EFDA Goal Oriented Training Programme

Guide for applicants

Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures and proposal template.

Contents

1. Introduction

The EFDA Goal Oriented Training Programme will be set-up through calls for proposals to the Associations. The evaluation of submitted proposals will be performed through set procedures in order to ensure transparency and excellence in the selected projects. This guide details the procedures to be followed for these actions.

2. Eligibility

The following eligibility criteria apply.

2.1. Participant institutions.

The implementation of this action will be through the Contracts of Associations. Participant institutions therefore have to be either Associations or institutions having collaborative agreements with the Associations.

A partnership in this action shall be composed of at least three independent institutions established in at least three different Member States or Associated States.

2.2. The collaborative training project

The training programme undertaken by the partnership shall provide a collaborative training based around a project of up to three years with clearly defined goals developed according to the needs of the priority areas mentioned in the call, for the transfer of knowledge and for career development of the researchers involved/recruited in the frame of the partnership. The researchers are therefore to be fully integrated into the research by involving them, for example, in exchanges between teams, partnership meetings, collaborative research or the dissemination of results, developing thereby a very practical oriented training programme. In this context, participants will also need to develop a structured programme for training (e.g. courses, seminars, intersectorial training periods, training in research management and exploitation of research results) and mentoring (e.g. supervision, career guidance) to the benefit of all trainee researchers included in the partnership. The training programme shall also involve mobility as and when it serves the goal of the training project.

Participant institutions will be given significant autonomy and flexibility in the detailed operation of the partnership.

Each researcher will establish, together with his/her personal supervisor, a *Personal Career Development Plan* comprising his/her training needs and scientific objectives and later on report upon the success with which these objectives were met. In this way the trainees will be encouraged to play an active role in shaping their own training programme and professional development.

2.3. Eligible researchers

This action is **mainly directed towards early stage researchers;** therefore the minimum academic requirement for being eligible is having gained a relevant diploma giving access to doctoral studies in the country where the diploma was obtained. Projects aiming at training mainly specifically recruited trainees will be favoured in the evaluation process.
According to the specificities of each training project, the researchers may be involved full time or part time in the training activities. This will be specified in the training proposals.

Eligible researchers will be nationals of the Member States or the Associated States to the European Fusion Development Agreement. The reference deadline for eligibility is the selection of the eligible researcher by the participant institution in the framework of this action. For the purpose of the EFDA Goal Oriented Training Programme, non-nationals from Member States or Associated States having legally resided and having had their main activity (work, studies etc) for at least four of the last five years, measured at the reference deadline for eligibility, in Member States/Associated States are treated as nationals of the Member/Associated State in which they have resided the longest.

3. Evaluation criteria and procedures

The evaluation of proposals is carried out by EFDA with the assistance of independent experts.

Experts perform evaluations 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 throughout in a professional manner. They sign an appointment letter, including a confidentiality and conflict of interest declaration before beginning their work. Confidentiality rules must be adhered to at all times, before, during and after the evaluation.

3.1. Experts selection

The EFDA Leader will nominate expert evaluators. The number and technical competences will be sufficient to cover the full scope of the proposals which are expected to address the priority areas approved by the EFDA Steering Committee. Experts will be asked to sign a confidentially agreement and declare any conflict of interest.

Conflicts of interest: Under the terms of the appointment letter, experts must declare beforehand any known conflicts of interest, and must immediately inform EFDA if one becomes apparent during the course of the evaluation. EFDA will take whatever action is necessary to remove any conflict.

Confidentiality: The appointment letter also requires experts to maintain strict confidentiality with respect to the whole evaluation process. Under no circumstance may an expert attempt to contact an applicant on his own account, either during the evaluation or afterwards.

At the beginning of the evaluation, experts will be briefed by EFDA, covering the evaluation procedure, the experts' responsibilities, the issues involved in the particular area/objective, and other relevant material.

3.2. Eligibility criteria

On receipt by EFDA, proposals will be assessed against the relevant eligibility criteria. Proposals which do not fulfil these criteria will not be included in the evaluation.

A proposal will be considered eligible only if it meets all of the following conditions:

- It is received by EFDA before the deadline given in the call for interest
- It involves at least the minimum number of participant institutions given in the call for proposals

- It is complete (i.e. both the requested administrative forms and the proposal description are present)

- Its content relates to a priority area defined in the call for proposals.

- The proposed trainees are eligible according to the definition given in section 2.3.

3.3. The evaluation procedure

The evaluation procedure will be carried out in two stages: an **individual evaluation** by the experts through an IAR (Individual Assessment Report) followed by a **Final Evaluation meeting** to define the final ranking of the proposals.

