



Implementing ERA-NET Cofund A hands-on Workshop for new practitioners in ERA-NET Cofund

Topic 2: How to implement the joint call Example ERA-NET NEURON Cofund

Anna Gossen
DLR-PT, Germany
ERA-NET NEURON



Wissen für Morgen



Overview

- Scope of call
- Timing of the call
- Funding mode and funding commitment
- The evaluation process
- Finding experts and telling them what to do
- The rankings list
- Filling the gaps – top up funding
- Proposal management tools
- Project monitoring and reporting



Scope of the call

NEURON's method:

- Strategic Research Agenda of NEURON II (2012 – 2015)
 - Part of a work package led by French partners (INSERM and CNRS)
 - Authored by our Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) and additional scientists
- Choice for particular topic via survey:
 - ⇒ highest number of participating funding partners for cofunded call
 - ⇒ then scientific workshop to shape the call in detail

General remarks:

- Check for overlaps of topics with e.g. other ERA NETS and calls
- Verify the size of your (national) scientific community you address
- Use scientific expertise for definition of targeted projects



Timing of the call

Established NEURON schedule for JTC cycle due to:

- CSC decision is required by end of September (national budget regulations)

• Call pre-announcement:	~December
• Launch of the call	~January
• Stage 1: pre-proposal submission	~March
• Review + decision	~May
• Step 2: full proposal submission	~June
• Review + decision	~by Sept/Oct
• Start of funding	~ Dec-May*

*depending on the schedule of the national funding organisation

*Note: EC needs to receive information 30 days before launch,
launch of cofunded call asap after the start of the COFUND (M1)*



Funding mode and funding commitment (CA)

What finance mode do you use?

Real/Virtual common pot or Mixed Mode

- **Mixed model** e.g. 50% of EC contribution as real common pot for gap filling
 - „Ideally 30%-50% of the EC contribution will be allocated to Gap filling”
 - “Ideally, a given partner should not receive more than 50% of its national contribution and
 - given partner should not receive more than 25% the total EC common pot.”
 - „The decision about utilization of any remaining budget will be taken by the CSC in accordance with the final funding decision.
In case of a *highly detrimental situation* to the overall goals [...] the above given principles will be reviewed by the CSC.” (i.e. 10% fixed return)
- National funding commitments should reflect the potential of the national research community



The evaluation process of NEURON

Two-step evaluation (mandatory in co-funded call)

- **1st step:**

- Formal check by Joint Call Secretariat
- National eligibility check (i.e. special requirements, budget limits ,..)
- International peer review, remote (3 written votes per proposal, if possible)
- *process to be decided by the consortium, e.g. review at national level possible (not controlled by the EC)*

- **2nd step:**

- International peer review panel meeting

- Evaluation criteria:

- Excellence
- Impact
- Quality and efficiency of the implementation

Subcriteria and evaluation/rating system can be individually specified

Rebuttal step may be added



The evaluation process of NEURON - Reviewers

How to find suitable reviewers?

- „Usual suspects“ in the scientific field
- Recommendations of partners
- Online search

Allocation of reviewers

- Make sure *all required expertise* is represented (interdisciplinary projects)
- Should be done by partners with scientific background
- Usually using web-based tool (submission system e.g. pt-outline)



The evaluation process of NEURON - Decisions

1st stage decision:

- Based on ranking list of evaluation (overall score)
 - Set threshold of mean score
 - Rules for high deviations may be needed
- Balance committed funding and expected demand ~2-3 x oversubscription
 - Pay attention to single “outliers” with exceptional oversubscription
- Widening for inclusion of new/additional partners from countries with low initial success rate (at this stage relevant for EU contribution)

← Use this opportunity for necessary adjustments

2nd stage decision:

- Proposals must be ranked according to the evaluation results of the PRP meeting
 - Selection for funding must be made on the basis of this ranking
- ⇒ No “jumping” allowed, an Independent Observer will be present to verify procedures as part of the EC monitoring



How many proposals in final selection list

- Selection list should be longer than the sum that qualifies for the EU-TOP-UP agreed in the EU-Contract
- Possible recommendations:
 - Only forward twice as many projects to full proposal stage as funding was committed nationally to the transnational evaluation
 - Try to create a large group of projects with the same ranking by means of steering the reviewers

Timing

If possible, arrange for a long break between ranking and selection process to work out some optimised scenaria



Recommended proposals

Ranking table: Instructions matter

NEURON's aims:

- fund the best projects
- fund as many projects as possible
- not to fund low quality projects

- The Peer Review Panel makes a **funding recommendation** (→ ranking list)

Acronym	Preliminary Rank	Final Rank	Category
Amaryllis	1	1	A
Apple	1	1	A
Apricot	1	1	A
Bunny	1	4	A
Anise	5	5	A
Artichoke	5	5	A
Asparagus	7	5	A
Banana	7	8	B
Barracuda	7	8	B
Basil	7	8	B
Beetle	7	8	B
Aubergine	12	8	B
Bamboo	12	8	B
Bee	12	8	B
Begonia	12	8	B
Birch	12	8	B
Blackfly	12	8	B
Bulldog	12	8	B
Bumblebee	12	8	B
Buxus	12	8	B
Celeriac	12	8	B
Chamomile	12	8	B
Chili			C
Coriander			C
.		.	
.		.	
.		.	

