

## Guide for evaluators – Participant selection

### IdeaLab ‘Managing threats’

#### 1. IdeaLab approach

The IdeaLab is an approach that will bring together 20-30 Participants, with the workshop Director and a number of mentors (referred to as the members of the Panel of Experts in this document) and independent stakeholders over a period of 5 days. An essential element of the IdeaLab is a highly multidisciplinary mix of Participants taking part. The IdeaLab requires knowledge and expertise from a broad range of disciplines and cultures, to drive lateral thinking and radical approaches to addressing particular research challenges.

#### Selecting the right people

The right mix of people will determine the success or failure of the IdeaLab. Selecting the Participants is one of the main tasks of the members of the Panel of Experts.

We need Participants from a range of disciplines and backgrounds (e.g. from the arts, humanities and social sciences to life sciences, physical sciences and engineering) and they will need to have the right mix of personal attributes. The whole IdeaLab approach is about bringing together people who would not normally interact. We are looking for people who can bring new thinking to an existing problem. They do not necessarily need to have any prior experience of the problem domain, but will need to demonstrate an enthusiasm for working at the interface between disciplines. Please re-read the Call Document (Annex 1) and the application form (Annex 2) to acquaint yourself with the concept of an IdeaLab. Before assessing the applications it is important to tune into the different set of requirements that come into play for an IdeaLab compared to the way research bids are normally assessed. Both the science/formal background and the person have to be right: the ‘right’ individual is as important – often more so – as the ‘right’ science or experience.

#### 2. Who do we seek?

Besides looking for an appropriate blend of disciplines and competences for the full breadth of the IdeaLab theme, our current wisdom on the ideal profile of an IdeaLab candidate is encapsulated in the following statement:

*‘The IdeaLab will be especially suited to individuals who are willing to step outside their particular area of interest or expertise, who are positively driven, who enjoy creative activity and are excited working with the give and take of collaborative problem-solving.’*

So, ask yourself: to what extent do I think this applicant has the right blend of an innovative, trans-disciplinary mindset and the right blend of intellectual curiosity & flexibility? Do they have the required positive outlook and the ability to play as equal, collegial, enthusiastic team-players? Or do they look more suited to the conventional bid route rather than the IdeaLab?

#### Striking the right balance between Participants from Poland and EEA states

Striking the right balance between Participants from Poland and EEA states is crucial to formation of eligible partnerships during the IdeaLab workshop. Eligible partnerships must as a minimum consist of

the Polish Principal Investigator and a workshop Participant from Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway. Additionally, Principal Investigators in projects created during the workshop must have at least a PhD and plan to implement the research tasks in a Polish research organisation.

### Other issues to take into account

- Equal opportunity implications. The members of the Panel of Experts need to bear in mind that candidates from some cultures tend to understate their qualities and may be reluctant to highlight their virtues.
- Striking the right gender balance among the Participants selected.
- Striking the right balance between experience and those at an earlier stage of their careers.

**For further guidance on the appropriate profile of an IdeaLab Participant, please see Annex 3.**

### 3. Selection process

The administration will carry out an eligibility check before the Participant application forms are sent to the members of the Panel of Experts. The following criteria will be taken into account in the eligibility check:

- Was the application sent before the deadline date and time established in the call and using the Programme Operator's electronic submission tool?
- Does the Host organisation qualify as a legal person established in Poland, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway?
- Are the two required statements – the Participant's statement and the Host organisation's statement – present, complete and signed?
- Are all fields of the application form filled in and written in English? Is the amount of text within the limits set in the call documentation?

The process for selection of the Participants will be as follows:

- The members of the Panel of Experts will perform an individual rating of each applicant and submit this to the administration.
- The members of the Panel of Experts will meet to discuss the ratings and perform the final selection of Participants.