- After reception of the proposals, EFDA checks their eligibility before distributing them to the expert evaluators.
- During the first evaluation phase, all the questions from the evaluators are forwarded by EFDA to the applicants and the answers are then transmitted by EFDA to all the evaluators involved in assessing the related proposal.
- The IARs are prepared independently by each evaluator before being circulated by EFDA to the other evaluators involved in assessing the same proposal
- The Final Evaluation meeting will be organised by EFDA, involving all expert evaluators with the following agenda:
    - Overview of the Calls received and designation of one Rapporteur among the expert evaluators for each proposal.
    - Closed sessions, one on each proposal where the expert evaluators involved will aim at reaching a consensus.
    - General session where the Rapporteurs present the outcome of the closed sessions and an overall consensus on the scoring and ranking of the proposals is reached.

3.3.1. Scoring

Each proposal will be evaluated against the pre-determined evaluation criteria given Annex 1 and scored according to the thresholds and weightings also given in Annex I.

Evaluation scores will be awarded for each of the four criteria, but not for the sub-criteria. The sub-criteria, which are not exhaustive, are issues that the expert should consider in the assessment of that criterion. They also act as reminders of issues to be raised later during the discussions of the proposal.

Each criterion will be scored out of 5. Half marks can be given. The scores indicate the following with respect to the criterion under examination:

1 -	*Poor. There are serious inherent weaknesses in relation to the criterion in question.*
2 -	*Fair. While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses that would need correcting.*
3 -	*Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, although certain improvements are possible.*

4 -	*Very Good. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Shortcomings are minor.*
5 -	*Excellent. The proposal outstandingly addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question.*

3.3.2. Individual evaluation of proposals

At this first step the experts are acting individually; they do not discuss the proposal with each other, nor with any third party. The experts record their individual opinions in an Individual Assessment Report (IAR), giving scores and also comments against the evaluation criteria.

Each proposal will first be assessed independently by at least two experts.

3.3.3. Final Evaluation Meeting

Once all the experts to whom a proposal has been assigned have completed their IAR, the evaluation progresses to a consensus assessment, representing their common views.

This entails a Final Evaluation Meeting to discuss the scores awarded and to prepare comments.

In a first step, closed sessions, one for each proposal, will be organised gathering the expert evaluators involved with the goal of reaching a consensus for each proposal. To this purpose, EFDA will designate among the involved experts a Rapporteur for each proposal. The Rapporteur will be in charge of drafting the consensus report with a consensus score for each of the criteria, suitable comments to justify the scores and possible recommendations.

In a second step, a general session will take place where each Rapporteur explains the results of the consensus meeting. The EFDA Leader or his representative will act as a moderator. The moderator is responsible for ensuring that the consensus reports reflects the consensus reached, expressed in scores and comments and that the scoring are equitably attributed to the different proposals and are based on the required evaluation criteria.

EFDA will also take the necessary steps to assure the quality of the consensus reports, with particular attention given to clarity, consistency, and appropriate level of detail. If important changes are necessary, the reports will be referred back to the experts concerned
The first outcome of this process is the consensus reports, one per proposal. They will be signed (either on paper, or electronically) by all experts involved.

The second outcome consists in establishing the final scoring and ranking of the proposals having passed all the thresholds (see annex 1 table 2), recommending a priority order for proposals with the same score. This shall take into account the overall ceiling of the GOT programme as well as the targeted number of trainees as defined in the call for proposals

4. Proposal content

The proposal should be prepared according to the following template:

4.1. General description

Acronym		**Expected Start date**					
Work package title							
Priority Area addressed							
Participant institution number[1]	1	2	3	4	5	6	…
Employing Association							
Number of trainees (person-months)							
Number of trainees foreseen to be recruited							
Mentoring (person-months)							
Mobility (person-months in laboratories other than the employer's laboratory)							

Objectives

Description of work (possibly broken down into tasks), and role of participants

Deliverables (brief description)

4.2. List of milestones

Milestones are control points where decisions may be needed with regard to the next stage of the project. For example, a milestone may occur when a major result has been achieved, if its successful attainment is required for the next phase of work. Another example would be a point when the consortium must decide which of several technologies to adopt for further development.

Milestone number	**Milestone name**	**Expected date** [2]	**Means of validation** [3]

[1] Coordinating Association is number 1.

[2] Measured in months from the project start date (T_0 = month 1).

[3] Show how you will confirm that the milestone has been attained. Refer to indicators if appropriate. For example: a laboratory prototype completed and running flawlessly; software released and validated by a user group; field survey complete and data quality validated

4.3. Implementation

4.3.1. Management structure and procedures

Describe the organisational structure and decision-making mechanisms of the project. Show how they are matched to the complexity and scale of the project.

(Maximum length for section 4.3.1: three pages)

4.3.2. Participant institutions

For each participant institution in the proposed project, provide a brief description of the organisation, the main tasks they have been attributed, and the previous experience relevant to those tasks. Provide also a short profile of the staff members who will be undertaking the work.

