

IMI Action Plan for the Independent Observers' Report

The Independent Observers' Report on the 2nd Call 2009 – Stage 2 Evaluation which was published in September 2010 and its findings are welcomed by IMI.

Comments from the Observers were very positive in describing the evaluation process as 'professionally and fairly conducted' as well as 'carefully and fairly implemented throughout.' Most importantly, the Observers were impressed with the 'striking efforts made to ensure an impartial and thoughtful evaluation of the proposals.' The Observers recognised the valuable input of both the IMI Executive Office and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) in the review process.

However, areas for improvements were highlighted covering the complete Stage 2 evaluation process steps.

Simplified Call Topic Drafting

In response to the main recommendations made by the Independent Observers, the IMI Executive Office is now in discussion with EFPIA and the European Commission to develop a more stream-lined design process for future Call topics which will be taken directly from the adopted Scientific Priorities. IMI will play a stronger liaison role with topic writers during the Call Topic drafting process in order to simplify it which will lead to an earlier launch of each Call.

Added Value Information, Support & Guidance

In line with its supporting approach (IMI is already in much closer contact at the FFP stage to provide regular interaction from a scientific, legal and administrative point of view), the IMI Executive Office will provide more information and guidance to both experts and consortia during the Full Project Proposals (FPPs) preparation phase.

Several concrete measures will be implemented such as more internal co-ordination, limitation of the length of FPPs to prevent duplication and overlap along with an extension of the Call process timeline, and additional guidance during briefing sessions and panel meetings so that the scoring system can be fully utilised and so that evaluators are better able to reflect this in their consensus evaluation reports.

Remote Evaluations

Evaluators will have additional time to complete their remote evaluations and the IMI Executive Office is currently examining how best to facilitate the sharing of remote evaluations via web-based tools. To improve the expert evaluation panel in line with the report's recommendations, longer Q&A sessions and a shorter writing period will be allocated for subsequent Stage 2 evaluations.

Clearer Understanding of Budgeting Issues

In relation to budget issues, the IMI Executive Office will offer further clarification to help evaluators understand the scope of their involvement in identifying the adequacy between the proposals and the allocated budget, without being required to assess to what extent the 'in-kind' contributions from IMI's partner, EFPIA match the requested IMI JU financial contribution.

Added Value at Ethical Review Stage

The Observers were satisfied with the ethical review process, commenting on the high level of ethical expertise in evidence. In future the IMI Executive Office will operate a joint panel so that this connects the ethical evaluation process to the scientific expert panels through a standardised approach. In this way the ethical panel will have the opportunity to discuss concerns directly with the coordinators of the proposals. This could have the 'added value' of informing and increasing awareness to ethical issues for all concerned.

Additional Interim Support

The IMI Executive Office is planning to conduct interim reviews of ongoing projects to take place during Q3, 2011. The IMI Executive Office is considering the inclusion of experts who have already been involved with the process as well as the potential involvement of Scientific Committee members.

Independent Scrutiny builds confidence in IMI

The IMI Executive Office recognises the importance of external assessment of its performance. The improvements and developments to the Call processes and procedures that will emerge as a result of this type of measured and important feedback are essential.