



MONITORING & MITIGATION OF GREENHOUSE GASES  
FROM AGRI- AND SILVI-CULTURE

## **Evaluation Guidelines**

FOR THE

**European Research Area  
Network Cofund for  
Monitoring and Mitigation of  
Greenhouse gases from  
Agri- and Silvi-culture**

**ERA-GAS**

Version 1.2: 18 October 2016



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## Main Amendments from Version 1.1

- 1) Updated Call Timeline (pages 5, 8, 9)
- 2) Updates to Section 6.5 – including an eligibility check for step 2 and amendments to the scoring system to be employed by the IEC in step 2 (pages 10, 13-15)



## 1. Definitions

- The **Evaluation Team (ET)** consists of the ERA-Gas WP3 team and is the central contact point for all issues around the evaluation procedures of the call.
- The ERA-Gas **Call Secretariat** is hosted by Teagasc, and is the central contact point for all technical issues around the online evaluation tool.
- The **International Evaluation Committee (IEC)** is a group of experts which will peer-review the submitted proposals in the framework of ERA-Gas. It will be composed of 10 to 20 international experts based on their acknowledged scientific excellence in the research areas covered by the submitted proposals. It will consist of a Chair nominated by the CSC and Co-chair selected by IEC members.
- A **rapporteur** is member of the IEC who shall report on a proposal during the evaluation meetings.
- The **Call Steering Committee (CSC)** is the decision-making body and consists of one representative of each ERA-Gas partner organisation providing cash funding to the Co-funded Call (**Funding Party**).
- Each Funding Party in this co-funded call has nominated a **National Contact Point (NCP)** to provide information on national funding rules and procedures.



## 2. Timeline

<b>Launch of the Co-funded Call and IEC constitution</b>	
04.03.2016	Call opening
08.04.2016	Deadline for nomination of experts to the IEC by CSC
18.04.2016	Selection of IEC Chair by CSC
03.05.2016	IEC constitution completed
<b>First step: submission and evaluation of pre-proposals</b>	
03.05.2016 – 14:00 CET	Deadline for pre-proposal submissions
25.05.2016	Declaration of No Conflict of Interest by experts
27.05.2016	Call eligibility and national/regional eligibility checks completed
30.05.2016	Start of pre-proposal evaluation by the IEC members
08.06.2016	IEC web conference / information event
05.07.2016	Deadline for pre-proposal evaluation (online)
06/07.09.2016	IEC meeting step 1: Ranking of pre-proposals (Dublin)
29/30.09.2016	CSC meeting step 1: selection of pre-proposals (Dublin)
18.10.2016	Communication of eligibility check and evaluation outcomes to the research project coordinators – Start of step 2
<b>Second step: submission and evaluation of full proposals</b>	
19.12.2016 – 14:00 CET	Deadline for full proposal submission
01.03.2017	Deadline for full proposal evaluation (online)
28/29.03.2017	IEC meeting step 2: ranking of full proposals (Dublin)
19.04.2017	CSC meeting step 2: selection of full proposals (Dublin)
03.05.2017	Communication of the evaluation outcomes and the funding recommendation to the research project coordinators
From August 2017	Start of research projects (depends on national/organisational rules and negotiation)



### 3. Purpose of this Paper

This paper is intended to serve as a guideline for evaluators and the Call Steering Committee and aims to provide some background and further details on the ERA-NET for Monitoring and Mitigation of Greenhouse Gases from Agri- and Silvi-Culture (ERA-Gas) evaluation process and the conditions and roles envisaged for evaluators.

Every call for proposals is dependent on finding skilled experts in the area of the research topics defined by the ERA-NET scope who are willing to contribute with their expertise to evaluate the research proposals submitted during the call procedure. In order to have a successful and timely ERA-Gas Call then the aim is to build up a pool of scientists/experts in the field who are able and willing to be involved in the evaluation process of this call.

