

# GeoERA



Establishing the European Geological Surveys Research Area to deliver a Geological Service for Europe

## GeoERA Stage Two

### INSTRUCTIONS TO MEMBERS OF THE EXPERT PANEL



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This document serves as a guide for experts reviewing Project Proposals submitted for the GeoERA Stage Two Call, who have a seat in the Expert Panel. The Expert Panel receive input from at least 3 technical reviewers on the strength and weaknesses of each proposal, before they continue to evaluate the proposals according to the Joint Call Document [No. 8B Evaluation Form](#).

GeoERA is a H2020 ERA-NET, which aims to set up a European Geological Research Area, which stimulates transnational sharing of knowledge, people and infrastructure by:

- promote the free movement of researchers, technology and knowledge
- address challenges more effectively on a high international level
- ensure effective and efficient use of public funds by aligning national research agendas

It is relevant to realise that working at the boundaries of countries, as similar to the boundaries of disciplines, is challenging, but will deliver new insights. The aim for GeoERA is therefore not to deliver high and new technologies as in H2020, but deliver a harmonised geological knowledge base across borders. To achieve this, all geological survey organizations (GSOs) will collaborate by aligning their national research agenda's and national funds (around 70%) to carry out work within GeoERA. While some surveys are already involved in research activities and familiar with EU-funding and administration, others are not familiar with this as their responsibilities are defined – and restricted – to their national task of gathering data and using these to provide unbiased information on subsurface. The projects under GeoERA will therefore also reflect capacity building and knowledge sharing on collaboration in a European context. This should be kept in mind while evaluating the GeoERA Project Proposals.

### 1.1 Evaluation

Prior to the evaluation members of the Expert Panel should:

- Read the Joint Call Document [No. 8A Code of Conduct and Declaration](#), and sign and submit the declaration form to [GeoERA@nwo.nl](mailto:GeoERA@nwo.nl).
- Consult GeoERA Joint Call Document [No. 8 Evaluation and Selection](#) to get familiar with details on the review meeting and the ranking procedure.
- Familiarize themselves with the evaluation criteria and look at the [Evaluation Form 8B](#) besides from reading this document.
- Read the introduction and the relevant SRTs from the GeoERA Joint Call Document [No. 9 Call Announcement and Scientific Scope](#).
- Understand the excellence, impact and the implementation requirements of proposals by reading Joint Call Document [No.11 Submission Template for Project Proposals, including Submission Guide](#).
- Email NWO if a conflict of interest is identified, or find that the research is outside of their area of expertise (keep in mind that GeoERA chose to have experts with rather general than specific expertise).

During evaluation, members of the Expert Panel should

- Not discuss proposals with proposers or others during the review period (except from at the Expert Panel meeting).
- Mark and comment on each proposal against the evaluation criteria given in [Form B](#)
- Send evaluation forms for each assigned proposal to NWO as instructed by NWO.

## 2 GEOERA AIM AND OBJECTIVES

GeoERA **aims** to integrate European Geological Survey Organisations' (GSOs) information and knowledge on subsurface energy, water and raw material resources to support sustainable use of the subsurface in addressing Europe's societal challenges.

GeoERA addresses four themes: **A) Geo-Energy, B) Groundwater, C) Raw Materials, and D) Information Platform**. The Information Platform theme is crosscutting in nature, and is designed to provide a sustainable framework to disseminate the findings and data from the other themes. The Scientific Scope of the GeoERA Research Programme and the objectives are described in GeoERA Joint Call Document [No. 9 Call Announcement and Scientific Scope](#). A more elaborated list of objectives for each theme, used in the Stage One Call phase, can be found – for information - in Joint Call Document [No. 4 Scientific Scope, Stage One – Project Ideas](#).

Project Proposals have been submitted to reflect the Specific Research Topics (SRTs) that accomplishes the general challenges, objectives and scope of the specific GeoERA Themes. In all SRTs submitting proposals on cross-thematic research is encouraged. The SRTs can be found in the GeoERA Call Document [No. 9 Call Announcement and Scientific Scope](#).

The Project Proposals should address the development of:

- Interoperable, pan-European data and information services on the distribution of geo-energy, groundwater and raw material resources and harmonized methods to assess them;
- Common assessment frameworks and methodologies supporting a better understanding and management of the water-energy-raw materials nexus and potential impacts and risks of subsurface use;
- Knowledge and services aimed at European, national and regional policy makers, industry and other stakeholders.

The **objectives** of the Projects Proposals should be to:

- Integrate national and regional research resources;
- Develop, improve, optimize and harmonize pan-European geological data and information at a scale and resolution that is useful for national and regional geological mapping programmes;
- Contribute to the establishment of a common European Geological Knowledge, and to the provision of a Geological Service for Europe, through a Geological Research Area.

The European Geological Knowledge Base will provide European stakeholders with access to objective and seamless data, information, knowledge and expertise on subsurface resources.

This will contribute to the following **goals**:

- Facilitate the optimal use and sustainable management of the subsurface; maximising its added value for energy, groundwater and raw material resources; while minimising environmental impacts and footprints;
- Support the reaching of good environmental status for subterranean and seabed resources.

### 3 EVALUATION OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

Below follows explanatory remarks on how to understand the evaluation criteria when evaluating the GeoERA Stage Two Call Project Proposals. Besides, additional guidelines on evaluating budget are added.

