

PROJECT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND METHODOLOGY

Energy Programme in Romania – Call Call for proposals - Call 5(a), 5(b), SGS-5:

“Enhanced research and development capacity”

Updated 02.06.2021.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

This document presents information about the assessment process that will be conducted by Innovation Norway as the Fund Operator. Project applications will be assessed by Innovation Norway who bears the responsibility for the handling of the applications and the project selection. The assessment will be based on a combination of appraisal methods as presented in section 2 of these Project Assessment Criteria and Methodology.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND ELIGIBILITY CHECK

The Fund Operator will check the fulfilment of administrative and eligibility criteria contained in the relevant Call for Proposals. In the case of applications not complying with the administrative and eligibility criteria, Innovation Norway may contact the Applicant to clarify the information provided or request the provision of additional information. Applicants will be given 10 working days to submit the information requested. Applications submitted in a language other than English will be automatically rejected.

All applications meeting the administrative criteria and the eligibility criteria, will be subject to a further assessment conducted by the Fund Operator. A “no” assessment corresponding to any of the criteria will disqualify the project application from further assessment and will lead to the rejection of the application. A letter to the Applicant will indicate the main reason for rejection. The rejection decision is final and will be communicated to the Applicant via e-mail, using the e-mail address indicated in the Application Form under the section “Contact person”.

TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

Applications which fulfil the administrative and eligibility criteria will be further assessed by two experts from the Fund Operator. The experts shall evaluate the projects against the selection criteria described in the relevant Call for proposals. If necessary, the Fund Operator may use external expertise on a case by case basis.

The financial and technical assessment criteria presented below will be scored on a scale from 0 (zero) to 6 (six) points, where 0 is the lowest (a criterion is not fulfilled at all, but the project could still be considered for funding) and 6 is the highest score. The scoring will constitute the basis for an assessment profile and will be used to rank the projects. Each of the assessment criteria may be a critical success factor, i.e. a weak score within one criterion can jeopardize the success of the whole project application and lead to the rejection of the application without further in-depth assessment of other criteria.

The result of the experts' assessment shall be a ranked list that forms the basis for the discussion of the Fund Operator's Selection Committee. The Selection Committee will make the decision to reject or approve the applications and decide on the ranking of approved applications. Prior to the Fund Operator's final decision, FMO, the Programme Partner(s) and the National Focal Point will be provided with the ranked list and reasonable time to give their input to the Fund Operator.

After the selection procedure is complete, information of the results and the decision on the award of grants will be communicated to the Applicants (Project Promoters) and positive decisions published online.

In case of decision to approve the application, the Applicant will first be informed about the decision via e-mail. Thereafter, the Applicant will receive a Project Contract containing the Grant Offer Letter, contractual conditions, approved project budget, maximum grant rate and amount, expected outcomes from the implemented project, Project Implementation Plan and Disbursement Plan. Specific issues may be subject to further formalization in the Special Conditions of the Grant Offer Letter.

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For each criterion that will be assessed, the Fund Operator will check the information included in the sections from the electronic Application Form and in the mandatory documentation attached to the Application Form. Please note that specific attachments like "Business Plan" or "Project Document" will be mandatory for submission by the Applicant if they are listed in this Call for Proposals. During the assessment process, the Fund Operator reserves the right to request clarifications and further documentary evidence as may be necessary.

1. ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK

NO.	FORMAL CRITERION	DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE	APPRAISAL METHOD	WEIGHTING	ANNOTATIONS
1.1.	The Application Form has been filled in according to the instructions given in the Call for Proposals and in the Field Help in the electronic Application Form, and all mandatory supporting documents are attached to the application.	<i>Application Form and Attachments</i>	Yes/No	n/a	More information and templates are available at the relevant Programme website.
1.2.	The application and the mandatory supporting documents are submitted and presented in English; certificates issued by national authorities and certified financial annual accounts issued in national language can be submitted and presented in the national language. For the rest of the documents, free translation in English is required.	<i>Application Form and Attachments</i>	Yes/No	n/a	See Call for Proposals, Annex I for list of mandatory documents.
1.3.	The appropriate electronic Application Form has been used, corresponding to the type of Call /Programme, type of Applicant (economic operator or non-economic operator) and country.	<i>Application Form</i>	Yes/No	n/a	The Fund Operator uses the same electronic Application Form for several programmes, so make sure you choose the correct call / programme / type of applicant / country / outcome and focus area.

