



CIVIS3i

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions COFUND

Postdoctoral Fellowships

Call 2

Guide for evaluators

January 2023 – v.2

GUIDE FOR EVALUATORS



This project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement N°101034324



Evaluators are invited to regularly check the CIVIS3i website for any updates of the guides and templates.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. CIVIS3i IN BRIEF

The CIVIS3i Postdoctoral Fellowships is a comprehensive fellowship programme providing excellent experienced researchers the opportunity to conduct frontier research and receive diversified training in an environment of scientific excellence and state-of-the-art facilities, under the supervision of renowned academics and with the support of an extensive collaboration network of academic and non-academic institutions. CIVIS3i is funded in part by four universities (Aix Marseille University - AMU, Université libre de Bruxelles - ULB, Sapienza Università di Roma – SUR, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid - UAM) of the CIVIS Alliance and in part by the European Commission through the H2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions COFUND Programme.

Candidates may choose to be hosted and develop their research at one of the [CIVIS3i four recruiting universities](#) (AMU, ULB, SUR, UAM), where their main advisor must be affiliated, and mobility within the whole CIVIS alliance (the ten universities + 24 non-academic partners) will be facilitated. Candidates are required to include elements of intersectoral mobility and interdisciplinarity in their application, such as a 3-month secondment and short visits in one of the academic or non-academic partners, and a co-supervision at one of the 10 CIVIS Universities (For more information see the [CIVIS website](#)). Secondment provisions and co-supervision should be included at the proposal stage if possible (recommended); however, if such elements are not fully defined in the proposal, the laureates will be accompanied on these dimensions once selected. Fellows are expected to participate in outreach activities related to their research. The competitive fellowships are designed to further the education and training of the fellows with primary emphasis placed on the individual's research promise, and to boost their future career inside or outside academia.

CIVIS3i proposes two calls within a five-year programme, the first in 2021 and the second in 2022. To impact the CIVIS3i Alliance post-doctoral international mobility as widely as possible, **the calls are open to all fields of research**, organised into the [5 hubs of CIVIS](#) and linked to global societal challenges. The hubs integrate multiple topics, giving the fellows the freedom to conduct research on a wide range of subjects, for instance:

– In **Health**: Nutrition and food; Ageing; Well-being; Epidemiology; Immunology; Public Health; Medical Studies; Neurosciences; Pharmacology; Sport and movement science

– In **Climate, Environment, Energy**: Geology; Oceanography; Biodiversity; Migrations and settlements; Sustainable energy; Climatology; Pollution; Astronomy.

– In **Digital and Technological Transformation**: Artificial Intelligence; New Media; Technologies & Engineering; Processes; Music; Learning; Sciences; Digitalization.

– In **Society, Culture and Heritage**: History; Literature; Sociology; Archaeology; Arts; Migrations; Religions; Philosophy; Political science; Languages.

– In **Cities, Territories and Mobilities**: Smart cities; Urbanism; Geography; Architecture; Transports; Logistics; Migrations; Governance.

Candidates must contact their potential advisor before submitting their application in order to discuss the research project and build an outstanding proposal. For each call, CIVIS3i will fund 16

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excellent researchers for a research project with a duration of 24-months, reaching a total of 32 fellowship positions over five years. The fellowships are offered by the four recruiting CIVIS3i universities, and are distributed as indicated in the table below:

| University | University acronym | Country | Number of fellowships offered per Call | Number of fellowships offered over entire CIVIS3i Programme |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------|--|---|
| University of Aix Marseille | AMU | France | 5 | 10 |
| Université libre de Bruxelles | ULB | Belgium | 4 | 8 |
| Universidad Autónoma de Madrid | UAM | Spain | 4 | 8 |
| Sapienza Università di Roma | SUR | Italy | 3 | 6 |
| Totals | | | 16 | 32 |

The present Guidelines for Evaluators are published as CIVIS3i is compliant with the code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers, the European charter for researchers and with the ethical procedures and regulations of the European Commission. The evaluation of postdoctoral proposals is carried out on a first stage by two independent external evaluators (peer-reviewers) and on a second stage by the CIVIS3i Selection Committee, composed of fourteen experts and the coordinator of the CIVIS3i programme, with support from the CIVIS3i management team. The evaluation and selection process will comply with the [Guide for Applicants – Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions, Co-funding of Regional, National, and International Programmes \(COFUND\)](#).

The experts evaluate eligible proposals on a personal basis, not as representatives of their employer, their country or any other entity. They are expected to be independent, impartial and objective, and to behave in a professional manner throughout the process.

Before commencing their work, evaluators will have to read and accept a non-disclosure agreement of confidentiality and conflict of interest (Annex I of this Guide for Evaluators). This agreement requires experts to maintain strict confidentiality with respect to the entire evaluation process, during and after the evaluation.

Under no circumstance may an evaluator attempt to contact an applicant on his/her own account, either during the evaluation or afterwards.

