

ITN Proposal Evaluation: Advice for a Successful Application

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Intracellular Calcium Signalling



Experience as an evaluator

- 18 years EU grant evaluation
- Wide range panels including MSCA

Training for evaluators

- Webinars
- REA headquarters, Brussels
- Chair, Vice chairs (experienced evaluators)

General guidance given to evaluators

- Evaluate based on criteria in work programme
- Evaluate ONLY what is written in the proposal
- Disregard any content outside page limit

How to help the evaluator

No waffle or blah blah

Make it clear in first three statements:

- What is the aim of the project?
- Why is the project important?
- What will be achieved at end of project?

The Innovative Training Networks (ITN) aim to train a new generation of creative, entrepreneurial and innovative early-stage researchers, able to face current and future challenges and to convert knowledge and ideas into products and services for economic and social benefit

For each criteria and sub criteria include appropriate sub-headings matching evaluation criteria

1. Excellence

1.1 Quality, innovative aspects and credibility of the research programme (including inter/multidisciplinary and intersectoral aspects and, where appropriate gender aspects

- Introduction, objectives and overview of the research programme
- Research methodology and approach
- Originality and innovative aspects of the research programme

Answer the question

- First sentence for each sub-criterion should answer the question

What are the innovative aspects of the research programme?

The innovative aspects of the research programme are x, y and Z

Quantify each statement

Numbers

Graphs

Dates

References

Diagrams

Figures

Quantify each statement

ESR's will take part in outreach events in local secondary schools.

versus

ESR 1-4 trained (training module xx) to be STEM/ Marie-Curie ambassadors will prepare activity x which will last x hours in schools x,y and Z during month x year x. Assessment of the outreach activity will be conducted by survey x

Qualify each statement

Project X is a highly innovative research programme which will ensure the new academic ESRs are trained to become proficient researchers.

Versus

Project X is highly innovative in its training programme becausex, y and z. It will ensure the trained ESR's achieve cutting edge in skills x y and z , have intersectoral training at x to provide knowledge of y, and network training z to gain x and z.

Colour and Borders

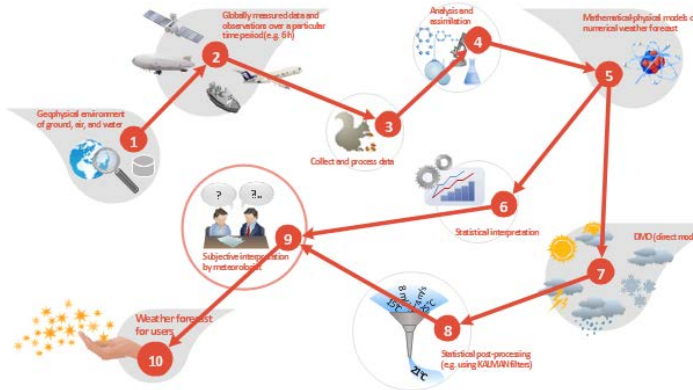
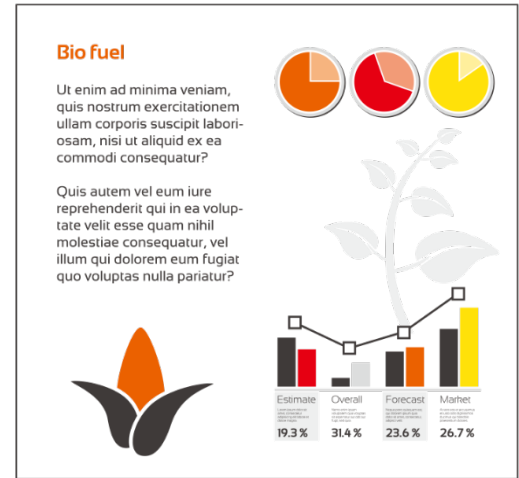
1.1.1 Introduction, objectives and overview of the research programme

The summary objectives are:

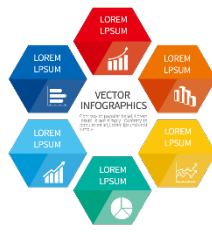
- Bnnbnbnbnb
- Vbv vbvbvb
- Vbv vbvbvbvb