2. ELIGIBILITY CHECK

A) APPLICANT	DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE	APPRAISAL METHOD	WEIGHTING	ANNOTATIONS
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2.1.	The Applicant is registered as legal person in the Beneficiary State and the entity fits in one of the categories of eligible applicants for the relevant grant scheme, as listed in the present Call for Proposal.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Applicant details” <i>Attachments:</i> Relevant registration documents as listed in the Call for Proposals.	Yes/No	n/a	-
2.2.	The Applicant has been established for at least the period of time set out in this Call for Proposals, <i>section 1.1 Eligible Applicants and Partners.</i>	<i>Application Form:</i> “Applicant details”, “Activity of the Applicant” <i>Attachments:</i> Relevant registration documents as listed in the Call for Proposals.	Yes/No	n/a	-
2.3.	The Applicant and the legal representative signing the application have clean criminal and tax record.	<i>Attachments:</i> Self-declarations regarding clean criminal and tax record	Yes/No	n/a	Certain circumstances would exclude entities from funding. Template available on the relevant programme website.

2.4.	The Applicant is not an undertaking in difficulty (<i>applicable only to entities subject to state aid rules</i>). The definition of “undertaking in difficulty” is included in Article 2, paragraph 18 of <i>Commission Regulation (EU) No.651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty</i> .	<i>Attachments:</i> Self-declaration regarding undertaking in difficulty	Yes/No	n/a	The Fund Operator is in principle not allowed to allocate public money (state aid) to enterprises in financial difficulties. However, the COVID-19 amendment of the rules will be applied. It means that micro- and small companies can receive grants even if in difficulties, and other companies can receive grants if not in difficulties at 31.12.2019. Template for self-declaration available on the relevant programme website.
2.5.	The Applicant is not bankrupt, entered in judicial administration or under liquidation, have suspended business activities, is the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in the national legislation.		Yes/No	n/a	-
2.6.	The Applicant has not been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization or any other illegal activity detrimental to financial interests, without evidence of substantial correction measures taken in the past years.	<i>Attachments:</i> Self-declaration regarding clean criminal and tax record	Yes/No	n/a	-
	B) PROJECT PARTNER(S)	DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE	APPRAISAL METHOD	WEIGHTING	ANNOTATIONS

2.7.	The Partner(s) is established as legal entity in the Beneficiary State or in one of the eligible Donor States.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Partnership" <i>Attachments:</i> Relevant registration documents listed in the Call for Proposals.	Yes/No	n/a	Note the difference of eligibility of Partner(s) depending on financing from either EEA Grants or Norway Grants.
2.8.	The Project Partner(s) must have been established for at least the period of time set out in this Call for Proposals, <i>section 1.1 Eligible Applicants and Partners.</i>	<i>Application Form:</i> "Partnership" <i>Attachments:</i> Relevant registration documents listed in the Call for Proposals.	Yes/No	n/a	-
2.9.	The Partner(s) and the legal representative signing the Partnership Agreement have clean criminal and tax record.	<i>Attachments:</i> Self-declarations regarding clean criminal and tax record	Yes/No	n/a	Certain circumstances would exclude entities from funding. Template available on the relevant programme website.
2.10.	In the case of a partnership project, a draft Partnership Agreement has been attached to the application.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Partnership" <i>Attachments:</i> "Partnership Agreement"	Yes/No	n/a	Template for Partnership Agreement available on the relevant programme website.
	C) PROJECT	DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE	APPRAISAL METHOD	WEIGHTING	ANNOTATIONS

