



CfP-AWP23-TRED-02

**2023 Annual Work Plan
2023-2024 EUROfusion *Bernard Bigot*
Researcher Grants**

Guide for applicants

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1. Introduction

The EUROfusion Bernard Bigot Researcher Grant action is set-up through calls for participation to the EUROfusion Consortium Members. The evaluation of submitted proposals is performed through a set of procedures in order to ensure transparency and excellence in the selected projects. This guide details the procedures to be followed for these actions.

2. Eligibility to the programme

The following eligibility criteria apply.

- 1) This action supports the initial training of researchers, typically during the first years of their careers in research. More precisely, this action is directed towards researchers of all nationalities, namely:
 - Researchers in possession of a doctoral degree (PhD) who have completed their PhD and defended their thesis in the two years preceding the deadline for proposal submission of the present call;

In case the researcher/engineer/technician has not started her/his contract at the time of the application for the grant, the Consortium member will have to provide a declaration of intent to recruit the researcher/engineer under an employment contract or equivalent contract compatible with the national legislation. She/he must be recruited at the latest by 1 July 2023.

- 2) The candidate's research project must be on a scientific or technical topic relevant to the objectives of the Work Plan for the implementation of the Fusion Roadmap.
- 3) The implementation of this action will be through the *EUROfusion Consortium* for the implementation of the Fusion Roadmap. The applicant must therefore have a contract with either a EUROfusion Member or one of its Affiliated Entities. The post-doctoral contract (or equivalent) can be shared between two EUROfusion Members or their Affiliated Entities, allowing the post-doctoral work to be conducted successively in two complementary laboratories.
- 4) The application must be supported and submitted by the relevant GA member(s).

If potential candidates are in any doubt over their eligibility, they are strongly advised to contact the EUROfusion Training and Education Manager (training@euro-fusion.org) for clarification.

3. Evaluation criteria and procedures

The evaluation of proposals is carried out by the EUROfusion Programme Manager with the assistance of independent experts.

3.1. Experts selection

The EUROfusion Programme Manager will nominate expert evaluators.

Experts perform evaluations on a personal basis, not as representatives of their (previous) employer, their country or any other entity. They are expected to be independent, impartial and objective, and to behave throughout in a professional manner. They sign an appointment letter, including a confidentiality and conflict of interest declaration. Confidentiality rules must be adhered to at all times, before, during and after the evaluation.

Conflicts of interest: Under the terms of the appointment letter, experts must declare beforehand any known conflicts of interest, and must immediately inform the EUROfusion Training and Education Manager (training@euro-fusion.org) if one becomes apparent during the course of the evaluation. EUROfusion will take whatever action is necessary to remove any conflict.

Confidentiality: The appointment letter also requires experts to maintain strict confidentiality with respect to the whole evaluation process. Under no circumstance may an expert attempt to contact an applicant on his own account, either during the evaluation or afterwards.

At the beginning of the evaluation, the experts will be briefed by EUROfusion on the evaluation procedure, the experts' responsibilities, the issues involved in the particular area/objective and any other relevant item.

3.2. Selection criteria of the proposal

On receipt by EUROfusion, proposals will be assessed against the selection criteria specified herein. Proposals that do not fulfil these criteria will not be included in the evaluation.

A proposal will be selected only if it meets all of the following conditions:

- It is received by EUROfusion before the deadline given in the call;
- It is compliant with the criteria defined under section 2;
- It is complete and includes all documentation required in section 4.

3.3. The evaluation procedure

The evaluation procedure will be carried out in four stages:

- evaluation of the proposal content by the experts in view of the establishment of a shortlist (the number of shortlisted candidates should be at maximum twice the number of foreseen grants);
- consensus meeting to establish a shortlist of candidates to be invited for an interview;
- interviews of all shortlisted candidates;
- consensus meeting to define the final ranking of the proposals.

3.3.1. Scoring

Each candidate will be evaluated against the pre-determined evaluation criteria given in Annex 1 and scored according to the thresholds and weightings also given there.

