



HELLENIC REPUBLIC MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENTS GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION HELLENIC FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

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EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS/APPLICATIONS UNDER THE ACTIONS OF THE HELLENIC FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

(Decision under Ref. No. 53660/13.09.2022 of the 131st Meeting of the Scientific Council of H.F.R.I.,

IUN: ΩMI246M77Γ-0Ξ8)



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1. GENERAL FRAMEWORK

The selection of Proposals/Applications for funding by H.F.R.I. is made after a comparative evaluation which is carried out by Committees of Experts, with Excellence being the sole criterion. The evaluation process is in compliance with:

- ➤ The procedures as provided in Law 4429/2016 (procedure for the appointment of evaluation committee members and independent experts),
- > The general institutional framework,
- ➤ The specific terms and conditions of each Call,
- International best practices.

In particular:

- I. The Proposals/Applications submitted under H.F.R.I.'s actions are evaluated by Evaluation Committees (EC) consisting of five (5) to twenty (20) members, who are appointed for each Call by the Scientific Council (SC) of H.F.R.I. in accordance with the provisions of Law 4429/2016, as in force.
- II. Each EC consists of renowned Greek and/or foreign scientists qualified in the scientific and/or technological fields related to the Proposal/Application to be evaluated.
- III. ECs may be assisted in their work by one or more Independent Experts, depending on the type and number of scientific fields covered by the Call. More specifically, if deemed necessary, a non-binding evaluation of one or more Proposals/Applications may be requested from one or more Independent Experts, appointed by decision of the Foundation's SC, upon recommendation of the EC. The decision for the evaluation of each Proposal/Application shall be made by the EC.
- IV. The members of the ECs and the Independent Experts come from the Register of Certified Evaluators of par. 11 of article 5 of Law 4429/2016 and, until its creation, from the Register of Certified Evaluators referred to in Article 27 of Law 4310/2014 (A' 258).
- V. The work/operation of ECs is governed by the "<u>Rules of Procedure of H.F.R.I.'s Evaluation</u> <u>Committees</u>" (Decision under Ref. No. 23648/18.03.2020 of the 75th Meeting of the Scientific Council of the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation, IUN: $\Psi 1\Omega \Gamma 46M77\Gamma \Theta IN$).
- VI. The members of the ECs and the Independent Experts are bound by rules of confidentiality and non-conflict of interest in order to ensure the integrity and reliability of the evaluation process.
- VII. The operation of each EC is supervised by the Foundation's SC.



2. EVALUATION PROCESS

2.1. Appointment of Evaluation Committees

H.F.R.I.'s SC selects and appoints the EC members based on their scientific expertise and in particular its relevance to the scientific field of the Proposals/Applications under evaluation. The members of the ECs are renowned scientists in their field.

Particular importance is given to the selection of the EC Chairmen who are responsible for the coordination and proper operation of the committees, and in particular:

- They organize the work plan of the committee they chair in collaboration with the members of the committee and the competent staff of H.F.R.I.
- They ensure that the "*Rules of Procedure of H.F.R.I.'s Evaluation Committees*" are applied and that conflicts of interest are stated at the beginning of each meeting.
- They try in collaboration with the members of the EC and the competent staff member of H.F.R.I. to ensure consistency in the committee's work.
- They coordinate the allocation of work, the organization of committee meetings and the assignment of Proposals/Applications to be evaluated.
- They approve the minutes of the committee meetings.

The appointment of the members of the ECs starts immediately after the Proposals/Applications submission end date.

2.2. Rules of confidentiality and prevention of conflict of interest

In order to ensure the transparency and reliability of the evaluation process, all participants (Members of the Committees and Independent Experts) sign a solemn declaration of confidentiality and non-conflict of interest, so as to prevent any case/situation that may affect their impartiality and/or the quality of their evaluation. They are also bound by strict terms of confidentiality and confidence which remain in force even after the end of the evaluation process.

In order to ensure this, H.F.R.I. has established express rules regarding the cases in which there is a conflict of interest. It is underlined that it is the responsibility of the members of the ECs and the Independent Experts to declare the conflict of interest, whenever they arise.

