



Knowledge for sustainable soils

SNOWMAN Network Management paper

| Date | Author/editor | Version |
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| 20/12/12 | Sofie Van den Bulck | final |

Management paper of the SNOWMAN network.

Content

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1 Introduction

There is a long tradition of networking in Europe along the theme of contaminated Soil and Groundwater. Supported by the EU framework programmes various networks have been started and some of these are still active as self-sustained networks. Research and a joint research agenda was always part of the activities of these networks. However, in CLARINET, a first identification of national research funding organizations and their programmes was made. The conclusion at that time was that there is a large overlap in research issues in the different national programmes.

This has led to the initiation of the ERA-NET SNOWMAN which started under the 6th Framework Program from the EU with a budget for five years (2003 – 2009). This first phase was successfully ended on June 30 2009. A network of research funders was established, which was able to execute joint calls for research projects. This aim was achieved by completion of the first call (2008) and the launching of the second call (2009).

SNOWMAN continued after June 2009 as a self maintained funding network: **the network of research funding organizations and administrations in the field of Soil and Groundwater in Europe: *Knowledge for sustainable soils***. It successfully launched the third (2010) and fourth (2012) call. Several initiatives were taken to share knowledge amongst the members, the research community and potential users: webinar, knowledge exchange days, a SNOWMAN conference on research projects. In the course of 2011 the need for actors on sharing and development of knowledge became clear. In that way, more effort can be put from development of knowledge to sharing of knowledge.

This Management paper gives an outline of the way the new network functions and its objectives.

The scope of snowman activities is 'managing soil quality' and comprises risks and remediation of contaminated soil, hydrology, soil transformation processes, soil related to socio-economic system, agriculture, biodiversity and climate change & energy.

SNOWMAN achievements

- A network of research funders in the field of contaminated Soil and Groundwater based on a common vision on sustainable soils;
- Principles of cooperation amongst national research funding organisations
- A joint Research Programme based on the needs of the various stakeholders, by means of three joint calls for research projects and a fourth in preparation;
- An established and executed communication and dissemination strategy with a focus on better use of research results.
- A number of papers that form the dowry for the network:
 - Vision paper.
 - Research programme (2009)
 - Communication strategy and Knowledge dissemination action plan (2007);
 - Call package
 - website

This paper describes the management of the Snowman network through the organization structure and the tasks and responsibilities of the various groups in the structure.

This paper is an annex to the Letter of Commitment by which Organizations confirm their participation in the network.

2 Vision, Mission, Strategy of SNOWMAN

Vision statement of the SNOWMAN Network

SNOWMAN is the network that assures future generations of sustainable soils and groundwater.

The SNOWMAN Vision is described in the SNOWMAN Vision Paper. In this Vision Paper SNOWMAN has set goals for co-operation between the national research programmes in the R&D process. The goals are divided in the different steps of the RTD process: Funding, Programming, Execution, Implementation and Evaluation (Table 1: Goals for co-operation related to the RTD-process). The table shows the short term goals and achievements of the ERA-NET phase and furthermore the mid-term and long term goals leading to a strategy for the SNOWMAN network.

This strategy is translated into objectives. The proposed structure, organization and activities of the network are a result of this.

Mission statement of the SNOWMAN Network

To develop and share relevant knowledge for the sustainable use of soil and groundwater.

This mission is to implement the common vision through the following strategic objectives for the network:

- **To implement the SNOWMAN Network Research Paper through transnational annual calls;**
- **To biannually update the SNOWMAN Network Research Paper;**
- **To implement the communication strategy and knowledge dissemination action plan;**
- **To increase the number of funders in the network;**
- To exchange existing knowledge and information;
- To establish common European research programming;
- To improve the objectives and procedures;
- To survey the relevance of social and economical sciences for SNOWMAN.

During the first year after the ERAnet period the SNOWMAN network concentrated on the first four objectives.

In table 1 the goals for co-operation of the Snowman ERA-net are presented. This table is part of the vision paper. For the short term the achievements of this period, presented in the Introduction of this paper are mentioned. For the mid-term and long-term the strategies of the new Snowman Network are added.

