ANNEX III – EVALUATION GUIDELINES

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Abbreviations

AKA = Academy of Finland

CS = Call Secretariat

CSC = Call Steering Committee

EC = Evaluation Committee

NCP = National Contact Point

SER = Summary Evaluation Report

Mandate of the Evaluation Committee

The Evaluation Committee (EC) consists of esteemed, international researchers and stakeholders in the field of the Pilot Call. The EC and its Chair are appointed by the Call Steering Committee (CSC) representing the Water JPI Funding Partner Organizations. The Chair of the EC is a scientific expert and will chair the EC panel meeting.

Evaluation Committee (EC) members are selected and recruited by the CS upon a list of experts provided by the members of the CSC. The final composition of the EC will be approved by the CSC. Part of the EC members may come from countries not participating in the call. This will allow for additional flexibility in case of conflicting interests. External Evaluators may be used if deemed necessary by the CSC.

The pre-requisites of the evaluators (this relates to both the EC members and External Evaluators) include:

- The evaluators are not part of one of the applying consortiums;
- The evaluators are not from/have no recent link with any of the applying institutes;
- Professional experience of the evaluator;
- Open nationality (the EC is open to non- Water JPI countries); and
- Balance between scientific disciplines; background (e.g. policy, academia, industry, etc.); gender; geographical distribution; and research, development and innovation.

Evaluators take part in the EC as independent experts and do not represent any organization nor can they send any replacements. EC members should declare any potential conflict of interest (Annex VI). These criteria particularly apply to the Chair of the EC, whose capacities and independence is critical to the task of the EC.

Role of Experts in the Evaluation Committee

Recommendations for Funding are made to the highest ranked proposals. Experts are invited to review and rank the applications according to the quality of the proposals, competence of the applicants and impact of the research following a panel discussion, moderation of the scores and comments given by the EC members in their draft evaluations during the EC panel meeting.

The CS in consultation with the EC Chair will be responsible for the assignment of proposals to the EC members. The rules for conflict of interest (Annex VI) will be followed in the assignment of proposals.

The EC members will have access to all applications submitted to the call, barring conflicts of interest (Annex VI). Each application will be assigned to at least two EC members who will be asked to submit draft evaluations on the online application system. Draft evaluations (two to three per proposal) will be made available to both the EC chair and members reviewing the particular application at least two weeks before the EC panel meeting. The EC shall review all the applications and prepare one Summary Evaluation Report (SER) for each application based on the draft evaluations and the discussions at the EC panel meeting. The Call Secretariat (CS) will assist the panel in preparing the final SER. In some cases, an application may be sent to an external

expert (External Evaluator) who is not a member of the EC but who may provide additional knowledge pertaining to a particular field.

The role of the EC will be:

- To evaluate the applications.
- To compose the final ranked list of applications recommended for funding based on the SERs produced by the EC members and External Experts. This will be achieved using the Final Evaluation Scores given based on evaluation criteria and threshold levels for each criteria.
- To provide a written SER for each application to explain its decision to the CSC and the applicants.

The role of the External Evaluators will be:

- To provide written Evaluation Reports for the use of the EC in cases where EC's expertise is not sufficient.

The CSC is responsible for the funding decisions based on the ranking made by the EC.

Evaluation criteria

For reviewing applications, the EC will use the Academy of Finland's (AKA) online services available on AKA's website (see the document "For Application Reviewers Using the Online Services").

There are three main Evaluation Criteria in the evaluation form (Annex IV), (1) the quality of the proposal, (2) competence of the applicant, and (3) the impact of the research. The evaluation criteria are divided into sub-criteria as follows:

1   Quality of the proposal   (average of sub-criteria rating 1-6; threshold level 5/6)

1.1 Scientific/technological quality	(sub-rating 1-6)
1.2 Novelty of the proposal	(sub-rating 1-6)
1.3 Relevance of the project to the call	(sub-rating 1-6)
1.4 Feasibility of the project (including budget), facilities available	(sub-rating 1-6)

2   Competence of applicants   (average of sub-criteria rating 1-6; threshold level 4/6)

2.1 Competence and expertise of the applicant/consortium	(sub-rating 1-6)
2.2 Project management	(sub-rating 1-6)
2.3 Added value of transnational consortium and complementarity expertise	(sub-rating 1-6)

3   Impact   (average of sub-criteria rating 1-6; threshold level 4/6)

3.1 Societal impact and stakeholder engagement	(sub-rating 1-6)
3.2 Dissemination and exploitation of the results	(sub-rating 1-6)
3.3 Potential outputs/results/policy relevance	(sub-rating 1-6)

The EC is asked to individually score and provide comments for each sub-criteria. These comments are particularly valuable in the decision-making. After funding decisions, the SER will be made available to the applicant. The SER will provide applicants with important feedback.