During the initial phase of selection/appointment of the members of the ECs, serious conflicts of interest that do not allow their participation in the EC are examined. More specifically, it is not possible for them to participate and they are excluded from the evaluation process if they have submitted a Proposal/Application themselves or participate as members of the Proposal research team or are supervisors of an Application submitted in the same Scientific/Thematic Area, under the respective Call.



Later, during the initial assignment of the Proposals/Applications to be evaluated, more cases of conflict of interest are examined in which the members of the EC are excluded from the evaluation of a specific Proposal/Application and do not participate in the discussion/evaluation of the Proposal/Application. Indicatively, the cases of conflict of interest that may arise in this phase concern the following:

- 1. They have participated in the preparation of a submitted Proposal/Application,
- 2. The Proposal/Application comes from the same Host Institution (University Faculty or School and/or Research Centre Institute) in which the EC member is employed,
- 3. The EC member is a member of the Host Institution's administration,
- 4. The EC member and the PI (or member of the research team) are related by blood or affinity up to fourth degree,
- 5. The EC member and the PI (or member of the research team) are associates, have common publications during the last five (5) years, or belong to the same research team during the last three (3) years.

2.3. Eligibility check

The eligibility check is performed by the H.F.R.I.'s Department of Research Projects and the EC in terms of thoroughness of the supporting documents and documents in general and in terms of compliance with the participation conditions of each Call. During the evaluation, the EC may discover ineligibility in terms of compliance with the participation conditions.

2.4. Evaluation

The evaluation is a particularly demanding process to which the members of the ECs are required to make a significant commitment of their time as they will have to work both individually and collectively. Furthermore, it is critical for the quality of the evaluation process that EC members are present at all committee meetings, as all decisions on the evaluation of Proposals/Applications are made collectively by the EC. Depending on the Action/Call the evaluation can be conducted in one (1) or two (2) phases.

Each EC is assisted in its work by a staff member of the Department of Research Projects who acts as the secretary of the EC and is responsible for all actions related to supporting the evaluation process. The members of the EC are briefed by the secretary on the "Rules of Procedure of H.F.R.I.'s Evaluation Committees", their responsibilities and liabilities, the evaluation process as well as the evaluation criteria and how to score them. Moreover, throughout the evaluation, he/she is in constant communication with the Chairman and the members of the Committee, as well as with the Independent Experts, in order to adequately support them in their work and to avoid cases that may harm the quality and the reliability of the evaluation process.



In the context of supervising the proper operation of the ECs, the members of the SC participate in the meetings, as they see fit, without the right to vote or participate in the evaluation of Proposals/Applications.

The evaluation for each EC usually starts with an initial/informative meeting during which the evaluation process is analysed up to and including the publication of the Final Ranking Tables of the Proposals/Applications. During this meeting, the members of the EC are updated on the number of submitted Proposals/Applications and their scientific fields as well as the evaluation schedule, while at the same time they can discuss about the evaluation process. At this stage, the EC members gain access to the general information of submitted Proposals/Applications and are asked to state any cases of conflict of interest. The secretary collects the relevant information and informs the Chairman of the committee so that the latter can proceed with the initial assignments of the Proposals/Applications for the remote evaluation.

The Proposals/Applications are assigned to the members of the EC through H.F.R.I.'s Web Portal taking into account the level of preference per Proposal/Application that the members of the committee have stated (where applicable) as well as the title, summary and keywords of the Proposals/Applications to be evaluated in order to achieve the optimal matching of the expertise of the EC members with the research area of the Proposals/Applications to be evaluated. If deemed necessary, some (and/or all) Proposals/Applications are also assigned to Independent Experts. Detailed instructions for registering on H.F.R.I.'s Web Portal are listed in Annex I.

The Independent Experts are selected and appointed by the SC. The EC may recommend to the SC any Independent Experts in order to evaluate certain Proposals/Applications. The Independent Experts are updated on the evaluation processes by the secretary of the EC and gain access to all the necessary documents and instructions for carrying out the evaluation through H.F.R.I.'s Web Portal. The Independent Experts evaluate the Proposals/Applications remotely, they do not discuss/have contacts/communication with the EC members, neither do they participate in the EC meetings.