Table 1: Goals for co-operation related to the RTD-process

| | Funding | Programming | Execution | Implementation | Evaluation |
|---------------------|--|--|--|---|--|
| Short term | 1. Bundle, focusing national budgets | 1. Share information on national research programmes 2. Sharing a common R&D agenda between the SNOWMAN partners 3. Improve involvement of end users in R&D. | 1. Sharing procedures of funders 2. Creating a data base of evaluators and reviewers 3. Creating a data base of researchers | 1. Start up of common dissemination plans | • Stimulate use of best practices |
| Achievements | 1. 1st and 2nd Call | 1. SNOWMAN Navigator 2. SNOWMAN Research Program 3. Consultation of all stakeholders in the making of the SNRP | 1. 1st and 2nd Call 2. The data base of call 1 and 2 are available 3. The researchers in the proposals are filed | 1. SNOWMAN Communication strategy | • Improved procedures for the next call • SNOWMAN Brochures • SNOWMAN report |
| Mid term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open more funding options for national researchers Sharing procedures of national funders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid overlap of national programmes Improving involvement of stakeholders in R&D Coherence in European, national and regional R&D programmes Integrate social and economical sciences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease bureaucracy in national and international programmes Create a common forum for reviewing proposals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve exchange of know how between national programmes | |
| Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth of the network with more funding organisations Continuous updating call procedures SNOWMAN as part of a larger network 3rd and fourth Call | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the SNRP with all relevant stakeholders in an advisory group. Update the common vision as stated in the vision paper Application of the communication strategy Survey of relevance of social and economical sciences for SNRP. Exchange of existing knowledge and information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuously evaluate the ongoing calls to explore the possibilities for decreasing bureaucracy Implementation of SNRP with calls for projects. -Installation of peer review group/call steering committee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execution of the Knowledge dissemination plan. Evaluate and update the Knowledge Dissemination action plan Enlarge the network with dissemination actors. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuously evaluate the SNOWMAN objectives and procedures |
| Long term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enlarge the network with more funding partners Any national programme is open for international submission of proposals One European address to submit proposals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaching a common vision on the research agenda on soil matters for FP Establish a common Research program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep researchers in Europe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing use of R&D results Becoming the main source of soil and groundwater quality knowledge | |
| Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger cooperation with the EC's DG Research, Environment and other relevant DG's Open the network for any | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interaction between EU/SNOWMAN programming | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common Pot calls Improved Knowledge infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bridging the gap between knowledge supply and demand SNOWMAN is the source for knowledge for | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An assessment of the relative quality of the soil research organizations |

| | | | | | |
|--|----------------|--|--|-------------------|--|
| | non EU country | | | sustainable soils | |
|--|----------------|--|--|-------------------|--|

3 Organization, tasks and responsibilities

3.1 Organization of the Network

3.1.1 SNOWMAN Network steering group (NSG)

The responsibilities of the Network Steering Group (NSG) are:

- To provide overall direction and co-ordination of the network
- To initiate joint calls
- To install task teams and to agree on Task Teams' annual plans
- To agree programme of events and activities
- To program and monitor the budgets
- To liaise with the EU
- To manage the dialogue with the outside world
- To fix the network fee
- To decide on contacts with other network delegations, participation in conferences etc
- To accept new memberships and conditions for membership
- To continually seek new network members
- To amend/change the management paper

Responsibility of the chair

- To chair the meetings of the NSG
- To manage the secretariat
- To be the representative of the Network
- To coach the Network together with the secretariat

The NSG consists of representatives of all full network members. Per full member there is one representative in the NSG. The NSG physically meets twice in a year, e.g. in June and November.

The physical NSG meetings will amongst others:

- Nominate and elect a chair person for the next year;
- Define (new) Task Teams and nominate (new) chairs
- Initiate new calls for projects and
 - agree on a country voting matrix for new calls
 - nominate the Call Steering Committee members
- Define the Annual plan, including digested advice from the Advisory Group
- Update this management paper
- Install New (affiliate) members

The physical meetings may be combined with meetings of the task teams. Each NSG member can propose new task teams. In a voting the choice for the new task teams will be made by the NSG. The NSG installs the task teams of the next year.

In the course of the year the NSG will discuss ongoing matters in regular telephone conferences.

3.1.2 *SNOWMAN Secretariat*

The tasks of the secretariat are:

- To implement the decisions of the Steering Group including, manage finances, propose budgets, monitor costs
- To organise the June and November meeting
- To manage subcontracts
- To arrange an annual audit by an accountant on budget and finances
- To support the activities of the advisory group and task teams
- To assist the Call Steering Groups
- To manage and update the network homepage
- To manage and administrate the team site
- Reporter, assistance to the chair
- Mailbox function, responsible for execution of communication (f.e. newsletter, mailings etc.)