All eligible applications are evaluated against the criteria established by the CIVIS3i Call for Postdoctoral Fellowships. Evaluation is performed individually and remotely by the peer-reviewers and by the Selection Committee, according to the Evaluation Grid provided on the secure [CIVIS3i evaluation portal](#).

Under the terms of this agreement, the experts must disclose beforehand any known conflicts of interest, and immediately inform the CIVIS3i Project Manager (see section 9 for contacts) if such conflicts become apparent during the course of the evaluation. The CIVIS3i Management Team is

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composed of the Project Coordinator, the Project Manager, Local Contact Points and the Financial Manager. The CIVIS3i Management Team and the CIVIS3i Selection Committee will take whatever action is necessary to eliminate such conflicts, as described in section 3 of the present Guide for Evaluators.

1.2. SECOND CALL TIMELINE

The timeline of the Second Call of CIVIS3i is the following:

Call opening: Wednesday, July 27th, 2022 at 14:00 Paris time

Call closing: Thursday, October 27th 2022 at 17:00 Paris time

Eligibility check: July 27th – November 2022

Evaluation: November 2022 – February 2023

Information to applicants: February 2023

Start of projects: Between February (earliest) and July 2023 (latest)

Fellowship duration: 24 months

Any change in this expected timeline will be announced in the CIVIS3i website.

2. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EVALUATORS

- The task of an evaluator is to participate in the confidential, fair and unbiased evaluation of each proposal according to the criteria of the CIVIS3i programme. The evaluator must invest her/his best efforts to do so and subsequently deliver a high-quality work.
- The evaluator works as an independent person. Such a person is deemed to work in a personal capacity and, in performing the work, does not represent any organisation, entity or country.
- The evaluator must use appropriate, non-discriminatory language related to evaluation of proposals.
- The evaluator commits him/herself to strict confidentiality and impartiality concerning his/her tasks. If an evaluator has a direct or indirect connection with a proposal, or other interest in any way connected with a proposal, or has any other allegiance which may impair his/her neutrality with respect to a proposal, the evaluator must declare such facts to the CIVIS3i Management Team as soon as he/she becomes aware of such circumstances. The CIVIS3i Management Team and the Selection Committee will ensure that, where the nature of any relation is such that it could threaten the evaluator's neutrality, he/she will not participate in the evaluation of the respective proposal and, if necessary, the competing proposals.
- Evaluators may not discuss any proposal with others, including other evaluators and members of the Selection Committee.
- The Project Manager will review the whole selection process to ensure that fairness has been displayed at all levels of the evaluation and in achieving consensus. She will record the

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agreed points and produce a selection consensus report detailing the decision of the CIVIS3i Selection Committee.

- Evaluators may not communicate with applicants. No proposal may be modified during the evaluation process.
- Evaluators will log their evaluations to the CIVIS3i Project Manager through the tool provided on the submission and evaluation portal.
- The evaluator will be held personally responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of any documents or electronic files sent, including the returning, erasing or destroying of all confidential documents or files upon completing the evaluation as instructed. Evaluators may seek further information (i.e.: on the internet, specialized databases, etc.) for the purpose of completing the examination of proposals. Evaluators must not disclose the contents of proposals or information on applicants to third parties (i.e.: colleagues, students, etc.).
- Evaluators are required to comply strictly with any rules defined by the CIVIS3i Selection Committee to ensure confidentiality of the evaluation. Failure to do so may result in the exclusion from current and future evaluation processes.

3. HANDLING OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

By reading and accepting the code of conduct for evaluators, and after reviewing the project summaries, the evaluator will notify the CIVIS3i Management Team of any possible conflict of interest.

3.1 HOW DO I FLAG A CONFLICT OF INTEREST?

At any time, you can contact the project manager and discuss a possible conflict of interest, ask for advice on whether your situation requires that you withdraw from the review or not, or inform about your conflict of interest/withdrawal (see section 9. Contact information on this Guide). In such cases, the Management Team appreciates if you can recommend another suitable expert – your name is not mentioned as recommender and the CIVIS3i staff conducts the usual quality-control before contacting any expert.



On the online portal using the flag icon (see images above), where you can describe the reason for the conflict of interest. In such cases, you will be contacted directly by CIVIS3i staff, as needed. The flag icon can be found i) on the First Evaluation Stage – Review Acceptance step, ii) on the First Evaluation Stage – Project Evaluation step, and, iii) on the First Evaluation Stage – Consensus step.

3.2 WHAT IS A CONFLICT OF INTEREST?

Conflict of interest can be direct or indirect. In a direct conflict of interest, an evaluator is involved in at least one of the following or similar situations regarding at least one of the postdoctoral projects for which evaluation is requested within the same Call for proposals:

- A person is an applicant, a team member, or consultant in one of the proposals, or was involved in the preparation of such a proposal.

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- A person is in a kinship relation with any of the persons involved in the proposal.
- A person has a personal interest or direct financial gain and would therefore benefit from one of the proposals being funded or not funded.

A person in a direct conflict of interest cannot participate in the evaluation process.

