



ERA-MIN2

RESEARCH & INNOVATION PROGRAMME ON RAW MATERIALS  
TO FOSTER CIRCULAR ECONOMY

## ERA-MIN Joint Call 2019

RAW MATERIALS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
AND THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

### GUIDE FOR REVIEWERS

Link to [«ERA-MIN2 Call»](#)

Link to the [Electronic Proposal Submission System](#)

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## 1. Definitions

**Applicant:** is a legal entity, represented by a Lead Researcher that forms a consortium at the stage of proposal submission.

**Beneficiary:** is a legal entity, represented by a Lead Researcher, member of a consortium selected for funding that receive financial support from the respective national/regional Funding Organisation.

**Call:** Refers to the ERA-MIN Joint Call 2019 opening on November 28, 2019 with a total budget of €10 303 000.

**Call Steering Committee (CSC):** Comprises representatives of the Funding Organisations that have committed national/regional funds to support the selected R&I projects. It supervises the whole Call procedure and agrees on the final list of proposals recommended for funding. It supervises the activities of the Joint Call Secretariat.

**Consortium:** Group of legal entities, each represented by a Lead Researcher, that are part of a joint collaborative R&I project proposal submitted to the Call or a project selected for funding.

**Coordinator:** One partner of the consortium represented by a Lead Researcher, who will be responsible for the internal scientific management of the project, intellectual property rights management, project reporting towards the JCS and CSC and will represent the consortium externally.

**Funding Organisations:** are responsible for providing funding under relevant rules and regulations to the beneficiaries from the respective country/region.

**Joint Call Secretariat (JCS):** Is responsible for the implementation of the Call and the follow-up phase until the funded projects and all reporting requirements have ended. All submitted proposals will be collected by the JCS, which makes them available to the CSC and the reviewers of the Scientific Evaluation Board. The JCS handles the communication with the applicants, reviewers, CSC and beneficiaries. The JCS is hosted by FCT (Foundation for Science and Technology), in Lisbon (Portugal) with the support of Ptj (Germany) regarding the ESS.

**Key Personnel:** is a team member person of an applicant or a beneficiary.

**Lead Researcher:** is the main responsible person of a legal entity and is the contact point with the corresponding national/regional Funding Organisation and the JCS.

**Partners:** legal entities, each represented by a Lead Researcher within a department or institute from universities, research organisations, companies, etc., forming a consortium.

**Scientific Evaluation Board (SEB):** Panel of internationally independent recognised scientific experts responsible for the quality assessment of the submitted proposals. SEB members will not submit or participate in proposals within this Call and must sign declarations of confidentiality, conflict of interest, code of conduct and privacy policy.

## 2. Aim

The aim of this document is to clarify to all reviewers involved in the evaluation process the purpose and procedures of different stages in the handling and assessment of the project proposals for the ERA-MIN Joint Call 2019. This document will clarify the roles and mandates of the different groups involved at the different stages. It will also show how to interpret the evaluation criteria.

ERA-MIN 2 takes all formal decisions of funding or rejection based on the recommendation from the Scientific Evaluation Board (SEB) and consideration of available national/regional budgets.

### 3. Schedule

The ERA-MIN Joint Call 2019 is a one-step call for proposals. The detailed time schedule of the evaluation process can be consulted in *Table 1*.

