



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

2024 JOINT TRANSNATIONAL CALL
“WATER FOR CIRCULAR ECONOMY”

12 September 2024

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Abbreviations

CS	Call Secretariat
CSC	Call Steering Committee
EC	European Commission
ECR	Early Career Researcher
EP	Evaluation Panel
FPO	Funding Partner Organisation
HE	Horizon Europe
JTC	Joint Transnational Call
MGA	Model Grant Agreement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCP	National Contact Point
PI	Principal Investigator
SCC	Standard Contractual Clauses
Water4All	European Partnership Water Security for the Planet

Memorandum of Understanding

for the 2024 Joint Transnational Call of the Water4All partnership, including its modality of Early Career Researchers, if applicable, between the Funding Partner Organisations listed in Section 4, hereafter individually and jointly referred to as “Funding Partner Organisation(s), or FPO(s)”.

1. Background

The Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call (JTC), which is the annual Water4All co-funded call for funding of excellent research and innovation proposals, includes the modality of Early Career Researchers (ECR), in which the FPOs may opt to participate.

The ECR modality of the JTC is aimed at Transnational Projects coordinated by early career researchers. The thematic framework, the eligibility and the evaluation process, and the ranking and the selection process are the same for the JTC and for the ECR except for the general eligibility criteria for the Coordinator, as set out in the Call Announcement. Effectively, the JTC and the ECR modality will be implemented as a single unique joint call for proposals, subject to the unique budget. Not all Funding Partner Organisations (FPOs) supporting the JTC are supporting the ECR modality (see Table 1 in Section 4). The ECR modality applies only to coordinator, other consortium participants do not have to be early career researchers.

The JTC and the ECR modality, if applicable, are thus subject of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

2. General objective

This MoU is a mutual statement of commitment among the FPOs’ of the 2024 JTC of the Water4All partnership including its modality of the ECR, if applicable.

The other items detailed in this MoU are not intended to be, and will not constitute in any way, a binding or legal agreement, or impose any legal obligation or duty on either FPO.

FPOs accept to make every reasonable effort to fulfil the intentions herein within their budget constraints. The purpose of this MoU is to establish a common understanding of the application, management, implementation, evaluation and funding procedures for the 2024 JTC proposals within the context of the Water4All partnership, including the ECR modality if applicable, to specify the organisation of the work between the FPOs. The rights and obligations of the FPOs concerning liability, access rights and dispute resolution and financial provisions are established in the Water4All Consortium Agreement.

In the event of any conflict between this MoU and the Water4All Consortium Agreement, the Water4All Consortium Agreement will take precedence over the provisions of this MoU.

3. Mutual commitments of the participants

Each FPO decides to ensure the application of this MoU and promote the success of the collaboration.

Under this MoU the FPOs expressly accept to negotiate with perfect good faith the terms of an agreement setting forth the terms and conditions of their collaboration. The FPOs note, however, that this MoU will in no case constitute a firm and irrevocable commitment by the FPOs to enter into an agreement.

Each FPO further decides to refrain from any activity that could be harmful to the project throughout the term of the MoU.

4. Funding model

The FPOs decide on launching the 2024 JTC of the Water4All partnership, including the ECR modality if applicable, using a Mixed Mode of virtual and real common pot, meaning every participating FPO will fund partners in selected Transnational Projects from within its country / region; the additional co-funding from the European Commission (EC) for eligible FPOs - EC Top-up - will be used partially to fill in the gaps in national/regional funds (real common pot) and partially as a contribution to each FPO in proportion to its actual commitment (virtual common pot), details are provided in Section 6. The FPOs not eligible for EC Top-

up agree on participating in the Water4All 2024 JTC, including the ECR modality if applicable, using only their national financial contribution to the call.

The following FPOs will participate financially in the Water4All 2024 JTC, including the ECR modality if applicable, with the tentative committed budget presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: FUNDING PARTNER ORGANISATION PARTICIPATING IN THE JTC AND THE ECR MODALITY IF APPLICABLE

No.	Country	Funding Partner Organisation	Short name	JTC (yes/no)	ECR (yes/no)	Total national budget for JTC and ERC in €
1	Austria	Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung	FWF	yes	no	800.000,00
2	Belgium	Flanders foreign investment office	FIO/ VLAIO	yes	no	800.000,00
3	Belgium	Fonds Voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek-Vlaanderen	FWO	yes	yes	700.000,00
4	Belgium	Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique	F.R.S.-FNRS	yes	yes	300.000,00
5	Brazil	Brazilian National Council of State Funding Agencies	CONFAP	yes	yes	1.610.000,00
6	Brazil	Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development	CNPq	yes	yes	100.000,00
7	Czechia	Technology Agency of the Czech Republic	TA CR	yes	no	300.000,00
8	Denmark	Innovation Fund Denmark	IFD	yes	no	1.300.000,00
9	Estonia	Sihtasutus Eesti Teadusagentuur	ETAg	yes	no	300.000,00
10	Finland	Suomen Akatemia	AKA	yes	yes	850.000,00
11	Finland	Ministry of the Environment	YM	yes	yes	150.000,00
12	France	Agence Nationale de la Recherche	ANR	yes	yes	1.700.000,00
13	Germany	Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung	BMBF	yes	yes	2.000.000,00
14	Greece	General Secretariat of Research & Innovation	GSRI	yes	no	1.000.000,00
15	Hungary	Nemzeti Kutatási, Fejlesztési és Innovációs Hivatal	NKFIH	yes	no	330.000,00
16	Ireland	Environmental Protection Agency of Ireland	EPA	yes	yes	700.000,00
17	Israel	Ministry of Energy	MoE	yes	no	tbc
18	Italy	Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca	MUR	yes	yes	2.000.000,00
19	Latvia	Latvijas Zinātnes padome	LZP	yes	yes	570.000,00
20	Lithuania	Lietuvos mokslo taryba	LMT	yes	yes	300.000,00
21	Luxembourg	Luxembourg National Research Fund	FNR	yes	no	350.000,00
22	Malta	Ministry for Environment, Energy and Regeneration of the Grand Harbour	MEER	yes	no	300.000,00
23	Moldova	National Agency for Research and Development	NARD	yes	yes	200.000,00
24	Netherlands	Dutch Research Council	NWO	yes	no	1.500.000,00
25	Poland	Narodowe Centrum Badań i Rozwoju	NCBR	yes	no	1.500.000,00
26	Portugal	Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia	FCT	yes	tbc	500.000,00
27	Romania	The Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding	UEFISCDI	yes	no	1.000.000,00
28	Slovak Republic	Slovak Academy of Sciences	SAS	yes	no	240.000,00
29	South Africa	Department of Science and Innovation	DSI	yes	yes	390.000,00
30	Spain	Agencia Estatal de Investigación	AEI	yes	yes	1.500.000,00
31	Spain	Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology	CDTI	yes	no	tbc
32	Sweden	The Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning	FORMAS	yes	yes	1.800.000,00
33	Switzerland	Swiss National Science Foundation	SNSF	yes	no	1.500.000,00

34	Tunisia	The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	MHESR	yes	no	400.000,00
35	Turkey	Türkiye Bilimsel Ve Teknolojik Arastirma Kurumu	TUBITAK	yes	no	500.000,00
36	United Kingdom	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council	EPSRC UKRI	yes	tbc	tbc
Estimated EU contribution (in Euro)						6.951.960,00
Total national commitment (in Euro)						26.348.000,00
Total contribution (in Euro)						33.299.960,00
EU Member States and Associated countries				Third countries and other countries		

