



EUROfusion

CfP-TRED-AWP24-TRED-02 EEG Annex 2 Guide for Applicants

**Annual Work Plan 2024
EUROfusion Engineering Grants**

**Annex 2 -
Guide for Applicants**

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1. Introduction

The EUROfusion Engineering Grants (EEG) programme aims to attract excellent engineers to the EUROfusion Work Programme. The grants are awarded for a limited time and are set-up to allow independent activities, aligned with the [European Research Roadmap to the Realisation of Fusion Energy](#). The candidates are encouraged to develop an engineering-oriented work plan with support from the EUROfusion Beneficiaries and Affiliated Entities.

2. Eligibility to the programme

The following eligibility criteria apply:

- 1) This action supports the career development and training of engineers, typically during the first years of their careers in research. More precisely, this action is strongly focussed towards engineers of all nationalities, namely:

Engineers in possession of a master degree in Engineering (or any equivalent university degree in Engineering) with or without a PhD degree, and/or professional experience in engineering of less than 6 years (that may include a doctoral studies) after the master degree w.r.t. the deadline for proposal submission of the present call.

The candidate shall be recruited and employed by a EUROfusion member or one of its Affiliated Entities stated in the Grant Agreement. The Consortium member/Affiliated Entity shall provide a declaration of intent to recruit the engineer under an employment contract or equivalent contract compatible with the national legislation. She/he shall be recruited at the latest by 1 July 2024.

Candidates who have been already employed by a Consortium member or its Affiliated for less than 2 years (not counting PhD studies) are also eligible to participate in the programme, provided they meet the requirements as specified above.

- 2) A joint proposal shall be submitted by the candidate and her/his mentor in the respective Research Unit (Consortium Member or its Affiliated Entity). The proposal shall refer to one of the competency areas described in the Annex 5 to the Call for Participation. Some topic ideas with interested EUROfusion Beneficiaries are listed for inspiration, however the candidate may develop and submit a proposal similar to or outside these topics but within the mandatory lists of competency areas.
Candidates may apply in more than one competency areas: in this case the submission should cover both areas or a separate proposal should be submitted to the two areas.
- 3) The implementation of this action is under the *EUROfusion Consortium* for the implementation of the European Research Roadmap to the Realisation of Fusion Energy. The application must be supported and sent by the relevant EUROfusion General Assembly (GA) member(s).

3. Evaluation criteria and procedures

The evaluation of proposals is carried out by the EUROfusion Programme Manager with the assistance of a panel of independent experts.

3.1. Nomination of the expert panel

The EUROfusion Programme Manager shall nominate expert evaluators.

Experts perform evaluations on a personal basis, not as representatives of their (former) employer, their country or any other entity. They are expected to be independent, impartial and objective, and to behave throughout in a professional manner. They sign an appointment letter, including a confidentiality and conflict of interest declaration. Confidentiality rules must be adhered to at all times, before, during and after the evaluation.

Conflicts of interest: Under the terms of the appointment letter, experts must declare beforehand any known conflicts of interest, and must immediately inform the EUROfusion Training and Education Manager if one becomes apparent during the course of the evaluation. EUROfusion shall take whatever action is necessary to remove any conflict.

Confidentiality: The appointment letter also requires experts to maintain strict confidentiality with respect to the whole evaluation process. Under no circumstance may an expert attempt to contact an applicant on her/his own account, either during the evaluation or afterwards.

At the beginning of the evaluation, the experts shall be briefed by EUROfusion on the evaluation procedure, the experts' responsibilities, the issues involved in the particular area/objective and any other relevant item.

3.2. Eligibility of the proposal

On receipt by EUROfusion, proposals shall be assessed against the relevant eligibility criteria specified in Section 2. Proposals which do not fulfil these criteria shall not be included in the evaluation, and candidates shall be promptly informed about this.

A proposal shall only be selected for evaluation if it meets all of the following conditions:

- It is received by EUROfusion before the deadline given in the call;
- It is compliant with the eligibility criteria defined under section 2;
- It is within the competency areas identified in Annex 5;
- It is complete and includes all the documentation required in section 4.

3.3. The evaluation procedure

The evaluation procedure shall be carried out in four stages:

- evaluation of the proposal content by the experts based on the written material;

- consensus meeting to establish a shortlist of candidates to be invited for an interview;
- interviews of all shortlisted candidates;
- consensus meeting to define the final ranking of the proposals.