**Table 1 – Time schedule the Call and evaluation procedures**

<b>Activity/Step</b>	<b>Due date</b>
Call text publication	November 15, 2019
Call for proposals opens	November 28, 2019
Call for proposals closes	March 12, 2020 at 17:00 CET
Eligibility check of the proposals by the Joint Call Secretariat	March 26, 2020
National/regional eligibility check of the proposals by the funding organisations (latest date)	April 14, 2020
Communication of results to non-eligible applicants	April 16, 2020
<b>Final allocation of proposals to SEB members by the Chairperson with the support of the co-chairperson</b>	<b>April 20, 2020</b>
<b>Submission of remote individual assessment of proposals by SEB members through the Electronic Submission System (ESS)</b>	<b>May 15, 2020</b>
<b>Submission of draft consensus evaluation reports by rapporteurs through the ESS</b>	<b>May 25, 2020</b>
<b>Scientific Evaluation Board (SEB) meeting to establish the ranking list of proposals recommended for funding (webconference)</b>	<b>June 4-5, 2020</b>
Submission of <b>final consensus evaluation reports</b> by the rapporteurs on the ESS	<b>June 5, 2020</b>
Call Steering Committee meeting to select proposals recommended for funding	June 15, 2020 or later
Communication of Call results	June 30, 2020 or later
Recommended latest date for project start	December 1, 2020

### 4. Proposals

The proposals consist of an application form with the following information:

- **Coordinator and partner data (including the 3 key personnel);**
- **Project data;**
- **Proposal Technical Description (Form A)** that includes a **Financial plan**, Gantt chart, references and ethics issue table;
- **Curriculum Vitae** of 3 key personnel maximum per partner;
- **Form B - Statement of Commitment** from each partner requesting funding;
- **Form C - Statement of Own Funding**, only in the case of partners not requesting any funding.

## 5. Eligibility check

The JCS and the national/regional funding organisations will check the eligibility of the submitted proposals in accordance with the Call Text.

## 6. Evaluation

Proposals that pass the eligibility check will be assessed by the SEB members. Proposals will be distributed to reviewers no later than April 20<sup>th</sup> through the ERA-MIN Electronic Submission and Evaluation System (<https://www.submission-era-min.eu/call3/evaluator-login>).

Each SEB member must sign the declarations of confidentiality and of conflict of interest, as well as the code of conduct and privacy policy (Appendixes B and C), before having access to the proposals.

A scanned copy of these signed declarations must be uploaded on the ESS before starting the individual remote evaluation of proposals.

Each proposal will be assigned to three reviewers from the SEB, one of which is appointed as rapporteur. Following the assignment of the proposals to the SEB members, and only after they have signed declarations of confidentiality and of conflict of interest, as well as the code of conduct and privacy policy, it proceeds as follows:

1. The reviewers' accounts will give them access to the summary and consortium team of their assigned proposals. It is of utmost importance to check immediately if a potential conflict of interest could exist. After declaring the non-existence of a conflict of interest (see Appendix B) for a particular proposal, the reviewer will have access to that proposal. If the reviewer declares a conflict of interest for the proposal, he/she will not be able to access that proposal and must inform immediately the Joint Call Secretariat by e-mail ([eramin@fct.pt](mailto:eramin@fct.pt)).
2. Reviewers write evaluation reports according to the evaluation criteria and scoring system (Appendix D) and employing the Evaluation Summary Report (Appendix E). For each of the three main evaluation criterion scores from 0 to 5 (half-points are allowed) are awarded (Appendix D). It is important that the written statements are sufficiently detailed and that they are in line with the score. The evaluation reports should be finalised by the **15<sup>th</sup> of May 2020** on the ESS.
3. Rapporteurs must write a draft consensus evaluation report employing the Evaluation Summary Report (Appendix E) and score each individual criterion as the average of the marks given by the 3 reviewers (see scoring system defined in Appendix D). The overall proposal score is the sum of the individual criterion scores. The report is due on the **25<sup>th</sup> of May** and must be submitted on the EES.
4. A week before the SEB meeting, the SEB members will perform a screening of the proposals to identify possible conflicts of interest. They will have access to the summary and consortium team of all proposals under evaluation and the rapporteur's reports. In addition to possible conflicts of interest declared in the ERA-MIN Electronic Evaluation System, **the members of the SEB must also declare them by e-mail to the JCS ([eramin@fct.pt](mailto:eramin@fct.pt)) before the SEB meeting.**
5. All SEB members attend the SEB meeting to discuss and consolidate the final consensus evaluation reports with the final scores and establish the ranking list of proposals recommended for funding. All the final consensus reports will be accessible to the CSC.
6. The final consensus evaluation reports will then be sent by the JCS to the proposal coordinators, who in turn distributes it to all partners of the consortium.