The evaluation process initially includes the stage of remote evaluation of the Proposals/Applications during which the evaluators (members of the EC and/or any Independent Experts) evaluate the Proposals/Applications separately and submit their score and comments to H.F.R.I.'s Web Portal.

As a rule, each Proposal/Application is assigned to at least two (2) members of the EC.

It is pointed out that the evaluation of the members of the EC and of the Independent Experts is not binding but serves as a recommendation to the EC and as a basis for the discussion of Proposals/Applications during committee meetings.

After the remote evaluation stage is completed, the Chairman of the EC with the support of the secretary invites its members to a meeting. During the meeting, and following a discussion, the committee (deciding unanimously or by majority) scores and ranks the Proposals/Applications and draws up the evaluation report for each Proposal/Application, taking into account both the individual evaluations submitted to the Web Portal and the previous discussion between the members of the EC. If deemed appropriate by the EC, one of the members of the committee, usually



from the members who have already evaluated the Proposal/Application, is appointed as the person responsible for drawing up the final evaluation report of the Proposal/Application (rapporteur).

Whenever required by the scope of the Proposals/Applications, and for the better organization of its work, the EC may set up small working groups, which, after completing their individual tasks, discuss about these Proposals/Applications with the other members of the Committee.

Depending on the number of Proposals/Applications to be evaluated and their scope, the evaluation may be completed in one or more meetings of the EC.

Detailed instructions on the use of H.F.R.I.'s Web Portal are listed in Annex II both by the members of the EC as well as by the Independent Experts.

2.4.1. Evaluation Criteria and Score

The evaluation criteria shall be specified in each Call.

The two (2) main evaluation criteria are the **Scientific Profile of the Principal Investigator** (or the PhD candidate in the case of scholarships) and the **Quality of the proposed project**.

During the remote evaluation stage of the Proposals/Applications, the evaluators (EC members and Independent Experts) score the evaluation criteria on a scale of 0 to 5 (per 0.5 units), as follows:

- **0 Insufficient**: The proposal either fails to address the criterion or the evaluation of the criterion is not possible due to insufficient or incomplete information.
- **(0.5 1) Weak:** The proposal does not sufficiently meet the criterion and/or there are inherent weaknesses.
- **(1.5 2) Moderate:** The proposal addresses the criterion in general but there are significant and substantial weaknesses.
- **(2.5 3) Good:** The proposal addresses the criterion at a good level but there is a number of shortcomings.
- **(3.5 4) Very Good**: The proposal addresses all aspects of the criterion at a very good level but a small number of shortcomings Are present.
- **(4.5 5) Excellent**: The proposal addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Depending on the Action, a weighting factor may be applied to calculate the final score of the criteria, while in order for a Proposal/Application to be eligible for funding it should score above a certain threshold in each criterion as well as in total. Thresholds are set in the Calls and may vary in different Actions.

It is highlighted that the score (scale 0 – 5) is internal, serving as a starting point/basis for discussions between EC members. during the meetings and for the preparation of the Ranking Tables of the Proposals/Applications and is not communicated to the candidates.



The EC ranks the Proposals/Applications based on their score (0 - 5) and, in combination with the threshold as defined in each Call, in A – B as follows:

- **A:** The proposal sufficiently meets the evaluation criteria and is recommended for funding if there is sufficient budget.
- **B:** The proposal does not sufficiently meet the evaluation criteria and is not recommended for funding.

After the completion of the evaluation, the Chairman of the EC transmits to the H.F.R.I. Director the temporary results of the evaluation which are illustrated in the ranking tables below:

- 1. Table of Proposals/Applications approved for funding (A)
- 2. Table of approved Proposals/Applications that cannot be funded due to insufficient budget (A)
- 3. Table of rejected Proposals/Applications (B)

It should be noted that in the above (under 1 and 2) Tables of approved Proposals/Applications, the Proposals are listed based on the internal score of the EC. In cases where two or more Proposals/Applications get the same overall score, prioritization is performed by the EC based on the provisions of the Call.