2.11.	The proposed project fits into one of the focus areas addressed in the Call for Proposals.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Project Information”	Yes/No	n/a	The project proposal is within the focus areas addressed by the Call for Proposals.
2.12.	Compliance with the minimum and maximum grant amounts to be applied for.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Project Information”, “Financing plan”	Yes/No	n/a	These criteria are absolute. Non-compliance will lead to rejection. See information in the Call for Proposals.
2.13.	No overlapping/double funding arises from the application for a similar project from EU/EEA/International Financial Institution/Bilateral or other sources.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Legal/other issues relevant to the project”	Yes/No	n/a	If the Applicant has applied to other public institutions for funding of the same project, or parts of the same project, you need to inform about this to avoid potential double financing. Unlawful disbursement of grants from the Fund Operator would require that the Applicant has to repay the money already disbursed to the project.
2.14.	The project is in compliance with both EU and national legislation of the Beneficiary State (in particular state aid, public procurement, and environment requirements).	<i>Application Form:</i> “Legal/other issues relevant to the project”	Yes/No	n/a	The Applicant has included a reference to the most relevant legislation and requirements.
2.15.	Incentive effect – work on the project did not start before the submission of the current application for grant.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Activities and schedule”	Yes/No	n/a	See definition in Glossary of Terms. Activities already started are not eligible.

2.16.	The resolution/decision of the decision-making body (the general assembly of shareholders/ stockholders, of the sole shareholder, of the Board of Directors, Local/County Council etc.), mentioning the agreement on contracting funding, the own contribution required for the implementation of the project, the person in charge with the project, the person designated to represent the Applicant in the relationship with the Fund Operator (signed and stamped).	<i>Attachments:</i> Additional attachments	Yes/No	n/a	-
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3. TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

	CRITERION	DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE	APPRAISAL METHOD	WEIGHTING	ANNOTATIONS
3.1.	Relevance - the extent to which the project meets the Programme specific expected outputs, outcomes and the eligible activities set out in the Call for Proposals.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Project Information”, “Outcomes” <i>Attachments:</i> “Expected outcomes of the implementation of the project”, “Business Plan” or “Project Document”	Scoring 0-6	10%	The Applicant needs to show that the project will result in enhanced research and development on capacity renewable energy, energy (i.e. renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy security technologies/solutions/services developed). within a reasonable time during or after the project implementation (patent applications submitted or new solutions developed). Eligible activities are described in the calls for proposals. As regards state aid, only GBER articles included in the Call for Proposals are eligible for the respective call.) Compliance with national plans and strategies will also be assessed under this criterion, as applicable.

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3.2.	<p>Technical viability and feasibility - the extent to which the project is mature, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the project is technically viable and feasible in terms of technical solution meets the project objectives and specific outcomes; the technical solution is documented and consistently described as regards technical description of all the project components; - the Applicant has the technical capacity to implement the project; - feasible time schedule for the project implementation. 	<p><i>Application Form:</i> “Project Information”, “Outcomes”</p> <p><i>Attachments:</i> “Business Plan” or “Project Document”. “Procurement plan”, “Detailed Activity Based Budget” (“Project cost and revenues”) and another documentary evidences.</p>	Scoring 0-6		<p>The Applicant has the necessary technical/technological resources to implement the project.</p> <p>Methods used in scientific and technological research, are accepted provided that they address uncertainty about the project’s final outcome.</p> <p>The project must have as an objective new concepts or ideas that improve on existing knowledge. This excludes from Research and Development any routine change to products or processes and, therefore, a human input is inherent to creativity in Research and Development.</p> <p>If calculations, designs, working drawings and operating instructions are needed for setting up and operating pilot plants or prototypes, they should be included in Research and Development. If they are carried out for the preparation, execution, and maintenance of production standardisation (e.g., jigs, machine tools), they should be excluded from Research and Development.</p> <p>The objectives, methodologies and technologies of the project are appropriate.</p>