## 7. SEB meeting

The SEB will hold one meeting for consensus discussion of proposals that marks the completion of the

evaluation procedure. The webmeeting will take place in the **4-5<sup>th</sup> of June 2020**.

CSC's representatives may participate as observers. The JCS and the observers shall not participate in the debates of the SEB members.

At the SEB meeting the procedure is the following:

1. The rapporteur shortly summarises the content of the proposal and presents the results of the draft consensus evaluation report.
2. Each proposal will be discussed and depending on the outcome a new score may be agreed upon within the SEB.
3. The final score of each proposal will be given during the SEB meeting considering the average score of the individual evaluations and the coherence of each proposal with the evaluation criteria.
4. Thresholds will be applied to the scores (see Appendix D). Proposals not meeting the thresholds will not be recommended for funding and are not discussed further.
5. For all proposals at and above the threshold, the ranking list is established in an iterative process, starting with the marks agreed upon as stated in the consensus report.
6. The rapporteur for a given proposal writes the corresponding final consensus evaluation report, based on the discussion and the decisions taken during the SEB meeting.

The results of the evaluation process are thus:

- a final consensus evaluation report for each proposal, written by the rapporteur and agreed with all SEB members, including scores for each criterion and overall score; and
- a ranking list for all proposals at, or above, the threshold.

## **8. SEB recommendations**

The SEB recommendations for funding are elaborated collectively, preferably by consensus: unanimous agreement or consensus driven by majority. All members shall have the opportunity to formulate their own views.

In general, the voting procedure consists in votes by show of hands (if it is deemed necessary, a vote by secret ballot can be undertaken following similar rules):

- The chairperson formulates the rationale for the voting procedure.
- The participants to the voting procedure are those members of the SEB who did not declare any conflict of interest regarding the rationale of the voting procedure.
- The decision corresponds to the option that gathered at least a simple majority among members of the SEB taking part in the vote.
- In case of equality of votes, the vote of the chairperson counts for 2.

The chairperson and the co-chairperson, assisted by the JCS, keep record of the discussions and the ranking list. All this information is kept confidential and made accessible only to the members of the SEB, the JCS and the CSC.

## **9. Final consensus reports**

The final consensus evaluation reports are the main part of the minutes of the meeting, stating the relative position of the proposals on the ranking list. They will present the strengths and the weaknesses of the proposal (for each criterion) together with some general comments and recommendations. The report must be based on facts and solely on proposal content.

The report must be written in a correct, respectful and understandable language and should neither indicate nor suggest anything concerning personal information about the rapporteur and/or the

reviewers.

When writing the final consensus evaluation reports, the SEB members shall:

- avoid comments that give a description or a summary of the application;
- must not copy parts (sentence or paragraphs) of the others reviewers' report;
- avoid the use of the first person or equivalent: "I think..." or "This reviewer finds...";
- always use dispassionate and analytical language: avoid dismissive statements about the applicants, the proposed science, or the scientific field concerned;
- avoid asking questions, as the applicants will not be able to answer them;
- evaluate the proposed work and not the work the SEB members consider should have been proposed.

At a later stage, the final consensus evaluation report is sent by the JCS to the coordinator, who in turn distributes it to all partners of the consortium.

## **10. SEB meeting minutes**

The minutes of the SEB meeting comprise, at least, the following information: date, participants, agenda, decisions, handling of conflicts of interest and final consensus evaluation reports. The JCS prepares the draft minutes, which are for sent for final approval by the chairperson. The minutes are not public and are shared only to the members of the SEB, the JCS and the CSC.

## **11. Evaluation fees**

The following expenses will be covered by ERA-MIN 2. The evaluation fees are subject to taxes<sup>1</sup>:

- 1000 € lump-sum fee for Chair
- 1000 € lump-sum fee for co-chair
- 100€ lump-sum fee for a SEB member that includes remote assessment of one proposal, up to 2 proposals as rapporteur and attendance to the SEB meeting. The total fee will be calculated based on the number of proposals individually assessed. The maximum fee is 600 € for the remote assessment of 6 proposals.

