

FFG  
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# **EVALUATION MANUAL FOR FFG SELECTION PROCESS MODEL 2 FUNDING (APPLICATION CALLS)**

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# 1 PREAMBLE

The FFG calls are carried out on the basis of harmonised funding instruments. These define the specific criteria and conditions for the individual projects (e.g. Company Project, Cooperative Research Project, etc.). The calls use a specific mix of instruments depending on the call objectives. An overview of the [instruments](#) is given on the FFG website.

The instruments provide consistent selection and processing standards. The following evaluation manuals are used in the FFG selection procedure:

Figure 1: Overview of evaluation manuals

Application procedure – ongoing submission	Competitive procedure
<p><b>Model 1</b> <b>Fast-track procedure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Evaluation: internal and/or external reviews, simplified evaluation scheme</li> <li>– Funding recommendation: call management or advisory committee</li> </ul>	<p><b>Model 3</b> <b>External evaluation committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Evaluation: internal and/or external reviews</li> <li>– Funding recommendation: external evaluation committee (FFG has no vote)</li> <li>– Distinction between <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Model 3a for funding</li> <li>– Model 3b for financing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Model 2</b> <b>Standard procedure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Evaluation: internal reviews, external reviews if necessary</li> <li>– Funding recommendation: advisory committee (FFG has no vote)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Model 4</b> <b>External evaluation committee plus hearing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Evaluation: internal and/or external reviews</li> <li>– Hearings: essential element of the evaluation process</li> <li>– Funding recommendation: external evaluation committee (FFG has no vote)</li> </ul>

## 2 KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

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The present evaluation manual refers exclusively to selection procedures according to Model 2.

The aim of the selection procedure is to select eligible projects from the formally correct funding applications submitted according to the criteria of the relevant funding instrument.

The evaluation committee (Advisory Committee for the General Programmes) is established by the FFG Management in agreement with the Supervisory Board.

## 3 EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

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### 3.1 Overview

The following diagram shows the evaluation and selection procedure.

*Figure 2: Schematic of evaluation and selection procedure*

Ongoing submission
Formal check by FFG
Internal review by FFG
All projects are discussed in an internal meeting
Meeting of the evaluation committee (= General Programmes Advisory Committee) and technical recommendation
Funding decision by FFG Management
Notification of funding applicants by FFG on an ongoing basis
Preparation and signing of agreements on an ongoing basis

## **3.2 Check and internal review by FFG**

The applications submitted within the deadline will undergo a formal check and an internal review in accordance with the specified process, the check lists/templates and the criteria specified in the technical guidelines. The results of the formal check and the internal review will be documented in the FFG's electronic documentation systems.

### **3.2.1 Formal Check**

The FFG Call Management will check the applications for completeness based on check lists and will ensure data capture. The criteria examined in the formal check can be found in the Call Guidelines. The funding applicants will be informed about the result of the formal check in good time. The applicants will be notified of any correctable deficiencies detected and will be requested to make appropriate corrections within a reasonable period of time, or the application will be excluded from the further process for formal reasons. If correctable deficiencies are not corrected within the specified period, the relevant application will also be excluded for formal reasons.

### **3.2.2 Internal review**

All funding applications approved for further evaluation following the formal check will be reviewed by FFG staff.

The internal review of funding applications consists of the following parts:

- The internal review is carried out according to the criteria in four different evaluation dimensions. Each application will be reviewed by two FFG staff members, typically with a technology and business background.
- This review covers aspects such as multiple funding, project history, SME status, incentive effect, unusual ownership structure, creditworthiness and residual financing and call-specific aspects.
- Applications will also be reviewed for compliance with specific funding conditions, allocation to correct organisation category, correct and transparent cost breakdown. The review may also result in suggestions for cost cuts.
- The review also examines whether the company is an undertaking in difficulty. Undertakings in difficulty are not eligible for funding.

### **3.2.3 Submission of additional documents during the internal review**

FFG staff carrying out the internal review may contact the funding applicants to obtain further information and additional documents. This may be done by phone, in writing via the FFG's electronic submission system, or personally, including on-site visits. Deadlines will be agreed for the submission of additional documents.

#### **3.2.4 Quality assurance**

A quality assurance process has been put in place for internal reviews. Each funding application will undergo an additional quality check by two other FFG staff members. All applications will additionally be discussed in a meeting led by General Programmes (= internal preliminary meeting). The internal review will be conducted within a reasonable period of time in a fair (equal treatment), transparent, consistent, unbiased and independent manner, taking into account data protection and confidentiality requirements, the type of project, and the subject of the funding. External reviewers may also be involved, who will be subject to the same principles.

Following the formal check and the internal review, the funding applications, together with recommendations (funding, discussion or rejection), will be forwarded to the evaluation committee (Advisory Committee for the General Programmes) for decision.

### **3.3 Meeting of the evaluation committee and technical recommendation**

The evaluation committee (Advisory Committee for the General Programmes) is established by the FFG Management in agreement with the Supervisory Board. The Advisory Committee of the FFG General Programmes will make a funding recommendation based on the evaluation process. This recommendation may include requirements and/or conditions or cost cuts. The Advisory Committee meets seven times a year.

### **3.4 From funding decision to contract**

The FFG Management will make the funding decision based on the recommendation submitted by the Advisory Committee.

## 4 EVALUATION DETAILS

The funding applications are assessed according to 4 main criteria:

Research and development projects:

- Quality of the project
- Economic potential and exploitation
- Feasibility
- Relevance to the programme

Innovation projects (Impact Innovation):

- Quality of the project
- Methodology
- Feasibility
- Relevance to the programme

The main criteria and the defined sub-criteria can be found in the relevant technical guidelines and call guidelines (in the event of combined guidelines).

The evaluation scheme is divided into 5 levels:

Table 1: Evaluation scheme

Sign	Explanation	Description
++	Excellent	The project meets the criterion <b>very well</b> and <b>to the full extent</b> .
+	Good	The project meets the criterion <b>well</b> and <b>to a predominant extent</b> .
-	Poor	The project meets the criterion <b>to an inadequate extent</b> . There are significant weaknesses.
--	Very poor	The project addresses/meets the criterion <b>to a very inadequate extent</b> . The weaknesses clearly outweigh the few strengths.
K.O.	Insufficient	The project <b>does not meet</b> the criterion.