#### 3.1 Introduction

Sub-criteria:	Explanation
<i>Does each participant have the necessary basic operational capacity to carry out their proposed activities?</i>	Participant refers to the institution. Do you consider the geological surveys involved the appropriate partners to work on this proposal?

#### 3.2 Criterion 1: Excellence

Sub-criteria:	Explanation
<i>Clarity and pertinence of the objectives</i>	Is it clear what the purpose of the project is? Does it contribute to the overall GeoERA objectives (see chapter 2 above)? Does the proposal contribute to the objective of the specific SRT in question – or, if not to all of them– sufficiently of these?
<i>Soundness of the concept, and credibility of the proposed methodology</i>	Is the project feasible? Is the proposed methodology sufficient to achieve the objectives described?
<i>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 organizational models)</i>	Will the project address activities beyond the state-of-the-art? Does it work further on already acquired knowledge and not repeat already performed research? Does it demonstrate innovation potential and in what way?
<i>Appropriate consideration of interdisciplinary approaches (in particular interactions with other GeoERA themes) and use of stakeholder knowledge</i>	Does the proposal address obvious interactions disciplines and in particular with other GeoERA themes? Does it fully address the interfaces with the Information Platform? Are consideration on the needs and knowledge available on stakeholders taken into account?

### 3.3 Criterion 2: Impact

<b>Sub-criteria:</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<i>The extent to which the outputs of the project would contribute to each of the expected impacts listed in the Stage 2 Call under the relevant topic</i>	How and to what extent will the project proposed contribute to the expected impacts of GeoERA and the specific SRT?
<i>Any substantial impacts not mentioned in the Stage 2 Call, that would enhance innovation capacity, creating new market opportunities, strengthen competitiveness and growth of companies, Address issues related to climate change or the environment, cover the interest of multiple European countries, or bring other important benefits for society</i>	Does the proposal describe other relevant impacts? Does the proposal represent a large consortium from at least three countries towards a Pan-European initiative?
<i>The quality of the proposed measures to: Exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of Intellectual Property Rights, IPR), and to manage research data where relevant</i>	Are exploitation and dissemination (project results, research data, IPR etc.) activities, sufficiently described?
<i>The quality of the proposed measures to: Communicate the project activities to different target audiences</i>	Does the proposal describe more target groups or end-users for their results?

### 3.4 Criterion 3: Quality and efficiency of the implementation

<b>Sub-criteria:</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<i>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;</i>	Does the work plan appear efficient, e.g. are interdependent tasks taken into account? Does tasks and resources seem balanced?
<i>Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk and innovation management<sup>1</sup></i>	Are management structure well described and in line with the GeoERA principles? The GeoERA Joint Call Document No. 11, sec. 3.1 and 3.2, covers the relevant section of the GeoERA Grant Agreement and Consortium agreement.
<i>Complementarity of the participants and extent to which the consortium as whole brings together the necessary expertise;</i>	Does the consortium as a group strengthen each other and the research purpose of the proposal?

<sup>1</sup> Proposed measures and approaches should specifically take into account, and align with, IPR and data management agreements and communication activities described in the overall GeoERA Grant Agreement and Consortium Agreement

<i>Appropriateness of the allocation of tasks, ensuring that all participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role.</i>	Does the resources committed per participants per task seem reasonable? Are resource appropriately divided for the interface work package and the project management?
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### 3.5 Marking guidance

One completed Evaluation Form 8b is required per Project Proposal:

- There are three evaluation criteria for Project Proposals;
- Each evaluation criterion will be marked out of five; half marks may be given (*Table 11*);
- The threshold for individual evaluation criteria will be three and the overall threshold, applying to the sum of the three individual marks will be 10. If a Project Proposal has scored less than this, it cannot be funded;
- Consensus comments must be given by the Expert Panel to support the marks given and provide feedback to the consortia.

*Table 1: Definition of evaluation marks*

<b>0</b>	<b>Fail:</b> the proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information (unless the result of an 'obvious clerical error')
<b>1</b>	<b>Poor:</b> the criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses
<b>2</b>	<b>Fair:</b> the proposal broadly addresses the criterion but there are significant weaknesses
<b>3</b>	<b>Good:</b> the proposal addresses the criterion well but with a number of shortcomings
<b>4</b>	<b>Very Good:</b> the proposal addresses the criterion very well but with a small number of shortcomings
<b>5</b>	<b>Excellent:</b> the proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion; any shortcomings are minor

### 3.6 Budget/project size

In the Joint Call Document [No. 9 Call Announcement and Scientific Scope](#), every SRT has a table that includes the estimated total budget for the SRT, the estimated budget per Project Proposal, and the maximum number of projects expected to be funded within the SRT. These estimations serve as an indication for project sizes and the number of projects the Executive Board is expecting, and serve as guidelines for the submitters.

The estimations are indicative to optimally use the EU funding provided to GeoERA. Evaluators should not review Project Proposals against this estimated budget, but the budget indicated in the Project Proposals and its activities and deliverables, e.g. does it look reasonable (too low, sufficient, too high). This means that Project Proposal budgets may exceed or even be lower than the budget estimations per SRT indicated in Joint Call Document No. 9, but this should not disqualify a Project Proposal.