



Joint Call on Food Crops and Biomass Production Technologies

GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Contact:

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1. The EIG CONCERT-Japan Joint Call evaluation process

1.1. Aim and scope of the EIG CONCERT-Japan Joint Call

The aim of this EIG CONCERT-Japan Joint Call is to bring together Japanese and European researchers to collaborate on a joint thematic research area of mutual interest, and thus pave the way for long-lasting cooperation between research institutions from Europe and Japan.

This EIG CONCERT-Japan Joint Call will focus on the following thematic area of **“food crops and biomass production technologies”**.

Each project consortium that submits a proposal for funding should consist of at least 3 partners, one from Japan and two from two different European countries participating in the Joint Call. A partner should be a research institution, university or company. The number of partners in a project consortium should be appropriate for the aims of the research project and reasonably balanced in terms of multilateral participation. Applications should clearly demonstrate the added value of working together.

In general, beneficiaries eligible for funding in this EIG CONCERT-Japan Joint Call are public and private legal RTD entities, higher education institutions and non-university research establishments, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)¹ and other kinds of organisations depending on the individual national/regional regulations and restrictions of each participating funding institution. The participating funding institutions will individually decide on the eligible beneficiaries in their countries/regions according to their national/regional regulations and restrictions.

1.2. Overall evaluation process

A **Joint Call Secretariat** (JCS) is entrusted with the overall preparation and operational management of this EIG CONCERT-Japan Joint Call. The Joint Call Secretariat is located at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and will be the main contact for the evaluators and the Scientific Committee members. **National/Regional Contact Persons** (NRCPs) will be located in each country/region participating in the Joint Call. Their main role is to support the Joint Call Secretariat in the overall implementation of the Joint Call and to execute all necessary tasks at national/regional level.

A four-step evaluation process will be implemented for proposals submitted within this EIG CONCERT-Japan Joint Call.

Step 1: Eligibility check

The Joint Call Secretariat and the National and Regional Contact Persons will check the eligibility of all submitted proposals taking into consideration the general Joint Call criteria and the individual national/regional criteria respectively. If a partner is found to be non-eligible by one of the funding organisations, the entire proposal may be rejected without further review.

¹ SMEs are enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euros, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euros

The **general eligibility criteria** are:

- Appropriate length and layout of the proposal (maximum number of pages adhered to and use of template for the Project Description)
- Inclusion of all necessary information in English
- Eligibility of all project partners
- Participation of at least three partners (beneficiaries), from a minimum of two different eligible European countries and Japan
- Eligible thematic focus
- Eligibility of requested funding
- Inclusion of a confirmation letter from the external sponsoring institution in case of additional partners that need to secure their own funding

The national/regional eligibility criteria of the participating funding institutions are given in the Call Text (see Part 2).

Step 2: Online evaluation of proposals

Each proposal is assessed by at least two evaluators. Based on these online evaluations, a preliminary ranking list is prepared.

Step 3: Meeting of the Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee is composed of high-level scientists nominated by the funding institutions participating in the Joint Call and is chaired by an independent chairperson. It will review the ranking list based on the online evaluations and recommend to the Funding Organisations Forum a list of proposals to be funded. Evaluators who have already participated in the online evaluation cannot be nominated as members of the Scientific Committee.

Step 4: Meeting of the Funding Organisations Forum

The Funding Organisations Forum consisting of representatives of the funding institutions participating in the Joint Call will take the final decision on the proposals to be funded on a consensus basis, based on the recommendations of the Scientific Committee. It will discuss and approve the recommended projects according to the ranking list and available budget.

1.3. Online evaluations

International, independent evaluators will evaluate the submitted proposals according to evaluation criteria defined by the Funding Organisations Forum. The evaluators are selected on the basis of their scientific experience, irrespective of their nationality, age and affiliation.

In general, evaluators need to have skills and knowledge appropriate to the relevant scientific and technological fields in which they are asked to assist. In addition, evaluators must have the appropriate English language skills required for evaluation and a proven experience in one or more of the following areas or activities:

- Management or evaluation of S&T projects

- International cooperation in science and technology
- Use of the results of research and technological development projects
- Technology transfer and innovation

Each proposal is assessed by at least two evaluators. Each evaluator will be attributed 4 to 5 proposals for evaluation. Evaluators have access to the full project proposals assigned to them as well as the call documents.

The allocation of proposals to the evaluators is done by the Joint Call Secretariat according to congruence between the proposal's topic and the experience of the evaluators. The evaluators are asked to submit their evaluations online in English, using PT-Outline, a specific web-tool for online evaluations. Submission of a printed version of the evaluations is not necessary.

