TECHNOLOGY CENTRE PRAGUE

CZ-SK WEBINAR TWINNING 2026 CALL

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TWINNING 2026

INTRODUCTION

AIM

- To enhance networking activities **between the research institutions and research infrastructures of the Widening countries** by linking it with **at least two internationally leading research institutions** from two different Member States or Associated Countries.

- To raise the **research profile of the institution from the Widening country and its staff**, including strengthening the **research management capacity.**

Type of action: CSA

Funding rate: 100% (lump sum)

Project duration: 3 years

Indicative number of projects: 210

Call budget: 264.5 M€

Project budget: 0,8 – 1,5 M€

Call opening: 8. 1. 2026

Call closing: 9. 4. 2026

SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

ELIGIBILITY

- Participation as **coordinators** is limited to legal entities established in **Widening countries.**
- **Gender equality plan** is an eligibility criterion.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL

- Eligible costs take the form of a **lump sum – BUT: there will be only ONE reporting period (after the project completion), so no need for more Work Packages.**

POTENTIAL PARTNER – JRC

EC JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE

- **JRC can contribute with specific expertise**, where relevant, for:
  - **development of R&I strategies** depending on the R&I domain chosen by the project,
  - **technology transfer** & **IPR management**
  - linking up to **regional smart specialisation strategy**.
- JRC is the EC´s widely recognised and independent evidence-based science and knowledge service.

INFORMATION

- **How to involve JRC as a partner** – described in General Annexes to the WP 2026-2027 (p. 6) and in more details in the FAQ on FTOP from 29 March 2023 (What are the rules of the JRC's involvement in the Horizon Europe calls/topics?)
- **In a proposal phase, the JRC may not participate in drafting and submitting the project proposal.**
- **Why to choose JRC as a partner** – evaluators pay attention to JRC involvement in the proposals submitted to the relevant calls and usually make positive comments in the Evaluation Summary Reports.

TWINNING 2026

PROPOSAL CONTENT

EXPECTED OBLIGATORY OUTCOMES

1. **Improved research excellence and capacities** in Widening countries closing the research and innovation gap within the European Union;
2. **Enhanced strategic collaboration** between the research institutions or higher education establishments of the Widening countries and at least two internationally leading research institutions or higher education establishments at European Union level;
3. **Raised reputation, research profile and attractiveness** of the coordinating institution, and improved research profile of its staff;
4. **Strengthened research management capacities** of the coordinating institution;
5. **Development of novel approaches in R&I collaboration** with increased mobility (inwards and outwards) of researchers.

PROPOSAL CONTENT I

- Clearly outline the **strategy** for stepping up and stimulating scientific excellence and innovation capacity **in a defined area of research and innovation** as well as the scientific excellence of the partners.
- **Components of the strategy**:
  - ✓ arrangements for formulating **joint research/innovation activities/projects** in the scientific area of choice,
  - ✓ description of how Twinning will take this research to a new level.
- **Include a comprehensive set of activities** such as (but not limited to)**:**
  - ✓ short-term staff exchanges, expert visits and short term on-site or virtual trainings, workshops, conference attendance, organisation of joint summer schools, dissemination and outreach activities,
  - ✓ as far as appropriate these activities should take into account the **GEPs** of the participants.

PROPOSAL CONTENT II

- Focus on **strengthening the research management capacities** of the coordinating institution

  - ✓ in a **dedicated work package or task**, in view of helping the staff of the coordinating institution to improve their broader research management capacities as defined in the **European Competence Framework for Research Managers** (RM Comp);
  - ✓ **establishing/upgrading a dedicated team** within the coordinating institution;
  - ✓ fully utilising the **experience and best practices** of the internationally leading partners;
  - ✓ **expected to be a concrete deliverable.**

PROPOSAL CONTENT III

- Illustrate **quantitatively and qualitatively the expected impact** of the twinning exercise **within the coordinating institution** (and possibly **at regional/national level**) **based on indicators** such as:
  - ✓ scientific production and peer recognition,
  - ✓ collaboration agreements with the non-academic sector,
  - ✓ attracting and mobilising investments from the private sector,
  - ✓ intellectual property developed,
  - ✓ new innovative products or services,
  - ✓ number of international students,
  - ✓ number of female scientists and their roles in the research institutions.

- Describe how the **leading scientific institutions** in the consortium will contribute in terms of provision of **access to new research avenues, creativity and the development of new approaches**, as well as acting as a **source for increased gender equality, inclusivness and mobility** (inwards and outwards) of qualified scientists and young researchers including doctoral candidates.