Each criterion will be scored out of 5. Half and quarter marks can be given. The scores indicate the following with respect to the criterion under examination:

- 1 - *Poor*
- 2 - *Fair*
- 3 - *Good*
- 4 - *Very Good*
- 5 - *Excellent*

3.3.2. Shortlisting

The evaluation of the candidates by the experts in view of the establishment of a shortlist will be carried out in three steps:

In the first step the experts are acting individually; they do not discuss the proposals with each other, nor with any third party. The experts record their individual opinion in an Individual Assessment Report (IAR), giving scores and also comments against the evaluation criteria. Each proposal will be assessed in detail by two experts.

In order to review the alignment of each proposal with the Roadmap and implementation in the related work packages, the abstract and motivation of all eligible proposals are shared with the relevant Project Leaders. They provide a qualitative assessment: (likely) already covered / not yet covered and (likely) valuable / not yet covered but (likely) disproven or not useful. These qualitative scores are to inform the evaluation panel, which can recommend further clarification or (later) modifications to the proposal. The Project Leader review will take place before the second step.

In the second step, all experts will hold a consensus meeting under the chairmanship of the EUROfusion Programme Manager or his representative to discuss the complete set of proposals. The experts having assessed a same proposal will discuss to reach a consensus on the scoring. All criteria with a difference of more than 1 point, will be addressed. When, after the discussion, differences in scoring subsist, the average marks will be used for this (these) criterion (criteria). The outcome of this meeting is a summary table showing the scores of all candidates agreed between the experts.

In case it is impossible to reach an agreement between the expert evaluators, EUROfusion will designate a new expert evaluator to act as arbitrator.

EUROfusion will take the necessary steps to assure the quality of the IARs, with particular attention given to clarity, consistency, and appropriate level of detail. If important changes are necessary, the reports will be referred back to the experts concerned.

Based on the definitive marks which are agreed between the experts at the end of this consensus meeting, a shortlist will be established by EUROfusion. The shortlist will include not more than twice the number of foreseen grants.

3.3.3. Interviews with the shortlisted candidates

The evaluation will then progress toward individual interviews of the shortlisted candidates.

The interview board will be constituted of all the experts involved in the evaluation process and of the EUROfusion Programme Manager (or his representative), who acts as chair of the board. The secretariat of the board is provided by EUROfusion.

At the interview it can happen that new facts emerge about the details of the Research Programme. Since the interview is the first opportunity for the whole Panel to review the Research Programme in detail, it is possible that afterwards the Panel can revise the mark given to the Research Programme during the first step.

EUROfusion shall ensure fair and equal treatment of the candidates in the interview and in the following Consensus meeting. Presentation in English shall be requested.

The interview process and criteria are detailed under Annex II.

3.3.4. Consensus meeting, final scores and ranking

After the interview, the board will hold a final meeting in order to:

- (1) Agree on the final score attributed to each shortlisted candidate (the final score is constituted of the sum of the two marks attributed at the end of the first stage assessment (consensus meeting) and during the interview, with a weight of respectively 40% and 60%)
- (2) Produce a final ranking of candidates and a proposal for the attribution of the grants.

In the case of proposals with the same final score, the board will decide the priority order based on the mobility plan foreseen in the project or at the end of the two years grant (if any). Preference will be given to the research projects including visits or long stay in other laboratories during the two years of the Grant programme or at the end of it.

At the end of the interview the board will proceed with a debriefing and attribute an interview mark to each candidate.

3.3.5. Assessment of financial proposal

The evaluation board will assess the financial proposal included in the grant applications and recommend the level of financial support for training and mission costs for the grants to be awarded. See Annex 1 (Call for Participation) for the applicable limits and rules.

3.3.6. Final Evaluation Report

All eligible candidates (awarded or not) will receive a Final Evaluation Report composed by the evaluation panel. This will include the feedback obtained in the first evaluation round as well as, if applicable, during the interviews. For every position and candidate, one panellist will be designated to take the lead in writing and the other panellists provide input and review. After a quality and consistency check, the reports will be shared with the respective candidates.

