**A. Instructions to external assessors**

**A.1 General Instructions**

1. External assessors have access to the additional documents uploaded by the applicants into EMS-ENI system.
2. Each project shall be assessed by using the information and documents available, provision of the *Guidelines for grant applicants,* the Manual, as well as any evaluation related instruction given by MA/JMC for clarification purposes. Subjective opinions on any of the questions/criteria from the evaluation grid shall be avoided.
3. Each project is assessed by the same 2 external assessors who performed evaluation in step 2, following the “four eyes” principle. One evaluation grid is compiled per project by each assessor.
4. In order to keep the pace of evaluation and avoid delays, at least **3 projects per week** **per assessor** shall be fully assessed. Each assessor shall manage his/her own working effort so that, at the end of each week, the set of projects is fully assessed, meets the quality requirements and is uploaded into EMS-ENI system. Exception is to be made only in case the assessor proposes PSC to request for clarifications.
5. Assessors shall work objectively and highly professional, their assessment must be substantiated and referenced to the project content and justify the scores awarded. Any qualitative appreciation e.g. “good”, “poor”, “very good” needs to be followed by arguments and references to the additional documents and/or the project content.
6. Additional documents need to be carrefully assessed against the evaluation questions/criteria, one by one, and in the given order. The evaluation grid provides references to documents and sections of the application package or additional documents where related information can be found. Assessors are accountable if the information exists, but it was not evaluated.
7. In case full and objective verification of the project cannot be performed due to missing/incorrect information and/or documents, the assessor may propose PSC to request clarifications from the applicant by filling in an Explanatory Note (**Annex g\_6**). The respective project must not fall under the situations listed in **Annex EV\_3**.
8. PSC decides on the appropriateness of the requests for clarifications, more specifically if they might improve or modify the project content. In case PSC decision is positive, based on the Explanatory Note, a letter of clarifications is sent to the applicant. The respective assessor shall finalize evaluation based on the clarifications received, and may benefit of 1 extra-day to finish his/her work and upload the evaluation grid into EMS-ENI system. In case PSC decision is negative, evaluation must be finalized only by considering the information and documents available, and without any extra working time.
9. Only 1 **clarification letter** per project can be made during this evaluation step therefore, the issues must be clearly and concisely explained in the respective Explanatory Note, per project and per partner executing a share of the infrastructure. The applicant has max. **10 calendar days** to upload clarifications into EMS-ENI system. PSC secretary informs the assessors when clarifications are uploaded.
10. PSC Secretary performs preliminary quality verification of the evaluation grids and may request revisions, if the case.
11. Based on the evaluation grids uploaded into EMS-ENI, PSC compiles one common evaluation grid per project and finally, the Evaluation Report (step 3).
12. In case of discrepancies between the Manual and the *Guidelines for grant applicants,* or situations not covered/regulated by the Manual, provisions of the *Guidelines for grant applicants* shall apply. In case the Guidelines or the Manual have no provisions for the respective situation, PSC shall decide on a case by case basis, by observing the working principles contained in the Manual.

**A.2 Specific instructions**

1. PSC secretary distributes weekly a new set of additional documents to each assessor. Each set refers to at least 3 projects. Results of the work done is checked by PSC secretary on weekly basis and monitored by PSC coordinator. By the end of each week, each assessor is expected to deliver at least 3 evaluation grids meeting the quality requirements and upload them into EMS-ENI system or, if the case may be, Explanatory Notes proposing PSC to request clarifications from the applicants.
2. The scoring system is given by the evaluation grid and indicates the relative importance of the aspects to be analysed and weighed during evaluation.
3. Reasons for awarding the scores, as well as serious weaknesses must be indicated in the evaluation grid.
4. Comments will be done in English.
5. In order to be accepted by PSC/JMC and not be subject for revision, any evaluation grid must satisfy the quality requirements:

⦁ Scores are awarded and comments are given for each evaluation criteria and,

⦁ Comments are consistent, project specific and coherent with the question answered/score awarded, references to the project are given. Comments synthesize the professional judgement made by the assessor and,

⦁ The Programme and the call requirements are fully met and,

⦁ Final conclusions and recommendations are project-specific, summarize the main strengths and weaknesses of the project, especially those related to further actions to be taken by the programme in case the project is to be contracted.

1. PSC may request revision of the evaluation grid in case that:

⦁ The evaluation grid is incomplete or of poor quality e.g. has blank comment boxes, comments, conclusions and recommendations are weak or too general, not supporting the score awarded, they do not reflect the assessor’s opinion on the topic and do not support PSC/JMC in taking an informed decision.

⦁ Discrepancies between the answers/scores and the given comments are identified

⦁ Scarce references to the project content are made

⦁ The Programme and the call requirements are not met.