Evaluators who cannot undertake an evaluation due to a conflict of interest should inform the Joint Call Secretariat which will then assign the proposal to another evaluator.

The online evaluation will take place from approximately 16th May to 17th June 2016 (see 1.9. Indicative timetable). The evaluators will receive an amount of 50 Euro per proposal evaluated. The payment will be administered and transferred by Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST). After the procedure is completed, all evaluators will be informed about the outcome of the evaluation and about the final selection of proposals for funding.

For any matters related to the evaluation process, evaluators are asked to communicate with the Joint Call Secretariat only.

1.4. PT-Outline evaluation tool

PT-Outline is an online tool for electronic data processing via web-forms to be accessed at:

- https://secure.pt-dlr.de/ptoutline/expert/EIG_JC1JAPAN

All evaluators will be registered in PT-Outline by the Joint Call Secretariat. Starting from 16th May 2016, each evaluator will receive his/her own login and password in order to proceed with the online evaluation.

Access is limited to the proposals the evaluator is assigned to. Changes in the review reports are possible up until the deadline for finalising the evaluations (17th June 2016).

For more information on how to use the PT-Outline evaluation tool, please refer to section 2.

1.5. Evaluation criteria and scoring system

Proposals should be evaluated according to the three evaluation criteria of this EIG CONCERT-Japan Joint Call:

1. *Scientific excellence (scoring from 0 to 5 points)*

- Sound research concept and quality of objectives
- Ambition, innovative potential and uniqueness of the research idea

- Scientific track–record / potential of the partners (including publications in scientific journals)
- Scientific standing of the organisations the applicants belong to

2. Impact of project results (scoring 0 to 5 points)

- Impact of the project on the scientific field/community
- Contribution to enhancing innovation capacity and integration of new knowledge
- Expected exploitation and dissemination of the results
- Added value of the multilateral project consortium

3. Implementation (scoring 0 to 5 points)

- Quality and effectiveness of the methodology
- Feasibility of the work plan (in relation to governance, adequate budget, resources, time schedule)
- Collaborative interaction and complementarity of project partners
- Expected sustainability of the collaboration
- Interdisciplinarity
- Involvement of early-stage researchers and gender balance

The **scoring system** is as follows:

5: EXCELLENT – The proposal fully satisfies all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

4: VERY GOOD – The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are possible.

3: GOOD – The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but improvements are necessary.

2: FAIR – There are serious inherent weaknesses in relation to the criterion in question.

1: POOR – The criterion is addressed in an inadequate and unsatisfactory manner.

0: FAILS / INCOMPLETE INFORMATION – The proposal fails to address the criterion in question or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.

In addition to the score, a succinct but substantial explanatory comment should be provided for each criterion (in the open text fields). The comments should take the form of a statement and explanation of key strengths and key weaknesses, in the light of the criteria.

1.6. The Scientific Committee

A Scientific Committee will be established for the thematic area of this EIG CONCERT-Japan Joint Call (“food crops and biomass production technologies”). The Scientific Committee will **rank the proposals based on the online evaluations and internal discussion and recommend to the FOF a list of proposals to be funded.**

The Scientific Committee will be chaired by an independent chairperson. The chairperson should help the Scientific Committee members to reach a consensus on the ranking of the proposals and to ensure that the evaluation process is conducted properly, fairly and thoroughly. The chairperson only has an advisory function and is not expected to express views on the proposals under examination. The chairperson should also make sure that the evaluation criteria are adhered to. The chairperson of the Scientific Committee will report on the discussions of the Scientific Committee at the meeting of the FOF and will support them with their decision-taking.

The members of the Scientific Committee – having an overview of all submitted proposals – should make sure that each proposal benefits from a fair evaluation and that the online evaluations are coherent with the assigned scores. The Scientific Committee will review all proposal evaluations and discuss problematic cases (e.g. proposals for which the two online evaluators gave considerably different scores) as necessary to confirm an agreed score. Finally, they will rank and recommend proposals for funding, based on the evaluation reports and internal discussion within the Scientific Committee.

The scientific evaluation of the proposals and their ranking according to excellence are the main tasks of the Scientific Committee. Any budgetary issues resulting from the fact that the EIG CONCERT-Japan Joint Call is financed from a virtual common pot will be handled by the Funding Organisations Forum.

