**Call for Expression of Interest for the Establishment of the EU-Rail Scientific Steering Group**

# INTRODUCTION

# The Europe’s Rail Joint Undertaking

The Europe’s Rail Joint Undertaking (hereinafter EU-Rail) was established by Council Regulation (EU) 2021/2085 of 19 November 2021 (“Single Basic Act or SBA”)[[1]](#footnote-2).

The objectives of EU-Rail are defined in Article 85 of the SBA, as well as further detailed in the EU-Rail Master Plan and Multi Annual Work Programme adopted by the Governing Board on 1 March 2022.

# THE SCIENTIFIC STEERING GROUP

## Purpose

Article 21(1)(a) of the SBA requires the JUs to seek for scientific advice via:

a scientific advisory body to be set up by the joint undertaking in accordance with the relevant provisions set out in Part Two, and subject to the provisions in this Article; or

ad hoc requests for independent expertise by the governing board to the joint undertaking on specific questions.

Article 91(2) confirms that EU-Rail shall set up the necessary scientific advice along the same lines as Article 21(1)(a).

The Governing Board in its Decision of 21 December 2021 extended the mandate of the existing Scientific Committee of Shift2Rail until a new Decision is taken to establish the necessary scientific advice.

In this respect, the Governing Board at its meeting of 15/03/2023 decided to proceed with the establishment of a Scientific Steering Group in accordance with Article 91(2) to provide advice and recommendations to the Governing Board (hereinafter referred to as GB) and the Executive Director (ED) on the progress of the implementation of the EU-Rail Research and Innovation Programme, in particular on its progress, implementation, delivery approach, including with regard to the relation between the Industrial Research and Innovation Activities and Exploratory and Other Activities.

In addition, the Scientific Steering Group shall advise the GB and the ED on any scientific matter in relation to the EU-Rail Programme at their request or at the initiative of the Group itself. The GB may request such advice following an agreement reached within the GB in accordance with the relevant GB Rules of Procedures.

## Tasks

According to Articles 17(2)(n), 21(7) of the SBA, the Scientific Steering Group shall carry out the following tasks:

advise on the scientific priorities to be addressed in the work programmes including on scope of calls for proposals, in line with the Master Plan and the Horizon Europe strategic planning;

advise on the scientific achievements to be described in the annual activity report;

suggest, in view of the progress of the Master Plan and individual actions, corrective measures or re-orientations to the Governing Board, where necessary;

provide independent advice and scientific analysis on specific issues as requested by the Governing Board, in particular as regards developments in adjacent sectors or to support the assessment of applications of potential associated members and contributing partners.

## Members

The Scientific Steering Group shall consist of no more than twelve permanent members. The Scientific Steering Group shall elect its chair and vice-chair from amongst its members for a period of two years. In addition, maximum two representatives of different European research associations, not beneficiaries of Europe’s Rail grants or contracts, are invited to participate to the Scientific Steering Group as observers. The Executive Director will propose to the GB the list of possible associations and his recommendation on the appointment.

In order to be able to collectively cover the technical domains needed to make science-based recommendations to the JU, the Scientific Steering Group members should be recognized scientific experts covering the relevant disciplines and perspectives related to the EU-Rail Programme. The Scientific Steering Group will be set up ensuring gender and geographical balance.

Members participate in the Scientific Steering Group in their individual capacity and commit to discuss the questions put forward and provide advice in their relevant fields of expertise to the best of their ability and in the best interest of the EU-Rail Programme.

Each member of the Scientific Steering Group will be requested to sign a declaration of Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest in line with GB Decision 02/2021.

The Scientific Steering Group Members may not delegate their tasks to another person. Members may be replaced by candidates from the reserve list in the case of long-term illness or incapacity to attend meetings.

In accordance with Article 21(3) of the SBA, the members of the Scientific Steering Group, as well as invited observers, shall be subject to the obligation of professional secrecy which, by virtue of the Treaties and the rules implementing them, applies to all members of the institutions and their staff, as well as to the Commission’s rules on security regarding the protection of sensitive non-classified and Union classified information, laid down in Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/443(31)and (EU, Euratom) 2015/444(32) respectively.

## Deliverables and reporting

The meetings of the Scientific Steering Group will be organized by the Scientific Steering Group Chair with the support of the JU. In accordance with Article 21(8) of the SBA, after each meeting of the Scientific Steering Group, its Chairperson shall submit to the GB a report outlining its opinions on the matters discussed during the meeting. Unless otherwise agreed, the minutes of the meeting and the report shall be made publicly available on the website of the JU.

The Scientific Steering Group members shall prepare and submit as a contribution to the JU Consolidated Annual Activity Report the annual report on the activities of the Scientific Steering Group.

The report shall provide recommendations on the research matters, consolidate their observations from the technical reviews while carrying out the above-mentioned tasks and provide opinion on the future directions of relevance to the EU-Rail Programme.

