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Backing visionary entrepreneurs

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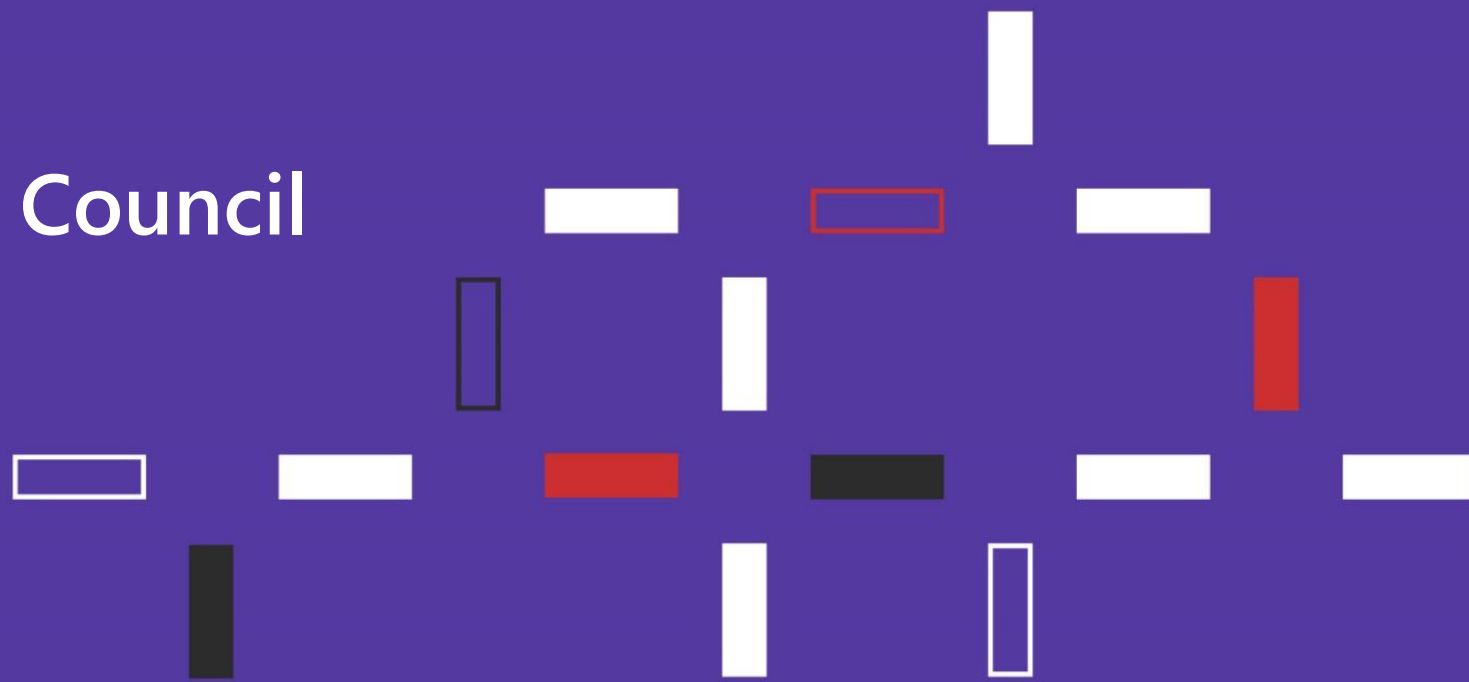EIC Pathfinder Open Web-Briefing for Remote Evaluators

Brussels, 16 June 2021

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Outline

1. PATHFINDER OPEN: Cut-off May 2021 – some statistical data
2. WHAT IS THE EIC?
3. PATHFINDER OPEN: Main features
4. PATHFINDER OPEN: Evaluation criteria
5. Evaluation process (Overview)
6. Main actors in the evaluation process
7. Admissibility and Eligibility
8. Role of the Remote Evaluator
9. What is the role of VC-QC? Some tips!
10. Feedback to Applicants
11. Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest
12. How to implement the Quality Checks in SEP
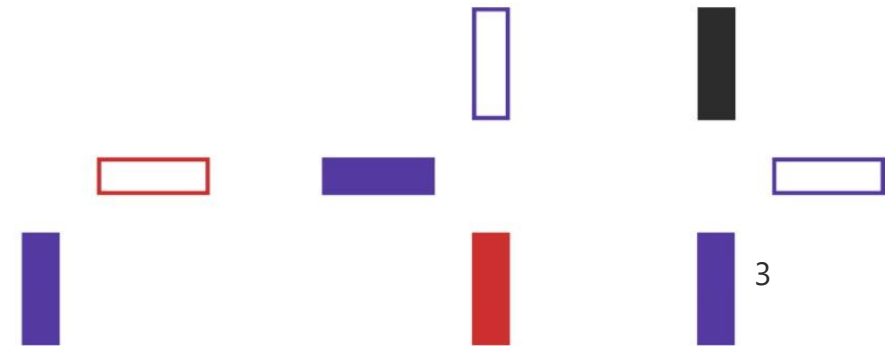13. Important documents & Contact persons
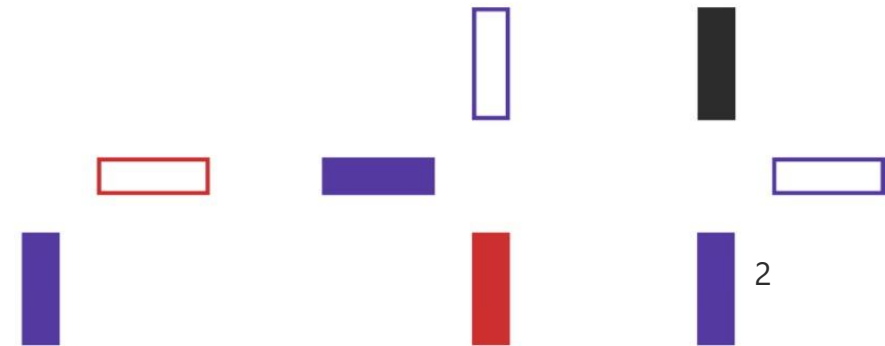
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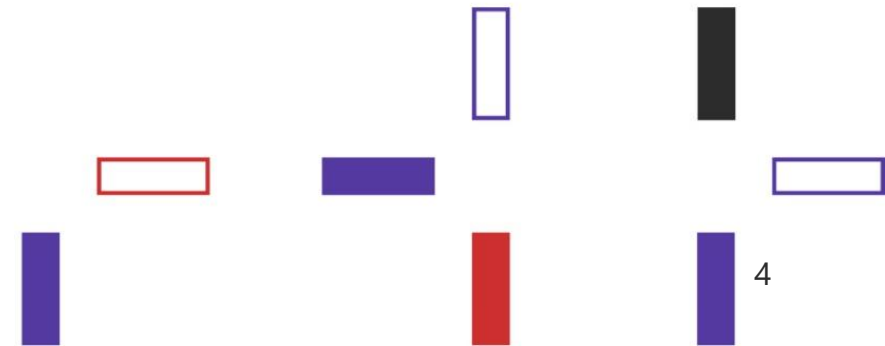
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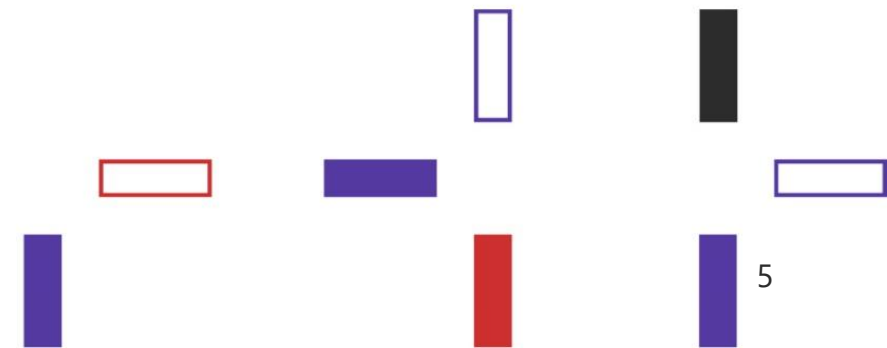
1. Some statistical data

General overview
PATHFINDER OPEN – Cut-off May 2021

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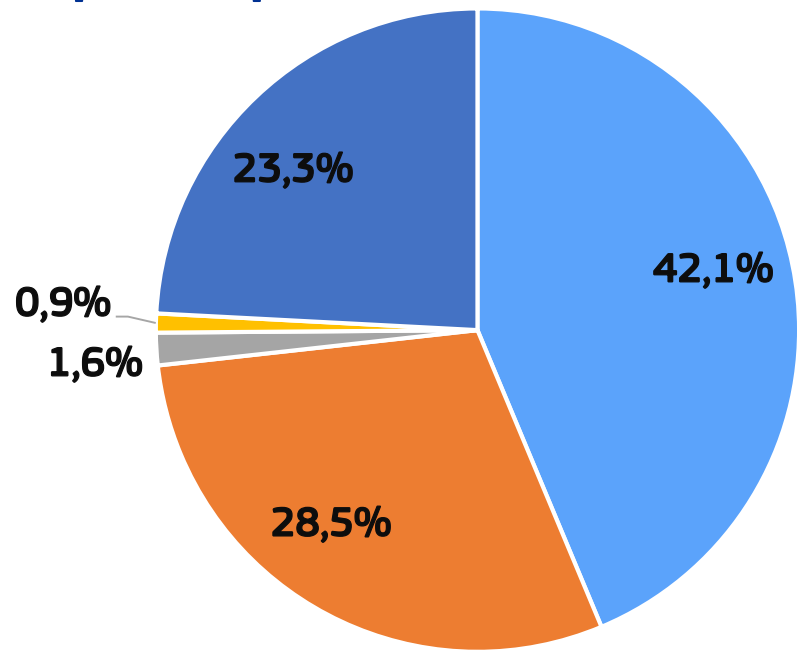| Name	Number of submitted proposals (A)	Number of participants (B)	Total requested grant (in EUR Million) (C)	Indicative available budget (in EUR Million) (D)
PATHFINDER OPEN	908	5.341	2748,58	168

Name	Average number of participants per submitted proposal (E) = (B) / (A)	Average requested grant per submitted proposal (in EUR Million) (F) =(C) / (A)	Expected number of selected proposals for funding (G) = (D) / (F)	Expected success rate	
				Proposal (G) /(A)	Budget (D) / (C)
PATHFINDER OPEN	6	3,03	55	6,1%	6,1%

