



Joint Transnational Call 2021

for transnational research projects in synergy with the two FET Flagships

Graphene Flagship & Human Brain Project

Call Procedures

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I. Administrative structures

I.1. Call Steering Committee (CSC)

The CSC is composed of representatives of National and Regional Research Funding Organisations (NRFO) participating in the Joint Transnational Call (JTC). It nominates the members of the Scientific Evaluation Panels (SEPs) and steers all activities of the JTC: Publication of the common call for proposals, common evaluation and selection of received proposals, common monitoring of projects and other common activities to support funded projects.

I.2. Scientific Evaluation Panel (SEP)

For each sub-call (Graphene basic research, Graphene applied research and innovation, HBP basic and applied research), a SEP is set up to evaluate the submitted proposals and rank the full proposals.

Each SEP is composed of high-level experts from different fields within the Graphene and HBP areas, representing both academic and industry-related research and geographically and gender balanced as much as possible. The number of SEP members from each of the countries participating in the call should be balanced, and a sufficient number of the SEP members should be drawn from non-participating countries. Scientists already participating in the respective Flagship Core Project cannot act as SEP members or external reviewers. Scientists involved in a proposal submitted to the JTC also cannot be SEP members or external reviewers. For all SEP members, conflict of interest rules apply.

The CSC decides on the composition of the SEP with the support from Joint Call Secretariat (JCS). Each NRFO is invited to suggest expert names (around 5). It can also nominate one. However, nominated members should act as any other member and evaluate and propose a ranking of the proposals only based on the jointly defined evaluation criteria. JCS collects suggestions and nominations and organises a vote of the CSC to rank the pooled list of proposed experts. JCS forms the SEP on the basis of the ranking order, while taking into account the above-mentioned balance criteria and consulting the CSC for any change of ranking order needed to avoid unbalance. The final composition of the SEP is submitted to the CSC for approval.

The CSC also selects the SEP chairperson and vice-chairperson among the SEP members. Both should be currently working outside of the countries participating in the sub-call. If needed, a separate vote is organised to support this selection.

The names of SEP members are published after the JTC outcome has been communicated to all the applicants, and after having checked their consent. In case a member does not give consent, the CSC is informed. The detailed reviewing assignments shall remain confidential.

I.3. Joint Call Secretariat (JCS)

The JCS, managed by ANR, is responsible for the administrative management of the call, from call preparation to implementation and project follow-up. It is the primary point of contact referring to the call procedures between the CSC members and the reviewers (SEP members and external experts). It is also the primary contact point for JTC applicants.

During the period of **applications and evaluations of proposals**, the JCS has to:

- organise and manage the application process;
- answer questions and resolve problems at central level raised by the applicants;
- manage the contacts with the external reviewers;
- support the supervision and monitoring of the progress of the call;
- collect applications and make the applications available to the CSC members;
- supply all necessary information to the SEP and CSC in electronic and printed form and of organizing the SEP meetings for the proposal evaluations;
- provide a summary table of all proposals and the outcomes of the selected applications during the selection process, including grounds for rejections, an abstract book and all completed evaluation forms for the SEP meetings;
- support and ensure a transparent process for evaluation of the proposals and the approval process;
- provide official letters for selected and rejected projects to the respective consortia coordinator;
- send official letters with the minutes, edited by the FLAG-ERA coordinator, of the CSC meeting attached to the CSC member organisations, at the end of the process.

Contact persons from the participating NRFOs (cf. “Contact Points” below) support the JCS concerning inquiries on their relevant applicable funding rules and legal frameworks.

The JCS customizes the reporting forms established for the call and manages the (yearly) distribution of the forms to the applicants and the collection of the reports. It distributes the reports to the CSC. Additionally, the participating funding organisations inform the CSC via the JCS if the national assessment of scientific or financial reports results in substantial changes of the project funding at the respective NRFO and specify the reasoning behind these changes.

1.4. NRFO Contact Points (CP)

A CP is specified by each NRFO and listed in the call text appendix. The CP is the point of contact for applicants at the national or regional level and is also the interface between the JCS and each NRFO to keep NRFOs informed about all phases of the call (proposal submission, evaluation, ranking list, etc.).

2. Submission & eligibility check

2.1. Publication of the call

The JCS is advertised on behalf of the participating NRFOs on the common website www.flagera.eu. The participating NRFOs separately advertise the Call in accordance with their national procedures and practices.

2.2. Submission of joint proposals

A one-step submission process applies, in which the applicants are invited to submit the full proposal.

Applicants are invited to name potential experts suited for evaluation in the domain of their proposals as well as experts not suited to evaluate their proposal due to conflict of interest. This list of experts would be exclusively used by the JCS and CSC.

