Europe-USA Call strengthening transnational research in the Molecular Plant Sciences

3³d ERA-CAPS Call for Proposals (2016)

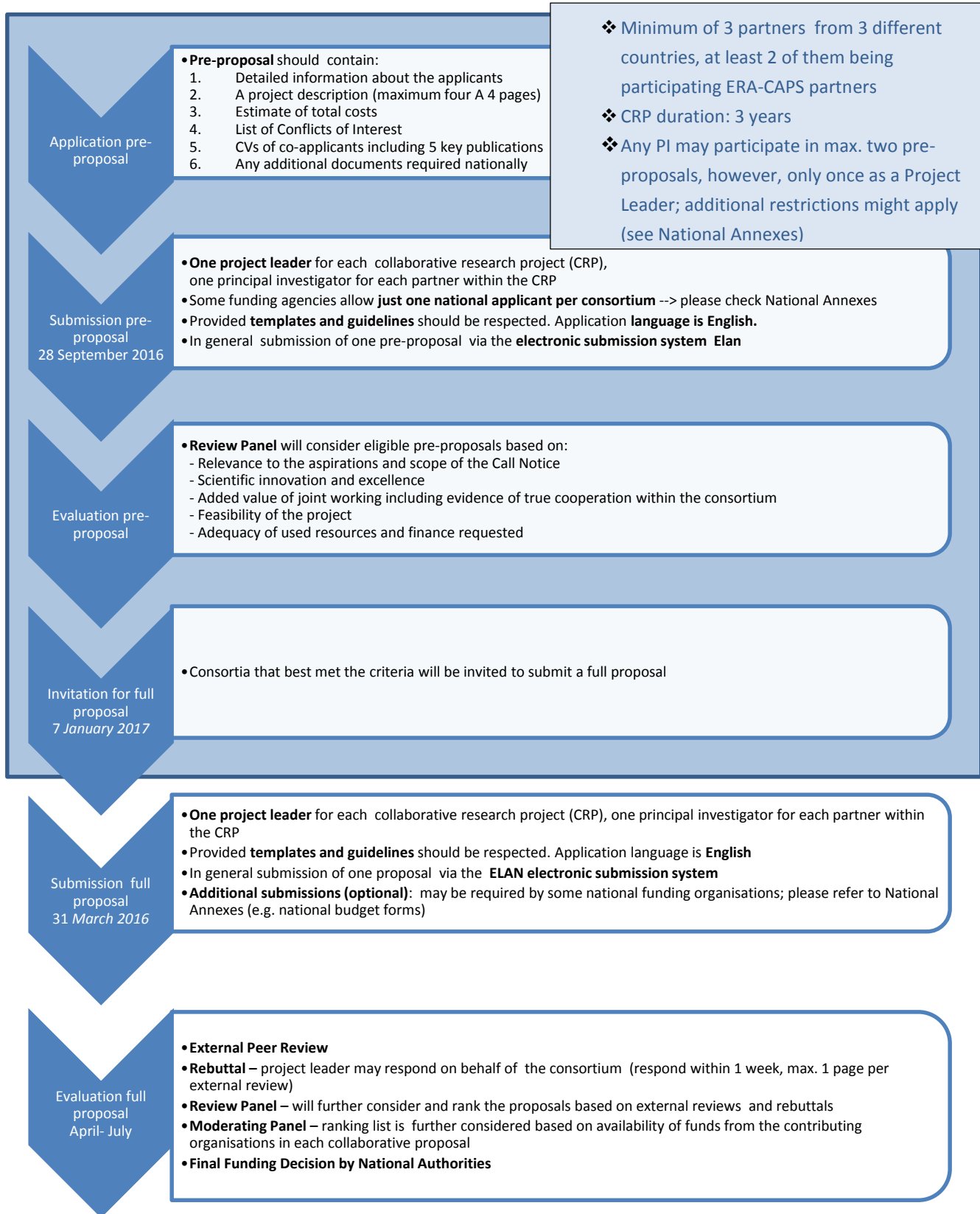# Guidelines for Application Pre-proposals

June 2016

1. Introduction

These guidelines briefly explain how to apply for an ERA-CAPS grant. There is a two stage procedure for joint applications and accordingly, the proposal evaluation and selection will also follow a two stage procedure.

At the first stage eligible **pre-proposals** will be subject to selection by a Review Panel based on the criteria that are published in the Call Notice. Selected consortia will be invited back for full proposal.