### Individual rating of each applicant

- 1) You will have been given access to the volume of IdeaLab applications.
- 2) You will also have been given and will have read the guide for evaluators – this document.
- 3) Via email you will have been sent a spreadsheet which will detail the applications in terms of the applicant's name, gender, professional title/academic degree, year of PhD award, institution and department, country, as well as a top-level indication of expertise. The applications will be ordered alphabetically by surname.
- 4) Please read through all the applications and use the spreadsheet to rate each applicant (A-excellent, B-good or C-weak) with regard to:
  - a) The relevance of their expertise to the challenges in the call;

- b) Their ability to develop new, adventurous and highly original research ideas;
- c) Their potential to contribute to research at the interface between areas of expertise;
- d) Their ability to work in a cross-disciplinary team and to communicate

And; provide your overall score for the applicant according to the following (please make sure you use the entire range of scores):

**4 – HIGHLY PROMISING** – has all of: a) to d); should bring special value

**3 – PROMISING** – is strong on a minimum of three of the areas with an allowable weakness in the remaining; good promise overall if a little lacklustre in some areas

**2 – MIXED VALUE** – a mixed profile but not without the odd sign of promise

**1 – UNSUITED** – a thin or an unconvincing application, or too packed or dense, or with self-promotion, showcasing or pre-agenda their primary motive, or too set in their thinking, or better suited to the conventional individual-bid funding route; or too much at an early or late career stage

(Only the overall score will be used in the further selection process.)

We are aiming for approximately **30 applicants in total to be selected**. However, do not feel constrained by the space limits – at this stage you should concentrate on rating all applications against the criteria. This initial scoring will instantly enable us to see if there are any definite decisions that the Panel of Experts agrees with, and so will expedite discussions at the Panel of Experts meeting.

- 5) As you are reading through the applications we would ask you to be aware of applicants with whom you may have a **conflict of interest**. The avoidance of any conflicts between personal interests and the interests of the National Science Centre is essential. In the context of peer review of applications and research proposals, a conflict of interest might arise, for example, if a Panel of Experts member has, or has had in the past, a close working relationship or personal connections with any individual(s) in the academic department or organisation from which an application originates. For guidance concerning conflicts of interest, please see Annex 4. An additional column on the master spreadsheet 'conflict of interest' is for recording potential conflicts between the applicants and the members of the Panel of Experts.

If you think that your involvement in assessing a particular application might be perceived as a conflict of interest, you should declare this at the meeting and record onto the spreadsheet in the conflict of interest column your name relating to the applicant with whom you are conflicted and **do not read the application or enter a score against their name**.

Where appropriate, the members of the Panel of Experts will be expected to leave the room during consideration of these applications and their exclusion from the discussion may be recorded in the record of the outcome of the meeting.

Please contact the administration if you feel that you need further advice about this matter or any other aspects of the IdeaLab selection process.

- 6) **We ask that you complete your initial scores on the spreadsheet and rename it with your name in the title e.g. 'NAME.xls' and send the completed spreadsheet via email.** This will

enable the office to populate the master spreadsheet with all scores before the Panel of Experts meeting.

### At the Panel of Experts meeting

We estimate that the Panel of Experts meeting should take no longer than 7 hours but, of course, this will be dependent on the number of applications received and agreement between the Experts. An outline process for operating the Panel of Experts is given below.

Once all the Panel of Experts members' ratings have been combined, the master spreadsheet will be displayed and filtered into **Yes, No and Maybe categories**. The Panel of Experts will assess the applications in the following way:

#### 1) First Pass of the applications:

Our first task will be to look at those applications (via the spreadsheet) which have been recorded as **No** by either **all the members of the Panel of Experts** or by the **majority of the members of the Panel of Experts**. If all are happy and in agreement with this, then these applications will be rejected and not discussed any further.

We will then turn our attention on to the group of applications that are in the **Maybes**. These applications will probably have the most mixed views from the Experts. **Maybe** applications will be discussed in turn by the Panel of Experts until a **yes** or **no** decision is collectively made and recorded on the spreadsheet. We should aim to spend no more than a couple of minutes on each application.

