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## GUIDE FOR EVALUATOR – FIRST CALL

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Co-Funded Brain Circulation Scheme



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## Guide for Evaluator

### 1. CoCirculation2 Program

The objective of CoCirculation2 is to enhance the career development of 100 Experienced Researchers wishing to diversify their individual competence through advanced training, international and intersectoral mobility opportunities through incoming mobility into Turkey. The triple 'i' dimension is applied to the program, with the objective to strengthen the effect of the fellowship on the researchers' careers. All fellowships must have an international component, and intersectoral and interdisciplinary elements in each project are highly encouraged.

### 2. Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria

#### 2.1. Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility criteria apply to the applicant, to the host organisation and the research proposal to be submitted by ERs presented below:

#### Eligibility criteria for the applicants<sup>1</sup>

1. Applicants must be Experienced Researchers, i.e. researchers who, at the time of the relevant deadline for submission of proposals, are in possession of a doctoral degree or have at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience.
2. Applicants may be of any nationality or age.
3. Applicants must comply with the mobility rule that applies to them, either the standard mobility rule or the flexible mobility rule.
  - a. Standard mobility rule: ERs must be non-residing in Turkey for more than 12 months in the three years prior to the relevant deadline for submission of proposals. Short stays which does not exceed 20 days in total in a year and compulsory national service are not counted. This standard mobility rule applies to all applicants not being eligible for the flexible mobility rule.
  - b. Flexible mobility rule: ERs must not have resided or carried out the main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Turkey for more than 36 months in the 5 years immediately before the call deadline. Short stays which does not exceed 20 days in total in a year and compulsory national service are not counted.
  - c. The flexible mobility rule will apply to four groups of researchers:
    - Applicant with refugee status. To benefit from the flexible mobility rule, researchers must have refugee status in accordance with the Turkish regulatory system at the time of the relevant deadline for submission of proposals, and principles laid down by the Geneva Convention.
    - Applicants with non- academic host organizations. To benefit from the flexible mobility rule, applicants must apply with a non-academic host organization.
    - Career restart applicants. To benefit from the flexible mobility rule, applicants must have had a career break in research, i.e. they must not have been active in research for at least 12 months prior to the relevant deadline for the submission of proposals.
    - Reintegration applicants. For applicant wishing to benefit from the flexible mobility rule for reintegration must be a long-term resident (Long-term residence means a period of full-time research activity in Turkey at least 5 consecutive years.) of Turkey. Applicants must in addition to this rule also move or have moved directly from a non-EU country to Turkey.

<sup>1</sup> Definitions as provided in the MSCA IF Guide for Applicants 2017 apply



It should be noted at this point that proposals from applicants benefitting from the flexible mobility rule will be evaluated together with other applications, in the scientific panel they apply for. No earmarked budget will be made available for these groups.

#### Eligibility criteria for the host organisations

1. The main host organization must be an academic or a non-academic research institute in Turkey with a high international research reputation.
2. Secondment host organizations must be an academic or non-academic institute of high quality in Turkey or abroad.
3. Supervisors are expected to be team leaders (or equivalent) of the team in which the fellow will work, and should have an excellent scientific profile.

#### Eligibility criteria for the research proposal

1. The proposal must be submitted before the Call deadline, through the online system eBİDEB. All proposals must be in English.
2. The proposal must be complete.
3. All proposals must adhere to the ethical issues policy of CoCirculation2, and must contain a completed Ethical Issues table.

Table 2.1 Eligibility criteria

### 2.2. Non-Eligibles

Researchers cannot receive double funding from TÜBİTAK. To this end researcher who are currently supported by any of TÜBİTAK program are not eligible to receive another funding from CoCirculation2 Fellowship.

Successful applicants from previous CoCirculation2 cannot apply to this Scheme.

Any Turkish national who has mandatory obligation in Turkey as a condition of any previous fellowship and/or support cannot apply to the CoCirculation2.