5. Review and evaluation procedure

5.1. Definitions and roles in the evaluation

- Associated Countries:** Associated Countries are countries who signed an association agreement with the European Union and its Members. In Horizon Europe, legal entities from Associated Countries can participate under the same conditions as legal entities from the Member States.
 The list of Associated Countries is available here:
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation-horizon-euratom-en.pdf>
- Call Secretariat (CS):** The Call Secretariat, hosted by the Project Management Agency Karlsruhe (KIT-PTKA), Germany, will be in charge to prepare, coordinate and follow-up the joint call processes, both electronically and physically. It will work in cooperation and consultation with the Call Steering Committee (CSC) and provide the CSC with all documents needed for decisions. It is the central contact point for applicants regarding all technical and general issues of the submission.
- Call Steering Committee (CSC):** The Call Steering Committee will be composed of one representative per FPO and will be the decision-making body in the framework of this call.
- Consortium/Consortia:** Transnational group(s) of partners, submitting a collaborative Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) proposal, from at least three (3) different countries involved in the Joint Call, including at least two partners from EU Member States or Associated Countries.
- Consortium Coordinator (CC):** Coordinator of the transnational collaborative RDI proposal. The CC coordinates the submission of the proposal prepared by the partners to the 2024 JTC on the online submission system, represents the Consortium in front of the CSC and the CS and, if funded, is responsible for the internal project management. On the online submission system, the CC will declare if they are applying under the JTC or the ECR modality.
- Early Career Researchers (ECR):** Refers to the modality of Early Career Researchers of the 2024 JTC aimed at project proposals coordinated by early career researchers, who have obtained their PhD less than 10 years ago from the call launch.
- Evaluation Panel (EP):** Panel of internationally recognised scientific, industry and policy experts which will evaluate and rank the pre/full proposals submitted in the 2024 JTC in order of merit. EP members will not submit or participate in proposals within this 2024 JTC and will sign declarations on confidentiality, absence of conflict of interest and code of conduct (Annexes I and II). The members of the EP consist of Evaluators, Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.
 - EP Chairperson:** Leads the Evaluation Panel (EP) meeting, by: ensuring active, all-inclusive and rich participation of all members; managing the collective decision-making by the EP; launching voting procedures if necessary; approving the EP meeting agenda and the minutes, proposed by the CS. Ideally the Chairperson is coming from Countries not represented in CSC.
 - EP Vice-Chairperson:** Takes the duties of the Chairperson if the Chairperson is absent, for example, due to a conflict of interest.
- External experts:** Independent experts appointed for its independent evaluation of the submitted pre and full proposals to the 2024 JTC in case an expertise is missing within the EP. External experts are not members of the EP.

- **Funding Partner Organisation (FPO):** Party that has committed national/regional funds to participate in the 2024 JTC, as well as the ECR modality if applicable, and that commits its national/regional funds by signing this MoU for the implementation of the 2024 JTC and the ECR modality.
- **Independent Observer:** External expert invited as observer to the EP meeting to assess the conformity of the evaluation procedure.
- **National Contact Point (NCP):** Each participating FPO in this 2024 JTC has nominated NCP(s) to provide information on national/regional funding rules and procedures.
- **Principal Investigator (PI):** Researcher/Leader of the research team of a Project Partner in a Transnational Project.
- **Project funding:** The total sum of the funding, which will be granted by the FPO to the project partners. The amount of funding that each project partner can receive depending from the national funding rules.
- **Project Partner:** Independent legal entity participating in the Transnational Project.
- **Transnational Project costs:** The total sum of the project costs which is necessary for the implementation of the foreseen activities.
- **Transnational Project:** A project funded in the frame of the 2024 JTC, including the ECR modality.

5.2. Scope and detail objectives of the Call

For the detailed description of the objective and topics of the Water4All 2024 JTC, including the ECR modality, please see Sections 1 and 2 of the Call Announcement in Annex VI.

5.3. Evaluation Procedures

The provisions of the evaluation procedure apply equally to the proposals submitted in the Water4All 2024 JTC and the ECR modality.

5.3.1. Call Process and Role of the Call Steering Committee

The Call Steering Committee (CSC) is the decision-making body of the Water4All 2024 JTC, including the ECR modality.

The CSC is chaired by the Call Secretariat (CS) supporting the call management.

The CSC is composed by one FPO representative with the mandate of assuming binding decision by voting. Each FPO has one vote unless two or more FPOs manage the same research budget, in this case they share the same voting right. The quorum is reached with two-third (2/3) FPOs represented. CSC will always aim at consensus decisions but, if needed, decisions will be taken by simple majority with casting for Chair in case of equality.

For decisions related to EC funding distribution (in particular decisions about the variation of percentage between real and virtual common pot) a 3/4 majority vote, with respect to the participating FPOs will be adopted.

The call process will be carried out online at the following webpage: <https://ptoutline.eu/app/CircEco-Water4All>

5.3.2. Role and Duties of CS and CSC during the Evaluation

The application process consists of two separate and consecutive steps as described in the Call Announcement (see [Annex VI](#)). The following outlines the tasks of the participating FPOs in the 2024 JTC:

Preliminary step

The CS creates a list of potential members of the Evaluation Panel asking each FPO to nominate at least five (5) evaluators (with confirmation of availability) within the given timeframe.

The final list of EP members will be composed by the CS and accepted by the CSC.

The CS will ensure all efforts at assuring a balanced country representation and gender balance in the evaluation process.

EP members will sign a confidentiality, non-disclosure, and conflict of interest policy agreement and will declare all their potential conflicts of interest with submitted (pre-)proposals, see Annex I.

Step 1

Pre-proposals that are submitted correctly and within the deadline will be checked for eligibility. The CS will check the international eligibility against the general eligibility criteria defined in Section 4 of Call Announcement in Annex VI. Each FPO will carry out the national/regional eligibility check according to its own national/regional eligibility criteria.

The CS will assign all pre-proposals to, as far as possible, three EP members for the scientific assessment, based on two criteria - **'Excellence'** and **'Impact'** as defined in Table 3 of Section 5 of Call Announcement. Each criterion is evaluated on a scale of 0 to 5, as defined in Table 4 of Section 5 of Call Announcement. The threshold for each individual criterion will be three (3).

The CS will produce a ranking list of pre-proposals based on the scores decided by the EP during the EP meeting. The final score will be calculated by reckoning the scores decided by the EP for each criterion and, afterwards, summing up the scores of the two criteria.

The CS will divide the pre-proposals in three (3) groups, according to the ranking list and the availability of funds from FPOs: Group A (highest evaluation scores), Group B (medium evaluation scores) and Group C (low evaluation scores). All pre-proposals in Group A, will be invited to Step 2. In Group B, pre-proposals will be selected and invited to Step 2, taking into account the ranking list, the representativeness of all FPOs and the funding ratio limits. Pre-proposals in Group C will be dismissed for their low classification and unavailability of funding.

The number of proposals invited to Step 2 will be determined considering the following elements:

- The CSC should invite a sufficient number of pre-proposals to step 2 to give them a fair chance of being funded;
- The expected financial pressure for some funding organisations;
- Feasibility of the evaluation process for the Call Secretariat to keep the evaluation process manageable.

If needed, the maximum oversubscription rate will be set by the CSC following the Step 1 evaluation and after bilateral exchanges between the Call secretariat/Pillar B leader and the affected FPO(s) with high oversubscription rate(s). If an FPO eligible for EC funding surpasses the maximum oversubscription rate, the CSC reserves the right to remove the proposals or applicants requesting funding to the aforementioned FPO(s) from the proposals considered to be invited to the Step 2 to reduce the funding pressure. For FPOs not eligible for EC funding, the maximum oversubscription ratio may be of a different value than that for the FPOs eligible for EC funding.

Step 2

Step 2 will be conducted as described in Section 5 of the Call Announcement, see Annex VI.

After the submission deadline for full proposals, the submitted full proposals will be checked by CS to ensure that they meet the formal call criteria and have not changed substantially from the respective pre-proposals. Requests for changes will be assessed and allowed by all the FPOs involved in the proposal. Any changes allowed by each FPO between Step 1 and Step 2 (e.g., Consortia compositions and any other minor changes) will be communicated to CS prior the Step 2 deadline. Full proposals not meeting the formal conditions will be proposed to CSC for rejection without further review.

The CS will check the international eligibility against the General eligibility criteria defined in Section 4 of Call Announcement. Each FPO will carry out the National/Regional eligibility check according to its own national/regional eligibility criteria.

The CS will assign each proposal to **three EP members** with experience in the domain of the relevant proposal. All full proposals meeting the formal criteria will be subject to a scientific evaluation based **on three criteria - 'Excellence', 'Impact' and 'Quality and Efficiency of Implementation'** as defined in Table 3 of Section 5 of Call Announcement. Each criterion is evaluated on a scale of 0 to 5, as defined in Table 4 of Section 5 of Call Announcement.

