



EU Joint Programme – Neurodegenerative Disease Research

Survey Results JPND calls 2016-2017 applicants

**Online report prepared by Abida Durrani (ZonMw) and Karin Yeo (FA)
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**This report is part of JPsustaiND Work Package 6:
“Monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment”**

Introduction

In order to strengthen its activities and make more rapid progress toward its overall aims, JPND carefully monitors and assesses its activities, including calls for research proposals. A survey was conducted in April 2018 among applicants of the JPND 2016 - 2017 calls. The first one, in 2016, was a rapid-action call for Working Groups for Harmonisation and Alignment in Brain Imaging Methods for Neurodegeneration and the second, in 2017, was a call entitled Multinational research projects for Pathway Analysis across Neurodegenerative Diseases. Responses were compiled, analysed and condensed into a series of conclusions that has been used to improve JPND future calls. The survey was performed within the context of the JPsustaiND Work Package 6, task 6.3., *Input from research communities and other partners* to reflect the administrative processes of JPND from a participant perspective. The questionnaire used in this assessment was focused on the experiences of the project coordinators and project partners regarding the call procedure and the evaluation criteria of the two calls, as well as views and preferences for future JPND calls. The aim of this initiative was to gain opinions from researchers in order to better calibrate JPND's scientific and administrative call management to the needs of the research community.

2016 Call

Launched in January 2016, the rapid action call for Working Groups for **Harmonisation and Alignment in Brain Imaging Methods for Neurodegeneration** aimed to establish working groups to bring forward novel approaches to enhance the use of brain imaging for neurodegenerative disease research. Twelve JPND Member States representing nine EU countries, two non-EU Member states (Canada and Switzerland) and one associated country (Norway), participated in the call. Eighteen working groups applied to this one-step call. Ten Working Groups, which together comprise 196 research partners were funded for a total amount of 0,5 million Euros.

2017 Call

Launched in January 2017, the call for proposals on Multinational research projects for **Pathway Analysis across Neurodegenerative Diseases** aimed to establish a limited number of ambitious, innovative, multi-national and multi-disciplinary collaborative research projects that combine experimental approaches from fundamental, pre-clinical and/or clinical research, perform network analyses to bring light to the underlying common and differing mechanisms between investigated diseases, and add value to existing research.

Twenty-two JPND partner organisations from 21 partner countries representing seventeen EU member states, two associated countries (Israel, Norway) and three non-EU member states countries (Australia, Canada and Switzerland), participated in the call. One hundred and eighty nine research consortia, applied to this two-step call. The selected ten projects comprised 51 research partners and were funded for a total amount of 14.4 million Euros.

Survey Highlights

From 3-30 April 2018, project coordinators and project partners who were involved in applications for the 2016 and/or 2017 call for proposals were consulted through an online survey regarding the call application process from a participant perspective.

Response rate

A total of 1001 project coordinators and project partners as unique individuals were approached to participate in the survey. Project coordinators and project partners who were involved in more than one project were only addressed once.

In total, 20% (200 out of 1001) of the project coordinators and project partners replied to the questionnaire, of which 78.5% (157 out of 200) completed it.

Of the 200 respondents, almost a quarter were from Italy (24%), followed by Germany (14,5 %), the United Kingdom (10.5%), France (9,5%) and The Netherlands (8%). The high response from these countries can be explained by the fact that they are highly represented in the JPND project proposals. Austria, Finland, Hungary and Slovakia showed the smallest share in filling out the questionnaire (0,50% each).

Preparation of project proposal

The satisfaction rate about the common aspects in the 2016 and 2017JPND calls pertaining to the preparation of the calls was highest for the information on the content of the call and the communication of the call launch (79% both) followed by the electronic submission process (70%), the full proposal template (63%) and the time period provided to prepare the full proposal (58%).

