

GENDER-NET Plus Joint Call on Gender and UN Sustainable Development Goals

Evaluation procedure and Timeline for the call

The evaluation of the proposals submitted in the transnational call will be performed by the Irish Research Council (IRC) and the Estonian Research Council (ETAg) on behalf of GENDER-NET Plus. The IRC and ETAg are responsible for ensuring a professional, transparent and fair selection process as outlined in this document. The Funding decisions are made by GENDER-NET Plus and the respective Funding Organisations involved.

Application and evaluation procedures

A two-step application and evaluation procedure will be used in this call, **Pre-Proposal Phase** and **Full Proposal Phase**. Projects shortlisted for further evaluation in the Pre-Proposal Phase will be invited to submit full proposals at the Full Proposal Phase.

Pre-proposals and full proposals must be submitted (in English) by the Project Coordinator electronically via the Electronic Proposal Submission System (EPSS) hosted by ETAg (see the “Pre-proposal submissions guidelines”). Note that in some cases parallel proposals should also be made directly to the respective participating Funding Organisations, see the “Funding Organisation Rules” and “Pre-proposal submission guidelines”.

In both the Pre-proposal Phase and Full Proposal Phase, evaluation of proposals submitted under the call will be carried out by an international Scientific Evaluation Committee (SEC).

Scientific Evaluation Committee

A minimum of 16 SEC members will participate in the evaluation and selection of pre- and full proposals under the Joint Call. The members of the SEC will be internationally recognised experts in the topics selected for the Joint Call. Members are suggested and appointed by the GENDER-NET Plus Organisation Committee. In composing the SEC, a balance in geographical distribution, gender and relevant disciplines is observed. To ensure fairness in the selection of projects, all necessary steps are taken to ensure that the SEC members have no conflict of interests with applications made to this call. The SEC members will be required to sign declarations that no conflict of interest exists before they exercise their evaluation duty and will sign a confidentiality agreement concerning all documents and the entire process. Members of the SEC act as independent experts and do not represent any organisations, nor can they send any replacements.

To ensure transparency, the composition of the SEC will be made available on the GENDER-NET Plus website after the evaluation process is completed.

External reviewers

External reviewers can be consulted to perform written scientific reviews of proposals requiring specific expertise at both the pre-proposal and the full proposal phases. Experts fulfilling this role are chosen from a long list of candidates provided by the Funding Organisations taking part in the GENDER-NET Plus. If needed, additional external reviewers can be appointed. External reviewers will remain anonymous throughout the evaluation process.

Independent observer

The requirement to provide an independent observer's report on the evaluation is mandatory for all EU co-funded joint calls. An independent observer will be asked to draft a report on the evaluation process which will detail how the evaluators applied the evaluation criteria and the process of arriving at a fair and transparent consensus.

The Independent Observer will be appointed by the GENDER-NET Plus and will assess the conformity of the implementation of the Joint Call to the rules governing it and, in particular, will review the proper implementation of the independent international peer review and the establishment of the ranking list of trans-national projects.

The Independent Observer will be required to undertake the following specific tasks:

- Review the publications associated with the call to ensure compliance with EU co-funding rules and the quality of the evaluation process
- Review the selection process for evaluators and briefing materials – to ensure that every effort was made to guarantee a balance and the competence of experts and the clarity of information provided to evaluators
- Participate at SEC meetings to ensure compliance with EU co-funding rules and adherence to evaluation and selection criteria
- Preparation of an independent observer's report for GENDER-NET Plus and the European Commission.

Review and Evaluation process

In both the Pre-Proposal and Full Proposal phase, proposals are evaluated by the SEC members with assistance of the reports from the external reviewers if needed.

The SEC will evaluate the proposals following the scoring systems indicated below.