We will then turn our attention on to the **Yes** group and repeat the process, checking that we are satisfied that all those applicants in the **Yes** group have the appropriate attributes, skills and research expertise to attend the IdeaLab and that we have the balance right referring back to the selection criteria.

#### 2) Second Pass of the applications:

Once we have done the first pass we will revisit the entire list. Asking the question: "Are we satisfied that there is no applicant in the **No** group that we would want to place into the **Yes** group?" If the Panel of Experts is satisfied, we then reject the **No** group.

This leaves us with the **Yes** group. The Panel of Experts should then closely examine this set of applicants. Do we have the right number of applicants? Is there the right balance of candidates from Poland and the EEA countries? Do we have the right number of possible Principal Investigators (scientists having a PhD from Polish research organisations)? Do we have a good gender balance and institutional balance, and also a good mix of people with diverse research backgrounds? The Panel of Experts will refine the **Yes** group until satisfied with the final selection. Candidates from the **Maybe** group that were previously rejected may be re-evaluated and included in the **Yes** group if necessary to obtain the optimal mix of people in the group.

**We should be aiming for approximately 30 Participants and 5-10 substitutes to be selected for the IdeaLab. Approximately 15 Participants should be from Polish research organisations and have a PhD and approximately 15 Participants should be from entities from Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein. Additionally, 3-5 Participants with a master's degree (or equivalent) planning to implement their projects in entities from Poland might be selected.**

### **3) Final Panel of Experts selection decision:**

The above final decision is recorded onto the spreadsheet, the spreadsheet is printed and the chair of the Panel of Experts and National Science Centre Scientific Coordinator will sign the list and the Panel of Experts meeting is complete.

#### **After the Panel of Experts meeting**

An email will be sent to the applicants that have been selected to attend the IdeaLab informing them of this decision, asking them to confirm their attendance. Unsuccessful applicants will be informed that they are not among the selected Participants. No applicant will receive any feedback from the Panel of Experts.

If selected applicants cannot participate, candidates outside of the group of 5-10 substitutes may be selected. Any changes to the group of approximately 30 Participants originally selected by the members of the Panel of Experts will be communicated to and approved by the Panel of Experts.

## Annex 1

Announcement of the IdeaLab call

## Annex 2 Participant's application form

### APPLICATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE IDEALAB "MANAGING THREATS" WORKSHOP

The application must be written in English. Applications filled in other languages than English shall be rejected as ineligible.

The deadline for sending the application is August 19,2019, 24:00 CEST.

#### I. Basic administrative data of the Participant

Name:
Surname:
Gender:
Professional title/academic degree:
Year of PhD award:
E-mail address:
Four key words indicating areas of your research, qualifications or professional experience relevant to this IdeaLab:

#### II. Basic administrative data of the Host organisation

Organisation's legal name in English:
Organisation's legal name in Polish: ( <i>applies only to Polish entities</i> )
Name in English of the department/division/unit planned to carry out the tasks:
Name in Polish of the department/division/office planned to carry out the tasks: ( <i>applies only to Polish entities</i> )
Person(s) authorised to represent the organisation:
Legal address:
Street:
Street No.:
Apartment No.:
Town/City:
Country:

### III. Qualifications, experience and personal characteristics of the Participant

Approximate number of characters is indicated for each question concerning characteristics of the Participant. The application must be concise and describe your expertise and motivation for participating. The text together with the questions should absolutely not exceed 2 standard pages in English (page format: A4; font size: no smaller than 11; lead: single; margins: left and right: 2 cm; margins: top and bottom: 1,5 cm).