The threshold for each individual criterion will be three (3). The overall threshold, applying to the sum of the three individual scores, will be ten (10).

The final ranking list will be forwarded to the CSC which will meet to decide on the projects to be recommended for funding by FPOs. For this decision, the CSC will strictly follow the order of the ranking list from the EP until the available EC co-funding is exhausted.

The decision about the Full proposals to be recommended for funding will be taken by the CSC based on the results of the scientific evaluation, the assessment by the EP and the available funding.

The Transnational Projects with the same final scores will be prioritised by the CSC taking into consideration the following principles. The CSC can decide how to use these principles providing that they are used uniformly for all proposals:

- Maximizing the total number of projects funded and thus optimizing the amount of EC financial support to the Water4All call;
- Prioritizing the projects submitted under the ECR modality, whenever applicable;
- Maximizing the number of countries/regions involved into the projects funded;
- Assuring a good balance between different topics of the call;
- Promoting the allocation of the EC financial support pro rata, based on the actual contributions of the FPOs involved in the proposals.

Once the available EC co-funding is exhausted, in case funds remain available for some FPOs supporting the ECR modality, a second step of selection will apply to a short list of proposals submitted under the ECR modality, provided that these projects are of sufficient quality (i.e., above the threshold). For the decision, the CSC will strictly follow the order of the ranking list from the EP for proposals submitted under the ECR modality. The ECR Transnational Projects with the same final scores will be prioritised by the CSC taking into consideration the following principles. The CSC can decide how to use these principles providing that they are used uniformly for all remaining proposals submitted under the ECR modality:

- Maximizing the total number of projects funded and thus optimizing the amount of EC financial support to the Water4All call;
- Maximizing the number of countries/regions involved into the projects funded;
- Assuring a good balance between different topics of the call;
- Promoting the allocation of the EC financial support pro rata, based on the actual contributions of the FPOs involved in the proposals submitted under the ECR modality.

National/regional funders may also decide to fund on their own national commitments (without EC financial support) additional Transnational Projects, subject to the availability of remaining national/regional funds and provided that these projects are of sufficient quality (i.e., above the threshold).

Further, each participating FPO accepts with the signature of this MoU that the EP ranking list for making the final funding recommendations is the reference document for the allocation of the EC financial support (in accordance with Annex 5 of the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement – HE MGA¹) while final funding decisions are made by the FPOs.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/agr-contr/general-mga_horizon-uratom_en.pdf

Redress Procedure

Applicants can request to redress the evaluation outcome if they suspect a breach in the application of the evaluation and selection procedures. This redress procedure only covers the procedural aspects of the evaluation and/or eligibility checks, including the national eligibility checks. The request to redress will not call into question the scientific or technical judgement of appropriately qualified experts.

In this case they will submit their request to redress to the Partnership Coordination Team of Water4All (redress_water4all@agencerecherche.fr) and the CS (water4all.call2024@ptka.kit.edu) via email, up to 14 calendar days after the date of dispatch of the evaluation outcome email by the CS at the end of each stage (first or second step). The proposal outcome email containing the results of the evaluation will give information on the redress procedure, which is described below.

Admissibility of request to redress

For a request to redress to be admissible the following conditions must be met:

- The request must be submitted by the Consortium Coordinator of the proposal to which the request to redress relates
- Only one request to redress per proposal will be considered
- The request must be addressed to the Water4All Vice-Chair
- The request must be submitted via email within the 14 calendar days deadline
- The request must contain the following minimum information:
 - The name of the call for proposals;
 - The proposal number;
 - The title of the proposal;
 - A description of the alleged shortcomings of the evaluation procedure.

The request to redress must demonstrate a procedural irregularity, factual error, manifest error of assessment, misuse of powers, or a conflict of interests. Requests to redress that do not meet the above conditions, do not deal with the evaluation of a specific proposal or merely express disagreement with the result or the reasoning of the evaluation will not be considered suitable for redress.

Procedure to submit a request to redress

Upon receipt of a request to redress, an acknowledgement of receipt will be sent by the CS within 7 calendar days. The acknowledgement will report the redress process and the anticipated date by which a decision on the request to redress will be communicated to the appellant.

All requests to redress received by the 14 calendar days deadline will be processed together and the decision will be communicated to the appellant within 14 calendar days from the deadline for submitting the requests.

The Water4All Vice-Chair will establish an internal “Redress Committee” chaired by the Water4All Vice-Chair and comprised of the Independent Observer, one representative from the Ethics and Deontology Board of Water4All and one representative of the Water4All consortium (Pillar B leader / representative of the Water4All Partnership Coordination Team / FPO not involved in the 2024 JTC). The role of the “Redress Committee” is to evaluate the requests to redress according to the procedure, ensuring fair and equal treatment of applicants.

They will examine the requests with support of the CS and one representative per FPO concerned by the requesting projects, if needed. The “Redress Committee” will provide its opinion on the implementation of the evaluation procedure, on the basis of the available information related to the proposal and its evaluation, and will make recommendation to the Water4All Vice-Chair, who is in charge of deciding, except for national eligibility.

A negative national eligibility check of a FPO cannot be overruled by the Vice-Chair. Requests to redress on national eligibility decisions will be assessed by the FPO responsible for the national eligibility check, that will

provide justification about its decision to the Vice Chair, in order to prove that national funding rules listed in the Call Announcement have been applied correctly.

For Step 1: Pre-proposals which were originally considered ineligible or not admissible to submit a full proposal, but which the Water4All Vice-Chair found to be eligible will be allowed to participate in Step 2. This will not lead to a change of the deadline for the full proposal submission.

For Step 2: The redress procedure may lead to a re-evaluation of all or part of the proposal by independent experts not involved in the previous evaluation or to the confirmation of the initial evaluation.

A re-evaluation will only be carried out if the request to redress shows that the selection procedure was flawed by a breach which affects the evaluation outcome and the final decision on whether to fund a proposal. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if the proposal has failed anyway on another criterion or if even by adding the maximum points for this criterion, the final score still remains below the funding threshold.

The score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. It may be lower than the original score. All requests to redress will be treated in confidence and will not prejudice future applications.

5.3.3. Evaluation Panel

The Evaluation Panel (EP) composition will be defined by the CS with the CSC approval after launching the JTC. This will include decisions regarding the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the EP. The EP composition will follow these criteria:

- The EP will be composed by an adequate number of evaluators independent of any funding organisation involved in this call.
- The EP will be composed of evaluators based on their expertise in the research areas covered by the pre/full proposals submitted in Step 1 and Step 2.
- The composition of the EP will be adjusted according to the number and content of the submitted pre/full proposals submitted in Step 1 and selected for Step 2 and the respective topic distribution, to ensure a fair distribution of proposals.

Additional considerations for the EP composition are the gender and geographical balance, also including countries not participating in the 2024 JTC.

The CSC will select the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the EP following CS suggestions, possibly coming from countries not represented in the CSC. EP members will be carefully selected with regard to any potential conflict of interest.

The EP members assigned to the pre/full proposal will assess the proposals in advance of the EP meeting and prepare individual evaluation reports. The EP members will discuss the pre-proposals and agree on the final scores for each criterion during the EP meeting.

For each pre/full proposal, one of the EP members will be nominated as the rapporteur. The rapporteur is in charge of presenting the evaluation results during the EP meeting and of writing the common consensus report, which summarises the evaluation comments and discussions during the meeting.

The decisions of the EP should be taken collectively, preferably by consensus or by a simple majority of the EP members in case consensus cannot be reached.

The composition of the EP will be published on the website after the funding decision.

5.3.4. Assignment of EP members

Three (3) EP members will be assigned to each pre/full proposal (as far as possible for Step 1), based on consideration of their expertise and the proposals' scientific topics. The assignment of EP members to pre/full

proposals will be circulated to the CSC before the evaluation procedures start. If necessary, the CS will send pre/full proposals to external experts. The CSC can veto against the assignment of EP members and potential external experts if, for example, a CSC member has justified concerns about the reliability of the scientific expertise or about a conflict of interest. EP members and potential external experts should not assess proposals from their own country, as far as possible.

