

# SYNTHESYS

## Synthesis of systematic resources

### SYNTHESYS User Selection Panel (USP) guidelines

URL for scoring applications: <http://application.synthesys.info/synthesys3/SynthAdmin/score/>

Please login using your usual SYNTHESYS account details.

#### General points for information

- For each call, no more than 15% of the number of Users **and** the number of User Days per TAF can be a staff member from a SYNTHESYS consortium institution.
- For each call, no more than 10% of Users can be a repeat visitor to any TAF from earlier rounds of the same project. **Please note that visitors from SYNTHESYS1 (Feb 04-July 09) or SYNTHESYS2 (Sept 09-Aug 13) are not considered repeats in SYNTHESYS3.** However, the USP should consider that prior SYNTHESYS1&2 Users with a proven track record of delivering high quality outputs are likely to do so again; they should be considered favorable and above prior SYNTHESYS1&2 Users who have not delivered high quality outputs. Furthermore, all else being equal, an applicant with no previous access to a TAF may be viewed as higher priority than an applicant who has received previous access (whether SYNTHESYS-funded or not). Additionally, a User may not be allocated more than 60 User Days to a specific TAF throughout the duration of SYNTHESYS 3.

Applications should focus on a research project. This can have a small training component, but the main aim cannot be training. It is the responsibility of the EU People Programme to deliver training, not Infrastructures Programme.

- If a 'facility' (e.g. molecular sequencing lab or SEM) is available in the applicant's home institution (or accessible in their home country) then the applicant must clearly justify why they need to use the facilities of the TAF. SYNTHESYS cannot be used as a service lab. There needs to be strong justification for visiting the TAF facilities, for example, the applicant may need access to the unique staff expertise.
- Scorers **must** leave informative notes in the 'Additional comments' section for each application they assess. The TAF Administrator is responsible for drafting feedback comments to applicants based on these comments and the discussions of the USP.
- Scorer comments are **not** visible to applicants.

#### Scoring

Inevitably USP members' scores vary and the comments below are designed to help calibrate against a degree of variation. Discussion at the USP will finalise the ranking of applications to ensure consensus and fairness to all applicants.

Due to the way the marking scheme is structured a minimum of around 40% is almost certain to be given. Most total marks fall in the range 50-80. In practice, the funding cut-off is generally around the good to very good level.

To ensure fair treatment of the applications, it is crucial that the various experts interpret the scale of marks in as similar a fashion as possible. Please make sure that you are thoroughly familiar with the guidelines below.

Please note that all six questions are marked out of ten then weighted to give a score out of 100% as follows:

# SYNTHESYS

## Synthesis of systematic resources

Methodology	Research excellence	Supporting statement	Justification	Expected gains	Scientific merit
30/100	10/100	10/100	25/100	10/100	15/100

>85% **Exceptional** - Key publications are expected. The researchers are among the best in their field or show the potential to be so. The proposal shows no weak points including robust research plan and very strong justification for collections access and resonance with high relevance to the European research community. Not previously accessed these collections or collaborated with TAF. Innovative, novel with exciting future possibilities.

75-85% **Excellent** - Publications in leading journals are expected. The researchers are among the leaders in their field or show the potential to be so. The proposal may have the odd weak point but in a minor area only. New collaborations involved.

65-75% **Very good** - Publications are expected or other valuable outputs. Very few weak points to the proposal. Possibly building on already established links but promising an additional dimension i.e. member of an existing User Group. Commonly in this category will fall the best PhD student applications.

55-65% **Good** - A project at a good international level, but of limited relevance to the European research community. Publications are expected. Some weak points which may be sufficient to warrant a recommendation to re-submit in a future round. Possibly evidence of little previous contact between host and applicant. Commonly in this category are PhD student applications or applicants with limited experience of applying for research grants which may involve new collaborations but with a degree of naivety as to what can realistically be achieved.

45-55% **Fair** - A project which is only partly of good international standards and with limited relevance to the European research community. Flawed in some major respects in terms of the evaluation criteria. Requests for repeat visits without sufficient justification.

<45% **Weak** - A project of inadequate quality, poorly described project with very little to the European research community. Fundamentally flawed with no evidence of planned outputs.

### The European Research Area (ERA)

When assessing proposals they should be viewed in the wider context of the ERA. The following extracts (taken from [http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/pdf/era-key-messages\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/pdf/era-key-messages_en.pdf)) give a brief overview:

*The European **Research** Area (ERA) is a unified research area open to the world based on the Internal Market, in which researchers, scientific knowledge and technology circulate freely and through which the Union and its Member States will strengthen their scientific and technological bases as well as their competitiveness and their capacity to collectively address grand challenges.*

#### **More competition, mobility and higher performance within ERA:**

*ERA raises overall excellence. Research systems based on peer review tend to more generously fund better scientists, who in turn train more PhD students and researchers leading to more results. ERA promotes the circulation of competent researchers between institutions, disciplines, sectors and countries, generating economic benefits from improved interaction as well as from knowledge circulation and transfer*