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3.2.1.	Scientific and/or technical excellence	<i>Application Form:</i> “Project Information” <i>Attachments:</i> “Business Plan” or “Project Document”	Scoring 0-6		<p>The pursuit of original and challenging objectives through the creation of “new knowledge” (such as seeking previously undiscovered phenomena, structures, or relationships) is a key criterion for Research and Development. Any use of already available knowledge (adaptation, customisation, etc.) which does not entail an attempt to expand the state of the art should be excluded (Novelty).</p> <p>In addition to the development of “new knowledge”, the project should have a creative approach, such as devising new applications of existing scientific knowledge or new uses of available techniques or technologies (Creativity).</p> <p>The project topic is answering to a well-defined problem/question with scientific and/or practical relevance.</p> <p>The project proposal contributes to a significant (clearly identified) progress beyond the state of the art.</p>

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3.2.2.	Results – the project should lead to results that could be possibly reproduced (transferable and/or reproducible)	<i>Application Form:</i> “Project Information” <i>Attachments:</i> “Business Plan” or “Project Document”	Scoring 0-6	20%	The project should result in the potential for the transfer of the new knowledge, ensuring its use and allowing other researchers to reproduce the results as part of their own Research and Development activities. The primary outputs of the research projects will be research results, including scientific publications, patent applications submitted, or new solutions developed.
3.2.3.	Project Impact - Potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results	<i>Application Form:</i> “Project Information” <i>Attachments:</i> “Business Plan” or “Project Document”	Scoring 0-6		The dissemination and exploitation of the expected results are clearly stated and realistic. The project lead towards distinct improvements of the quality of life, performance and/or efficiency of products, technologies and/or services. The strategy for further valorisation of the project results.
3.3.	Innovation level - the extent to which the project includes innovation, either on enterprise level, sector level, national level or international level.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Project Information” <i>Attachments:</i> “Business Plan” or “Project Document”	Scoring 0-6	10%	See definitions in Glossary of Terms. The project is innovative in terms of scientific or technological innovation or prospects of innovation, and challenge.

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3.4.	Releasing effect - the extent to which the project would not be executed without a grant.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Project information" <i>Attachments:</i> "Business Plan" or "Project Document"	Scoring 0-6		See definition in Glossary of Terms. The criteria will be assessed by comparing the Applicant's ability to finance the project with and without a grant.
3.5.	Internal factors - the extent to which the Applicant (and Partner(s)) have the necessary human resources to implement the project. Factors over which the Applicant may influence with strategic choices (key resources, core activities, production etc.).	<i>Application form:</i> "Internal factors" <i>Attachment:</i> "Business Plan" or "Project Document", "CVs of the project team"	Scoring 0-6	20%	For more information see the "Business Plan" or the "Project Document" template Personnel involved in the project activities show relevant expertise according to their role in the project.
3.6.	Financial capacity and operating risk - The extent to which the Applicant (and possible Partners) have the necessary co- financing and financial capacity to implement the project and support its cost. Operating risk – the assessment of Applicant's financial situation and debt service capabilities.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Expense Budget", "Financing Plan", "Financial Statement" <i>Attachments:</i> "Applicant's Certified Accounts", "Letter of Commitment" <i>Other sources:</i> Credit reports purchased by Innovation Norway	Scoring 0-6		The Fund Operator may purchase credit reports to assess the Applicant's and Partner's financial capacity and operating risk.

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3.7.	Costs estimates and funding - The extent to which the project have clear and well documented cost estimates and a financing plan. The budget is correctly elaborated and correlated with project activities, allocated and estimated resources.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Expense Budget”, “Financial Plan” <i>Attachments:</i> “Business Plan” or “Project Document”, “Detailed Activity Based Budget (DABB)”, “Procurement Plan”	Scoring 0-6		The project budget includes sufficient details in order to assess the project’s cost estimates and their eligibility.
3.8.	IPR status (Intellectual Property Rights) - immaterial resources available for the proposed project.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Project Information” <i>Attachments:</i> “Partnership Agreement”, “Business Plan” or “Project Document”	Scoring 0-6		Intellectual achievements, design, trademarks, patents etc.