4. Proposal content

An eligible proposal shall contain the information as noted in the following table. The required filename is indicated in the first column. Replace “{Lastname}” with your last name. *In case the last name contains spaces, please replace all spaces with an underscore.*

Filename	Content
ERG23_01_{Lastname}	A letter from the relevant GA member(s) addressing the application to EUROfusion and certifying that the post-doctoral (or equivalent level) contract with the EUROfusion Consortium Member or its Affiliated Entity, has started or declaration of intent to recruit the researcher/engineer under an employment contract or equivalent contract compatible with the national legislation
ERG23_02_{Lastname}	The CV of the candidate with all relevant information (specifically the European and international experience)
ERG23_03_{Lastname}	A motivation letter (max 1 page)
ERG23_04_{Lastname}	A copy of the PhD thesis. If not available in English, a summary of the thesis in English is to be provided.
ERG23_05_{Lastname}	Proof of the date of PhD graduation.
ERG23_06_{Lastname}	A copy of the report of the PhD jury, when available. If such a report is not available then a letter of the academic supervisor should be included.
ERG23_07_{Lastname}	A list of several references (with their e-mail addresses), including at least one who did not work with the candidate but may know him/her well enough.
ERG23_08_{Lastname}	A list of scientific publications of the candidate (if available). In case the candidate has a PhD degree and her/his PhD thesis is not in English, those scientific publications that are written in English should be included.
ERG23_09_{Lastname}	Short CV of the Mentor and main relevant publications (maximum length: 2 pages)
ERG23_10_{Lastname}	A description, <u>by the candidate</u> , of his/her research project, its objectives and work plan (maximum length: 2 pages; minimum font size 11 point).
ERG23_11_{Lastname}	A list of milestones and deliverables to be achieved (by ensuring them to be SMART, i.e.: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).
ERG23_12_{Lastname}	A comprehensive description of the individual training activities and career development plan, in which also the participation in trainings are described, long term missions to other laboratories, key meetings and conference attendance (maximum length: 2 pages).
ERG23_13_{Lastname}	A description of actions involving specific expenditure, along with justification how these expenditures contribute to the achievement of the scientific goals of the work programme (maximum length: 1 page)
ERG23_14_{Lastname}	Experience of the EUROfusion Consortium Member or its Affiliated Entity in the topic of the research/post-doctoral

	project and the organisation of the mentoring in this proposed grant.
ERG23_15_{Lastname}	Abstract of the research project, with objectives, method and outcomes (max. length: 0.5 page; minimum font size 11 point).
ERG23_16_{Lastname}	A motivation of the alignment of the proposal with EUROfusion's implementation of the Roadmap. See Annex 3 for an overview of objectives per Roadmap Mission.
ERG23_17_{Lastname}	A 50-word public summary aimed at journalists, which can be put on the EUROfusion website and public media to announce the awardees.
ERG23_18_{Lastname}	A supporting statement from any Institution/Organisation involved in hosting the candidate.
ERG23_19_{Lastname}	<p>A financial summary for resources required by the EUROfusion Member or its Affiliated Entity for the implementation of the proposal, including the following information per year and engineer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Salary cost (incl. (social) fees and superannuation). - A global forecast of expenses related to the activities carried out by the engineer and to her/his career development (e.g., participation in conferences and training courses, purchase of hardware and/or consumables necessary for a successful implementation of the project). - Mission costs with a summary of the foreseen stays in other laboratories indicating the purpose and duration of the stays. <p>The financial summary shall include a detailed justification for the requested financial support for training and mobility costs. For the financial summary, the template in Annex 4 should be used.</p> <p><i>Note: the document Annex 4 is in Excel format and this item should be submitted in Excel format.</i></p>

The above-mentioned documentation shall be uploaded to the online proposal form in IMS and shall be saved to single PDF files for each of the above-mentioned items (except for the Financial Summary, which shall be Excel). Follow the naming structure for every file in the left column of the table. Note the underscores in the filenames. Only complete and correct proposals will be considered.

5. Personal Data Protection (GDPR)

The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a privacy and data protection regulation in the European Union with effect from the 25th May 2018. The GDPR imposes obligations on organisations that control or process personal data and introduces rights and protections for EU citizens. EUROfusion is committed to ensuring that candidates' privacy is protected and strictly adhere to the provisions of all relevant Data Protection legislation, including GDPR, ensuring all personal data is handled in line with the principles outlined in the regulation.