One of the Network members will host the SNOWMAN Secretariat. The secretariat will support the NSG, Advisory group and the task teams. The secretariat is responsible for the day-to-day co-ordination of and administration for the network. If the cooperation leads to mutual satisfaction, the secretariat may be hosted by this member for an indefinite period. The chair of NSG, task teams and Advisory group can ask the secretariat to undertake actions, however if these actions are not budgeted, the chair of the NSG can decide on the execution of the action.

3.1.3 *Advisory Group*

The responsibilities of the Advisory group are:

- To advise the Network Steering Group on the biannual updating of the SNRP
- To advise the Network Steering Group on the quality of the network
- To assist the Call steering Committee in the review of final project reports

Every participating country can appoint one or more members for the advisory group. The AG members represent researchers in the field of soil and groundwater or other stakeholders from e.g. the EU, Common Forum and other stakeholder networks. Membership is for the period of two years and may be prolonged. At least one member of the NSG is present in the meetings of the Advisory group. The AG selects a chair amongst its members and physically meets once a year.

3.1.4 *SNOWMAN Call steering committees (CSC's)*

The responsibilities of the CSC's are:

- To develop and implement joint calls along the procedure presented in Annex 1
- To involve the Communication task team in the dissemination of Research Results

In the CSC all funders participating in the ongoing call are represented. They can be full network members or affiliate members. According to a coordinated call road map (Annex 1) the Task Team Research Program will prepare a voting matrix. Based upon the results of that voting there will also be a voting on the Call Coordinator, by the call funders. All funding organizations of the call have a vote and are eligible to be the Call Coordinator. The Call coordinator will be asked to organize the call and to steer the call secretariat. The CSC defines a principles' paper in which tasks and responsibilities of the project boards of all projects in a call are defined. Tasks of the call secretariat are described in Annex 2.

3.1.5 *SNOWMAN task teams*

Task teams deliver annual action plans to the NSG for approval. Tasks are :

- The search for new network members
- Communication and Knowledge dissemination
- Research Program
- New developments

The NSG installs additional Task Teams.

3.2 Liabilities (disclaimer)

The members of the SNOWMAN network are only liable for their own contracts. No member of SNOWMAN can be liable for actions or agreements made by other SNOWMAN network members. The liability with respect to projects will be fixed in the call procedures.

3.3 Decision making process

All decisions are based on consensus within the NSG.

The chair of the NSG fixes a mandate for the secretariat to take minor decisions that are necessary to run the secretariat.

3.4 Confidentiality of information

All information is non confidential, unless otherwise agreed upon by the NSG.

SNOWMAN NETWORK ORGANISATION SCHEME



4 Membership of the Network

To maintain a sustainable network it is crucial that the majority of all members are in some way active in the network. This means that SNOWMAN aims to have at least 80 % of its members participating in its calls and 90 % of the members active in either the call or in any of the task teams.

The SNOWMAN network allows three forms of membership:

- Full members
- Affiliate members
- observers

4.1 Full network membership

Conditions

- Membership is open for research funding or knowledge dissemination funding organizations or administrations or any other organisations that can support the mission of SNOWMAN
- Membership is on an organizational level
- Membership commences with the signature on the Letter of commitment
- Membership is possible for a minimum of one year
- The annual fee is fixed by the NSG. This fee is to be paid in cash. In exceptional cases it is possible to pay in kind. A request to pay in kind is to be approved by the NSG.
- Termination of the network membership has to be in writing to the secretariat. The fee paid is not returnable.

Rights with regards to the network membership

- Appointment of Advisory group members
- A seat in the SNOWMAN Network Steering Group
- A vote in the election of the NSG chair
- All task teams are open for participation
- To initiate a call and or another task
- Participating in updating the SNRP
- The right, not the obligation to participate in the annual call
- If the network member is participating in a Call, a seat SNOWMAN Network Call Steering committee
- Participation in all SNOWMAN meetings
- Access to all research results from all SNOWMAN projects
- a vote in the election on themes for (international) knowledge dissemination activities
- a platform for networking on knowledge dissemination

4.2 Affiliate network membership

Affiliate membership is in principle time-limited, i.e. for the duration of a call. Affiliate members will be regularly (annually) encouraged to acquire full network membership starting after one year.