## **12. Contacts**

Questions about the evaluation process are answered by the Joint Call Secretariat (JCS):

E-mail: [eramin@fct.pt](mailto:eramin@fct.pt)

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<sup>1</sup> The reviewer decides if the 25% tax will be charged in Portugal or if he/she declares that does not want to be charged in Portugal by signing a document called "Modelo 21".

## Appendix A. Roles in the evaluation procedure

### SEB Members

The rapporteurs, as well as the chairperson and the co-chairperson, are SEB members.

- The chair and co-chair of the SEB will appoint three SEB members per proposal for the remote assessment, of which one will be assigned as rapporteur.
- All SEB members will participate in all the debates of the SEB meeting within the limits of conflict of interest rules.
- **Until one week prior to the SEB meeting, the SEB members should check if a potential conflict of interest could exist and if not, all the proposals and the respective draft evaluation reports should be read in advance of the SEB meeting.**
- At the SEB meeting, the members express her/his own view on the proposal evaluation after its introduction by the rapporteur.
- Another SEB member allocated to the same proposal may replace the rapporteur in his/her committed actions.

### Chairperson

The chairperson organises the work of the SEB by consulting the co-chairperson and keeping the JCS informed about the process, meaning especially:

- Assigns, from the SEB, three reviewers to each proposal considering the proposal content and the reviewer expertise.
- Appoints one of the three reviewers of a proposal as the rapporteur.
- Lead the SEB meeting: ensure active, all-inclusive and rich participation; manage collective decision making and approval by the panel; decides upon the request of voting procedure taking into account that has to be an exceptional procedure.
- Ensure uniformity and consistency of attention to all proposals, coherence between evaluation comments and final scores and validates the rapporteur's summary.
- Request further information to the JCS, especially if a situation not foreseen in the present document arises.
- Validate the agenda proposed by the JCS, the minutes of the meeting and the consensus evaluation reports.
- Formulate suggestions or forward comments on the functioning of the SEB to the JCS.
- Launch a voting procedure, if at least 1/3 of the participating SEB members call for it.

### Co-chairperson

- The co-chairperson is in copy of the mailing exchanges with the chairperson and the JCS and can provide advice spontaneously or upon solicitation.
- The co-chairperson acts in capacity as chairperson if the chairperson is unable (absence, conflict of interest) to ensure its prerogatives.

## Rapporteurs

- The rapporteurs evaluate the proposals in the same way as the other SEB members, i.e., based on the evaluation criteria they provide marks and written assessments employing the Evaluation Summary Report (see Appendix E), due on the **15<sup>th</sup> of May**.
- For each report allocated to him/ her by the SEB chair, read and assess the three individual reports (his/her own and of two more reviewers), appraise and make sense of the proposal in relation to the assessments and elaborates a draft consensus report, due on the **25<sup>th</sup> of May**.
- At the SEB meeting on **4-5<sup>th</sup> June**, the rapporteurs shortly summarise the content of the proposals and present the draft consensus evaluation reports.
- The rapporteurs summarise the outcomes of the discussions after the other SEB members expressed their own views on the proposal's evaluation
- Before the end of the SEB meeting, the rapporteurs write the final consensus evaluation reports on the ESS.

## **Appendix B. Declarations of Confidentiality and of Conflict of Interest**

### **1. Declaration of Confidentiality**

I undertake not to reveal any detail of the evaluation process and its outcomes or of any proposal submitted for evaluation. I understand that I will be held personally responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of any documents or electronic files sent and for returning, erasing or destroying all confidential documents or files upon completing the evaluation, unless otherwise instructed.

