Guidelines for ESF Research Networking Programmes (RNPs)

These guidelines are aimed at researchers involved in the running of ESF RNPs (such as RNP Chair and Steering Committee members) as well as researchers interested in participating in activities supported in the frame of an RNP.

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The present guidelines are applicable as of 1 September 2011 to all ESF Research Networking Programmes (RNPs), running or to be launched, and replace all former versions of guidelines applicable to RNPs, without prejudice to existing written contracts. ESF reserves the right to modify the present version or substitute new guidelines as it considers necessary.

I. INTRODUCTION

ESF Research Networking Programmes (RNP) provide European scientists with a unique opportunity to establish international collaborative research networks and infrastructures around a major scientific issue or science-driven topic.

RNPs are coordinated programmes that aim at facilitating exchange of scientific ideas, personnel and knowhow between nationally funded researchers/research groups in order to enhance synergy across national boundaries at the European level and beyond.

With the overall strategic aim of promoting interdisciplinary fora where exchange of knowledge and expertise including development of new techniques and methods as well as training for the next generation of scientists is facilitated, RNPs include all or part the following activities:

- Science meetings (workshops, conferences or schools);
- Grants for short and exchange visits;
- Dissemination activities (publications…);
- Creation and maintenance of scientific databases at the European level.

It is important to note that RNPs are open activities. Principal participants within a Programme are expected to network during the Programme's lifetime with colleagues in other relevant networks and research groups to ensure that opportunities within the Programme's activities are known and are open to all. Activities proposed within the RNP should demonstrate this open character, i.e. ensure access to all the relevant research community.

RNPs are self-coordinated activities, i.e. managed by an appointed Steering Committee (SC) consisting of scientists who represent each of the national ESF Member Organisations (MOs) or other organisations that contribute to the programme. Funds are administered by the ESF. A dedicated ESF team provides guidance to the SC and support for the management of activities. Recognising that a degree of flexibility in scientific and financial management is essential for the success of an RNP, ESF will normally, as the RNP develops, accept a degree of adjustment from the original proposal, provided this is justified in scientific terms. ESF will not accept any adjustments that it considers to run counter to its responsibilities to the contributing organisations, or counter to ESF financial regulations. The ESF team in charge of the RNP will advise the Steering Committee on these matters. In occasional cases, including commencing activity in scientific areas not included in the approved proposal, the circumstances may require referral to the ESF team. In exceptional circumstances, the ESF team may require the submission of information for consideration at Standing Committee level.

ESF evaluates Programmes at the mid and final term and may, at any time, recommend to the funding Member Organisations termination or redirection. **ESF, on behalf of the contributing organisations, retains ultimate financial and management authority**.

II. HOW AN RNP OPERATES

Steering Committee (SC)

Composition and role

The SC is composed of scientists (one per participating country), nominated by the contributing organisations, usually on the basis of the names suggested in the initial application. Gender and age balance should be taken into account in forming the SC.

The responsibility for managing an RNP rests with its SC, whose primary objective is to ensure that the high-level scientific objectives of the approved proposal are achieved. The SC is the core decision-making body of the RNP and responsible for the management of scientific activities and the financial planning for the RNP, in consultation with ESF. All SC members should take an active part in all the decisions concerning the running of the RNP, i.e. approval of proposals for scientific activities, of travel grants, of budget, etc.

SC members are responsible for the appropriate flow of information on RNP activities to their relevant contributing organisation(s). They should also ensure that information on the RNP and its activities are distributed as widely as possible to the scientific community of their own country.

Meetings

The SC should hold its first meeting at the ESF in Strasbourg within three months of the formal approval of the RNP.

The SC typically meets once per year, more frequently if necessary. All members are expected to attend meetings on a regular basis. SC members who are unable to attend the meeting should not be substituted. The items to be typically addressed at each SC meeting are provided in an appended agenda template (Appendix A).

Voting

In the event of a vote (a quorum of 50 % is necessary), decisions will be made by a simple majority of those voting. The Chair and SC members present are all entitled to vote. The Chair will have an additional casting (deciding) vote in the event of a tied vote. In the case of conflict of interest (e.g. direct involvement in an application), members should refrain from voting.

Steering Committee Chair

The Chair is elected by the SC from among its members. This person is normally one of the main applicants and must be affiliated to an institution located in a contributing ESF member country.

The Chair represents the RNP, and is responsible for its scientific and operational coordination and for reporting to ESF. He / she is expected to dedicate, on an honorary basis, a reasonable amount of time and effort to the management of the RNP.

In addition to the specific responsibilities of this position, the Chair will also act as the member for his / her contributing organisation(s).

Executive Group

An Executive Group can be set up by the SC to ensure efficiency, e.g. to rapidly assess incoming applications and reports.

Persons linked to the Steering Committee

The persons described below are closely linked to the SC but are not formal members and are thus not entitled to vote.

The Coordinator

The RNP budget may cover the costs of an RNP Coordinator to assist the Chair in managing and coordinating RNP activities.

The proposal for the appointment of an RNP Coordinator, including costs foreseen for this, should normally be included and justified already in the RNP proposal. The level of the costs, their detail and the duration of the position of Coordinator must be within the bounds set by the present guidelines and are subject to ESF approval. They should then be agreed upon by the SC, usually at its kick-off meeting. The detailed description of the Coordinator's role and associated costs is provided in Appendix B.

The Coordinator is requested to provide an account of his/her activities for the RNP at each SC meeting.

Advisory Experts

A limited number of experts whose presence is essential on scientific grounds may be invited to attend meetings of the SC. The basis for this will be decided at the first SC meeting and is subject to approval by ESF. Their expenses may be paid out of the RNP funds.

ESF Staff

A dedicated ESF team, composed of an Administrator and a Science Officer, under supervision of the relevant ESF Head of Unit, is responsible for working with the SC, the Chair and (when applicable) the Coordinator.

The *ESF Science Officer* enhances links between the RNP and existing activities of relevance and provides support and guidance for scientific management and deliverables (e.g. mid-term and final reports).

The *ESF Administrator* provides the SC with guidance and technical advice regarding the functioning of an RNP and manages the online application and reporting system used for all RNP activities as well as the RNP budget (keeps budget table updated, validates online and offline payments, liaises with the ESF finance office). The ESF Administrator also creates the RNP pages on the ESF website and keeps them updated.

ESF Heads of Units and Standing Committees will be contacted / consulted for reporting and when requesting major changes to the initial plans of an RNP.

The ESF team is responsible for organising the first (kick-off) SC meeting of the RNP.

Funding organisations supporting an RNP

Most organisations funding RNPs are ESF Member Organisations (MOs) and normally commit themselves to supporting an RNP during its entire lifetime. However RNP proposers may also seek financial support from organisations which are not ESF MOs.

Each organisation contributing funds to the RNP is eligible to nominate a member for the duration of its contribution. It is usual that only one member per country is appointed. Flexibility may be shown if there are two or more contributing organisations from the same country though contributing organisations should first seek to agree on a common representative.