### 4. Background, Scientific scope and aims of the ERA-Gas Call

The formation of the ERA-Gas consortium has been facilitated by the Joint Programming Initiative on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change (FACCE-JPI) and the consortium will continue to work closely with the FACCE-JPI. The ERA-Gas Cofund will directly contribute to Core Theme 5 (Greenhouse gas mitigation) of the FACCE-JPI Strategic Research Agenda (SRA). In order to implement this SRA, the consortium of ERA-Gas launched the joint call.

The aim of the ERA-Gas Call is to strengthen the transnational coordination of research programmes and provide added value to research and innovation on greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation in the European Research Area and in New Zealand. The agricultural sector in Europe and New Zealand faces significant challenges in curbing GHG emissions while maintaining food security and sustainability in a changing climate. EU policy proposals requiring a 40% reduction in emissions without a corresponding decrease in primary production pose significant challenges. As a result, incorporation of abatement strategies into tailored sustainable production systems and the implementation of these strategies on the ground are of the utmost importance. In addition, the inclusion of Carbon sinks as an offsetting option, particularly in forestry and agricultural soils, means that verification of sinks and the impact of management on those sinks is vital.

The scientific scope of the present call for proposals addresses collaborative projects in the following four research themes:

Theme 1): Improving national GHG inventories and monitoring, reporting and verification of emissions

Theme 2): Refining and facilitating the implementation of GHG mitigation technologies

Theme 3): State of the art production systems that are profitable and improve food and forest biomass production while reducing GHG emissions

Theme 4): Assessment of policy and economic measures to support emissions reductions across the farm-to-fork and forest-to-consumer chain.

If possible, SMEs and other stakeholders should be encouraged to participate in the consortia, to enhance impact, facilitate knowledge exchange and uptake of results to deliver measurable benefits to greenhouse gas reduction in Europe and New Zealand. Research proposals should show evidence of added value and synergies with existing national and



transnational research activities. Duplication of existing activities should be avoided. Research proposals must encompass a detailed plan for the dissemination of results, including transfer of research outputs into products and services, and knowledge exchange to meet the aims of ERA-Gas.

**More detailed information on the scope of ERA-Gas is available in Annex B of Call Announcement.**

Significant linkages are envisaged between ERA-Gas and the ERA-Net Sustainable Animal Production (SusAn). SusAn will fund research on innovative solutions for livestock production systems in Europe. Overlap in the respective Calls has been avoided and synergies in the scope of both ERA-NETs have been discussed in depth and are explained in Annex B of the Call Announcement of ERA-Gas. Note that the ERA-Net SusAn is now closed to applicants as the Call for research proposals concluded in March 2016.

## 5. Management Bodies involved in the Evaluation Procedure

### 5.1 Evaluation Team

The Evaluation Team (ET) is the central contact point for all issues around the evaluation procedures of the call and acts as the link between the IEC and the CSC:

- **Contact for Evaluation Team:** Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), Ireland. Noel Collins tel: +353 16072924, email: [eragas@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:eragas@agriculture.gov.ie)

While DAFM is available by phone, **email is the preferred contact option**. If requested, you will be called back.

### 5.2 Call Secretariat

The Call Office, hosted by Projektträger Jülich, Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH, Germany, is the central contact point for applicants regarding all technical and general issues concerning the evaluation tool. The ERA-GAS Call Office will be available in general during business days from 09:00 to 16:00 CET. Beyond this timeframe, it is recommended to contact the Call Office electronically via email: [ptj-eragas@fz-juelich.de](mailto:ptj-eragas@fz-juelich.de)

### 5.3 Call Steering Committee

The Call Steering Committee (CSC) consists of one representative of each Party providing funding to the Joint Call and is responsible for the overall direction, transnational project selection for funding and follow-up of Funded Projects. The CSC provided the national annexes for the Call Announcement, thereby confirming their participation in the Co-funded Call. They will provide written commitment of available funds for Transnational Projects selected in the Co-funded Call.