### **2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

I will refrain from reviewing the proposal if a conflict of interest exists or could be perceived to exist. I understand that there is a conflict of interest if I stand to profit professionally, financially or personally from approval or rejection of the proposal; or if in the past five years I have published with, cooperated with or worked at the same research institution as the applicant or any of the project workers; if I have fundamental differences of scientific opinion with any applicant; or if I have close links with the applicant or any of the co-workers, either professional or private. If any such conflict of interest exists or arises, I will inform the JCS ([eramin@fct.pt](mailto:eramin@fct.pt)).

*Your declaration on a potential conflict of interest will be treated in strict confidence by the JCS and will under no circumstances be passed on to anybody else. There is no need to mention normal scientific contacts, for example at conferences or workshops.*

## Appendix C. Code of Conduct

Fundamental principles of good research practice and peer-review are essential for research integrity. All parties involved directly or indirectly in the evaluation must ensure the transparency of the process as well as that the evaluation criteria are respected for all proposals and that the public funds are well used:

- SEB members are chosen for their technical or scientific expertise and in a manner to ensure that decisions taken by the SEB reflect a broad range of opinions. The role of the SEB is to ensure that consortia submitting projects of a similar quality have an equal chance of success.
- All parties involved directly or indirectly in the evaluation must act objectively, with no self-interested motives. They do not represent their company, country, organisation or establishment.
- The SEB members shall evaluate the proposals based solely upon the information contained in the proposals.
- Decisions must be taken collectively by the SEB after all arguments have been heard. Furthermore, decisions must be substantiated.
- Opinions expressed during evaluation meetings as well as information which parties are the first to obtain have to be kept confidential. The substance of the SEB debates must remain secret and the individual positions must not be divulged (see Appendix B).
- Minutes will be kept for those meetings during which decisions are reached. These minutes will be circulated to the meeting participants for verification. These minutes should not contain any information which could directly or indirectly identify which parties put forward which arguments.
- SEB members should refrain in all cases from identifying experts to third parties, and from divulging any other element which could compromise their anonymity. Likewise, SEB members should not contact directly applicants.
- With the exception of the chair and the co-chair, the SEB members cannot enter in any form of contact with other SEB members in relation with the ERA-MIN Call 2019 before the SEB meeting.
- If any member is the object of any pressure whatsoever from a project applicant, she or he must notify immediately the JCS.
- If there is a conflict of interest (see Appendix B), the concerned person must inform the JCS as soon as finding that a conflict exists. The necessary measures are taken to ensure that the related decision and discussion will not be biased or suspected to be so (e.g. by requesting the concerned person to leave the room when the proposal in question is being discussed).
- The chairperson may, on his or her own initiative, consult the JCS in respect to a real or possible conflict of interests, which has been brought to his or her attention by any means whatsoever.
- Conflicts of interests as well as the methods used to handle these situations should be included in the SEB meeting minutes.

## Appendix D. Evaluation criteria, scores and thresholds

The evaluation of proposals is based on the following three main evaluation criteria and sub-criteria:

### 1. SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE

- Clarity and pertinence of the objectives;
- Soundness of the concept, and credibility of the proposed methodology;
- Extent that 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, services or business and organisational models);
- Appropriate consideration of interdisciplinary approaches and, where relevant, use of stakeholder knowledge;

### 2. IMPACT

- The extent to which the outputs of the project would contribute at the European and/or International level to expected impacts in line with the integrated strategy proposed in the EU Raw Materials Initiative (RMI) and the Strategic Implementation Plan of the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Raw Materials;
- Any substantial impacts that would enhance innovation capacity, create new market opportunities, strengthen competitiveness and growth of companies, address issues related to barriers/obstacles, and any framework conditions such as regulation, standards, public acceptance, workforce considerations, financing of follow-up steps, cooperation of other links in the value chain, or bring other important benefits for society;
- Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of IPR), and to manage research data where relevant;
- Quality of the proposed measures to communicate the project activities to different target audiences;
- Support the development of technological solutions and services for the implementation of the Strategic Implementation Plan of the European Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials.
- How well the project results will benefit both women and men (or contribute to a gender equal societal development)

### 3. QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

- 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;
- Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk and innovation management;
- Quality and complementarity of the participants and extent to which the consortium as whole brings together the necessary expertise;
- How well the team (key persons) is composed regarding gender distribution, as well as the distribution of power and influence between women and men
- Appropriateness of the allocation of tasks, ensuring that all participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role.

