

FAQ – how will GeoERA Project Proposals be selected for funding?

At the end of the Stage 2 Call for Project Proposals (mid-January 2018), we expect that a substantial number of proposals have been submitted. Rules for selecting proposals for funding are described in [Call Document no. 8](#), and the rules are further exemplified below to clarify the selection process.

Evaluation and scores

Shortly after the end of the submission period, the proposals will be evaluated and scored by independent experts. Each of the three award criteria *Excellence*, *Impact*, and *Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation* is given a score of 1-5 points. For a proposal to qualify for funding, it needs to score equal to or higher than the evaluation thresholds. For individual evaluation criteria, the threshold is 3, so to qualify for funding a proposal must have scores of 3 or higher for each of the three criteria. In addition, the sum of the scores in the 3 individual criteria must be 10 or higher.

Ranking proposals

After evaluation and scoring, proposals are ranked according to their scores. Proposals will first be ranked within each individual Specific Research Topic (SRT), in case more than one proposal is received. For each SRT, only the highest-ranking proposal (or proposals, if the call topic description indicates that more than 1 proposal can be funded) are retained and can be recommended for funding.

Next, a ranking will be made between the retained proposals within each theme. The highest ranking proposals are then recommended for funding, until the budget for each theme is exhausted.

Should proposals be ranked equal when selecting the last for funding, the GeoERA Executive Board will determine a priority order for these proposals, based on the following approach, that will be applied successively for every group of equally scored proposals requiring prioritisation, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order:

- a) Proposals that address topics, or sub-topics, not otherwise covered by more highly-ranked proposals, will be considered to have the highest priority.
- b) Proposals identified under (a), if any, will themselves be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the criterion *Impact*. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on scores for the criterion *Excellence*.
- c) If necessary, any further prioritisation will be based on the following factors, in order:
 - o involvement of GeoERA participants who are otherwise not involved in successful proposals;
 - o synergies between projects within or across themes;
 - o or other factors related to the objectives of the GeoERA call.
- d) The method described in (b) will then be applied to the remaining equally scored proposals in the group.

Table 1: GeoERA call budget

	Theme	Budget (€)
GeoERA co-funded call for transnational proposals	Geo-Energy	10.3 million
	Groundwater	7.7 million
	Raw Materials	8.4 million
	Information Platform	3.9 million
	Total	30.3 million

In case there is remaining budget within a theme, the budget may be relocated to a Project Proposal with the best quality, i.e. the highest ranked Project Proposal on the overall ranking list (covering all four themes), that has not yet received funding, taking into account the previous rules as well as the budget guidelines outlined in table 1.

The rules are illustrated below to clarify the selection process.

NB: Only one proposal, with involvement of all the GeoERA partners, is expected for the Information Platform theme; thus this theme is not elaborated below.

Outcome of evaluation

The Joint Call Document no. 9 indicates per SRT the number of projects expected to be funded as well as budgets allocated to the individual SRTs.

Let's have a look at a theoretical outcome of the call, illustrated in the tables below for each of the three themes – the proposals qualified for funding are marked with bold, based on the score thresholds and on the no. of expected projects in each SRT:

Table 2: Geo-Energy – hypothetical scores and ranking

Geo-Energy (GE)	SRT GE1	SRT GE2	SRT GE3	SRT GE4	SRT GE5	SRT GE6
Budget estimates (mill. €)	0.75	3.0	0.75	1.0	3.8	1.0
No. of projects expected	Up to 1	Up to 3	Up to 1	Up to 2	Up to 2	Up to 1
Project Proposals ranked by scores	13	15	11	14.5	15	11
	12	14	10	13.5	12.5	10.5
		12		12.5	10	9
		8				

Table 3: Groundwater – hypothetical scores and ranking

Groundwater (GW)	SRT GW1	SRT GW2	SRT GW3	SRT GW4
Budget estimates (mill. €)	2.7	1.7	2.5	0.8
No. of projects expected	Up to 2	Up to 1	Up to 1	Up to 3
Project Proposals ranked by scores	12.5	15	14.5	14
	11.5	12	13	13.5
	10	9		10