PROPOSAL CONTENT IV
WP1: RESEARCH COMPONENT

- A research and innovation component **not exceeding 30%** of the total Horizon Europe grant (including the indirect costs) may be included, which should be presented in a dedicated work package (WP1) entitled 'Research component.

- At least **50% of the budget for this component should be allocated to the coordinator.**
- A research and innovation component may involve:
  - ✓development and implementation of **new ideas, methods, or technologies,**
  - ✓advances the current state of the art in a particular field by pushing the **boundaries of knowledge and creating novel solutions.**

- **All trainings related to R&I that advances beyond the state of the art** should be budgeted and included in this work package.

PROPOSAL CONTENT V

Possibly 8 Work Packages (WP1 + 5 obligatory expected outcomes + 2)

- ✓ **WP1 – Research Component**
- ✓ Improved excellence capacity and resources
- ✓ Enhanced strategic networking activities
- ✓ Raised reputation, research profile and attractiveness
- ✓ Strengthened research management capacities
- ✓ Improved creativity (new approaches in R&I collaboration, increased mobility)
- ✓ Management
- ✓ Communication, Exploitation, Dissemination

TWINNING 2026

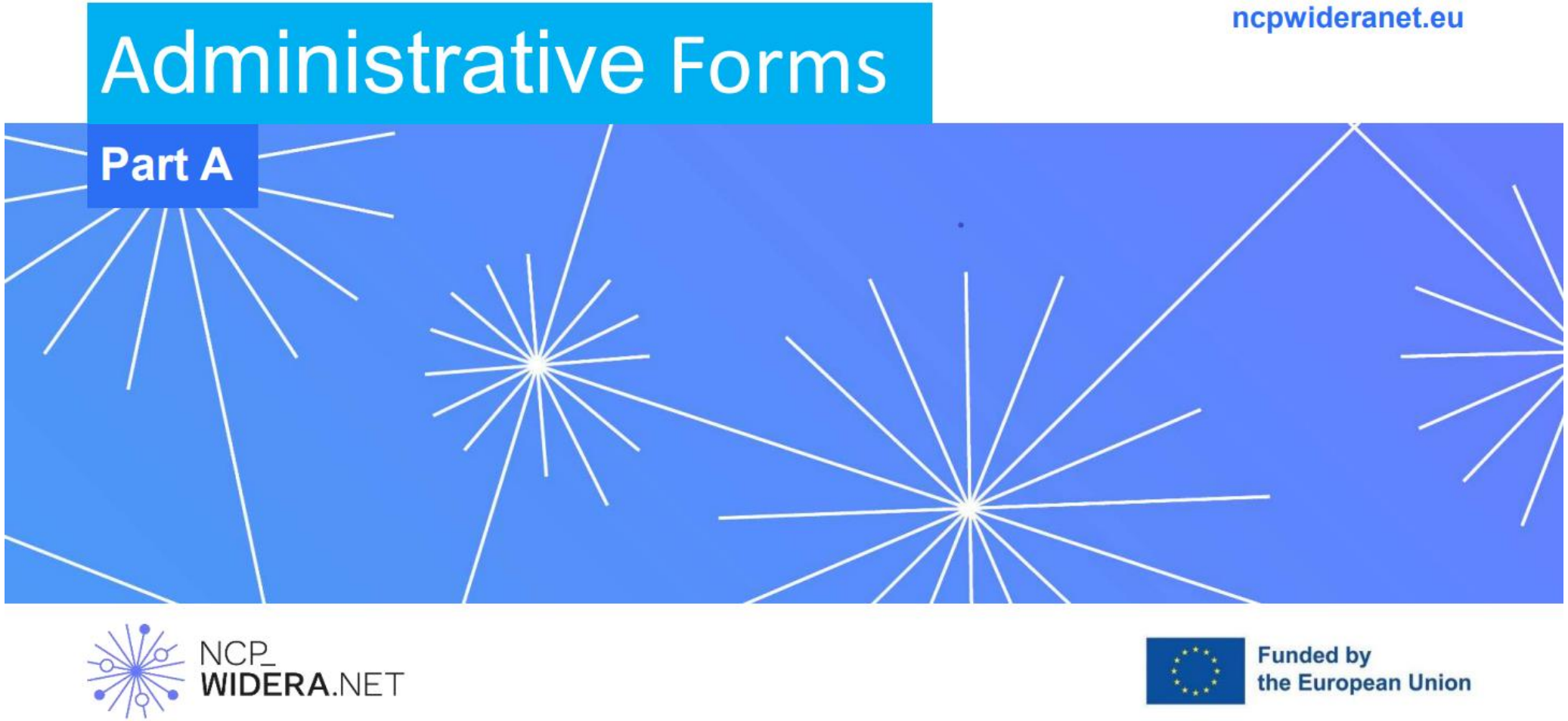
PROPOSAL TEMPLATE
incl. RECENT CHANGES

CSA STANDARD TEMPLATE

Structure of the Proposal

- **Part A is generated by the IT system. It is based on the information entered by the participants through the submission system in the Funding & Tenders Portal.** The participants can update the information in the submission system **at any time before final submission.**
- **Part B** of the proposal is the **narrative part that includes three sections that each correspond to an evaluation criterion.** Part B needs to be uploaded as a PDF document following the templates **downloaded by the applicants in the submission system for the specific call or topic**.

ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS – PART A



PART B: IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

- The **structure of the template must be followed** – sections 1, 2 and 3 each correspond to an evaluation criterion.
- Only proposals that successfully **address all the required aspects** will have a **chance of being funded**.
- After the deadline, **excess pages** (in over-long proposals/applications) will be automatically made invisible, and will not be taken into consideration by the experts.
- The proposal is a **self-contained document**. Experts are instructed to ignore hyperlinks to information that is specifically designed to expand the proposal.
- **DEFINITIONS** (critical risk, deliverable, impacts, milestones, objectives, outcomes, pathway to impact, research output, results, Technology Readiness Level …)

