



**ESF MO Forum on Peer Review:
The Action Plan and its implementation**

Dr. Nina Kancewicz-Hoffman

Senior Science Officer in the CEO Unit

Vienna, 6-7 October 2008

ESF Member Organisation Forum on Peer Review

Aim of this Forum: sharing of experiences and developing common good or better practices in Peer Review across Europe

Activities

- International conference *Peer Review – Its Present and Future State* organised by ESF, the Czech Science Foundation (GACR) and the European Heads of Research Councils (EUROHORCS), Prague, October 2006 as a starting point (2006)
- Definition of areas of common interests by the Working Group; focus on ex ante evaluation of grant proposals

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review

1st Workshop of the Forum organised by NWO and ESF in March 2008

Core Principles and 3 topics discussed:

- Peer Review standards across borders and cultures
- International Peer Review and the sharing of resources at the European level
- Reviewing specific types of proposals: networks, MIT proposals, infrastructure proposals

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review

Follow up:

- Action Plan distributed to participants of the workshop in July 2008 with an invitation to join proposed actions

The Action Plan concentrates around two areas:

- Standardisation of peer review processes across Europe including issues of monitoring of quality of peer review processes, preparation of reviewers and, transparency of procedures
- International peer review and sharing of resources at the European level (sharing of data bases, creating European panels)

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review Action Plan

ACTION 1

ESF Peer Review Guide - A Management Tool Box
for Research Funding Organisations

ACTION 2

A pilot study on practices regarding incentives for
peer review

ACTION 3

Referee Databases: quality of contents

ACTION 4

Web Bank of Peer Review Practices on the ESF web
site

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review Action Plan

ACTION 1

ESF Peer Review Guide - A Management Tool Box for Research Funding Organisations

- The Guide will be directed at European funding agencies and councils
- It will have a form of a 'tool box' where for each issue one will find core principles and recommendations as well as references to good practices (exemplars)
- The Guide will aim at establishing common terminology for peer review: common definitions of terms used will be described and synonyms in use will be collected.

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review Action Plan

ACTION 1 **ESF Peer Review Guide - Modules**

- a. Core Principles of Peer Review - Introduction and structuring framework for the Guide
- b. Guidance for reviewers including 'Quality assurance of reviews'
- c. Quality assurance of peer review processes (e.g. ISO9001 accreditation, ESF EUROCORES Programme QA standards, ERA-Nets experiences, US Department of Energy Guidelines)

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review Action Plan

ACTION 1 ESF Peer Review Guide - Modules cont.

- d. The right to reply (rebuttal) before funding decision - advantages and disadvantages
- e. Multi-, inter-, and trans-disciplinary and breakthrough research and related peer review issues.
- f. The role of peer review panels – achieving standardized rankings

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review Action Plan

ACTION 2 Incentives for Peer Review Advice

- A pilot study on practices regarding incentives for peer review (e.g. fees, other types of reward ensuring a review process respecting referee interests) to be commissioned by ESF and EUROHORCs
- On a basis of the study European research funding organisations (initially ESF-EUROHORCs members joined later by other organisations) should adopt a joint policy agreement on recommended practices

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review Action Plan

ACTION 3 Referee Databases - quality of contents

- adopting common criteria and methods for the selection of high-quality referees to include in the data bases
- developing methodologies for the identification of reviewers with expertise (scientific and other) appropriate for a specific call
- IT formats and legal issues (e.g. freedom of information and data protection issues)
- The aim of the action is to agree recommendations which facilitate exchanges of data between data bases of different European organisations

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review Action Plan

ACTION 4 Web Bank of Peer Review Practices on the ESF web site

- Examples of innovative, interesting projects and practices in Peer Review will be collected and posted on the ESF website. An editorial group from among ESF-EUROHORCs membership should be established. ESF staff will manage the Bank.

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review Action Plan

The Actions should facilitate and promote the development of common standards and resources

- To enable benchmarking of national peer review processes
- To develop trust necessary in joint funding schemes
- To make outcomes of nationally conducted peer review comparable.

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review Action Plan

Implementation of the Action Plan

- Action Plan included in the ESF-EuroHORCs Roadmap of Actions (ESF Science Policy Briefing no 33):
5. Peer Review of researchers and proposals at the European level
- 7-8 October - Meeting of the Working Group; new members are joining; implementation of the Action Plan on the agenda

ESF MO Forum on Peer Review Participating MOs

- Research Foundation Flanders (FWO), Belgium
- Czech Research Council (GACR)
- Danish RC for Technology and Production Sciences
- Academy of Finland
- Health Research Board, Ireland
- INFN, Italy
- NWO, the Netherlands
- KNAW, the Netherlands
- Swedish RC
- Swiss National Science Foundation
- EPSRC, UK
- MRC, UK
- ESF (coordinator)