### 2.3. The evaluation criteria, sub-criteria, weights and thresholds

The detailed elements applying to the selection of applicants and their proposal are as follow:

Excellence Weight 50%	Impact Weight 30%	Quality and efficiency of implementation Weight 20%
Quality and credibility of the research/innovation project; level of novelty, inter/multidisciplinary and gender aspects	Enhancing the potential and future career prospects of the researcher	Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan
Quality and appropriateness of the training and of the two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host	Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results	Appropriateness of the allocation of tasks and resources
Quality of the supervision and of the integration in the	Quality of the proposed measures to	Appropriateness of the management structure



team/institution	communicate the project activities to different target audiences	and procedures, risk management
Capacity of the researcher to reach or re-enforce a position of professional maturity		Appropriateness of the institutional environment (infrastructure)
1	2	3
Priority in case of ex aquo		
An overall threshold of 70% will be applied to the total weighted score		

Table 2.3 Evaluation criteria, weights and thresholds

#### 2.4. Evaluation scores

Experts are asked to evaluate all proposed following the evaluation criteria and sub criteria mentioned above. Scores may be awarded to one decimal point. They will award a score of a minimum of 0 (proposal fails to address the criterion or is incomplete), through 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent) points. The sub criteria will assist the experts with the evaluation; the experts are not required to provide a score for each sub criterion.

Score	Explanation of the score
0	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. Proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
3	Good. Proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
4	Very Good. Proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
5	Excellent. Proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Table 2.4 Evaluation Scores and Explanations

### 3. Evaluation and Selection Process

The aim of this guide is to assist those involved in the evaluation of the CoCirculation2 Scheme. The evaluation and selection phases of the fellowship proposals follow four steps:

- Eligibility check,
- Remote peer review evaluation and ethics check,
- Selection committee meeting (including consensus) and ethics check,
- The funding decision.



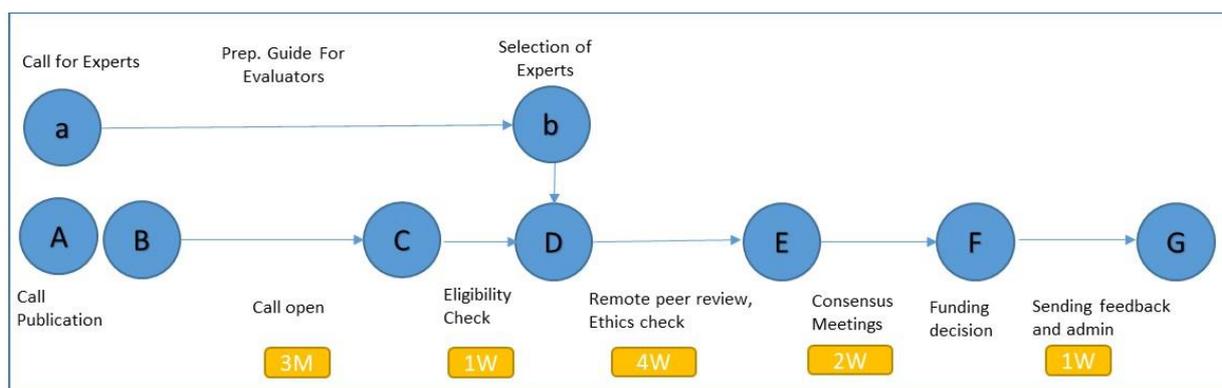


Fig 1.1 Evaluation and selection process

The time for completing the evaluation process, from the deadline of the calls to the funding decision takes 8 weeks in total.

### 3.1. Eligibility check

All applications are checked for eligibility by the Call Secretariat. The eligibility criteria are clearly described in the Guide for Applicants as well as on the call website. All proposals that are considered ineligible is excluded from evaluation.

### 3.2. Remote evaluation

All proposals that have fulfilled the eligibility criteria are evaluated by a peer review system carried out by panels of independent experts. The Experts Database of TÜBİTAK and European Commission Expert Database will be used for the selection of assessment committees. Call Secretariat will nominate the experts based on the match between research field and key words of the submitted proposals and the expertise and key words of the experts.

The CoCirculation2 Scheme Call Secretariat will send an e-mail to invite the potential experts to the evaluation and to give prior information on the procedures. In this initial step, the evaluators will also be asked to disclose potential conflicts of interest.

Each eligible proposal will be sent to 3 experts, this is the selection committee for each proposal. Each expert will read and evaluate a maximum of 10 proposals per call. Each expert will write an Individual Assessment Report and send this to the Call Secretariat. The experts will have 2 weeks to prepare their assessment reports.