Conditions

- Membership is only open for research funding organizations or administrations

- Membership is on an organizational level
- Membership is possible for a maximum of one year, after that period the prospective member has to decide to become a full network member or an observer
- Free membership, unless the member wants to participate in a call. Then a contribution for the secretariat cost will be charged.

Rights

- Participation in a call
- If the affiliate member is participating in a Call, a seat in the SNOWMAN Network Call Steering Group
- Participation in SNOWMAN meetings on invitation
- Access to all research results

4.3 Observers

Additional research or knowledge dissemination funding organizations may be invited by the NSG for any specific meeting.

4.4 Co-funder

Organisations (public or privately owned) that can financially support the mission of SNOWMAN, without becoming a full member of SNOWMAN, can become a co-funder.

Conditions:

- co-funding is linked to a specific event or task
- the support (financially or in kind) is fixed before the event in mutual agreement
- the advertisement is proportional to the input and can never imply to become the dominant party

Rights:

- visibility in advertising the event

5 Finances

Expenditures

It is assumed that all members pay their own membership costs for travel and subsistence and their time for the execution of their task in the network.

The NSG defines the membership fee for full network members. The management costs of the network, which are shared amongst the full network members and paid for from the membership fees, are:

- The network secretariat
- Costs for general network activities decided upon by the NSG on a case-by-case basis; examples are meeting costs, travel & stay for the AG chair.

Income

The incomes of the network are the annual fees for network membership. The NSG will continually seek additional funding sources.

For those organizations that are not able to pay a fee it is suggested that they pay in kind by adopting one of the tasks of the secretariat.

Annex 1 The procedure for the implementation of a Call: **Coordinated call roadmap**

This roadmap shows indicative milestones starting from Month 1 in any year (M1) and assuming the call to open in M9 and contracts awarded in M19.

The idea is to have a regular “appointment” with the researchers who will be “ready” to prepare proposals.

| Task | Reference documents | Who ? | Deadline |
|--|---|--|---|
| Preparation of the call voting matrix (call topics, interested funders, rough budget estimation) | Research programme | Previous call coordinator | M1 |
| Decision meeting on call topics and organisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - election of the call topics - identification of the funders' group - election of the call coordinator - Secretariat - agreement on the call roadmap | Voting matrix completed | All potential funders | M2 |
| The decision to have a new call is taken | | | M2 30th |
| Distribution of the “SNOWMAN” call package : letter of commitment, principles' paper, applicants' guide, application form, pre-announcement and announcement text | Previous call package | Call coordinator or secretariat to funders | M2 30 th |
| Preparation of the research questions | “Voted” matrix, summary of the 1 st decision meeting | All funders | M3 1 st to M5 15 th |
| Check of the call package, proposals for amendments | Previous call package | All funders | M3 1 st to M5 15 th |
| Information about the scope of the call to other potential funders, offer to participate | “Voted” matrix, summary of the 1 st decision meeting | Call coordinator or person from the network responsible for the enlargement of the group | M3 1 st to M5 15 th |
| The call coordinator has identified new potential funders, has received proposals for the research questions and for amendments to the call principles and letter of commitment | | | M5 15th |
| Preparation of the call technical content and first up date of the call package | Proposals for research questions and amendments of the call package | Call coordinator and secretariat | M6 1 st |
| Decision meeting : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - funders list; - budget for the call; - discussion / approval of the technical content; | Draft call package sent prepared by call coordinator + secretariat | All funders | Mid M6 |