Participants profile in submitted proposals
PATHFINDER OPEN – Cut-off May 2021

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5.341 participants

1.060 SMEs (19.8%)
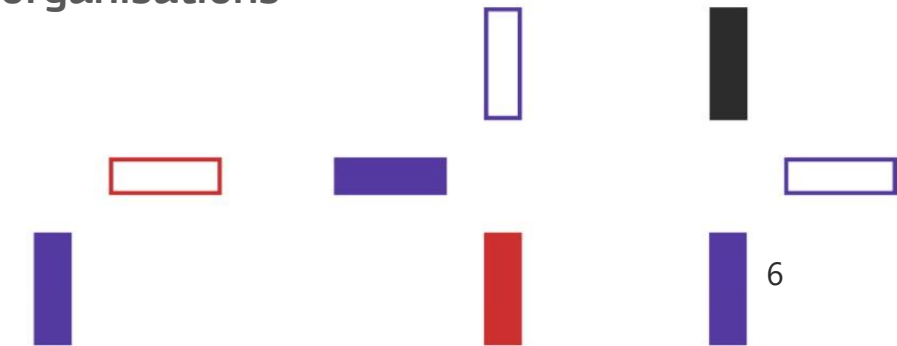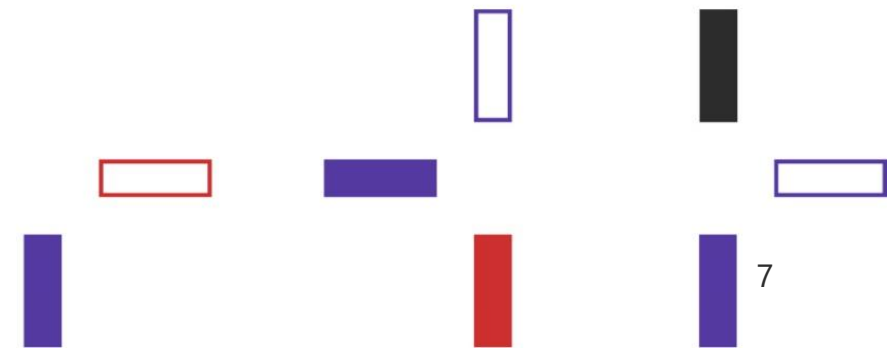
- Higher Education Institutions
- Private for profit companies
- Other
- Public bodies
- Research organisations

Pie chart:
- 42,1%
- 28,5%
- 1,6%
- 0,9%
- 23,3%
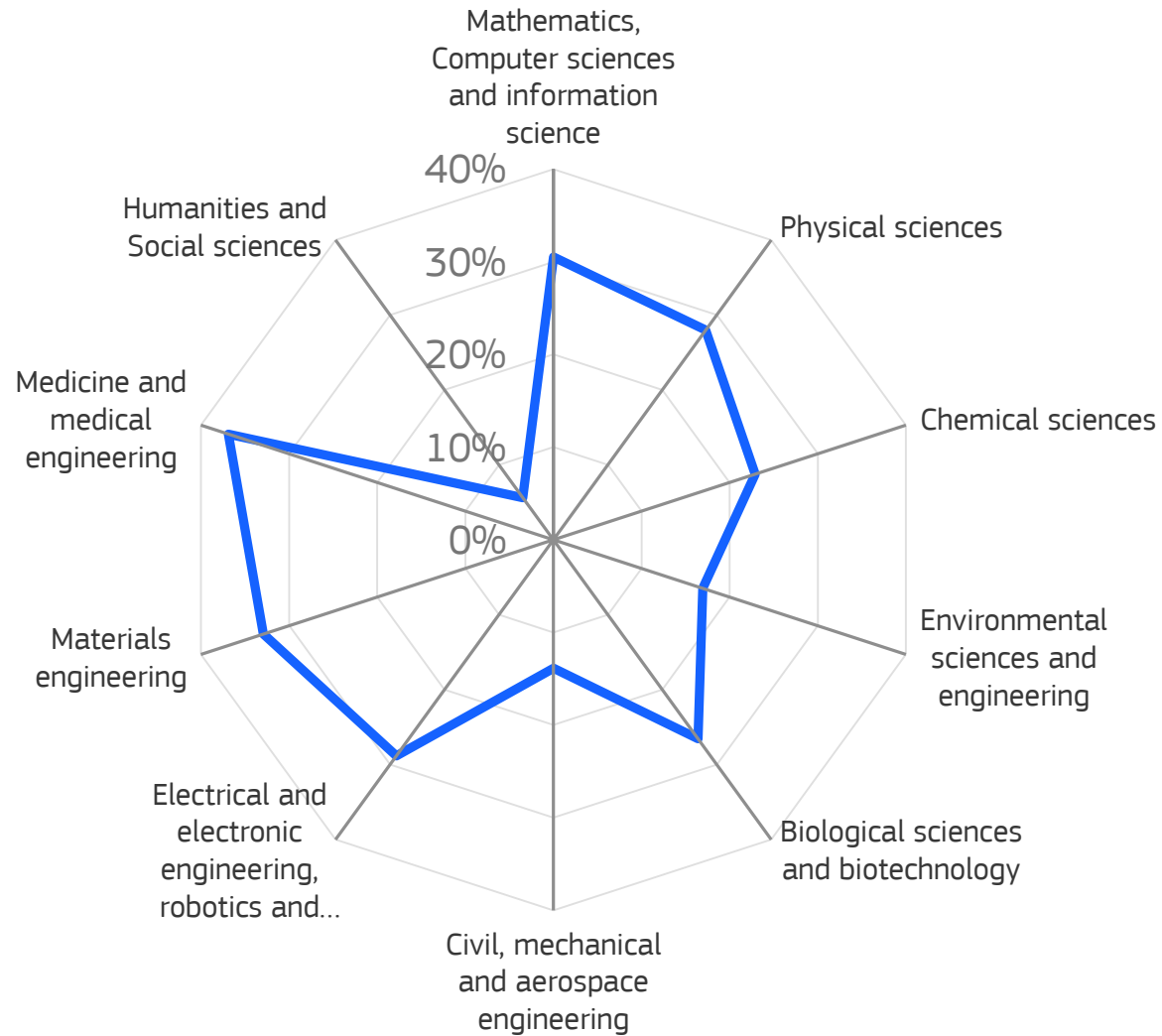
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2. What is the EIC?

Europe's most ambitious innovation initiative

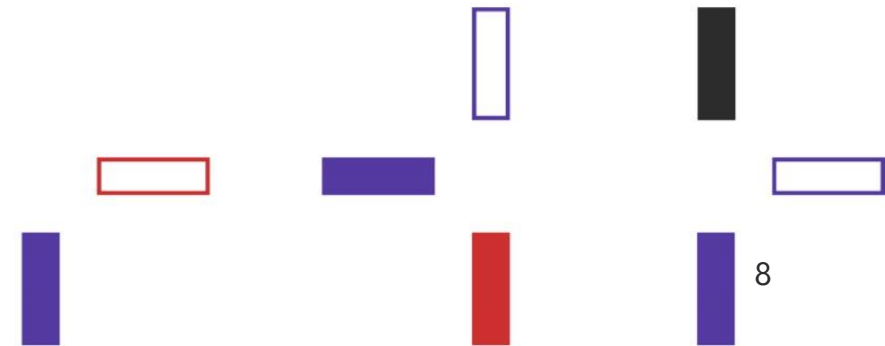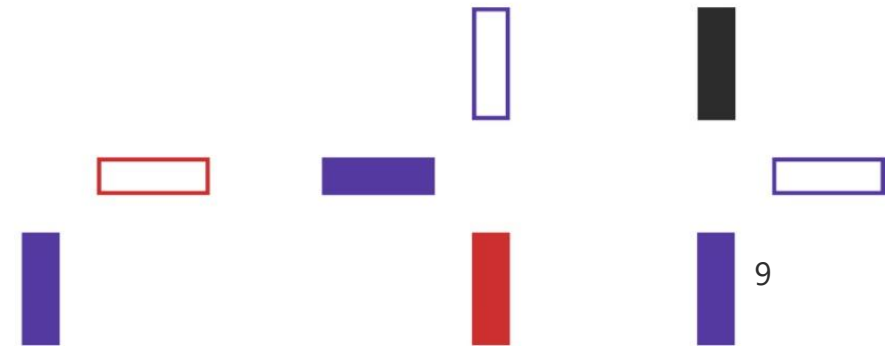- **€10 billion** programme to identify, develop and scale up breakthrough technologies and disruptive innovations in Europe
- **Unique** in the world to combine research on emerging technologies with Accelerator for startups, SMEs and scaleups
- **EIC Fund** largest VC deep-tech* investor in Europe (over €3 billion)
- **Innovator-centric** steered by Board of leading innovators
- **Pro-active approach** with flexible funding
- Enhances the **European innovation ecosystem**

*Deep-tech is a technology that is characterised by always being at the technological forefront by the constant interaction with new ideas and results from the lab

Part of the Innovative Europe pillar of Horizon Europe

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- Support to innovations with breakthrough and market creating potential

€10 billion

European innovation ecosystems

- Connecting with regional and national innovation actors

€520 million

European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

- Bringing key actors (research, education and business) together around a common goal for nurturing innovation

€2.9 billion

HORIZON EUROPE

SPECIFIC PROGRAMME: EUROPEAN DEFENCE FUND	SPECIFIC PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTING HORIZON EUROPE & EIT* Exclusive focus on civil applications		
Exclusive focus on defence research & development	Pillar I EXCELLENT SCIENCE	Pillar II GLOBAL CHALLENGES & EUROPEAN INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS	Pillar III INNOVATIVE EUROPE
Research actions	European Research Council	Clusters: • Health • Culture, Creativity & Inclusive Society • Civil Security for Society • Digital, Industry & Space • Climate, Energy & Mobility • Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Environment	European Innovation Council
	Marie Skłodowska-Curie		European innovation ecosystems
	Research Infrastructures		European Institute of Innovation & Technology*
Development actions		Joint Research Centre	
	WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND STRENGTHENING THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA		
	Widening participation & spreading excellence	Reforming & Enhancing the European R&I system	

* The European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) is not part of the Specific Programme

What is the EIC?

One stop shop for breakthrough, deep-tech, market-creating innovators

- Open to all innovators, in any field, at any time
- Complemented by targeted funding on strategic challenges
- Highly competitive for Europe's high potential innovators

Agile funding from idea to investment

- Pathfinder for advanced research on emerging technologies
- Transition from lab to commercial setting
- Accelerator & EIC Fund to scale up innovations by start-ups & SMEs

Building ecosystems and comunities

- Access to Business Acceleration Services (coaches, mentors, corporates, investors & knowledge partners)
- EIC Programme Managers to develop visions for breakthroughs, manage portfolios, and connect to ecosystems
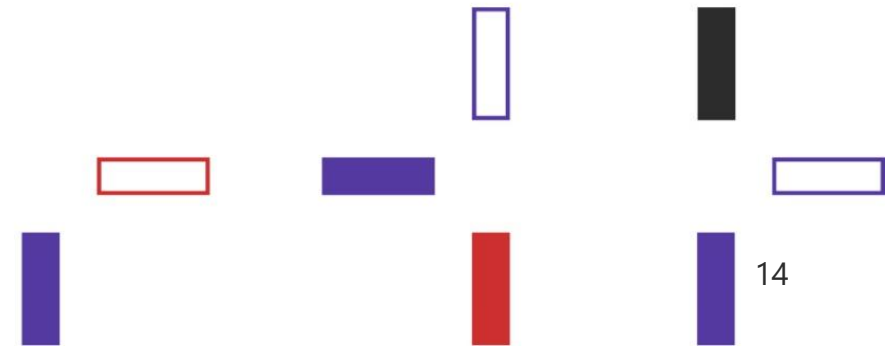- Crowding in other investors (VC, corporates, etc.)

