



# FCT

Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia  
MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO E CIÊNCIA

## **EVALUATION GUIDE Additional Information**

### **FCT Evaluation of R&D Units 2013**

29 April 2014

# FCT Evaluation of R&D Units 2013

## Additional Information to the Evaluation Guide

The following document is an update to the FCT R&D Units 2013 [Evaluation Guide](#). It aims to ensure monitoring of the evaluation process by the applicants and to provide further details on the procedures of both evaluation stages.

### 1. Evaluation Structure - Panels

Given the distribution of the scientific domains covered by the applications, six disciplinary and one transdisciplinary review panels will be set up. In addition of the Chair, each panel will be composed of between 7 and 16 members, depending on the number of proposals to be allocated.

- Panel 1: Exact Sciences
- Panel 2: Engineering Sciences
- Panel 3: Health and Life Sciences
- Panel 4: Natural and Environmental Sciences
- Panel 5: Social Sciences
- Panel 6: Humanities
- Panel 7: Transdisciplinary

Panel 7 will be constituted by 2-3 members of each of the six single-disciplinary panels, ideally including the chair of each panel. This panel will be in charge of assessing the applications that were submitted as interdisciplinary.

The Review Panels are constituted by international, seasoned experts of the highest standard who have a wide view and whose knowledge cuts across the domains covered by the Review Panel. In order to guarantee their capacity to assess all the elements of the applications submitted by the research units, besides their high scientific profiles, Review Panel members should also have extensive knowledge and experience in management of scientific structures (as directors/heads of laboratories, groups and/or institutes).

### 2. Evaluation Process

The evaluation process is organised in two stages.

## Stage 1 – Remote Assessment and Panel evaluation

Stage 1 evaluation is based on the work and assessment of four experts:

- Two external referees (subject-specific review)

For each application, two external referees will be identified and appointed by the European Science Foundation; one of these may be suggested by the research unit itself (when absence of conflicts of interest and appropriate expertise have been acknowledged). These experts should complement each other and hold detailed expertise that allows thoroughly considering the science put forward in the application. They should also have some experience in management of science teams/units.

The external referees will provide their assessment online and will not participate to any face-to-face meeting.

- Two members of a given Review Panel (domain-specific Review)

For each application, two review panel members will be appointed and will act as rapporteurs (lead and secondary).

The secondary rapporteur will provide his/her assessment of the application in parallel with the external referees.

Stage 1 evaluation is sequenced as following:

1. Early assessment

External referees and secondary rapporteurs provide their assessments of the applications using an online platform. These assessments will be based on criteria detailed below.

2. Rebuttal phase

Once the three assessments (two from the external referees and one from the secondary rapporteur) are available online, the coordinator of the research unit will have the possibility to comment on factual points put forward in these assessments. This rebuttal phase will be completed and submitted online.

3. Lead rapporteurs' assessment and pre-synthesis

Once all three early assessments are available, the lead rapporteur will complete the pre-synthesis report of the information provided AND his/her own assessments. This pre-synthesis will follow the same template as the assessment reports but will address two additional questions.

- i. Validation of the research profile(s) (basic research, applied and/or experimental development) indicated by each research unit in the application form;
- ii. Validation of the laboratorial intensity level indicated by each research unit in the application form, since it will have direct implications on the core funding component to be awarded.

#### 4. Review Panel meetings

All information, including the comments from the rebuttal phase, will be made available to the Review Panels in advance of their meetings. The Review panels will meet physically, discuss each application and reach consensus on:

- scores for each criterion and comments to be put forward to the research unit
- specific issues to be considered during Stage 2 of the evaluation process (for research units shortlisted for Stage 2)
- recommendations on the intensity level and share of applied/basic research of each research unit (see page 30 of the [Evaluation Guide](#)).

After the discussion, the lead rapporteur will produce the final consensus report. Both scores and comments are critically important. The consensus reports comments will constitute the feedback to be communicated to all applicants in Stage 1 of the evaluation.

**Only applications with scores equal to or above 15 out of 20 (15/20) AND with marks of at least 4/5 for criteria A and C AND marks of at least 3/5 for criteria B and D will be shortlisted for Stage 2 of the evaluation process. The remaining applications will not be selected for Stage 2 and their corresponding R&D Units will immediately receive a qualitative overall grading, as described below:**

Result	Description	1st Stage Cumulative Score
Shortlisted for Stage 2	R&D Unit that has been selected to proceed to Stage 2 of the evaluation process. The R&D Units whose applications are selected for stage 2 will only receive their overall grading at the end of the full evaluation process.	≥ 15 <sup>1</sup>
Good	R&D Unit with quality at the national level, reduced internationalisation and some contributions to its area of research	< 15 > 12 <sup>2</sup>
Fair	R&D Unit without significant contributions to its area of research	≤ 12 > 11 <sup>3</sup>
Poor	R&D Unit without contributions to its area of research and with other weaknesses.	< 11

#### Notes

- 1 Additionally the application must score at least 4 points in each of the ratings of criteria A and C, and at least 3 points in each of the ratings of criteria B and D.
- 2 Additionally the application must score at least 3 points in any of the four evaluation criteria ratings.
- 3 Additionally the application must score at least 3 points in each of the ratings of criteria A and C, and it must also score at least 2 points in each of the ratings of criteria B and D

## Stage 2 – Research Unit interviews and site visits

Shortlisted research units will be visited in the summer/autumn 2014. Site visits will be grouped in order to limit the amount of travel.