PART B: STRUCTURE

28 pages limit for Part B!

TITLE OF THE PROPOSAL

List of participants (table)

1. Excellence

1.1 Objectives

1.2 Coordination and/or support measures and methodology

2. Impact

2.1 Project's pathways towards impact

2.2 Measures to maximise impact - Dissemination, exploitation and communication

2.3 Summary KEY ELEMENT OF THE IMPACT SECTION

3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation

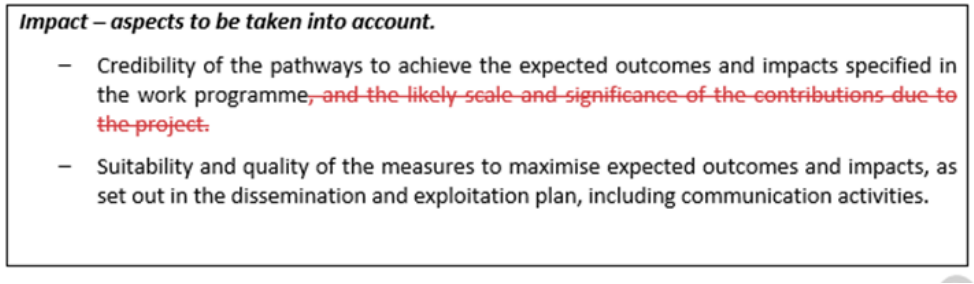
3.1 Work plan and resources

3.2 Capacity of participants and consortium as a whole

CHANGES IN APPLICATION FORMS 2026

Horizon Implementation Day, 20 January 2026

- **Tags removed**
- **Page limit reduced by 5 pages!**
- 40 pages for actual costs RIA and IA, 45 pages for lump sum RIA and IA.
- 25 pages for actual costs CSA, 28 pages for lump sum CSA.



Impact – aspects to be taken into account.

- Credibility of the pathways to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts specified in the work programme~~, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions due to the project.~~
- Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.

Part 2 – Impact - Section 2.1

- No longer need to explain the general scientific, economic and societal expected impacts as they are already taken into account in the topic expected impact.
- Project's pathways towards impact" subsection was simplified and the subpoint b) asking a detailed indication of the scale and significance of project contributions was removed from the template. We now ask only to "Provide quantified estimates when possible and relevant".

TABLES FOR SECTION 3.1 (CHANGES SINCE 2026)

Horizon Implementation Day, 20 January 2026

Table 3.1a:	**List of work packages**
Table 3.1b:	**Work package description**
Table 3.1c:	**List of Deliverables**
Table 3.1d:	**List of milestones**
Table 3.1e:	**Critical risks for implementation**
Table 3.1f:	**Summary of staff effort**
Table 3.1g:	**'Subcontracting costs' items**
Table 3.1h:	**'Purchase costs' items (~~travel and subsistence~~, equipment ~~and other goods~~, ~~works and services~~)**
~~Table 3.1i:~~	**'Other costs categories' items (e.g. internally invoiced goods and services)**
~~Table 3.1j:~~	**'In-kind contributions' provided by third parties**

"Purchase costs" items (major equipment costs) has been simplified and it now only covers equipment costs. Please provide details on the need for equipment costs, if they exceed 15% of the personnel costs for that participant (according to the budget table in proposal part A).

have been removed

For actual costs grants, these tables will be required during GAP as part of the Description of Action of retained for funding proposals. For lump sum projects, details on Purchase costs items are provided in the "Any Comments" tab within the detailed budget table.