In compliance with article 13 of the GDPR, EUROfusion provides the following information:

- Name and address of the Controller:
Tony Donné
EUROfusion Programme Management Unit
Boltzmannstr. 2
85748 Garching - Germany
- The personal data collected within the present call for participation will be processed for the sole use of the evaluation and selection of the proposals for the awarding of the 2023-2024 EUROfusion Bernard Bigot Researcher Grants
- The recipients of the personal data are the EUROfusion Programme Management Unit and the evaluation panel composed by external experts.
- The personal data will be stored for the period of the evaluation process (September-December 2022). The personal data of the selected candidates will be stored until the formalisation of the Task Agreement in the first half of 2023. After this period the personal data on the candidates who do not participate in the programme will be deleted. After the programme, all personal data will be deleted.
- The candidates have the right to request from the controller access to and rectification or erasure of personal data or restriction of processing concerning her/his data or to object to processing as well as the right to data portability.

6. Recommendations for applicants

The following recommendations are given to candidates to optimize their proposal and presentation:

- The candidate and mentor should have a close interaction during the preparation of the Work Programme. A good briefing of the candidate by the mentor is strongly advised, especially if the candidate is from outside the Fusion field.
- The candidate is strongly advised to have a rehearsal of his/her presentation at his/her institute and/or at the institute supporting his proposal. If needed this can be done via Videoconference to avoid unnecessary travelling. Some of the (future) colleagues can act as 'shadow expert panel' to train the candidate for possible questions he/she might expect in the actual interview.

- Candidates that are involving different institutes in their Work Programmes should contact responsible people at these institutes to ascertain that their proposal is supported on a managerial level, to avoid later surprises (e.g. their Work Programme or Training Programme not being supported). The mentor should have an active role in making sure that the proposal has the full support from all Parties involved.
- **Candidates are expected to be available for the interview to be held by video meeting in the period between 1-12 November 2022.**

7. Indicative timeline for the evaluation

Launch of the call	Week of 13 June 2022
Deadline for proposals	13 September 2022 23:59 CEST
Check proposals for eligibility	14-16 September 2022
Proposals transmitted to referees	End September 2022
Referees return Individual Assessment Report	Mid October 2022
1 st consensus meeting with referees (VC). <i>In this meeting the candidates are shortlisted for the interviews.</i>	End October 2022
Interviews (per video meeting) between:	1 - 12 November 2022
General Assembly endorsement* <i>* Like in 2021 the General Assembly will be asked to mandate the EUROfusion Bureau to endorse the selection of the candidates, such that they can be informed about the outcome shortly after the Bureau, rather than to wait until the meeting of the General Assembly in December.</i>	22 November 2022
Final Assessment Reports by the referees	29 November 2022

Annex I: Evaluation criteria, thresholds and weightings for the short-listing

EUROfusion Bernard Bigot Researcher Grants		
Criterion (with typical review elements):	Threshold	Weighting
Research project <i>incl.:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The fusion relevance and alignment with the Roadmap - The scientific novelty - The proposed method - The ambition - The SMARTness of the objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) 	3/5	40%
Training and competence development <i>incl.:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consistency with the work programme - Quality and level of training activities - Quality of career development plan - Professional environment and mentorship 	3/5	30%
Candidate background/competence <i>incl.:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scientific publications - Educational background - Motivation - International experience and language proficiency - Professional achievements - Future potential of the candidate in fusion 	3/5	30%

Proposals that fail to reach the threshold as indicated for each individual criterion or with a total score of below 3.75 shall be excluded from the final ranking.

Annex II: Evaluation criteria for the interview.

Individual interviews will last about 35 minutes and will consist of

- a presentation by the candidate (maximum 10 minutes)
- questions by the interview board (about 25 minutes).

The evaluation criteria for the interview will be based on the following criteria:

Criterion	Threshold	Weighting
Quality of the presentation	3/5	1/3
Scientific/technical background	3/5	1/3
Quality of project and competence development programme	3/5	1/3

The final score is constituted of the sum of the two marks attributed at the end of the first stage assessment and during the interview, with a weight of respectively 40% and 60%. This with the note that the experts panel may decide to amend the marks for the work programme and training programme given in the IAR (see Section 3.3.3).

In the case of proposals with the same final score, the board will decide the priority order based on geographical and gender diversity and the mobility plan foreseen in the project or at the end of the two years grant (if any). In the latter consideration, preference will be given to the research projects including visits or long stays in other laboratories during the two years of the Grant programme or at the end of it.