Before starting the assessment of pre/full proposals allocated to them, the EP members and potential external experts will first check the Partners in the research Consortium and the proposal's summary for any potential conflict of interest (see Annex I: *Conflict of interest, confidentiality and non-disclosure policy*). If there is no conflict of interest, the EP members and potential external experts have to sign declarations on absence of conflict of Interest, confidentiality and non-disclosure policy and upload them in the Online Submission Tool before starting the evaluations.

As soon as a potential conflict of interest exists or arises, the EP members and potential external experts will inform the CS immediately and the access to pre/full proposal content will be blocked. Then another EP member or external expert needs to be allocated to that pre/full proposal.

5.3.5. Evaluation reports

Step 1 – Pre-proposals

The pre-proposals will be distributed among the EP members according to their expertise. Each proposal will be evaluated as far as possible by three (3) EP members.

EP members have to submit a written individual evaluation report of the pre-proposal assigned to them considering the common evaluation criteria and scoring system established by Water4All, as described in detail in Annex IV: *Evaluation Form Template Pre-Proposal*, by the agreed deadline (Annex III: *Call timeline for evaluation procedure*). They have to enter the results on the Online Submission tool before the scheduled EP meeting.

One of the EP members will be nominated as a rapporteur and in charge of writing the consensus report summarising the discussion from the EP meeting.

Step 2 – Full proposals

The full proposals will be distributed among the EP members according to their expertise. Each proposal will be evaluated with the assistance of at least three (3) EP members. The EP members may be the same used in the pre-proposal phase but, if needed, they can be changed. One of the EP members will be nominated as a rapporteur and in charge of writing the consensus report summarising the discussion from the EP meeting. EP members have to submit a written individual evaluation report of the full proposal assigned to them, considering the common evaluation criteria and scoring system established by the Water4All 2024 JTC for proposal, as described in detail in Annex V: *Evaluation Form Template Full Proposal* by the agreed deadline (Annex III: *Call timeline for evaluation procedure*).

The common evaluation form template is provided via the Online Submission Tool. In the evaluation report, the written comments must be sufficiently clear, understandable and detailed, and not limited to one sentence, to demonstrate the judgement by evidence. The comments on each criterion as laid out in Annex 5 of the HE MGA should be consistent with the respective score between zero (0) and five (5) for individual criterion.

There is no need to summarise the proposal and questions should be avoided, the applicants would not be able to answer them. Focus should be put on justifying the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal based on the given criteria. EP members will provide context for their comments based on the application, i.e., evaluators will be asked to score proposals as they were submitted, rather than on their potential if certain

changes were to be made. When an EP member identifies substantial shortcomings, he/she will reflect this by awarding a lower score for the criterion concerned. There should be consistency between the numerical scores and written comments.

Assessment of the budget and justification of resources are included in the evaluation of the proposals as a whole, therefore comments on expenses should be raised only at this general level since eligible costs and funding models for each partner of the Consortium may be different due to the national/regional funding rules.

5.3.6. Evaluation Panel meetings

EP meetings will be organised in Step 1 (Online) and Step 2 (in presence) to discuss the evaluations by the EP members assigned to the pre/full proposals (as well as the external reports if any) and to agree on a final evaluation. The EP members will pay special attention to the pre/full proposals with identified issues such as discrepancies in the notations. In Step 1 and Step 2, an EP member will be assigned as rapporteur for each proposal and in charge of writing a consensus report.

An Independent Observer will be invited to the EP meetings to assess the conformity of the general procedure. The pre-requisites for the selection as an Independent Observer are:

- Experienced with the EC co-fund process
- Experienced with European project funding
- Time availability

FPO representatives may participate as observers but they are not allowed to interfere in the process and will respect confidentiality of the debates. The Independent Observer and the CS will not participate in the discussions of the EP members.

Before the EP meeting, the EP members perform a first screening of proposals to identify possible conflicts of interest and obtain an overview of the scientific content of the whole set of the eligible full proposals. For this purpose, the members of the EP will declare possible conflicts of interest to the CS. EP members that declared a potential conflict of interest cannot participate in the discussion of that proposal and have to leave the room until the discussion is finished. The CS will assist the Chairperson in this task during the EP meetings in order to avoid any conflicts of interest.

The Chairperson assisted by the CS keeps record of the discussions. All information is to be kept confidential and made accessible only to the members of the EP, the Independent Observer within the meaning of Section 3.6 of the 2024 JTC Call Announcement.

The decisions of the EP should be taken collectively, preferably by consensus or by simple majority of the EP members, in case consensus cannot be reached. The outcomes of the EP meeting discussion for each pre/full proposal will be the scores given and a final consensus report for each pre/full proposal. Because of the varying quality of the reports, the overall scores are not just the average of individual scores but the outcomes of the discussion between EP members.

Thresholds will be applied to the scores of the full proposals (Section 5.2 of the Call Announcement). The threshold for each individual criterion is three (3) and for the overall score ten (10) meaning that full proposals on the ranking list with a score below three (3) for at least one individual criterion or an overall score lower than ten (10) will not be recommended for funding.

During the EP meeting, the pre/full proposals will be discussed successively and for each proposal the three assigned EP members will summarize their evaluation and discussion can take place. The EP will perform the finalization of one ranking based on the scores given to each pre/full proposal.

The minutes of the EP meetings (in both steps) comprise at least the following information: date, participants, agenda, decisions, handling of conflicts of interest within the meaning of the Annex 5 of the HE MGA and Art.

12 of the HE MGA, ESRs and ranking of proposals. The Chairperson sends the draft minutes to the EP members for comments before final approval. The minutes are not public and are issued only to the members of the EP members, Independent Observer and CSC.

The consensus report written by the rapporteur of the pre/full proposal should strongly reflect the relative position of the proposals on the ranking list by providing the strengths and the weaknesses for each criterion. The report should be based solely on proposal content, rather than suggestions to improve the Transnational Project.

The report will be written in a correct, **respectful** and understandable English and should neither indicate nor suggest anything concerning personal information about the EP members or any divergent opinions between them.

The applicant will receive an electronic letter including information on the invitation (or not) for submitting a full proposal after Step 1 and on the recommendation for funding (or not) after Step 2, both accompanied by the consensus report and reminder for the redress procedure.

5.3.7. Honoraria and Costs

At the first Step, EP members and potential external experts will receive a fee for their evaluation of pre-proposals that is fixed at a rate of EUR 50 per proposal.

At the second Step, EP members and potential external experts will receive a fee for their evaluation of full proposals that is fixed at a rate of EUR 75 per proposal, plus their travel and accommodation costs for attending the EP meeting.

At both Steps, EP members will receive a fixed fee of EUR 250 for their participation to the EP meeting, in addition to proposal evaluation fees. The EP Chair and Vice-Chair will receive a fixed fee of EUR 1.500 plus their travel and accommodation costs for the Step 2 EP meeting (Step 1 meeting will be held online).

The Independent Observer will receive a fixed fee of EUR 1.000 plus the travel and accommodation costs to attend the Step 2 EP and CSC meetings (Step 1 EP and CSC meetings will be held online).

These costs will be covered by the CS through the management costs of the Water4All partnership.

6. Main principles for the funding of the co-funded Joint Transnational Call

The FPOs decide on launching the co-funded 2024 JTC, including the ECR modality, to comply with the following principles:

1. The cost of the funding of the RDI projects in a JTC consists of the national contribution to the JTC and the EC Top-up. In this partnership, the funding rate for EC co-funding is estimated at 21 % (i.e. an EC Top-up estimated at 27% of the national contribution).
2. The EC-eligible FPOs decide to use the EC Top-up for research as a “mix-mode” funding model composed of:
 - **Minimum 60 % of the EC Top-up for the virtual common pot**, which will be directly allocated to all funded projects based on the respective actual contributions by the EC-eligible FPOs involved (“just return”)
 - **Maximum 40% of the EC Top-up for the real common pot**, which will be used for filling the gaps in the projects of the ranking list irrespective of the applicants’ national affiliation.