1. An assessor shall not benefit of extra-time for evaluating the projects attributed in case that:

⦁ evaluation grids needs revision or correction or,

⦁ PSC considers that requests of clarifications proposed are inappropriate.

1. In case that information lacks consistency in different parts of the application package, data provided in documents signed by the legal representatives shall prevail over the data inserted into the application form. In case of inconsistencies between different parts of the Applicvation Form, information leading to the most favourable decision for the project will be considered.

**EVALUATION GRID**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| pROJECT REGISTRATION NUMBER |  |
| CALL FOR PROPOSALS | **HARD** |
| assessor (NAME) |  |
| evaluation step | **Evaluation of additional documents** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PROJECT SYNOPSIS** | |
| Project Title |  |
| lEAD PARTNER |  |
| TYPE OF ACTION | HARD |
| TYPE OF PROJECT | integrated / symmetrical / single country |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT**   [To verify if the additional documents required for Step 3 of evaluation have been provided as required by the Call for proposals and if they are accurate.] | | | | | | | | |
| **NO** | | | | **YES/ NA** | **Full feasibility study/ studies or equivalent** [for each project Partner executing an infrastructure component] | | **Comments in case the question receives a “NO”** | |
|  | | | |  | The identification data of the Partner is correct. | |  | |
|  | | | |  | The identification data of the infrastructure component (title, location details) matches the information provided within section C4 (GA#4). | |  | |
|  | | | |  | The content framework given by the Call for proposals for the content of the document(s) is followed. | |  | |
|  | | | |  | The document is still valid according to the provisions of the national legislation in force **OR**, in case such provisions do not exist, is not older than 12 months. | |  | |
| **NO** | | | | **YES/ NA** | **Environmental Impact Assessment(s)** [for each project Partner executing an infrastructure component] | | **Comments in case the question receives a “NO”** | |
|  | | | |  | The identification data of the Partner is correct. | |  | |
|  | | | |  | The identification data of the infrastructure component matches the information provided within section C4 (GA#4). | |  | |
|  | | | |  | The content framework given by the Call for proposals for the content of the document(s) is followed. | |  | |
|  | | | |  | The document is still valid according to the provisions of the national legislation in force **OR**, in case such provisions do not exist, is not older than 12 months. | |  | |
| **NO** | | | | **YES/ NA** | **Building permit(s)** [for each project Partner executing an infrastructure component] | | **Comments in case the question receives a “NO”** | |
|  | | | |  | The identification data of the Partner is correct. | |  | |
|  | | | |  | The identification data of the infrastructure component matches the information provided within section C4 (GA#4). | |  | |
|  | | | |  | The document is still valid according to the provisions of the national legislation in force. | |  | |
|  | | | |  | The period foreseen for execution of the infrastructure matches the planning from section C7 *Indicative time plan* of the application form. | | ⦁ If NO and the project could be adjusted without severly modifying it i.e. minor re-planning of project activities, make recommendation. If adjustements to the project are sever, reject the project. | |
| **NO** | | | | **YES/ NA** | **Other execution details, consents, approvals, authorizations and agreements required by the national legislation and mandatory to begin execution of the infrastructure** [for each project Partner executing an infrastructure component] | | **Comments in case the question receives a “NO”** | |
|  | | | |  | All the documents indicated in the Application Form have been provided. | |  | |
|  | | | |  | [per document] The identification data of the Partner is correct. | |  | |
|  | | | |  | [per document] The identification data of the infrastructure component matches the information provided within section C4 (GA#4). | |  | |
|  | | | |  | [per document] The document is still valid according to the provisions of the national legislation in force. | |  | |
| **NO** | | | | **YES/ NA** | **Ownership document(s) and access to the land/ building** [for each project Partner executing an infrastructure component] | | **Comments in case the question receives a “NO”** | |
|  | | | |  | The identification data of the Partner is correct. | |  | |
|  | | | |  | The identification data of the infrastructure component matches the information provided within the application form (C4 GA#4). | |  | |
|  | | | |  | The documents provided at this step match those indicated in section C4 (GA#4). | |  | |
| **NO** | | | | **YES/ NA** | **Coherence crosscheck** [for each project Partner executing an infrastructure component] | | **Comments in case the question receives a “NO”** | |
|  | | | |  | There are no discrepancies between the identification data contained in the additional documents listed above and provided by the project partners, and denomination of the infrastructure component, identification of the beneficiary partner, coordinates of the location where the infrastructure is to be executed, requirements of the Call for proposal (e.g. content of the statements, period cover by the ownership rights etc.) | |  | |
| **CONTENT ASSESSMENT** [for each project Partner executing an infrastructure component] (Max score = 10 points) | | | | | | | **Comments and references to the project** | **Score** |