ESF provides funding organisations with annual budgets, publications and reports of all RNPs they support. Moreover funding organisations should receive regular feedback from the SC representative they nominated.

Additional funding organisations may join the RNP throughout the Programme's lifetime, except in its last year.

III. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Where does the funding come from?

Once recommended for funding, an RNP proposal will be circulated to all ESF MOs, who will decide whether they wish to financially support it (*à la carte* principle). Other organisations ("non-MOs") may join. If financial commitments reach a level considered to be viable by ESF, the RNP can be launched.

In addition to the funds provided for the networking activities of an RNP ("networking budget"), the contributions received from participating organisations include an annual fee paid to ESF to cover the full cost of the administration and coordination of the programme.

Budget holder: ESF

ESF issues an annual call for contributions to all organisations participating in an RNP. Funds are received and managed by ESF, who is responsible for overseeing that the networking budget is allocated and spent in accordance with its rules and regulations, on behalf of the contributing MOs.

RNP accounts are audited annually and the auditors' report is presented to the ESF General Assembly.
The fiscal year of ESF is the calendar year.

RNP budget and budget break down

An RNP provides financial support to a variety of networking activities to achieve the RNP's objectives.

The SC is requested to establish a budget on an annual basis. It is common practice that the Chair and the Coordinator (when applicable) draft the budget, in consultation with the ESF office and submit it to the SC for approval. As budget holder, ESF reserves the right to ensure that the SC's decisions are in line with ESF principles and objectives. A description of typical budget allocations is provided in Appendix I.

Direct research costs linked to specific research activities, e.g. salaries, equipment and consumables, are not eligible, as such costs should be supported directly at the national or international (e.g. EU) level.

Unused funds

In their 3rd or 4th year of activity (for RNPs with a duration of respectively 4 or 5 years) the ESF team will identify RNPs that have a carryover of unspent funds which represents the equivalent or above 1 full year of contributions.

When this is the case, a **realistic plan of activities** to take place over the remaining year(s) will be requested from the Chair, including a concrete indication of the necessary funding. It is then the responsibility of the relevant ESF Head of Unit to decide whether this plan provides *sufficient justification* to proceed with a **full annual call for contributions** for that year.

Alternatively, ESF may decide to:
a. **Reduce** the annual call for contributions on the basis of planned activities and related necessary funding; (Note: a reduced call for contributions can be applied in the year-before-last and/or in the last year of the RNP)
   or
b. **Cancel** the last annual call for contributions as sufficient funds are available for the funding of remaining planned activities.

IV. RNP ACTIVITIES

To achieve its objectives, a RNP can carry out a range of different activities, namely:

- Science meetings (workshops, conferences or schools);
- Travel grants for short and exchange visits;
- Publication of information brochures, newsletters, leaflets, scientific books and meeting proceedings, etc.;
- Creation of websites;
- Creation of scientific databases at the European level.

All activities must be in the interest of the RNP. The decision on funding lies with the SC, having assessed scientific merit and relevance to the RNP, and taking into account ESF rules and criteria set out in the present guidelines.

Science Meetings

Science meetings are organised either by the Steering Committee (SC) or on the basis of an open call for proposals. In case of an open call, the scientific community can apply for RNP funds to organise a science meeting within the scope and interest of the RNP. Alternatively, in case thematic teams are part of the RNP proposal, each team usually organises one or several science meetings per year. The way in which science meetings will be organised during the course of the RNP will have been mentioned in the proposal. Science meetings may take various forms:

- *A workshop* may bring together between 10 and 50 participants for two to four days to focus on a specific issue;
- *A conference* is a scientific meeting with a broader impact – brings together a larger number of participants (> 50) for two to four days and consists of lectures, exchange of information and discussion on developments in a specific scientific area;
- *A school* is directed towards graduate students who have completed a master's degree, doctoral students or the equivalent. It may bring together between 30 to 150 participants to focus on a specific issue with a clear training element. The duration of a school would normally be one to two weeks.

Organisers of RNP science meetings may apply for co-sponsorship.

Eligibility
- Organisers should be scientists/researchers based in a country in which the ESF has a Member Organisation (MO) or from any other country in which a contributing organisation to the RNP is based;
- All science meetings are normally *geographically limited to contributing countries*.

Decisions on the funding of science meetings are taken by the SC, in accordance with the *Guidelines concerning the Assessment of Applications for Funding* (Appendix C).

Full details of on application procedures, organisational and financial aspects are provided in Appendix E.

Short and Exchange Visit Grants

Short and exchange visit grants should be advertised on the basis of an open call for applications issued by the SC, using the means considered most appropriate (advertising in a scientific journal, email circulation, website, etc.). An RNP may support two types of travel grants:

- *Short visits* of up to 15 days;
- *Exchange visits*, from 15 days to six months, renewable.

Grants must be relevant to the overall aims of the RNP.

Eligibility

Applicants may be either pre-or post-doctoral and must:

- undertake work within the scope of the RNP;
- apply to stay in a country other than the country of origin;
- return to the institution of origin upon termination, so that the applicant's institution may benefit from the broadened knowledge of the scientist.

Having assessed scientific merit and relevance to the RNP, preference should normally be given to applications in the following order:

1. between contributing countries;
2. between a contributing country and a non-contributing ESF member country;
3. between a contributing country and a non-ESF member country in Europe;
4. between a contributing country and any country not covered by 1-3.

Researchers from countries with ESF Observer status not contributing to the RNP should be considered non-ESF. F. In the case of doubt, decisions on eligibility will be taken by the ESF Head of Unit.

The SC may decide to apply its own criteria in addition to the above. These criteria must be discussed and agreed at the SC meeting prior to any call. The SC may also decide to define the priority topics within the field of the RNP.

Decisions on grants awarded will be taken by the RNP SC, in accordance with the ***Guidelines concerning the Assessment of Applications for Funding*** (Appendix C).

The full details of short and exchange visit grant procedures are provided in Appendix F.

Publicity, Website and Publications

Once an RNP is officially launched, effort is put in communicating its objectives and ways of operating.

Publicity starts with the production of an RNP brochure, which must be finalised ***within the first six months of the RNP.*** In subsequent years, a regular newsletter may be produced, informing the relevant scientific community of the progress being made. Other communication activities may involve the production of a poster, of press releases, the announcement of the RNP activities in scientific journals, participation in radio or television programmes, etc.

As a standard service, ESF creates web pages for each of its RNPs. However, the SC is encouraged to set up its own dedicated website. More information on websites is provided in Appendix H.

Various types of scientific publications may be enabled by the RNP. This includes books or book chapters, journal articles or entire special issues, proceedings, reviews, etc. For more information on the publication of books, see Appendix G.

ESF visibility

To ensure visibility of the RNP in supporting publicity, websites and publications, the authors should clearly identify such productions as being ESF-funded or co-funded activities, e.g. in announcements, books, abstracts, etc. ESF MOs contributing to the activity should also be credited in relevant publications. The ESF logo, remit and acknowledgement text for inclusion in such material can be made available by ESF upon request. A copy of any article or publication resulting from an ESF-sponsored activity should be sent to ESF.