The abovementioned ratio may be changed by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the CSC, to maximise funding of projects and to avoid the blocking of the ranking list. In any case, such changes should guarantee to all EC-eligible FPOs a just return at least equal to 10% of their national/regional budget actually committed to fund their participants.

3. The total EC contribution (real and virtual common pot) for a specific EC-eligible FPO will not exceed the total national contribution provided by this Participant. Exceptions are possible upon CSC approval as per pre-defined voting rules (see point 2).
4. The following overall objectives for finalizing the funding decision will be adhered without order of preference:
 1. maximizing the number of funded high-quality proposals,
 2. optimizing the national and EC contributions,
 3. maximising the number of FPOs funding at least one project,
 4. prioritizing the projects submitted under the modality ECR in case of ex-aequo, whenever possible.
5. Each FPO is asked to match as accurately and realistically as possible the financial demand from their respective research communities with the budget earmarked for the call to be able to fund an adequate number of RDI projects, taking into account the past experiences from similar calls. Due to a possible high financial pressure, a maximum grant request per proposal and/or per project partner will be set by each FPO involved in the call for their national/regional team(s).
6. The minimum FPO contribution to the co-funded Call should be about 100.000,00 € in cash.
7. Funding gaps may arise in the ranking when one of the FPOs runs out of money. Additional solutions to unblock situations at the national/regional level will be explored, such as:
 - FPOs may be able to come up with extra money to fund high/excellent quality proposals,
 - FPOs may ask the applicants to reduce realistically their requested contribution, and
 - FPOs may be able to fund foreign teams (e.g., via subcontracting, via the release of (part) of their respective virtual common pot, etc.).

While fully respecting the funding rules from each FPOs, these different levels of flexibility will be explored (i) before the launch of the call, (ii) after the first evaluation step, and (iii) after the final evaluation of the proposals. The FPOs agree on holding bilateral exchanges with the CS and Water4All Pillar B leader in cases of high oversubscription in Step 1 upon request and will act in good faith with the joint objective of not to jeopardize the JTC success and optimize the use of overall committed funding and EC co-funding.

8. The distribution of the EC funding per partner will be determined by the actual outcomes of selection process. The reference for the distribution of the EC funding will be the Consortium Agreement.

In order to promote inclusiveness of underrepresented or the widening countries participating in the JTC, certain measures could be taken by the CSC, such as offering a chance to the consortia invited to Step 2 to invite one more partner from an underrepresented or widening country², or allowing a higher maximum number of partners from these countries in consortia if the number of partners is capped. This measure will be taken in line with point 4.3.

7. Monitoring of Transnational Projects

FPOs commit to monitor Transnational Projects, to inform the Follow-up Secretariat if they become aware of issues affecting the implementation of Transnational Projects, and working together to resolve any issues until all Transnational Projects are completed.

The FPOs involved in the funding of RDI Transnational Projects in each co-funded JTC, including the ECR modality, commit to monitor the funded projects from the Kick-off until the end date of the Water4All partnership Grant Agreement to fulfil the reporting requirements toward the EC.

² More info on Widening Countries: [Widening participation and spreading excellence | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/widening-participation-and-spreading-excellence/)

The funded Transnational Projects are required to provide a mid-term report (around month 18 after the kick-off meeting) and a final report (around month 36 after the kick-off meeting or in line with the extension of the project, if applicable) on research progress and financial aspects.

The mid-term and final reports will allow the FPOs to monitor the implementation status of the research according to the initial work plan. The mid-term and final reports will be assessed by a dedicated follow-up group and feedback will be sent to the CSC for information and discussion, and then to the concerned projects. The CSC will decide on the composition of the follow-up group.

The funded Transnational Projects are required to participate in the following events:

- a **kick-off meeting** at the beginning of the funding period (Spring 2026),
- a **mid-term meeting** to present and discuss the mid-term reports (Autumn 2027), and
- a **final meeting** to present and disseminate the project results at the end of the funding period (Spring 2029).

Whenever possible, the funded Transnational Projects will also be invited to other relevant events of the Water4All partnership that will allow for networking between the projects and the dissemination of the projects' results.

The funded Transnational Projects will make available publicly the new databases, with metadata, they will have produced according to the provision of Art. 17 of the HE MGA.

The dissemination of the project outputs is the responsibility of the funded projects. Plans for dissemination of the results will form part of the proposals and are included in the evaluation procedure.

The outputs of the funded projects will be analysed to help illustrate the impact of the Water4All partnership.

8. Confidentiality

As stated in the Water4All Consortium Agreement (Section 16), all information in whatever form or mode of communication, which is disclosed by a FPO (the "Disclosing Party") to any other FPO (the "Recipient") in connection with the Joint Transnational Call 2024 and its modalities during its implementation and which has been explicitly marked as "confidential" at the time of disclosure, or, in case it was disclosed orally, has been identified as confidential at the time of disclosure, and has been confirmed and designated in writing within 15 calendar days from oral disclosure at the latest as confidential information by the Disclosing Party, is "Confidential Information"

The content of the proposals received under the 2024 JTC, including the ECR modality, of the Water4All partnership is deemed to be Confidential Information, as well as the lists of Transnational Projects selected for funding prior to its publication.

Each of the FPOs will subsequently only administer Transnational Projects they have approved for funding. Accordingly, the national law of each FPO will govern each project considered or approved for funding.

Results are owned by Project Partners according to their own Consortium Agreement. The results generated by the Knowledge Hub must be made publicly available.

9. Data Management and Data Protection

All European FPOs will comply with the European General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679) and provide the appropriate safeguards regarding the transfer of personal data to a third country.

The FPOs will not share personal data with third parties other than parties necessary for the execution of the joint transnational call and parties required by national laws.

The transfer of personal data in the scope of the execution of the MoU to a Party or a third party situated in a country that does not present adequate safeguards under the GDPR shall ensure that such transfer is possible and that it complies with the GDPR on the basis of an adequacy decision or on the basis of standard data protection clauses adopted by the commission in accordance with the examination procedure or pursuant to Article 49 of the GDPR.

For non-EU and non-EEA Countries with an adequacy decision with the EU regarding data protection, the national regulations apply. The Standard Contractual Clauses (SCC) is signed for non-EU and non-EEA Countries not offering an adequate level of data protection according to the EC.

Applicants, EP members and external experts, and CSC members will be made aware that by submitting an application to or participating in the evaluation of the 2024 JTC, including the ECR modality, they acknowledge the use, processing and retention of their data within this 2024 JTC, in line with GDPR.

In the event of co-responsibility between the co-responsible FPO's concerned within the meaning of the GDPR³, the FPO will sign an agreement defining their respective roles and duties as Joint Controllers.

10. Intellectual property

Each FPO will remain the sole owner of its know-how, names, company names, trademarks, logos, products and will refrain from using those of the other Participant without the prior express written authorization of such other Participant.

11. Duration of the Memorandum of Understanding

Except in case of early termination as set out in Section 12, this MoU will be effective as of the date of the last signature and will remain in effect until the final Transnational Project selected in the final Ranking List ends and at least until all agreements are settled/closed out (including any extension period) and the final Transnational Projects' reports are submitted and approved. This MoU may be amended or modified by mutual written decision of the signatories or their replacements.

12. Termination

If either FPO materially breaches the obligations stated in this MoU wilfully and fails to remedy such breach within 15 days of the sending of a registered letter with acknowledgment of receipt giving notice of the breach at issue, the other FPOs may terminate this MoU as of right, without prejudice to any damages it may be entitled to claim hereunder.

Any termination of the negotiations will be notified by either FPO by sending a registered letter with acknowledgment of receipt notifying such termination and shall result in the termination of this MoU.

In the event one of the FPOs wrongfully terminates the negotiations, the other FPO reserves the right to claim damages for wrongful termination of the negotiations.

In the event the negotiations are terminated, each FPO will retain ownership of the services it has provided under the partnership project and the negotiations.

13. Signatures

We, the undersigned, do hereby accept to the terms and conditions specified in this Memorandum of Understanding:

³ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council (article 6).

