

GRANTS DEBRIEFING AND REVIEW PROCEDURE

only for the purpose of ECMWF grant procedures

1. INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the procedure by which applicants may request a debriefing and/or review during the selection process of their project proposal (“proposal”) under ECMWF’s grants procedures. It specifies who may request a debriefing and/or review, on what grounds, the involved steps, and the possible outcomes.

The debriefing serves to raise concerns about how a proposal was evaluated; and the review is a more formal procedure to contest procedural irregularities, factual errors, manifest errors of assessment, or abuse of power.

ECMWF is committed to ensuring that its grants procedures are open and fair and carried out in accordance with its Financial Regulations.

At the request of an unsuccessful applicant, ECMWF will provide a reasoned debriefing. ECMWF also treats very seriously any allegations that it has not carried out any grants procedures with its published procedures and will investigate thoroughly all requests for a review of the application of these procedures in a grants procedure.

2. WHO MAY REQUEST A DEBRIEFING OR REVIEW AND HOW

During the selection process, applicants will be notified, via information letter sent from ECMWF to the Coordinator, only if there are issues with admissibility, eligibility, financial capacity and exclusion checks. At the end of the selection process, all the applicants will be informed about the evaluation results of the proposals via an information letter sent from ECMWF to the Coordinator.

Upon receipt of the information letter, applicants may request a debriefing and/or a review if there is an indication that there has been a procedural shortcoming or a manifest error of assessment in the evaluation of the proposal. It is recommended that the Coordinator takes the lead in requesting a debriefing and/or a review on behalf of all applicants involved in the Proposal (Beneficiaries, Affiliated Entities, Associated Partners, Subcontractors - if applicable).

Upon receipt of the information letter - whether it is received during the selection process, at the end, or at both stages - applicants may request a debriefing and/or a review if there is an indication that there has been a procedural shortcoming or a manifest error of assessment in the evaluation of the proposal.

Such a request must be submitted within ten (10) working days from the date and time the information letter is sent by email, as evidenced by the Outlook sending timestamp. After this period, applicants shall forfeit the right to request a debriefing and/or review. However, ECMWF reserves the right to accept or reject a late request for debriefing and/or review if the delayed submission of the request is duly justified and reasonable.

The Coordinator bears sole responsibility for regularly monitoring their email and, upon receipt of the information letter, informing the relevant applicants involved in the proposal (Beneficiaries, Affiliated Entities, Associated Partners, Subcontractors - if applicable), and afterwards the applicants may request a debriefing and/or review if they choose to do so.

Shall the applicants request a debriefing within the aforementioned time window, they will also have the possibility to request a review procedure not later than ten (10) working days after the date of the debriefing.

3. DEBRIEFING

The debriefing is undertaken by a senior member of ECMWF with responsibility for the grants procedure and focuses on the way the relevant proposal was evaluated, including evaluation by independent evaluators, if any. Details of other proposals are not divulged, but the applicants are given constructive feedback on the strengths and areas for improvement of the proposal.

The aim of the debriefing is to exhaustively address the applicants' concerns. The applicants may not initiate a review procedure until after completing the debriefing.

Requests for debriefing must be submitted by replying directly to the email address used by ECMWF to send the information letter.

4. REVIEW

The review procedure consists of:

- an initial review by the Director-General,
- followed, if requested, by a review by a Grants Review Board (GRB).

Requests for review must be submitted in writing, by registered mail, addressed to:

Director-General
ECMWF
Shinfield Park
Reading
RG2 9AX
UNITED KINGDOM

and parallelly sent as a PDF by email to grants@ecmwf.int for information.

Requests for review must be signed by an individual who has the authority to represent the applicants in all matters related to the request.

Requests may be withdrawn by the applicants at any time before the outcome is announced by ECMWF. Upon withdrawal, the original evaluation results shall remain final.

All review requests are treated as confidential.

5. BASIS ON WHICH A REVIEW PROCEDURE MAY BE REQUESTED

The review request must focus solely on aspects related to the evaluation process, not the merits of the proposal. Applicants may raise concerns regarding procedural irregularities, factual errors, manifest errors of assessment, or abuse of power. However, mere repetition of the proposal content or disagreement with the evaluation outcome or reasoning are not considered.

The review request may not reference the evaluation of proposals submitted by other applicants or those submitted under different or previous calls.

Applicants are responsible for providing ECMWF with the form below filled in with the relevant information together with evidence supporting their review procedure request and for ensuring that the evidence is accurate, verifiable and sufficient to support a review.

6. REVIEW BY ECMWF DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Within thirty (30) working days of receiving the request, the ECMWF Director-General shall issue a written decision to the applicants. The decision shall:

- state the reasons for the decision; and
- if the request is upheld in whole or in part, indicate the corrective measures that are to be taken.

The applicants will be deemed to have accepted the Director-General's decision unless the applicants submit a request for a further review, in the same manner and to the same address as set out at Paragraph 4 above and the request is received by ECMWF within ten (10) working days of receipt of the Director-General's decision.

Should the Director-General receive a request for a further review, he/she will, within a reasonable time, but in any event no longer than two (2) calendar months, convene a GRB competent to review decisions taken by ECMWF in application of its grants procedure.

7. REVIEW BY ECMWF GRB

In the course of undertaking its review, the GRB will consider the applicants' concerns and supporting evidence, the grant procedure followed and any associated records relevant to the challenged process. These shall be disclosed to the GRB by ECMWF or the applicants, as appropriate, within fifteen (15) working days of being requested by the GRB.

The decision of the GRB shall be in writing and shall:

- state the reasons for the decision; and
- if the request is upheld in whole or in part, indicate the corrective measures that are to be taken.

If the applicants' challenge to the application of the grant process is upheld, the GRB will consider an award of compensation for direct costs unreasonably incurred in the light of the failure to implement the process, including the cost of making the request for review. (Indirect and consequential costs and expenses and loss of profit or revenue, even if ECMWF was advised of the possibility of such losses, will be excluded from the calculation of such compensation.)

Compensation will be subject to a limit of £25,000 or 2% of the value of the grant for which the tender was submitted, whichever is the lesser.

If the applicants' challenge to the grants process is not upheld, the GRB will consider a recommendation that the applicants should pay a contribution to ECMWF's reasonable costs for dealing with the request for review.

The decision of the GRB shall be final and binding.

8. EFFECT OF REVIEW ON GRANT PROCEDURE

Unless, in the opinion of the Director-General, the subject of the request relates to matters which would substantially impact the activities which are the subject of the grants procedure, the request for a review will have no effect on the grants procedure being challenged or on any award of grants as a result of the procedure.