Open Access

RNP participants are encouraged to deposit an electronic copy of any scientific publication relating to the RNP in an institutional or subject-based repository at the moment of publication. In addition, they are expected to ensure that this electronic copy becomes freely and electronically available according to the following conditions:

- immediately if the scientific publication is published "open access", i.e. if an electronic version is also available free of charge via the publisher;
  or
- within 12 months of publication for RNPs within social sciences and humanities, and within six months for RNPs in other scientific domains.

Data Curation[1] and Management

In recent years, the outcome of RNPs has increasingly led to the creation of scientific databases, registries, data collections, digital resources, and other relevant infrastructures. RNPs may pursue the establishment of any of these infrastructures at the European level, including the aggregation of existing national databases under one framework.

ESF should be clearly acknowledged for the publication of research outcomes in the forms cited above.

The SC is responsible for the implementation of the data curation and management plan as submitted within the original proposal (when applicable). Deviations from such plan must be justified.

The data curation and management plan provides details on the organisation of research data and includes the following sections:

1. Aims and purpose (e.g. 'added value' to be provided by the new data created or captured in relation to existing datasets and resources);
2. Target audience (e.g. who will benefit);
3. Time schedule;
4. Type of data to be created or captured (e.g. patient records, genome sequences, historical sources, demographic details, seismologic graphs) as well as kind of methods and standards to be used;
5. Access and sharing of data (e.g. public trusted repositories to be used);
6. Ethical and privacy issues to be tackled;
7. Long-term strategy for storing, maintaining, updating, enriching and archiving the data. The plan should indicate explicitly how maintenance, updating and quality assurance will be ensured after the end of the Programme;
8. Costs for implementing and maintaining the planned database infrastructure/platform. For details on allowable costs, see **Appendix I**.

Access

The "OECD Principles and Guidelines for Access to Research Data from Public Funding" apply when using public funds to produce publicly accessible knowledge (please refer to http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/9/61/38500813.pdf).

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[1] *Digital curation involves maintaining, preserving and adding value to a trusted body of digital information (research data) throughout its lifecycle for current and future use (derived from definition by Digital Curation Centre, UK)*

V. REPORTING

Evaluation of the RNP

ESF evaluates RNPs at the mid and final term, on the basis of written reports provided by the Chairs and which are assessed at the plenary meetings of the relevant Standing Committees. The evaluation reports of an RNP will be sent to organisations contributing to it with, for the mid-term report, a recommendation to continue or terminate funding. As reports need to be assessed externally the Chair is expected to submit the relevant report at or before the indicated deadline. Sufficient time must be made available for peer reviewing prior to the plenary meeting. The ESF team will inform the Chair of the deadline by which a report is due.

- The reports will be evaluated according to the criteria provided in Appendix K;
- Content and structure of the mid-term report are provided in Appendix L;
- Content and structure of the final report are provided in Appendix M.

Failure to submit a report will proscribe the Chair from submitting further proposals for ESF activities, and may result in the retention of funds.

General Reporting

All documents relating to Steering Committee meetings, selection and decisions on funding for travel grants and scientific meetings, other financial commitments, etc., must be provided to the ESF office. The ESF office will retain these and financial documents relating to the RNP in accordance with its audit requirements.

VI. DURATION AND EXTENSIONS

The first SC meeting marks the launch of the RNP. The RNP will run for either four or five years (as specified in the original proposal) from this date onwards. Editorial or publishing activities may take place for up to two years after the official completion date provided funds have been committed prior to this date.

Limited extensions, up to six months, may be granted in exceptional circumstances, and with no additional funding. Extensions should be considered only in order not to miss a major scientific opportunity, and must not be considered if the principal objective of the extension is "to use unspent funds". A written request should be submitted by the Chair to ESF. Decisions on extensions are the responsibility of the ESF Head of Unit and ESF Directorate. RNPs requiring extra funds or longer extensions (e.g. a new RNP) should submit a follow-up RNP proposal for consideration in the normal, competitive, peer-reviewed manner.

APPENDIX A: *Template for a Standard Steering Committee Agenda*

EUROPEAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Standing Committee for the xxx (acronym)

Research Networking Programme on "xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx", 20xx-20xx

xxx Steering Committee Meeting
Date, Location

AGENDA

Item 1   **Welcome and opening remarks**

Item 2   **Approval of the agenda and minutes of the previous meeting**

Item 3   **State of the art of networking activities (including calls, assessments of applications & reports)**

Item 4   **Budget and expenditures**

Item x   **Report of Coordinator on his/her activities (if applicable)**

Item x   **Preparation of mid- or final reports (when applicable)**

Item x   **Feedback on mid-term report evaluation (when applicable)**

Item x   **Any Other Business**

Item x   **Date and location of next meeting**

APPENDIX B: *Role of RNP Coordinator*

The role of the RNP Coordinator is to assist the Chair and the Steering Committee (SC) in achieving the Programme aims and objectives. The RNP Coordinator should be familiar with the RNP guidelines and procedures. The Coordinator's tasks typically include the following:

- Act as liaison with the ESF office and as day-to-day contact point for the SC and researchers involved in the RNP;
- Provide assistance to the Chair in organising SC meetings, from logistical matters to the preparation of meeting documents (including budget and minutes, except for the kick off meeting, organised by ESF);
- Provide information on funding opportunities and modalities within the RNP, as well as assistance in the organisation of scientific activities (e.g. workshops, conferences, schools, short and exchange visits);
- Assist with the publication and dissemination activities of the RNP (e.g. books, newsletters), including development and maintenance of an external web site (when applicable);
- Assist with the preparation of reports and other documentation and take responsibility for collecting the full documentation of the RNP.

Profile

In general, the person appointed should be based at the Chair's institution, be familiar with the field of the RNP and have good administrative and organisational skills. Typically, he / she is an administrator, a PhD student or an early career researcher.

Appointment details

The level of involvement required should be justified by the type and number of activities of the RNP, subject also to the maxima given in the table below. The related financial contribution towards the employment costs will, in all cases, not exceed 12% of the RNP's annual networking budget and should be justified by appropriate documentation (e.g. salary scales applied by the potential Coordinator's institution) at the time of the request.

	Maximum time effort (FTE)	Max % of RNP Networking budget
RNP up to 100 000€ Networking budget	0.2 (i.e. 1 day/week)	12
RNP above 100 000€ Networking budget	0.3 (i.e. 1,5 day/week)	12

The results of the Coordinator's activities are subject to a yearly evaluation by the RNP's SC. ESF reserves the right to modify or cancel its financial contribution depending on this yearly evaluation. All responsibility for human resources management and costs related to the running and termination of the Coordinator's contract are carried by the university or institution, and are not covered by the financial contribution from ESF.