Process:

- The Joint Call Secretariat will establish a pre-ranking of the proposals on the basis of the results of the online evaluations, as indicated in the following table:

Online Evaluation Score	Category	Description	Consequence
14 ≤ X ≤ 15	A	Excellent	Proposals are recommended for funding
12 ≤ X < 14	A-	Very good	Proposals are recommended for funding
10 ≤ X < 12	B	Good	Proposals may be funded in case resources are still available. However, small changes to the projects' work plan, budget, etc. may be necessary.
6 ≤ X < 10	C	Fair	Proposals are not recommended for funding
< 6	D	Poor	Proposals fail to adequately address the criteria or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information and are therefore not recommended for funding

- The Scientific Committee members will be given access to the full project proposals, the reviews and the pre-ranking list at least 10 working days before the scheduled Scientific Committee meeting in Paris. In preparation for the meeting, every member of the Scientific Committee will be assigned a certain number of proposals by the Joint Call Secretariat.
- For each proposal a **first and a second reader** will be chosen. Both readers are requested to prepare an **overall evaluation** with short comments on the proposal and its corresponding evaluations, as well as a judgement on whether the overall score for the proposal (consisting of the average of the scores of both evaluations) is justified. The overall evaluations should be submitted to the Joint Call Secretariat in time before the Scientific Committee meeting.

- Both readers will briefly **report their views on the respective proposals during the Scientific Committee meeting** to stimulate discussions among all Scientific Committee members. The Scientific Committee members are highly encouraged to make themselves familiar with all proposals; they should at least read in detail the proposals to which they are assigned as first or second reader.
- The Scientific Committee should establish a ranking list of the proposals grouped according to the following system:

<p>Category A: Proposals are recommended for funding, divided into two sub-categories:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A (Excellent) A- (Very good)</p> <p>Category B: Proposals may be funded in case resources are still available, but changes to the projects' work plan, budget, etc. may be necessary</p> <p>Category C: Proposals are not recommended for funding</p> <p>Category D: Proposals fail to adequately address the criteria or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information and are therefore not recommended for funding</p>

- To accompany the final ranking list, short summary remarks on the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal will also be prepared by the Scientific Committee.

The final outcome of the evaluation, including the overall score and a summary version of the key remarks of the evaluators will be made available to the project leaders of the proposals after the evaluation and selection procedure has been completed.

The meeting of the Scientific Committee is scheduled for **July 2016 in Paris**.

All costs for the participation of the members of the Scientific Committee meeting (i.e. costs for travel and accommodation) will be paid for by their nominating funding organisation. In addition, all Scientific Committee members will receive an honorarium payment of 150 Euro for their participation, paid for by Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST).

1.7. The Funding Organisations Forum

The Funding Organisations Forum, comprising representatives of each participating funding institution, will take **the final decision on the proposals to be funded on a consensus basis**, based on the recommendations of the Scientific Committee. It will discuss and approve the recommended projects according to the ranking list and the available budget. The Chair of the Scientific Committee will assist the Funding Organisations Forum with their decision-taking and if necessary provide detailed information about the ranking decision and the scientific value of the proposals.

The Funding Organisations Forum meeting, during which the funding decision will be taken, will be held in **July 2016**, back-to-back with the Scientific Committee Meeting. In preparation for this meeting, the ranking list of the Scientific Committee and minutes of their meeting, along with the overall Joint Call budget breakdown will be sent to the Funding Organisations Forum members. The ranking list will also highlight any bottlenecks that might arise due to the limited funds of the participating Joint Call funding institutions.

At their meeting, the Funding Organisations Forum members will discuss and approve the recommended projects according to the ranking list and the available budget. It is expected that about 5 projects will be funded in total.

If the number of proposals recommended for funding by the Scientific Committee is smaller than can be supported by the overall call budget, only part of the available budget will be used. If the number of proposals recommended for funding by the Scientific Committee is greater than can be supported by the individual budget commitments from certain countries, the Funding Organisations Forum will discuss alternative options for funding of the recommended proposals.

Funding gaps may arise in the case that one of the funding institutions participating in the Joint Call runs out of money to support all recommended proposals. If one of the partners participating in a project consortium cannot be financed by their respective funding institution due to such budget restraints, and no other possibility of financing is available, the consortium and thus the proposal as a whole will be rejected. The members of the Funding Organisations Forum should be mandated to decide upon funding in the name of their institution. They are also the main actors in negotiating a solution in case of discrepancies between requested and available budget.

The Funding Organisations Forum meeting will result in a final list of projects that will be funded in the frame of this EIG CONCERT-Japan Joint Call.

