

# How to fill in a DESIGNAE Grant review form

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## 1. General Principles for Writing the required Sections

When evaluating proposals, reviewers should consider both the scientific quality of the project and the developmental stage of the applicant, his/her scientific environment as well as consistency with the DESIGNAE project. It is crucial to know the MoU of the Action and the objectives of the relevant working group. In case of doubt, the WG leaders should be asked to provide the necessary information. In the case of specific “challenge” calls, the objectives and other details of that “challenge” need to be known.

Additional documents such as abstracts (conference grants), the applicants CV and letters of invitation are available for the review process and should be consulted when needed. However, the reviewer is not expected to “research” past the provided application documents. Those should contain all necessary information. If information is lacking, applications can be sent back to the reviewer to revise and resubmit the application (see below).

Please note: only “very good or excellent” proposals should be funded, i.e. if the reviewer feels a proposal is worth funding after reading it, it is “very good or excellent” (i.e. standard section should receive in average about 4 points). Additional points are given to young researchers and investigators as well as those from ITC countries, allowing some minor flaws in the proposal, i.e. a mark to drop to 3 points. Furthermore, proposals with evident additional benefits to the action are recognized with additional points, as are conferences located in Europe.

Please be aware of the interdisciplinary nature of the action. Applicants are encouraged to highlight interdisciplinary aspects in their proposals and write for reviewers outside of their narrow field of expertise. Furthermore, DESIGNAE wants to be encouraging in the evaluation process, i.e.:

- Evaluation should consider the applicant’s career stage and available opportunities.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on potential rather than an extensive track record.
- Minor methodological limitations may be acceptable if the proposal demonstrates strong learning potential and scientific reasoning and interdisciplinarity.
- Mentorship and institutional support should be considered as added value.
- Emphasis should be given to good project organization and achievable objectives.

Revision should be always an opportunity for the applicant to learn and to improve skills: in case of “rejection” it should be suggested how to improve and overcome weaknesses in future.

Proposal will be reconsidered after revision by the applicant (where recommended) when resubmitted within 2 working days.

Section 4 contains a brief guide of how to understand certain terminology within the reviewing process and how to assess them.

Reviewers are expected to grade the quality of the application simply by awarding points to specific questions – see the explanation of the questions for the specific grants in section 2/3. Additionally, on the second side of each review form the following points should be filled out:


- **Assessment of the requested budget (reasonable/changes needed – please specify):** *please refer to the guidelines of the grant as well as information provided e.g. in the specific call or recommendation letter (VMG). Daily allowance for conference grants can be confirmed here: [www.cost.eu/daily\\_allowance](http://www.cost.eu/daily_allowance) Please suggest changes when necessary, so that overspending can be avoided, providing more opportunities for the action's members.*
- **Comments by reviewer to GCA:** *comments written here stay are not forwarded to the applicant. Here the reviewer can express his/her limitations in the review process – general difficulty in understanding the application, and if necessary, suggest that a second reviewer might be consulted. It can also be suggested that only minor revision is necessary which could be provided by the applicant within 2 working days.*
- **Comments by reviewer to applicant (please provide feedback especially in the case of a negative evaluation):** *the reviewer is strongly encouraged to provide here final comments and suggestion considering strength and weaknesses of the application, remembering our goal to train young researcher in project writing, to better organize ideas and strengthen strategies. Referees should be:*
  - *Respectful and balanced*
  - *Specific and evidence-based*
  - *Providing constructive suggestions*
  - *Focusing on improvement and not judgement*
  - *Aligning feedback with the suggested evaluation criteria*
  - *Concise and clear*
  - *If possible, encourage resubmission*

## 2. Conference grants

- a) Young Researchers and Innovator Conference Grants (**YRICG**) & Inclusiveness Target Countries Conference Grants (**ITCCG**)


Threshold is by **9** points. Max. 2 addit. points given for YRI, ITC and European conferences.

- **Relevance of the congress/conference (max 5 points):** Is the congress/conference recognized within the academic/professional community as a forum for presenting and discussing topics that are relevant to the WG of the Action?


 The reviewer should judge if the congress/conference is suitable for presenting the proposed topic and consider if the topic of the conference as well as the applicant's abstract are relevant to the Action/WG.

- **Relevance of the proposal (max 5 points):**


- Is the topic and content of the presentation relevant to the topic of the WG of the Action?

 The topic/content of the presentation should clearly align with the focus and objectives of the relevant Working Group and the DESIGNAE Action, and directly contribute to its themes and activities

- Is the quality of the work and its novelty appropriate for representing DESIGNAE? -

 The reviewer should assess whether the work is of high quality and sufficiently novel to effectively represent DESIGNAE.