In the Table of rejected Proposals/Applications, the Proposals/Applications are listed by ascending number.

2.5. Notification of Candidate Beneficiaries

Upon approval of the temporary results by H.F.R.I.'s SC, these are communicated to the candidates and posted on the website of the Foundation.

The communication of temporary results is carried out through H.F.R.I.'s Web Portal where candidate beneficiaries can access the evaluation of their Proposal/Application [score (A/B) and committee evaluation report].

3. REDRESS PROCEDURE

The candidates have by law a time period of 10 days to redress starting from the day after the temporary results are communicated to them.

A redress request (objection) should only concern **grounds of legality** and not the scientific judgment of the committee. In particular, the candidate beneficiaries may redress if they identify a procedural error and/or an omission by the committee which may have negatively affected the evaluation of their Proposal/Application. Legality grounds may include, but are not limited to, an error during the eligibility check, omission of submitted data, or a lack of relevance between the score



and the evaluation report. Redresses based on scientific disagreement with the judgment of the EC and limited to repeating the content of the submitted Proposal/Application and/or refuting the evaluation of the committee are not accepted.

Objections are examined by three-member Redress (Objection) Committees within a period of 10 days from the deadline for their submission. The members of the objection committees are appointed by H.F.R.I.'s SC and come from the Register of Certified Evaluators of par. 11 of Law 4429/2016. The Committees are assisted in their work by employees of the Research and Legal Departments of H.F.R.I.

The Redress Committees have at their disposal all data concerning the case to be examined (files of the submitted Proposal/Application, evaluation report, objection) and decide whether there are legality grounds for accepting the objection. The Objection Committees do not re-evaluate the Proposals/Applications nor call into question the scientific judgment of the EC but are limited to verifying the correctness of the evaluation processes.

Candidates are notified of the decisions of the Objection Committees.

In case the objection is accepted (in part or in whole), then the relevant decision of the Objection Committee is transmitted to the EC in order to re-evaluate the Proposal/Application. It is underlined that the re-evaluation is carried out necessarily by the EC itself, based on the initially submitted data (access is not provided to additional information that the candidate beneficiaries may have submitted with their objection) and is limited to the points/criteria indicated in the Decision of the Objection Committee.

After the completion of the re-evaluation process, the Final Ranking Tables of the Proposals/Applications are transmitted to H.F.R.I. by the EC's Chairman, are approved by the Foundation's SC, are communicated to the candidate beneficiaries and are posted on H.F.R.I.'s website.



ANNEX I





User Guide

Registration in H.F.R.I. Portal

(https://portal.hfri.gr)

v2.0 - September 2022



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4. Introduction

This document is a brief guide on how to register in the portal of the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (H.F.R.I.) – $\frac{https://portal.hfri.gr}{https://portal.hfri.gr}$

5. General

The portal of the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation, referred from now on as "H.F.R.I. portal", is the only gateway to H.F.R.I.'s activities related with submission and evaluation of proposals, and implementation of research projects. Thus, individuals are invited to register in the portal either for submitting a proposal as Principal Investigators or as experts for the evaluation and monitoring of the proposals and the projects, respectively.

6. Registration in H.F.R.I. portal

To register in the H.F.R.I. portal please visit the link https://portal.hfri.gr and press "Entry" (see Figure below):

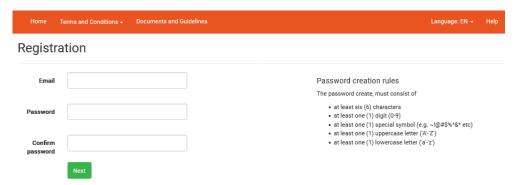


• When entering the portal for the first time, please choose the "Register" button (see Figure below):