CHANGES IN GENDER BALANCE CRITERION SINCE 2025 (GENERAL ANNEXES)

- Annex F (Procedure) for WP 2023-2024 states "...*the gender balance among the **researchers** named in the researchers table in the proposal will be used as a factor for prioritisation*;"
- **Annex F (Procedure) for WP 2025** states "... *the gender balance among the **researchers with a leading role** named in the researchers table in the proposal, will be used as a factor for prioritisation*."
- The change to the gender balance in lead researchers (in the project, calculated for the whole consortium) applies to **calls under WP 2025 and onwards.** The leading role could be both the task leader and work package leader, **as long as they are declared as having a leading role in the researchers table in the proposal template Part A**.

GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE AI (2023)

- When considering the use of generative AI tools for the preparation of the proposal, it is imperative to exercise caution and careful consideration. **The AI-generated content should be thoroughly reviewed and validated by the applicants to ensure its appropriateness and accuracy, as well as its compliance with intellectual property regulations. Applicants are fully responsible for the content of the proposal (even those parts produced by the AI tool) and must be transparent in disclosing which AI tools were used and how they were utilized.**
- **Specifically, applicants are required to:**
  - ✓ **Verify the accuracy, validity, and appropriateness** of the content and any citations generated by the AI tool and correct any errors or inconsistencies.
  - ✓ **Provide a list of sources used to generate content** and citations, including those generated by the AI tool. Double-check citations to ensure they are accurate and properly referenced.
  - ✓ **Be conscious of the potential for plagiarism** where the AI tool may have reproduced substantial text from other sources. Check the original sources to be sure you are not plagiarizing someone else's work.
  - ✓ **Acknowledge the limitations of the AI tool in the proposal preparation**, including the potential for bias, errors, and gaps in knowledge.

