



Guidelines for reviewers

AgreenSkills+

v. August 2016



Foreword

Dear reviewer,

You have been invited to review applications received under the current call of the AgreeSkills+ programme.

This guide provides you with information about the rationale and expectations of this programme as well as the main components of its evaluation process, notably the evaluation grid to fill in and the criteria to consider when you will draft your evaluation report(s).

More comprehensive information about the programme is provided on the AgreeSkills website (www.agreenskills.eu) along with a detailed “Guide for applicants” available for consultation.

The AgreeSkills Management team thanks you in advance for your interest and your involvement in this reviewing exercise, which is an essential step in AgreeSkills+ evaluation process.

Your contribution and input will be very much appreciated as they will greatly contribute to the selection of the mobility research projects of the most talented and promising researchers.

The AgreeSkills Management team



The AgreeSkills+ programme is coordinated by INRA, the French National Institute for Agricultural Research, with the collaboration of Agreenium-IAVFF. The programme is co-funded by the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration (Contract number FP7-609398). AgreeSkills+ is compliant with the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, the European Charter for Researchers, as well as the ethical procedures and regulations of the European Commission. This includes adherence to the recommendations of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies opinion 24, related to agricultural research and development, and the Guidance Note Related to Ethics and Food-Related Research.

Content

1 General information about AgreeSkills+ 4

2 What will you be evaluating and how to proceed? The Evaluation grid..... 5

3 What will you receive and what will you need to send back? 8

4 AgreeSkills+ contact information 9

ANNEX I - The Evaluation Grid..... 10

ANNEX II - Confidentiality, non-disclosure and conflict of interest agreement..... 12

1 General information about AgreenSkills+

AgreenSkills+ is an international mobility postdoc programme co-funded by the EU, coordinated by INRA (the French National Institute for Agricultural), in collaboration with Agreenium-IAVFF (a consortium comprising the main French agricultural and veterinary research and higher education organizations). It is designed to increase the research potential and career prospective of researchers to better respond to the current and future challenges in the fields of life, food and environmental sciences. AgreenSkills+, like its predecessor AgreenSkills, is open to inventive, promising and experienced young and independent researchers holding **a PhD, with 0 to 10 years' postdoctoral research experience**.

AgreenSkills+ offers two types of post-doc fellowships: **Incoming fellowships** for researchers coming from all countries who apply to undertake a research project in a laboratory of one of Agreenium's members in France. **Outgoing fellowships** for researchers who are employed by an Agreenium's member and wish to work in a university or research centre outside France.

Without discrimination in terms of nationality, gender, career breaks or disciplinary fields, AgreenSkills+ welcomes young experienced researchers who freely propose their topics, construct their basic or targeted research projects and identify the laboratories they wish to work in. The main aim of the programme is **to support the best projects of talented young and experienced researchers** from around the world and to provide them with excellent condition for research as well as training opportunities.

The selection of AgreenSkills+ fellows is conducted through a continuous call for applications with **two selection rounds per year** in April and October/November.

Each application is evaluated by reviewers before undergoing a final assessment and ranking by the AgreenSkills Scientific Committee.

2 What will you be evaluating and how to proceed? The Evaluation grid

AgreenSkills processes define two types of post doc: (i) the young experienced researchers having less than 7 years postdoctoral research experience (ii) the independent researchers, having between 7 and 10 years' postdoctoral research experience.

An evaluation grid has been established to assess the applications submitted to AgreenSkills+ programme, with specific criteria ratings for each category (young vs independent).

This "Evaluation grid" is structured in **3 sections**, following the main components of the research project proposal document:

1. **Applicant's Record**
2. **Research Project Proposal**
3. **Hosting Environment.**

When assessing an application, a reviewer should keep in mind that AgreenSkills+ intends to reward:

- The most talented and promising young and independent researchers, in each category respectively, evaluated on the basis of their academic record and research experience;
- Research projects which are scientifically rigorous and in line with an adding value to the applicant's career path;
- Mobility proposals that will be carried out in the most appropriate hosting environment in terms of expertise and facilities.

