

JPND call 2020

Establishing a virtual peer review panel meeting

Amendment to the call procedures document

Date: 19.08.2020

1. Background

Due to the again expanding Corona crisis, the Joint Call Secretariat (JCS) decided to cancel the physical Peer Review (PRP) Panel and Call Steering Committee (CSC) meetings. Instead, a virtual PRP and CSC meeting via the Webex tool will be organized on the same days.

1.1. PRP meeting

All reviewers and CSC members will be connected by audio and, where possible, by video. It is preferred that reviewers will join the entire meeting (and not just parts of it). Thus, a daily meeting time of four hours should not be exceeded; if possible, a maximum of three hours is envisaged.

1.2. CSC meeting

The CSC meeting will be scheduled in the morning of the following day. A delay of one day is preferred to ensure maximum compatibility with individual child care schedules and to allow first discussions within the own organization on the meeting results and possible options to overcome funding gaps. The chair will be invited to join the CSC meeting.

2. Before the meeting

Several actions will be taken before the meeting to reduce discussion times at the meeting as far as possible. The JCS will be in ongoing contact to the reviewers during the preparation phase and coordinate all actions.

2.1. Consolidation phase

The reviewers will actively be asked to provide their written assessments on time. As for the pre-proposals, a consolidation phase will be implemented as soon as the written assessments will be finished. For each full proposal, an individual E-Mail will be sent to the three assigned reviewers. The written assessments will be shared among the three reviewers and they will be asked whether a revision of the own evaluation is preferred in the light of the other assessments. At least a brief feedback will be mandatory from each reviewer, i.e. participation to the consolidation phase will be obligatory (for the pre-proposals it is just optional).

2.2. Meeting preparation

Several days before the PRP meeting all participants will receive:

- access to all full proposals (just reading access; no further evaluations)
- all scores and written assessments
- agenda and attendance list
- reviewer assignment and rapporteur table
- meeting introduction (powerpoint slides)
- coordinators and partners list (reduced information for reviewers)

These documents will allow an in-depth preparation of the meeting, especially for the reviewers. The meeting introduction will include all the information that is typically presented at the beginning of a physical PRP meeting by the JCS. Sharing this presentation beforehand will allow the JCS to reduce the introduction during the teleconference to a minimum.

The JCS will circulate a coordinators and partners list with reduced information (without budgets and funding organisations) to the reviewers and ask them to declare any conflicts of interest before the meeting. A short statement from each reviewer for each proposal is needed (e.g. by ticking “no conflicts” for a proposal or by indicating the proposal partner to which a conflict exists). Identifying all potential conflicts of interest before the meeting will speed up the handling of this issue during the meeting (see 3.3)

A rapporteur will be assigned for each proposal. Rapporteurs will be asked to prepare for a brief oral summary of the proposal and the written assessments (i.e. the own assessment and those of the other two reviewers). In some cases, the rapporteur may be the only person to speak about the respective proposal during the meeting (3.3.a).

2.3. Introducing the chair

A preliminary talk via telephone between the JCS and the chair will be scheduled. The JCS will brief the chair regarding the general evaluation conditions, the outcome of the written evaluation, the consolidation phase and the preliminary ranking. The chair and the JCS will also discuss the best way of conducting the meeting. Based on the individual preferences of the chair, changes to the meeting process (as described below) may be possible as a result of the discussion. CSC members will be invited to join the preliminary talk; however, their participation is not mandatory.

2.4. Technical pre-test

To reduce technical difficulties at the meeting, a test session will be offered to all participants.

3. During the meeting

It is the aim to discuss all proposals as well as the final ranking as compared to a physical meeting. Nevertheless, some adaptations are needed to fit with the requirements of a teleconference meeting, especially regarding the limited time for discussions (see 1.1):

3.1. Technical issues

Participants will be able to communicate with a technical support person via chat or email.

3.2. Introduction

The JCS will provide an introduction on relevant aspects related to the call, the evaluation and the proceedings during the meeting. As the presentation will be shared beforehand (see 2.3), the introduction will be brief.

Afterwards, the chair will continue with a welcome note and a brief round of introductions among the participating reviewers (the attendance of the CSC members will be generally issues by the JCS, no individual introduction).

3.3. Proposal discussions

Before entering into the discussion of individual proposals, the chair will initiate a debate regarding the proposals that should receive a full discussion and those receiving only a brief discussion. For each proposal it will be noted which option should apply.

- a. Brief discussion: Proposals at the top as well as the bottom of the ranking list which in addition have closely correlating scores may be subjected to a brief discussion. The rapporteur will be asked to summarize the proposal and the available evaluations, followed by a statement from the PPI reviewer. The rapporteur will also be asked to make a suggestion on the final score and whether the proposals should be recommended for funding or not. The chair will ask the two other assigned reviewers and the other panel members for their explicit consent.; in the case of an agreement, discussion will finish without further contributions; if not, a full discussion of that proposal will follow.
- b. Full discussion: Proposals receiving a full discussion will be handled as during a physical meeting, i.e. the rapporteur initiates the discussion, followed by statements of the other assigned reviewers and the PPI reviewer. Afterwards, each panel member may join the discussion. A consensus decision will be taken regarding the final score and the funding recommendation. This procedure should be preferred for proposals in the middle of the ranking list and for those proposals with a higher diversity among the individual scores.

Afterwards, the proposals will be discussed in the order of their ranking, starting with the best proposals and taking into account the decided mode of discussion. It may be decided at any time to switch from a brief discussion to a full discussion.

If there is a reviewer with a conflict of interest, he or she will be switched to the lobby of the Webex meeting room when the respective proposal is discussed (i.e. no audio/video connection to the ongoing discussion during that time).

3.4. Minutes

As the rapporteurs tasks during the virtual meeting will be increased as compared to a physical meeting, rapporteurs will not be asked to summarize the panel discussion (as described in the call procedures document for a physical meeting). Instead, the JCS will take notes of the discussion and draft the minutes. The minutes will be circulated and agreed as describe in the call procedures document.