3.3.1. Scoring

Each candidate shall be evaluated against the pre-determined evaluation criteria given in Appendices 1 and 2 and be scored according to the thresholds and weightings also given in Appendices 1 and 2.

Each criterion shall be scored out of 5. Half and quarter marks can be given. The scores indicate the following with respect to the criterion under examination:

- 1 - *Poor.*
- 2 - *Fair.*
- 3 - *Good.*
- 4 - *Very Good.*
- 5 - *Excellent.*

3.3.2. Shortlisting

The evaluation of the candidates by the experts in view of the establishment of a shortlist shall be carried out in the following steps:

In the first step, the experts are acting individually; they shall not discuss the proposals with each other, nor with any third party. The experts record their individual opinion in an Individual Assessment Report (IAR), giving scores and also comments against the evaluation criteria. All experts shall receive the information of all candidates, but each proposal shall be fully assessed by two experts. The proposed projects are reviewed by the EUROfusion Programme Management Unit and the Programme Manager confirms the scarcity factor of each project in relation to the needs of the EUROfusion Work Programme.

In the second step, all experts shall hold a consensus meeting under the chairmanship of the EUROfusion Programme Manager or her/his representative to discuss the complete set of proposals. The experts having assessed the same proposal shall discuss to reach a consensus on the scoring. All criteria where a significant difference appears (more than 1 point) shall be addressed. When, after the discussion, differences in scoring remain, the average marks shall be used for this (these) criterion (criteria). The outcome of this meeting is a summary table showing the preliminary scores of all candidates agreed between the relevant experts. In case it is impossible to reach an agreement between the two expert evaluators, EUROfusion shall designate an additional expert evaluator to act as arbitrator.

After the consensus meeting EUROfusion shall take the necessary steps to assure the quality of the Individual Assessment Reports (IARs), with particular attention given to clarity, consistency, and appropriate level of detail.

Based on the definitive marks which are agreed between the experts at the end of this consensus meeting, a shortlist shall be established by the EUROfusion Programme Manager. The shortlist shall include not more than twice the number of foreseen grants.

3.3.3. Interviews with the shortlisted candidates

The evaluation shall then progress towards the next step: individual interviews of the shortlisted candidates.

The interview board shall consist of all the experts involved in the evaluation process and of the EUROfusion Programme Manager (or her/his representative). The board is chaired by the EUROfusion Programme Manager (or her/his representative). The secretary of the board is provided by the EUROfusion Programme Management Unit.

At the interview it can happen that new facts emerge about the details of the candidate's application. Since the interview is the first opportunity for the whole Panel to review each application in detail, afterwards the Panel can revise the marks given during the first step.

EUROfusion shall ensure fair and equal treatment of the candidates in the interview and in the following Consensus meeting. The language in the presentation and all submitted material shall be in English.

The interview process and criteria are detailed under Appendix 2.

3.3.4. Consensus meeting, final scores and ranking

As the final step, the board shall hold a final meeting after all interviews in order to:

- (1) Agree on the final score attributed to each shortlisted candidate. The final score is the sum of the two marks attributed at the end of the first stage assessment (consensus meeting) and during the interview, with a weight of respectively 40% and 60%.
- (2) Produce a final ranking of candidates and a proposal for the attribution of grants.

3.3.5. Assessment of financial proposal

The evaluation board will assess the financial proposal included in the grant applications and recommend the level of financial support for training and mission costs for the grants to be awarded.

The support could be up to a maximum of 10k€ Consortium Contribution for training and other costs and up to a maximum of 20k€ Consortium Contribution for travel and mission costs for the full period of the grant.

4. Proposal content

An eligible proposal shall contain the information as noted in the following table. The required filename is indicated in the second column. Replace “{Lastname}” with your last name. In case the last name contains spaces, please replace all spaces with an underscore. All the PDF files below should be combined into one .ZIP-file with the name “**EEG24_FP9_1_{Lastname}.zip**”. For example for Dr. Smith Jones, this filename is EEG24_FP9_1_Smith_Jones.zip.