The CSC may nominate NCP to support participants on national eligibility and selection criteria during proposal submission, however CSC Member and NCP may coincide.

The CSC shall take the following decisions:

- Approval of the Call Announcement including timelines, selection of call topics, guidelines and rules for participation (call eligibility criteria)
- Nomination and approval of the IEC and the independent observer



- Selection of pre-proposals which will be invited to submit full proposals
- Follow-up and monitoring of Transnational Projects

Transnational Projects to be funded need approval of all relevant Funding Parties. The CSC cannot overrule the funding decision of a Funding Party with regard to the national/regional contribution.

## 5.4 International Evaluation Committee

### 5.4.1 Constitution

Until 8 April 2016, each CSC member shall nominate at least 5 international experts based on their acknowledged excellence in the scientific scope of the Joint Call and/or expertise on valorisation and commercialisation of project results to peer review the submitted proposals.

The CSC will select a Chair and Vice-Chair to the IEC from the pool of nominated experts. In selecting the international experts for the IEC, the CSC shall endeavour to avoid any possible Conflicts of Interest.

The IEC will consist of 10 – 15 members (dependent on number of proposals received) selected from the expert pool. The IEC may be supported by additional experts from the nominated pool if required.

### 5.4.2 Tasks

The IEC shall peer review pre-proposals (step 1 of the call procedure) and full proposals (step 2) and provide consolidated evaluation feedback for both evaluation steps.

Eligible pre-proposals will be evaluated by a minimum of 2 experts per pre-proposal. In case of contradictory votes one additional expert will be invited for review to cast the vote. Full proposals will be evaluated by a minimum of 3 experts.

#### **The tasks of IEC Chair are to:**

- Assist the ET in assigning the proposals to the experts,
- Assign one expert as rapporteur to each proposal,
- Participate in the introductory web-conference/information event in May 2016, and any subsequent web-conference/information event involving the IEC or CSC if required.
- Attend and chair the evaluation meeting (IEC meetings) to report on these evaluations:
  - For pre-proposals on 6/7 September 2016 (Dublin)
  - For full proposals in 28/29 March 2017 (Dublin)
- Attend the CSC meetings after both evaluation steps to report on these evaluations:
  - For pre-proposals on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016 (Dublin)
  - For full proposals on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2017 (Dublin)

If for any event the Chair is unable to perform these tasks the Vice-Chair will step in.

#### **The tasks of the IEC members are to:**

- Participate in the introductory web-conference/information event in May 2016, and any subsequent web-conference/information event involving the IEC (possibly up to two additional timings)
- Evaluate approx. 10 pre-proposals between 30<sup>th</sup> May to 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016





- Provide the evaluation results including relevant comments online and on time
- Evaluate approx. 6 full proposals between 10<sup>th</sup> January 2017 to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017
- Attend the evaluation meetings and participate in the discussions
  - o For pre-proposals on 6/7 September 2016 (Dublin)
  - o For full proposals in 28/29 March 2017 (Dublin)
- Be willing to act as rapporteur for a proposal

Applicants may specify in the pre-proposal up to three experts to be excluded from evaluation of the relevant proposal.

### **The tasks of the rapporteurs**

There shall be one rapporteur per proposal whose tasks, in addition to the task as IEC member are to:

- Coordinate the experts' feedbacks on the proposals
- Consolidate the feedback on the proposals to be sent to the applicants and fill in the online tool
- Invite an additional expert to review a proposal if required to cast the vote
- Inform the ET in case the experts cannot agree on a common judgement of a proposal

### **5.4.3 Reimbursement of efforts**

As acknowledgement of their work IEC members will be reimbursed as follows:

1. Reimbursement of travel costs for both evaluation meetings:
  - Flights economy class has to be booked by the expert individually, and will be reimbursed by the ERA-Gas executive team.
  - Accommodation will be booked and paid directly by the ERA-Gas executive team.
  - Catering and Social Dinner will be organised by the ERA-Gas executive team.
- Flights economy class, accommodation will be booked and paid directly by the ERA-Gas Executive team.
- Catering and a Social Dinner will be provided by the ERA-Gas Executive team.
2. Fee for attendance at each meeting: €150
3. Fee per submitted pre-proposal evaluation: €50
4. Fee per submitted rapporteur summary pre-proposal evaluation: €50
5. Fee per submitted full proposal evaluation: €100
6. Fee per submitted rapporteur summary full proposal evaluation: €50

The list of international experts involved in the evaluation process will be published after final selection of Transnational Projects. The specific proposals evaluated by each expert will not be disclosed.



## 6. Evaluation procedure

### 6.1 Online Evaluation Tool

In order to facilitate the evaluation procedure an online evaluation tool in which the evaluation scores and comments have to be entered will be provided for both evaluation steps. The Call Secretariat as contact point for all technical issues concerning the online evaluation tool will provide a corresponding guidance for the tool together with personalised login data to the experts.

### 6.2 Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest and Assignment of Proposals

All experts will receive personalised login data to the online evaluation tool from the Call Secretariat. All experts will have to upload a signed agreement to ERA-Gas's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy (Annex B) to get access to the core data of the projects (abstract, consortium, title). In order to be able to quickly reassign proposals in case of a Conflict of Interest, the IEC members will receive summary details for all submitted pre-proposals

Based on the core data, before being able to start the evaluation all experts will be asked after the deadline for pre-proposal submission (3 May 2016), to submit the following information for each proposal by **25 May 2016**:

1. Confirmation of "No Conflict of Interest" (Annex A),
2. Preference to review a specific proposal.

The assignment of the pre-proposals to the experts will be done by the ET with support of the IEC chair according to the relevant expertise of the experts in the expert pool with respect to the topic and research focus of the pre-proposal, taking into account any Conflict of Interest.

After assignment, the experts will get access to the complete pre-proposal to enable the evaluation process. It is expected that reviewers reviewing the pre-proposals (step 1 evaluation) will as far as possible, also review the full proposals of the same projects (step 2 evaluation).

### 6.3 Scoring Scheme

The scoring scheme for pre-proposals is as follows.

The scoring system uses a 6-point scale for all three review criteria for pre-proposals and full proposals. Projects will be evaluated using scores in the range 0 – 5, where half marks are permitted. The overall score per proposal will be the sum of the three main criteria and will be given as a whole number in the range 0 – 15.

The scores will be interpreted in line with the system set out in Box 6.1 (Box 5.1 in Call Announcement).



### Box 6.1 – Scoring System for Review Criteria in ERA-GAS

*0 - The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.*

*1 - Poor. The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.*

*2 - Fair. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.*

*3 - Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.*

*4 - Very Good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.*

*5 - Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.*

## 6.4 Step 1: Evaluation of Pre-proposals

### 6.4.1 Eligibility Check

After the submission deadline, all pre-proposals submitted correctly and on time will be checked against the following mandatory call eligibility criteria:

- A minimum of 3 and a maximum of 8 independent entities seeking funding from minimally 3 different EU Member States or Associated Countries participating in the Co-funded Call (see Table in section 2.4 of Call Announcement; please note: New Zealand does not count to the minimum or maximum number of partners).
- Applicants from countries not participating in the call are welcome in research consortia, as are applicant who are based in participating countries but do not seek funding from the participating funding agencies. Such partners will have to secure their own resources (financial commitment, see Annex C of Call Announcement) and will not be counted towards the minimum or the maximum number of partners.
- A maximum of € 300,000 requested funding per project from any one funding organisation.
- The total requested funding per project from any one funding organisation cannot exceed the indicative total national/regional call contribution.
- A maximum duration of 36 months, ending no later than October 2020.
- Proposal (pre- and full proposal) must be written in English, including a 300 word abstract that can be easily understood by non-experts.
- Pre-proposal must be submitted completely before the respective deadlines via the online ERA-GAS Submission Tool. No other application format will be accepted.
- Complete core data according to the pre-proposal template (Annex D of Call Announcement).