At the second stage the **full proposals** will be subject to external peer review and the project leader will have the opportunity to comment on the external expert opinions (rebuttal step). A Review Panel will rank the proposals based on the peer review assessment. This ranked list will then be further considered by a Moderating Panel (comprising funding agency representatives) taking into account budgetary issues, leading to the final ranking list. This list will be forwarded to the national funding bodies, which will make the final funding decisions regarding their national applicants.

Proposals to both the ERA-CAPS main call and ERA-CAPS Sub-Call on data challenges in plant sciences will follow the same application procedure and the same peer review procedure.

The course of the application and evaluation procedure of the third ERA-CAPS call **"Europe-USA Call strengthening transnational research in the Molecular Plant Sciences"** and its timeline is illustrated in Figure 1.

Application pre-proposal

- **Pre-proposal** should contain:
  1. Detailed information about the applicants
  2. A project description (maximum four A 4 pages)
  3. Estimate of total costs
  4. List of Conflicts of Interest
  5. CVs of co-applicants including 5 key publications
  6. Any additional documents required nationally

- ❖ Minimum of 3 partners from 3 different countries, at least 2 of them being participating ERA-CAPS partners
- ❖ CRP duration: 3 years
- ❖ Any PI may participate in max. two pre-proposals, however, only once as a Project Leader; additional restrictions might apply (see National Annexes)

Submission pre-proposal 28 September 2016

- **One project leader** for each collaborative research project (CRP), one principal investigator for each partner within the CRP
- Some funding agencies allow **just one national applicant per consortium** --> please check National Annexes
- Provided **templates and guidelines** should be respected. Application **language is English.**
- In general submission of one pre-proposal via the **electronic submission system Elan**

Evaluation pre-proposal

- **Review Panel** will consider eligible pre-proposals based on:
  - Relevance to the aspirations and scope of the Call Notice
  - Scientific innovation and excellence
  - Added value of joint working including evidence of true cooperation within the consortium
  - Feasibility of the project
  - Adequacy of used resources and finance requested

Invitation for full proposal 7 January 2017

- Consortia that best met the criteria will be invited to submit a full proposal

Submission full proposal 31 March 2016

- **One project leader** for each collaborative research project (CRP), one principal investigator for each partner within the CRP
- Provided **templates and guidelines** should be respected. Application language is **English**
- In general submission of one proposal via the **ELAN electronic submission system**
- **Additional submissions (optional)**: may be required by some national funding organisations; please refer to National Annexes (e.g. national budget forms)

Evaluation full proposal April- July

- **External Peer Review**
- **Rebuttal** – project leader may respond on behalf of the consortium (respond within 1 week, max. 1 page per external review)
- **Review Panel** – will further consider and rank the proposals based on external reviews and rebuttals
- **Moderating Panel** – ranking list is further considered based on availability of funds from the contributing organisations in each collaborative proposal
- **Final Funding Decision by National Authorities**

Grant award letters (early 2018)

Figure 1: General workflow application- and evaluation-procedure of third ERA-CAPS call for both the main Call and the Data Challenges Sub-Call

For detailed guidance about the procedure, eligibility and evaluation criteria of this third ERA-CAPS call, applicants should refer to the corresponding Call Notice and National Annexes provided on the ERA-CAPS website: http://www.eracaps.org/era-caps-calls/era-caps-third-call.

All call procedures will be administered by the **Call Secretariat**, under strict confidentiality. Please contact the Secretariat with any questions regarding the organisation or administration of this call.

ERA-CAPS Call Secretariat:

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2. Pre-Proposal design and submission

General issues:

- Applicants should take note of individual regulations mentioned in the ***National Annexes***, and should contact their National Call Coordinator for any queries related to these Annexes.

- Applicants should strictly follow the detailed instructions available in these *'Guidelines for Application'.* All proposals should be submitted to the ERA-CAPS Call secretariat through the electronic submission system Elan.

- Templates for the Pre-proposal Application form, CV, Conflict of Interest list can be downloaded from the ERA-CAPS website (Third Call 2016).

- After successful submission the main applicant will receive a confirmation of receipt. In case your application will be declared ineligible you will receive feedback from respectively the Call Secretariat/National Call Coordinator.

- All applications must be written in English.

- A project leader (applicant 1) should be identified for each collaborative research project, who is the primary contact person for the consortium. In addition, a principal investigator (PI) should be designated from each of the other collaborative institutions (named 'partner' in the *Applicant Form*) of the CRP (applicants 2, 3 etc.).

- **Incomplete pre-proposals as well as applications submitted by mail, fax, CD-ROM or e-mail will not be processed**.