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3. PATHFINDER OPEN: Main features
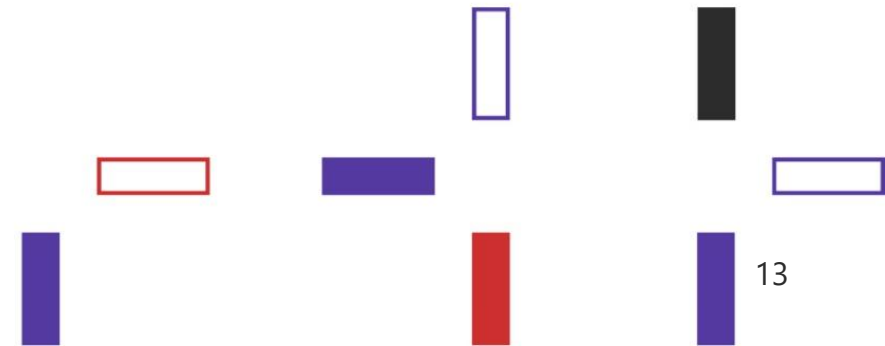
What is the EIC Pathfinder?

The EIC Pathfinder programme funds **research** to **develop the scientific basis** to underpin **breakthrough technologies**.

EIC Pathfinder Open proposals:

- Aim to realise **an ambitious vision for radically new technology**, with potential to create new markets and/or to address global challenges.

- Support **early stage development of such future technologies** (e.g. various activities at low **Technology Readiness Levels 1-4**), based on high-risk/high-gain science-towards-technology breakthrough research (including 'deep-tech').

- Provide the **foundations of the envisioned technology**.

Bottom-up approach with no predefined topics.

Type of Action: Research and Innovation Action (RIA).

Research and innovation action (RIA)
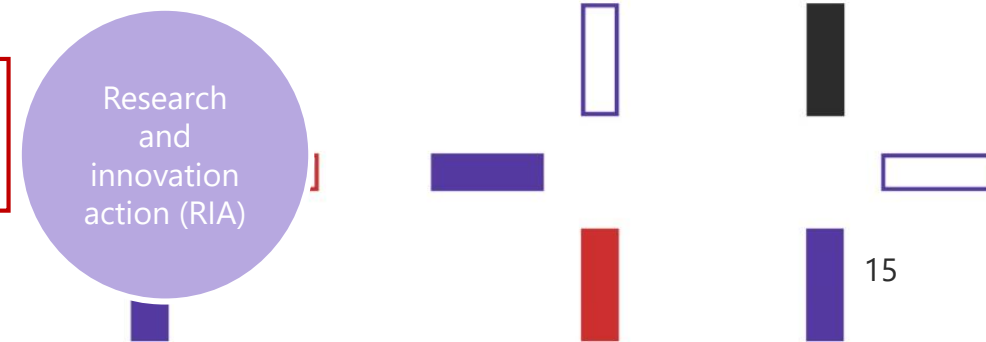
Essential characteristics:

Collaborative, **interdisciplinary** research, meeting the following 'gatekeepers':

- **Convincing, long-term vision of a radically new technology** that has the potential to have a transformative positive effect to our economy and society.

- **Concrete, novel and ambitious science-towards-technology breakthrough**, providing advancement towards the envisioned technology.

- **High-risk & high-gain research approach & methodology**, with concrete and plausible objectives.
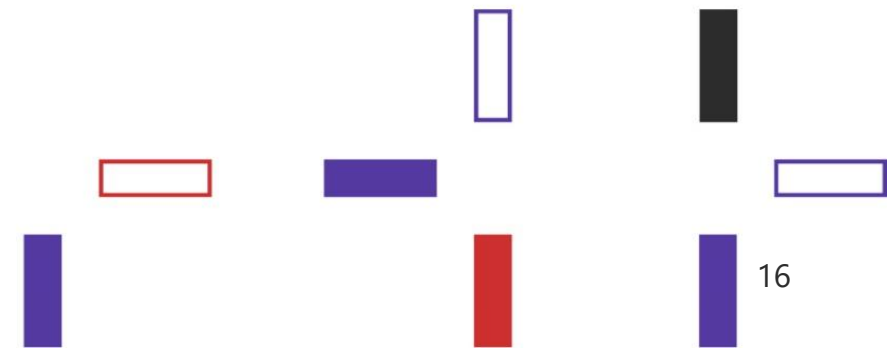
Expected outcomes of an EIC Pathfinder Open project

- The expected outcome of a EIC Pathfinder project is the **proof of principle** that the **main ideas of the envisioned future technology are feasible**, thus validating its scientific and technological basis;

- Projects are expected to take the necessary measures to **allow future uptake to take place**, for instance through an **adequate formal protection of the generated Intellectual Property (IP)**;

- Projects are encouraged to involve and empower in their teams **key actors** that have the potential to **become future leaders** in their field such as excellent early-career researchers or promising high-tech SMEs, including start-ups.
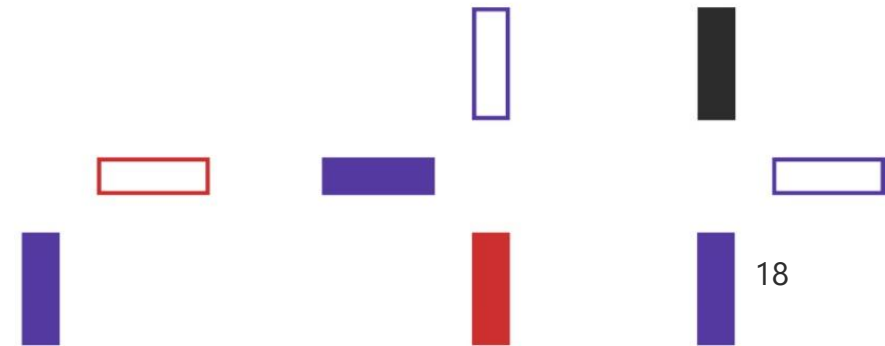
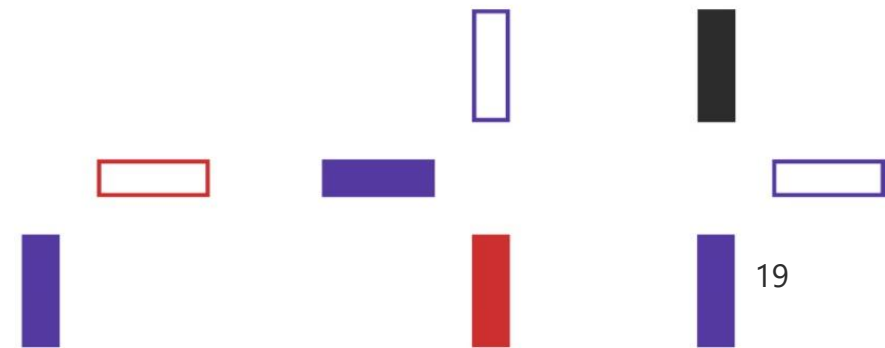# Let's practice with Slido!

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4. PATHFINDER OPEN: Evaluation criteria

Proposal template

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- <u>Part A</u>:

Administrative part of the proposal: General information, Participants, Budget, Ethics (**including the Ethics Self-Assessment**) and Security section, and the Declarations.

- <u>Part B</u>:

Scientific narrative part of the proposal (research core proposal)

- Section 1: Excellence
- Section 2: Impact
- Section 3: Quality and efficiency of the implementation
- Additional annex with information on clinical trials (if relevant).

In SEP in H2020:

Documents

Part A Technical Annex Section 1-3 Technical Annex Section 4-5

In SEP in HE:

Documents

Part A Part B Information on clinical trials

Evaluation form

The evaluation form includes:

- Main part with the three **evaluation criteria:**
  - Criterion 1 – **Excellence** (4 sub-criteria, 1 score)
  - Criterion 2 – **Impact** (2 sub-criteria, 1 score)
  - Criterion 3 – **Quality and efficiency of the implementation** (3 sub-criteria, 1 score)

Each criterion includes the '**aspects to be taken into account**'. The same aspect is not included in different criteria, so that it is not assessed twice.

- **8 Additional questions**
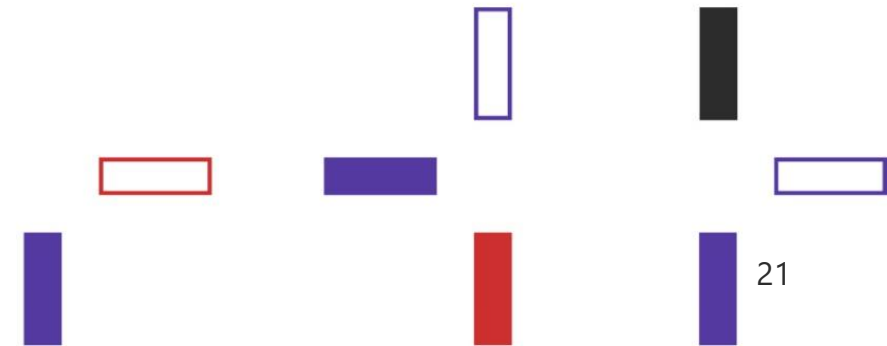
The "Excellence" criterion

- **Long-term vision:** How convincing is the vision of a radically new technology that has the potential to have a transformative positive effect to our economy and society?

- **Science-towards-technology breakthrough:**
  - How concrete, novel and ambitious is the proposed science-towards-technology breakthrough with respect to the state-of-the-art?
  - What advancement does it provide towards realising the envisioned technology?

- **Objectives:**
  - How concrete and plausible are the proposed objectives?
  - To what extent are high-risk/high-gain research approach and methodology appropriate for achieving them?

- **Interdisciplinarity:** How relevant is the interdisciplinary approach from traditionally distant disciplines for achieving the proposed breakthrough?

Threshold 4/5

Weight 60%
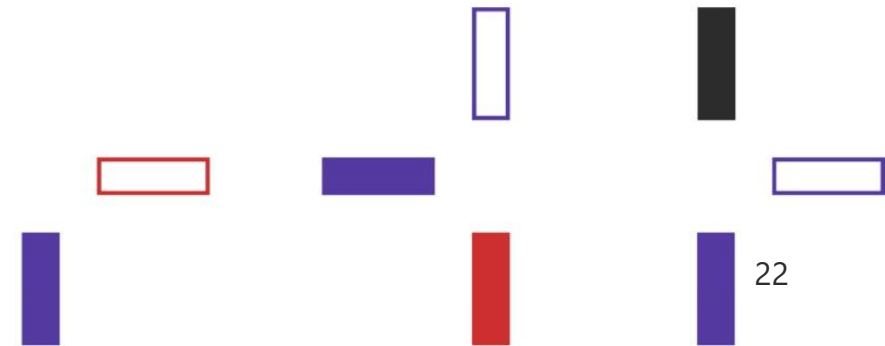
- **Innovation potential:**
  - How adequate are the proposed measures for protection of results and any other exploitation measures to facilitate future translation of research results into innovations with societal or economic impact?
  - How suitable are the proposed measures for empowering key actors that have the potential to take the lead in translating research into innovations?