Please note that:

- Each application will be evaluated by at least three reviewers;
- Your marks and comments will be kept anonymous and will not be given to the candidate. They will be sent to the members of the AgreenSkills Scientific Committee for global analysis, final assessment and ranking of the applications.

Recommendations to complete the evaluation grid (Annex I)¹

Reviewers are requested to bear in mind the following recommendations when it comes to completing the evaluation grid:

- The same evaluation criteria apply to incoming and outgoing fellowships;
- Being a highly-selective programme, assessments must be objective and as discriminating as possible;
- Please do not hesitate to use **the entire range of ratings** from 0 to the maximum suggested for each item in the grid.

¹ The "Evaluation Grid" is available online on the website: www.agreenskills.eu under the "Documents" section

- **Minimum thresholds** apply to each section. Candidates will be eliminated when the mean of the three reviewers falls below the threshold. Please note that thresholds in each section are not limits: the total score of a section can go below the stated threshold if you believe it is necessary and appropriate.
- Some issues referred in the grid do not need a mark but it is important to check if these have been respected by the applicant (indicate this with a 'Yes' or 'No' answer). This is especially relevant to questions related to ethical issues and research integrity, which are raised in the Research Project Proposal and, in more detail, in the form entitled, 'Ethical Issues Grid and Considerations'. These questions are intended to encourage the applicant to reflect on ethical matters that may arise in his/her research. *These elements do not require to be formally assessed as they will be overseen by the AgreenSkills Ethics Commission.*
- In addition to the marks, you are invited to elaborate detailed **comments for each section and overall conclusions** for each application. These comments and conclusion are mandatory to validate the evaluation.
- Reviewers shall be free to attach any additional document they may wish to add to complete their reviewing report.

1. 'Candidate's record' section

- In this section, not only should the scientific production and skills of the researchers be evaluated (thanks to different criteria regarding mentoring, animation, innovation, success in grant writing, etc.), but also whether their personal career path corresponds to an interesting and original trajectory where specific choices, varied experience and eventual breaks are attentively reviewed.
- When giving your marks and comments for this section, you should take into account the candidate's experience of research since his/her PhD. The number of years of postdoctoral research experience of the candidate is reported in the grid (line 7, column 3).
- The record should be assessed taking into consideration the special constraints brought by each scientific field. The reviews need to adapt and assess how the capacity of being productive varies according to different topics.

2. 'Research project proposal' section

- In this section the quality of the research project is to be evaluated as a whole, assessing intrinsic scientific value and the relevance of the proposal in relation to the researcher's skills and career path.
- It is important that the mobility project provides added value to the researcher's career. Please indicate and comment in which forms (e.g. through added skills, improved experience, collaboration with particularly qualified scientists etc.) the proposed mobility research project would add value to the researcher's career. The added value of the mobility project is

a particularly significant component of the evaluation for an independent researcher and should therefore be clearly demonstrated by the candidate.

- The wide scope of topics covered by the programme may lead to proposals raising ethical issues. Please indicate if the candidate has taken them into account and has justified the eventual issues raised. As mentioned above, this section does not receive a mark and will also be viewed by the Ethics Commission.

3. 'Hosting Environment' section

- In this section, you will assess the scientific support and access to resources provided by the hosting institution to support the candidate's project. In addition, the adequacy and quality of the hosting environment with regard to the expertise field and facilities required to carry out the research project must be carefully assessed.
- Child care and/or other special needs may be addressed under 'material conditions' and evaluated, if relevant.
- The commitment of the hosting institution for a policy of equal treatment for both permanent and non-permanent researchers is systematically made by a statement at the end of the research project proposal document, just before the final signature.

Confidentiality and conflict of interest (Annex II)

Reviewers understand that being involved in the reviewing exercise implies respect of rules on confidentiality and conflict of interest.