2.3. Eligibility check

The Joint Call Secretariat (JCS) checks all proposals to ensure that they meet the call formal criteria (number and country distribution of participating research groups, inclusion of all necessary information in English, number of pages). Minor changes can be made to correct proposal eligibility issues, subject to approval of CSC. The JCS forwards the proposals to the Call Steering Committee (CSC) members who perform a check for compliance to country/regional rules.

3. Evaluation and selection of proposals

Proposals are assessed by external reviewers and the SEP. Proposals are assessed according to specific evaluation criteria provided in the call announcement, using a common evaluation form.

3.1. SEP evaluation

The JCS sends the external reviews and the proposals to the SEP members. For each proposal, at least two members of the SEP act as internal reviewers, one of them being the “rapporteur”, who writes a consensus report of the evaluation of the proposal, based on the reports of the external reviewers and the panel discussions.

Soon after the proposals submission, the SEP discuss, in the frame of a remote meeting, in order to assign the proposals to the SEP members and propose external experts to be contacted. Later, the SEP meets (physical meeting or remote meeting) to discuss each proposal and, after consideration of the evaluation criteria, external reviews, and their own discussions, the SEP scores and ranks the proposals. The CSC members can be present at this meeting as observers.

The results of the evaluation process are thus

- a consensus report for each proposal, including scores for each criterion, and
- a ranking list of proposals.

3.2. External reviews

External reviewers review the full proposals remotely. They are suggested by the SEP on the basis of their scientific expertise relative to the submitted proposals, approved by the CSC, and contacted by the JCS to request their participation. Each full proposal is allocated to at least two external reviewers. All external reviewers are asked to use the same evaluation form for the written reviews and to score the proposals according to the same evaluation criteria and scoring system as the SEP members.

3.3. CSC Meeting

The CSC meets to establish the list of projects recommended for funding. The process used to establish this list is described in the Consortium Agreement.

3.4. Conflict of Interest

SEP members and external reviewers must declare any conflict of interest and exclude themselves from reviewing an application or from discussion of a proposal if they stand to profit professionally, financially or personally (including family members and partner relatives (1st degree)) on approval or rejection of an application. They should also refrain from reviewing if they have published together with the applicant or the co-workers within the last five years, if they are currently cooperating, or if professional dependencies exist.

3.5. Confidentiality

SEP members and external reviewers shall enter into a confidentiality agreement before undertaking the evaluation process. Discussions during the SEP meetings must remain confidential and the individual positions of the SEP members must not be divulged.

3.6. Evaluation Fees

SEP members are remunerated for proposal evaluation and more generally for their efforts during the evaluation procedure, and reimbursed for their travel and accommodation expenses incurred by their attendance to the SEP meeting. Payments are managed by the JCS and charged to the FLAG-ERA budget.

4. National Negotiation Phase

The JCS informs project coordinators about the outcome of the scientific evaluation and the funding recommendation. The coordinators receive the consensus reports and are invited to distribute them to their consortium partners.

For proposals recommended for funding, the consortium partners are invited to contact their respective NRFOs for further instructions regarding national applications. The application and negotiation phase is handled following the usual rules for each NRFO, amended by special procedures for the ERA-NET case where this is applicable.

NRFO representatives shall outline the timing of their internal procedures to ensure that all partners of one project can begin with the research project at the same point in time.

5. Timeline

The timeline below can be updated if needed, subject to approval of the CSC.

Date	Milestone
30 September 2020	Pre-announcement publication (full topic descriptions, eligibility rules and contact points)
15 October 2020	Call document final draft distributed
5 November 2020	Call for SEP member suggestions

5 November 2020	MoU signature launch
26 November 2020	MoU signature deadline
30 November 2020	Call Announcement publication
30 November 2020	Deadline for SEP member suggestions by the NRFOs
30 November 2020	Call for votes on SEP member suggestions
7 December 2020	Deadline for votes on SEP member suggestions
17 December 2020	Invitation of potential SEP members
19 January 2021	Information webinar
19 April 2021	Proposal submission deadline
25 May 2021	Deadline for national eligibility check
25 May 2021	Transnational eligibility check (JCS)
31 May 2021	1st SEP meeting, remote (proposals assignment, suggestions of external reviewers)
03 September 2021 (location TDB)	SEP meeting (Establishment of the ranking list, finalisation of consensus reports)
10 September 2021 (location TDB)	CSC meeting or conference call (funding discussion)
14 October 2021	Deadline for NRFO decisions
22 October 2021	Feedback to applicants and publication of results
Nov 2021 - March 2022	Funded projects start