Table 4: Raw Materials – hypothetical scores and ranking

Raw Materials (RM)	SRT RM1	SRT RM2	SRT RM3	SRT RM4	SRT RM5
Budget estimates (mill. €)	2	1.25	1.5	2.5	1.15
No. of projects expected	Up to 1	Up to 2	Up to 3	Up to 2	Up to 1
Project Proposals ranked by scores	12	14.5	15	14	15
	11.5	14	13.5	13	14.5
		10	9.5	11	9
			9		

These hypothetical examples illustrates the fact that some proposals with high scores may not be qualified for funding compared to others with a lower score due to the limitation of projects expected within each theme. Secondly, a situation can be foreseen where the call expected up to 3 projects within one SRT, but only 2 proposals passed the evaluation threshold of 10 (e.g. SRT RM3).

Ranking within each theme

The next step is to rank the Project Proposals within each Theme as there will probably not be funding for all qualified proposals. For illustrating this step, each qualified proposal is in the tables 5, 7 and 9 below designated prefix related to their SRT and a letter A, B or C reflecting the position on the ranking list within their SRT (e.g. GE1 A, GW4 C, RM2 B etc.; "A" being the proposal with the highest ranking in one given SRT and "C" with the lowest ranking). Besides, hypothetical budgets are added in the tables. It should be noted that proposals are allowed to have a budget slightly larger than the expected budget allocated to the individual SRTs. The expected budgets are merely indications of budgets for project proposals expected by

the EB. As partners have indicated a minimum and maximum in-kind commitment, it is also expected that proposals might have a lower budget.

Geo-Energy:

Table 5: Geo-Energy – max. budget 10.3 mill. € - proposals with equal ranking are marked with italics

Project Proposal No.	Ranking based on score	Budget (mill. €)	Budget summed (mill. €)
<i>GE2 A</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>1.1</i>
<i>GE5 A</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>1.9</i>	<i>3.0</i>
GE4 A	14.5	0.6	3.6
GE2 B	14	1.0	4.6
GE4 B	13.5	0.5	5.1
GE1 A	13	0.8	5.9
GE5 B	12.5	2.0	7.9
GE2 C	12	0.9	8.8
<i>GE3 A</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>0.7</i>	<i>9.5</i>
<i>GE6 A</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>10.6</i>

In the Geo-Energy Theme, the last proposal will (initially) not be funded as the max. budget of 10.3 would then be more than exhausted. Instead, the funding stops at GE3 A, leaving 0.8 mill. € for the cross-thematic ranking, described below.

Note that two times two proposals were equally ranked (scores 15 and 11 respectively). In the first case of both a score of 15, both proposals are funded, but not in the case where the score is 11. The criteria above (a-d) was used to select the one to be funded before the budget was exhausted, e.g. the highest score for the criterion *Impact (criteria b)*, as both topics were not funded by higher ranked proposals (*criteria a*).

This results in a funding for each SRT as illustrated in table 6:

Table 6: Geo-Energy – expected budgets/number of projects to be funded compared to the outcome based on this theoretical outcome of the call, scores, and ranking.

Geo-Energy (GE)	SRT GE1	SRT GE2	SRT GE3	SRT GE4	SRT GE5	SRT GE6
Budget estimates (mill. €)	0.75	3.0	0.75	1.0	3.8	1.0
No. of projects expected	Up to 1	Up to 3	Up to 1	Up to 2	Up to 2	Up to 1
Funding per SRT	0.8	3.0	0.7	1.1	3.9	0
No of projects funded	1	3	1	2	2	0

Groundwater:

Table 7: Groundwater – max. budget 7.7 mill. €

Project Proposal No.	Ranking based on score	Budget (mill. €)	Budget summed (mill. €)
<i>GW2 A</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>2.0</i>
<i>GW3 A</i>	<i>14.5</i>	<i>2.6</i>	<i>4.6</i>
GW4 A	14	0.4	5.0
GW4 B	13.5	0.5	5.5
GW1 A	12.5	1.5	7.0
GW1 B	11.5	1.4	8.4
GW4 C	10	0.4	8.8

In the Groundwater Theme, the last two proposals will (initially) not be funded as the budget is exhausted, which is 7.7 mill. €. This results in a funding for each SRT as illustrated in table 8. However, 0.7 mill. € is left for the cross-thematic ranking, see below.