In an indirect conflict of interest, an evaluator is involved in at least one of the following or similar situations:

- A person has some other professional/business relation with at least one of the proposals
- A person is a competitor to the proposal in a scientific or business sense
- Persons who have been in a student/professor relationship with the person involved in the proposal, having less than 5 years of scientific autonomy or in any other professional relationship in the last 3 years.
- A person who has co-authored publications with the project bearer in the last 5 years.
- A person that may have any other relationship with a project bearer affecting his/her impartiality.

A person in an indirect conflict of interest cannot be an evaluator, but can act as an observer on the Selection Committee meeting.

Members of the CIVIS3i Management Team and the CIVIS3i Selection Committee, and their families may not compete in the frame of the CIVIS3i Calls for Postdoctoral Fellowships. In case of other forms of personal relationships between a member of the CIVIS3i Management Team and/or the CIVIS3i Selection Committee and the project bearer, the CIVIS3i Selection Committee member and/or the CIVIS3i Project Management Team member must disclose such possible conflicts of interest on one or more proposals once information of the proposals applying for selection is presented.

The CIVIS3i Management Team or Selection Committee member who is involved in a conflict of interest regarding a specific proposal must remain neutral when a decision on financing is being made, must leave the premises while a discussion concerning the selection of a project is in progress, must not comment on the evaluation process results or disclose information that might influence the CIVIS3i Selection Committee's decision on selection. If the CIVIS3i member is in a conflict of interest with regard to any of the proposals, he/she will not participate in the selection of the proposal in question.

If the evaluator is in a direct conflict of interest with at least one of the proposals, the CIVIS3i Selection Committee will exclude him/her from the immediate evaluation procedure. If an evaluator is in an indirect conflict of interest, he/she may not participate in the evaluation of the particular proposal.

In case a conflict of interest is not fully described in this document, the CIVIS3i Selection Committee will make the final decision as to whether the particular evaluator may participate in the evaluation procedure or not, and whether to accept the evaluation report.

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4. SELECTION OF EVALUATORS

The CIVIS3i Management Team will oversee the selection process for the selection of the external experts to evaluate the postdoctoral projects. The CIVIS3i Management Team will choose suitably qualified evaluators for the evaluation.

The evaluators will be identified from French, European and international organisations and will be selected to fit the scientific scope of the submitted proposals. A balance of nationalities, gender and expertise will be sought, making sure that the panel represents an international group of scientists. This will ensure impartiality during the evaluation of the applications.

Sources for finding potential evaluators are listed below:

- Scientific databases such as successful EU and international project coordinators
- Recommendations from the CIVIS3i Selection Committee
- Recommendations from successful and eminent scientists
- other COFUND expert databases

The CIVIS3i Selection Committee will regularly update the list of experts capable of evaluating the proposals. The list is drawn up to ensure:

- A high level of expertise
- An appropriate range of competencies, including the appropriate English language skills required for the proposals to be evaluated
- An appropriate balance between academic and industrial expertise and users
- A reasonable gender balance
- A reasonable distribution of geographical origins
- Regular rotation of experts
- Absence of any conflict of interest

In constituting the lists of experts, the CIVIS3i Selection Committee also takes account of their abilities to appreciate the industrial and/or societal dimension of the proposed work.

5. EVALUATION AND SELECTION

The evaluation of the application file consists of an eligibility check, a remote expert evaluation (double peer-revision), and an interview with the Selection Committee.

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5.1. ELIGIBILITY CHECK

Once submitted the applicant will receive an email of acknowledgment of receipt of proposal. Eligibility criteria for each proposal are checked before the evaluation begins. Eligibility is checked by CIVIS3i staff. If you spot an issue, please inform the CIVIS3i project manager. Proposals which do not fulfil the eligibility criteria will not be included in the evaluation. Within the CIVIS3i Call for Postdoctoral Fellowships, a proposal will only be considered eligible if it meets all of the following conditions:

Eligible applicants are experienced researchers:

- Holder of a doctoral degree at the date of the Call deadline, 27 October 2022,
- Applicants without a doctoral degree, provided they have documented full-time equivalent research experience of minimum 4 years prior to 27 October 2022
- Candidates cannot have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the recruiting country (France for AMU, Belgium for ULB, Italy for SUR or Spain for UAM) for more than 12 months in the three years immediately before the Call deadline.

Full-time equivalent research experience is measured from the date when a researcher obtained the degree allowing him or her to embark on a doctorate. This needs to be proven by the employment (or equivalent) contracts.

Career breaks are excluded. Career breaks refer to periods of time where the candidate was not active in research, regardless of his/her employment status. The rule is checked by reference to the employment status of the candidate in the domain of research.

Proposals that surpass the 10-limit page for the Research and Training Project will not be eligible for evaluation.

5.2. DOUBLE PEER REVISION

After the closing date of this call for postdoctoral proposals, each external expert will have to evaluate and score the eligible proposals submitted, according to the criteria and questions on the reviewers' evaluation form (template provided as Annex 2 at the end of these guidelines). The CIVIS3i Management Team will rank the proposals based on the average of the scoring by the two independent experts.