Pre-proposals that are in line with all these criteria will be checked for national/regional eligibility by the CSC with regard to national/regional regulations.



Research consortia were encouraged to consider good geographical coverage and balance in the allocation of work to be undertaken. However, applicants were also advised in the Call Announcement that a higher number of represented countries in a consortium would not automatically result in a positive evaluation of the proposal.

#### 6.4.2 Evaluation Criteria

Applicants and experts are advised to thoroughly read the **Scope and Annex B of the Call Announcement** which explains in detail what is expected from applicants in the Call.

Pre-proposals will be peer reviewed by a minimum of 2 experts from the IEC per pre-proposal. The pre-proposals will be reviewed and evaluated to ensure that they meet the scope as set out in Annex B of the Call Announcement, considering the following criteria:

- Fit in scope and relevance to the Call research themes
  - o The proposal must relate to at least one of the Call's four research themes.
  - o The proposal should not overlap with on-going or completed projects funded by other instruments, programmes or projects.
- Transnational added value
  - o The degree to which the proposal will add value in addressing the Call research themes in an international context, i.e. the potential and extent of the project of having positive impacts in more than one country.
- Innovative, multi-dimensional research approach:
  - o Originality and degree of innovation
  - o An integrated approach which combines all aspects that are relevant to tackle the interconnected challenges of sustainable agriculture and forestry, food security and impacts of climate change.
  - o A multi- and interdisciplinary approach which will bring together researchers from different disciplines (multidisciplinary) to collaborate across research disciplines (interdisciplinary) to tackle the challenges of sustainable agriculture, food security and impacts of climate change.
  - o A multi-actor approach which will encourage input and draw effort from across the international scientific and technical communities.

For scoring pre-proposals a threshold for individual criteria of 3 will be applied. An overall threshold applying to the sum of the three individual scores will be 10 (average from 3 experts). The IEC will provide pre-proposal evaluation, categories to rank pre-proposals above this threshold and consolidated feedback for participants.

#### 6.4.3 Evaluation Meeting (Step 1)

After the deadline for the evaluation of pre-proposals the ET will prepare a draft ranking list to be discussed during the IEC meeting of step 1 (see timeline table in section 2). The aim of this meeting is to:

- Discuss the results,
- Agree on a final score for each project,
- To recommend pre-proposals for step 2 (ranking list) to the CSC, categories to rank these proposals and provide consolidated comments



The rapporteur of a pre-proposal will be requested to consolidate the comments on each pre-proposal during the meeting into an evaluation report to be completed using the online tool.

#### 6.4.4 Selection of pre-proposals

The CSC will decide which eligible, peer-reviewed pre-proposals above threshold (3/5) will be invited to step 2. This will be done in such a way that:

- Only pre-proposals ranked above threshold will be selected and
- The average oversubscription rate of available national/regional contributions to requested funding will be restricted to approximately 1:3.

Project coordinators will be informed of the outcome electronically by the ERA-Gas Call Secretariat including consolidated feedback from the evaluators.

### 6.5 Step 2: Evaluation of Full proposals

#### 6.5.1 Eligibility Check

Full proposals will be checked for eligibility on the same basis as at pre-proposal stage. Full proposals which respect the call eligibility criteria and do not differ significantly in scope from the corresponding pre-proposal will be considered eligible. Funding agencies will have a limited amount of time (~ 1 week) to raise any concerns regarding the eligibility of a full proposal. Failure to raise concerns (including the absence of a response from a funding agency) at this time will be considered as acceptance of the eligibility of a proposal. Eligible full proposals will be sent to the International Evaluation Committee for final review and ranking.

#### 6.5.2 Evaluation Criteria

Applicants and experts are advised to thoroughly read the **Detailed Scope as set out in Annex B of the Call Announcement (and in the Annex to the Guidelines for Applicants for Full Proposals)** which explains in detail what is expected from applicants in the Call.