Table 8: Groundwater – expected budgets/number of projects to be funded compared to the outcome based on this theoretical outcome of the call, scores, and ranking.

Groundwater (GW)	SRT GW1	SRT GW2	SRT GW3	SRT GW4
Budget estimates (mill. €)	2.7	1.7	2.5	0.8
No. of projects expected	Up to 2	Up to 1	Up to 1	Up to 3
Funding per SRT	1.5	2.0	2.6	0.9
No of projects funded	1	1	1	2

Raw Materials:

Table 9: Raw Materials – max. budget 8.4 mill. € - proposals with equal ranking are marked with italics

Project Proposal No.	Ranking based on score	Budget (mill. €)	Budget summed (mill. €)
<i>RM3 A</i>	15	0.6	0.6
<i>RM5 A</i>	15	1.3	1.9
RM2 A	14.5	0.7	2.6
<i>RM4 A</i>	14	1.3	3.9
<i>RM2 B</i>	14	0.7	4.6
RM3 B	13.5	0.6	5.2
RM4 B	13	1.4	6.6
RM1 A	12	1.1	7.7

In the Raw Materials Theme, all qualified proposals managed to be funded, even leaving 0.7 mill € for the cross-thematic ranking, see below. Note that again two times two proposals were equally ranked (15 and 14). Since the budget was still available, this was not an issue, and all qualified proposals were funded. This results in a funding for each SRT as illustrated in table 10.

Table 10: Raw Materials – expected budgets/number of projects to be funded compared to the outcome based on this theoretical outcome of the call, scores, and ranking.

Raw Materials (RM)	SRT RM1	SRT RM2	SRT RM3	SRT RM4	SRT RM5
Budget estimates (mill. €)	2	1.25	1.5	2.5	1.15
No. of projects expected	Up to 1	Up to 2	Up to 3	Up to 2	Up to 1
Funding per SRT	1.1	1.4	1.2	2.7	1.3
No of projects funded	1	2	2	2	1

Ranking proposals for funding across Themes

The three Themes all have a small budget left, in total summing up to 2.2 mill. € (0.8+0.7+0.7). Note that none of the Themes had more budget left than 10%. To use this last funding, we rank proposals from all Themes qualified for funding but not already funded:

Table 11: Qualified proposals not already funded – 2.2 mill. €

Project Proposal No.	Ranking based on score	Budget (mill. €)	Budget summed (mill. €)
GW1 B	11.5	1.4	1.4
GE6 A	11	1.1	2.5
GW4 C	10	0.4	2.9

In this case, GW 1B will be funded leaving 0.8 mill. €, which is too little to fund the next proposal (in this case GE6 A).

We would like to spend the entire GeoERA budget of 30.3 mill. €. If there are possibilities to fund more projects to spend the entire budget, the EB will put forward a proposal to the GeoERA General Assembly.

10 % rule

As mentioned above, only 10% of the budget for each Theme can be used for ranking across Themes. However, situations conflicting with this rule may arise. The last proposal to be funded in a Theme can have a budget bigger than the budget available which is larger than the 10%. Or, too few proposals within a Theme were ranked above the threshold for funding, leaving more than 10% of the Theme budget but no projects to fund. The Executive Board will come up with a proposal to solve this issue, which should be discussed and agreed with the EC and the General Assembly.

Final remarks

Any scenario not covered in the two sections above will be subject to discussion and decision by the GA, in consultation with the EC. GeoERA should find a way to fund as many projects as possible, and using as much of the EC funding as possible, without breaking any contractual rules.