### 3.3. Selection Committee meeting and consensus

Following the submission of the assessment reports, the experts will be invited to finalize the evaluation process through participating in consensus meetings of max 1 hour. Where possible, experts are invited to TÜBİTAK Headquarters for a face-to-face meeting. TÜBİTAK will also organise remote attendance to these meetings through Webex, Skype or otherwise for those experts that are located far from Ankara. There will be a consensus meeting for each proposal.

Each selection committee will have an appointed Chair who will be an experienced expert or a TÜBİTAK staff member. Chairs will not take part in the actual evaluations but monitor and lead the panel discussion procedure to ensure that the evaluation is transparent and objective. The three experts are invited to come to a consensus regarding the comments and the scores. When consensus cannot be reached, the Chair will moderate the discussion and the voting for the score. One independent expert in each selection committee will act as rapporteur, who will summarize the comments, scores and consensus of the experts, and draft the final Evaluation Summary Report (ESR). This ESR will be sent to the applicant. Following this phase, the Call Secretariat will accumulate all final scores in one overall Ranked List of the proposals

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of the proposals.

### **3.4. The funding decision**

The Call Secretariat will prepare a proposal for a funding decision, based on the Ranking List and the available budget for each call. The final funding decision will be approved by the TÜBİTAK. Since the budget will be allocated by a ranking list (starting from the applicant getting the highest mark to the one getting lowest one) there will also be a reserve list which will wait till the unused funds become available and will come into force if there occur any withdraw.

In each call 25 fellows will be funded. However, the number of the supported researchers per call will remain flexible depending on the available budget and quality of applications. When the total scores of the proposals are equal, priority will be based on the scores received for individual evaluation criteria. If necessary, any further prioritizations will be based on other appropriate characteristics, to be decided by the Steering Committee, related to the contribution of the proposal to the European and Turkish Research Areas and/or general objectives mentioned in the work programme (e.g. inter-sectoral mobility, international co-operation, favourable employment and working conditions). Whether or not such a prioritization is carried out will depend on the available budget and the quality of applications.

## **4. Composition and Organisation of Selection Committees**

### **4.1. Selection of experts**

The most important requirement for each expert is a solid scientific background, complemented by other requirements such as experience in assessing and/or implementing fellowships and experience in transnational mobility and career development issues.

Independent experts for the selection committees must fulfill the following criteria:

- Having registered to the Experts Database of TÜBİTAK,
- Having at least five publication, published in last 5 years, in a peer reviewed journal in the field of the submitted proposal,
- Having the capability to evaluate the proposals in English,
- Willing to sign the declaration of confidentiality, the declaration of no conflict of interest and a declaration against discrimination of researchers on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, nationality or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic condition.

Independent experts for the selection committees have the following desirable characteristics:

- Experience in management of fellowships / research projects
- Experienced in aspects of training and career development of researchers

### **4.2. Balance of experts**

Each selection committee will exist of three assessors. The first requirement for each expert is a solid scientific background. In any case, the selection committees will include at least two experts whose scientific concentration is in the field of the submitted proposal. This may be complemented by a 3rd expert with expertise in an adjacent or overall scientific field.

The Call Secretariat has the responsibility to select experts from various nationalities. Accordingly, at least two of the experts in a selection committee will have a non-Turkish nationality or a non-Turkish residency. Attention will also be given to achieving gender balance.

For multidisciplinary proposals, the Call Secretariat will endeavour to find experts to cover all scientific aspects of the proposal. In these cases, additional experts may be asked to review the



proposal. For all proposals with industry relevance, TÜBİTAK will endeavour to appoint at least one expert with industry background to that proposal.

#### **4.3. Declarations that must be signed by the Independent Expert**

- Declaration of confidentiality. Experts may not discuss any (part of any) proposal or applicant with others, including the applicant and host organisation(s), during any stage of the selection process. The Declaration also requires the experts to be independent, impartial and objective with regards to the proposal and applicant.
- Declaration of non-discrimination of researchers. All experts must sign a declaration against discrimination of researchers on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, nationality or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic condition.
- Declaration of No conflict of interest. CoCirculation2's definitions are based on those from the Grants Manual H2020, please see below. In case of a potential conflict, the Call Secretariat shall decide whether the expert is accepted or not. In case a conflict of interest becomes apparent during the selection process, the Call Secretariat will remove the expert from the proposal and appoint a new expert to this proposal. In addition to the expert signing this declaration, the Panel Management system also checks for conflicts of interest.