- **Communication and Dissemination:** How convincing and wide reaching are the proposed measures and plans for public/stakeholder engagement and for raising awareness about the project outcomes, including through Open Science, with respect to their potential to establish new markets and/or address global challenges?

Threshold
3.5/5

Weight
20%

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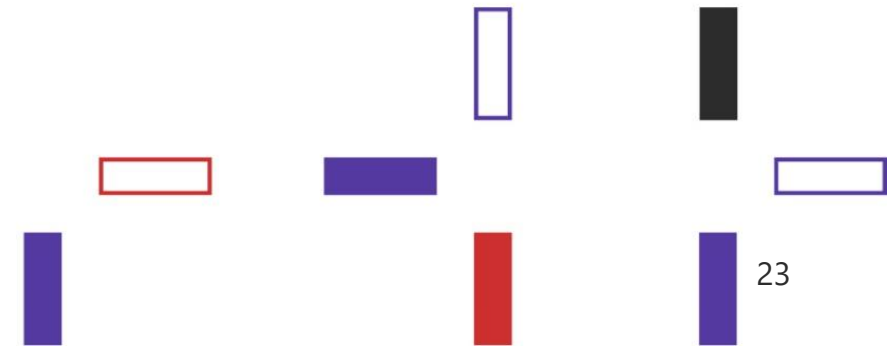
- **Quality of the consortium:** To what extent do the consortium members have all the necessary high quality expertise for performing the project tasks?

- **Work plan:** How coherent and effective are the work plan (work packages, tasks, deliverables, milestones, time-line, etc.) and risk mitigation measures in order to achieve the project objectives?

- **Allocation of resources:** How appropriate and effective is the allocation of resources (person-months and equipment) to tasks and consortium members?

Threshold
3/5

Weight
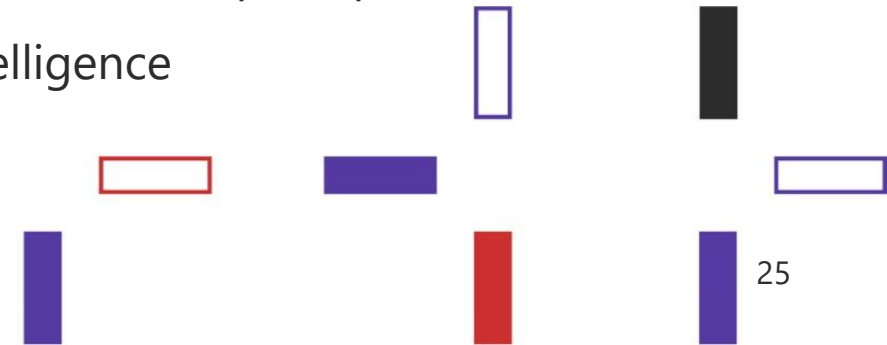20%
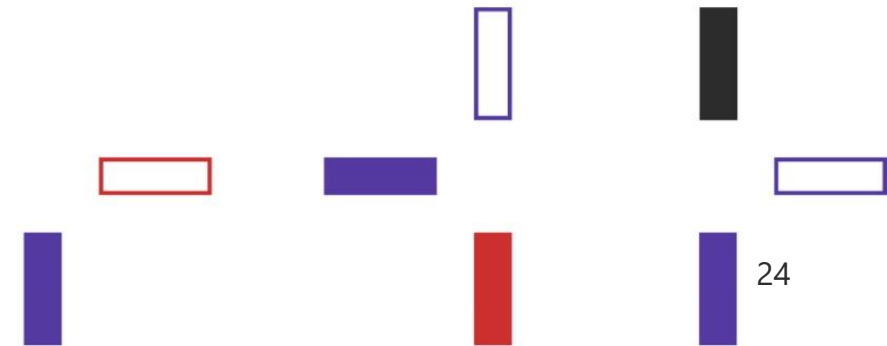
Additional questions in the evaluation form

Evaluation form includes:

- Main part with the three **evaluation criteria** where you give comments and scores
- **Additional questions:** The evaluators are asked to take a position on additional questions linked to the selection procedure or policy considerations.

Additional questions in Horizon Europe evaluations

- Scope of the application

- Additional funding

- Use of human embryonic stem cells (hESC)

- Use of human embryos (hE)

- Activities not eligible for funding

- Exclusive focus on civil applications

- Do no significant harm principle

- Artificial Intelligence

- Two possible options:

    - out of scope

    - 'in scope' because it corresponds, wholly <u>or in part</u>, to the topic description against which it has been submitted

- Comment in the specific box (in case the proposal is out of scope)

Even if you consider a proposal as out of scope, please still evaluate it fully.

Who is eligible for funding:

EU COUNTRIES

- Member States (MS) including their outermost regions.

- The Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) linked to the MS.

NON-EU COUNTRIES

- Countries associated to Horizon Europe (AC)*.

- Low and middle income countries.

- Other countries when announced in the call or exceptionally if their participation is essential.

OTHER CASES

- Affiliated entities established in countries eligible for funding.

- EU bodies.

- International organisations (IO):
  - International European research organisations are eligible for funding.
  - Other IO are not eligible (only exceptionally if participation is essential)
  - IO in a MS or AC are eligible for funding for Training and mobility actions and when announced in the call conditions.

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Exceptional funding

During the **evaluation** experts give their opinion on the exceptional funding to participants from non-EU countries not eligible for funding and international organisations. Participation is considered **essential** for the action if there are clear benefits for the consortium, such as:

- outstanding competence/expertise
- access to research infrastructure
- access to particular geographical environments
- access to data

In such exceptional cases, the IER should clearly mention whether funding should be granted or not and justify this.
Your assessment will help the EU services to take a decision on the exceptional funding for these participants.

Use of human embryonic stem cells (hESC) and human embryos (hE)

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- In two separate questions, experts give their opinion on whether the proposal involves the use of **hESC** and **hE.** This is independent of, and serves to verify, the applicants' answers in the ethics issues table.

- If you consider that the proposal involves hESC, you must state whether the use of hESC is, or is not, **necessary to achieve the scientific objectives** of the proposal and the reasons why.

Your answers to these questions and the comments provided will be used by the ethics experts in charge of the ethics assessment. Proposals involving hESC can be funded only if the use of hESC is necessary to achieve its objectives.

Activities not eligible for funding

- Participants have declared **in proposal part A** that the proposal does not include any activity excluded from funding.

- Evaluators are asked to **confirm** that this is the case.

- if you think that the proposal includes one or more activities excluded from funding, you must provide the **reasons** for this conclusion and explain why the beneficiaries' declaration is wrong.

- Evaluators must reflect the **removal of the activities excluded from funding** in the final score (e.g., if the excluded activities were important for reaching the objectives, their removal would lead to a lower score).

- The proposals are not rejected as ineligible during the evaluation phase. Instead, they are **processed according to their score**, including the possibility to go on the main list and be invited for grant preparation.

- Your opinion will help the EU services to decide whether to reject the proposal as ineligible or to fund it in a modified form without the ineligible activities.

The **activities excluded from funding** are activities that:

- aim at **human cloning** for reproductive purposes, or

- intend to **modify the genetic heritage of human beings** which could make such changes heritable (with the exception of research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads, which may be financed), or

- intend to **create human embryos** solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer, or

- lead to the **destruction of human embryos** (for example, for obtaining stem cells).

Do no significant harm principle (DNSH)

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European Green Deal

In line with the European Green Deal objectives, the research and innovation activities should not make a significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives (EU Taxonomy Regulation)

The **DNSH principle** needs to be taken into consideration in the **scientific methodology under the Excellence criterion** and **impact** of the project.

The six environmental objectives to which no significant harm should be done:

Climate change mitigation

Climate change adaptation

Sustainable use & protection of water & marine resources

Transition to a circular economy

Pollution prevention & control

Protection and restoration of biodiversity & ecosystems

Do no significant harm principle (DNSH)

- Aspects related to the '**Do no significant harm**' (DNSH) principle must be part of the proposal and are evaluated as part of the **excellence criterion**. This means that the scientific methodology must be designed in a way it is not significantly harming any of the six environmental objectives of the EU Taxonomy Regulation.

- Also, for the evaluation of the **impact of the proposal**, participants are asked to include any potential negative environmental outcome or impact of the project including when expected results are brought at scale (such as at commercial level), and explain how the potential harm can be managed.

- It is not expected that a proposal that is not compliant with the DNSH principle is funded, unless the **non-compliance is fully justified** by the applicants.

- Evaluators are asked in one **additional question** whether the proposal is compliant with the DNSH principle and provide comments in the case the answer to the question is 'Partially', 'No' or 'Cannot be assessed'. The answer to this question will be **used for monitoring purposes** and for a proper **follow up in the case the project is funded**.

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- Participants confirm, as part of the **declarations in proposal part A** that the proposal has an exclusive focus on civil applications. Activities intended to be used in military application or aiming to serve military purposes cannot be funded.

- Evaluators are asked to **confirm** that this is the case.

- If you think that the proposal does not have an exclusive focus on civil applications, you must provide the **reasons** for this conclusion and explain why the beneficiaries' declaration is wrong.

- Evaluators must reflect the **removal of the activities excluded from funding** in the final score (e.g., if the excluded activities were important for reaching the objectives, their removal would lead to a lower score).

- The proposals are not rejected as ineligible during the evaluation phase. Instead, they are **processed according to their score**, including the possibility to go on the main list and be invited for grant preparation.

- Your opinion will help the EU services to decide whether to reject the proposal as ineligible or to fund it in a modified form without the ineligible activities.

Artificial intelligence

- Experts must answer an additional question as part of their individual evaluations on whether the activities proposed involve the **use and/or development of AI-based systems and/or techniques**.

- If you answer 'yes' to this question, you must **assess the technical robustness** of the proposed AI-system as part of the excellence criterion (if applicable).

- In addition, your answer to this question will help us to with the **proper follow-up** of any aspects related to **Artificial Intelligence** in projects funded under Horizon Europe.

(*) Technical robustness refers to technical aspects of AI systems and development, including resilience to attack and security, fullback plan and general safety, accuracy, reliability and reproducibility.

AI-based systems or techniques should be, or be developed to become:

- **Technically robust**, **accurate and reproducible**, and able to deal with and inform about possible failures, inaccuracies and errors, proportionate to the assessed risk posed by the AI-based system or technique.
- **Socially robust**, in that they duly consider the context and environment in which they operate.
- **Reliable and function as intended**, minimizing unintentional and unexpected harm, preventing unacceptable harm and safeguarding the physical and mental integrity of humans.
- Able to provide a suitable explanation of its **decision-making process**, whenever an AI-based system can have a significant impact on people's lives.