Content	Filename
Application	
Application form including information on the list of references, project proposal and consent for the data protection .	EEG24_01_{Lastname}.pdf
1-page personal letter . Header is not required. Please consider adding any additional information you would like the expert selection panel to consider while evaluating your application. You also have the opportunity to share a) an achievement in your life or work that you are particularly proud of and b) a challenge you faced in your life and work, how you have overcome it and what you have learned from it. Alternatively, please share your motivation for applying for the EUROfusion grant.	EEG24_02_{Lastname}.pdf
A letter from the relevant EUROfusion General Assembly member(s) addressing the application to EUROfusion and certifying that the contract with the EUROfusion Consortium Member or its Third Party, has started or declaration of intent to recruit the researcher/engineer under an employment contract or equivalent contract compatible with the national legislation.	EEG24_03_{Lastname}.pdf
A supporting statement from all Institution(s)/ Organisation(s) involved in hosting the candidate.	EEG24_04_{Lastname}.pdf
Candidate Background	
The CV of the candidate with all relevant information (specifically the European and international experience). Explicit consent to personal data processing is given in the application form.	EEG24_05_{Lastname}.pdf
Publication list of the candidate. In case the Master or PhD thesis is not in English, those scientific publications that are written in English should be included.	EEG24_06_{Lastname}.pdf
A copy of the Master (and PhD thesis if applicable) of the candidate. If not available in	EEG24_07_{Lastname}.pdf

English, a 2-3 pages summary of the thesis in English is to be provided.	
Proof of the completion date of the Master degree.	EEG24_08_{Lastname}.pdf
Mentor Background	
Short CV of the mentor(s) and main relevant publications (maximum length: 3 pages per mentor). Explicit consent to personal data processing is given in the application form.	EEG24_09_{Lastname}.pdf
Financial summary	
<p>A financial summary for resources required by the EUROfusion Member or its Affiliated Entity for the implementation of the proposal, including the following information per year and researcher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Salary cost (including fees, superannuation and social charges). b) Training and specific costs related to the successful execution of the research project, if any (e.g. conferences fees (max two conferences) and training courses fees, purchase of hardware and/or consumables necessary for a successful implementation of the project). c) Travel costs (travel to conferences and training courses, mission for meetings, working sessions, experiments and visits to other laboratories) with a summary indicating the purpose and duration of the stays. Each visit/mission shall be for a duration shorter than 3 months. <p>The financial summary shall include a detailed justification for the requested financial support for training and mission costs. Here, the template <i>EEG Financial Summary Template</i> should be used, which is added to this call.</p>	<p>EEG24_10_{Lastname}.xls <i>Note: this item should be submitted in Excel format.</i></p>

The above-mentioned documentation shall be uploaded to the online proposal form in IMS and shall be saved to single PDF files for each of the above-mentioned items (except for the Financial Summary, which shall be Excel). Follow the naming structure for every file in the right column of the table. These PDF files should be combined into one .ZIP-file with the name “**EEG24_FP9_1_{Lastname}.zip**” and uploaded to the online proposal form in IMS.

Only complete and correct proposals will be considered in the selection process.

5. Personal Data Protection (GDPR)

The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a privacy and data protection regulation in the European Union with effect from the 25th May 2018. The GDPR imposes obligations on organisations that control or process personal data and introduces rights and protections for EU citizens. EUROfusion is committed to ensuring that candidates' privacy is protected and strictly adhere to the provisions of all relevant Data Protection legislation, including GDPR, ensuring all personal data is handled in line with the principles outlined in the regulation.

In compliance with article 13 of the GDPR, EUROfusion provides the following information:

Type of Data processed:

Personal data present in the application or eventually communicated with supplementary documents of the application, by the candidates. As well as personal data relating to mentors. The data processed does not fall within the scope of application of articles 9 and 10 of the Regulation.

Name and address of the Controller:

Max-Planck-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften e.V.
Hofgartenstraße 8, 80539 Munich
Phone: +49 (89) 2108 -0

Name and address of the Data Protection Officer:

Heidi Schuster
Hofgartenstraße 8, D-80539 Munich
Phone: +49 (89) 2108-1554
Email address: datenschutz@mpg.de

The personal data collected within the present call for participation will be processed for the sole use of the evaluation and selection of the proposals for the awarding of the AWP24 EUROfusion Engineering Grants.

Both the candidates and the mentors express their consent to the processing of personal data (GDPR, art. 6, par. 1, letter a) necessary for carrying out the selection procedure and to allow EUROfusion Programme Management Unit (PMU) to fulfil the obligations related to the Grant Agreement (GDPR, art. 6, par. 1, letter b).

The data will be processed:

- through the use of manual and automated systems;
- by people authorized to carry out these tasks, pursuant to the law;
- with the adoption of adequate measures to guarantee the security of the data and to prevent access to the same by unauthorized third parties.

There are no automated decision-making processes.

The recipients of the personal data are the EUROfusion PMU members involved in the process and the evaluation panel composed by external experts.