ESF will send a letter signed by the ESF Director of Administration and Finance and the relevant ESF Head of Unit assuring that all relevant payments will be made upon reception of a yearly invoice from the university or institution, covering the contribution up to the agreed level, during the agreed period of appointment. No contracts are made between ESF and the university or institution. There is therefore no contractual obligation between the ESF and the Coordinator employed by the university or institution.

An official statement on expenditure should be provided to the ESF at the end of each financial year by the university or institution employing the Coordinator. It should clearly indicate the level of the ESF contribution in relation to the employment costs of the Coordinator as well as the proportion of FTE (Full Time Equivalent) devoted to the activity.

The budget heading covers only contributions towards the employment costs. Costs of travel to RNP meetings of the RNP Coordinator shall be covered from the relevant meetings' budget lines.

APPENDIX C: *Guidelines for RNP Steering Committees concerning the assessment of applications for funding*

ESF follows certain standards in its own assessment processes, and expects ESF standards to be followed within its RNPs when allocating ESF funds.

1. ESF delegates powers of approval for RNP awards to the Steering Committee (SC). The SC must agree to any further delegation of these powers;

2. The SC may establish an executive group of its members to assess proposals and to select those recommended for funding. If such a group is set up, there should be a rotation of members;

3. It is recommended that an executive group consist of more than two persons: at least two members plus one person authorised to take the decision (typically the SC Chair) to ensure that problems of conflicts of interests be properly addressed. External advice may be sought;

4. The SC should agree on the criteria for assessing proposals in line with the RNP objectives. It may decide to apply additional criteria beyond those defined by ESF for the relevant activity. All criteria should be made known to potential applicants in advance;

5. In operating these criteria, it is expected that every care will be taken to avoid any bias, intentional or unintentional, on the grounds of gender, age or country of work (within the bounds of the RNP collaboration). However, the SC may set overt criteria to address a specific RNP need, e.g. regional / national balance in an activity, or fellowships for young researchers;

6. Decisions taken under delegation from the SC should be reported at the SC's next meeting;

7. Records of decisions, and any related assessments or rationale, should be archived with the ESF;

8. SC members and other assessors should not involve themselves in the assessment of proposals in which they have a personal or financial interest. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. uniqueness of expertise), such a bar may be waived with the agreement of the other members involved, if the interest is declared and considered not to compromise the potential decision;

9. Evidence of contravention of these guidelines with respect to bias or interest may result in removal of the member from the SC and notification to the relevant ESF Member Organisation(s).

APPENDIX D: *Science meetings: Guidelines for proposers and awarded organisers*

The Steering Committee (SC) of the RNP will consider proposals for workshops (10-50 participants), conferences (>50) and schools (30-150 participants) on topics within the scope of the RNP and with a European or international dimension.

Eligibility criteria for application

Applicants

Applicants should be established scientists / researchers based in a country in which the ESF has a Member Organisation (MO) or from any other country in which a contributing organisation is based.

Location

Meetings should normally take place in countries that financially support the RNP (cf. information provided on relevant RNP web page). Exceptional cases must be justified and approved by ESF.

Participants

Priority should be given to participants from countries which financially support the RNP, followed by participants from other, non contributing, ESF MO countries. The involvement of young scientists is strongly encouraged. Organisers are asked to ensure balanced geographical and gender representation amongst the participants.

The participation of researchers from industry and the private sector in ESF meetings is welcome, and is subject to the basic principles set out in Appendix E.

Assessment procedure

Applications will be assessed on the basis of their scientific quality and relevance to the RNP by the RNP's Steering Committee (SC) or a sub-group of the Committee set up for that purpose.

Submission procedure and contents of proposal

The SC may decide to have a call for proposals with a specific deadline, or operate on a continuous submission basis.

Applications should be submitted online **at least three months** before the planned starting date of the event. The form can be accessed from the relevant RNP webpage. Applications should include the information listed below but additional information related to selection criteria may also be requested. Applicants should check the relevant RNP website.

1. Scientific Summary (max. 1000 words) and Abstract (max. 50-70 words);
2. Meeting Programme;
3. Curriculum Vitae of Scientific Organiser including list of five most relevant publications during the last five years;
4. Provisional list of proposed speakers/participants;
5. *Additionally, to be submitted directly in the online form*: Estimated budget indicating the breakdown for travel, accommodation, meals and any other expenses.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the assessment by ESF via email.

What the funds should be used for

Amount awarded

The amount of funding awarded for a meeting will be decided by the RNP SC on the basis of the proposal submitted and the RNP funds available for that purpose.

Expenses to be covered by RNP funding

ESF funding should be principally used to cover the travel and accommodation costs of speakers and participants. Costs for hiring meeting facilities should be kept to a minimum. Where possible, organisers should try to negotiate the use of meeting facilities within their universities / institutes either as an in-kind contribution or for a minimum fee.

Expenses covered to a limited extent

ESF funding should not be used to support more than 10% of speakers from non-ESF member countries (calculated on the basis of the total number of attendees funded by ESF). The number of participants from non-ESF member countries can be increased provided they are funded from a source other than ESF. Special cases must be justified and agreed upon by ESF.

Local administrative costs (where applicable) should not exceed 10% of the ESF funding for the meeting. Such costs include administrative and technical assistance, printing, photocopying, telephone, fax, email etc. Additional support (consumables) for schools may be considered.

Expenses not covered by the RNP funding

Honoraria are normally not paid by ESF and the organisers of ESF meetings and speakers will not be remunerated.

ESF funding should not be used for social events such as excursions, concerts etc. which do not have any direct scientific link to the RNP's objectives.

Non- profit making event

Scientific meetings organised by ESF are expected to be non-profit making. Participants at ESF meetings should not be required to pay registration fees.

Co-sponsoring

ESF funding may be used to fully or partially fund a meeting. Organisers of ESF meetings are encouraged to apply for additional funding, e.g. from national research organisations, universities, private companies etc. It is the responsibility of the Chair or organiser of the activity and his / her institution to ensure that ESF approval is obtained prior to making any contractual commitments and that sponsors from the private sector comply with ESF policy conditions as outlined in Appendix E.

Administrative procedure and conditions of award

The organiser must confirm acceptance of the award and adherence to the present *Guidelines* to ESF using the online form at the web address indicated in the email notification of award.

Upon receipt of a signed hard copy of the acceptance form, the ESF will make an advance payment of 80% of the allocated grant, normally two months before the meeting, for direct coverage of all local costs and direct travel refund to participants.

The final payment will be made upon satisfactory and timely completion of the reporting requirements described further on and validation of the reports by the SC and ESF.

Penalties apply in case of delay in reporting. Any unspent balance must be returned to the ESF.

Implementation of the awarded meeting

Meeting organisation

The organiser is responsible for all meeting arrangements, including preliminary contacts with all prospective participants. An attendance and accommodation form may be circulated for participants to return directly to the organiser who will then supervise the designated hotel reservations and practical arrangements.

The organiser should notify participants well in advance of the meeting of the exact details concerning reimbursement for meeting expenses, e.g. full payment for each participant, payment for speakers only, payment of costs up to a certain limit. Cases where participants from non-contributing countries are supported by the RNP to participate should be clearly indicated. When making payments, the organisers must follow ESF's financial rules for the reimbursement of expenses (cf. Appendix J).