Recommended for funding
(excellent)



Recommended for funding (very good)



= flexibility zone

Not recommended for funding



Recommended projects = Selection list

1) Identify the blocking situations

Project Rank	Total Project Budget	Funder 7	Funder 8	Funder 9	Funder 10	Funder 15**	Funder 16	Funder 17	Funder 18	Funder 19	Funder 20*	Funder 21**	Funder 22
1	548.526								249.213				299.313
1	532.763						200.000		83.292				249.471
1	807.125		282.142								225.000		299.983
4	395.000	200.000								195.000			
4	643.828		299.646		240.000						104.182		
4	322.806		298.485						24.321		0		
4	948.222				370.000						295.000		283.222
4	965.326		300.000								430.046		235.280
9	794.001	199.000			297.429								297.572
10	750.000	200.000		100.000	300.000					150.000			
10	704.643		299.935					105.000					299.708
10	355.000	100.000						105.000				150.000	0
10	738.000		288.000		300.000					150.000			0
10	745.264				300.000	150.000							295.264
10	673.200		300.000			150.000					223.200		0
10	530.113	180.113					200.000			150.000			0
10	477.000		300.000										177.000
10	1.288.000	590.000	300.000							150.000			248.000
10	504.990		299.990	100.000				105.000					
10	890.921	300.000	300.000										290.921
10	794.097	394.423	299.674	100.000									0
10	406.000	172.000		100.000					134.000				



Blocking situations

Identify & mend blocking, if possible

Mind legal status of single partners

Project #	Total Project Budget	Funder 7	Funder 8	Funder 9	Funder 10	Funder 15*	Funder 16	Funder 17	Funder 18	Funder 19	Funder 20*	Funder 21*	Funder 22
1	548.526								249.213				299.313
1	1.081.289						200.000		83.292				249.471
1	1.888.414		282.142								225.000		299.953
4	2.283.414	200.000	282.142							195.000			848.767
4	2.927.242	200.000	581.788		240.000						329.182		848.767
4	3.250.048	200.000	880.273		240.000						329.182		848.767
4	4.198.270	200.000	880.273		610.000						624.182		1.131.989
4	5.163.596	200.000	1.180.273		610.000						1.054.228		1.367.269
9	5.957.597	399.000	1.180.273		907.429						1.054.228		1.664.841
10	6.707.597	599.000	1.180.273	100.000	1.207.429						1.054.228		1.664.841
10	7.412.240	599.000	1.480.208	100.000	1.207.429			105.000			1.054.228		1.964.549
10	7.767.240	699.000	1.480.208	100.000	1.207.429			210.000			1.054.228	150.000	1.964.549
10	8.505.240	699.000	1.768.208	100.000	1.507.429			210.000			1.054.228	150.000	1.964.549
10	9.250.504	699.000	1.768.208	100.000	1.807.429	150.000		210.000			1.054.228	150.000	2.259.813
10	9.923.704	699.000	2.068.208	100.000	1.807.429	300.000		210.000			1.277.428	150.000	2.259.813
10	10.453.817	879.113	2.068.208	100.000	1.807.429	300.000	400.000	210.000			1.277.428	150.000	2.259.813
10	10.930.817	879.113	2.368.208	100.000	1.807.429	300.000	400.000	210.000			1.277.428	150.000	2.436.813
10	12.218.817	1.469.113	2.668.208	100.000	1.807.429	300.000	400.000	210.000			1.277.428	150.000	2.684.813
10	12.723.807	1.469.113	2.968.198	200.000	1.807.429	300.000	400.000	315.000			1.277.428	150.000	2.684.813
10	13.614.728	1.769.113	3.268.198	200.000	1.807.429	300.000	400.000	315.000			1.277.428	150.000	2.975.734
10	14.408.825	2.163.536	3.567.872	300.000	1.807.429	300.000	400.000	315.000			1.277.428	150.000	2.975.734
10	14.814.825	2.335.536	3.567.872	400.000	1.807.429	300.000	400.000	490.826			1.277.428	150.000	2.975.734

	Total	Funder 7	Funder 8	Funder 9	Funder 10	Funder 15	Funder 16	Funder 17	Funder 18	Funder 19	Funder 20*	Funder 21	Funder 22
Budgets (earmarked)	12.503.000	2.000.000	3.000.000	200.000	2.000.000	400.000	500.000	210.000	500.000	670.000	923.000	800.000	1.300.000