Consequently, you will be asked to sign a '*Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest*' statement when accepting the task of reviewing and when returning us your expertise, by signing the declaration at the bottom of each evaluation grid.

3 What will you receive and what will you need to send back?

The AgreeSkills Programme coordinators will invite you – via email – to serve as reviewer and will give you the title and abstract of one or more applications. Please confirm by email as soon as possible whether you agree to evaluate the proposal(s). If so, you will receive from the coordinators the following documents:

- The candidate's mobility research project proposal;
- His/her Curriculum Vitae;
- The interview report, co-signed by the candidate and the representative in the hosting institution;
- The signed Ethical issues table and considerations form (a commitment to conform to the indications of the European Group on Ethics and Science and New Technologies of the European Commission and the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity);
- Eventual additional documents and reference letters, if any.

In addition, you will receive an evaluation report template specific for each candidate (Annexe 1), which includes:

- The personal evaluation grid, to be completed with your marks and comments;
- The non-disclosure agreement and the conflict of interest, to be completed and signed.

Each personal evaluation grid will be sent in an Excel format, with pre-registered information about the candidate (name, type of application, category of the candidate Young vs Independent, number of years of research experience since PhD, title of the research project...) and calculation cells for the total scoring. **Please take care to fill in the right column: column 3 for Young experienced researcher; column 4 for Independent researcher.**

You will be informed by email about the deadlines to complete the reviewing task. In general we aim at completing the reviewing process within 3 weeks.

Please note that AgreeSkills+ reviewers receive a stipend to compensate their work. The Programme coordinators will inform you about the amount and the instructions on how to proceed with the payment of the evaluation, as well as what information you will be required to provide for the payment.

4 AgreenSkills+ contact information

For further details regarding all aspects of the programme, please consult our website: www.agreenskills.eu.

If you cannot find the information you are looking for, you may also contact the AgreenSkills management team.

AgreenSkills+ management team

Coordinators:

- Gilles Aumont, gilles.aumont@inra.fr
- Odile Vilotte, odile.vilotte@inra.fr

Other members of the team:

- Carmen Avellaner, European Programme Manager, carmen.avellaner@inra.fr
- Ioana Stanciu, Executive Manager, ioana.stanciu@inra.fr
- Jean-Pierre Tregan, Administrative Assistant, jean-pierre.tregan@inra.fr

Main address & telephone

INRA - AgreenSkills+ programme
147 rue de l'Université F - 75338 Paris cedex 07 - France
Tel.: +33 (0)1.42.75.90.00

ANNEX I - The Evaluation Grid

The "Evaluation Grid" is available online in .xlsx format on www.agreenskills.eu under Documents section

Criteria	Indicators	Young	Independent
A	Candidate's record (Minimum 0 Maximum 40 points – minimum threshold: 25 points)	0 < 7 years after PhD	7 ≤ years after PhD ≤ 10
Academic record	Publications (corresponding, first, or last author) or patent filings Presentations as invited speakers Book or book chapter author Participation in open calls for proposals as contributor or leader Graduate teaching as lecturer or training coordinator Awards and prizes if any	Max. 30	Max. 25
Collaboration and networking	Participation in collaborative projects (if possible at leading position – funded by competitive programmes) Partnerships or experience with industry University or post-graduate programme leader Membership of professional bodies and committees	Max. 5	Max. 8
Research management, technology transfer, communication	Team management Technological platform management Consultancy for the public or private sector Other experiences and skills Dissemination/communication	Max. 5	Max. 7
Comments	<i>Mandatory</i>		
B	Research project proposal (Minimum 0 Maximum 30 points – minimum threshold: 20 points)	0 < 7 years after PhD	7 ≤ years after PhD ≤ 10
Science	Originality of the proposed scientific project (contribution to advancing the current state-of-art in the field concerned)	Max. 10	Max. 8
Impact	Innovation potential Environmental and/or agricultural and/or nutritional impact Technological impact Economic impact Societal impact, short, medium and long term	Max. 5	Max. 5
Scientific and technological excellence	Approach Results Project structure Mobilisation of resources Timing	Max. 5	Max. 4
Competences and knowledge brought	Relevance for the ERA in the field of Agronomy Added value for French Agronomic community	Max. 5	Max. 5
Added value	Expected added value of the mobility project for the candidate's career and project development	Max. 5	Max. 8
Ethics	Demonstration of awareness about ethical issues Reasonable efforts made to address ethical rules framework	<i>Mandatory Yes or No</i>	<i>Mandatory Yes or No</i>
Comments	<i>Mandatory</i>		