### Before the site visit

When preparing for the visit, research units will be asked to take a detailed look at the specific questions and issues put forward by the review panel in their consensus report prepared during Stage 1.

### During the visit

The visit will include at least:

- a partial visit of the facilities;
- a brief presentation of the application (6-years strategic research programme), including answers to the specific points put forward by the panel;
- a brief presentation of the research team(s);
- an interview with the unit coordinator and possibly with other key team members, PhD students and post-doctoral researchers;
- a closed session during which evaluators will discuss and agree on the outcome of the visit.

While a lead rapporteur will chair the visit, a secondary rapporteur will keep track of the discussions and will formalise the conclusions of the experts in a visit report that will be submitted online and made available for the final evaluation meetings (second review panel meetings).

### Final Review Panel meetings

After all the site visits, the review panels will reconvene in order to integrate the outcomes and findings of the visits (final review panel meeting). Based on the visit reports and on the plenary discussion, a final consensus report will be produced on the actual final ranking of each research unit (exceptional, excellent, very good, good, fair, poor).

**In Stage 2 of the evaluation process, the qualitative overall grading should be based on the Review Panel's own judgment of the general merit of each R&D Unit, after the visit/interviews, and will not be the direct result of a quantitative algorithm based on the ratings attributed to each individual criterion (which should however inform the judgement of the Panel).**

Grade	Description
<b>Exceptional</b>	R&D Unit recognised as an international reference for its scientific and technological output and exceptional contributions to its area of research.
<b>Excellent</b>	R&D Unit distinguished by the high quality and international merit of its scientific and technology output and with significant contributions to its area of research.
<b>Very Good</b>	R&D Unit with high quality and national merit and with significant contributions of international relevance in its area of research
<b>Good</b>	R&D Unit with quality at the national level, reduced internationalisation and some contributions to its area of research.
<b>Fair</b>	R&D Unit without significant contributions to its area of research.
<b>Poor</b>	R&D Unit without contributions to its area of research and with other weaknesses.

## 3. Evaluation criteria

### 3.1. Stage 1

A high level of scientific merit, by international standards, is the main criterion used to assess and to prioritise funding. This criterion applies to the past and future planned research activities as well as to the Research Unit's team. All units are expected to meet the Mission Statements (see pages 26 and 27 of the [Evaluation Guide](#)) of their corresponding scientific domain with the highest possible standards.

During Stage 1, the evaluation is based on the following **four criteria** (see pages 8 to 10 of the Evaluation Guide):

- A. Productivity and contribution to the National Scientific and Technological System (NSTS)
- B. Scientific and technological merit of the research team
- C. Scientific merit and innovative nature of the strategic programme
- D. Feasibility of the work plan and reasonability of the requested budget

**Each criterion accounts for 25% towards the final mark and is rated on the 5-point scale below:**

Numeric score	Corresponding wording	Definition
5	Excellent	All relevant aspects of the assessment criteria successfully addressed. Any shortcomings are minor.
4	Very good	Assessment criteria very well addressed/met, although certain improvements are still possible.
3	Good	Assessment criteria well addressed/met, although improvements would be necessary.
2	Fair	Assessment criteria broadly addressed, however there are significant weaknesses.
1	Poor	Assessment criteria addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

## 3.2. Stage 2

During Stage 2, the evaluation is based on the following **five criteria** (see pages 8 to 10 of the [Evaluation Guide](#)):

- A. Productivity and contribution to the National Scientific and Technological System (NSTS) – 20% or 35%
- B. Scientific and technological merit of the research team – 20%
- C. Scientific merit and innovative nature of the strategic programme – 20%
- D. Feasibility of the work plan and reasonability of the requested budget – 20%
- E. Impact of the scientific, technological and cultural output (see page 9 of the [Evaluation Guide](#)) – 5% or 20%

Note: The relative weighting of Criteria A and E will depend on the specific research profile(s) of the R&D Units (basic research or applied research/experimental development). Therefore, R&D Units with a basic research profile will be assessed with a lower weighting in criteria E (i.e. 5%), which will be balanced by a higher weighting in criteria A (i.e. 35%).

**Each criterion is rated on a 5-point scale according to the same scale as that of Stage 1.**



# FCT

Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia  
MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO E CIÊNCIA

[www.fct.pt](http://www.fct.pt)