(Maximum length for section 4.3.2: one page per participant)

4.3.3. Consortium as a whole

Describe how the participants collectively constitute a consortium capable of achieving the project objectives, and how they are suited and are committed to the tasks assigned to them. Show the complementarities between participants. Explain how the composition of the consortium is well-balanced in relation to the objectives of the project.

i) Sub-contracting: If any part of the work is to be sub-contracted by the participant responsible for it, describe the work involved and explain why a sub-contract approach has been chosen for it.

ii) Additional partners: If there are as-yet-unidentified participants in the project, the expected competences, the role of the potential participants and their integration into the running project should be described.

(Maximum length for section 4.3.3: one page)

4.3.4. Impact

Describe how your project will contribute towards the priority areas listed in the call for proposal. Mention the steps that will be needed to bring about these impacts. Explain why this contribution requires a European (rather than a national or local) approach. Indicate how account is taken of other national or international research activities. Mention any assumptions and external factors that may determine whether the impacts will be achieved.

(Maximum length for the whole of Section 4.3.5 – one page)

4.3.5. Resources to be committed

Please provide the following information using the hereunder template:

- Personnel costs. As consequence of the manpower (person months per participant) indicated in section 4.1. To be reimbursed 40% by the European Community according to the provisions of the Contracts of Association.
- Other costs. Please indicate any other major costs (e.g. equipment, management, participation to conferences, subcontracting, etc.). To be reimbursed 40% by the European Community, according to the provisions of the Contracts of Association.
- Mobility costs. Indicative information (not to be included in the budget) on the number and duration of missions and foreseen costs. To be reimbursed according the general rules of the Mobility Agreement.

Name of the training	Nb of trainees	Trainees in person/ month	Trainees costs in €	Mentoring in person/ month	Mentoring cost in €	Other costs in €	Total costs in €	Mobility costs in €	Total costs with mob.
Assoc. 1									
Assoc. 2									
Assoc. 3									
…									
Total									

Note: Ceilings shall apply for mentoring (20% maximum of the total budget) and for other costs (10% maximum of the total budget).

Describe how the totality of the necessary resources will be mobilised. Show how the resources will be integrated in a coherent way, and show how the overall financial plan for the project is adequate. **Finally, state clearly the total expected costs for the project**.

(Maximum length for Section 4.3.4 – two pages)

4.3.6. Consideration of gender non-discrimination aspects

You may give an indication of the sort of actions that would be undertaken during the course of the project to promote gender equality in your project, or in your field of research. (These will not be evaluated, but will be discussed during negotiations should your proposal be successful)

These could include actions related to the project consortium (e.g. improving the gender balance in the project consortium, measures to help reconcile work and private life, awareness raising within the consortium) or, where appropriate, actions aimed at a wider public (e.g. events organised in schools or universities)
(Maximum length for section 4.3.6 – one page)

Annex I: Evaluation criteria, thresholds and weightings.

Table 1: Evaluation criteria.

1. Scientific and/or technological excellence *(relevant to the topics addressed by the call)*	**2. Training / Transfer of Knowledge**	**3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation and the management**	**4. The potential impact.**
• Soundness of concept, and quality of objectives. • S&T objectives of the research programme. • Scientific quality of the research programme. • Appropriateness of research methodology. • Originality and innovative aspect of the research programme. • Knowledge of the state-of-the-art	• Quality of the training programme. Consistency with the research programme. Complementary skills offered. • Networking of the training activities. • Appropriateness of the size of the requested training programme with respect to the capacity of the hosts. • Where appropriate, capability to provide an influx of new researchers/engineers in the fusion programme (recruitments).	• Appropriateness of the management structure and procedures. • Quality and relevant experience of the participant institutions. • Capacities (expertise / human resources/ facilities / infrastructures) to achieve the research, and adequate task distribution and schedule. • Appropriateness of industry involvement. • Adequate exploitation of complementarities and synergies among partners in terms of research and training. • Appropriateness of the plans for the overall management of the training programme (demarcation of responsibilities, rules for decision making, etc.). • Networking and dissemination of best practice among partners. • Clarity of the plan for organizing training events (workshops, conferences, training courses). • Appropriateness of the proposed mobility.	• Appropriateness with respect to the Priority Areas defined in the Call. • Contribution of the proposed training programme to improvement of the career prospects of the fellows. • Provision to establish longer term collaborations and /or lasting structured training programme between the partners' organizations. • Where appropriate, justification of the training events open to external participants and their integration in the training programme. • Where appropriate, mutual recognition of the training acquired by multi-partner hosts. • Where applicable, relevance of the role of visiting scientist with respect to the training programme. • Number of new trainees to be recruited

Table 2: Weightings and thresholds

Activity	**EFDA Goal Orientated Training Program**	
Criterion:	Weighting	Threshold
S&T Excellence	25%	3
Training	25%	3
Implementation	25%	3
Impact	25%	3

Proposals that fail to obtain at least 3 points in each individual criterion and at least 14 points in total shall be excluded from the final ranking.

Note 1: W=Weighting expressed as a percentage, T = Threshold score out of 5