

Expression of Interest: Proposals Evaluation Board

Background

The Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST), acting for and on behalf of the Foundation for Science and Technology, hereinafter referred to as MCST, is a public body established by the central government with the mandate of advising government on science and technology policy. MCST also acts as a Managing Authority for Research and Innovation (R&I) Programmes and initiatives, which supplement the national R&I ecosystem.

MCST frequently requires support on expert evaluation, of applications/proposals it receives in response to its funding Programmes and initiatives. To supplement MCST's expertise in the design, launch and implementation of such funding Programmes and initiatives, MCST is establishing an **Proposals Evaluation Board**, to be composed of a range of scientific and business advisory experts. The Proposals Evaluation Board Members are expected to contribute to MCST's Programmes and initiatives through their specific and technical expertise, applied to evaluating proposals/applications, to enable MCST to make decisions on shortlisting of proposals/evaluations and subsequent contracting of successful applicants to carry out research and/or activities in relation to the corresponding Programme/initiative Call for proposals.

MCST issues a number of periodical and adhoc Calls for applications/proposals, across a number of Programmes and initiatives. Such Programmes and initiatives typically fund research in the form of grants. At times, awards are also considered. Participant eligibility varies across public, academic and private sectors. Programmes and initiatives are subject to specific national rules for participation and funding modalities. The focus of the Calls for proposals/applications varies from bottom-up early stage research, to applied research, feasibility activities, and others. Thus, the thematics are indeed broad, but can be classified as requiring evaluation expertise on **scientific** subjects (including those aligned to the national smart specialisation priorities, as well as others) or **business advisory** subjects (in cases where the funded activity is, for example, a feasibility study). Those expert areas required from Proposals Evaluation Board Members are described in a separate document.

This Expression of Interest is launched as an Open Call for a definite period, to facilitate the admission of the "first wave" of Board Members. Should MCST require the filling of gaps in expert areas throughout the term 2021 to 2025, it may once again publish Open Calls of definite or indefinite periods, for the engagement of further Proposals Evaluation Board Members, to ensure a suitable support structure for the evaluation of its Programmes/initiatives. In such cases, existing Board Members can also apply for other scientific or business advisory areas which were omitted from their previous submission and are not captured in their active Assignment Letter.

Eligibility Criteria and Selection

Proposals Evaluation Board Members shall be appointed should they satisfy as a minimum, the following criteria:

- Applicants must be individuals.
- Education: As a minimum, a tertiary level of education, i.e. a first degree at MQF Level 6
- Subject Experience (scientific/business advisory): At least 5 years of professional work experience within the selected areas (top-level for scientific, and specific for business advisory)
- English Language: Writing and Reading Comprehension (proficient), Listening Comprehension and Speaking (at least intermediate)

- Applicants will not be considered eligible if they advise clients on funding applications for MCST programmes/initiatives, nor will they be considered eligible should they want to apply, directly or indirectly for MCST funding programmes/initiatives.
- Applicants will not be considered if any of the documents mentioned under “Documents to be submitted by Applicants” have been omitted or are incomplete.

Appointment

Evaluation Board Members will be appointed for one or more scientific and/or business advisory subjects.

Following the Call closure for the Expression of Interest, MCST shall identify all eligible applicants and invite them to sign a Terms of Reference document. This does not constitute an obligation by MCST to assign work/tasks to the Evaluation Board Member, as such work/tasks will be dependant on volume of applications in the specialisation areas, and suitability of the Member to the work/tasks in hand.

Should an Evaluation Board Member be potentially required to work on a task, he/she will receive an Assignment Letter stipulating the scientific subjects and/or business advisory subjects he/she may be required to evaluate. This letter will also list the evaluation types and related applicable fees.

Term

Term of engagement of Board Members is five (5) years, which duration shall be from 2021 to 2025, inclusive, unless otherwise specified by MCST.

Proposals Evaluation Board Member Responsibilities

Board Members, engaged through an Assignment Letter, shall perform tasks that may be defined as scientific and/or business advisory expert evaluations for applications/proposals received by MCST in response to an MCST Programme/initiative Call for proposals. The mode of delivery of the task will vary depending on the requirements of the Programme/initiative. However, Board Members may expect to typically conduct evaluations that will result in the Proposals Evaluation Board Member presenting a signed **Individual Evaluation Report (IER)** that contains scoring against evaluation criteria, as well as detailed comments to substantiate such scores. The Proposals Evaluation Board Member, depending on the Programme/initiative, may also be required to participate in Consensus Meetings, and/or compile a **Consensus Report (CR)**. Detailed instructions are to be provided by MCST.

Board Services Fees and Timelines

As MCST runs various Programmes and initiatives, this Terms of Reference document provides a generalised overview of the Proposals Evaluation Board Services fees and task timelines. The fees and task timelines are appropriate for the level of effort/work, required in delivering the task. The Assignment Letter, if applicable, will indicate the **Evaluation Type**, as well as the scientific and/or business advisory subject matters selected by MCST.

Type A evaluations are ones which will require the evaluation of a short proposal and require minimal reporting. Such proposals would be aligned to small research funding requests or awards.

Type B evaluations involve the evaluation of proposals aligned to relatively small requests for funding, or first stage/lightweight submissions for larger funding. Some reporting is required and there may be the need of attendance to a brief consensus meeting.

Type C evaluations will require the evaluation of detailed proposals aiming to access larger amounts of funding. These evaluations will require detailed reporting and most likely require attendance to a consensus meeting and rapporteuring tasks.

Evaluation Type	Type A	Type B	Type C
Board Services Fee	€40	€90	€150
Timeline for completion of task	Strictly 7 days from receipt of task		
Board Services Fee for one-time training per Programmes, as advised by MCST	€150		

The above Board Services Fees exclude VAT, which is to be added to the Invoice if the services rendered are within Malta.

The fees are quoted as per task, and are all-inclusive of any reporting, meetings and re-evaluations. The fees may be revised at MCST's discretion to ensure these are competitive over the term of appointment.

Processing of Personal Data

MCST will process all personal data related to the Proposals Evaluation Board Members according to the GDPR Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and the data protection act CAP586, as the data controller, for the purpose of managing communications and tasks as per this Terms of Reference Document, as well as for any other reasons required by law. The Proposals Evaluation Board Member has the right to access their personal data and request amendments to it. Any queries on such personal data must be sent to the MCST Privacy Officer (Mr. Doyle Abela: doyle.abela@gov.mt). Unless otherwise stated, Proposals Evaluation Board Member personal data shall be retained for a period of 10 years.

Relevant Reference Documents

List of Scientific and Business Advisory areas

Documents to be submitted by Applicants

Completion of the electronic *Proposals Evaluation Board Application Form* (when pressing Submit, the completed form will be automatically sent to MCST).

As part of the *Proposals Evaluation Board Application Form* and included as uploaded files:

- A detailed Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Certificates for **each** degree qualification claimed (preferably in English; MCST may require apostilled translations prior to appointment)
- A personal profile justifying the years of experience claimed against the scientific and/or business advisory areas, and a list of funding programmes for which evaluation experience has been gained (if applicable)

Call deadline

This Expression of Interest shall close **cob Wednesday 9th December 2020**.