ESF visibility

To heighten awareness of the ESF supporting an event, the organiser should clearly identify the meeting as an ESF-funded or co-funded activity, e.g. in announcements, RNP abstracts, etc. Organisations contributing to the activity should also be credited in relevant publications. The ESF remit and ESF logos are available at the following link (http://www.esf.org/index.php?id=2429).

Reporting requirements after the meeting

A final report must be submitted online by the organiser within two months of the event (the link is provided in the email notifying the organiser of the transfer of the advance payment). The final report includes the following three elements:

1. **Scientific report**

   Organisers are required to upload a **scientific report** in.pdf or .doc format which will represent the basis for the evaluation of the activity. The report should not exceed seven A4 pages and contain the following items:

   - summary (up to one page);
   - description of the scientific content of and discussions at the event (up to four pages);
   - assessment of the results and impact of the event on the future directions of the field (up to two pages);
   - Annexes: programme of the meeting and full list of speakers and participants.

2. **Financial report**

   When a departmental or other locally audited account is provided by the organiser (e.g. university or institute), it is sufficient to fill in the ESF financial statement form online (listing total expenditure for travel, accommodation, meals and local administrative costs where applicable.) and forward a hard copy of the **ESF final payment form** (automatically generated once the report has been submitted) signed by the local organiser and the relevant organisation's finance officer to the ESF. In this case, original bills are not required, but must be kept by the organisation in case of auditing.

   When in very exceptional circumstances the payment from ESF is made into an account not operated by an official organisation, the account holder must provide a detailed financial statement with original justification of all expenditure (travel tickets, bills, receipts, etc.).

3. *List of participants*

A list of <u>all</u> meeting participants must be entered online. The list should include for each participant: title, full name, gender and affiliation, comprising full professional address and email address.

Note: In line with French law and with European Union directives on the protection of personal data, it is the organiser's responsibility to inform participants that their information will be entered into the ESF database (participants will also receive an automatic notification from ESF). Further information on the ways in which such information will be used by ESF can be found at http://www.esf.org/data.

Evaluation and validation

The scientific report will be evaluated by the RNP SC, normally by the sub-group delegated to recommend the awards. Unless other arrangements have been made, the contents of the report will be considered as being in the public domain and will be published on the RNP web pages and/or may be used, suitably acknowledged, in the compilation of reports submitted by the RNP to ESF.

The financial report will be validated by ESF. The reporting will be considered incomplete if the full list of participants has not been submitted online.

Penalties

If the reports are not received within the two-month deadline, the ESF reserves the right to retain the outstanding funds from the award. In the case of unreasonable delay (6 months or more), the advance will also have to be returned to ESF upon notification by formal letter with copy to the relevant authorities within the organiser's institution.

Notification to the organiser prior to each step will occur via email as follows:

- 2 months after the meeting: 1st reminder, outlining penalties to ensue in case of further delay;
- 4 months after the meeting: 2nd reminder; balance on the award forfeited;
- 6 months after the meeting: final notification; 80% advance on the award reclaimed and notification of ensuing formal letter with copy to organiser's institution

In addition, the failure to comply with the reporting requirements will be recorded in the ESF database and this fact brought to the attention of ESF recommending panels should the organiser submit any further proposals for funding under an ESF instrument.

APPENDIX E: *Participation of the private sector in RNP science activities*

In promoting research within Europe, the ESF wishes to bring together the expertise which is available within all sectors of the research community. Although ESF activities tend to operate in the more 'academic' part of the research spectrum, there may nevertheless be a strong interest from non-public sectors, and their participation in ESF actions is encouraged. Such participation can be an important and desirable element for the mutual benefit of the parties involved.

Participation of researchers from the private sector

The basic principles for the participation of researchers from industry and other parts of the private sector are set out below:

- All scientific actions within ESF take place 'openly', i.e. there shall be **no confidential information**. Intellectual Property Rights or copyright are the property of all participants contributing financially or intellectually to the activity;
- ESF does not favour any one private sector participant over another and so ESF activities are open to all researchers who have the expertise to be involved;
- Industrial and other private sector participants are responsible for their own costs related to travel, subsistence and accommodation.

Private sector sponsorship

The financial involvement of the private sector in ESF activities is welcomed, subject to certain conditions. In particular:

- Sponsorship of ESF supported science activities and sponsorship of websites of these activities is conditional on the sponsors assuring ESF, in writing, that they comply with, or are willing to comply with, ESF policy guidelines relevant to the sponsor's field of activity, particularly in relation to good research practice and ethical matters. Further information on ESF policy guidelines can be obtained from the ESF office or at http://www.esf.org/activities/science-policy/science-policy-and-the-standing-committeesexpert-boards.html);
- Sponsorship arrangements cannot be of an exclusive nature.

APPENDIX F: *Short and Exchange Visit Grants: Guidelines for applicants and grantees*

Planned visits should be directly relevant to the scope of the RNP. There are two types of grants:

- *Short visits* of up to 15 days;
- *Exchange visits*, from 15 days to six months, renewable.

Eligibility criteria and priority order of grant allocation

Applicants may be either at the pre or post-doctoral level and must:

1. apply to stay in a country other than the country of origin;
2. return to the institution of origin upon termination, so that the applicant's institution may benefit from the broadened knowledge of the scientist.

The RNP's Steering Committee (SC) or the sub-group of the Committee set up for that purpose, having assessed scientific merit and relevance to the RNP, will normally give preference to applications in the following order:

1. between contributing countries;
2. between a contributing country and a non-contributing ESF member country;
3. between a contributing country and a non-ESF member country in Europe;
4. between a contributing country and any country not covered by 1-3.

Researchers from countries with ESF Observer status not contributing to the RNP are considered non-ESF. In the case of doubt, decisions on eligibility will be taken by the ESF Head of Unit (cf. information provided on relevant RNP web page for list of contributing countries).

How to apply for funding

The SC may decide to have a *call for proposals with a specific deadline,* or operate on a *continuous submission* basis.

Applications should be submitted online *at least two months* before the planned starting date of the exchange. The forms can be accessed from the relevant RNP website. Applications should include the information listed below but additional information related to additional selection criteria may also be requested. Applicants should check the relevant RNP website.

Short visit grant applications include:	*Exchange visit grant applications include:*
• A short description of the proposed project work (about 250 words) and aim of the visit; • A curriculum vitae of two A4 pages; • Full address details of the prospective host(s); • Proposed starting date; • Estimated travel costs.	• A short description of the proposed project work (about 1000 words) and aim of the visit; • A curriculum vitae of two A4 pages; • List of five most recent publications; • A letter of recommendation from someone familiar with the applicant's work; • A letter of acceptance from the host at the receiving institution; • Full address details of the prospective host(s); • Proposed starting date; • Estimated travel costs.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the evaluation by ESF via email.