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|--|---|----------------------------------|--|
| - discussion / approval of the call package. | | | |
| Amendments to the letter of commitment, the principles' paper and the pre-announcement text | Summary of the October decision meeting | Call coordinator and secretariat | Decision meeting + one week |
| Last comments period for the letter of commitment, the principles' paper and the pre-announcement text | letter of commitment + principles' paper | All funders | M7 1 st |
| Amendments to the applicants' guide, the application form and the announcement text | Summary of the October decision meeting | Call coordinator and secretariat | M7 1 st |
| Signing process for the letter of commitment starts | Letter of commitment + annex (principles' paper) | All funders | Mid M7 |
| The call is pre-announced | | | Mid M7 |
| Last comments period for the applicants' guide, the application form and the announcement text | applicants' guide, application form, pre-announcement and announcement text | All funders | M8 1 st |
| The letters of commitment are signed, the members of the Call steering committee are nominated | | | Mid M8 |
| The call package is finalised | | | Mid M8 |
| The call is open | | | M9 1st |
| Preparation of the peer review phase : updating of the peer review guide | Peer review guide | Call coordinator and secretariat | M10 1 st |
| Comments to the peer review guide, nomination of peer reviewers : 1 st step | Peer review guide, Nomination table | All funders | M11 1 st |
| First contact with peer reviewers to check their availability | Peer review guide (finalised), Availability form | Secretariat | M11 31 st |
| The call is closed | | | M11 31st |
| Eligibility check | Principles' paper, applicants' guide | Secretariat | Mid M12 |
| Nomination of additional peer reviewers : 2 nd step | | All funders | Mid M12 |
| Fit to call check | Principles' paper | CSC | M12 30 th n |
| Fundability check | Principles' paper | All funders | M12 30 th |
| Decision on the list of proposals sent to peer review | Results of the fit to call check and fundability check | CSC | |
| Peer review | Peer review guide | Peer reviewers | M13 |
| Collection and summary of evaluation reports | Peer review guide | Secretariat | 3 rd week of M13 – end of M13 n |
| Moderation meeting | Peer review guide | Peer reviewers | End of M13 |

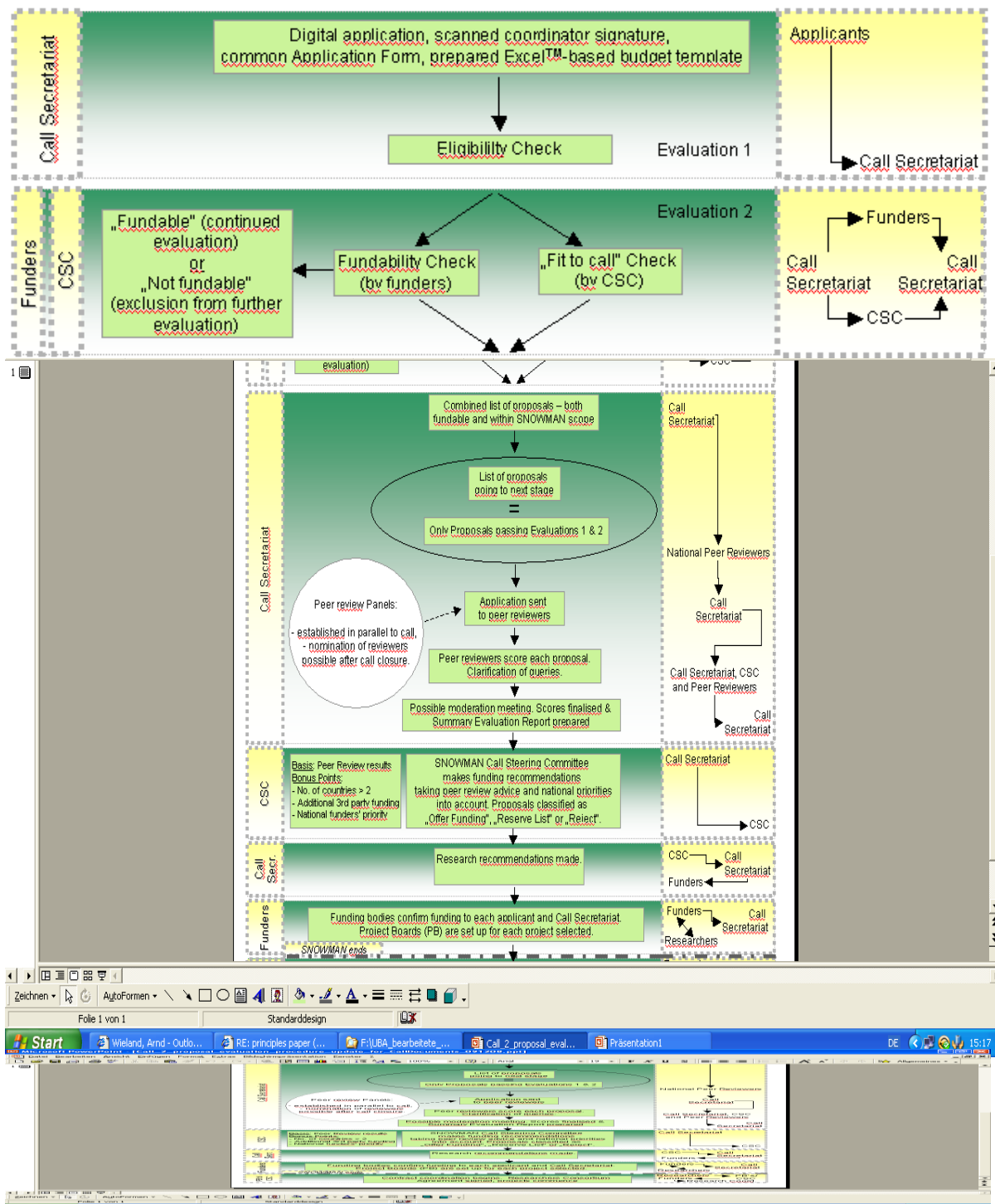
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|--|--|-------------------------|---|
| Definition of national priorities | Principles' paper | CSC | 1 st week of M14 |
| Preparation of the recommendation meeting | | CSC chair + Secretariat | 1 st and 2 nd week of M14 |
| Recommendation meeting | Principles' paper, evaluation summary reports from peer review and moderation meeting, national priorities scores and bonus points | CSC | Mid M14 |
| The CSC proposes a list of accepted proposals, rejected proposals and a reserve list | | | Mid M14 |
| The funders are asked to confirm the recommendations and to nominate the project boards participants | Letter of confirmation | Secretariat / funders | M15 1 st (or M17 1 st ?) |
| Contract negotiations | Principles' paper, applicants' guide | Funders | M15 to M18 |
| All contracts are awarded | | | M19 1st n |
| Contract monitoring | Principles' paper | Project boards + CSC | End of the last contract |
| Dissemination of research results | Principles' paper, communication strategy, dissemination plan | Project boards + CSC | |