- **Additional benefit to the Action (max 3 points):** Are there additional benefits to the WG/Action (e.g. by accumulating data for a database or knowledge to be distributed with the WG or Action) and/or additional Action Dissemination Activities at the conference to be considered? –

 Are potential benefits to the action mentioned in the proposal which can e.g. increase the knowledge/skills of the WG/Action? Are dissemination activities described? If yes, what is the quality and how to rate the likely impact of the action?

b) Dissemination Conference Grants (**DCG**)

Threshold is by **8** points. Max. 3 addit. points given for YRI, ITC and European conferences.

- **Relevance of congress/conference (max 5 points):**

- Is the congress/conference recognized within the academic/professional community as a forum for presenting and discussing topics that are relevant to the WG of the Action? -



The topic of the event should fall in one of the WGs areas or across WGs, to better represent DESIGNAE activity and aim.

- Is it a suitable forum for dissemination activities reaching relevant end-users and/or attract participants?



The reviewer should consider the relevance and multidisciplinary of the event and the audience. The topic of the event should be also able to attract a relevant number of participants and the type of action be suitable for reaching a wide audience and leading to large impact.

- **Relevance of the proposal (max 5 points):**

- Is the topic and content of the presentation relevant to the topic of the WG of the Action and lays a suitable basis for representing DESIGNAE? -



The reviewer should judge if the applicant provides enough evidence that the congress/conference is suitable for presenting the proposed topic and consider if the topic of the conference as well as the applicant's abstract are relevant to the Action/WG.

- Does it have a potential to significantly increase the visibility of the COST Action and /or to attract additional participants and stakeholders? -



The event should have the potential to attract participants from different field and stakeholders to better represent the strategy of the COST action.

### 3. Mobility grants

#### A) Short term scientific Missions (**STSM**)

Threshold is by **12** points. Max. 2 additional points given for YRI and ITC.

- **Relevance of the proposal (max 5 points):** Does the application contribute to the objectives of the Action and (if applicable) to the goals specified in the call?



The application should clearly have goals coherent with the action or WG/s and are in line with the DESIGNAE strategy; in addition, for challenge calls, the proposal must be coherent with those indicated in the call.

- **Interdisciplinarity (max 5 points):** Does the mission reflect the interdisciplinary approach of the action, by e.g. leading to the exchange of knowledge in an interdisciplinary setting or is the topic of the activity interdisciplinary in nature? -



The application should provide a clear and logical planning with achievable goals, which can be achieved within the provided time-plan. If applicable, does the time-plan align well with the time-plan of the WG or the specific call?

- **Planning (max 5 points):** Is the quality and feasibility of the work plan reasonable and satisfying and (if applicable) falls within the envisioned plan of the call?



Referees should assess whether the mission demonstrates interdisciplinarity, either through cross-disciplinary collaboration or by addressing an inherently interdisciplinary topic.

## B) Virtual Mobility (VM)

Threshold is by **12** points. Max. 2 additional points given for YRI and ITC.

- **Relevance (max 5 points):** Does the application contribute to the objectives of the Action and (if applicable) to the goals specified in the call? -



The application should clearly have goals coherent with the action or WG/s and are in line with the DESIGNAE strategy; in addition, for challenge calls, the proposal must be coherent with those indicated in the call.

- **Expertise (max 5 points):** Is the applicant expertise and contribution clear and relevant and (if applicable) in line with the criteria specified in the call? -



Referees should assess whether the applicant's expertise and role are clear, relevant, and aligned with the call's criteria.

- **Planning (max 5 points):** Is the quality and feasibility of the work plan reasonable and satisfying and (if applicable) falls within the envisioned plan of the call? -



The application should provide a clear and logical planning with achievable goals, which can be achieved within the provided time-plan. If applicable, does the time-plan align well with the time-plan of the WG or the specific call?

## **4. An additional guide for how to understand specific criteria:**

### **Scientific Quality**

- Clarity and relevance of objectives: what and why, considering update the state of art,
- Soundness and appropriateness of methodology: how the aim will be fulfilled
- Contribution to DESIGNAE project

### **Feasibility**

- The work plan and timeline should be consistent
- Availability of resources and infrastructure/collaboration needed identified

### **Innovation and Originality – Advantages for the applicant**

- Novelty/improvement/advantages/potential to overcome current limitation /disadvantages and advance current knowledge

And/Or

- Opportunity for the applicant to improve knowledge and expertise

### **Impact**

- Scientific, societal, or technological relevance
- Potential for dissemination and application

### **Applicant Potential**

- Academic background and achievements relative to career stage and age
- Motivation and independence
- Ability to carry out the proposed work
- Quality of the research environment