- **In this respect, please note that additional documents may be required by some funding agencies. Please refer to the national annexes for details.**

Submission procedure:

The **pre-proposal** must be submitted to the electronic proposal submission system **ELAN** at:

http://elan.dfg.de

For guidance how to use Elan, please refer to the **ELAN Manual for electronic submission of ERA-CAPS proposals** provided at http://www.eracaps.org/era-caps-calls/era-caps-third-call. Each consortium is requested to fill out an **electronically generated fact sheet** (**Electronic Proposal Form**). There is a partial redundancy with the **application form** (to be uploaded in PDF format) in order to enable the Call Secretariat to quickly process the applications for eligibility check and evaluation. The proposal documents must be provided as explained in the guidance below.

In order to submit a proposal to the ELAN system, a simple and short **registration** is required to get an ELAN account (does not apply to applicants who are already registered in ELAN!). To get to the ELAN submission system, please follow the link: https://elan.dfg.de/dana-na/auth/url_2/welcome.cgi

It is strongly recommended that applicants begin entering their details into the system well in advance of the call deadline. You will be able to save a draft version of your entry and continuously revise it before submission.

The closing date for submission of pre-proposals is Wednesday, 28 September, 2016 – 12:00 CET.

3. Guidance for the Application Form and enclosures

The *Application Form* is the template containing the main part of the scientific proposal. When writing the **pre-proposal,** please follow the guidelines outlined for each item/ section in the *Application Form* template.

The **Pre-proposal** should address the following five items (1 – 3 covered by the *Application Form*):

1. <u>**Detailed information about all applicants**</u> .
The above-mentioned on-line sheet contains all particulars of the applicants. These should match the information given on the application form. A project leader (applicant 1) should be identified for each collaborative proposal (primary contact person for consortium). In addition, a principal investigator should be designated from each of the other collaborative institutions (applicant 2 etc.).

2. <u>**A project description**</u> (maximum **four A 4 pages**)
with margins of minimal 2.5 cm with minimum font size of Times New Roman 11 point or equivalent, with a line spacing of 1.5.)

This should be a short description of the scientific ideas and research hypothesis of the joint project including the duration of the project, an overview of the work programme, shared know-how and

distribution of work during the course of the project. The research plan should briefly describe the following items:

- **objectives of the project**; *describe the scientific objectives of the project and show how these objectives aim at significant advance in the established state-of-the-art.*

- **links to the research themes of the programme**; *demonstrate that the proposal is in compliance with the thematic scope of the call. In case 'other topics' are addressed explain why they are important in view of the strategic ambition of this call*

- **main research methods employed**; *outline the proposed methods and explain why they are preferred in view of the objectives.*

- **significance and applicability of the research results**; *explain the relevance and urgency of the research programme proposed, in terms of concrete applications (scientific and technological) and in terms of economic and societal impact.*

- **added value of the collaboration**; *demonstrate why the project will increase synergy between teams around Europe and more globally, and enhance quality and competitiveness of plant research compared to nationally funded projects*

3. Estimate of total costs

An estimate of total project costs (in €) should be given per partner including the number of full time equivalents involved in the project, the total labour costs requested from ERA-CAPS, total material costs requested from ERA-CAPS .

This table should provide evidence that the requested means are balanced and justified when compared to the proposed work programme.

4. CVs of the applicants/co-applicants (please use available template)

A CV of each (co)applicant (one page per person) is required. This should include full contact details, current position, research interests, expertise and the five most relevant publications. Please merge into one PDF.

5. List of people with whom applicants/co-applicants have a Conflict of Interest according to the ERA-CAPS Code of Conduct on CoIs. (please use available template without changing the formatting)

The Call Secretariat would like to anticipate on the referees that need to be recruited, in case your application will be selected for full proposal. To avoid conflicts of interest when selecting the referees, you are requested to upload an up-to-date list for each PI and Co-PI, naming all researchers with whom you have closely collaborated within the last four years (in general collaborations leading to joint publications, be it published, submitted and/or planned ones). In order to cover any updates, you will be asked to resend this list at the full proposal submission stage if invited.

Suggestions for referees that you would prefer not to be used for reviewing your proposal can be listed in the above-mentioned document as well. Please list names of referees that should be avoided for the assessment of your proposal and give a brief justification.

Please note that none of this information will be forwarded to external reviewers or panel members.

6. **Additional documents may be required by some funding agencies. Please refer to the national annexes for details.**

Additional documents should be uploaded separately from the pre-proposal form in PDF format.

When uploading the documents please use the following document names:
'Pre-proposal_<your CRP Acronym>_ERA-CAPS.PDF'
'CV_<your CRP Acronym>_ERA-CAPS.PDF'
'COI_<your CRP Acronym>_ERA-CAPS.PDF'