The three evaluation criteria are **Excellence**, **Impact** and **Implementation** with a respective weight of 50, 30 and 20 % in the final score. The sub-criteria corresponding to each criterion are described in Annex 2. Each sub-criterion includes the "**aspects to be taken into account**". **The same aspect is not included in different criteria, so it is not assessed twice.** Within the excellence criterion, evaluators are invited to consider the track record of the candidate in relation to the level of experience. A maximum of 32 candidates will be shortlisted for interview with the Selection Committee. However, in case of *ex-aequo* (equal scores), it is possible that more than 32 applicants may need to be interviewed.

Each application will be sent to two (2) independent external referees specialised in the scientific domain of the proposal. In some cases, for instance in highly interdisciplinary projects and other

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situations, an additional expert evaluator may be required; that is decided on a case-by-case basis. The selection of the experts is based on the following criteria:

- Adequacy of the disciplinary and thematic fields of the experts identified with the topic and two main disciplines of the submitted projects;
- Relevance of the expert's profile in regard to the programme's objectives and the nature of the submitted projects (participation in interdisciplinary and intersectoral research, participation in international project selection committees...);
- Scientific renown, assessed through number of citations greater than 500 for hard sciences (Web of Science), academic career superior to that of the candidate's, editorial responsibilities and awards;
- Active publication track-record in the specific field with several peer reviewed publications over the last ten years;
- Confirmation that the experts have (i) never co-published with the candidate (ii) have not co-published neither with the candidate's Postdoctoral advisor (or the leader of the research group in which the candidate has performed research in case no PhD has been obtained) nor with the local host at CIVIS3i in the five years prior to the evaluation process.

The experts will not be affiliated to the current institution of the candidate or to any of the institutions targeted by the candidate in their research project, the experts will be from other countries and they will sign a declaration of confidentiality, impartiality and absence of any conflict of interest with the project to be evaluated. The CIVIS3i management team will pay attention to reach a gender balance in the experts solicited for double-peer revision of the projects.

The external experts will receive the complete application file together with an evaluation sheet (Annex 2) and this guide for the evaluator. They will also receive a briefing on ethics guidelines to help them assess whether ethical implications of the projects have been properly addressed. They will be asked to provide scores for the evaluation criteria, as well as sufficiently detailed comments (Annex 2). The experts will evaluate the proposal "as is", i.e. not considering its potential if a series of modifications were made. Scoring corresponds to the following options (decimal values of 0.1 possible):

- **A score of 1.0 - Poor:** if the criterion is not adequately addressed or if there are serious inherent weaknesses
- **A score of 2.0 - Fair:** if the criterion is broadly addressed but reveals significant weaknesses
- **A score of 3.0 - Good:** if the criterion is well addressed with a number of shortcomings
- **A score of 4.0 - Very Good:** if the criterion is very well addressed with a small number of shortcomings
- **A score of 5.0 - Excellent:** if the criterion is fully and satisfactorily addressed and any identified shortcomings are minor.

Scores will be given to each sub-criterion (see Annex 2). The score of each criterion will be the average of the scores of the sub-criteria. A weight for each criterion will be applied and the weighted scores of the three criteria will be added to yield the total weighted score of the proposal for one evaluator. The CIVIS3i Management Team will review the results of the independent evaluations and be very attentive that the evaluation is well motivated. If the two independent evaluations differ by 3 points or more out of 5 on a given criterion, the two reviewers will be put in contact to discuss their opinion on the proposal, identify the points of disagreement and be given the opportunity to revise their own assessment. The final score of the proposal will be the average of the two separate external evaluations. The final score will be rounded up to the third decimal. The

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CIVIS3i Management Team will rank candidates based on the final score and prepare a shortlist of candidates based on the number of places available at each recruiting university. This ranking will be provided to the Selection Committee.

In case of equal scores, additional criteria will be applied, in the following order of priority:

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Priority will be given to the projects that have scored higher in the excellence criterion, then in the impact criterion and then in the implementation criterion. |
| 2 | Priority will be given to candidates from EU Member States and Associated Countries that are below 70% of the EU average (47.8) of the Composite Indicator in Research Excellence ¹ |
| 3 | Priority will be given to proposals where the fellow contributes to maintain the gender balance in the host research group. |
| 4 | Priority will be given to candidates that had a documented career break of at least 12 months prior to the deadline. |

The CIVIS3i project manager will ensure the quality of the peer-revisions, in particular that they are sufficiently justified in the comments.

Only proposals with a final score above 70/100 will be considered admissible for the next stage (interview by the Selection Committee).