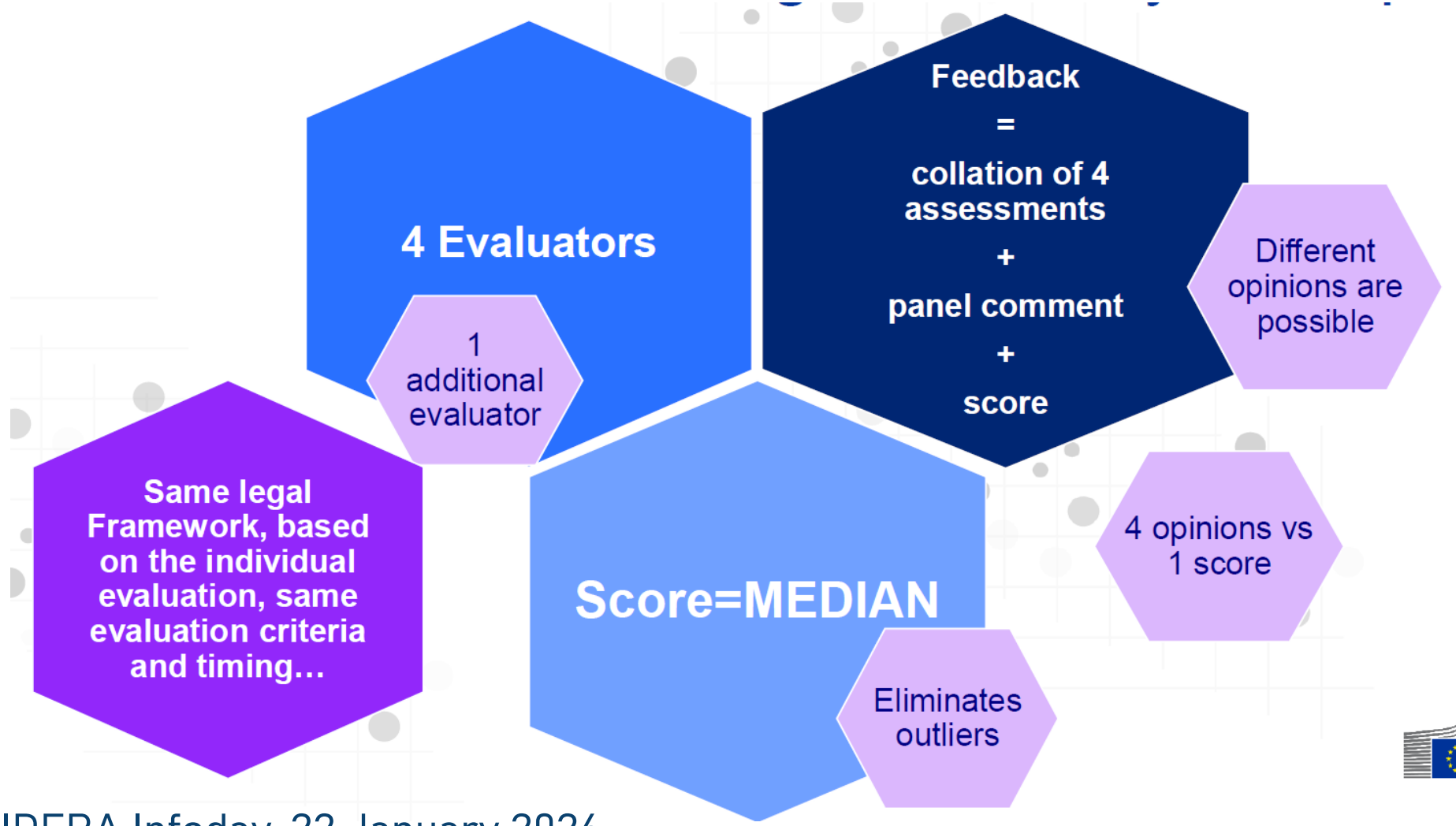
TWINNING 2026

PILOT EVALUATION

PILOT EVALUATION TWINNING 2026
KEY PRINCIPLES I

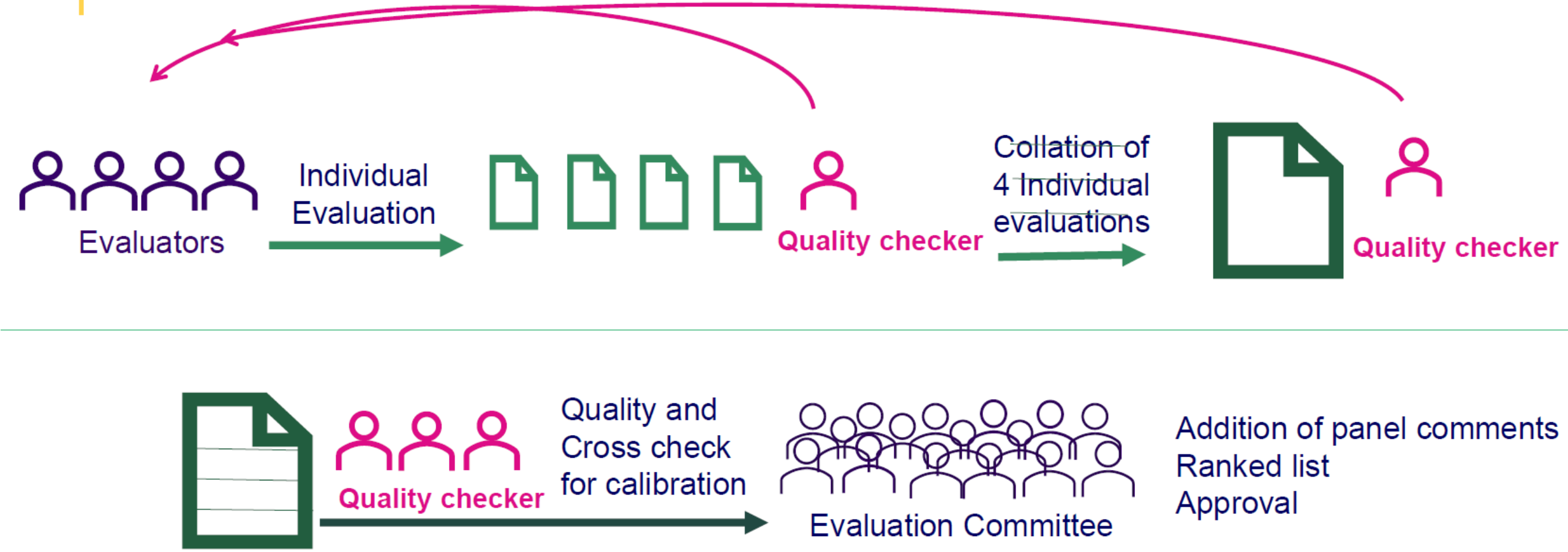
- ✓Proposals first evaluated & scored individually by **at least four expert evaluators**.
- ✓The **score for each award criterion** will be **the median of the evaluators' scores**.
- ✓The **overall score** from this individual evaluation phase will be **the sum of the three median scores** from the three award criteria.
- ✓These **individual assessments**/reports of the 4 evaluators will then be **quality checked** and, if necessary, further discussed at the panel review.
- ✓The **Evaluation Summary Report** will comprise **the final score, a collation of the comments from the four individual assessments/ reports**, including **a comment that summarises the assessment by the evaluation committee**."