What the funds covers

	Short visits grants (max. 15 days)	**Exchange visit grants** (15 days – max 6 months)
Allowance	85 € per day	1600 € per month 400 € per week 57 € per day
Travel expenses *	Up to a maximum of 500 €	Up to a maximum of 500 €

** travel expenses cover the expenses of **one** return journey to and from the host institute. It does not normally cover shipment costs.*

The grants do not cover health insurance, taxes, or retirement scheme contributions.

Administrative procedure and conditions of award

The grantee must confirm acceptance of the award and adherence to the present *Guidelines* to ESF using the online form at the web address indicated in the email notification of award and return a signed hard copy to ESF.

Awarded funds will be transferred by ESF as follows:

	Short visit grants	**Exchange visit grants**
Advance payment	Not applicable	Two months before the start of the exchange. It represents 80% of the total allowance granted
Final payment	After the visit, upon timely and satisfactory completion of the reporting requirements described below and validation of the reports by the SC and ESF	

If the length of stay is shorter than the foreseen period, the payment will be adjusted accordingly. Any unspent balance must be returned to the ESF.

Penalties apply in case of delay in reporting.

In the case of cancellation or unreasonable delay of an exchange visit grant (six months or more), all advances must be returned to the ESF.

Reporting requirements after the short/exchange visit

A final report must be submitted online within **one month** after the end of the visit (the link is provided either in the email of award (short visit) or in the email informing the grantee of the transfer of the advance payment (exchange visit)). The final report is composed of the following three elements for both short and exchange visit grants:

1. A *scientific report* in .pdf or .doc format. It should contain the following information and not exceed 6-8 A4 pages:

   1. Purpose of the visit;
   2. Description of the work carried out during the visit;
   3. Description of the main results obtained;
   4. Future collaboration with host institution (if applicable);
   5. Projected publications / articles resulting or to result from the grant (ESF must be acknowledged in publications resulting from the grantee's work in relation with the grant);
   6. Other comments (if any).

2. a signed *host statement form**

3. a completed and signed *balance payment form** accompanied by the original travel tickets

*items automatically generated once the online report has been submitted.

Evaluation and validation

The scientific report will be evaluated within the RNP, normally by the sub-group delegated to recommend the awards, and if necessary using external peer review. Unless other arrangements are agreed upon, the contents of the report will be considered as being in the public domain and may be used, suitably acknowledged, in the compilation of reports submitted by the RNP to ESF. Reports may also be published on the RNPs' website and / or the ESF website.

The balance payment form will be validated by ESF on the basis of the original travel tickets provided. The reporting will be considered incomplete without the signed host statement form.

Penalties

If the reports are not received within the one-month deadline, the ESF reserves the right to a) retain the outstanding funds from the award for Exchange visit grants or b) deduct 20% from the award for Short visit grants. In the case of unreasonable delay (3 months or more), the advance payment for Exchange visit grants will also have to be returned to ESF upon notification by formal letter with copy to the relevant authorities within the grantee's institution while for Short visit grants, the award will be fully retained by ESF after notification by formal letter with copy to the relevant authorities within the grantee's institution.

Notification to the grantee prior to each step will occur via email as follows:

- 1 month after the visit: 1st reminder, outlining penalties to ensue in case of further delay;
- 2 months after the visit: 2nd reminder; balance on the award forfeited for Exchange visit grants / 20% to be deducted from the award for Short visit grants
- 3 months after the visit: final notification; Advance payment on the award (80% of the subsistence allowance) reclaimed for Exchange visit grants / award forfeited for Short visit grants; notification of ensuing formal letter with copy to grantee's institution.

In addition, the failure to comply with the reporting requirements will be recorded in the ESF database and this fact brought to the attention of ESF recommending panels should the grantee submit any further applications for funding under an ESF instrument.

APPENDIX G: *Book publications*

Results of RNPs may be published in scientific journals according to standard procedures for submission of manuscripts. The present guidelines are not meant for such papers. Instead, they are directed towards book publications subsidised through the RNP funding (expenses for editing costs, illustrations etc. can be covered from the publication budget line, see Appendix I). The following general guidelines should be adhered to:

1. Normally, the RNP Steering Committee (SC) is expected to identify a suitable publisher, and make a proposal on issues such as number of volumes, pages, illustrations, and of production issues such as binding and dates. This entails that all necessary permission has been sought and granted, e.g. permission for illustrations. This is the responsibility of the individual authors. In addition, this should be realised in accordance with the requirements of the publisher.

2. ESF does not have to be involved in the negotiation with the publisher and production of a contract, provided that the SC ensures that the publishers are familiar with the following preconditions:

   - Prior to finalising the contract, the publisher provides the SC with a budget for the total publication costs. This budget constitutes the basis for negotiations on the size of royalties, for instance royalties paid upon sale of a certain number of copies.
   - ESF should receive a copy of the draft contract and be able to negotiate any changes as far as financial commitment and legal clauses are regarded. Specific items to be included in the contract are:
     - The number of print copies, and to whom they should be given, e.g. ESF (typically three free copies), SC members, editors;
     - The possibility for participants and for ESF to purchase additional copies from the publisher at a discount price. The percentage discount must be included in the negotiations and in the contract preconditions;
     - Print copies should be distributed by the publisher upon receipt of pre-addressed mailing lists, and at the publisher's expense;
     - Copyright: the copyright should be shared between authors, editor(s) and the publisher. Responsibility concerning potential copyright infringement should be shared between author, editor(s) and publisher.
   - Following SC and ESF approval, the volume editors/authors may act as signatories of the contract directly with the publisher.

3. ESF will provide the SC with the ESF logo, the remit and acknowledgement texts for inclusion in the publications.

APPENDIX H: *Websites*

Basic information on the RNP will be posted on the ESF web pages (summary, list of Steering Committee (SC), funding organisations, calls for proposals). In addition, the SC is strongly encouraged to set up its own dedicated website, which will have more detailed content and can have open and restricted (members-only) pages.

This website is expected to serve as a communication platform between participants.

ESF does not take any responsibility for the editorial content of the website developed by the SC.
The following general guidelines should be adhered to:

1. The ESF logo should be visible and the RNP should be clearly identified as an RNP in the title on the activity's homepage. The RNP may have its own logo in addition;

2. A brief introduction summarising the aims of the RNP with reference and hyperlink to the ESF website should be included in the homepage;

3. The disclosure of persons' names, addresses, activities, etc., should follow general EU regulations (more at http://www.esf.org/data) and the relevant national rules for data protection, e.g. the individual person has to give his/her agreement. Restricted access to this information could be envisaged;

4. Webmasters of participating research organisations have to be informed of any links to their website;

5. Advertisements from private companies and sponsorship are possible through an agreement between the company and the host organisation, complying with ESF guidelines and ethical standards (a standard agreement can be obtained from ESF);

6. Scientific publications or pictures under copyright cannot be copied on to the website without prior permission of the publisher and/or author.