5.3. SELECTION COMMITTEE INTERVIEWS

A Selection Committee will be organised that covers all of the [five CIVIS hubs](#) (Health; Cities, territories and mobilities; Digital and Technological transformation; Climate, environment and energy; Society, culture, heritage) and the four recruiting universities (AMU, ULB, SUR and UAM). The gender balanced Selection Committee will be composed by 14 members: 1 scientific representative from each of the four recruiting universities; 1 independent international expert per each of the five CIVIS hubs; 2 representatives of the CIVIS3i non-academic partners; 1 external international expert in interdisciplinary and intersectoral research, 1 external international expert in ethics in science and in scientific integrity; and 1 HR representative from AMU, the CIVIS3i coordinator University. The Selection Committee will be headed by a Selection Committee president, appointed by the rotating CIVIS presidency (every 6 months).

The Committee Members will receive a copy of the ranked applications, together with the corresponding reports from the double peer-revision (2 reports per candidate). The Selection Committee will interview the shortlisted candidates, in English, during the one month after the end of the peer-revision period. The **30-min interviews** will take place remotely via a secure video connection, technically organised by AMU. Candidates will have **10 min to present their research project**, their professional profile and expertise and may use a support (e.g., slides). A **15-min Questions & Answers** session will follow with the Selection Committee.

During the interviews, the Selection Committee will assess the soundness of the research proposals, the candidate's capacity to engage in scientific discussion, and their capacity to envision the

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[Research and Innovation Performance in EU Member States and Associated Countries 2014, p. 19](#)

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implementation of the research project. Specifically, the Committee will evaluate the candidates using four criteria (each graded on 5 points):

- Clarity and consistency of the presentation of their project
- Ability to take part in a scientific discussion and answer comments from the committee on scientific aspects of their project
- Ability to envision the implementation of an interdisciplinary and intersectoral project, to envision the conduct of the project in its environment, and potential ethical aspects
- Capacity to answer CV-related questions and discuss career options

The candidate's score from the interview will be used as a bonus ranging from 1 to 20 and added to the double peer-revision score. A final ranking of the candidates per host institution will be established on this basis. Should two proposals have the same final score with the bonus, per host institution, precedence will be given to those having rated better at the double peer-revision stage. The Committee will select 16 candidates. The rejected candidates will be either ranked in a reserve list or rejected if the quality of the applications is deemed insufficient. Candidates will be entitled to initiate a redress procedure as stated by the national law if they contest the recruitment procedure. Eligible candidates will receive an acknowledgement when they pass a selection phase.

The Committee will be able to provide recommendations to the candidates and to their advisors, in the Committee's final evaluation report. Such recommendations will allow the laureates to improve their project and unsuccessful candidates to improve for future applications. The Committee Members will not proceed to a separate evaluation of the proposals nor will they be able to change the ranking of the proposals on their own. All interviewed candidates will receive a report from the Selection Committee after the interviews.

There will be an independent evaluator to all stages of the selection process.

During the selection process and the implementation of the project, the Selection Committee, the postdoctoral advisor and the Project Management Team will engage to prevent any type of discrimination, not only from gender aspects but also taking into consideration age, disabilities, and return from a career break. CIVIS3i will guarantee, throughout the recruitment process of the fellows, that gender equality is respected by promoting genuine equal access opportunities between men and women, without, however, taking precedence over quality and competence criteria. Thus, gender equality will be promoted in CIVIS3i through a gender mainstreaming approach, with the following measures:

- The CIVIS3i Selection Committee will comply with the gender balance recommendation of the EC at the selection level by aiming at welcoming to the highest extent possible and with equal merits a reasonable gender balance between male and female fellows;
- Gender aspects and key reference documents will be included in the Guidelines for Evaluators available on the website;
- CIVIS3i will consider career breaks in the evaluation of the applications. The reasons for career breaks can be due to a variety of personal reasons, including pregnancy, childcare, national service, temporary career change, unemployment, illness and travel. Candidates are therefore encouraged to submit evidence-based CVs, reflecting a representative array of achievements and qualifications appropriate to the position;
- Together with gender issues, the Selection Committee and postdoctoral advisors will be attentive to the protection of equal opportunities at other levels, in order to make sure no discriminations occur because of nationality, age, or disability.



6. THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT EXPERTS

As an independent expert evaluator:

- You **are responsible for carrying out the evaluation of the proposals yourself and you are not allowed to delegate the work** to another person!
- You must close reports in the electronic system **within a given deadline**.
 - This is part of your contractual obligations!
 - The allowance/expenses you claim may be reduced or rejected otherwise.
- Significant funding decisions will be made on the basis of your assessment.
- If you suspect any form of misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, double funding), please report this to CIVIS3i staff.
- You need to comment on ethical aspects.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

INDEPENDENCE

- Experts evaluate projects in a personal capacity;
- Experts do not represent their employer, nor their country;

IMPARCIALITY

- Experts must treat all proposals equally and evaluate them impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants;

OBJECTIVITY

- Experts evaluate each proposal as submitted, meaning on its own merit, not its potential if certain changes were to be made;

ACCURACY

- Experts make their judgment against the official evaluation criteria and the call the proposal addresses and nothing else;

CONSISTENCY

- Experts apply the same standard of judgment to all proposals.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Expert evaluators must:

- **Not discuss evaluation matters** (e.g., content of proposals, evaluation results or opinions of fellow experts) with anyone, including:
 - o Other experts or CIVIS3i staff or any other person not directly involved in the evaluation of the proposal;

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- The sole exception: Your fellow experts who are evaluating the same proposal in a consensus group or Panel review.
- **Not contact partners** in the consortium, sub-contractors or any third parties;
- **Not disclose names** of your fellow experts;
- **Maintain confidentiality of documents, paper or electronic**, at all times and wherever you do your evaluation work (on-site or remotely).

