

## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this Evaluation Methodology is to provide information to potential applicants regarding the evaluation and selection procedure for the ARIES Proof-of-Concept fund.

## **2. Definitions**

### **Evaluation Panel (EvPa)**

The ARIES IAB (Industrial Advisory Board) will appoint the Evaluation Panel (EvPa). The panel will be composed of ARIES team members, chosen from the Work Package (WP) Coordinators, the project industrial partners, and may include external advisors.

The EvPa Chair is the Coordinator of ARIES Work Package 14 (WP14): Promoting Innovation. The Management Team is ex-officio member of the Evaluation Panel.

The EvPa is responsible for drafting the evaluation report and making recommendations to the ARIES Steering Committee (SC) regarding the selection and award of funding for the PoC. The members of the Panel decide jointly on any non-compliance, non-selection, rejection and the points awarded during the evaluation of projects for the PoC Fund.

The role of EvPa members is not to act as sponsors of specific projects, but to promote innovation and technology transfer. To this end, during the evaluation phase, contacts with the technical persons proposing the projects shall be carried out **exclusively via the Chair of the Panel**.

EvPa members will be asked to declare conflicts of interest, personal or institutional, where this arises in relation to an application they have been asked to assess. The members of the Evaluation Panel are expected to sign a declaration of non-disclosure agreement as well as a declaration of non-conflicting interests.

## **3. Description of the evaluation procedure**

All members of the Evaluation Panel will have access to the projects' technical and financial (including budget, business plan if any) information. All the projects presented within the deadline indicated on the ARIES website will be included in a list of proposals for evaluation. All the proposals will be evaluated at a chosen date.

The requirements for proposal submission will be published on the ARIES website at least 4 months before the deadline. Proposals missing to comply with the call requirements will be rejected.

Decisions within the EvPa will be taken by consensus among all members of the Panel. In case of discrepancies, the Panel will attempt to reach a common agreement. If a common agreement is not reached, decisions will be taken by majority voting.

The evaluation should follow a number of steps. Evaluators will first check that all the mandatory questions and documentation are provided and that the requirements for participation are met (e.g. deadlines respected, signatures, minimum legal requirements).

Only the proposals meeting the requirements during an evaluation stage will pass on to the next stage. In case a proposal does not meet all requirements to pass to the next stage, the proposal is deemed not eligible and dismissed from the list.

The Chair, with the support of an appointed secretary (to be appointed by EvPa), will draft an Evaluation Report. The other members of the Panel are entitled to propose additions, modifications and remarks. The result of the evaluation is the responsibility of the Evaluation Panel members, and each member will sign the Evaluation Report.

### **3.1 Exclusion criteria and assessment of administrative conformity**

At this stage, the Evaluation Panel needs to check only if the proposal has been submitted duly dated and signed by the technical representative and if it is using the proposal template and not exceeding the maximum number of pages. In case industry is involved, the proposal needs to include a statement certifying no fraud, bankruptcy or pending legal complains.

The evaluation results of this stage will be registered in the Evaluation Report.

### **3.2 Selection criteria**

The selection of proposals is based on a set of defined criteria. Each of the criterion below is scored using the average score of all the votes cast by EvPa members. The selection criteria (precisely defined in Table 1) are:

- **Quality**
- **Impact**
- **Implementation** (work plan, schedule, business plan, risk assessment).

Each of the criterion is scored up to 5 points.  
The minimum threshold for each criterion is 3 points.  
The cumulative threshold for the proposal to pass to the next evaluation stage is 9 points.

The results of the selection will be registered in the Evaluation Report, including the ranking of scores. If two projects happen to have the same score, they will both pass to the next evaluation stage.

**Table 1: Selection criteria**

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<p><b>1. Quality</b></p> <p><i>Note:</i> The following aspects will be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Innovative aspect of the proposal not covered by similar research activity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clarity and pertinence of the objectives</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The extent to which the proposed work is beyond the state-of-the-art, and demonstrates innovation potential (e.g. ground-breaking objectives, novel concepts and approaches, new products or services)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Score 1:</b></p> <p>Threshold 3/5</p>
<p><b>2. Impact</b></p> <p><i>Note:</i> The impact section may be supported by market data and indicators. Expected applications are those commercial and industrial practices realistically within the reach of the project outcomes. The following aspects will be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The extent to which the outputs of the project would enhance innovation capacity, create new market opportunities, strengthen competitiveness and growth of companies or bring other important benefits to society;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Quality of the proposed measures to disseminate and exploit the project results, including management of IPR</li> </ul>	<p><b>Score 2:</b></p> <p>Threshold 3/5</p>
<p><b>3. Implementation</b></p> <p><i>Note:</i> The following aspects will be taken into account: (EvPa will assess the operational capacity of applicants to carry out the proposed work)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Soundness of the concept, credibility of the proposed methodology in terms of meeting specific market needs. Soundness of the Business plan.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, including extent to which the resources assigned to work packages are in line with their objectives and deliverables; credibility and soundness of business plan, budget plan and schedule.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Score 3:</b></p> <p>Threshold 3/5</p>
<p><b>Total score:</b></p>	

**Interpretation of scores:** Scores must be in the range 0-5. Evaluators will score proposals as they were submitted, rather than on their potential if certain changes

were to be made. When an evaluator identifies significant shortcomings, he or she must reflect this by awarding a lower score for the criterion concerned.

0	<b>The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.</b>
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.

### **3.3 Ranking for eligibility to interview**

Total score is the sum of criteria 1+2+3. Cumulative threshold is 9/15.

### **3.4 Interview of first 4 ranked projects**

Depending on the total number of proposals received, EvPa may decide to invite selected projects for an interview. However, no more than 4 projects will be invited to the interview stage and 2 other projects will be included in a short-list in case of need. The presentation and the Q&A session will be used for the second round of selection. The interview will have the following format:

- Max. 20-30 minutes presentation in front of the EvPa
- Max. 20-30 minutes Q&A session after the presentation

### **3.5 Assessment of proposals (awarding criteria)**

Proposals that have been selected for interview are eligible for final evaluation stage. Based on the interview assessment, EvPa will make a proposal to the SC on the projects selected for the PoC Fund. The EvPa will propose to SC projects according to:

### **3.6 Technical evaluation**

The technical criteria to be evaluated are:

- the technical description, presentation and relevance of Q&A session (up to 10 points).
- the project schedule and corresponding allocation of resources, the workplan and the person-months for the type of work foreseen. Milestones for project implementation monitoring (up to 7 points).

- the industry involvement (i.e how industry is coordinated and involved into the process of technology transfer)
- Business Plan, with reference to:
  - general description, completeness, soundness of the business plan and presented level of details
  - the potential of market impact as presented and justified by data (up to 5 points).

For each of these criterion (and exclusively based on these) the evaluators will give scores and **write a justification for each criterion which will be submitted to the SC for the funding decision.**

### 3.7 Financial and final evaluation

Only proposals that have reached the minimum thresholds for the technical evaluation will pass the financial and final evaluation. The maximum number of projects to undergo the financial evaluation is 4. The budget allocation for each project having passed the final evaluation will be decided by the Management Team, in consultation with the WP14 coordinator. The ARIES project considers that proposals requesting a contribution of about 50 K€ would allow PoC activities to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting different amounts.

### 3.8 Monitoring

The EvPa will monitor outputs on all PoC grants, and will fix appropriate means of follow-ups and verifications that funding is used appropriately for the scope of the research. All award holders will be required to submit a final report containing details of outputs arising from their work within 2 months after the end of the project and however no later than 2 months before the end of the ARIES project, which means by February 2021 at the latest.

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