| **1** | There is coherence between the Feasibility study, namely section 2.2 (*Analysis of the current situation and identification of deficiencies*) and 2.3 (*Justification of needs for the infrastructure*), and the application form, namely section C1.2 and C4 (*GA#4 Works/ infrastructure*). | | | | | | ⦁ If NO – request clarifications and highlight the inconsistencies |  |
| **1** | **In each scenario** proposed, there is coherence between the Feasibility study, namely section 3.1 (*Features of the site/ location*), and the application form, namely section C4 (GA#4 *Works/ infrastructure*). | | | | | | ⦁ If NO – request clarifications and highlight the inconsistencies |  |
| **1** | **In each scenario** proposed by the Feasibility study, there is free and unlimited access to the infrastructure component, as evidenced by the designed part of the study and the ownership documents. | | | | | | ⦁ If NO – request clarifications |  |
| **1** | If necessary, **in each scenario** proposed by the Feasibility study, there is possibility to connect the infrastructure component to the utilities networks. | | | | | | ⦁ If NO – request clarifications |  |
| **1** | **In the scenario chosen**, there is coherence between the Feasibility study, namely section 4.4 (*Overview of technical and economic indicators related to the infrastructure*), and the application form, namely section C4 (GA#4 Works/ infrastructure). | | | | | | ⦁ If NO – request clarifications and highlight the inconsistencies |  |
| **1** | **In the scenario chosen**, there is coherence between the Feasibility study, namely section 5.2 (*Implementation strategy*) of the Feasibility study and the application form, namely section C4 (*GA#4 Works/ infrastructure*). | | | | | | ⦁ If NO – request clarifications and highlight the inconsistencies |  |
| **1** | **In the scenario chosen**, there is coherence between the Feasibility study, namely section 4.4 (*Overview of technical and economic indicators related to the infrastructure*) and section 5.2 (*Implementation strategy*), and the application form, namely section C7 *Indicative time plan*. | | | | | | ⦁ If NO – request clarifications and highlight the inconsistencies |  |
| **1** | **In the scenario chosen,** estimated costs of the infrastructure given by the Feasibility study matches the overall cost in budget sheet *Indicative infrastructure budget breakdown* of the Application Form. In case costs are bigger, additional funds have to be provided by the beneficiary from his own resources outside the project budget to execute the respective infrastructure in full. | | | | | | ⦁ If NO – request clarifications about the solution to provide additional funds |  |
| **1** | **In the scenario chosen**, conclusions/ recommendations of the Environmental Impact Assessment have been taken into account by the Feasibility study at section 3.6 (*Sustainability aspects related to infrastructure)*. This section is also coherent with the application form, namely section C8 (*Sustainability of the project outputs and results).* | | | | | | ⦁ If NO – request clarifications |  |
| **1** | **In each scenario** proposed, there is coherence between the Feasibility study, namely section 3.9 (*Risk analysis and measures to prevent/ mitigate risks)*, and the application form, namely section C4 (GA#1 Project management and GA#4 Works/ infrastructure). | | | | | | ⦁ If NO – request clarifications and highlight the inconsistencies |  |
|  | | | | | **10** | **Very good** (the statements above are fully valid) | ***Questions guiding the assessment***  ⦁*Does the project make the necessary connections between the content of the Application Form and the content of the Feasibility Study(ies), as mentioned in the evaluation grid?*  ⦁*After execution, will the infrastructure be fully accesible and operational i.e. open to public access, connected to main utilities, acoording to its purpose, etc.?*  ⦁*Are the technical, functional and economical indicators kept unchanged, as stated in the Application Form? In case of minor deviations, does the project provide sound and reliable arguments?*  ⦁*Are there any significant differences between the costs initially estimated in the budget, part of the Application Form, and the costs given in the Feasibility Studies? Are reasons provided for such deviations sound and reliable? Is there any commitmment taken by the respective partner that it will cover any additional cost from outside the grant and the co-financing? Is the project still eligible?*  ⦁*Is the list of risks pertaining to execution of the infrastructure comprehensive? Are adequate measures for their prevention/mitigation foreseen?* | |
| **5 – 9** | **Adequate** (the statements above are mostly valid, and although some inconsistencies are identified between the additional documents and the Application Form, and their effect on further project implementation is not decisive) |
| **< 5** | **Poor** (the statements above are mostly not valid due to lack of clarity, logic and/or details of the Feasibility study, serious discrepancies between the documents provided and/ or the Application Form which could affect further implementation of the project) |
| **[xx]** | | **SCORE (step 2) & SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS** | | | | | | |
| (per partner) **Conclusions following the compliance assessment 1** | | | | | | | | |
| (per partner) **Conclusions following the compliance assessment 2[[1]](#footnote-1)** | | | | | | | | |
| (per partner) **Conclusions following the content assessment** | | | | | | | | |
| **[xx]** | | | **FINAL SCORE** | | | | | |

1. If the case, after clarifications [↑](#footnote-ref-1)