Open Science for EIC funded projects

Open Science

Open science is an approach based on open cooperative work and systematic sharing of knowledge and tools as early and widely as possible in the process, including active engagement of society.

Open science practices include:

- Early and open sharing of research (for example through preregistration, registered reports, pre-prints, or crowd-sourcing).

- Research output management including research data management (RDM).

- Measures to ensure reproducibility of research outputs.

- Providing open access to research outputs (e.g. publications, data, software, models, algorithms, and workflows) through deposition in trusted repositories.

- Participation in open peer review.

- Involving all relevant knowledge actors including citizens, civil society and end users in the co-creation of R&I agendas and contents (such as citizen science).

Mandatory OS practices

- **Mandatory in all calls**: Open access to publications; RDM in line with the FAIR principles including data management plans; open access to research data unless exceptions apply ('as open as possible as closed as necessary').

  Reflect in lower score when not sufficiently addressed

Recommended OS practices

- All open science practices beyond mandatory will be evaluated positively when sufficiently addressed.

EIC funded projects (or authors) must retain sufficient intellectual property rights to comply with all of their open science requirements, including specific licensing requirements.

When OS practices (mandatory and recommended) are duly justified as not appropriate for the project, do not lower score for not addressing those practices

35

Gender dimension in R&I content

Gender dimension

Addressing the gender dimension in research and innovation entails taking into account sex and gender in the whole research & innovation process.

Under Horizon Europe the integration of the gender dimension into R&I content is mandatory.

Why is gender dimension important? **It brings added value of research in terms of excellence, rigor, reproducibility, creativity and business opportunities It enhances the societal relevance of research and innovation**

- Why do we observe differences between women and men in infection levels and mortality rates in the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Does it make sense to study cardiovascular diseases only on male animals and on men, or osteoporosis only on women?
- Does it make sense to design car safety equipment only on the basis of male body standards?
- Is it responsible to develop AI products that spread gender and racial biases due to a lack of diversity in the data used in training AI applications?
- Is it normal that household travel surveys, and thus mobility analysis and transport planning, underrate trips performed as part of caring work?
- Did you know that pheromones given off by men experimenters, but not women, induce a stress response in laboratory mice sufficient to trigger pain relief?
- Did you know that climate change is affecting sex determination in a number of marine species and that certain populations are now at risk of extinction?

Management of intellectual property (IP)

Beneficiaries must use their best efforts to *exploit their results* *or have them exploited by a third party, in priority those established in a Member State or an Associated country, including through transfer or licensing.*

The provision of a results ownership list is mandatory at the end of a project.

The strategy for IP management in a proposal

- Proposers are expected to take the necessary measures to allow future uptake to take place, for instance through an adequate formal protection of the generated Intellectual Property (IP).
- They should foresee protection measures, such as patents, design rights, copyright, trade secrets etc., and how these would be used to support exploitation.
- If exploitation is expected primarily in non-associated third countries, it must include justifications on how that exploitation is still in the Union's interest.

Operational capacity

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Important information on role of individual participants and previous experience is included in Part A of proposal.

- Applicants to EIC Pathfinder Call must have the know-how, qualifications and resources to successfully implement their tasks in the project and contribute their share.

- This assessment of operational capacity will be carried out during the evaluation of the award criterion 'quality and efficiency of the implementation'

- Public bodies, Member State organisations and international organisations are exempted from the operational capacity check.

If the evaluation of the award criterion 'Implementation' leads a score above the applicable threshold, then the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

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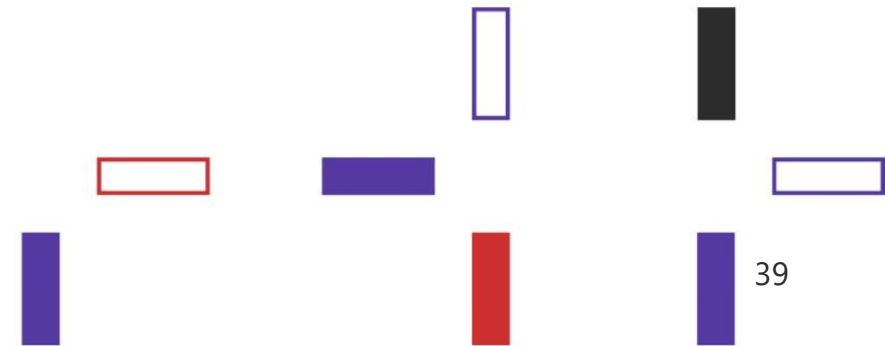
Interpretation of the scores

0 The proposal **fails to address the criterion** or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.

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 a number of shortcomings are present.

4 **Very Good.** The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.

5 **Excellent.** The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

The whole range of scores should be used. Use steps of 0.5
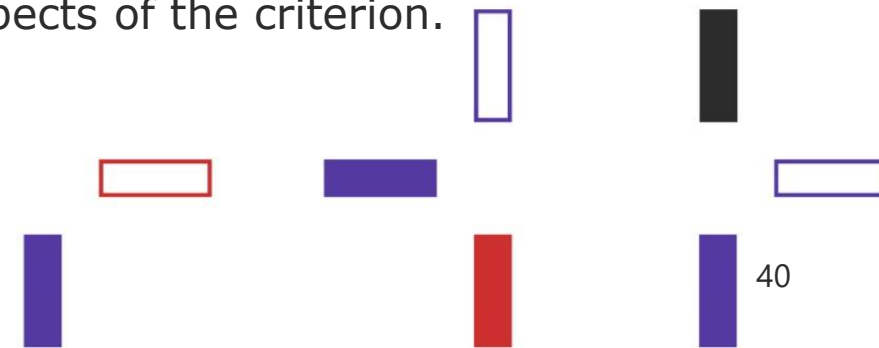
Points for attention

- **The quality of the comments in your IER is of utmost importance**.

- Comments must reflect a clear assessment of the proposal based on its merit, with justification.

  o Clear feedback on the proposal's **weaknesses and strengths**, of an adequate length, and in an appropriate tone.

  o **Shortcomings should be explained**, but no recommendations given.

  o **Ensure that scores (per criterion) are consistent with the corresponding comments (per criterion including all different sub-criteria) using the full scale provided.**

To be avoided:

1. Comments not related to the criterion in question.
2. Comments too long, or too short and inappropriate language.
3. Categorical statements that have not been properly verified.
4. Scores that don't match the comments.
5. Marking down a proposal for the same critical aspect under two different criteria.

Remember: Applicants will read your comments and can challenge them during the rebuttal phase and/or through the evaluation review procedures.

Some typical mistakes in the IER

Please make sure to avoid:

- Comments with examples of research already being conducted elsewhere (followed by citations).

- Suggestions for improvement of the proposal.

- Using speculative expressions such as "seems to be" and "is difficult to see".

- Indicating any names of research investigators (such as Professors, researchers, etc.)

- Making any reference to specific locations and specific numbers (such as number of SMEs present in the proposal, aggregate number of work packages) to avoid the possibility of factual errors.

Remember to always refer specifically to the content of the proposal to substantiate your judgment/statement.
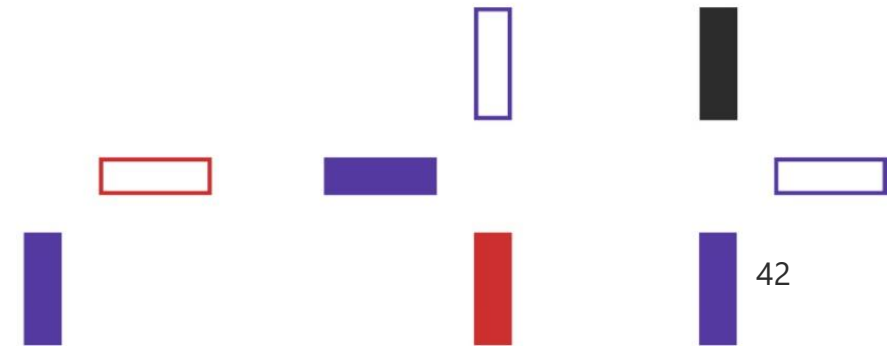
Quality of the IERs – Key principles

*Comments must reflect the assessment of **the criteria in the frame of what is requested in the call.***

*Comments should be **precise** and **definite.***

*Avoid **factual mistakes.** Whenever factual statements are made, they should be **explicitly verified.***

*Comments should consist of **clear, concise** and **complete sentences.***

*Comments must not be **discriminatory, offending** or **inappropriate***

*Comments must **not be based on assumptions and should not suggest ignorance or doubt.***

*Comments must **not contain recommendations or suggestions** to improve the project.*

*The comment for a criterion, taken as a whole, must be **consistent with the meaning of the score** that is awarded for that criterion.*

You can send your questions via Sli.do:

Link:Slido.com
Code: K010

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5. Evaluation process (Overview)

Each proposal is allocated to 4 remote evaluators

Each evaluator drafts comments and assigns scores

Deadline

Proposal submission

Applicant

Admissibility & Eligibility* Check

Expert Assignment

For each (4x)

Evaluator writes Individual Evaluation Report (IER)

EISMEA

Conflict of Interest check at any stage of evaluation

IER Quality Control

Feedback within 5 months

Ethics screening/ assessment

Evaluation Committee Panel Review Final score & comment

Cross-Reading by Evaluation Committee Panel Members

Draft Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) created

X 4

Rebuttal Phase

*out-of-scope can be declared at further stages

Evaluation schedule

Milestones	Deadlines
Call cut-off	25 May 2021
VC-QCs training	14 June 2021
Remote Evaluators online briefing	16 June 2021
Remote evaluation starts	**17 June 2021**
ALL assignments accepted	**21 June 201**
Deadline for submission of the 1st IER	**24 June 2021**
Deadline for submissions of the 3 IERs ready	**29 June 2021**
6 IERs submitted (or ALL for RE with <=6 IERs assigned)	**5 July 2021**
Deadline for ALL IERs READY (if more than 6)	**12 July 2021**
Remote cross-readings launched	15 July 2021
Remote Evaluation Committee Panel Week	10-17- September 2021
Result letters sent to applicants by	25 October 2021

Milestones reached since 25 May 2021

- **908 proposals** <u>submitted</u> and transferred to the SEP evaluation tool

- More than **1800 experts** were checked for possible Conflict of Interest

- Approximately **1000 Remote Evaluators** allocated to between **1** and **8** proposals (apart from few exceptional cases)

- Approximately **100 Vice-Chairs Quality Controllers** (VC-QCs) who will work with up to 8 proposals each.

