

The evaluation process is articulated in the following steps:

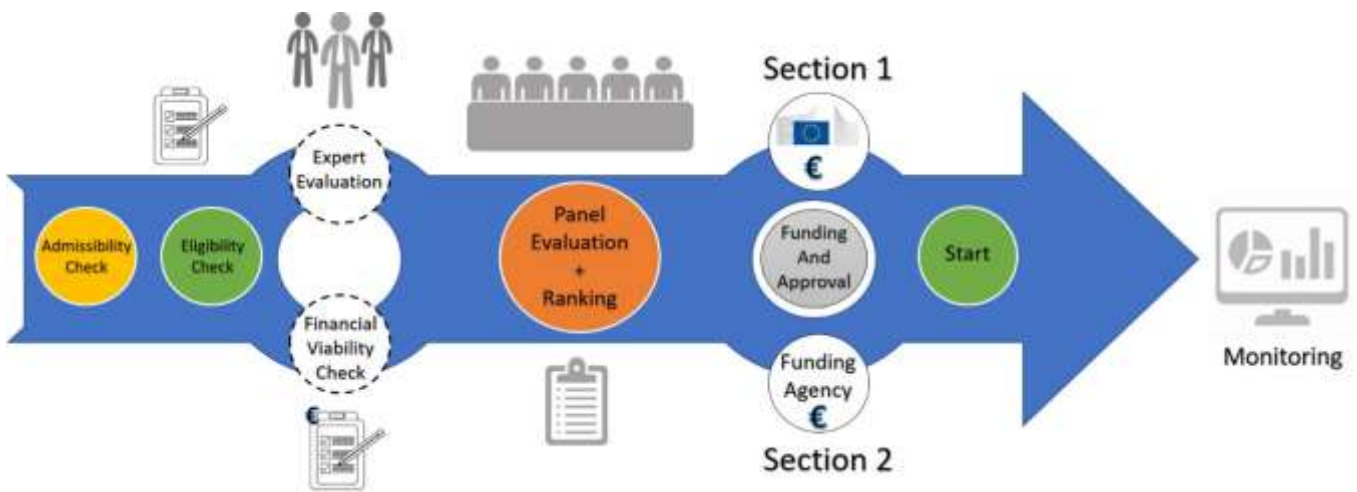


Figure 1. The PRIMA evaluation process

## 1. Admissibility and Eligibility Check

Once submissions are closed, the Call Secretariat checks the admissibility and eligibility of project proposals. Only proposals that are deemed admissible and eligible are assigned to experts to be evaluated.

To be considered admissible, a proposal must be:

- complete and adequately put together
- submitted via the Electronic Submission System before the indicated deadline
- readable, accessible and printable
- inclusive of the requested administrative data, the proposal description, and any other obligatory supporting documents specified in the call conditions
- inclusive of a draft plan for the exploitation and dissemination of the results (not required for pre-proposals)

To be considered eligible, a proposal must:

- comply with the eligibility conditions set out in Rules for Participation of Horizon 2020 - Regulation No.1290/2013 and any derogations to these as specified in the Decision (EU) 2017/1324
- comply with the minimum requirement to have an eligible consortium which is: at least three independent legal entities established in three different PRIMA Participating States, out of which at least one must be established in an EU Member State or a non-MPC third country associated to Horizon 2020 participating in PRIMA and at least one must be established in a third country bordering the Mediterranean Sea (MPC) considered as a Participating State
- its content must correspond, wholly or in part, to the topic for which it is submitted

The reasons for non-eligibility of the ineligible projects are recorded and communicated to applicants.

The procedure described above is performed for BOTH Stage 1 (pre-proposals) and Stage 2 (full proposals).

In the case of Section 2 proposals, the eligibility check is also performed by the PRIMA national funding agencies<sup>1</sup>, since the proposals must comply with additional eligibility criteria laid down by the National Regulations.

## **2. Individual Evaluation**

After the eligibility check, the call secretariat assigns eligible proposals to evaluators. In accordance with Article 15 of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation no. 1290/2013, each eligible proposal is evaluated remotely by at least three expert evaluators<sup>2</sup>. They carry out a technical evaluation based on the following award criteria: excellence, impact, quality and efficiency of implementation (the latter evaluation criterion is only used at the second stage of applications).

An Individual Evaluation Report (IER), which includes comments for all evaluation criteria, is prepared by each evaluator at the end of the remote evaluation.

## **3. Consensus Phase**

After the remote individual evaluation and in advance of the panel review meeting, proposals that received very discrepant marks and scores by the three evaluators are discussed in Consensus Meetings (supervised by the Project Officer and moderated by the Evaluation Committee Chair), in order to harmonise views and agree on scores to assign. In all Consensus Meetings evaluators need agree on consensus scores and take into consideration each other's views.

## **4. Panel Review**

After the remote individual evaluation and consensus phase, evaluators meet in panel configuration (Scientific Evaluation Committees) to further discuss, check on the consistency of / reach a common view on their scores and comments and — in case of equal scores — to agree on a priority order. The panel configuration allows evaluators to have an overview of ALL eligible proposals, not just the ones they evaluate, which enables them to decide fairly when ranking the proposals.

Every panel review meeting is presided by an independent Chair. The duties of the Chairs are to lead the discussion, to guarantee that rules and procedures are followed, to make sure that the evaluation is conducted transparently and fairly, and to approve the meeting minutes and the final evaluation reports.

During the panels, interactions between PRIMA staff, the Chairs and the independent expert evaluators are limited to clarifications on the procedures and logistics.