#Project	Total	Funder 7	Funder 8	Funder 9	Funder 10	Funder 15**	Funder 16	Funder 17	Funder 18	Funder 19	Funder 20*	Funder 21**	Funder 22
1	548.526	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	249.213	0	0	0	299.313
1	1.081.289	0	0	0	0	0	200.000	0	332.505	0	0	0	548.784
1	1.888.414	0	282.142	0	0	0	200.000	0	332.505	0	225.000	0	848.767
4	2.283.414	200.000	282.142	0	0	0	200.000	0	332.505	195.000	225.000	0	848.767
4	2.927.242	200.000	581.788	0	240.000	0	200.000	0	332.505	195.000	329.182	0	848.767
4	3.250.048	200.000	880.273	0	240.000	0	200.000	0	356.826	195.000	329.182	0	848.767
4	4.198.270	200.000	880.273	0	610.000	0	200.000	0	356.826	195.000	624.182	0	1.131.989
4	5.163.596	200.000	1.180.273	0	610.000	0	200.000	0	356.826	195.000	1.054.228	0	1.367.269
9	5.957.597	399.000	1.180.273	0	907.429	0	200.000	0	356.826	195.000	1.054.228	0	1.664.841
10	6.707.597	599.000	1.180.273	100.000	1.207.429	0	200.000	0	356.826	345.000	1.054.228	0	1.664.841
10	7.412.240	599.000	1.480.208	100.000	1.207.429	0	200.000	105.000	356.826	345.000	1.054.228	0	1.964.549
10	7.767.240	699.000	1.480.208	100.000	1.207.429	0	200.000	210.000	356.826	345.000	1.054.228	150.000	1.964.549
10	8.505.240	699.000	1.768.208	100.000	1.507.429	0	200.000	210.000	356.826	495.000	1.054.228	150.000	1.964.549
10	9.250.504	699.000	1.768.208	100.000	1.807.429	150.000	200.000	210.000	356.826	495.000	1.054.228	150.000	2.259.813
10	9.923.704	699.000	2.068.208	100.000	1.807.429	300.000	200.000	210.000	356.826	495.000	1.277.428	150.000	2.259.813
10	10.453.817	879.113	2.068.208	100.000	1.807.429	300.000	400.000	210.000	356.826	645.000	1.277.428	150.000	2.259.813
10	10.930.817	879.113	2.368.208	100.000	1.807.429	300.000	400.000	210.000	356.826	645.000	1.277.428	150.000	2.436.813
10	12.218.817	1.469.113	2.668.208	100.000	1.807.429	300.000	400.000	210.000	356.826	795.000	1.277.428	150.000	2.684.813
10	12.723.807	1.469.113	2.968.198	200.000	1.807.429	300.000	400.000	315.000	356.826	795.000	1.277.428	150.000	2.684.813
10	13.614.728	1.769.113	3.268.198	200.000	1.807.429	300.000	400.000	315.000	356.826	795.000	1.277.428	150.000	2.975.734
10	14.408.825	2.163.536	3.567.872	300.000	1.807.429	300.000	400.000	315.000	356.826	795.000	1.277.428	150.000	2.975.734
10	14.814.825	2.335.536	3.567.872	400.000	1.807.429	300.000	400.000	490.826	356.826	795.000	1.277.428	150.000	2.975.734

3) use your flexibility

Ranking list vs. finances

What are your limitations in financial terms:

EC grant maximum = EC contribution (33% of project costs)
+ units costs for additional activities (max. 20% of the EC grant)

but has a fixed maximum (e.g. 6.7 Mio. €)
& not all partners are eligible for EC contribution

How many projects do you need to fund to

- *Secure management costs*
e.g. to secure 3 Mio. € for management, it requires ~9 Mio. € national project costs
- *Maximize EC contribution*
e.g. to receive 6,7 Mio. € EC grant ~17 Mio. € national project costs are required



Project selection

- same rank => prioritization can be done according to the following criteria:
 1. *Use of national funding (individually limited, to be maximized in total)*
 2. *Number of represented countries*
 3. *Number of groups from underrepresented countries*

In case that the requested budget exceeds the earmarked budget of a funding organisation **EU Top-Up funding may be used to fill these funding gaps** as specified in the Consortium Agreement.



Negotiations

1. Increase of national contribution
 - Increase conditional for specific projects?
 - Fundraising
2. Cuts in projects - How to implement?
 - Linear cuts in all (national) projects?
 - Reviewer recommendation for a particular project?
3. Cuts in management costs
4. Waiver „reimbursement“ („fixed return“)
5. Exchange of staff between countries
 - Negotiations with both funders involved, and PIs
6. Other measures ...



Project monitoring and reporting

- **Monitoring of call implementation:**

- EC receives the PRP ranking list and list of funded projects:
data on each participant (principal investigator) and abstracts
- Report from an independent observer
- signed commitment on availability of funds for the selected projects from each consortium partner participating in the joint call



Project monitoring and reporting

- **Monitoring of funded projects**

- reporting system: joint annual reports /final report
(national reports might be required additionally)
- Call results and their dissemination: # submitted proposals, applicants, funded projects
 - overall success rate, overall statistics
 - Countries
 - ...
- After the call: Analysing impact of joint calls
- Conducted by the joint call secretariat or partner
(own workpackage with own budget)



Lessons leant

- Good practice in call implementation must consider impartiality, transparency, and confidentiality
- Documentation is essential
- Communication is essential, too
- There is no one procedure for all calls, flexibility is necessary

JPco-fuND