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung (FWF)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Flanders foreign investment office (VLAIO)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call and in the ECR modality

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Fonds Voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek-Vlaanderen (FWO)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call and in the ECR modality

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique (F.R.S. – F.N.R.S)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Brazilian National Council of State Funding Agencies (CONFAP)

Name: Odir Antônio Dellagostin

Title: President

Date and Stamp: 9 September 2024

Signature:

DocuSigned by:

62043F1BF9B949F...

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call and in the ECR modality

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (TA CR)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Innovation Fund Denmark (IFD)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Sihtasutus Eesti Teadusagentuur (ETAg)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call and in the ECR modality

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Research Council of Finland (AKA)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call and in the ECR modality

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Ministry of the Environment Finland (YM)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call and in the ECR modality

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call and in the ECR modality

Authorised to sign on behalf of: **Karlsruher Institut für Technologie - Projektträger Karlsruhe (KIT-PTKA) acting on behalf of Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF)**

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: General Secretariat of Research & Innovation (GSRI)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Nemzeti Kutatási, Fejlesztési és Innovációs Hivatal (NKFIH)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call and in the ECR modality

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Environmental Protection Agency of Ireland (EPA)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Ministry of Energy Israel (MoE)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call and in the ECR modality

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca (MUR)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call and in the ECR modality

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Latvian Council of Science (LZP)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call and in the ECR modality

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Lietuvos mokslo taryba (LMT)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Luxembourg National Research Fund (FNR)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Ministry for Environment, Energy and Regeneration of the Grand Harbour (MEER)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call and in the ECR modality

Authorised to sign on behalf of: National Agency for Research and Development (NARD)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Dutch Research Council (NWO)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Narodowe Centrum Badań i Rozwoju (NCBR)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call [and in the ECR modality]

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: The Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call and in the ECR modality

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Department of Science and Innovation (DSI)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call and in the ECR modality

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Agencia Estatal de Investigación (AEI)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology (CDTI)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call and in the ECR modality

Authorised to sign on behalf of: The Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning (FORMAS)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Türkiye Bilimsel Ve Teknolojik Arastirma Kurumu (TUBITAK)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

For participation in the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Authorised to sign on behalf of: Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC UKRI)

Name:

Title:

Date and Stamp:

Signature:

ANNEXES

Annex I: Conflict of interest, confidentiality and non-disclosure policy

This code applies to the Evaluation Panel members and the external experts if any.

Conflict of interest

An important aspect of this code is the avoidance of any conflicts between personal interests and the interests of the applicants. A conflict of interest might arise, for example, if there is or has been a close working relationship, financial or personal connections with any individual(s) in the academic department(s) or organisation from which a proposal originates. Such interests may also be indirect and relate to immediate family members or any other persons living in the same household as the reviewer.

Definition of the conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest may include the following:

- Relatives, personal ties or conflicts;
- Close scientific collaboration, e.g., implementation of joint projects or joint publications within the past three years (e.g., have co-authored and published an article with the applicant during the past three years, have been involved in the preparation of the application, or are involved in the publication or exploitation of the results);
- Direct scientific competition with personal projects or plans;
- Close proximity, e.g., member of the same scientific institution with a hierarchical or department relation or impending change of the reviewer/rapporteur to the institution of the applicant in a position with a hierarchical or department relation or vice versa;
- Teacher/student relationship, unless independent scientific activity of more than 10 years exists;
- Dependent relationship in employment during the past 5 years;
- Participation in ongoing or recently concluded professional appointment proceedings;
- Current or prior (past 5 years) activity in advisory bodies of the applicant's institution, e.g., scientific advisory boards;
- Direct or indirect benefits directly if the proposal is accepted;
- Personal economic interests in the funding decision.

Rules for the prevention of conflict of interest

Evaluation Panel members and additional external experts have to sign a conflict of interest, confidentiality and non-Disclosure declaration to confirm that they will comply with the principles state herein. For each proposal they have to evaluate, Evaluation Panel members and external experts will have to declare online, through the Online Submission Tool that they do not have a conflict of interest with the concerned proposal.

Applicants included in a proposal submitted to this call (including all the team members) may not serve as Evaluation Panel members or external expert.

Evaluation Panel members and external experts will be independent experts and should not be involved in case of a conflict of interest.

Evaluation Panel members will leave the room during the discussion of a proposal in case of a possible conflict of interest. Evaluation Panel members and external experts may not apply for a project in the call.

Confidentiality and non-disclosure policy

All submitted proposals, the correspondence forwarded to you, the reviews and the identity of the reviewers will be treated as strictly confidential. They will not be revealed to third parties.

Therefore, the responsibilities of an Evaluation Panel member or an external expert may only be carried out personally and may not be delegated to third parties.

The scientific content of the proposal may not be exploited for personal or other scientific purposes.

An Evaluation Panel member or an external expert should not identify himself/herself to the applicant or any third party.

Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Declaration for members of the Evaluation Panel (EP) and external experts

The Evaluation Panel members and the additional external experts are requested to sign the following declaration:

1. Your Potential Conflicts of Interests.

Your participation in this joint call requires that you be aware of potential conflict situations that may arise. Read the examples of potentially biasing affiliations or relationships listed in the “Conflict of interest, confidentiality and non-disclosure”.

As a member of the Evaluation Panel or an external expert, you will be asked to contribute to the evaluation process. You might have a conflict or be perceived to have a conflict with one or more submitted proposals. Should any conflict arise during your term, or when asked to do a review, you must bring the matter to the attention of the Call Secretariat who will determine how the matter should be handled and will tell you what further steps, if any, to take.

2. No Use of “Insider” Information.

Your designation gives you access to information not generally available to the public. You will not use that information for your personal benefit or make it available for the personal benefit of any other individual or organisation.

3. Your Obligation to Maintain the Confidentiality of Proposals and Applicants.

Proposals are received with the expectation of protection of the confidentiality of their contents. For this reason, you will not copy, quote, or otherwise use or disclose to anyone, including your graduate students or post-doctoral or research associates, any material from any proposal you are asked to review. If you believe a colleague can make a substantial contribution to the review, please obtain permission from the Call Secretariat who asked that you review the proposal *before* disclosing either the content of the proposal or the name of any applicant or principal investigator.

You will respect the confidentiality of all applicants and of other reviewers, as appropriate. You cannot disclose their identities, the relative assessments or rankings of proposals by a peer review panel, or other details about the peer review of proposals.

4. Confidentiality of the Evaluation Process and Evaluator’s Names.

The names of additional external experts won’t be made public.

The names of the Evaluation Panel members will be made public after the announcement of awards. Which EP members assessed which proposals will however be kept confidential.

YOUR CERTIFICATION

Your Potential Conflicts.

I have read the list of affiliations and relationships that could prevent my participation in matters involving such individuals or institutions. To the best of my knowledge, I have no affiliation or relationship that would prevent me from performing my duties. I understand that I must contact the Joint Call Secretariat if a conflict exists or arises during my service. I further understand that **I must sign and return this Conflict Statement to the Call Secretariat before I can review proposals.**

Maintaining the Confidentiality of Others.

I will not divulge or use any confidential information, described above, that I may become aware of during my service. I have read and understand the information on Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure and promise to take all necessary measures to fulfil my obligations in my role as EP member.

Release of the names of the EP (Apply only to EP Members).

Following the announcement of awards for the call, the names of the EP members will be published.