- Approximately **120 Vice-Chairs Cross Readers** (VC-CRs) who are now being contracted and who will work with up to 8 proposals each.
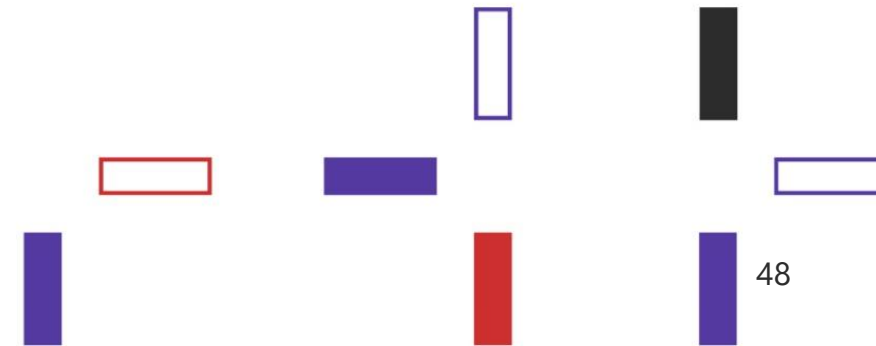
IMPORTANT! Deadlines.

- **For technical reasons the SEP deadlines are not configurable and DO NOT correspond to the actual deadlines.**

- **PLEASE RESPECT ALL THE DEADLINES**
- **YOU WILL BE GIVEN BY THE EISMEA STAFF**
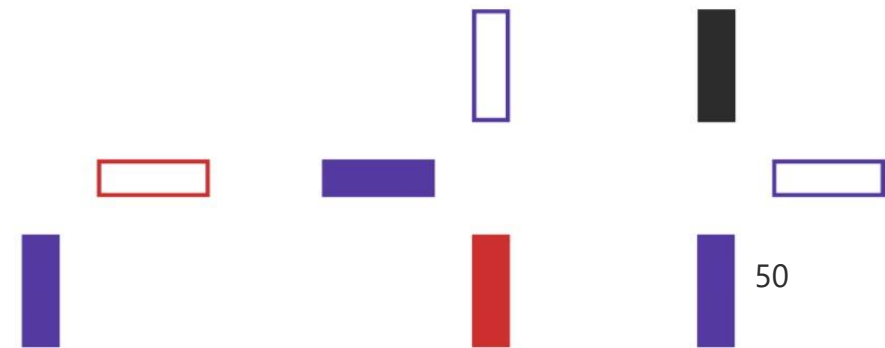
6. Main actors in the evaluation process

- Project officers (PO):
  - 6 cluster chairs,
  - call coordinator & deputy call coordinator

- Remote Evaluators (RE):
  - Write remotely good quality individual evaluation reports and assign corresponding scores
  - They will be assigned between 1 and 8 proposals.
  - Submit individual evaluation reports within given deadlines

- Vice-Chair Quality Controllers (VC-QC):
  - Check the quality of individual evaluation reports
  - They will be assigned on average 9 proposals.

- Vice-Chair Cross Readers (VC-CR):
  - Cross-read proposals and prepare the Remote Evaluation Committee Panel Week
  - Take part in the Remote Evaluation Committee Panel Week

- Independent Observer (IO)
  - Observe the evaluation process
  - Provide advice/suggestions to EISMEA on the evaluation process (if needed)

• **Independent Observer (IO) appointed by the Agency (I)**

• <u>to ensure a high degree of transparency of the evaluation process, by:</u>

• checking the functioning and execution of the overall process;
• verifying compliance with the procedures;
• advising on the conduct and fairness of the evaluation sessions, how the experts apply the criteria, and how the procedures could be improved;
• liaising with the staff members involved in the evaluation sessions;
• if necessary, suggesting possible corrections that could be put into practice immediately (or for future evaluations).
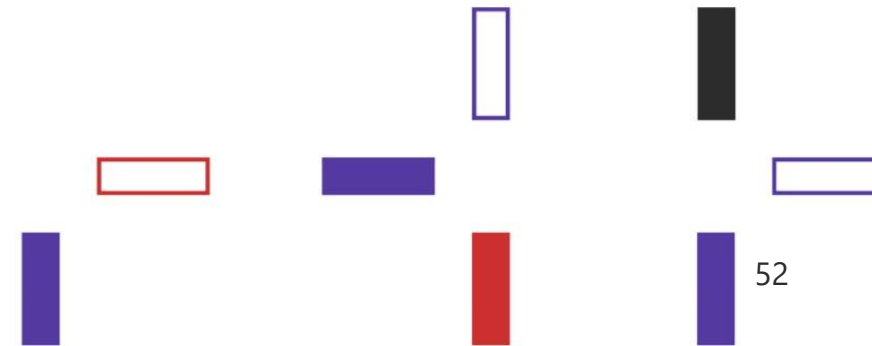
• Independent Observer (IO) appointed by the Agency (II)

- The Independent Observer sets out her findings (and suggestions on corrections) in the observer report to the Commission/Agency.

- **The Independent Observer:**
- **does not evaluate proposals nor expresses any opinion on their quality;**
- **may raise any question, attend any meeting related to the evaluation**.

• Independent Observer for this cut-off
Dr. Emily Taylor (ejat2@cam.ac.uk)

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Link:Slido.com
Code: K010

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We will answer as many as possible
by the end of the presentation
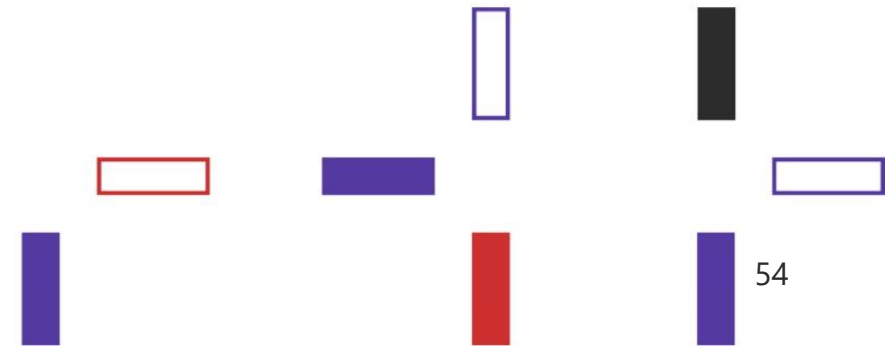
7. Admissibility and Eligibility
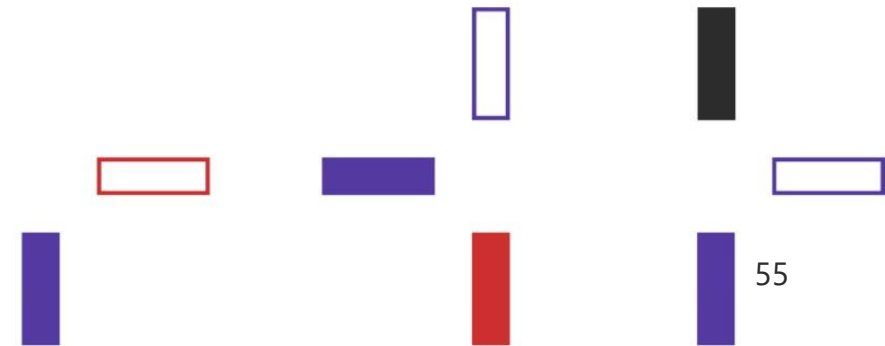
Admissibility and Eligibility of proposals

European Innovation Council

Admissibility *is checked by the Agency.*

- Applications must be **complete** and contain the requested administrative data and the proposal description;.

- Applications must be **readable, accessible and printable**.

- Applications must include a **plan for the exploitation and dissemination of results including communication activities**

- A specific **page limit of 17 A4 pages** apply for part B of the proposal.

Eligibility *is checked by the Agency.* ***If you spot an issue, please inform the EISMEA staff.***

- Eligible activities are the ones described in the call conditions.

- Minimum number of partners as set out in the call conditions (at least one independent legal entity established in a MS, and, at least two other independent legal entities established either in a MS or AC).

- For calls with deadlines in **2022** and onwards participants that are public bodies, research organisations or higher education establishments from Members States and Associated countries must have a gender equality plan in place.

Countries associated to H2020

Until association agreements become applicable, the transitional arrangement set out in the EIC Work Programme 2021 is applicable

*Following the Swiss Federal Council decision to withdraw from the negotiations on the Institutional Framework Agreement there will be consequences on their participation to Horizon Europe. Experts will received additional information in the coming days on how to treat Switzerland participants in this call

Albania	Iceland	Morocco	Tunisia
Armenia	Israel	North Macedonia	Turkey
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo**	Norway	Ukraine
Faroe Islands	Moldova	Serbia	United Kingdom***
Georgia	Montenegro	Switzerland*	

**This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.
*** The UK is associating to the full Horizon Europe programme with the only exception of the EIC Fund.
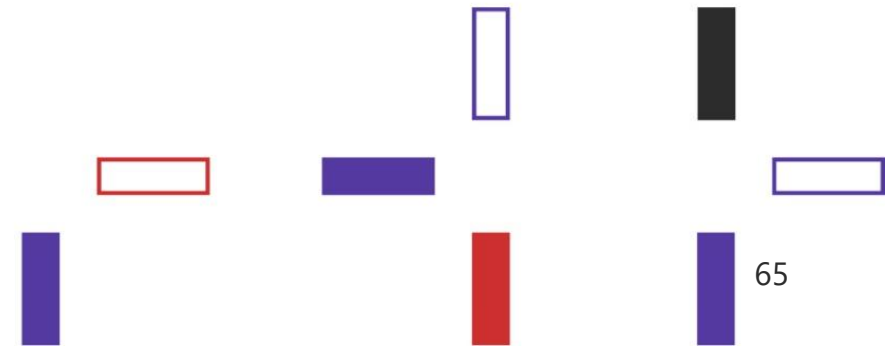
You can send your questions via Sli.do:
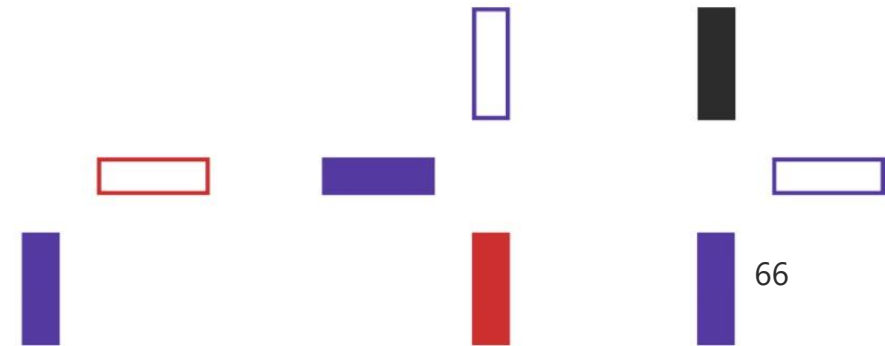
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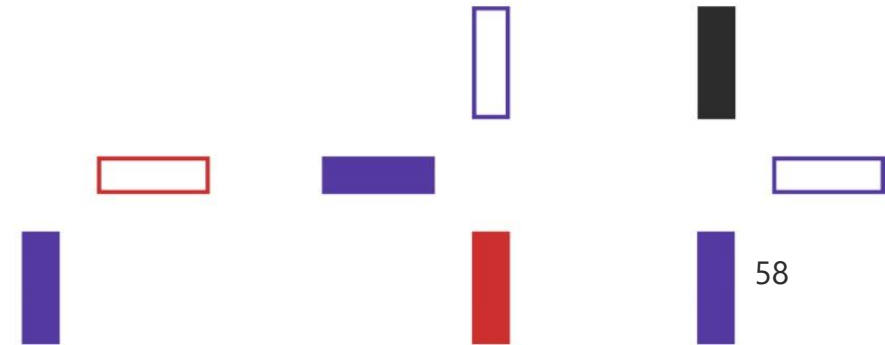
8. Remote evaluation phase
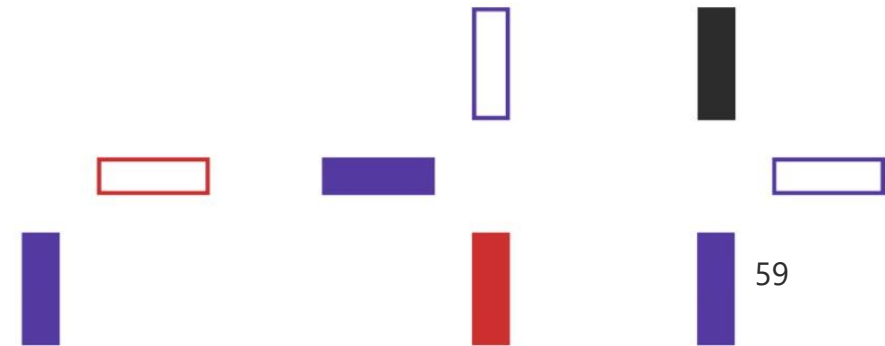
- As an independent expert, you evaluate proposals submitted in response to a given call
- <u>You are responsible for carrying out the evaluation of the proposals yourself</u> - you are not allowed to delegate the work to another person!
- <u>You must close reports in the electronic system within a given deadline</u>
- This is part of your contractual obligations! The allowance/expenses you claim may be reduced or rejected otherwise
- PLEASE RESPECT DEADLINES COMMUNICATED BY POs!
- <u>Significant funding decisions will be made on the basis of your assessment</u>
- If you suspect any form of misconduct (e.g. plagiarism, double funding), please report this immediately to EISMEA staff
- You need not to comment on ethics, as proposals that are successful in this scientific evaluation will undergo an ethics review (21-25 September 2021)