All the panels agree on final ranking lists including scores and marks attributed to proposals evaluated. No voting is needed since the decisions are taken by consensus. All panel members sign a declaration confirming the transparency of the evaluation process.

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<sup>1</sup> The National funding agencies finance projects awarded under Section 2 of the PRIMA Programme.

<sup>2</sup> The three experts have the following roles: two are readers, one acts as rapporteur. All of them review the proposal and write an Individual Evaluation Report (IER), but the rapporteur is responsible for drafting the final Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) after the conclusion of the panel review. The ESR summarises the comments of the three evaluators and the panel review discussion.

After the conclusion of the panel review, evaluators prepare Evaluation Summary Reports (ESR) outlining the outcome of the evaluation for each proposal. The ESR summarises the comments of the three evaluators who assess the proposal, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the proposals.

## 5. Guiding Principles of Evaluations

The guiding principles adopted for the evaluation are the following:

- **Transparency:** Funding decisions are based on clearly described rules and procedures. Applicants receive adequate feedback on the outcome of the assessment of their proposals.
- **Fairness and impartiality:** All proposals are treated equally. They are evaluated impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin, the identity of the submitting entity, the participants or any team member.
- **Confidentiality:** All proposals, associated annexes and related data, knowledge and documents submitted to PRIMA are treated with the strictest confidentiality.
- **Efficiency and speed:** The evaluation process, preparation and award of grants are dealt with as priority matters, without compromising quality and due diligence by PRIMA-IS.
- **Research integrity considerations:** Any breach of research integrity rules may result in the exclusion of a proposal at any time.

The Call Secretariat liaises on a regular basis with the independent expert evaluators to make sure that evaluation rules and procedures are appropriately understood and to avoid any conflicts of interest. During the remote evaluation, experts are asked to check each proposal's consortium and declare any conflicts of interest, so that such proposals are not assigned to them.

During panel meetings, when conflicts of interest are declared and validated by the chair, experts are invited to leave the room during the discussion.

## 6. Evaluation Criteria

Research and Innovation Action (RIA), Innovation Action (IA) and Coordination and Support Action (CSA) proposals are evaluated on the basis of the award criteria 'Excellence', 'Impact' and 'Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation' in accordance with Article 15 of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation No 1290/2013.

For the evaluation of first-stage proposals under a two-stage submission procedure, only the criteria 'excellence' and 'impact' will be evaluated. Within these criteria, **only the aspects in bold** will be considered

	<b>Excellence</b>  <i>The following aspects will be taken into account, to the extent that the proposed work corresponds to the topic description in the work programme:</i>	<b>Impact</b>  <i>The following aspects will be taken into account:</i>	<b>Quality and efficiency of the implementation</b>  <i>The following aspects will be taken into account:</i>

<p><b>All types of action</b></p>	<p><b>Clarity and pertinence of the objectives;</b></p> <p><b>Soundness of the concept, and credibility of the proposed methodology;</b></p>	<p><b>The extent to which the outputs of the project would contribute to each of the expected impacts mentioned in the work programme under the relevant topic;</b></p>	<p>Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, including extent to which the resources assigned to work packages are in line with their objectives and deliverables;</p> <p>Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk and innovation management;</p> <p>Complementarity of the participants and extent to which the consortium as whole brings together the necessary expertise;</p> <p>Appropriateness of the allocation of tasks, ensuring that all participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role.</p>
<p><b>Research and innovation actions (RIA); Innovation actions (IA)</b></p>	<p><b>Extent that the proposed work is beyond the state of the art, and demonstrates innovation potential (e.g. ground-breaking objectives, novel concepts and approaches, new products, services or business and organisational models)</b></p> <p><b>Appropriate consideration of interdisciplinary approaches and, where relevant, use of stakeholder knowledge and gender dimension in research and innovation content.</b></p>	<p>Any substantial impacts not mentioned in the work programme, that would enhance innovation capacity, create new market opportunities, strengthen competitiveness and growth of companies, address issues related to climate change or the environment, or bring other important benefits for society;</p> <p>Quality of the proposed measures to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of IPR), and to manage research data where relevant.</li> <li>• Communicate the project activities to different target audiences</li> </ul>	

<b>Coordination &amp; support actions (CSA)</b>	<b>Quality of the proposed coordination and/or support measures.</b>	Quality of the proposed measures to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of IPR), and to manage research data where relevant.</li> <li>• Communicate the project activities to different target audiences</li> </ul>	
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## 7. Funding Decision

In line with Article 6(10)(c) of the PRIMA Decision, the proposals are ranked according to evaluation results. The selection of proposals to be funded are made by PRIMA-IS based on this ranking. Since the funding of participants in Section 2 activities are the responsibility of PS and not PRIMA-IS, the respective PS have to provide adequate funding in line with their national rules. In the event that one or more projects cannot be funded by the PS, PRIMA-IS decides to select for funding the projects directly following them in the ranking list(s).

## 8. Communication of Evaluation Results

Evaluation Summary Reports, as well as the total scores of the project proposals, are sent to project coordinators after both Stage 1<sup>3</sup> and Stage 2 panel reviews. The final lists of funded projects are published on the PRIMA website.

## 9. Means of Redress

Applicants who believe that the evaluation of their proposal was not carried out in accordance with the procedures set out in the Annual Work Plan may request a review of the evaluation. This procedure covers only the procedural aspects of the evaluation, and not the merits of the proposal. The full procedure for redress is available at the following link: <http://prima-med.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/PRIMA-Appeals-procedure.pdf>

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<sup>3</sup> For proposals that successfully pass the first stage of two-stage calls, feedback is provided to all coordinators, but the first stage ESR is only sent after the second stage evaluation.