Evaluation scores will be awarded to the three main evaluation criteria and not for the different sub-criteria. Each main evaluation criterion is rated using the 0-5 scale (half-points are allowed):

**0** — The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information (unless the result of an 'obvious clerical error').

**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 with a number of shortcomings

**4—Very good:** the proposal addresses the criterion very well but with a small number of shortcomings

**5—Excellent:** the proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion; any shortcomings are minor.

Rapporteurs/Reviewers have to identify strengths and weaknesses for each main evaluation criterion and should provide context for their comments based on the application. There should be consistency between the numerical scores and written comments. Reviewers will be asked to score proposals as they were submitted, rather than on their potential if certain changes were to be made.

Each criterion will be scored out of 5 and the threshold for individual criterion will be 3. For each proposal, the overall rating (0-15) will be the sum of the individual criterion scores. The overall threshold for proposals, applying to the sum of the three individual scores, will be 10.

At the SEB meeting, a ranking list will be established for the proposals with overall rating at, or above, 10 and with all the main evaluation criterion scores at, or above, 3.

Proposals not meeting the thresholds will not be funded.

## Appendix E - Evaluation Summary Report

<b>Criterion 1: Scientific excellence</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Clarity and pertinence of the objectives;</li> <li>➤ Soundness of the concept, and credibility of the proposed methodology;</li> <li>➤ Extent that 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, services or business and organisational models);</li> <li>➤ Appropriate consideration of interdisciplinary approaches and, where relevant, use of stakeholder knowledge.</li> </ul>
<b>Score (0-5):</b>
<b>Comments:</b>

<b>Criterion 2: Impact</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The extent to which the outputs of the project would contribute at the European and/or International level to expected impacts in line with the integrated strategy proposed in the EU Raw Materials Initiative (RMI) and the Strategic Implementation Plan of the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Raw Materials;</li> <li>➤ Any substantial impacts that would enhance innovation capacity, create new market opportunities, strengthen competitiveness and growth of companies, address issues related to barriers/obstacles, and any framework conditions such as regulation, standards, public acceptance, workforce considerations, financing of follow-up steps, cooperation of other links in the value chain, or bring other important benefits for society;</li> <li>➤ Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of IPR), and to manage research data where relevant;</li> <li>➤ Quality of the proposed measures to communicate the project activities to different target audiences;</li> <li>➤ Support the development of technological solutions and services for the implementation of the Strategic Implementation Plan of the European Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials;</li> <li>➤ How well the project results will benefit both women and men (or contribute to a gender equal societal development).</li> </ul>
<b>Score (0-5):</b>
<b>Comments:</b>

<b>Criterion 3: Quality and efficiency of the implementation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 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;</li> <li>➤ Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk and innovation management;</li> <li>➤ Quality and complementarity of the participants and extent to which the consortium as whole brings together the necessary expertise;</li> <li>➤ How well the team (key persons) is composed regarding gender distribution, as well as the distribution of power and influence between women and men;</li> <li>➤ Appropriateness of the allocation of tasks, ensuring that all participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role.</li> </ul>
<b>Score (0-5):</b>
<b>Comments:</b>

<b>Overall Evaluation</b>
<b>Overall score (0-15):</b>
<b>STRENGTHS of the proposal</b>
<b>WEAKNESSES of the proposal</b>

## **Appendix F. Privacy Policy**

ERA-MIN 2 will comply with the Protection of Personal Data Requirements by following the ethical standards and guidelines of Horizon 2020 and applicable EU and national law. Your data will be used by ERA-MIN 2 for its statistics.

I declare that for transparency and dissemination purposes I authorize the disclosure of some information concerning my person, namely: title, name, country, gender and sector on the ERA-MIN 2 website after the conclusion of the ERA-MIN Joint Call 2019.