



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Community Research



Guidance notes and templates for Project Technical Review involving Independent Expert(s)

FP7 Collaborative Projects (CP), Networks of Excellence, Coordination and Support Actions (CSA), CP-CSA, ERA-NET, Research for the Benefit for Specific Groups (BSG, especially SMEs)

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Disclaimer

The information and advice contained herein is not intended to be comprehensive and readers are advised to seek independent professional advice before acting upon them. The Commission does not accept responsibility for the consequences of errors or omissions herein enclosed.



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1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of a technical review is to assess the work carried out under the *project* over a certain period and provide recommendations to the Commission. Such review may cover scientific, technological and other aspects relating to the proper execution of the *project* and *EC grant agreement* (ECGA) in line with its article II.23 (General Conditions)¹.

This document provides guidance for the reviewers² on the review process as well as on the content of their report to the Commission.

¹ II.23. Technical audits and reviews

1. The *Commission* may initiate a technical audit or review at any time during the implementation of the *project* and up to up to five years after the end of the *project*. The aim of a technical audit or review shall be to assess the work carried out under the *project* over a certain period, *inter alia* by evaluating the *project* reports and deliverables relevant to the period in question. Such audits and reviews may cover scientific, technological and other aspects relating to the proper execution of the *project* and the *grant agreement*.

2. With respect to the Description of Work (Annex I), the audit or review shall objectively assess the following: - the degree of fulfilment of the *project* work plan for the relevant period and of the - the continued relevance of the objectives and breakthrough potential with respect to the scientific and industrial state of the art;

- the resources planned and utilised in relation to the achieved progress, in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;

- the management procedures and methods of the *project*;

- the *beneficiaries'* contributions and integration within the *project*;

- the expected potential impact in economic, competition and social terms, and the *beneficiaries'* plan for the *use* and *dissemination* of *foreground*.

3. Audits and reviews shall be deemed to be initiated on the date of receipt by the *beneficiary(ies)* of the relevant letter sent by the *Commission*.

4. Any such audit or review shall be carried out on a confidential basis.

5. The *Commission* may be assisted in technical audits and reviews by external scientific or technological experts. Prior to the carrying out of the evaluation task, the *Commission* shall communicate to the *beneficiaries* the identity of the appointed experts. The *beneficiary(ies)* shall have the right to refuse the participation of a particular external scientific or technological expert on grounds of commercial confidentiality.

6. Audits and reviews may be carried out remotely at the expert's home or place of work or involve sessions with *project* representatives either at the *Commission* premises or at the premises of *beneficiaries*. The *Commission* or the external scientific or technological expert may have access to the locations and premises where the work is being carried out, and to any document concerning the work.

7. The *beneficiaries* shall make available directly to the *Commission* all detailed information and data that may be requested by it or the external scientific or technological expert with a view to verifying that the *project* is being/has been properly implemented and performed in accordance with the provisions of this *grant agreement*. 10 OJ L 136, 31.5.1999 FP7 Grant Agreement - Annex II – General Conditions Version 5, 18/12/2009 25

8. A report on the outcome of the audits and reviews shall be drawn up. It shall be sent by the *Commission* to the *beneficiary* concerned, who may make observations thereon within one month of receiving it. The *Commission* may decide not to take into account the observations conveyed after that deadline.

9. On the basis of the experts' formal recommendations the *Commission* will inform the *coordinator* of its decision:

- to accept or reject the deliverables;

- to allow the *project* to continue without modification of Annex I or with minor modifications;

- to consider that the *project* can only continue with major modifications;

- to initiate the termination of the *grant agreement* or of the participation of any *beneficiary* according to Article II. 38;

- to issue a recovery order regarding all or part of the payments made by the Commission and to apply any applicable sanction.

10. An ethics audit may be undertaken at the discretion of the *Commission* services up to five years after the end of the *project*. Paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 shall apply *mutate mutandis*.

²

Experts with a valid security clearance will be appointed to review Security classified projects. They might be recommended by the Programme Committee members

2. MANDATE OF THE INDEPENDENT EXPERT(S)

2.1. Objectives

The reviewer's task is to give external advice to the Commission on the *project*, with respect to the following issues:

1. the degree of fulfilment of the *project* work plan for the relevant period and of the related deliverables
2. the continued relevance of the objectives and breakthrough potential with respect to the scientific and industrial state of the art
3. the resources planned and utilised in relation to the achieved progress, in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness
4. the management procedures and methods of the *project*
5. the beneficiaries' contributions and integration within the *project*
6. the expected potential impact in scientific, technological-, economic, competitive and social terms (where relevant), and the plans for the use and dissemination of results.