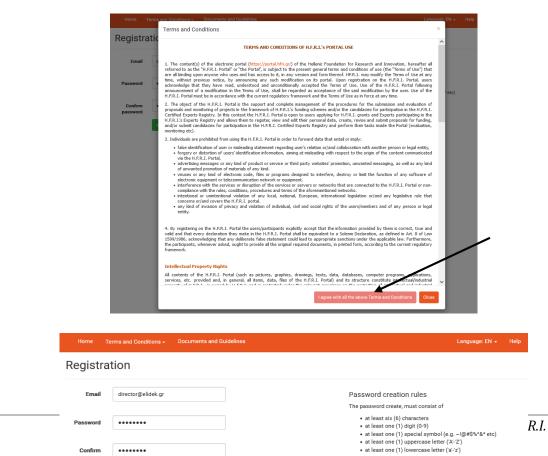


Home	Terms and Conditions →	Documents and Guidelines	Language: EN →	Help
H.F	R.I. Portal			
Log	gin Register			

• Create your account following the instructions presented in the Figure below:



• Accept the "Terms and Conditions" by pressing the respected buttons marked with the black arrow (see Figures below):

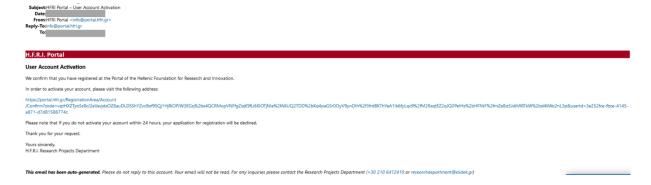


I agree with the Terms and Conditions

13



• To activate your account please click the link sent to your email (see Figure below):



• Once you activate your account, you will receive the confirmation email (as the one presented in the Figure below), where your unique H.F.R.I. – ID number is given:



7. Addition of personal data

Once you are successfully registered in the H.F.R.I. portal, please login in the portal using the email and password that you used for your registration (see Figure below).



A "password reminder" is available, if necessary.



• Once you log in, you will be asked to select the desired organization. Please press the respected logo from the list (see Figure



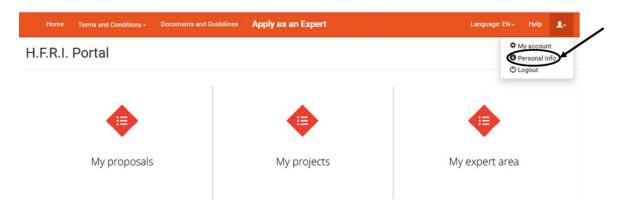




below):

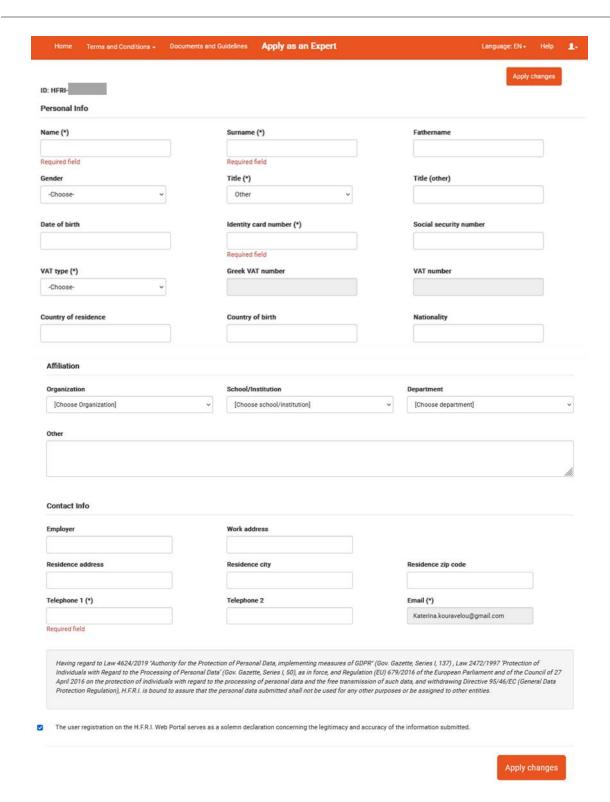


• Once you select the desired organization logo, you will enter in the respected organization interface. For HFRI you will see the interface of the Figure below. Prior to any other action add your personal data in the tab "Personal Info" at the up right side of the portal.