Each member shall actively contribute to the drafting of the above-mentioned report.

During the Scientific Steering Group meetings, each member may be asked to organise, prepare and present a topic in the interest for the Scientific Steering Group to execute its mandate.

Members of the Scientific Steering Group are entitled to receive fees/honoraria for specific tasks agreed with the JU and that result in new scientific deliverables and reporting.

In this case the EU-Rail may sign an EU expert contract with the member. In this case, the member should first be registered as an expert in the EU Funding & Tender opportunities portal[[2]](#footnote-3). Instructions to register the profile in the EU database of external experts as well as the EU Model Contract for Experts is available on the [EU Funding & Tender opportunities portal](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/work-as-an-expert).

## Meetings

The Scientific Steering Group shall meet at least twice a year.

Extraordinary meetings may be convened upon the Chairperson’s own initiative after informing the Executive Director.

The Scientific Steering Group meetings may take place by audio conference, video conference or other means of communication. Alternatively, physical meetings shall normally take place in Brussels at the seat of the JU.

## Reimbursement of expenses

Members of the Scientific Steering Group do not receive remuneration for the preparation, participation and reporting to the meetings indicated in section 2e. However, they are entitled to the reimbursement of their travel expenses directly connected with a physical meeting, in accordance with [Decision C(2007)5858](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/experts_manual/regl_experts_en.pdf)[[3]](#footnote-4).

## Selection, appointment and duration

Based on the applications received from the present Call and the potential candidates proposed by the States Representatives Group, the Executive Director will prepare a list of all candidates eligible to become members of the Scientific Steering Group on the basis of the eligibility criteria.

A panel composed of at least 8 members, chaired by the Executive Director, including 2 members of the GB, 1 statutory staff of the JU, 2 representatives of the European Commission, 1 representative of ERA and 2 representatives of research associations will carry out an assessment of the eligible applications in accordance with the principles of non-discrimination, equal treatment and absence of conflict of interests.

The panel will establish a draft shortlist of at least 16 candidates who are considered best suited. The panel will decide if the list will be ranked in decreasing order with a distinction between candidates proposed as members and for reserve list, or if the list will be in an alphabetical order.

In the case of ranked list, the Executive Director will present the results of the panel to the GB. Where the panel would present the list in alphabetical order, the ED may recommend to the GB the twelve candidates from the list to become members of the Scientific Steering Group and 4 candidates for the reserve list.

The GB, after having taken into consideration the recommendation of the panel and/or Executive Director, will decide on the appointment of candidates as Members and to the reserve list.

Members of the Scientific Steering Group will be appointed for a 4-year term. Within 9 months before the end of the first term of the Scientific Steering Group, the Executive Director shall propose to the GB either the full or partial renewal of the Members of the Scientific Steering Group, or the termination of their mandate. Where a full or partial renewal would be agreed by the GB, it cannot exceed an additional term of up to 4 years. No additional renewal will be possible and a Member of the Scientific Steering Group been appointed for 8 years cannot be candidate to a new call before a break of at least 2 years. In case of partial renewal, the experts on the reserve list will be opted-in the position of Members of the Scientific Steering Group; in this case, a new call will be launched to fill the remaining positions.

The approved reserve list will be valid for the duration of the term, including any subsequent renewal, of the appointed Scientific Steering Group. In case of a vacancy, the GB will, subject to continuing eligibility check, appoint a new member from the reserve list for a period of 4 years or for the rest of the duration of the aforementioned term, whichever is the earliest.

Before appointment, all members of the Scientific Steering Group shall be required to complete a declaration of conflict of interest and confidentiality according to the procedure established by the GB. Where a Scientific Steering Group member would declare an unmanageable conflict of interest, the Executive Director after having examined the situation and the possible mitigating measures may propose to the Governing Board, for decision, the dismissal of the concerned Scientific Steering Groupmember.

# CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

## Objective

In accordance with Article 21 of the SBA, there shall be a balanced representation of experts among the members of the Scientific Steering Group, within the scope of the activities of EU-Rail, including with respect to gender and geographical balance. Collectively, the members of the Scientific Steering Group shall have the necessary competences and expertise covering the technical domain to make science-based recommendations to the joint undertaking, taking into account the climate, environmental and socioeconomic impact of such recommendations and the objectives of the joint undertaking.

The Members of EU-Rail Scientific Steering Group shall reflect a balanced representation of worldwide recognised experts, in at least one of the fields of action of the EU-Rail JU R&I Programme, from academia and public or private research centres (including within industry).

The EU-Rail Scientific Steering Group shall be composed mainly of highly skilled and open-minded external experts (scientists, engineers, professors, etc.) with innovative vision to focus on the scientific and technical analysis of the EU-Rail Programme from different perspectives comprehending environmental impact, technology and scientific forecast, telecommunications and information technology, digital aspects, artificial intelligence, automation, societal and economic impact. Members of the EU-Rail Scientific Steering Group are expected to have knowledge about the challenges of the European railway sector.