The reviewer(s) will also assist the Commission by recommending any reorientation that may be required, but the final decision on recommendations and reorientation is taken only by the Commission.

2.2. Outline of the review process

External experts are appointed to perform technical reviews. In accordance with the Art II.23.5 of the FP7 Grant Agreement, the Commission transmits the name(s) of the appointed expert(s) to the consortium.

If a review meeting is scheduled, the expert(s) will read all relevant documents before the meeting and will attend the review meeting. He/she will then provide an assessment of the *project*³ based on the written material and information provided at the meeting. In the case of remote review, the assessment will be based on written documents only.

The technical review of a project (consolidated if there are several experts) is transmitted by the Commission to the Consortium via the coordinator but it is not made public.

³ Where deemed necessary the Commission may also arrange for a on-the-spot technical audit of a beneficiary(ies); the procedure to be followed shall be explained to the beneficiaries in the letter of announcement before the audit.

2.3. Review material

The documents to be reviewed should normally include the following:

- Annex I (contractual Description of Work against which the assessment will be made)
- Project periodic report for the period under review
- Deliverables necessary for the assessment of the work, due in this period, according to the deliverable table in Annex I,
- For a final technical review, the final report should also be part of the material to review.

2.4. Reporting

At the end of the review exercise, the expert will prepare a project technical review report by filling the template for the *project* review report included in this document. This document has to be transmitted to the Project Officer within the requested deadline.

When more than one expert is involved in the *project* review, they might be asked to issue a single consolidated report written by a 'rapporteur'.

3. PROJECT ASSESSMENT OF THE COMMISSION

On the basis of the experts' formal recommendations, the *Commission* will inform the *coordinator* of its decision (which may differ from the experts' recommendations):

- to accept or reject the deliverables;
- to allow the *project* to continue without modification of Annex I or with minor modifications;
- to consider that the *project* can only continue with major modifications;
- to initiate the termination of the *grant agreement* or of the participation of any *beneficiary* according to Article II. 38 of the *grant agreement*;
- to issue a recovery order regarding all or part of the payments made by the Commission and to apply any applicable sanction.

4. TEMPLATE FOR THE TECHNICAL REVIEW REPORT

The template hereafter provides the structure for the technical review report that needs to be prepared by the expert(s) after the review.

There are two types of technical review as described below:

- Periodic regular/foreseen technical review in the grant agreement (generally linked to payment).
- Unforeseen Technical Reviews which can be requested by POs if necessary at anytime and which can be linked to financial and technical aspects but also to only technical aspects.

The template can be found at http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/find-doc_en.html.

For the projects managed by DG RTD and DG ENTR and the Research Executive Agency (REA), technical review reports will be submitted only via the specific IT reporting tool system (so-called SESAM). A "quick guide" explaining how the users can use this specific IT reporting tool is available at the following address: <http://webgate.ec.europa.eu/sesam>.

TECHNICAL REVIEW REPORT

Grant Agreement number:

Project Acronym:

Project title:

Funding Scheme:

Project starting date:

Project duration:

Name of the scientific representative of the project's coordinator and organisation:

Project web site:

Type of technical review:

Periodic regular/foreseen technical review

Unforeseen Technical Review

Period covered by the technical review report, from to
.....

Date and place of review meeting (if applicable):

Name(s) of expert(s):

-
-
-

Name of expert drafting the report:

Individual report

Consolidated report

Name of the Project Officer:

1. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

a. Executive summary

Comments, in particular highlighting the scientific/technical achievements of the project, its contribution to the State of the Art and its impact:

- Excellent progress (the project has fully achieved its objectives and technical goals for the period or has even exceeded expectations).
- Good progress (the project has achieved most of its objectives and technical goals for the period with relatively minor deviations).
- Acceptable progress (the project has achieved some of its objectives; however, corrective action will be required)
- Unsatisfactory progress (the project has failed to achieve critical objectives and/or is not at all on schedule).

b. Overall recommendations (e.g. on overall modifications, corrective actions at WP level, or re-tuning the objectives to optimise the impact or keep up with the State of the Art, or for other reasons, like best use of resources, re-focusing...).