C	Hosting Environment	
	(Minimum 0 Maximum 30 points) – minimum threshold: 20 points	
Scientific context and its relevance for the research project	Mentor's profile (publications) Mentor's commitment Short description of the receiving laboratory: scientific record, staff, material resources including equipment and infrastructures, etc.	Max. 8
Access to resources	Access to the technical staff Access to consumables and equipment Access to technological platforms Access to financial resources Participation in international conferences	Max. 8
Training/learning	Complementary scientific and technical skills (summer schools, researcher schools, etc.) Science-related skills: scientific management, project setup, technical writing, grant writing, innovation, entrepreneurship, etc. Opportunities for informal learning	Max. 7
Material conditions	Catering, transport, housing Health insurance, social benefits Child care Special needs (reduced mobility, visibility...)	Max. 7
Ethical issues	Compliance with the recommendations of the EU Group of Ethics recommendations and the local ethical committee	<i>Mandatory, Yes or No</i>
Equality	Equal treatment towards permanent and non-permanent researchers	<i>Mandatory, Yes or No</i>
Partnership	Opportunity of new partnership for the receiving laboratory	<i>Mandatory, Yes or No</i>
Comments	<i>Mandatory</i>	
Conclusions		
(Minimum 0 Maximum 100 points) – minimum threshold: 65 points		
Conclusions and general comments	<i>Mandatory</i>	

NOTE: Please note during the evaluation exercise that the maximum duration for an AgreeSkills+ fellowship should not exceed the end of the AgreeSkills+ programme, which is the 4th of May 2019.

ANNEX II - Confidentiality, non-disclosure and conflict of interest agreement

In the framework of the **AgreenSkills+** programme coordinated by INRA

I, the undersigned,.....living at.....that I understand that being involved as expert in the evaluation exercise within the framework of **AgreenSkills+** programme implies the use of confidential scientific, technical, industrial or commercial information (hereafter “confidential information”) related to the research project(s) I am reviewing that will be communicated to me through written, oral form or any other support.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I agree and respect to the disclosure of certain proprietary and confidential information and specifically:

- To only use the confidential information for the reviewing exercise;
- To neither reproduce nor disclose – in any form – all or part of the confidential information;
- To take all preventative measures to prevent the disclosure of the confidential information to a third party;
- Not to file a patent application/request or any other title of intellectual property based on confidential information;
- To destroy the confidential information, and any and all reproduction thereof, upon the completion and submission of the review(s).

However, these provisions of confidentiality will not apply to the information:

- That was lawfully in my possession prior to signing this agreement;
- That has come into the public domain other than by a breach of this agreement;
- That is required by law to be disclosed.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

I also declare and confirm:

- That I do not have any important collaboration or I am not in direct competition with the applicant to review;
- That I do not take any advantage from my current position in order to benefit myself, my relatives and colleagues, my laboratory or my organization;
- That I do not contact, in any case, the applicant(s) in the framework of my assessment;
- That I will evaluate the project(s) with equity and objectivity, according to the criteria stipulated in the evaluation grid (Annex I).

I, the undersigned, commit myself to take all necessary measures to respect the above mentioned obligations.

Date and Signature:

END OF DOCUMENT