X,Y AND Z are important for improvement of human health world wide

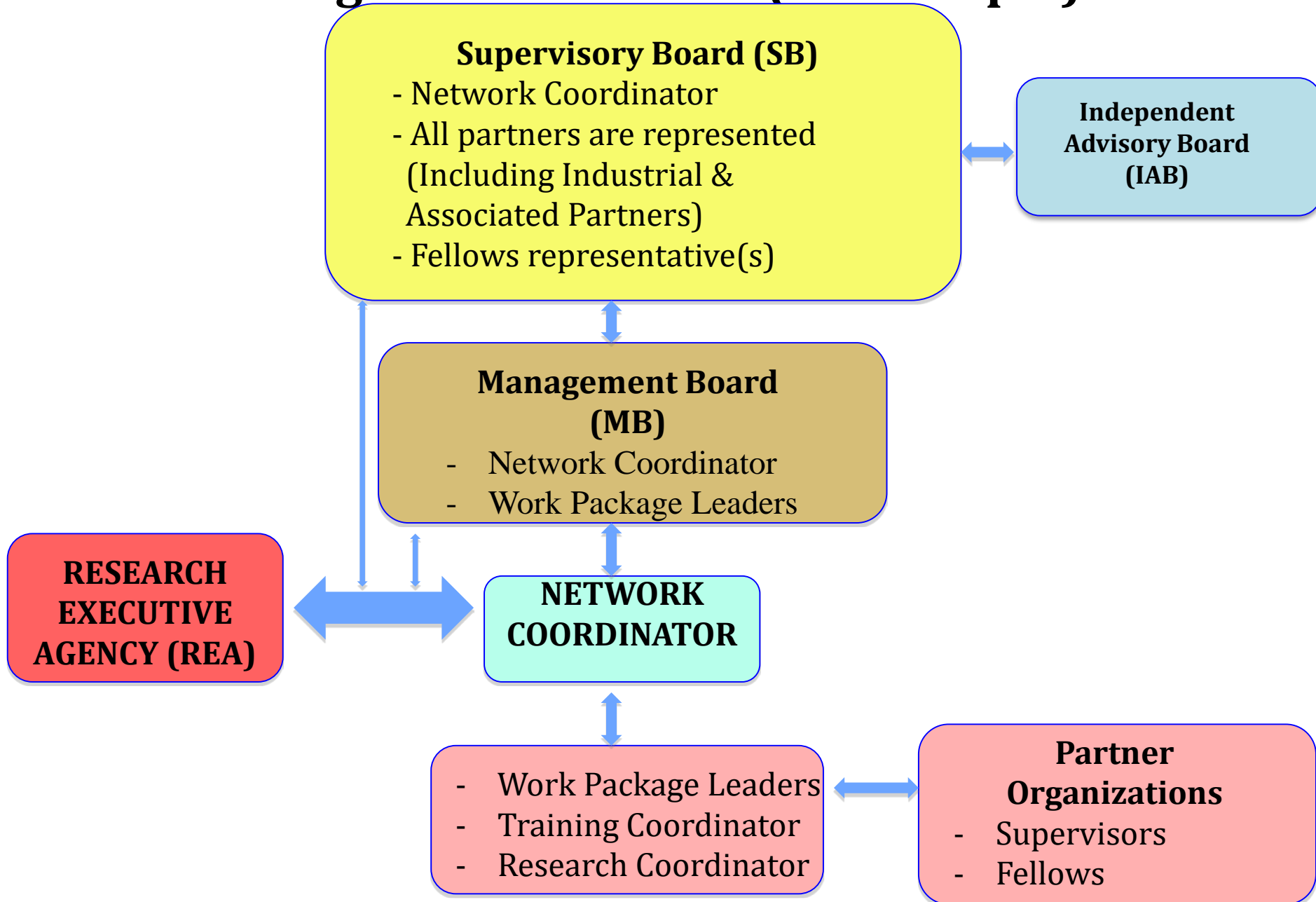
A picture is worth a thousand words



College Comparison Tracker			
Applications			Comparison >
	[College 1]	[College 2]	[College 3]
Location	[Location]	3	8
Contact	[Contact]	34	4
Fee	[Fee]	5	5
Application Due Date	[Due Date]	6	4
Application Date	[Application Date]	7	3



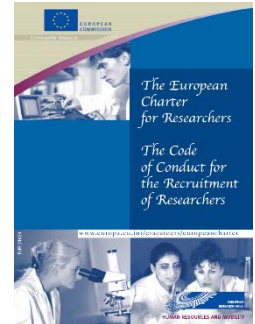
Management Structure (an example)



Success is in the detail!