Guiding principles

Independence

- You are evaluating in a personal capacity.
- You represent neither your employer, nor your country!

Impartiality
- You must treat all proposals equally and evaluate them impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants.

Objectivity
- You evaluate each proposal as submitted, meaning on its own merit, not its potential if certain changes were to be made.

Accuracy
- You make your judgment against the official evaluation criteria and the call or topic the proposal addresses and nothing else.

Consistency
- You apply the same standard of judgment to all proposals

- RE evaluates each <u>proposal as submitted</u>, not on its potential if changes were to be made

- If RE identifies <u>shortcomings/weaknesses</u>, these <u>must be reflected in a lower score</u>

- RE comments on the identified issues, but <u>cannot make recommendations</u>

- <u>Proposals with weaknesses</u> that prevent the project from achieving its objectives should not receive above-threshold scores (<u>should stay below threshold</u> for a given criterion)

- To complete the RE task you have to sign-in and submit the Individual Evaluation Report (IER) in the electronic system (FUNDING & TENDER OPPORTUNITIES PORTAL)

- To implement the QC comments please respond **within 2 days** to the specific QC comments by modifying accordingly your IER and re-submitting it.
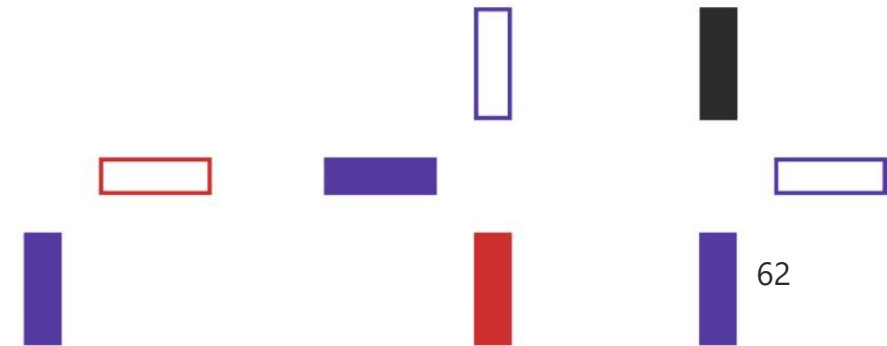
• Quality of IER is PARAMOUNT!

    - IERs remain unchanged and are collated all together (ESR) and sent to the applicants with possible additional comments by the Evaluation Committee Panel review

    - Quality is ensured by the fairness of the assessment, completeness and full compliance of the comments with corresponding PATHFINDER OPEN evaluation criteria/sub-criteria

• **Scope of IER is to give:**
    - **Clear assessment of the proposal based solely on its merits**
    - **Clear feedback on the proposal's strengths and weaknesses**
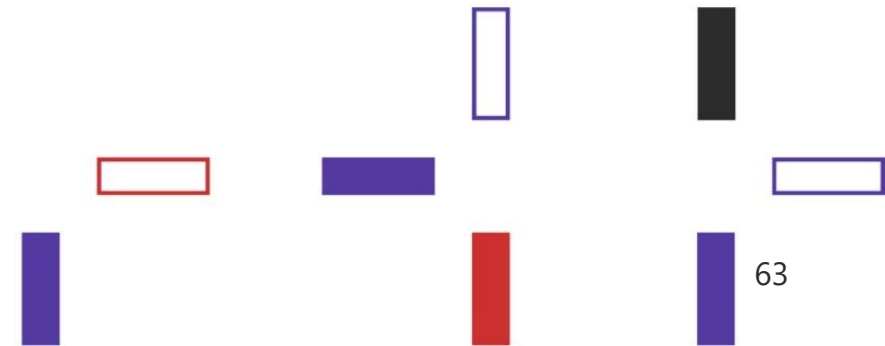
- In case the VC-QC provides comments for your IER, then it will be reopened and you will receive an email notification.

- If applicable, each evaluator should revise a given IER according to EISMEA request based on comments provided by VC-QCs

- React within 2 days to QC comments by modifying accordingly IER and re-submit

- To finalize the QC process, it may be that several iterations will be needed – please, be patient and collaborative

- Once the QC phase for a given IER is finalized you will received an email notification with confirmation
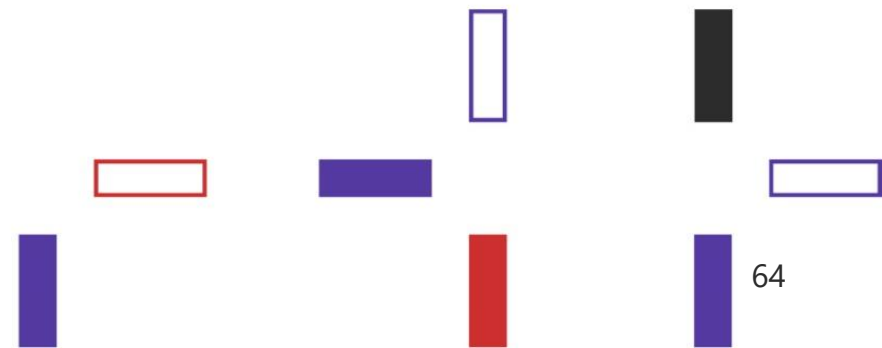
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9. How to implement the Quality Checks in SEP

The VC-QC comments can be seen in SEP, on the left side of the IER's screen (please, press on 'Expand comments')

- *Figure 1: The comments in SEP for the quality control: while the repository is keeping all the comments from the beginning of the work, the left side window displays only the latest 4 comments.*

IER modifications in practice
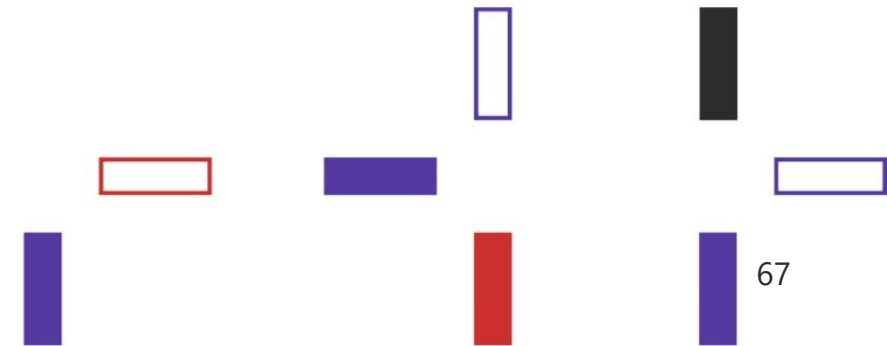
- *Figure 2: The comments in SEP for the quality control: in expanded mode the left-side window displays all the comments from the beginning of the work, structured on evaluation criteria.*

10. Feedback to Applicants
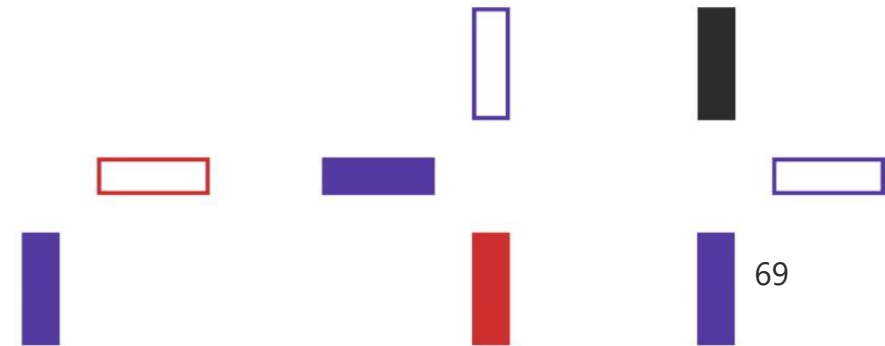
Feedback to applicants Evaluation Summary Report (ESR)

- Collation of all individual comments, per sub-criterion, from all 4 Individual Evaluation Reports (IER) – may be mutually contradicting (no consensus): <u>full transparency</u>

- Consensus score of the proposal, per criterion, is calculated as a <u>median of all individual scores</u> from IERs

- Final score, per criterion, is <u>decided by the final </u>Evaluation Committee Panel<u> Review</u> and the proposal total score is <u>calculated as a weighted sum of scores from all 3 criteria</u>

- Final Evaluation Committee Panel Review adds also some <u>additional comments</u>, possibly including the advice <u>not to resubmit the proposal</u>
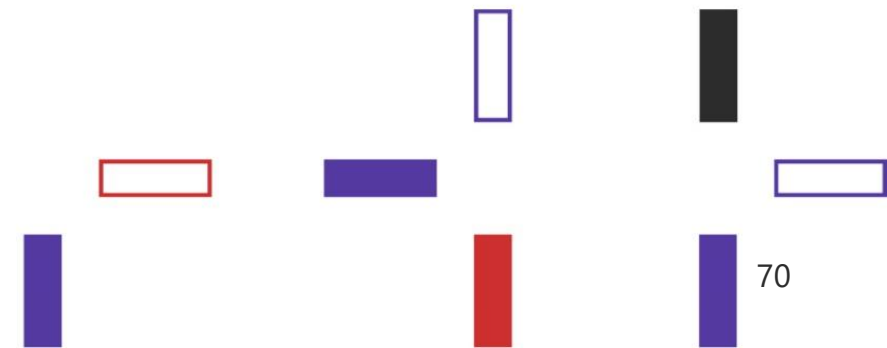
11. Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