Name:

Function: EP member

DATE:

Signature:

Annex II: Code of conduct for EP members and external experts

Fundamental principles of good research practice and peer-review are essential for research integrity. All parties involved directly or indirectly in the evaluation will ensure the transparency of the process that the evaluation criteria published in Section 6.2 of the Call Announcement are respected equally for all proposals and that public funds are well used:

1. The Evaluators (Evaluation Panel Members or external experts if needed) are chosen for their technical or scientific or industrial expertise to cover all the topics addressed by the submitted proposals.
2. All parties involved directly or indirectly in the evaluation will act objectively, with no self-interested motives. They do not represent their company, organisation or establishment.
3. The evaluators will evaluate the proposals based solely upon the information contained in the proposals.
4. The EP members will finish the individual written assessment of pre-proposals within a period of six weeks (the exact deadline will be given to you with the assignment communication) through the Online Submission Tool's dedicated section for remote evaluation;
5. The EP members will finish the individual written assessment of full-proposals within a period of four weeks (the exact deadline will be given to you with the assignment communication);
6. Evaluation Panel Members will be available for discussions with other Panel Members for the consolidation of the draft Consensus Reports and agree to provide contact details to other Panel Members.
7. The rapporteurs will finish the draft Consensus Report in due time (the exact deadline will be given to you with the assignment communication); they will be available to moderate the discussions; they will finish the final Consensus Reports soon after the EP meeting.
8. At the EP meeting, decisions will be taken collectively by the EP members after all considerations have been heard. Furthermore, decisions will be substantiated.
9. Opinions expressed during EP meetings as well as information which parties are the first to obtain have to be kept confidential. The substance of the EP debates will remain secret and the individual positions will not be divulged (see Conflict of interest, confidentiality and non-disclosure policy).
10. Minutes will be kept for those meetings during which decisions are reached. These minutes will be circulated to EP members and observers for verification and approval within 10 days.
11. EP members should refrain in all cases from divulging any other element which could compromise their anonymity. Likewise, EP members cannot contact the applicants or the other Evaluators during the individual evaluation of proposals.
12. If any evaluator is the object of any pressure in whatever from a project Partner, she or he will immediately notify the Call Secretariat.
13. If there is a conflict of interest (see Conflict of interest, confidentiality and non-disclosure policy), the concerned person will inform the Call Secretariat as soon as finding that a conflict exists. The necessary measures are taken to ensure that the related decision and discussion will not be biased, or suspected to be so (e.g., in requesting the concerned person to leave the room when the project in question is being discussed).
14. The chairperson may, on his or her own initiative, consult the Call Secretariat in respect to a real or possible conflict of interests, which has been brought to his or her attention by any means whatsoever.
15. Conflicts of interests as well as the methods used to handle these situations should be included in the EP meeting minutes.

Annex III: Call timeline for evaluation procedure

Tentative Time Schedule of the Water4All 2024 JTC, including the ECR modality	
First Step: Submission of pre-proposals	
July 2024	Call Pre-announcement
Early September 2024	Additional CSC before launching 2024 JTC
12 Sept. 2024	Call Publication
Sept.-Oct. 2024	Approved EP members list, Chair and co-chair by CSC
13 Nov. 2024, 15h00 CET	Deadline for submission of the pre-proposals
November 2024	General and National eligibility checks by the CS and FPOs
Early Dec. 2024	2nd CSC Meeting – Eligibility Check (focused on “in-between” cases)
Mid-Dec. 2024 – Mid-Feb. 2025	Scientific evaluation by EP members
Early Feb. 2025	Online EP meeting for ranking the list of preproposals
Mid Feb. 2025	3rd CSC Meeting – Selection pre-proposals for the second step
End Feb. 2025	Notification to the applicants of the first step outcomes
28 Feb. 2025 - 12 March 2025	Period for request to redress
12-28 March 2025	Evaluation of the requests to redress received and communication of decisions to the applicants
Second Step: Submission of the full proposals	
28 Feb. 2025	2nd step opening
29 April 2025, 15h00 CEST	Deadline submission of the full proposals
Early May 2025	Eligibility check of full proposals by Call Secretariat and FPOs
Mid-May 2025	4th CSC Meeting – Eligibility Check
End June 2024	Evaluation Panel Meeting – Ranking list of JTC and ERC full proposals
September 2024	Meeting CSC for selection of proposals recommended for funding
End Sept.	Notification to the applicants of the Transnational Projects recommended for funding
1-15 Oct. 2024 (15 days)	Period for request to redress
Mid-October 2024	Evaluation of the requests to redress received and communication of decisions to the applicants
Last quarter 2025 / 1 st quarter 2026	Start of the funded Transnational Projects
Spring 2026	Kick-off meeting of funded Transnational Projects
Last quarter 2028 / 1st quarter 2029	End of the funded Transnational Projects

Annex IV: Evaluation Form Template Pre-Proposal

Please comment on each criterion and related strengths and weaknesses (if any) and provide context for comments based on the application, i.e., please evaluate proposals as they were submitted, rather than on their potential if certain changes were to be made. In the case substantial shortcomings are identified, please reflect this by awarding a lower score for the criterion concerned. Consistency between the numerical scores and written comments should be ensured.

	Score (0-5)
<p>Criterion 1. Excellence</p> <p>1.1 Clarity and pertinence of the project’s objectives to the Water4All JTC2024 topics and extent to which the proposed work is ambitious, and goes beyond the state of the art.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the proposal clearly addressing aspects related to circularity in the use of water or the creation of water-related circular value chains? - Is the proposal contributing to and/or increasing the advancement of the Science & Technology knowledge? - Does the proposal take scientific and/or technological risk? (Please comment...) - Does the proposal have a potential breakthrough despite this risk-taking? <p>1.2 Addressing the knowledge gaps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are the methodology and research design clear, feasible and suitable to answer the identified knowledge gaps and/or achieve the proposed objectives? - Are stakeholders and end-users involved in the definition of the challenge and problems? <p>1.3 Soundness of the proposed methodology, including the underlying concepts, models, assumptions, inter-disciplinary approaches, appropriate consideration of the gender dimension in research and innovation content, and the quality of open science practices, including sharing and management of research outputs and engagement of citizens, civil society and end users where appropriate.</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>	
	Score (0-5)
<p>Criterion 2. Impact</p> <p>2.1 Credibility of the pathways to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts specified in the call text, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions from to the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the plan for impact clear and does it follow logically from the expected results of the project? - Is it suitably ambitious with regards to solving the problem addressed? 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there strategic impact on reinforcing competitiveness and/or on solving societal or environmental problems at European and international level? - Are the outcomes feeding into the expected pathway? <p>2.2 Relevance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are the cases representative of water intensive sectors and activities? - Can the knowledge and solutions be transferred to other users, activities and sectors? - Can the results enhance the regulatory framework or increase wide compliance with regulation? <p>2.3 Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there feasible exploitation and dissemination plans of the scientific project results (including management and IPR) - Are the expected results or the knowledge acquired of importance for economic/ societal sectors and the economic development? - Is there a clear communication plan? <p>2.4 Added value of European transnational co-operation and networking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the proposal identify the right actors to make successful use of the results possible? - Is there are clear plan for interactions with /exchange and transfer of results within the consortium, to stakeholders or society? - Are the outcomes linked clearly linked SDGs 	
Comments:	

	Overall Score (0-10)
Overall evaluation	
Comments:	

Scoring

Evaluation scores will be awarded globally for each of the two criteria, but not at the level of the sub-criteria. The sub-criteria are issues, which the evaluators should consider in the assessment of that criterion. Each criterion will be scored out of five (no half-marks allowed).

The scores indicate the following with respect to the criterion under examination.

0 – LIMITED - The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.

1 – POOR - The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

2 - FAIR - The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

3 – GOOD - The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.

4 – VERY GOOD - The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.

5 – EXCELLENT - The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Annex V: Evaluation Form Template Full Proposal

Please comment on each criterion and related strengths and weaknesses (if any) and provide context for comments based on the application, i.e., please evaluate proposals as they were submitted, rather than on their potential if certain changes were to be made. In the case substantial shortcomings are identified, please reflect this by awarding a lower score for the criterion concerned. Consistency between the numerical scores and written comments should be ensured.