Selection criteria

Grant proposals will be evaluated by experts, on the basis of the three selection criteria 'Research excellence', 'Potential impact' and 'Quality and efficiency of the implementation' as outlined below:

Research excellence

- How well the proposal addresses the call topics
- Sound concept and quality of objectives
- Progress beyond state of the art
- Quality and effectiveness of the research methodology

Potential impact

- Extent to which the research outcomes are likely to be of value inside and/or outside of academia
- Appropriateness of measures for the dissemination and/or exploitation of results
- European Added Value (including Canada)

Quality and efficiency of the implementation

- Appropriateness of the management structure and procedures
- Quality and relevant experience of the individual participants

- Quality of the consortium as a whole (including complementarity, balance, level of integration and collaboration)
- Appropriate allocation and justification of the resources to be committed

Scoring system and threshold

Evaluation scores will be awarded for the criteria Excellence, Impact, Implementation (not for the individual bullet points listed above). The excellence criterion will be scored from 1 to 7, where 7 is the top score and 5 is the threshold for being considered for funding. The impact criterion will be scored from 1 to 5, where 3 is the threshold. The implementation criterion will be scored from 1 to 3, where 2 is the threshold. The scores will be given as integers, without decimals. (For the evaluation of the pre-proposals, only the criteria 'excellence' and 'impact' will be evaluated.)

Pre-Proposal phase

The pre-proposal is open to all research consortia fulfilling the eligibility requirements.

A formal transnational eligibility check will be conducted by the Call Secretariat on all pre-proposals, followed by a national eligibility check by the relevant funding agencies.

The pre-proposals will be evaluated by the SEC using the selection criteria Excellence and Impact as described above. In addition to the threshold 5 and 3 for each criterion respectively, a threshold of 9 for the sum of the two scores will be used.

Each pre-proposal will be read carefully by at least three SEC members, and if needed by external reviewer(s). Proposals not relevant to the call (out-of-scope) will be rejected without further review. The SEC will then convene in a face-to-face meeting to decide the score for each criterion and each pre-proposal. The SEC will draw up a list with the score sums of the pre-proposals. Pre-proposals with the same score sum will not be differentiated in the list.

The estimated sum of the budgets of the pre-proposals invited by GENDER-NET Plus to submit full proposals will be approximately 2.5 times the total budget of the call (provided that enough pre-proposals above the threshold have been received).

After the pre-proposal evaluation, feedback is provided to all coordinators. Proposals that successfully pass the Pre-Proposal Phase, will receive their feedback at the same time as they receive an invitation to submit full proposals.

Full proposal phase

A second eligibility check of the full proposals will be performed by the Call Secretariat to ensure that they meet the formal criteria of the call and have not changed substantially from the respective pre-proposals.

The full proposals will be evaluated by the SEC using the selection criteria Excellence, Impact and Implementation and using the scoring system, as described above, with the thresholds 5, 3 and 2 for each criterion respectively (arriving at a threshold sum of 10). Each proposal will be read carefully by at least three SEC members, and if needed by external reviewer(s). The SEC will convene in a second face-to-face meeting to decide the score for each criterion and each proposal. The SEC will draw up a list with the score sums for the full proposals. Proposals with the same score sum will be ranked following the procedure described below.

Priority order for proposals with the same score

If necessary, the panel will determine a priority order for proposals which have been awarded the same score sum. The following approach will be applied to rank these proposals.

a) GENDER-NET Plus is committed to using the available funding as effectively as possible to fund excellent research. For proposals with the same score sum, priority will be given to those that can be funded with the available resources. Within this pool, proposals that address topics not otherwise covered by more highly-ranked proposals, will be considered to have the highest priority.

b) If further differentiation is needed, the proposals will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the criterion excellence. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on scores for the criterion impact.

c) If a distinction still cannot be made, the SEC may decide to further prioritise by considering how to enhance the quality of the project portfolio through synergies between projects, or other factors related to the objectives of the call. These factors will be documented in a report from the SEC.

Timeline for the call¹

20 December 2017	Launch of the call and Announcement of opportunity published
1 March 2018	Deadline for submitting pre-proposals
Mid-March to End of May 2018	Eligibility check and evaluation of pre-proposals, followed by decision on which pre-proposals to invite to the full proposal phase.
First week of June 2018	Invitation to submit full proposals
Mid-July 2018	Deadline for submitting full proposals
End July to end of September 2018	Eligibility check and evaluation of full proposals
Mid October 2018	Final Funding Decisions
One month before start of project	Signing of Grant Agreement for funded projects
1 March 2019	Latest start of funded projects
31 December 2021	Latest closing of funded projects

¹ Subject to change under unforeseen circumstances