Web version - Executive Summary

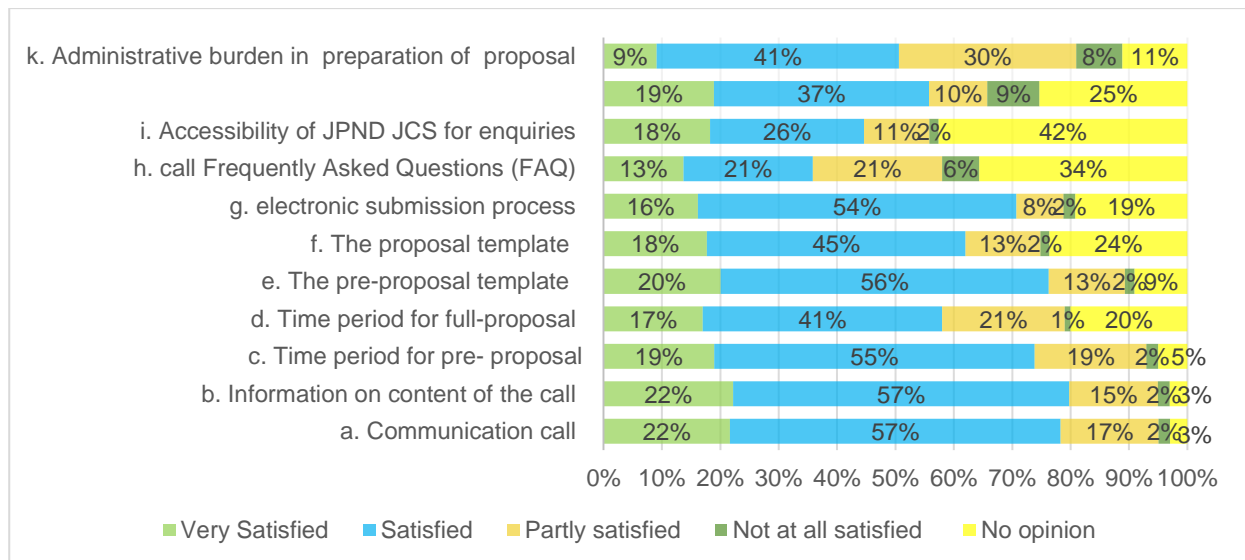


Figure: Satisfaction rate with different aspects pertaining to the preparation of the proposal in JPND calls 2016 and 2017. The satisfaction rate reported combines all the respondents of both calls.

Evaluation Criteria and Satisfaction Rate

The evaluation criteria of project proposals were different for the 2016 and 2017 JPND calls. The participants were asked to grade the clarity of the given evaluation criteria used in both calls.

There were 6 criteria for 2016's JPND Call:

1. The scientific fit to the call
2. The distinctiveness and likely impact of the activity
3. The timeliness and the relevance of ideas proposed for discussion
4. Standing of experts within the working group and the appropriate mix of scientific skills
5. Feasibility and appropriateness of the project plan
6. Plans for dissemination and the potential impact of the outcomes to the field

More than 74% of the respondents involved in the 2016 JPND call assessed the six given evaluation criteria as "very clear" or "clear".

There were 4 evaluation criteria for 2017 JPND Call:

1. Relevance to the aim(s) of the call
2. Scientific quality of the proposal
3. International competitiveness of participating research groups
4. Deliverable outcomes and potential foreseen impact

The four given different criteria used for the evaluation of the project proposals were also rated either "very clear" or "clear" by more than 68% of the respondents involved in the 2017 JPND call. The evaluation procedure with regard to the communication of the results and the time period of the evaluation process were (very) clear to the majority of the respondents of both the calls (respectively 76% and 80%).

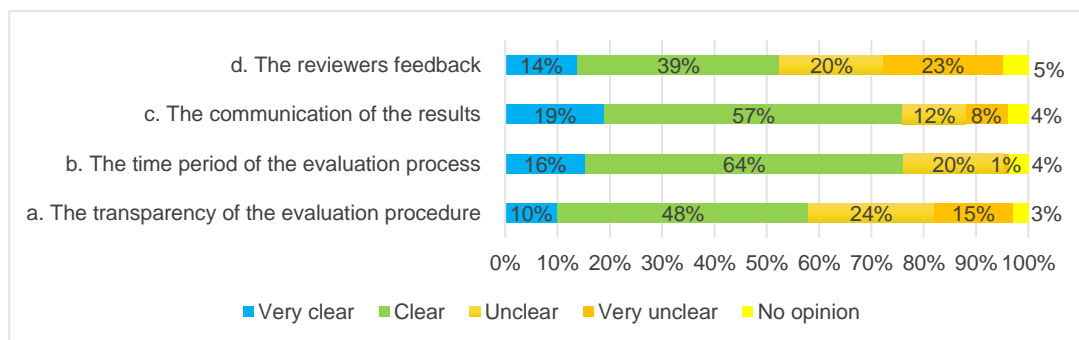


Figure 7: Clarity of the aspects pertaining to the evaluation of proposals. The respondents could rate the clarity of the given four aspects regarding the evaluation of the proposal. The total number of respondents were 126.

Future calls

According to the majority of the respondents, the focus of future JPND calls should be on broader topics (69%) and include two or more scientific topics in one call (67%). More than half of the respondents found the involvement of young scientists, researchers from beyond Europe as (very) important. Additionally, 63% of the respondents thought that the involvement of research groups should include at least three and at most six countries. According to the majority of the respondents, the call procedure should preferably be performed in two steps (79%) and the project duration should be extended to four years (42%). More than three-quarters of the respondents find it (very) important that JPND should organise workshops and annual conference for project partners and young scientists for communication and dissemination of knowledge gained in JPND supported projects.