7. ETHICS

Ethics is central to scientific integrity, honesty and clarity of science. This means that in any application submitted to the Horizon 2020 programme, including CIVIS3i Postdoctoral Programme, ethics issues must be identified and addressed. Compliance with the relevant ethics provisions is essential from the beginning to the end of the project and is an integral part of research funded by the European Union within Horizon 2020.

7.1. ETHICS ON THE APPLICATION

Applicants submitting research proposals for funding for CIVIS3i postdoctoral fellowships should demonstrate proactively in their proposal that they are aware of, and will comply with, ethical principles and applicable International, European and national law. As part of their application file, candidates are required to fill the H2020 Ethics Issues questions and if one or more ethical issues are flagged, they will be required to indicate what are the ethical implications of their project and explain how the issues will be addressed. The goal is to assess the ethical aspects of the research objectives, methodology and potential impact.

For awarded projects, ethics experts will identify the projects that require ethical approval at the national level (e.g., with regards to data protection, the conduct of clinical trials and animal welfare). The Ethics Review Procedure will focus on the compliance with ethical rules and standards, relevant European legislation, international conventions and declarations, national authorizations and ethics approvals, proportionality of the research methods and the selected fellows' awareness of the ethical aspects and social impact of their planned research. The ethics self-assessment and the explanations therein will not count towards the limit of 10 pages of the core proposal, the candidate's ethics self-assessment will be done via a form on the online submission system.

7.2. ETHICS EVALUATION

At the First Evaluation Stage, the double peer-revision, **expert evaluators are required to include an ethics evaluation**, in the form of a general comment, indicating, to the best of their knowledge, if there are any ethical issues not adequately addressed. This may include identifying ethical issues not raised in the application, and/or indicating if the measures proposed are adequate for the handling of the ethical issue(s) in question, and reference to the relevant national or international legislation. **Evaluators are required to consult the Ethics Briefings to be able to assess if ethical concerns have been properly addressed.**

- Experts have to screen the proposal for ethical issues;
- Comments related to ethics will be included in the evaluation reports;
- A proposal cannot be penalised on ethical grounds.

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7.3. ETHICS BRIEFING

Key sources of EU and international law are the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Convention on Human Rights and its Supplementary Protocols. Another important source is the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).

Main ethical principles:

- Respecting human dignity and integrity
- Ensuring honesty and transparency towards research subjects and notably getting free and informed consent (as well as assent whenever relevant)
- Protecting vulnerable persons
- Ensuring privacy and confidentiality
- Promoting justice and inclusiveness
- Minimising harm and maximising benefit
- Sharing the benefits with disadvantaged populations, especially if the research is being carried out in developing countries
- Maximising animal welfare, in particular by ensuring replacement, reduction and refinement ('3Rs') in animal research
- Respecting and protecting the environment and future generations

For further documentation on ethics, please visit the [EU Ethics guidelines](#).

All applicants were required to complete an **Ethics Issues Form** in the online application platform. **Expert evaluators will see the applicant's Ethics Self-Assessment as part of the application file.** If candidates replied YES to any question on the Ethics Issues Form, they were required to answer an **Ethics Self-Assessment**, which asks candidates to "describe how the project meets the EU relevant legislation on Ethics and the National legislation and good practices on research ethics". For more details, please refer to the H2020 "[How to complete your Ethics Self-Assessment](#)" guide.

Institutional ethics clearance (if relevant) was not required at submission stage. For successful proposals only, ethics approval will be necessary prior to the beginning of research activities that are subject to approval. The fellows will then receive guidance by the Department of Research Administration on the procedures to obtain institutional ethics approval and their projects will be monitored to ensure that the ethics obligations deriving from the approval are respected.

Main ethical Issues:

- RESEARCH ON HUMAN EMBRYO/FOETUS
- RESEARCH ON HUMANS
- PRIVACY
- RESEARCH ON ANIMALS
- RESEARCH INVOLVING NON-EU COUNTRIES (ICPC COUNTRIES)
- DUAL USE
- OTHER ISSUES

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The following fields of research are not eligible for funding under Horizon 2020 and cannot therefore be included in proposals:

- research activities directed at human cloning for reproductive purposes
- research activity intended to modify the genetic make-up of human beings that could make such changes heritable (apart from research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads, which may be financed)
- research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purposes of research or stem cell procurement, including the technique of somatic cell nuclear transfer
- research that leads to the destruction of human embryos.

Research on human stem cells (both adult and embryonic) may be financed — depending on both the content of the scientific proposal and the laws of the Member States involved. No funding will be granted for research activities that are prohibited in all Member States. No activity will be funded in a Member State where such activity is forbidden.

How do I identify if an ethical issue was adequately addressed by the applicant?

Check the following pdf with more detailed guidelines indicating in which cases applicants need to provide justifications and how to deal with research activities involving each of the above mentioned ethical issues:

https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/ethics/h2020_hi_ethics-self-assess_en.pdf

8. ONLINE EVALUATION PORTAL & SUPPORT MATERIALS

Experts will be contacted and invited by the CIVIS3i designated staff to register on the CIVIS3i Experts Database. Experts will be pre-registered on the CIVIS3i online portal by CIVIS3i staff and will receive an automatic email with an access link.

Experts are required to register on the online portal to access the application and online evaluation form. Registration includes defining a user name, email and password to access the evaluation portal. Experts are required to provide their evaluation online. Evaluations sent outside of the online evaluation portal will not be considered.

Experts are kindly asked to add the automatic CIVIS3i email address to your safe contacts list to ensure you receive all important notifications and review reminders and avoid delays:

noreply@mail.smapply.net

After log in, experts will see the Review Dashboard and all applications assigned to them. The review consists of the three steps described below. At each step, evaluators are required to submit their answers by clicking on "MARK AS COMPLETE". Experts will be able to save a draft of their review before submitting it.

First Evaluation Stage – Review Acceptance: This step consists of two "accept" checkboxes, to formally accept the confidentiality and no-conflict of interest agreements. In this step, experts

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can only see the General Information section of the application and not the full Research and Training Project, CV and other application sections.

Only after the two reviewers assigned to one application have completed this step, will the full application and evaluation form be accessible to the two reviewers, i.e., if one reviewer does not complete this step, the other reviewer will not be able to proceed to the Project Evaluation form.

Please complete this step as soon as possible

First Evaluation Stage – Project Evaluation: This step consists of the actual scientific evaluation form (see Annex II). At this step, experts will have access to the whole application file and sections. Experts may download the whole or parts of the application. This section is only visible to experts after both reviewers assigned to the application have completed and submitted the Review Acceptance form (see above). Once both reviewers have submitted the review on Project Evaluation, the Consensus step becomes visible (see next).

First Evaluation Stage – Consensus: This step consists of the consensus discussions among the two experts assigned to one application. This section is only available once both experts have finalised and submitted their Project Evaluation review. The content of this section will be part of the evaluation report sent to applicants.

Each of the above steps contains a practical Summarized Instructions pop-up window, accessible via the icon “(!) instructions”. In addition, expert evaluators will have access to the following support materials in the form of a **Toolkit for experts**:

- Guide for evaluators Call 2
- Evaluation form in editable format (.docx)
- Code of Conduct for Evaluators
- H2020 Ethics Guide
- Tutorial videos on using the evaluation portal
- Presentation “CIVIS3i-MSCA Evaluation Briefing”

Experts will be able to download their reviews.

9. CONTACT INFORMATION

All inquiries should be addressed to the CIVIS3i project manager

Dr. Joana Boavida, joana.boavida(at)univ-amu.fr

Direction de la Recherche et de la Valorisation - DRV
Aix-Marseille Université
63 La Canebière
13001 Marseille, France

Privileged language for communication will be English, but support can be provided in French, Portuguese, Italian and Spanish on request. This support will be preferably given through email exchange. In general, a policy of “answer within five (5) working days” will be applied in the

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framework of CIVIS3i. When a call is open the deadline for an answer by e-mail will be reduced to a maximum of two (2) working days, except during the last week of December, during which the office at Aix-Marseille University is closed.

For questions specifically addressed at the other CIVIS3i recruiting universities, please contact the Local Contact Points:

ULB - Université libre de Bruxelles, EU liaison office: [ulb-europe\(at\)ulb.be](mailto:ulb-europe(at)ulb.be)

UAM - Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Rafaella Lenoir: [rafaella.lenoir\(at\)uam.es](mailto:rafaella.lenoir(at)uam.es)

SUR - Sapienza Università di Roma, Rosa DiStefano, [rosa.distefano\(at\)uniroma1.it](mailto:rosa.distefano(at)uniroma1.it)

10. PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

Aix Marseille Université (AMU) – 13007 Marseille, 58 Boulevard Charles Livon, France – is the Data Controller of the personal data collected in the context of applications to CIVIS3i. In this capacity, AMU respects the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27/04/2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR).

The data collected by AMU through the submission and evaluation platform is solely processed for the purposes of submitting and evaluating the research projects against the evaluation criteria and selecting projects in view of a contractual agreement between the CIVIS3i partner universities (AMU, SUR, ULB and UAM) and the candidate. Personal data collected includes the first name, surname, nationality, e-mail address, postal address and family situation, as well as the data provided in the CV.

Applications will only be valid if the aforementioned personal data is provided. By applying, candidates agree with the processing of this personal data as part of their application. By accepting to review proposals, expert evaluators (reviewers) agree with the processing of this personal data as part of their reviews.

AMU commits to taking the appropriate measures to guarantee its confidential treatment. It is stored on password-protected servers for maximum six months after the end of the call CIVIS3i for non-selected applicants. CIVIS3i and AMU's staff have access to this data only to the extent necessary for the execution of its corresponding tasks (e.g., submission of an application, evaluation of an application, recruitment of a candidate, conduct of the research project). Besides internal AMU services, the data is transmitted to external evaluators under confidentiality clauses, as part of the evaluation process. This transmission makes use of third-party services (web services provider), located in France and Canada, who are contractually obliged to ensure the same level of protection for the personal data as AMU.

All necessary information on AMU's Personal Data Protection policy is available at <https://www.univ-amu.fr/en/public/ethics-committee>. Applicants can address their queries on the treatment of their Personal Data to our Data Protection Officer (DPO).

DPO: Professor Hervé Isar

e-mail: [herve.isar\(at\)univ-amu.fr](mailto:herve.isar(at)univ-amu.fr)

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This address can also be used, upon justification of identity, to exercise the rights to request access to and rectification or deletion of the personal data or, under conditions, restriction of processing, the right to object to processing as well as the right to data portability. For any complaints, applicants are free to contact the French Data Protection Authority (CNIL, "Commission Nationale de l'Informatique et des Libertés"). AMU would appreciate the opportunity to answer to the complaint first, before it is addressed to the CNIL.

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ANNEX 1 – AGREEMENT OF NON-DISCLOSURE / CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In the framework of the CIVIS3i postdoctoral fellowships programme, I, the undersigned, (*name and surname, professional address*), understand that being involved in the evaluation of applications (hereafter "research projects") within the CIVIS3i 1st Call for Postdoctoral Fellowships Proposals implies the use of confidential scientific, technical, industrial or commercial information (hereafter "confidential information") related to the research project(s) I am reviewing which will be communicated to me through written, oral form or any other support.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I expressly agree and undertake:

- To only use the confidential information for the review
- To neither reproduce nor disclose – in any form – all or part of the confidential information
- To take all preventative measures to prevent the disclosure of the confidential information to a third party
- Not to file a patent application or any other title of intellectual property based on confidential information
- To destroy the confidential Information, and any and all reproduction thereof, upon the completion and submission of the review(s)

However, these provisions of confidentiality will not apply to the information:

- That was lawfully in my possession prior to signing this agreement
- That has come into the public domain other than by a breach of this agreement
- That is required by law to be disclosed

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

I also declare and undertake

- Not to be currently working on any important collaboration or being in direct competition with the applicant to review
- Not to take any advantage from my position to profit myself, my relatives, my colleagues, my laboratory or my organisation
- Not to make contact, in any case, with the applicants in the framework of my mission
- To evaluate the research project(s) with equity and objectivity

I commit myself to take all necessary measures to respect the above mentioned obligations.

Date:

Signature:

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ANNEX 2 – EVALUATION FORM

| CRITERION | SCORE |
|--|---------------------------------|
| EXCELLENCE (weight: 50%) | 1 (poor) - 5 (excellent) |
| Quality, level of novelty of the research project; Relevance of the project ambition; Appropriate consideration of interdisciplinary aspects (if relevant); Appropriate consideration of gender aspects (if relevant); Relevance to the CIVIS3i themes Evaluation (sufficiently detailed comments): | |
| Quality and appropriateness of the two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the hosting group; Potential of the intersectoral collaboration with non-academic partners (if relevant) Evaluation (sufficiently detailed comments): | |
| Quality of the researcher and capacity to reach or reinforce professional independence Evaluation (sufficiently detailed comments): | |
| IMPACT (weight: 30%) | |
| Enhancing the future career prospects of the researcher Evaluation (sufficiently detailed comments): | |
| Quality of the proposed communication ² activities to different target audiences Evaluation (sufficiently detailed comments): | |
| Quality of the strategy for the dissemination ³ and exploitation of project results & activities; Capacity to engage society (e.g., involvement of citizens) Evaluation (sufficiently detailed comments): | |
| IMPLEMENTATION (weight: 20%) | |
| Coherence, feasibility and effectiveness of the work plan Evaluation (sufficiently detailed comments): | |
| Appropriateness of the management structure and procedures, including risk management Evaluation (sufficiently detailed comments): Overall evaluation (sufficiently detailed comments): | |
| Ethics evaluation (required) Based on the EU Ethics guidelines, is this research raising any ethical issues? If yes, is the candidate addressing them appropriately? | |

² The communication activities of Horizon 2020 projects go beyond dissemination: they do not involve project results only but also the project in general such as the societal challenges or European added-value of the project. Thus, communication activities target a much wider audience, including the media and the general public. It is important to use a less technical language so that a non-specialist audience can easily understand the goals and means of the project.

³ Dissemination aims at maximising the impact of research results in the public domain. Therefore, the target audience of dissemination activities is any potential user of the project results: the scientific community, stakeholders, industry, policy makers, investors, civil society, etc.