To this end, EU-Rail hereby invites suitably qualified and motivated individuals to apply as external experts to the present Call to become part of the EU-Rail Scientific Steering Group.

The candidate submitting their application shall have scientific expertise in one of the following areas:

* system view of European railway sector and its connection with other transport modes
* railway vehicle including subsystems
* railway infrastructure including subsystems
* railway signalling and digital applications including subsystems
* telecommunications
* military mobility
* information technology, artificial intelligence and other digital sciences,
* economics and socio-economics fields and related sciences,
* other scientific fields related to EU-Rail Programme.

## General description of the procedure

## Individuals interested in performing the tasks as described in Section 2, with expertise in the fields listed in section 3.a and complying with the requirements set in Section 4, are invited to submit an expression of interest in accordance with the rules set out in this notice, in one of the official languages of the European Union by electronic means at the following address: [info-call@rail-research.europa.eu](mailto:info-call@rail-research.europa.eu)

## Information and documents to be provided (content of applications)

Interested individuals should send an application composed of the following documents:

**a Letter of interest** (see Annex I) with their full contact details and the list of specific fields indicated in Section [3.a](#_bookmark15) in which they have expertise;

## Supporting evidence

a **Curriculum Vitae (CV) in the Europass format** (available on the following website: [http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu](http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/)) in English;

**List of scientific publications in books and peer-reviewed journals, including abstracts of the 10 most relevant articles.**

The JU reserves the right to request any documentary evidence it deems necessary in order to verify experts' skills and knowledge.

Please note that it is the responsibility of the expert to inform the JU immediately of any changes to their administrative and technical details which would result in a change to their original application.

## Submission of Application for call for expression of interest and evaluation of candidates proposed by the States’ Representatives Group

In accordance with Article 21(4) of the SBA, the GB shall take into consideration the potential candidates proposed by the States’ Representatives Group. The evaluation of the candidates proposed by the States’ Representatives group will be carried out by applying criteria in Section 4 of this notice of call for expression of interests.

## Inclusion in the list of experts and Appointment as Scientific Steering Group Member

The objective of this call for expressions of interest is to set up a list of external experts that will result from the procedure set up under Section 2.b and c here above. In accordance with that procedure the GB will appoint the Members of the Scientific Steering Group and approve the reserve list.

Inclusion in the list entails no obligation on the part of the JU concerning the conclusion of contracts.

The list resulting from this notice will be valid for 8 years from the decision of the Governing Board and used exclusively for the execution of the tasks within the fields described in Section [3.a](#_bookmark15) under the Scientific Steering Group mandate.

If, at any given time and following the rules established under 2.g., the Scientific Steering Group will consist of less than twelve members, the GB will ask the JU to launch another call for expression of interest.

**Expert contract and thresholds**

As a result of this procedure and under the conditions indicated in section 2d above referred, the EU may sign an EU Expert Contract with the expert. The selected experts may be contracted for an estimated amount of 100 days over a period of for 4 years, renewable at the conditions established here above. The number of days is indicative and it does not constitute an obligation on the part of the contracting authority.

Prior to the signature of the contract, the expert must be registered in the [Portal Expert Database](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/work-as-an-expert). Experts not registered in the database shall not be entitled with a contract.

The expert contract’s conditions are indicated in the EU Model Contract for Experts available at the [EU Funding&Tender opportunities portal](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/work-as-an-expert). Before signature of the contract, the expert must sign a Code of conduct and – if appropriate – a declaration that there is no conflict of interest for the tasks he/she must performed.

The EU Call for Expression of Interest for the Funding & Tenders Portal Expert Database 2021-2027 details the registration procedure for both experts already registered in the Expert Database and new experts. EU contracts are managed fully electronically through the Portal in accordance with the [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions.](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/ftp/tc_en.pdf)

Important notice: EU-Rail is not responsible for the registration procedure though the Funding & Tenders Portal. Only upon validation/confirmation of the expert’s profile in the Portal Expert Database, may EU-Rail may sign a contract with the expert. During the registration procedure, the EU validation services will contract the expert to verify his/her identity and bank account and check compliance with the mandatory legal requirements laid down in the EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046.

Additional information can be found in the Funding & Tenders Portal, in particular :

- [Online Manual](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/om_en.pdf)

- [Portal FAO](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/faq;type=0,1;categories=;tenders=;programme=null;keyword=;freeTextSearchKeyword=;matchWholeText=true;period=null;status=0;sortQuery=publicationDate;faqListKey=faqSearchTablePageState)

Individual contracts must stay below the thresholds for the award of public contracts referred to in Article 175 of the EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046 (in 2023 EUR 140 000, excluding allowances and travel costs).