Full proposals will be peer reviewed by a minimum of 3 experts from the IEC per full proposal against the criteria set out in Table 6.1 (Table 5.1 in Call Announcement).

The sub-criteria outlined in Table 6.1 should be considered for the full proposal evaluation.

#### 6.5.3 Scoring Scheme

The scoring scheme for full proposals is as follows.

The scoring system uses a 6-point scale for all three review criteria for full proposals. Projects will be evaluated using scores in the range 0 – 5, where half marks are permitted. The overall score per proposal will be the sum of the three main criteria.

The scores will be interpreted in line with the system set out in Box 6.1 (Box 5.1 in Call Announcement).



Evaluation scores will be awarded globally for each of the three criteria, but not at the level of the sub-criteria. The sub-criteria are issues which the expert should consider in the assessment of that criterion. The questions under the sub-criteria headings are meant to be explanations of the meaning of the sub-criteria. They are not exclusive and also act as reminders of issues to raise later during the discussions of the proposal. Each criterion must be scored using the six point scale from 0 – 5 according to the scoring system set out in Box 6.1.

For scoring full proposals a threshold for individual criteria of 3 will be applied. An overall threshold applying to the sum of the three individual scores will be 10.

**Table 6.1 – Criteria for evaluation of Full Proposals in ERA-Gas**

Overall score		
Excellence :	Impact :	Implementation:
‘Scientific and/or technological excellence - Quality of the transnational project’	‘Potential impact’	‘Quality and efficiency of the implementation and management’
Clarity and relevance of the objectives	Contribution to expected impacts as detailed in the Call Announcement	Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan
Credibility of the approach	Enhanced innovation capacity and integration of new knowledge	Complementarity of the project participants
Soundness of the concept	Strengthening the competitiveness and growth of companies through innovation	Appropriateness of the management structures
Level of ambition and innovation	Other environmental and socially important impacts	
	Effectiveness of planned communication and dissemination activities	



#### 6.5.4 Evaluation Meeting (Step 2)

After the deadline for the evaluation of full proposals the ET will prepare a draft ranking list to be discussed during the IEC evaluation meeting of step 2. The aim of this meeting is to:

- Discuss the results,
- Agree on a final consensus score for each project,
- Finalise the ranking list by consensus,
- Decide on categories to rank full proposals that are above the threshold score of 10 for projects recommended for funding
- Consolidate feedback for applicants
- Prepare the evaluation reports to be sent to the applicants.

For each full proposal, the rapporteur will have to prepare an evaluation report which clarifies the scoring of the criteria. This will be done based on the comments of all experts that have assessed the proposal. It shall include the consensus score for each criterion as well as the overall final score for the full proposal. It will have to be delivered 1 week before the CSC meeting at the latest. The evaluation report will be used as a basis for feedback to the applicants on their proposals.. In case that the IEC does not recommend a full proposal for funding, arguments hereto, should be formulated in a constructive way.

#### 6.5.5 Selection of full proposals

Based on the ranking list of full proposals, projects will be recommended for national/regional funding by the CSC. Project coordinators will be informed of the outcome (including the consolidated feedback from the experts) electronically by the ERA-Gas Call Secretariat.

### 6.6 Finalisation of the Co-funded Call

At the end of the selection of projects recommended for funding, the following information will be sent to the European Commission:

- The ranking list(s) of the projects
- The observers' report on the evaluation
- The joint selection list of the projects to be funded
- Commitment on availability of funds.

## 7. Conformity, Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality

### 7.1 Independent observer

An independent observer, to be appointed by the CSC, shall assess the conformity of the implementation of the joint call and, in particular, review the proper implementation of the independent international peer review and the establishment of the ranking list of transnational projects.

### 7.2 Conflict of Interest

In order to avoid any conflict of interest no funding party of ERA-Gas will be involved in the evaluation procedure (including the appointment of the IEC), if the party or its affiliates plan to respond themselves to this call.