1.8. Conflict of interest and confidentiality

Evaluators and members of the Scientific Committee should not be put in a situation in which their impartiality might be questioned, or where the suspicion could arise that recommendations are affected by elements that lie outside the scope of the review.

A **conflict of interest** in evaluating a proposal exists when an applicant and/or an evaluator/Scientific Committee member have:

- a. Relatives, personal ties or conflicts
- b. Close scientific collaboration, e.g. implementation of joint projects or joint publications within the past 3 years
- c. Direct scientific competition with personal projects or plans
- d. Close proximity, e.g. member of the same scientific institution or impending change of the reviewer to the institution of the applicant or vice versa
- e. Teacher/student relationship, unless a following independent scientific activity of more than 10 years exists
- f. Dependent relationship in employment during the past 3 years
- g. Participation in current or recently concluded professorial appointment proceedings
- h. Current or prior common activity in advisory bodies of the applicant's institution, e.g. scientific advisory boards

i. Personal economic interests in the funding decision

Evaluators/Scientific Committee members who encounter a conflict of interest should inform the Joint Call Secretariat immediately, which will then assign the proposal to another evaluator.

All proposals, the correspondence forwarded to evaluators/Scientific Committee members, as well as the evaluation reports themselves, must be treated as **strictly confidential**. Identities of applicants must not be revealed to third parties under any circumstances. Therefore, the responsibilities of an evaluator/a Scientific Committee member may only be undertaken personally and may not be delegated to third parties. Furthermore, an evaluator/a Scientific Committee member should not identify himself/herself as an evaluator to an applicant or to any third party.

Accepting the nomination to become an evaluator/a Scientific Committee member for this Joint Call constitutes agreement that the scientific content of any and all proposals cannot be exploited for personal or other scientific purposes.

After the end of the evaluation process and once the funding decision has been taken, the funding agencies participating in this Joint Call reserve the right to publish the names of the evaluators/Scientific Committee members, but without indicating which project each evaluator/Scientific Committee member has evaluated.

1.9. Indicative timetable

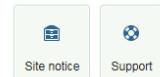
Publication of the Call for Proposals	Wednesday 10th February 2016
Deadline for proposal submission	Thursday 28th April 2016 (deadline of 12:00 (midday) CET / 20:00 JST)
Eligibility check	2nd – 13th May 2016
Online evaluation	16h May – 17th June 2016
Scientific Committee meeting	July 2016
Funding Organisations Forum meeting	July 2016
Preparation of national/regional funding contracts	August – September 2016
Start of projects	October 2016
Interim project reporting 1	September 2017
Interim project reporting 2	September 2018
Final project reporting	September 2019

[* This is an approximate implementation schedule and is subject to change]

2. Instructions on how to use the PT-Outline evaluation tool



Step 1: To access the evaluation tool please use the login and the password sent to you by the Joint Call Secretariat, and go to the following links:

- https://secure.pt-dlr.de/ptoutline/expert/EIG_JC1JAPAN



Step 2: When accessing the website you will have an overview of the proposals you are asked to evaluate.

For safety reasons your session is terminated automatically after about two hours of inactivity.

Each proposal can be visualized by clicking on the icons  and  in order to download the following documents:

- the **data sheet** with the names and contact information of the project partners and the main general project information including a short abstract.
- the **project description** with information on the project, the time plan and the project partners' CVs.

cover page session timeout: 12:16 o'clock (UTC+0h)

For evaluation click on the proposal ID which opens the form below the table. Save your changes by clicking the appropriate buttons. The proposal can be opened by clicking the red PDF document icon. Please click the "Finalize" button to finalize your review. The colouring in the overview table helps you to identify the status of individual reviews. Red: no or incomplete review, yellow: review is present and can be finalized, green: review is finalized.

Show all entries Search:

ID	group	PDF	proposal documents	Keywords	Project acronym	Organisation short name	Organisation type	Country	result
EIG_JC1JAPAN-006	Experts review			Biotechnology	JST-RARP	RARI	Public research organisation	Other	-

Showing 1 to 1 of 1 entries

Step 3: To open the evaluation form, please click on the proposal ID in the red box (e.g. EIG_JC1JAPAN-006). A form will appear below the proposal.

Step 4: The screenshot below shows the assessment form starting with the part “Conflict of Interest”. Please indicate if you identify any conflict of interest, and if so, please contact directly the EIG CONCERT-Japan Joint Call Secretariat to inform it.

EIG_JC1JAPAN-006 - Experts review

Save Save and close Finalize

Experts review

All fields marked with * are mandatory.

Please note deadline to complete your evaluation is 17th June 2016

Conflict of interest:

You should refrain from reviewing the application if a conflict of interest exists or could be perceived to exist. Peer reviewers who encounter a conflict of interest should inform the EIG CONCERT-Japan Joint Call Secretariat as soon as possible which will then assign the proposal to another peer reviewer.

A conflict of interest in evaluating a proposal exists if one of the following criteria applies to the evaluator:

- Relatives, personal ties or conflicts
- Close scientific collaboration, e.g. implementation of joint projects or joint publications within the past 3 years
- Direct scientific competition with personal projects or plans
- Close proximity, e.g. member of the same scientific institution or impending change of the reviewer to the institution of the applicant or vice versa
- Teacher/student relationship, unless a following independent scientific activity of more than 10 years exists
- Dependent relationship in employment during the past 3 years
- Participation in current or recently concluded professorial appointment proceedings
- Current or prior activity in advisory bodies of the applicant's institution, e.g. scientific advisory boards
- Personal economic interests in the funding decision

The following scoring system is used to evaluate the project proposals:

5: **EXCELLENT** – The proposal fully satisfies all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.
4: **VERY GOOD** – The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are possible.
3: **GOOD** – The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but improvements are necessary.
2: **FAIR** – There are serious inherent weaknesses in relation to the criterion in question.
1: **POOR** – The criterion is addressed in an inadequate and unsatisfactory manner.
0: **FAILS / INCOMPLETE INFORMATION** – The proposal fails to address the criterion in question or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.

In addition to the score, a succinct but substantial explanatory comment should be provided for each criterion (in the open text fields). The comments should take the form of a statement and explanation of key strengths and key weaknesses, in the light of the criteria. The sum of the points will then be calculated automatically.

Please note: All fields have to be filled out. Please make sure not to exceed the allowed number of characters (spaces are also counted as characters) but you are

Step 5: Please read carefully the description of the three criteria against which you are asked to assess the proposals:

1. Scientific excellence,
2. Impact of project results,
3. Implementation.

For each of the three criteria please insert:

- **a short but consistent commentary**, between 500 and 3000 characters (spaces are also counted as characters).
- **a score** between 0 (fails / incomplete information) and 5 (excellent). The scoring system is detailed under the conflict of interest statement.

All fields are mandatory.

EIG_JC1JAPAN-006 - Experts review

Save Save and close Finalize

Criterion 1: Scientific excellence

- Sound research concept and quality of objective
- Ambition, innovative potential and uniqueness of the research idea
- Scientific track-record / potential of the partners (including publications in scientific journals)
- Scientific standing of the organisations the applicants belong to

Criterion 1: Scientific excellence *
characters left: 3000

Criterion 1: score *
(from 0 to 5)

Criterion 2: Impact of project results

- Impact of the project on the scientific field/community
- Contribution to enhancing innovation capacity and integration of new knowledge
- Expected exploitation and dissemination of the results
- Added value of the multilateral project consortium

Criterion 2: Impact of project results *
characters left: 3000




Criterion 2: score *
(from 0 to 5)

After you have given a commentary and a score for each of the three criteria, please give a **short comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the overall project**.

You can also add **additional comments** if needed (no obligation to fill it out).

Do not forget to **save** your comments by pressing the button "**Save**" at the top of the form. Then a green bar will temporarily appear to confirm the action.

The colouring of the proposal ID box in the overview table helps you to identify the status of your evaluations:

- : no or incomplete review,
- : review is present and can be finalized
- : review is finalized.

Step 6: When you have finished your evaluation, please press the blue button “**Finalize**” at the top of the tab, next to “Save” and “Save and close”. The colour of the proposal ID will then turn into green in the overview table.

Step 7: Please proceed in the same way with evaluating the other proposals that have been assigned to you by pressing on another project ID to open a new evaluation form.

After finalization of all of your evaluations, you can leave the PT-Outline tool by clicking on the button “Logout” at the top left-hand side of the website.

For any questions related to the content of the EIG CONCERT-Japan Joint Call and the evaluation procedure, please contact the Joint Call Secretariat:

Ms. Sandrine Plaud-Guérin

E-mail: concert-japan-ics@cnrs.fr

Phone: +33(0)1 44 96 40 11

For technical support with the PT-Outline webtool, please contact:

Mr. Sunay Basyigit

E-mail: ptoutline@dlr.de

Phone: +49 (0)30 67 055-705