[experts-video](#)
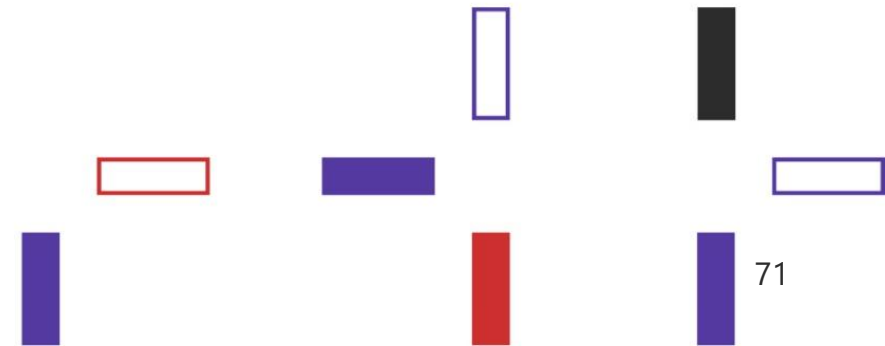
Confidentiality

Social media: Take great care not to post pictures or comments on evaluation matters through social media

You must:

- **Not discuss evaluation matters** (e.g. content of proposals, evaluation results or opinions of fellow experts) with anyone, including:

  - Other experts or EU staff or any other person (e.g. colleagues, students…) not directly involved in the evaluation of the proposal.

  - **The sole exception**: Your fellow experts who are evaluating the same proposal in a consensus group or Evaluation Committee Panel review.

- **Not contact partners** in the consortium, sub-contractors or any third parties.

- **Not disclose names** of your fellow experts.

- **Maintain confidentiality of documents, paper or electronic**, at all times and wherever you do your evaluation work (on-site or remotely).

  - Please take nothing away from the evaluation building (be it paper or electronic).

  - Return, destroy or delete all confidential documents, paper or electronic,upon completing your work, as instructed.

European Innovation Council

- You have a COI if you:

Were involved in the preparation of the proposal.

Stand to benefit directly/indirectly, if the proposal is successful or fails.

Have a close family/personal relationship with any person representing an applicant legal entity.

Are a director/trustee/partner of an applicant or involved in the management of an applicant's organisation.

Are employed or contracted by an applicant or a named subcontractor.

Are a member of an Advisory Group or Programme Committee in an area related to the call in question.

Are a National Contact Point or are directly working for the Enterprise Europe Network.

Are involved in a competing proposal.

Conflicts of Interest (COI) (II)

More in detail, in the following situations, the Commission/Agency will decide whether a COI exists

- If you were employed by an applicant including third parties or linked third parties involved in the proposal in the last three years

- If you were involved in a grant agreement/decision, the membership of management structures or a research collaboration with an applicant (or Marie Skłodowska Curie research fellow) in the last 3 years

- If you are in any other situation that casts doubt on your impartiality or that could reasonably appear to do so
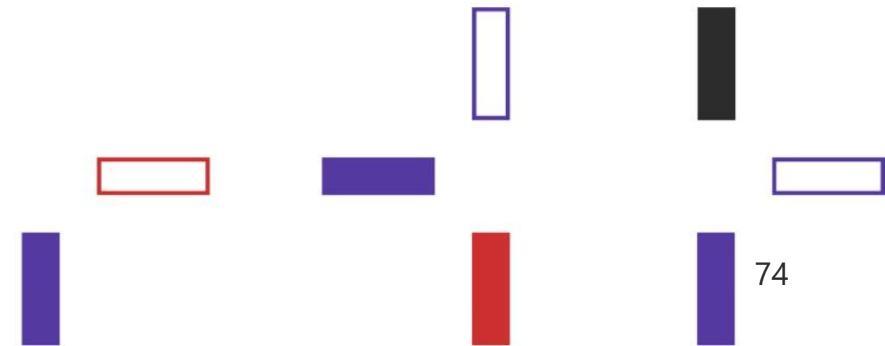
Conflicts of Interest (COI) (III)

> *You must inform the Commission/Agency/JU as soon as you become aware of a COI before the signature of the contract, upon receipt of proposals, or during the course of your work.*

- If there is a COI for a certain proposal you cannot evaluate it **neither individually, nor in the consensus group, nor in the panel review.**

- The EU services will determine if there is a COI on a case-by-case basis and decide the course of action to follow.

- **If you knowingly hide a COI**, you will be excluded from the evaluation and your work declared **null and void.**

  - The allowance/expenses you claimed may be reduced, rejected or recovered.

  - Your contract may be **terminated.**

COI rules are listed in the Code of Conduct annexed to the expert contract

You **can** send your questions via Sli.do:
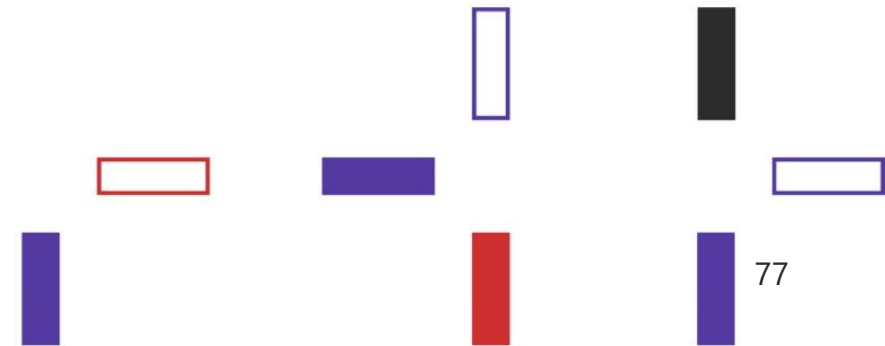
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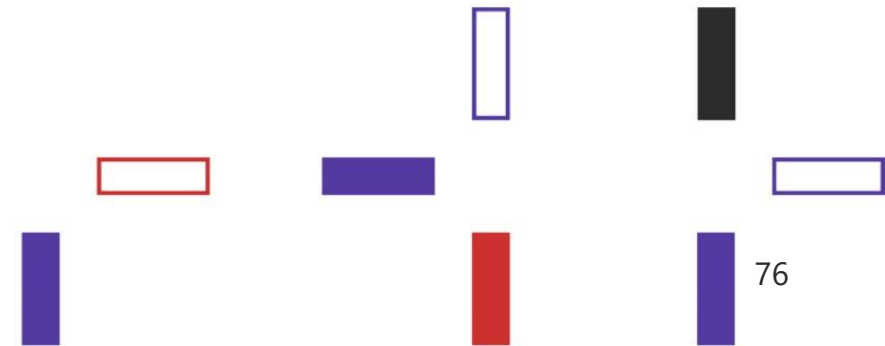
12.Important documents & Contact persons

EIC Work Programme 2021: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021/wp_horizon-eic-2021_en.pdf
including the *General Annexes*: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf

Admissibility and Eligibility conditions:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021/wp_horizon-eic-2021_en.pdf(Annex 2)

Proposal template:
Standard Application Form (EIC Pathfinder Open 2021)
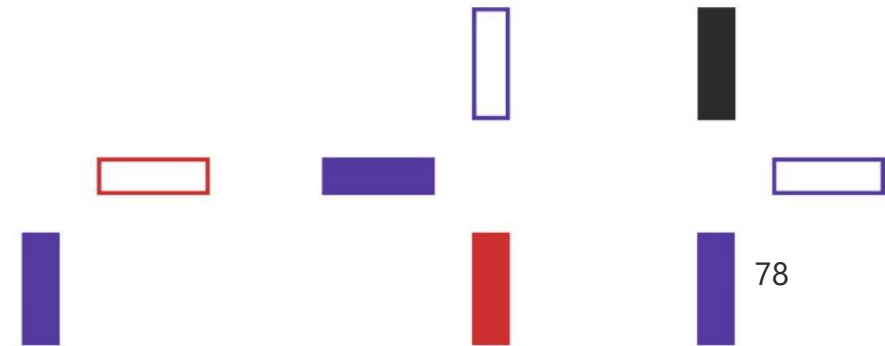
Email to be used: support.evaluator@eic.eismea.eu

Call Coordinator: **Antonio Loredan** Antonio.Loredan@ec.europa.eu

Independent Observer: **Dr. Emily Taylor** (ejat2@cam.ac.uk)
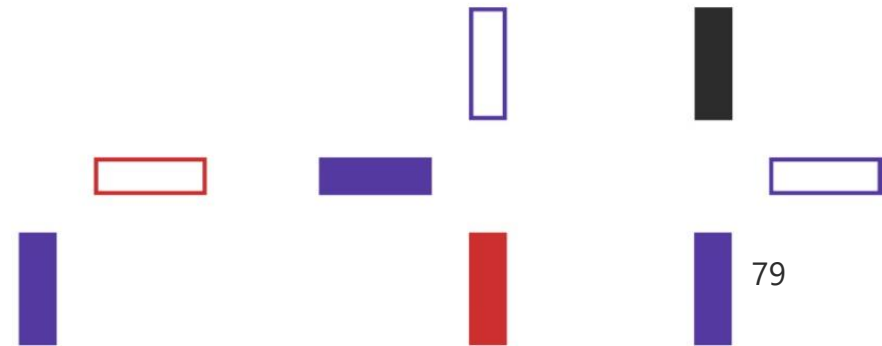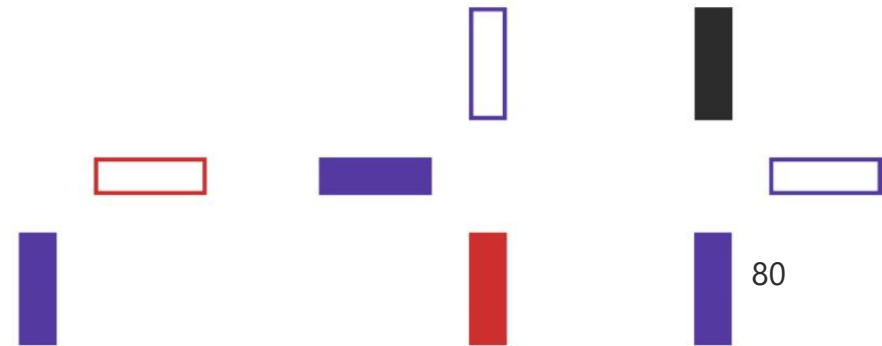
Thank you for your attention!

Questions?
Slido.com
Code: K010

Thank you!

https://eic.ec.europa.eu

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European Innovation Council