2. OBJECTIVES and WORKPLAN

a. Progress towards project objectives: Have the objectives for the period been achieved? In particular, has the project as a whole been making satisfactory progress in relation to the Description of Work (Annex I to the grant agreement)?

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

b. Progress in individual work packages: Has each work package (WP) been making satisfactory progress in relation to the Description of Work (Annex I of the grant agreement)?

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

c. Milestones and deliverables: Have planned milestones and deliverables been achieved for the reporting period?

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

| DELIVERABLES LIST STATUS | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|---|---------|
| No. | Title | Suggested Actions (To be Approved/Rejected) | Remarks |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

d. Relevance of the objectives in the coming periods: Are the objectives for the coming period(s) i) still relevant and ii) still achievable within the time and resources available to the project?

i

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Yes | Partially | No |

ii

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Yes | Partially | No |

Comments

e. For Networks of Excellence (NoEs) only:

Has the Joint Programme of Activities been realised for the period, with all activities foreseen satisfactorily completed?

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Yes | Partially | No |

Comments

f. For ERA NET only:

Has the Joint Programme of Activities been realised for the period, with all activities foreseen satisfactorily completed?

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

3. RESOURCES

a. Assessment of the use of resources : To the best of your estimate, have resources used, i.e. personnel resources and other major cost items, been (i) utilised for achieving the progress, (ii) in a manner consistent with the principle of economy, efficiency and effectiveness⁴. Note that both aspects (i) and (ii) have to be covered in the answer.

i

Yes

Partially

No

ii

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

The principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness: refers to the standard of “good housekeeping” in spending public money effectively. Economy can be understood as minimising the costs of resources used for an activity (input), having regard to the appropriate quality and can be linked to efficiency, which is the relationship between the outputs and the resources used to produce them. Effectiveness is concerned with measuring the extent to which the objectives have been achieved and the relationship between the intended impact and the actual impact of an activity. Cost effectiveness means the relationship between project costs and outcomes, expressed as costs per unit of outcome achieved. Guide to Financial Issues, Version 30/06/2010p.37.

b. Deviations: If applicable, please comment on large deviations with respect to the planned resources.

Comments

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

a. Management: Has the project management been performed as required?

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

b. Collaboration between beneficiaries: Has the collaboration between the beneficiaries been effective?

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

c. Beneficiaries' roles: Do you identify evidence of underperforming beneficiaries, lack of commitment or change of interest of any beneficiaries?

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

5. USE AND DISSEMINATION OF FOREGROUND

a. Impact: Is there evidence that the project has/will produce significant scientific, technical, commercial, social, or environmental impacts (where applicable)?

Yes

Partially

No

Not applicable

Comments

a.1. Is there an impact on participating Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)?

Yes

Partially

No

Not applicable

Comments

a.2. Is there an exploitation potential for the participating SMEs?

Yes

Partially

No

Not applicable

Comments

b. Use of results: Is the plan for the use of foreground, including any update, appropriate? Namely, please comment on the plan for the exploitation and use of foreground for the consortium as a whole, or for individual beneficiary or groups of beneficiaries and its progress to date.

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

c. Dissemination: Have the beneficiaries disseminated project results and information adequately (publications, conferences...)?

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

d. Please identify potential information that should be disseminated to:

- Policy makers

- The scientific community

- The general public

- A specific group of end users

- e. Involvement of potential users and stakeholders: Are potential users and other stakeholders (outside the consortium) suitably involved (if applicable)?

Yes

Partially

No

Not applicable

Comments

- f. Links with other projects and/or programmes: Is the consortium interacting in a satisfactory manner with other related Framework Programme projects and/or other R&D national/international programmes, standardisation bodies (if relevant), existing relevant networks?

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

6. OTHER ISSUES

If applicable comment on whether other relevant issues (e.g ethical, policy-related/regulatory, safety and gender issues) have been handled appropriately.

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

7. FLAG THE PROJECT

- Highlight as a success/case story
- High visibility/media attractive project
- Substantial R&D breakthrough character
- Project linked to R&D national/international programmes
- Project with an impact on EU policies (click on which EU policy: http://ec.europa.eu/policies/index_fr.htm)
- Project with an impact on promoting Joint Programming (especially for ERA-NET)
- Outstanding Use/Exploitation of results
- Significant R&D participation from outside EU
- Involvement of non-RTD actors in the field (economic, policy makers, civil society, end-users, standardisation bodies...)
- Good innovation potential
- No Flag
- Other

Comments

Name (s) of the expert(s):

Date:

Signature(s):