ESF Peer Review Support

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ESF Peer Review Support

AIMS OF REQUESTS:

• Internationalisation of selection criteria and expert base
• Enlarging expert base
• Bench-marking national schemes
• Ensuring objectivity and fairness when several national organisations involved
• Outsourcing Peer Review
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TYPES OF SUPPORT REQUESTED:
• Provision of data: information on experts
• Extended support agreements for end-to-end process: call management, Peer Review, outcome (ranking lists, recommendations)

REQUESTS FROM:
• National funding organisations
• International funding organisations
COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH TOOL KIT

• End-to-end peer review process
• Additional support:
  - at the call and selection stage: common pot agreements, support in financial negotiations, policy considerations (e.g. national priorities)
  - at implementation stage: networking and coordination of funded projects

REQUESTS FROM:
• European programmes involving several national funders (‘common pot’)
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Provision of data - Examples

• Helmholtz Gemeinschaft: candidates for chairs and members of 5 review panels for Strategic Evaluation of the Helmholtz-Research Field “Earth and Environment”

• KNAW: reviewers for Academy professorship candidatures; different research fields

• Agencia Nacional de Evaluación y Prospectiva (ANEP), agency of the Spanish Ministry of Education and Research: experts for benchmarking (self-evaluation) of ANEP peer review process (parallel evaluation of proposals); all research fields
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Full cycle - Examples

• European Young Investigator Award (EURYI)
• ESA ELIPS (European Life and Physical Sciences in Space) Programme: ESF will conduct end-to-end review process over several years; different research fields using space as research environment
• ERA-Net EUROPOLAR Consortium: pilot application of the ESF Tool Kit for the PolarCLIMATE Programme; ESF will develop the Call, procedures and guidelines for 2-stage project selection including Peer Review
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WHY ESF?

ESF Peer Review characterised by:
• Supra-national and interdisciplinary character of peer review
• Standards must meet MO expectations (divers national and disciplinary cultures)
• Criteria and procedures must be clear and transparent for applicants from divers national and disciplinary cultures
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WHY ESF?

- Quality controlled and standardized Peer Review process
- Quality controlled database of international referees (including the ESF Pool of Reviewers)
- Experienced Science Officers
ESF Review process standards include:

- Consistent rules and procedures across instruments and disciplines
- Special arrangements for treatment of trans-committee (multidisciplinary) proposals:
  - coordinated collaboration of disciplinary units;
  - target number of reviews per proposal reached across the board including trans-committee proposals
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CONDITIONS

• Support for evaluation exercises with significant impact on development of European research
• Provision of data free of charge but an exchange expected
• Extended support contracts based on cost recovery mechanism
• Guidelines for minimum lead time for a request based on number of referees requested per Scientific Unit
ESF Pool of Reviewers 2007

• 1916 researchers covering all fields of research registered (2320 in 2006)
  ✓ Former reviewers (nominations from ESF MOs, selection by ESF scientific staff)
  ✓ ESF awardees in a wide sense
  ✓ Ex-committee members

• Volunteers for reviewing up to 5 proposals over a 1 year period

• Consent to be recommended to other organisations
Impact

- Greater accuracy of scientific expertise profiles: significantly fewer refusals related to inaccurate expertise
- Increased effective availability of reviewers: ‘no reply rate’ decreased from 35% to 13%
- Increase in the response rate: from 43% to 64%
- Significant decrease in the office time spent on the review process
ESF Pool of Reviewers 2007

Geographical Distribution

- 84% ESF MO Country
- 16% Non ESF MO Country
ESF Pool of Reviewers 2007

Pool membership from ESF MO Countries

- United Kingdom
- Germany
- France
- Netherlands
- Italy
- Spain
- Europe
- Belgium
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Finland
- Austria
- Denmark
- Other South/East. Europe
- Norway
- Hungary
- Portugal
- Czech Republic
- Other Western E. countries

Individuals
ESF Pool of Reviewers 2007

Distribution by broad area of expertise

- Biomedicine (EMRC)
- Life, Earth and Environm. Sci. (LESC)
- Physical and Eng. Sci (PESC)
- Humanities (SCH)
- Social Sciences (SCSS)
- LESC-PESC
- EMRC-LESC
- SCH-SCSS
- LESC-SCSS
- EMRC-SCSS
- EMRC-LESC-PESC
- Other Transdisc. 2 Domains
- Other Transdisc. 3/3+ Domains
Monitoring the quality of reviews

1. Timely: Was the review sent in time?
2. Respectful: Is the review, including the language used, respectful of proposers?
3. Adequate: Is the review adequate to be used in the review process?
4. Substantiated: Are scores (grades) sufficiently substantiated?
5. Useful for panels: Did the rapporteur and/or CG/SC/RP find the assessment useful?
ESF Pool of Reviewers

Issues for collaboration:

- Expanding the Pool – exchange of referees
- Improving participation of ‘new countries’ (starting with social sciences; MO secondment to be announced)
- Referee area of expertise classification (classification of research disciplines)
- Monitoring the quality of reviews and referees