



Terms of Reference for the User Selection Committee

1. Role of the User Selection Committee

The role of the User Selection Committee (USC) is to evaluate the proposals submitted for access to the Joint Research Centre (JRC) physical Research Infrastructures (RIs) under the relevance-driven mode of access. At the request of the JRC the USC may be asked to propose priority topics to include in the call for proposals and to advice on technical matters when delineating the details of the test program and when granting access to the JRC RIs.

2. Appointment of User Selection Committee members

The Scientific Development Unit in consultation with the JRC RIs delivering access proposes the members of the USC, based on the domains of expertise of the RIs delivering access. A USC may evaluate proposals related to calls from one or more RIs within the fields of science related to the call for proposals.

The composition of each USC should be geographically balanced, in particular towards the RTD "Widening participation and spreading excellence" list of countries¹. The USC should also aim at meeting the 40% target of the under-represented gender, taking into account the situation in the specific field.

The USC evaluating proposals for a given call or group of calls is composed of a minimum of three, to a maximum of five members: one representative of the JRC acting as chair of the USC and two to four independent European experts from academia and research institutions. The representative from the JRC shall be from the Unit running the RI concerned with the call. The Unit running the RI may also nominate an extra member to the USC participating as secretary with no grading rights with the tasks of facilitating the meeting, taking notes and bringing in relevant information. The secretary may be from a different Unit running the concerned RI, bringing additional expertise to the meeting. In case of calls addressing more than one RI, the USC will have a representative from each of the RIs, with a minimum of three, up to a maximum of four external experts, acting as members of the panel in the different scientific fields covered by the call for proposals.

Members of the USC are considered as experts pursuant to Chapter IV of Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council². Experts must register at the Expert area of the Participant Portal of Horizon Europe³. The work dedicated by these experts and the travel and subsistence costs to attend the meetings at the JRC will be paid in accordance with the rules applicable in the Commission. To this end, experts will sign a contract with the JRC based on the Horizon Europe Model Contract for Experts⁴.

The appointment of the USC shall be approved by the JRC Senior Management. The JRC Board of Governors shall be duly informed of the final list approved by the JRC Senior Management.

The composition of the USC will be periodically revised by the JRC.

¹ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/widening-participation-and-spreading-excellence_en

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/695/oj>

³ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/funding-tenders-opportunities/display/OM/Expert+registration>

⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/work-as-an-expert>



3. Procedure for evaluation of proposals

Shortly after the deadline for submission, the members of the USC receive from the concerned RI the eligible proposals.

The USC meets to evaluate the eligible proposals. The meetings are convened by the JRC RI according to the time schedule of each RI and shall take place preferably at the JRC site hosting the RI. It is also possible to convene the meetings remotely via video conference.

The USC meeting will convene with a minimum of three members, of which one from the concerned RI, while the remaining ones, in case of impossibility of physically attending the meeting, shall send their signed evaluation forms one day prior to the meeting. In case of calls addressing more than one RI, the USC will convene with a minimum of four members, of which two from the concerned RIs.

Each member of the USC evaluates independently each proposal according to a set of selection criteria and provides an evaluation form with the grades of all eligible proposals. The individual grades of each of the members of the USC are discussed and consolidated at the USC meeting.

The chair of the USC will coordinate the drafting of a qualitative evaluation. Indicatively, the qualitative evaluation will be sent by the Scientific Development Unit to the Lead User two (2) months after the closing date for submission of proposals.

The USC may be convened to express a non-binding opinion on issues that may arise between the JRC and the Lead User Institution (see definition in the Framework of access to JRC physical RIs) of a successful proposal when delineating the details of the test program.

4. Consultation during implementation of User Access Projects

The USC may be consulted by the JRC RI to discuss issues related to the implementation of a User Access Project, in particular when there are strong deviations from the project plan as contained in the Description of Work of the Research Infrastructure Access Agreement.