- Check for consistency between Part A (admin data) and Part B (substance)

- European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers



- HR Excellence in Research award



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

- EU 7 Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training

ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/Principles_for_Innovative_Doctoral_Training.pdf

- Gender: Gender balance in research teams

 - Gender balance in decision making/supervision

 - Integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation

 - Athena SWAN award

Consortium

Beneficiaries and partners

- Size (6-10 beneficiaries)
- Multinational
- Intersectoral
 - Industry /SME which can assist with exploitation
 - Museum/ NGO/ Hospital/clinic to get end user input/relevance
- Multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary
- Added value of consortium

Quality of Supervision, Mentoring and Career development

- Provide details of supervisor's background in training ESR's rather than just information on supervisor's research background
- Provide details of non-academic supervisor's background in training/mentoring for career development

Career Development Plan

- Research objectives
- Career and research training requirements
- Teaching experience
- Complementary Skills training
- Publications and Participation at conferences

Complementary/transferable skills to be offered including on a local and network-wide scale

- Career and business e.g. IP, management, leadership, business plan writing, networking
- Personal development e.g. presentation skills, equality and diversity, language courses
- Research and management e.g. open science, grant writing, ethics, laboratory management

Secondments

- Length
- Frequency

Dissemination and Communication activities

- **Workshops** for researchers and general public
- ***Marie Curie Ambassadors*** in schools and colleges
- **Project ITN Open Day or Night** in several countries of the host institutions
- **Multimedia releases** through TV, ITN website, youtube, social networks, etc..).
- **Dissemination activities** at scientific meetings
- **Open access publications**
- **ITN symposium** to share the achievements of the whole consortium to the scientific community and the general public
- **ITN film** which can be used as a high quality educational resource from students to teachers, business and community leaders

Risk management is addressed with sufficient convincing detail

- Specific research project risks
- Consortium and general project management risks

Evaluator's feedback on EXCELLENCE: Some common criticisms

- **The description of the state-of-the-art in the field is not comprehensive and the originality and innovative aspects of the proposal are not documented.**
- **Superficial or unconvincing description of the research methodology.**
- **Lack of synergies between the proposed individual projects.**
- **Insufficient interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary dimensions of the research training program.**
- **Unsatisfactory presentation of the intersectoral aspects of the network & the role(s) of the industrial partners in research & training activities.**
- **Inadequate exposure of the ESRs to another sector and lack of meaningful secondments.**
- **Insufficient network-wide and complementary skills training.**
- **Unsatisfactory quality of supervision.**

Evaluator's feedback on IMPACT: Some common criticisms

- **The network benefits to the researchers' career prospects are not sufficiently highlighted.**
- **Inadequate demonstration of the network's contribution to building long-lasting collaborations between European institutions.**
- **Insufficient attention to enhancing public-private sector collaborations on research and training.**
- **Absence of clear plans for exploitation of the results and protection of IPR.**
- **No clear measures to ensure dissemination of the Network's results and a lack of outreach activities to educate the general public**

Evaluator's feedback on IMPLEMENTATION: Some common criticisms

- **Poorly described Work Plan lacking a credible time plan, and/or deliverables, and/or milestones, and/or Gantt chart, etc.**
- **The credibility of the Work Plan is low due to the lack of contingency planning for potential pitfalls and possible failures.**
- **No description of the individual ESR projects is provided.**
- **The presentation of the management structure, including the decision making process, is inadequate.**

REMEMBER:

Very good is not good enough in proposal scoring

0 - The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information;

1 – POOR.

The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses;

2 – FAIR.

The proposal broadly addresses the criterion but there are significant weaknesses;

3 – GOOD.

The proposal addresses the criterion well but with a number of shortcomings;

4 – VERY GOOD.

The proposal addresses the criterion very well but with a small number of shortcomings;

5 – EXCELLENT.

The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

To achieve an excellent score, make sure that your proposal:

- Addresses ALL the evaluation criteria and subcriteria.
- Present the strengths of the network
- Highlights innovative aspects of the research and training
- Creates long-lasting collaborations
- IPR protection
- High-quality dissemination, communication & outreach activities

Acknowledgments

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THANK YOU