Numerical evaluation of the sub-criteria is made with scores ranging from 1 (weak) to 6 (outstanding). The score for each Evaluation Criterion is the average of the scores for the sub-criteria. The Final Evaluation Score is the sum of the scores of each of the evaluation criteria (up to 18 points). Proposals with a score below the threshold of 13 will not be considered for funding.

Applications are scored using the scale below. There should be consistency between the numerical score and written comments.

> 6 = outstanding, stands out with exceptional novelty, innovativeness and renewal of science at global level

> 5 = excellent, extremely good in international comparison – no significant elements to be improved

> 4 = very good, contains some elements that could be improved

> 3 = good, contains elements that can be improved

> 2 = unsatisfactory, in need of substantial modification or improvement

> 1 = weak, severe flaws that are intrinsic to the proposed project or the application

Finally, the EC is asked to give an overall assessment of the application including the strengths and weaknesses, as well as possible additional comments.

Evaluation Procedure

Each application is typically assigned to at least two members of the EC (Reviewer1 and Reviewer2) who will write draft evaluation forms for the proposal before the EC panel meeting. The EC will compose the SER for each application during the panel meeting based on the draft evaluations and the discussion. Thus, detailed draft evaluation forms will be of great help to the EC's work. The draft evaluation will be combined for each proposal and made available in two weeks before the EC panel meeting.

The preparation of the SER will be done during the EC panel meeting by the rapporteur (one of the EC members assigned for each proposal by the CS) with the help of the CS. The duty of the rapporteur is not to write a draft evaluation of the applications in question before the EC panel meeting. However, reading the application beforehand and forming a tentative opinion about its level will facilitate the EC panel discussion and help the rapporteur to prepare the SER based on the draft evaluations as well as the panel discussion.

The SERs will be sent to the CSC and the applicants. Detailed SERs will help to understand the outcome of the review and the ranking given by the EC. The composition of the EC will be made public once the CSC has made their final funding decision (as a group and not per individual proposal).

External Evaluator

Evaluators fulfilling the role of External Evaluators are suggested by the CSC in cases when the EC expertise is not sufficient to evaluate the application or parts of the application. External Evaluator will give a written statement for the use of the EC (before EC panel meeting) to support of the EC evaluation task.

Ranking of the Proposals

Proposals which fail to meet at least one of the evaluation criteria thresholds will not be considered for funding.

Proposals which have a sum of scores of each of the evaluation criteria score below the funding threshold of 13 will not be considered for funding.

For the proposals recommended for funding, the EC will be asked to consider the suitability of the requested budgets and the need for budget adjustments. Advice will also be requested on the relative importance of each partner contribution to the collaborative proposal.

Funding Decisions

Shortly after the EC panel meeting, the CSC will meet to decide on the projects to be funded. The CSC has the intention to fund the highest ranked proposals within the possibilities of national budgets.

Declaration for the Evaluator to Accept

Please acknowledge, that by accepting the task as an evaluator and an EC member you guarantee not to disclose the information that you will receive as an evaluator, nor to use it for anybody's benefit or disadvantage as stipulated in Annex VI. Furthermore, you affirm that if you have a conflict of interest with one or more application(s), you will immediately inform the CS (Annex VI).

The Academy of Finland's Online Services

For more information on how to use the AKA's online services, please see "How to guide for reviewers" (http://www.aka.fi/Tiedostot/ohjeet/Verkkoasiointi_tmk_ohje_en.pdf) or contact the CS.

Evaluation Fee and Travel costs

Honorary fee will be paid for the evaluation process to the EC chair and members. Lunches and coffee/tea during the meeting will be provided. The travel costs in economy class and accommodation costs of the EC members will be covered. Any exceptions from this should be negotiated with CS. The EC members are also advised to take travel insurance.