Please be aware that submission of applications exceeding the limits indicated above may lead to your application being considered as ineligible during the eligibility check. Please include a description of the following:

Your qualifications: please provide a brief summary focusing on those relevant to this IdeaLab. Include your scientific experience as well as non-scientific expertise and competences, involvement in international cooperation, cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organisations, participation in collaboration between science and society, and any other relevant skills or experience. (1000-1500 characters including spaces)
How your interests and experience will contribute to the topic for this cross-disciplinary IdeaLab (1000-1500 characters including spaces)
Your skills and experience in communicating your research to a non-specialist audience (700-1000 characters including spaces)
Your skills and experience in team-work and cross-disciplinary cooperation (700-1000 characters including spaces)
How you expect to adapt to, and contribute in the intensive IdeaLab setting, which involves: using novel approaches, developing ground-breaking ideas, establishing new relationships and working with new partners, delivering creativity under pressure . (500-700 characters including spaces)
Reflect on what makes you think innovatively, and how you function when asked to step outside your area of expertise. (500-700 characters including spaces)

### IV. Annexes

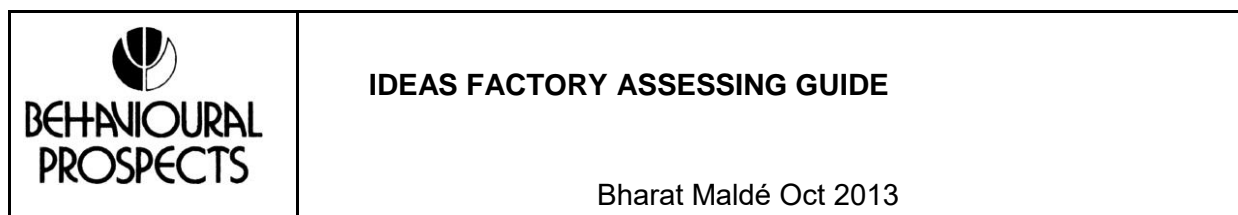
#### Annex 1 – Participant’s statement

Add Pdf file

#### Annex 2 – Statement of the person(s) authorised to represent the Host organisation

Add Pdf file

## Annex 3



Pioneered in the UK by the Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council – the EPSRC – an ideas factory or a sandpit brings together scientists or practitioners to work on a global theme in an intensive residential setting to achieve transformative breakthroughs by way of novel solutions or lines of research. It is an important complement to the conventional way research is funded and supported and has the rich potential to yield exciting rewards. Assessing suitability here is different from how scientific worth is usually measured.

The ideal profile of a ‘sandpitter’ is:

Someone with an abiding ‘zest for quest’ who enjoys nothing better than to spend three to five intensive days away from work and home working with ideas – generating, building, shaping – in the close company of like-minded others, many of them strangers, without letting personal issues get in the way. As excited with their own ideas as those of others with a genuine delight in completely new lines of thinking emerging. *They come with no pre-agenda other than the pull of the opportunity to immerse themselves in an ideas-play around the subject of the sandpit, playing as equals without being precious about themselves, their own ideas or expertise.*

Assessing: it is useful to apply a four- or five-category assessment at the pre-sift stage (where the panel members are assessing their allocated batch of applications on their own) and a sharper three-way split at the sift stage (when the panel members come together to determine whom to invite). As examples, the pre-sift scale categories might be Highly Promising, Promising, Mixed Promise and Unsuitable and the at-sift scale categories will be Yes, No and Maybe.

Having familiarised yourselves with what a sandpit is and the ideal participant profile as outlined above, examine the replies on both sides of the EoI and ask yourself:

Looking at the replies in the round, to what extent do I think this applicant has the right blend of an innovative, trans-disciplinary mindset and the required positive personal attributes? Do they have the right blend of intellectual curiosity & flexibility and the ability to play as equal and enthusiastic team-players? Score as follows:

4 HIGHLY PROMISING – has all of: a) an innovative bent, b) theme-relevant expertise and c) positive personal attributes; should bring special value

3 PROMISING – is strong on two of the three areas with an allowable weakness in the third, or: good promise overall if a little lacklustre in some areas

2 MIXED PROMISE – a mixed profile but not without the odd sign of promise

1 UNSUITED – a thin or an unconvincing application, or better suited to the conventional individual-bid funding route; or too much at an early or late career stage; or with self-promotion, showcasing or pre-agenda as the primary motive.