The personal data collected for the purpose of the selection will be stored for the period of the evaluation process (May-December 2023). Following the decision of the General Assembly on the list of candidates to be awarded, the personal data included in not awarded applications will be deleted. As regards the personal data provided in the awarded applications, they will be stored in the EUROfusion PMU systems until the formalisation of the Task Agreement.

The candidates, as well as the mentors are entitled to the rights of access (GDPR, Article 15), rectification (GDPR, Article 16), erasure (GDPR, Article 17, para. 1), restriction of processing (GDPR, Article 18), data portability (GDPR, Article 20) and withdrawal of consent (GDPR, Article 7, para. 3). They also have the right to submit an objection to the supervisory authority. For the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft (MPG), this is the Bayerische Landesamt für Datenschutzaufsicht, Postfach 1349, 91504 Ansbach, Germany.

6. Recommendations for applicants

The following recommendations are given candidates to optimize their application and presentation:

- The candidate and mentor should have a close interaction during the preparation of the Work Plan. The mentor doesn't have to come from the same institute as the candidate. A good briefing of the candidate by the mentor is strongly advised, especially if the candidate is from outside the Fusion field. The Work and the Training Plan should be 'signed off' by the mentor and the candidate jointly.
- An interaction between the mentor and the Project Leader/Task Force Leader or a member of the EUROfusion Programme Management Unit is optional before the final application is submitted.
- Candidates who are shortlisted for an interview are advised to have a rehearsal of their presentation at their institute or at the institute supporting their proposal.
- Candidates that are involving different institutes in their Work Plan should contact responsible people at these institutes to ascertain that their proposal is supported on a managerial level. The mentor should have an active role in making sure that the proposal has the full support from all Parties involved.
- The work plan can reflect a substantial period of interaction with relevant activities of EUROfusion work package(s) or the EUROfusion Programme Management Unit and should reflect that possible longer term periods outside the employing institution are compliant with the travel budget of the grant.

- **The interviews are expected to be held by video meeting in the period between 18-29 September 2023. Candidates are expected to be available for the interview.**

7. Provisional evaluation timeline

Launch of the call	Week of 20 March 2023
Deadline for proposals	5 June 2023 (23:59 CET)
Proposals to referees	June 2023
Referees return assessment reports	July 2023
1 st Consensus meeting with referees and shortlisting	End of July 2023
Interviews (3-4 days)	18-29 September 2023
Expected endorsement by the EUROfusion General Assembly (GA)	10-11 October 2023

Appendix 1: Evaluation criteria, thresholds and weightings for the shortlisting

EUROfusion Engineering Grants		
Criterion:	Threshold	Weighting
Background/competence of the candidate in relation to her/his 'professional age' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motivation and diversity - Educational Background - Scientific publications/thesis - International background and knowledge of several languages - Professional achievements - Potential of the candidate for the future of the fusion research programme 	3/5	60%
Quality of the work plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevance to the competency areas addressed by the call - Scientific quality of the work plan - Quality of the objectives - Appropriateness of research methodology - Knowledge of the state-of-the-art 	3/5	20%
Scarcity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scarcity in relation to the EUROfusion Work Programme in the implementation of the European Research Roadmap to the Realisation of Fusion Energy 	0/5	10%
Quality of the training plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consistency with the work plan - Quality of the training plan - Contribution of the proposed training plan to improvement of the career prospects of the candidate - Quality and relevant experience of the hosting organization (expertise / human resources / facilities / infrastructures) and, where appropriate, of the other organization participating to the programme. 	3/5	10%

Proposals that fail to reach the threshold as indicated for each individual criterion shall be excluded from the final ranking.

Appendix 2: Evaluation criteria for the interview.

Individual interviews shall last about 35 minutes and shall consist of:

- Presentation by the candidate in English on their academic/professional background and project (about 10 minutes)
- Questions by the interview board (about 20 minutes)
- Questions by the candidate (about 5 minutes).

The evaluation criteria for the interview will be based on the following criteria:

Criterion	Threshold	Weighting
Quality of the presentation	3/5	50%
Scientific/technical background	3/5	50%

At the end of the interview the expert panel shall proceed with a debriefing and attribute an interview mark to each candidate.

The final score is constituted of the sum of the two marks attributed at the end of the first stage assessment and during the interview, with a weight of respectively 40% and 60%. This with the note that the expert panel may decide to amend the marks they gave for the first stage assessment after the interview (see Section 3.3.3).

The grants will be awarded to candidates with the highest-ranking and with a minimum final score of 3.5.