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EACEA/

Guidelines for the Evaluation Committees

1. INTRODUCTION

This document provides guidance to the Agency's Evaluation Committees on dealing with exclusive priorities. It describes how priorities are assessed, reminds us of the role of the evaluation committee and the general principles currently being applied, and then provides guidance on the principals to be applied in managing exclusive priorities.

Exclusive and balanced priorities

The Lifelong Learning call for proposals defines, for most of the different actions¹ under the sectoral and transversal programmes, priorities that applicants **must** address in order to be eligible for EU funding. In addition, the call mentions explicitly that a balanced coverage of priorities is intended:

"Where priorities are specified for a given type of action, these reflect those issues which are central to policy development at European level in education and training and *applications must address at least one to these priorities* in order to be selected. To ensure a proper coverage of the priorities the selection of applications for funding will be based upon the quality of applications as well as the *need for a balanced coverage of the priorities.*"²

As a consequence, in practical terms:

1. The Agency has implemented the electronic application form (eForm) in such a way that it can only be submitted if the applicant has identified for his application *one* of the action's priorities.

¹ There are no published priorities for Accompanying Measures and Erasmus Networks and applicants for these actions may therefore propose activities in any relevant domain.

² See "Strategic Priorities", Introduction, Chapter 5, page 8

2. In the evaluation briefing, external experts will be asked to assess, under the award criterion “Relevance”, the extent to which the applications *satisfactorily address the chosen priority*. If the experts judge that an application has *not satisfactorily addressed* the priority a score of 2 or less (out of 5) should be given. If this score is confirmed by both experts, during the consolidation phase, the practical consequence will be that the application will not be considered further for funding.

Role of the Evaluation Committee

An Evaluation Committee, composed of representatives from the Executive Agency and the Commission, is set-up in order to supervise the whole selection process, to ensure the respect of the procedures in place, to guarantee a fair transparent and coherent assessment *and* to propose a “*balanced coverage of the priorities within the actions, if applicable*”.³

In order to facilitate its work, the Committee will receive the following lists presenting the evaluation results from the expert panel:

1. The list of applications ranked by order of merit (*ranked list*) for each *action* in the sub-programme/Key Activity concerned. The order of merit is determined by the overall scores for the applications⁴⁵, expressed as a percentage.
2. A ranked list of applications for each priority under each action, so that the coverage of priorities can be seen in detail and taken into account in the proposed selection decision for the authorised officer.

Where two or more applications receive the same quality score (*ex-aequo*), the Committee may also receive a suggestion from the expert panel for the ranking, according to their appreciation of the relative merits of the applications.

When an application from a previously funded project/network is being considered for selection, the Committee will also receive as input the Agency’s appreciation of past performance.

The Committee will decide on the eligibility of applications and how to deal with identical or similar applications in order to avoid double funding. It will propose a *selection decision* to the authorising officer which becomes definitive once the authorising officer has taken the *award decision*.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES CONCERNING THE WORK OF THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The Evaluation Committee takes on board the recommendations of the experts but is expected to reach its own opinion as to what should be selected (the Committee is generally expected to endorse the experts’ conclusions but must not simply rubber-stamp the results).

³ See LLP Guide, Part I, page 21 http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc/call13/part1_en.pdf

⁴ On the basis of the award criteria defined in the call

⁵ The criterion for third country participation is not counted in the overall score for the application, but is considered separately

The following principals, apply:

- a. The Committee may decide to have a different appreciation of the quality of an application than the experts, however this is expected to be exceptional and in these cases the committee must:
 - i. Have carried out a similar level of assessment of the application as was carried out by the experts;
 - ii. Ensure the decision is recorded in the Evaluation Committee's minutes, with the justification;
 - iii. Produce a modified Evaluation Summary Report for the application that reflects the decision, ensuring that the changed score(s) is/are accompanied by appropriately modified text.
- b. The Committee proposes a list of applications to be selected for each action trying to achieve a balanced coverage of priorities and, if appropriate, a list of applications in reserve. Only applications with a *score > 2 for each* of the award criteria and with a *minimum overall score of 60%* shall be selected for funding or put in reserve.
- c. Where necessary, the Committee shall rank applications that are ex-aequo. In doing so, they should consider the relative scores for the award criterion "Relevance", as this reflects the extent to which the priority is addressed within the proposal.
- d. The Committee may propose to transfer budget between the actions within a sub-programme/Key Activity in order to optimise the selection results in view of the strategic priorities. However, the total amount of budget required to fund all the selected applications may not exceed the budget indicated in the LLP Work Programme for the sub-programme/Key Activity.
- e. The number of applications in reserve should not normally exceed 10% of those being selected. It may, however, be higher when the success *rate* for the action is unusually low and there is a number of highly scored applications that cannot be funded with the budget available (point c).
- f. The option for third country participation is normally approved for each selected/reserve list application where the score for this criterion is > 2. The additional budget required to fund these options in the selected applications must be taken into account when calculating the overall total (point c).
- g. All decisions must be recorded in the Committee minutes.

3. *SPECIFIC PRINCIPLES CONCERNING A BALANCED COVERAGE OF PRIORITIES*

The Evaluation Committee will select applications by order of merit and on the basis of the general principals mentioned above. In addition, it will apply the following principles in trying to achieve a *balanced coverage of the priorities*:

- a) The Committee may decide that a better balance of priorities is achieved by selecting lower scored applications that offer a better coverage than applications of a higher score. Such a decision must be recorded in the Committee minutes.
- b) A balanced coverage of priorities shall not necessarily mean that an equal number of projects is to be funded under each priority. The Committee may take into account the following information when deciding on the coverage and balance:
 - the stock of projects already funded for the same priorities under previous calls of the LLP. In this case, the scores and comments for the criterion 'Innovative character' could be useful indicators;
 - the breadth of thematic coverage. In this case, the scores and evaluators' comments for the criterion 'Relevance' could be useful indicators.
- c) In addition to a proposal for selection, the Committee shall produce a statement to explain the decisions taken to achieve a balanced coverage of priorities. Note that the results of the selections will be presented to the LLP Committee, the budgetary authorities and the applicants in a standard, coherent way.