#### PROMPTS:

- All three criteria – expertise, innovative bent and personal attributes – are important but time and again ‘the person behind the science’ has been found to be a critical divider.
- Resist favouring a particular discipline over another, keeping in mind the stronger need for the ability to work across and at the edge of disciplines.
- Wild Card picks. While individuals with an outlier discipline or character have the potential to inject a usefully fresh dynamic into the event, take extra care when picking such individuals that they also have the right social and communication skills to work well with others.
- In arriving at the final target number of ~ 30 Participants, it is important to have a diverse range of disciplines, gender, culture and experience to enrich the innovative outputs of a sandpit. Women often inject a usefully different dynamic and early career Participants are often better suited to the sandpit than their more experienced counterparts who are more likely to want to protect and defend their established portfolios or name and fame. Be on guard against: ‘We can’t possibly run an event without so-and-so who is such a big name in the game’. If any such should be involved, look for a time-limited role rather than as fulltime Participants.
- To ensure freshness as well as fairness and a level playing field, use only the application form replies as a basis for assessing suitability. Resist dipping into publication records or websites or being unduly distracted by name-and-fame type considerations. Carefully picked unsung heroes often shine in this environment.
- Always bring to the table any hunch or instinct that draws you towards ‘can’t put my finger on it but there is something about this applicant that we may well miss if not picked...’ Bring them up at the sift to check out with other panel members.

#### Annex 4 Code of ethics and conflicts of interest in the IdeaLab call

1. International experts must be resident and working outside Poland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.
2. By agreeing to evaluate the applications submitted at all stages of the IdeaLab call announced by the National Science Centre, the expert undertakes to maintain full confidentiality and not to disclose any part of the information contained in the applications, including the names of the applicants.
3. The full confidentiality of the information implies that any content of the project idea or full proposal cannot be used for any purposes other than the evaluation process. Withdrawal from the evaluation process does not release the expert from the duty to maintain full confidentiality with respect to the information contained in the evaluated proposal.
4. The expert should be sensitive to the appearance of a conflict of interest with respect to the Participant applying for participation in the IdeaLab workshop. The expert is not eligible for evaluation of the Participant's application form in the case of:
  - personal relations with the Participant, especially if the expert is married to, or shares a kinship to the second degree with the Participant, or shares some legal ties with the Participant, i.e. has legal custody or power of attorney of any Participant,
  - professional relations with the Participant or the Host organisation, especially if the expert has worked in this organisation within a period of three years prior to the deadline for submission of the application,
  - scientific relations with the Participant, especially if the expert is a supervisor/mentor of the Participant, has co-authored scientific work with the Participant within a period of three years prior to the deadline for submission of the application, has entered direct research competition with the Participant,
  - economic relations with the Participant, especially if the expert is capable of directly profiting from the reviewed application.
5. The above cases do not exhaust all possibilities for a conflict of interest. If in doubt, the expert should contact a relevant Scientific Coordinator, advising of the conflict of interest or bias. However, if the expert is of the opinion that the existing conflict of interest would lead to a biased evaluation, the expert should withdraw from the assessment unconditionally.
6. In the case of a conflict of interest described in point 3 between an expert and a selected Participant, the expert is replaced by a new expert selected by the NCN Council.
7. The expert cannot be individually involved in the preparation of the Participant's application form and full proposal.
8. Experts are required to sign a declaration that they undertake to inform the Programme Operator if a conflict of interest should arise in the course of their duties. They also sign a declaration that no such conflict of interest exists during the course of the IdeaLab call evaluation procedure.