APPENDIX I: *Description of commonly used budget lines*

Committee meeting expenses

The travel and associated costs of Steering Committee (SC) members, the RNP Coordinator and/or Advisory Experts (if applicable), and ESF staff for attendance at SC meetings or sub-meetings will be covered by the RNP in accordance with ESF rules for reimbursement of expenses (cf. Appendix J). Travel claims are to be sent back to the ESF Administrator in charge of the RNP *within the month following the meeting*.

This budget heading also covers:

- limited and justified costs of travel other than participation in meetings of the Programme incurred by the Chair and approved by the Steering Committee;
- any costs of ESF mid-term or final review meetings on the Programme.

To economise on resources and whenever possible, a SC meeting should be scheduled in conjunction with an RNP workshop or conference and held at a convenient European location (i.e. in a country financially supporting the RNP) or at the home institute of a member of the Committee.

RNP Coordinator (optional)

The financial contribution towards the employment costs of a Coordinator will, in all cases, not exceed 12% of the RNP's annual networking budget and should be justified by appropriate documentation (ex: salary grids applied by the potential Coordinator's institution, etc.) at the time of the request.

	Maximum time effort (FTE)	Max % of RNP Networking budget
RNP up to 100 000€ Networking budget	0.2 (i.e. 1 day/week)	12
RNP above 100 000€ Networking budget	0.3 (i.e. 1,5 day/week)	12

A detailed description of the tasks of the Coordinator is provided in Appendix B.

External administrative costs (optional)

In some cases a Chair and / or RNP Coordinator may need to claim administrative costs incurred by organising and managing the various activities related to the RNP. The main items eligible are postage, fax, telephone facilities and other office running expenses. Purchase of computers, printers, fax machines or other equipment, rental of space or subscription to a network provider is not covered. Charges under this heading will be reimbursed against claims made by the Chair's or Coordinator's institution and are limited, in all cases, to 10% of the RNP's annual networking budget.

Science meetings

All costs associated to science meetings supported by an RNP fall under this heading.

Short and exchange visit grants

All costs associated to short and exchange visits supported by an RNP fall under this heading.

Publications

This budget heading covers the RNP brochure, leaflets, books, etc. The original RNP proposal must include an estimate of the costs under the budget heading 'Publicity, websites and publications'. This budget heading includes costs related to:

1. *Publicity*

These costs are related to the production of the RNP brochure and other communication activities, such as the production of newsletters. ESF will provide an estimate of the costs involved in the production of the brochure.

2. *Websites*

The costs of maintaining the web pages of the RNP on the ESF website will be covered directly by ESF. However, costs for the development and maintenance of a local, dedicated RNP website should be entered under this budget heading.

3. *Publications*

The **direct costs** covered under this item may involve a subsidy to the publisher to assist in the production of these publications. Alternatively, it may take the form of a guarantee to buy a number of volumes.

Related costs such as editing costs and the costs of editorial group meetings will also be covered by this heading. In a more limited way, the specific costs for translations and for honoraria can also be covered. The RNP SC will be responsible for negotiating with translators and copy editors, and ensuring that the estimates stay within the publication/editorial budget. A dedicated form is available from the ESF office for reimbursement of editing and translation costs.

If a RNP intends to generate a series of working papers and/or produce a final series of edited volumes as an end result of the RNP's research activities, the SC is encouraged to make an annual provision for publications from the first year of the RNP, with the aim of using these funds towards the end of the RNP. These funds will remain available for editorial costs in the publication phase for a maximum period of two years after the official end date of the RNP.

The SC is expected to submit a publication plan to ESF, stating the timeline for publishing the books, as well as an estimate of the editorial costs involved. Any change in the timeline and publication schedule requiring a change in the budgetary provisions needs approval by the relevant ESF Head of Unit.

Data Curation and Management (optional)

Costs for the implementation and maintenance of the database infrastructure/platform (IT development, web-related development and management, data management, etc.) can be covered from the RNP budget. Such technical work (inc. occasional data input) might include honoraria if justified but not salaries. Relevant training directly associated with the curation and use of the infrastructure/platform can be foreseen.

Purchase of computers, printers, or other equipment, subscription to a network provider, hosting and storage costs for the database infrastructure are not covered. Costs for scientific activities leading to data creation and field work/studies to acquire data, make an inventory of existing resources or similar are not eligible.

The RNP SC will be responsible for negotiating with relevant service providers, and ensuring that the estimates stay within budget. ESF should be consulted prior to decisions, receive a copy of the draft contract and be able to negotiate any changes as far as financial commitment and legal clauses are regarded.

Costs supported from the "data curation and management" budget heading are limited, in all cases, to one third (1/3) of the RNP's total networking budget.

APPENDIX J: *ESF rules for the reimbursement of travel expenses*

Participants in ESF meetings should arrive and depart as close as possible to the beginning and end of the meeting. In cases where participants have been on non-ESF business either before or after the meeting, organisers should only cover expenses incurred by attendance of the ESF event, unless extension of stay is justified by a significant reduction in overall cost (resulting e.g. from reduced air fares).

Travel costs

Air tickets should be tourist class (or at a lower rate if cheaper tickets, e.g. PEX/APEX, are available). To benefit from the most economical fare, early booking is essential. Where no price is indicated on the ticket, the invoice should also be provided to the organiser.

Train tickets and train supplements may be first class.

Taxis should only be taken when convenient public transport is not available.
Costs of health, life and luggage insurance are not reimbursed under ESF rules. Cancellation insurance will only be reimbursed for PEX/APEX tickets.

Use of private car (including road tolls and fuel) should be reimbursed, unless otherwise agreed in advance, on the basis of 1st class train fare or, for longer distances, on the basis of the APEX airfare where this is more economical. An estimate of the fare from a certified travel agent should be produced with the claim for reimbursement. For short journeys by car where no public transport is available and therefore no estimate of fare can be provided, the number of miles/kilometres covered should be indicated. When two or more participants travel together by car, travel costs should be reimbursed to only one person.

Accommodation

Reimbursement of actual expenses for room and breakfast should be made only on production of hotel bills and should not include meals or incidental expenses, such as supplement for an accompanying person, laundry, bar bills, private telephone calls, etc. which are at the participant's own cost.

Meals

Lunch and dinner expenses can be reimbursed at a fixed rate of 21 € maximum, only when meals are not provided by the organiser, or by a host organisation, or by an airline.

APPENDIX K: *Evaluation Criteria for RNP Mid-term and Final Reports*

Mid-term and Final Reports are assessed by External Referees who are asked to consider the following points, forming the evaluation criteria:

1. RNP objectives

- Level to which the RNP has reached its objectives as compared to the RNP proposal
- If there were changes to the RNP initial proposal, were they justified?