PILOT EVALUATION TWINNING 2026
KEY PRINCIPLES II



Source: EC WIDERA Infoday, 22 January 2026

PILOT EVALUATION TWINNING 2026 – PROCESS



Source: EC WIDERA Infoday, 22 January 2026

PILOT EVALUATION TWINNING 2026 – SCORE

- The score per criterion will be the median of the individual scores.
- The total scores will be the sum of the medians.

4 IERs

CRIT 1	3	5	4	2	**3,5**
CRIT 2	3,5	2	3	4,5	**3,25**
CRIT 3	2,5	3,5	5	4	**3,75**
Total score					**10,5**

Source: EC WIDERA Infoday, 22 January 2026

EVENTS AND USEFUL INFORMATION

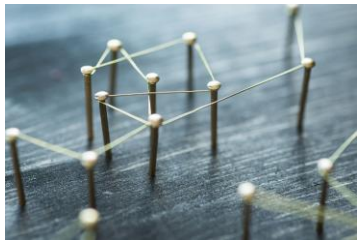
EVENTS

- **EC Infoday on Widening 2026 – 2027**

  When: 22 January 2026 09:30 – 15:30
  Where: Brussels online
  Presentations and recording here

- **CZ-SK workshop on TWINNING 2026 Call**

  When: 5 February 2026 9:30 – 12:00
  Where: online Bratislava-Praha
  Presentations and recording on the HE web



- **International Information Day "Twinning: general conditions, practical information, project presentation"**

  When: 27 February 2026 10:00 – 16:00
  Where: online (Czechia – Poland – Romania – Ukraine)
  Registration form; Agenda

Preliminary timetable of Widening instruments events organised by TC Prague

✓ September/October 2026	Excellence Hubs
✓ April/May 2027	ERA Chairs, ERA Research Managers
✓ June 2027	EIC Pre-accelerator Widening

USEFUL INFORMATION

- CORDIS
- EC standard briefing for evaluators (1/12/2025)
- REA recommendations for quality proposal preparation (9/2/2023)
- **Communication, exploitation, dissemination:**

PROPOSAL PRE-SCREENING GUIDE

Deadline for pre-screening via portal wideraexperts.eu

When: 8 March 2026
User Guide here

Deadline for pre-screening via Czech NCP

When: 26 March 2026 (but ideally 19 March)

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Describe the current status quo in your institution – a SWOT analysis is the basis of a good proposal.**
- **Be self-critical and concentrate on the weaknesses & threats = the main reason why you prepare the proposal.**
- Do not forget to take them fully into account in the Work plan/WPs, tasks …
- Objectives must correspond to the text of the call & the introduction of the WP, the main objective & specific objectives must be well described.
- Text: clear & concise, use simple short sentences & short paragraphs, avoid buzzwords & unnecessary words, do not repeat passages, limit the use of abbreviations – help the evaluators to orientate easily in the text.
- **Choose catchy acronym and title, and pay attention to the formulation of the abstract.**
- Describe the linkages with national and regional RIS3 and other strategies. Refer to EU or global strategies.
- Updated website of the institution (at least basic English version necessary, funded European/international R&I projects easily searchable).
- Stress the added value of the project to your region, country, EU and even the world.
- Communication and dissemination: provide detailed info on activities targeting different stakeholder groups, organise a press conference (WP C&D) as a side event to the project kick off meeting (WP Management).
- **DO NOT CHANGE THE STRUCTURE OF THE TEMPLATE and use the terminology of the call.**
- Always **have the proposal read by someone outside the consortium** (colleagues, NCPs…).

QUESTIONS? DON´T HESITATE TO CONTACT ME!

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