Annex 2 Tasks related to the Call Secretariat**Frequency**

- B = Only once
- C0 = periodically per call
- C1 = Once per call
- C2 = Twice per call
- C6 = Half a year per call
- 0 = Periodically
- 1 = Monthly
- 2 = Bi-monthly
- 6 = Half a year

| Task | Frequency |
|--|-----------|
| Involvement in preparation of Call Principles | B |
| Collecting "lessons learned" | 0 |
| Preparing the meeting minutes | 0 |
| Servicing the funded projects (contact to coordinators, information exchange) | C0 |
| Project monitoring (keeping the deadlines, contacting coordinators, information transfer to CSC) | C0 |
| Call time planning and monitoring | C0 |
| Participation in conferences and workshops related to the call | C0 |
| Participation in conferences and workshops related to the funded projects | C0 |
| Assisting the Call Coordinator | C0 |
| Assisting the CSC | C0 |
| Servicing potential research projects | C0 |
| Presentations and lectures | C0 |
| Preparation of meeting documents | C0 |
| Servicing the Call funders | C0 |
| Servicing the call reviewers | C0 |
| Updating the Call documents (Applicants' Guide, Application Form, Application Form – Budget parts) | C1 |
| Preparing Call preannouncement | C1 |
| Preparing Call announcement | C1 |
| Updating Call reports (midterm, final) | C1 |
| Preparation of the peer review (documents, dates, monitoring, contacting reviewer, telephone conferences, reviewer meeting, etc.) and involvement in its execution | C1 |
| Preparation and execution of the recommendation meeting (documents, dates, etc.) | C1 |
| (at least) Involvement in the call evaluation and production of related reports | C1 |
| Publication of Call results | C1 |
| Preparing letters and data(bases) to be used in the call | C1 |
| Acknowledgement of receipt to coordinators of proposals | C1 |
| Eligibility Check | C1 |
| Letters regarding proposal evaluation results sent to research coordinators (all three groups: recommended for funding, reserve list, | C1 |

| | |
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| rejected) | |
| Consortia agreements: Collecting and monitoring | C1 |
| Press kit preparation, ordering, etc. | C1 |
| Collecting the funders' letters of commitment, sending signals to start | C1 |
| Involvement in updating the Research Agenda – leading to a call agenda | C1 |
| Involvement in updating the Model Contracts | C1 |
| Organization and preparation of meetings and telephone conferences | 2 |
| Homepage updates: Funded project pages, project file upload (reports) | C2 |
| Preparing and updating information sheets of funded projects | C2 |
| Receiving interim reports of the projects and directing these to the CSC | C6 |



Involvement of the Secretariat during the proposal evaluation phase