• Complete the fields with all the available data. Pleasy pay attention to the madatory fields marked with "*" (see Figure below):



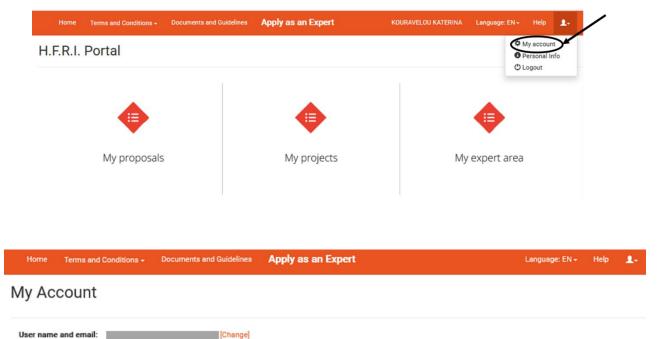


• You can update your personal info at anytime by visiting this tab and clicking "Apply changes" after adding your new data.



8. Change of email and/or password

If you would like to change your email or password, please visit the tab "My Account" at the up right side of the portal and follow the instructions (see Figures below):



9. Contact

Password: [Change]

For any inquiry regarding technical issues, please contact the Helpdesk team, through the tab "Help" of the portal.

For any other inquiry please send an email to researchdepartment@elidek.gr



ANNEX II





"Working as an expert" manual

(https://portal.hfri.gr)

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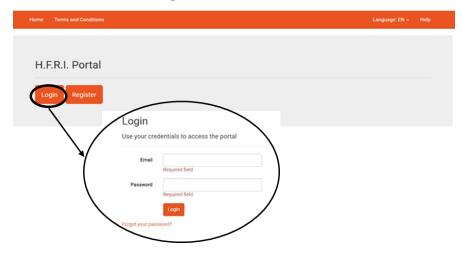


1. Introduction

This document is a brief guide to help experts with H.F.R.I.'s evaluation platform https://portal.hfri.gr.

2. Login in H.F.R.I.'s portal

First of all, you need to login in the H.F.R.I. portal https://portal.hfri.gr as seen in the Figure below, using your email and password used for your registration in H.F.R.I.'s portal. If needed, the reminder of your password is possible through the portal. If you have not register yet to H.F.R.I.'s portal, please see the document <a href="https://www.users.com/user



Once you log in, you will be asked to select the desired organization. Please press the respected logo from the list (see Figure below):

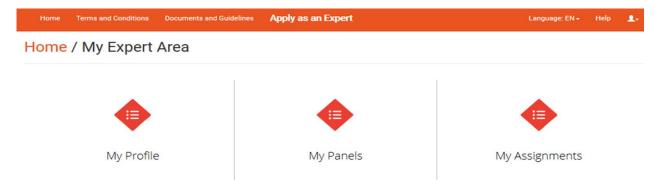




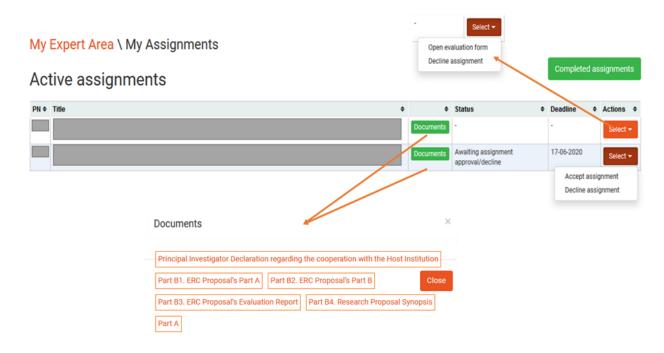
3. Assignments interface

Once you select the desired organization, please select "My expert area".

In the Tab "My Assignments", you can see all the proposals assigned to you. In parallel, for each assignment you will receive an automated email at the email account that you used for your registration in the portal.



Once you receive the assignment, you need to accept or decline it (through the button "select"). You can have access to the documents of the proposals by pressing the button "documents".

