

Evaluation criteria and grading scales

Proposals will be reviewed based on five assessment criteria – the scientific excellence and novelty of the proposed research, the scientific merits of the applicant, the feasibility of the project, relevance to WISE and significance with respect to sustainability. The criteria together with the guiding questions and grading scales are detailed below.

1 The scientific excellence and novelty of the proposed research (1-7)

- Are the scientific questions addressed of importance in the context of existing scientific knowledge and ongoing research worldwide?
- Does the proposal outline a research approach that permits the questions raised to be answered?
- When applicable, is the proposed development of methods or techniques of high scientific significance? Does the proposed development allow new scientific questions to be addressed?
- To what extent does the proposed project define new, interesting scientific questions?
- To what extent does the proposed project use new ways and methods to address important scientific questions?

2 The merits of the applicant (1-7)

The assessment should concern the merits of the applicant to perform the proposed project. The assessment of the complementary expertise of the participating researchers is only of relevance for the grading of the feasibility of the project.

- How significant is the applicant's scientific productivity, impact, and other merits from a national and international perspective, in relation to the research area? Here, the emphasis should be on recent (the last 7 active years) scientific achievements.
- How significant are the applicant's merits from the perspective of academic age (active years since PhD)?
- What is the applicant's scientific competence within the research area of the application?
- When applicable, does the applicant have previous experience in the development of experimental or theoretical methods?

A seven-grade integer scale is used to assess the criteria for both the scientific excellence and novelty of the proposed research and merits of the applicant:

Outstanding	7
Exceptionally strong application with negligible weaknesses	
Excellent	6
Very strong application with negligible weaknesses	
Very good to excellent	5
Very strong application with minor weaknesses	
Very good	4
Strong application with minor weaknesses	
Good	3
Some strengths, but also moderate weaknesses	
Weak	2
A few strengths, but also at least one major weakness or several minor weaknesses	
Poor	1
Very few strengths, and numerous major weaknesses	

3 Feasibility (1-3)

A high risk-high gain project is not considered as having lower feasibility. It is the criteria below that should be evaluated.

- Are the available equipment, infrastructure, and other resources adequate for the proposed project?
- Considering the project as a whole, does the applicant have sufficient competence to perform the proposed research?
- Does the description in the research plan support the likelihood that the proposed project will be performed successfully?
- Is the scope of the project reasonable in relation to the grant amount applied for?
- Is the applicant's activity level in the project reasonable in relation to the proposed project?
- Does the research environment of the applicant allow for a successful project?

- Does the proposed research show *potential* to collaborate or benefit from other WISE research activities?

A three-grade integer scale is used:

Feasible	3
The project is feasible if the applicant receives the grant.	
Partly feasible	2
There are uncertainties regarding feasibility. For example, if the project is dependent on an international infrastructure where the applicant has not yet competed successfully for access. Another example would be if the applicant is dependent on a large contribution, for a central part of the project, from an external party. The project can be funded if a strong research plan and strong merits compensate for the uncertainties.	
Not feasible	1
The project is not feasible and should not be funded. For example, if the project requires access to equipment that will not be completed during the grant period.	

4 Relevance to WISE (yes/no)

The proposed project should cover at least one crossing-point of the WISE-matrix. In the evaluation process, it should not be more favorable to cover more of the WISE matrix in a project application, but it is okay to have breadth in the project. This criterion is an “emergency brake” and is expected to be “yes” in almost all cases.

A two-grade scale is used:

Relevant	yes
The project covers one or more crossing points in the WISE matrix.	
Not relevant	no
The project does not cover any point in the WISE matrix	

5 Significance of sustainability aspects (1-5)

The criteria below should be evaluated.

- **Sustainability Reflection**

The extent to which the proposal gives a reflection on how the anticipated application and implementation of successful research outcomes could affect sustainability: including both potential positive and negative impacts.

- **Sustainability Competence**

The extent to which the identified co-PI and the main PI have relevant expertise to address the sustainability challenges identified in the project.

- **Research Plan for Sustainability**

The extent to which the project includes a credible and appropriate plan for addressing the identified sustainability aspects in the research proposal.

- **Integration of Sustainability and Materials Research**

The extent to which sustainability considerations are integrated into the scientific design and execution of the materials research itself.

A five-grade integer scale is used:

Excellent

5

Exceptionally strong sustainability integration with negligible weaknesses. The proposal provides an in-depth reflection on both positive and negative impacts, with the PI and co-PI demonstrating clear complementing and outstanding relevant expertise. A highly credible sustainability plan is presented, where the hypotheses are based on the integration of sustainability into materials science.

Very good

4

Very strong sustainability integration with negligible weaknesses. The proposal thoroughly reflects on sustainability impacts, with the PI and co-PI showing strong relevant clear complementing and strong relevant expertise. A credible sustainability plan is presented, where the hypotheses are based on the integration of sustainability into materials science.

Good

3

Strong sustainability integration with minor weaknesses. The proposal reflects on sustainability impacts with some gaps, and the PI and co-PI showing complementing and expertise with minor shortcomings. A

reasonable sustainability plan is presented, where the hypotheses are based on the integration of sustainability into materials science.

Fair

2

Some strengths in sustainability integration, and some weaknesses. The reflection on impacts is partial, and the PI and/or co-PI show complementing relevant competence to some extent. A sustainability plan is presented with some weaknesses, where the hypotheses are based on the integration of sustainability into materials science to some extent.

Poor

1

Very few strengths in sustainability integration, with major or numerous weaknesses. The reflection on impacts is limited, and the PI and co-PI insufficiently show complementing relevant competence. A non-credible sustainability plan is presented, where the hypotheses are based on the integration of sustainability into materials science insufficiently.