2. RNP activities: scientific quality and impact

- Scientific standards of the RNP activities
- Scientific visibility and impact of:
    - Meeting and exchange activities (conferences, workshops, schools, short and exchange visits)
    - Activities linked to the establishment of databases, registries or similar infrastructures (if applicable)
    - Other activities (if applicable)
- Collaboration with:
    - Other scientific networks and organisations
    - Industry

3. European added value and RNP visibility

- European dimension of the RNP collaboration
- Impacts and benefits of the RNP to:
    - The relevant **national** research groups
    - **European** and/or the **worldwide** research community
- Benefits for young scientists

4. RNP management and finances

- Assessment of the RNP management
- Assessment of the use of funds:
    - Is the expenditure justified and in line with the initial proposal?
    - Are unspent funds (if any) justified?

5. Publicity and publications: scientific quality and impact

- Assessment of the quality and impact of:
    - Public and scientific outreach actions (i.e. aimed at publicity) such as RNP brochure, website, newsletter(s), media outreach (e.g. press releases, radio programmes), etc.
    - The most relevant scientific publications (such as books, journal articles, proceedings, etc.) enabled by the RNP

6. Future planning, recommendations and conclusions

Mid-term report only:
- Has this RNP made any difference to the European R&D scene so far?
- Is it recommended that this RNP completes its term?
- With any changes? If yes, please make recommendations and provide details

Final report only:
- Has this RNP made any difference to the European R&D scene?

APPENDIX L: *Content and Structure of the Mid-term Report*

> *It is very important to bear in mind that the future of the RNP depends on the quality of this mid-term report. The RNP Chair should aim at providing the best possible report and the best presentation of data and information.*

The mid-term report prepared by the RNP Chair (on behalf of the SC) should address the evaluation criteria of ESF (cf. Appendix K), should not exceed 4-5 pages (excluding appendices) and be structured as follows:

1. RNP objectives

The focus should be on the scientific highlights and achievements as compared to the original RNP proposal. Deviations from the proposal should be justified.

2. RNP activities: scientific quality and impact

How did the RNP activities contribute to the overall goals of the RNP until now? Examination should distinguish between types of activities as applicable:

- Meeting or exchange activities (conferences, workshops, schools, short and exchanges visits)
- Activities linked to the establishment of databases, registries or similar infrastructures
- Other activities including scientific-strategic actions, collaboration with industry, etc.

3. European added value and RNP visibility

This section should focus on issues such as the impact on and benefits to research in Europe, collaboration with other researchers and with other scientific activities / organisations in Europe and world-wide, or any other added value.

4. RNP management and finances

Up-to-date budget and expenditure statements will be provided by the ESF. This data should be used by the Chair as support to produce the report's budget and expenditure tables.

Unspent funds need to be justified, especially if the carryover of unspent funds represents more than one full year of financial contributions from the funding organisations. When this is the case, the report should indicate how this will be remedied, outlining a realistic plan of activities to take place over the remaining years.

5. Publicity and publications: scientific quality and impact

This section should outline activities in that area and how they contributed to the overall goal and impact of the RNP until now. Distinguish between:

- Public and scientific outreach (i.e. aimed at publicity) such as RNP brochure, website, newsletter(s), media outreach (e.g. press releases, radio programmes), etc.
- Scientific publications enabled by the RNP. This includes books or book chapters, journal articles or entire special issues, proceedings, reviews etc. acknowledging the ESF.

6. Future planning

Justification for the continuation of the RNP in terms of the objectives and added value of the second and final stage of the RNP should be explained.

Planned allocated amounts for the remaining activities should be provided in case the unspent funds are high (cf. item 4).

7. Appendices

- Complete list of the RNP Steering Committee members and RNP collaborators;
- List of the supporting ESF MOs (and any other financially contributing organisations);
- Up to date expenditure overview including budget headings*;
- List of RNP activities undertaken (science meetings, short and exchange visits, etc);
- Statistics showing the distribution of participants by country and gender in each activity (whenever data is available)*;
- List of outreach actions and of RNP publications containing a visible reference to / acknowledgement of the ESF**;
- Any other relevant information.

prepared by the Chair and based on the data provided by the ESF office
** use templates provided by ESF office*

APPENDIX M: *Content and Structure of the Final Report*

The final report prepared by the RNP Chair (on behalf of the SC) should address the evaluation criteria of ESF (cf. Appendix K), should not exceed 6 pages (excluding appendices) and be structured as follows:

0. Executive summary of the RNP

One to two pages, summarising contents of the report, to be posted on the RNP website(s).

1. RNP objectives

The focus should be on the scientific highlights and final achievements as compared to the original RNP proposal and the mid-term report. Deviations from the proposal should be justified.

2. RNP activities: scientific quality and impact

How did the RNP activities contribute to the overall goal of the RNP? Examination should distinguish between types of activities as applicable:

- Meeting or exchange activities (conferences, workshops, schools, short and exchanges visits)
- Activities linked to the establishment of databases, registries or similar infrastructures
- Other activities including scientific-strategic actions, collaboration with industry, etc.

3. European added value and RNP visibility

This section should focus on issues such as the impact on and benefits to research in Europe, collaboration with other researchers and with other scientific activities / organisations in Europe and worldwide, or any other added value.

4. RNP management and finances

Justification of expenditure / of unspent funds as compared to the initial proposal and mid-term report should be outlined. Unspent funds need to be clearly justified.

5. Publicity and publications: scientific quality and impact

This section should outline activities in that area and how they contributed to the overall goal and impact of the RNP. Distinguish between:

- Public and scientific outreach (i.e. aimed at publicity) such as RNP brochure, website, newsletter(s), media outreach (e.g. press releases, radio programmes), etc.
- Scientific publications enabled by the RNP. This includes books or book chapters, journal articles or entire special issues, proceedings, reviews, etc. acknowledging the ESF. A detailed publication plan is needed if scientific publications are expected to be published after the official end date of the RNP. It should include a budget and timeline for these activities (e.g. editorial meetings) to be spent within 2 years from the completion date of the programme.

6. Future perspectives

Follow-up activities within or outside the ESF, at the national, European or international level should be highlighted, as well as the possible development of future projects, potential synergies with European or nationally funded existing projects. If a database, registry or similar infrastructure was established in the frame of the RNP, include plans for future sustainability and use.

The development into other ESF activities may also be addressed in this section of the report.

7. Appendices

- Complete list of the RNP Steering Committee members and, if relevant, of external corporate collaborators (networks, organisations, associations, etc.);
- List of the supporting ESF MOs (and any other financially contributing organisations);
- Up to date expenditure overview including budget headings*);
- List of RNP activities undertaken (science meetings, short and exchange visits, etc);
- Statistics showing the distribution of participants by country and gender in each activity (whenever data is available)*;
- Databases/digital infrastructures (if applicable): summary information on scope, access policy (open to scientific community or not), number of users, documentation (e.g. methodology on data acquisition, documentation on compliance to technical standards, etc.) and dissemination activities (e.g. training)
- List of outreach actions and of RNP publications containing a visible reference to / acknowledgement of the ESF**;
  Optional: Hardcopies of the main RNP publications (scientific papers / books / conference proceedings, etc.) if not provided to ESF before;
- Any other relevant information.

prepared by the Chair and based on the data provided by the ESF office
*** use templates provided by ESF office*