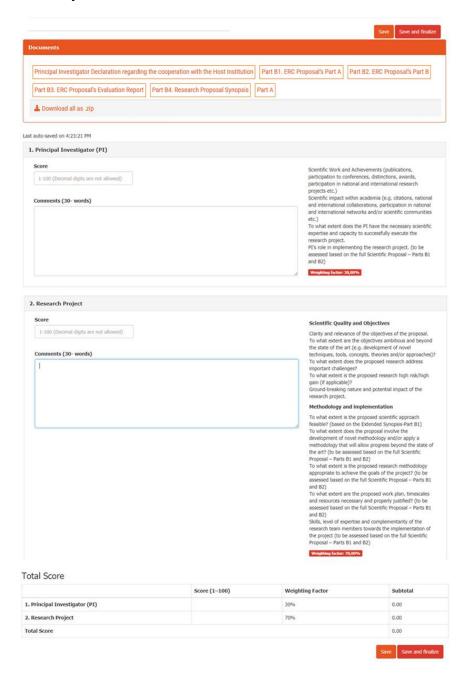




Once you accept the assignment, you can have access to the individual evaluation form, through the button "select".

An indicative evaluation form is presented in the following figure. The criteria as well as the score range depend on the call. You can "save" your report or once you have finalized your review, please press "save and finalize".

This interface is used by both the members of the evaluation committee and the external experts.

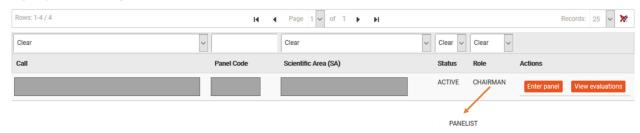




4. "My panels" interface - Evaluation Committee Members

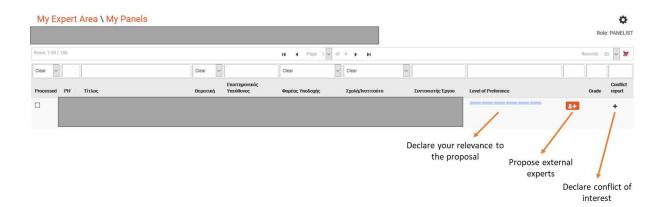
Once you get appointed as an Evaluation Committee Member, you will get access to all the proposals of the specific panel, under the specific call. To see these proposals, please select from the "My expert area" interface the tab "My Panels".

My Expert Area \ My Panels



Either as a "panelist" or a "chairman" once you enter the panel, you can see all the proposals, declare your relevance to the field of the proposal to be evaluated, suggest experts and/or declare conflict.

As a "chairman" you assign proposals to the panel members (confidential guidelines are given to chairmans/chairwomans by H.F.R.I.).

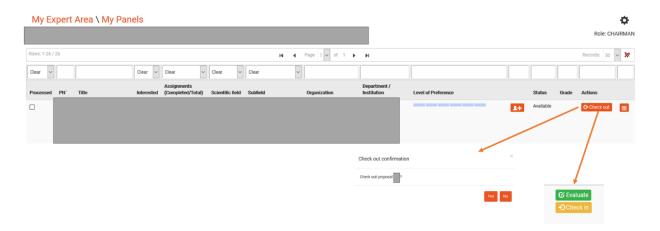


5. "My panels" interface - Evaluation Committee Meeting

In the "My Panels" interface, the evaluation reports are becoming available to the Evaluation Committee Members, once submitted and during the meetings of the Committee.



Especially, during the meetings, an interface as the one presented below is appeared.



Once you select "check out", two options are available: By selecting "Evaluate" and then "Yes" all the individual reports of the specific proposal are available to all members of the committee. At that point the panel members can decide on the final evaluation of each proposal (final score and comments). When the Committee reaches to a final decision, the final report can be saved by pressing the "save and finalize" option. If more discussion/comments/changes are needed, then the option of editing is available through the "save" button. After pressing the "save" button you need to press the "check in" button.

6. Contact

For any inquiry regarding technical issues, please contact Helpdesk team, through the tab "Help" of the portal.

For any other inquiry please send an email to researchdepartment@elidek.gr.