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3.9.	<p><i>(only applicable to projects producing heat/electricity for selling for profit – i.e. not for own consumption)</i></p> <p>Market potential and competitiveness - quality of market analysis, under the balance of demand and offer of products or services (e.g. electricity). Note: A qualitative market analysis contains competition identification, strengths and weaknesses, the competitive advantage of the Applicant.</p>	<p><i>Application Form:</i> “External factors”</p> <p><i>Attachments:</i> “Business Plan” or “Project Document”</p>	Scoring 0-6		Marketing research and selling potential will be considered (marketing strategy) to sell new or improved products/services that meet demand requirements (price, quality, quantity) and, at the same time, ensure profits over time.
3.10.	<p>Project profitability - the extent to which the project has potential on the market.</p>	<p><i>Application Form:</i> “Project value creation and risk”</p> <p><i>Attachments:</i> “Business Plan” or “Project Document”</p>	Scoring 0-6		The projects profitability will be based on the potential of the technologies/solutions/services to enter the market and generate revenues.

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3.11.	Good Business Practice - the extent to which the Applicant (and Partner(s)) adhere to Good Business Practice as defined by the OECD guidelines and UN Guiding Principles on business and human right, including zero-tolerance towards corruption (initiatives on Applicant level).	<i>Application Form:</i> “Activity of the Applicant”, “Project Information”, “Cross cutting issues”	Scoring 0-6	15%	Applicant has included information on Good Business Practise at the institution/organisation/company level. The principles mentioned in the “ <i>Guidelines on cross-cutting issues and good business practice</i> ” are applicable to (and should be observed by) all Project Applicants/Promoters (i.e. <u>Corruption, Violation of human rights, Poor working conditions, the Environment</u> etc.), regardless of whether they are a business, a public institution, NGO or other form of legal establishment. For economic entities, Good Business Practise could be a competitive advantage.
3.12.	Project risks - the extent to which the project is adequately supported by a risk management plan.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Project value creation and risk”, <i>Attachments:</i> “Business Plan” or “Project Document”	Scoring 0-6		The Applicant should have identified and assessed the relevant risk factors that may affect the achievement of the project expected outcome and described how they intend to mitigate the risks. There may be different types of risks, i.e. financial risk, technical/ technological risk, market risk, HR risk, time schedule, environmental and more.

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3.13.	Sustainability - the project incorporates clear sustainability measures, i.e. the durability of the project after the implementation deadline.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Project information" <i>Attachments:</i> "Business Plan" or "Project Document"	Scoring 0-6		The Applicant is able to sustain the project investment/facility, financially, technically and by adequate human resources after the project has been completed.
3.14.	Partnership's quality (if applicable) - the extent to which the Partnership Agreement includes clear division of roles, responsibilities and cash flow have been agreed upon; assessment of Partner's involvement in the preparation, implementation and sharing the project results; each partner has a significant contribution to the project activities.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Partnership" <i>Attachment:</i> "Partnership Agreement"	Scoring 0-6	15%	See Frequently Asked Questions re. how to establish a good Partnership Project structure.
3.15.	Cross-cutting issues - the extent to which the project complies with relevant cross-cutting issues identified in the Application Form: good governance and good business practice, sustainable development, and gender equality.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Cross-cutting issues"	Scoring 0-6	10%	The Applicant has included specific information related to the project (e.g. described the internal measures and procedures in place, or intended to be implemented throughout the project implementation, at the level of the Applicant).

	CRITERION	DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE	APPRAISAL METHOD	WEIGHTING	ANNOTATIONS
3.16.	Socio-Economic impact - the extent to which the project has added value, i.e. the socio-economic profitability.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Project Information", "Project value creation and risk", "Cross-cutting issues" <i>Attachment:</i> "Business Plan" or "Project Document"	Scoring 0-6		May involve recruitment of unemployed people, settlement in a region, improved environment, development of a local business environment/technological environment, competence development of individuals and companies, level, and consequences of innovation, etc.