In selecting the experts for the IEC, the CSC shall endeavour to avoid any possible conflicts of interest. The online evaluation tool will include a feature which will prevent access to the proposal in case a conflict of interest is declared by the expert.

### 7.3 Confidentiality

The proposals will be handled confidentially by the ERA-Gas Call Secretariat, the ET, the national funding parties, the mandated experts responsible for the evaluation of the proposal and the independent observer.

The evaluation results of funded projects under the Co-funded Call are deemed to be confidential, except for the list of international experts participating in the evaluation process which will be published after final selection of Transnational Projects. The identification of experts for any given proposal shall, however, not be disclosed.

Evaluators have to agree on and sign the “Confirmation of No Conflict of Interest” (Annex A) and the “Confidentiality Agreement” (Annex B).





## Annex A – Confirmation of No Conflict of Interest

Representatives of the ERA-Gas Partner Organisations, Call Steering Committee (CSC), ERA-Gas Call Secretariat, Evaluation Team (ET), National Contact Points (NCP), International Evaluation Committee (IEC) members and external experts are required to declare any actual or potential Conflict of Interest towards the proposals. A conflict of interest may arise for an individual for the following reasons:

- If the approval or rejection of the proposal may in any way benefit or harm them;
- If they have or have had close collaboration with the applicant, e.g.
  - Co-authored/published articles with the applicant in the past three years,
  - Been involved in the same group as the applicant or are involved in the publication or proposal of the results
  - Been a superior, subordinate or instructor of the applicant in the past three years;
- If one member has an employment relationship or is otherwise affiliated in the same organisation as the applicant;
- If the applicant is a close person to them. A close person is:
  - Spouse (also de facto), child, grandchild, sibling, parent, grandparent or a person otherwise especially close to the person (e.g. fiancé/e or a close friend), as well as their spouses (also de facto)
  - Sibling of the person's parent or his/her spouse (also de facto), a child of the person's sibling, the person's previous spouse (also de facto)
  - Child, grandchild, sibling, parent or grandparent of the person's spouse as well as their spouses (also de facto), a child of a sibling of the person's spouse
  - Half-relative comparable to the above mentioned people

If a person feels their impartiality may otherwise be endangered they should also declare a conflict of interest.

In case of a possible conflict of interest the person must notify the ET without any unjustified delay and not be involved in the review of such proposals, which includes leaving the room during the discussion of the proposal at the IEC meeting(s). CSC and IEC members may not apply for a project in the call.

I hereby confirm that I do not have a Conflict of Interest and if a situation arises during the course of the evaluation of proposals where a Conflict of Interest emerges then I will immediately notify the ERA-GAS ET.

Signature:

Name of Person:

Date:



## Annex B – Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy Agreement

Proposal documents including research plans and abstracts as well as evaluation statements are confidential documents and should therefore be handled and stored with due care and confidentially.

Experts are therefore not allowed to disclose any information concerning proposal documents or evaluations to outsiders, nor are they allowed to use this confidential information to their own benefit or anyone else's benefit or disadvantage. In addition, they may not reveal to outsiders that they are assessing the research plan of a particular researcher. Anyone who has questions about the proposal documents or evaluation reports shall be advised to contact the Evaluation Team (ET).

Once the evaluation has been completed, experts are required to destroy all proposal documents and any copies made of them or return them to the ET. Confidentiality must also be maintained after the evaluation process has been completed.

Summary Evaluation Reports are likewise confidential documents, but applicants will receive the final report on their proposals after the funding decisions have been made.

Experts' personal data (contact details) will be stored and processed electronically by ERA-Gas Parties in the Co-funded Call context only. All Parties are advised to handle the data confidentially. However, the composition of the International Evaluation Committee (expert's name, organisation, country) will be published on the ERA-Gas webpage after the funding decision. However, the assignments to the individual projects will not be disclosed.

I hereby agree with the Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy.

Signature:

Name of Person:

Date: