Journal-based metrics such as journal impact factor (JIF).
* Journal’s reputation (and its corresponding adjectives, e.g. high-impact/very good/standard…) as a proxy of an article’s quality.
* h-index (not appropriate for early career researchers) and other similar indices based on citation counts, even if standardized, e.g. for academic age.
* Secondary criteria (gender, discipline, reputation of the host institution…).

Concrete examples below:

The exact meaning of the scoring system (excellent, very good, good, fair, poor, fail) is described in section 4.1), the question therefore is **which of these scores best describes the application**. Remember, however, that the score is not sufficient for your evaluation to be fully understood. Do not be afraid to give your frank opinion and support it with an appropriate score. **Your specific comments are invaluable, and the score should reflect not only the number of weaknesses but also the severity of the weaknesses or the level of the strengths**.

Some do’s and don’ts:

* + - * Write your comments using full and clear sentences for each (sub)criterion. Use 1-2 sentences for each sub criterion to avoid long and complex evaluation reports.
      * Avoid summarising the application.
      * Point out strong and weak points based on the given sub-criterion; everything that is included in your Evaluation Report must be briefly justified. You may not use general statements such as: “*The research could have been described better*” or “*The proposed research project is good/poor”*.
      * Avoid generalisations such as “C*ountry X is weak in this area!*”. The evaluation is at the level of the applicant and the host. Instead use for example: “*The application does not clearly demonstrate that the host has the capacity to run this project*”.
      * Do not assume or anticipate the quality of an institution (even prestigious institutions), this must be clearly detailed and demonstrated in the application.
      * Career breaks (due to parental leave, extended sick leave, etc.) should not be viewed negatively nor have any bearing on the overall evaluation of the merits of the applying researcher.
      * Avoid statements such as “*the candidate has few publications for his/her age*”. Publication rates vary widely across disciplines and age is not a criterion. If you believe the track record of any participant is inadequate, then use a phrase such as “*The application has not demonstrated that the proposed researcher has a track record strong enough to carry out this project*”. Please take into consideration the possibility that the applicant has resumed a research career and assess the total time spent in research.
      * Ethical issues are of considerable importance and you should make a note of those raised by the proposed project. Ethical issues should not affect your evaluation but will need to be addressed by the SMT and the appointed Ethics Board.
      * In the case of a proposal using human embryonic stem cells (hESC), you **must** mention if the use of hESC is justified and necessary for the success of the project in your evaluation report.
      * Consider only the material included in the application and appendices.
      * Above all, avoid writing personal comments and insults.
      * Finally, avoid statements such as *not described, absent, etc…*, which are potential grounds for redress, it is better to write “*not fully, not clearly, insufficiently, …”.*