### **5. Alignment of the ethical rules with the ethical principles for Horizon 2020**

TÜBİTAK fully recognizes that research activities funded within the frame of the CoCirculation2 Scheme must respect fundamental National and European ethical principles.

In line with general Horizon 2020 rules, the CoCirculation2 will not fund research which deals with:

- Research activity aiming at human cloning for reproductive purposes;
- Research activity intended to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable (research related to cancer treatment of the gonads can be financed);
- Research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

In addition, conform the rules of the People programme, areas which require ethical approval are:

- Informed consent
- Human embryonic stem cells
- Privacy and data protection
- Use of human biological samples and data
- Research on animals
- Research in developing countries
- Dual use (possible military/terrorist application)

#### **5.1. Treatment of ethical issues in an applicant's research**

Applicants will be asked to complete an ethical issues table (identical to the Ethics Issues table in Horizon 2020 projects) in their proposal. In this table, applicants will declare whether any of the activities specified in the table will be conducted during the lifetime of the project. Even if they don't, evaluation committee may also decide that ethical committee approval may be needed.



## **5.2. Ethical committees and regulatory bodies in Turkey**

Turkey does not have a national ethics committee for Research and Technological Development. Therefore, Local Ethics Committees have an important role in decision-making on ethical issues. Local Ethics Committees are placed in universities and some of the research organizations have their own ethics committees.

For ethical issues on Human Embryonic stem cells, the applicant will apply to the Central Ethics Committee which has been established within the Ministry of Health. Any application for financing for research on human embryonic stem cells will include, as appropriate, details of licensing and control measures that will be taken by the competent authorities, as well as details of the ethical approval that will be provided.

In addition, TUBITAK will contact the Project Officer in Research Executive Agency (REA) before the fellowship will be awarded, providing an explanation of why research into hESC is required, and agrees not to provide funds to any such projects before the European Commission Ethics Review accepted the project and an agreement from the Programme Committee has been communicated to TUBITAK by the REA.

The CoCirculation2 is a scheme for incoming mobility which offers secondment options, and thus research projects funded under the scheme will be carried out mostly in Turkey and abroad for a duration up to 6 months for approved secondments. Taking its supranational structure into account, Horizon 2020 Ethical Rules were adopted by TÜBİTAK. TÜBİTAK will ensure, through the signing of the fellowship acceptance form with the host organisations, that these ethical rules are respected. As a result, the European Commission's rules on ethical issues will be binding for the host organisations and, through them, for the fellows and their research projects.

## **6. Conflict of Interest of the Experts**

At the time where the selection committees are established, the experts are asked to declare any real or potential conflict of interest. Each expert is provided with an overview of circumstances that result in a disqualifying or potential conflict of interest.

A disqualifying conflict of interest exists if an expert:

- was involved in the preparation of a proposal
- benefits directly or indirectly if a proposal is accepted
- has a close family or personal relationship with an applicant
- is a director, trustee or partner or is in any way involved in the management of an applicant
- is employed or contracted by one of the applicants or any named subcontractors. Such an expert may, however, exceptionally be invited to take part in the evaluation session, if all of the following apply
  - the expert works in a different department/laboratory/ institute from where the action is to be carried out
  - the bodies operate with a high degree of autonomy and
  - such a role is justified by the requirement to appoint the best available experts and by the limited size of the pool of qualified experts (and this is documented)

A potential conflict of interest may exist if an expert:

- is employed or was employed by one of the applicants in the last 5 years
- is involved in a contract or grant agreement, grant decision, membership of management structures (e.g. member of management or advisory board etc.) or research collaboration with an applicant or a fellow (or had been so in the last 5 years)
- is in any other situation that could cast doubt on their ability to participate in the evaluation of the proposal impartially (or that could reasonably appear to do so in the eyes of an external third party)



Whenever one of these situations is valid, the expert will not evaluate the proposal of the applicant which has the risk to create conflict of interest. The experts will have to sign a Code of Conduct, which includes a declaration of no conflict of interest and a declaration of confidentiality. The experts who do not sign the Code of Conduct will not be allowed to work as an evaluator.

