



July 2014

## **Answers of the IMI Executive Office to the recommendations from the Independent Observers' report for Call 9 (Stage 2)**

### **RECOMMENDATION A**

As Consortia members answer some questions during their time allocated to the presentation of the project (30'), would it be possible to have time flexibility in the second part of the Hearing in order to have more exchanges between experts and candidates? Alternatively would it be possible to limit the overview to 10-15' with a strong focus on the riskiest parts of the plan (budget estimates, coordination, human potential ...) without responding to questions sent by IE panel. More time could then be given to the specific questions from experts.

#### **IMI response**

The applicant consortia are currently asked to prepare a brief presentation focussing on major changes between EoI and FPP, many consortia also use this presentation to address the questions posed by the experts. While recognising the limited time available and considering the objective to allocate the same opportunities to the concerned applicants (principle of equal treatment) , the IMI office feels this is an appropriate use of the time, and that the questions should still be asked to ensure they are fully answered.

The IMI office will further strengthen the emphasis during the consortium briefing to ensure the presentation focusses on the riskiest parts of the plan in order to save time for the Q&A session.

### **RECOMMENDATION B**

One IE seemed not to fully understand the concept of IMI. He was surprised to realize that the same EFPIA contributor was present with them during stage 1 and during the Hearing with the Applicants. The same IE felt that the evaluation and the questions during the Hearing were mainly oriented on the scientific aspects of academic teams and not enough on the involvement of the industrial partners. He wondered about the possibility of providing an opportunity to focus on each aspect, for instance by establishing two separate Hearings.

A preventative measure for such confusion would be to further clarify, during stage 1, the involvement of industry in the two stages with their specific role during the hearing of stage 2.

#### **IMI response**

As the questions are prepared as part of the consensus panel meeting, they should reflect the consensus of the independent experts, which may occasionally focus on the academic teams. The IMI office makes sure that the current hearing process addresses the aims of the evaluation.

However, to ensure that the role of the EFPIA participants is clarified to all experts, the evaluation briefing at stage 1 will be revised.

### **RECOMMENDATION C**

Ensure physical presence of IEs and avoid remote presence by phone. Quality of communication is variable, level of attention is variable, actual presence is variable. A possible substitute could be video-conferencing with a request for presence during the whole day of meeting.

### **IMI response**

The IMI office agrees that the physical presence of the independent experts is highly desirable and already tries to ensure this for all our evaluations. On occasion, due to unforeseen circumstances, an independent expert becomes available only remotely. The IMI office will continue to aim to have all experts physically present and explore video conference facilities for when this cannot be the case.

### **RECOMMENDATION D**

One of the consortia presented a FPP that will not be fully funded via IMI/EFPIA which came as a surprise to the Panel who flagged it when reviewing the FPP in the morning. Additionally, the supplemental funding was not secured yet and no credible alternative/risk mitigation/risk management approaches were offered during the Hearing by the Consortium. We recommend finding out ways to discuss this type of funding issue before the Panel meeting.

### **IMI response**

The funding issue with this particular FPP is currently under assessment by the IMI Governing Board to ensure the feasibility of the FPP considering the original objectives of the topic. The IMI has requested further clarifications from the applicants and, therefore, the negotiation of the grant agreement has been delayed accordingly until all the funding has been secured. For future calls, the IMI is considering the lessons learned arising from this specific case.

### **RECOMMENDATION E**

One IE shared with us that, in his view, and for the FPP he worked on, the project management chapter of this FPP was on the weak side as he was expecting both more in terms of quantity and quality of information. This is already addressed in the Guidance document on the FPP (section 5.1), although we recommend strengthening the FPP requirements with project management specifications to harmonise the minimum available information on such an important topic at FPP stage.

### **IMI response**

Project management is already an assessment criterion for the FPP evaluation under the implementation criterion. Should the independent experts feel the FPP is weak in this area, they already have the opportunity to request clarification during the hearing, and suggest improvements that would be incorporated during the negotiation stage.