

METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES FOR EXPERT EVALUATORS

IPCEI AI – Pre-selection of Project Proposals (Expression of Interest – EoI)

1. Objective of the Evaluation

These guidelines define the methodology for the evaluation of project proposals submitted under the Expression of Interest (EoI) phase within the IPCEI AI framework.

The objective of this evaluation is to assess whether a project proposal demonstrates:

- a credible and well-defined concept,
- a clear potential to achieve results beyond the state of the art,
- a relevant contribution at European Union level,
- a sufficient basis for further development into a full IPCEI project.

The evaluation serves as a pre-selection mechanism for identifying projects suitable for advancement to subsequent stages of the IPCEI process.

2. Scope of Evaluation and Nature of the EoI Phase

The EoI phase represents an initial screening stage. Therefore:

- proposals are not expected to provide full technical, financial, or implementation detail,
- the evaluation focuses on the quality, credibility, and ambition of the concept,
- the absence of detailed evidence shall not be considered a deficiency, provided that the underlying concept is logically structured and sufficiently justified.

Fundamental Principle

The evaluation shall assess the potential and credibility of the project, not its level of maturity.

3. Mandatory Evaluation Framework

3.1 Review of Submitted Documentation

The expert evaluator is required to conduct a comprehensive assessment of all submitted documents, including:

- Registration Form
- IPCEI Application Template (RDI FID)

- Preliminary Funding Gap Template
- Solemn Declaration
- Project Summary (SVK)

Failure to review all submitted documentation constitutes a procedural deficiency.

3.2 Language of Evaluation

- The evaluation shall be conducted exclusively in English.
- All scores, comments, and justifications must be provided in English.

Any evaluation not complying with this requirement may be considered formally invalid.

3.3 Independent Multi-Expert Assessment

- Each project proposal shall be evaluated by three independent expert evaluators.
- Evaluators shall perform their assessments:
 - o independently,
 - o without consultation or coordination with other evaluators,
 - o based solely on their own professional judgment.

4. Sources of Information and Evaluation Integrity

The evaluation shall be based on:

- the complete set of submitted documents,
- with primary reference to the IPCEI Application Template structure and sections.

Mandatory Rules:

- Information not explicitly stated shall be considered not demonstrated.
- Evaluators shall not infer, assume, or supplement missing information.
- External sources or prior knowledge shall not influence the evaluation.

5. Structure of the Evaluation

The evaluation consists of two stages:

A. Gate Criteria (Eliminatory)

Projects must satisfy both of the following:

- Potential to achieve beyond the state of the art
- Relevance for IPCEI and the European value chain

Failure to meet any of these criteria results in rejection without scoring.

B. Scoring Criteria

Projects passing the gate criteria are evaluated across seven criteria, each scored on a scale from 0 to 5.

6. Evaluation Methodology

6.1 Scoring Scale

Score	Definition
0	Not addressed
1	Very weak, insufficient
2	Weak, limited credibility
3	Adequate, acceptable
4	Strong
5	Excellent, highly convincing

6.2 Gate Criteria Assessment

A. Beyond the State of the Art

(Template section: 2.2.2)

The evaluator shall verify:

- identification of the current state of the art,
- identification of limitations or technological gaps,
- explanation of the proposed advancement,
- indication of technological complexity or risk.

A positive assessment requires a credible and logically justified innovation claim.

B. Relevance for IPCEI and EU Value Chain

(Template sections: 1.2, 1.3, 1.3.1)

The evaluator shall verify:

- clear positioning within the value chain,
- contribution at EU level,

- integration into the IPCEI ecosystem.

Projects lacking European relevance or value chain positioning shall be **rejected**.

7. Instructions for Scoring Criteria

Each criterion shall be evaluated with reference to the corresponding sections of the IPCEI Application Template.

The evaluator shall:

- assess the substance and credibility of the content,
- ensure that the assigned score is consistent with the written justification,
- avoid over- or under-scoring based on incomplete information.

8. Commenting Requirements

For each evaluated criterion:

- A comment of minimum 3–5 sentences is mandatory.
- Comments shall:
 - refer to specific elements of the proposal,
 - justify the assigned score,
 - be objective, clear, and evidence-based.

Examples:

Unacceptable:

“Strong project, good innovation.”

Acceptable:

“The proposal identifies current limitations in [technology] and proposes a solution based on [approach], which introduces measurable improvement in [parameter]. However, the lack of quantified benchmarks reduces the strength of the argument.”

9. Consistency and Quality Assurance

Evaluators shall ensure:

- internal consistency of scoring across all criteria,
- alignment between numerical scores and written comments,
- proportional evaluation relative to the EoI stage.

10. Final Evaluation Output

The evaluator shall provide:

- a total score (maximum 35 points),
- a final justification, summarizing:
 - o key strengths,
 - o key weaknesses,
 - o overall assessment of the project's suitability for further stages.

11. Audit and Compliance Requirements

The evaluation process is subject to formal audit and verification. Therefore:

- all scores must be traceable to documented evidence,
- all conclusions must be explicitly justified,
- the evaluation must be transparent, reproducible, and defensible.

12. Final Evaluation Principle

A high-quality EoI proposal is not defined by the level of detail, but by its ability to present a credible, ambitious, and strategically relevant concept with clear innovation potential at European level.