	Score (0-5)
<p>Criterion 1. Excellence</p> <p>1.1 Clarity and pertinence of the project’s objectives to the Water4All JTC2024 topics and extent to which the proposed work is ambitious, and goes beyond the state of the art.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the proposal clearly addressing aspects related to circularity in the use of water or the creation of water-related circular value chains? - Is the proposal contributing to and/or increasing the advancement of the Science & Technology knowledge? - Does the proposal take scientific and/or technological risk? (Please comment...) - Does the proposal have a potential breakthrough despite this risk-taking? <p>1.2 Addressing the knowledge gaps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are the methodology and research design clear, feasible and suitable to answer the identified knowledge gaps and/or achieve the proposed objectives? - Are stakeholders and end-users involved in the definition of the challenge and problems? <p>1.3 Soundness of the proposed methodology, including the underlying concepts, models, assumptions, inter-disciplinary approaches, appropriate consideration of the gender dimension in research and innovation content, and the quality of open science practices, including sharing and management of research outputs and engagement of citizens, civil society and end users where appropriate.</p> <p>Comments:</p>	
	Score (0-5)
<p>Criterion 2. Impact</p> <p>2.1 Credibility of the pathways to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts specified in the call text, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions from to the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the plan for impact clear and does it follow logically from the expected results of the project? - Is it suitably ambitious with regards to solving the problem addressed? 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there strategic impact on reinforcing competitiveness and/or on solving societal or environmental problems at European and international level? - Are the outcomes feeding into the expected pathway? <p>2.2 Relevance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are the cases representative of water intensive sectors and activities? - Can the knowledge and solutions be transferred to other users, activities and sectors? - Can the results enhance the regulatory framework or increase wide compliance with regulation? <p>2.3 Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there feasible exploitation and dissemination plans of the scientific project results (including management and IPR) - Are the expected results or the knowledge acquired of importance for economic/ societal sectors and the economic development? - Is there a clear communication plan? <p>2.4 Added value of European transnational co-operation and networking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the proposal identify the right actors to make successful use of the results possible? - Is there are clear plan for interactions with /exchange and transfer of results within the consortium, to stakeholders or society? - Are the outcomes linked clearly linked SDGs 	
<p>Comments:</p>	
	<p>Score (0-5)</p>
<p>Criterion 3. Implementation</p> <p>3.1 Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks, and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages, and the resources overall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the proposed organization and management of the scientific project effective and efficient? - Are the management structures and procedures, including and innovation management, appropriate? - Are risks properly identified and managed? - Are the resources assigned to the work packages in line with their objectives and deliverables? 	

<p>3.2 Capacity and role of each participant, and the extent to which the consortium as a whole brings together the necessary expertise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are participants in the proposal well-suited to the tasks assigned to them (necessary expertise)? - Is their role well-defined and do they complement each other well? - Are tasks well balanced among partners? <p>3.3 Appropriateness of the partners and justification of the resources to be committed (budget, staff, equipment ...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the estimated effort/allocation of resources appropriate? - Is it ensured that all participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role? - Do the work and financial plans plus the time schedule show prospects for success? - Is there a balance of scientific and financial contributions from respective countries' partners? 	
Comments:	

	Overall Score (0-15)
Overall evaluation	
Comments:	

Scoring

Evaluation scores will be awarded globally for each of the three criteria, but not at the level of the sub-criteria. The sub-criteria are issues, which the evaluator should consider in the assessment of that criterion. They also act as reminders of issues to rise later during the discussions of the proposal. Each criterion will be scored out of five (no half-marks allowed).

The scores indicate the following with respect to the criterion under examination.

0 – LIMITED - The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.

1 – POOR - The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

2 – FAIR - The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

3 – GOOD - The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.

4 – VERY GOOD - The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.

5 – EXCELLENT - The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Annex VI: 2024 Joint Transnational Call Announcement

The Call Announcement and the most updated versions of supporting documents are available for download on the 2024 Joint Transnational Call dedicated webpage, from Water4All website – www.water4all-partnership.eu.

Annex VII: National/regional funding commitments for the 2024 JTC, including the ECR modality if applicable

Reserved national/regional funding commitments to the Water4All 2024 JTC on “Water for Circular Economy”.

No.	Country	FPO	JTC (yes/no)	ECR (yes/no)	National contribution for the JTC and ECR [€]	Additional national contribution [€]	No. of projects envisaged in this call (range)	Max funding per proposal (for 1 or more national applicants)
1	Austria	FWF	YES	NO	800.000,00	N/A	2	400.000 €
2	Belgium	FIO/ VLAIO	YES	NO	800.000,00	N/A	2	500.000 €
3	Belgium	FWO	YES	YES	700.000,00	N/A	2-3	350.000 €
4	Belgium	F,R,S,-FNRS	YES	YES	300.000,00	N/A	1	300.000 €
5	Brazil	CONFAP	TBC	TBC	100.000,00	N/A	TBC	TBC
6	Brazil	CNPq	YES	YES	100.000,00	N/A	3-5	30.000 €
7	Czechia	TA CR	YES	NO	300.000,00	N/A	2	150.000 €
8	Denmark	IFD	YES	NO	1.300.000,00	N/A	3-4	500.000 €
9	Estonia	ETAg	YES	NO	300.000,00	N/A	1	150.000 € if project partner; 300.000 € if project coordinator
10	Finland	AKA	YES	YES	850.000,00	N/A	2-3	400.000 €
11	Finland	YM	YES	YES	150.000,00	N/A	1-2	150.000 €
12	France	ANR	YES	YES	1.700.000,00	N/A	5-6	300.000 € if project partner; 400.000 € if project coordinator
13	Germany	BMBF	YES	YES	2.000.000,00	N/A	3-8	600.000 € 350.000 € if project partner; 500.000 € if project coordinator
14	Greece	GSRI	YES	NO	1.000.000,00	N/A	5	230.000 €
15	Hungary	NKFIH	YES	NO	330.000,00	N/A	1-2	170.000€ exception: 330.000 € for HU coordinator and further HU partner(s) – not subcontractors – involved in the same proposal)
16	Ireland	EPA	YES	YES	700.000,00	N/A	3	250.000 € if project partner; 350.000 € if project coordinator
17	Israel	MoE	YES	NO	pending			
18	Italy	MUR	YES	YES	MUR-FIRST 1.000.000 € MUR-ERDF 1.000.000 €		MUR-FIRST 4 MUR-ERDF 4	MUR-FIRST : 250.000 € MUR-ERDF: 350.000 €
19	Latvia	LZP	YES	YES	570.000,00	N/A	2-4	Up to 100.000 € per project year per partner

20	Lithuania	LMT	YES	YES	300.000,00	TBC	2	150.000 € if project partner; 200.000 € if project coordinator or more applicants in the same proposal
21	Luxemburg	FNR	YES	NO	350.000,00	N/A	1	350.000 €
22	Malta	MEEE	YES	NO	300.000,00	100.000,00 €	1-2	200,000 €
23	Moldova	NARD	YES	YES	200.000,00	N/A	2	100.000 €
24	Netherlands	NWO	YES	NO	1.500.000,00	N/A	5-8	325.000 €
25	Poland	NCBR	YES	NO	1.500.000,00	N/A	4-8	One applicant: 300.000 €, if more polish applicants in one proposal: 350.000 € for all
26	Portugal	FCT			500.000,00			
27	Romania	UEFISCDI	YES	NO	1.000.000,00	N/A	4-5	250.000 € if project Coordinator; 200.000 for all romanian partners in case a Romanian institution is not the Coordinator
28	Slovak Republic	SAS	YES	NO	240.000,00	N/A	2	120.000 €
29	South Africa	DSI	YES	YES	390.000,00	N/A	3 for the JTC and 2 for the ECR	100.000 EUR for the JTC and 45.000 for the ECR
30	Spain	CDTI	YES	NO	1.200.000,00	N/A	2-4	N/A
31	Spain	AEI	YES	YES	1.500.000,00	N/A	6-9	NOT COORD. proposal: max. 175.000 € COORD. proposal: max. 275.000 € COORD. proposal (2 partners): max. 325k Additional max. 37.500 € can be requested per proposal for experimental tasks
32	Sweden	Formas	YES	YES	1.800.000,00	N/A	7-9	Max 250.000 € for Swedish partners in a project and Max 300.000 € if one Swedish partner also is a coordinator of the project
33	Switzerland	SNSF	YES	NO	1.500.000,00	642.857,00	1-5	1.000.000 €
34	Tunisia	MHESR	YES	NO	400.000,00	N/A	4	100.000 €
35	Turkey	TUBITAK	YES	NO	500.000,00	N/A	2-3	200.000 €
36	UK	UKRI/NERC	YES	NO	pending	N/A	3-4	187.000 €
TOTAL - EC eligible Funding Organisations								
Total - ALL Funding Organisations (incl. Non-EC eligible ones)								