In accordance with Article 44 of the EU-Rail Financial Rules[[4]](#footnote-5), Article 237 of the EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046 shall apply mutatis mutandis for the experts included in the Funding & Tenders Portal Expert Database 2021-2027.

## Indicative timetable

Interested parties may submit an application until 30 June 2023.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Milestone** | **Deadline** |
| Date of shipment of this call | March 2023 |
| Closing date for submission of applications | 30 June 2023 |
| Indicative date of the information on the outcome of the evaluation | December 2023 |
| Indicative date for the 1st SSG meeting | December 2023 |
| Validity of the list | Until 2027 |

# EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications received will be assessed in the light of exclusion, eligibility and selection criteria.

## Exclusion criteria

## Please refer to the EU Experts Call for Expression of Interest under the Funding & Tenders Portal Expert Database 2021-2027.

## Eligibility criteria

Candidates must demonstrate ‘Scientific Excellence’ through a minimum of 10 years of relevant research or industry experience after obtaining a degree and a minimum of 5 years of experience of managing/organising/participating in research projects;

Candidates must have a degree in a relevant scientific area, preferably also at post graduate level, as well as an established reputation through demonstrable expertise and ideally have contributed to similar high level advisory bodies

Candidates must be a citizen of one of the Member States of the European Union or one of the Countries associated to Horizon Europe programme, in accordance with Article 16 of Regulation (EU) of the Council and of the Parliament on the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1290/2013 and (EU) No 1291/2013.

For the purpose of participation in the GB, the Chair or its alternate of the Scientific Steering Group shall not occupy the position of Member of the GB.

## Selection criteria

Candidatures will be subject to a comparative evaluation against the following criteria:

Proven ‘scientific excellence’, with reference to scientific production by authorship/contribution in peer-reviewed international journals published in English and/or scientific assessments/reviews at national/international level of relevant scientific and research activities during the last five (5) years;

Significant proven professional knowledge related to at least one relevant EU-Rail Programme activities (see section 3.a), with reference to scientific publications and/or participation to related R&I activities;

Professional experience including organisational and management experience in (rail) research projects, including in a multidisciplinary environment;

Proven experience in activities linked to the transfer of research results towards industrialisation;

Independent use of spoken and written English, (equivalent of B2 level or above, according to CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)..

Only experts complying with all the criteria, and reaching at least the minimum total and individual thresholds, will be included in the list.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Maximum individual scoring** | **Minimum threshold** |
| Proven ‘scientific excellence’ | 30 | 20 |
| Significant proven professional knowledge related to at least one relevant EU-Rail Programme activities | 30 | 20 |
| Professional experience including organisational and management experience in research projects | 15 | 10 |
| Proven experience in activities linked to the transfer of research results towards industrialisation | 10 | 5 |
| Independent use of spoken and written English | 15 | 10 |
| **Total scoring** | **100** | **65** |

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

EU-Rail applies the EU policy of equal opportunities and accepts applications without distinction on the grounds of age, race, political, philosophical or religious conviction, gender or sexual orientation and regardless of disabilities, material status or family situation.

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# PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

If processing candidates’ applications involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV), such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, your replies to the questions and any personal data requested are required to evaluate your tender in accordance with the specifications of the invitation to tender and will be processed solely for that purpose by EU-Rail. Details concerning the processing of personal data for selected and not selected experts are available on the Privacy Statement at: https://rail-research.europa.eu/about-europes-rail/europes-rail-reference-documents/functioning-of-the-europes-rail-ju/

# EX-POST TRANSPARENCY

In accordance with Article 38 of the EU Financial Regulation, information about EU expert contracts above EUR 15 000 (name, address/region and amount) is published each year on the [Europa website](https://ec.europa.eu/budget/financial-transparency-system/index.html).

- *Annex I: Letter of Intent*

**Annex I - Letter of interest – EU Rail Scientific Steering Group**

1. Please read carefully the specifications and conditions of the call for expressions of interest before applying.
2. Please pay attention to providing complete, true, accurate and viable data and contact details:

- The Europe’s Rail Joint Undertaking assumes the truthfulness of the information provided in the CV and application form;

- The Europe’s Rail Joint Undertaking might at all times request written documents supporting the provided information;

- If the provided information appears to be incorrect or if on request written evidence is not received within two calendar weeks, the Europe’s Rail Joint Undertaking reserves the right to delete the information from its database of independent experts and to take the necessary actions in accordance with the Europe’s Rail Joint Undertaking financial rules;

- The Europe’s Rail Joint Undertaking cannot be held liable for use of incorrect information obtained via the application form.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Personal & contact details** | |
| Title (i.e. Mrs., Ms, Mr., Dr.) |  |
| Family name |  |
| First name(s) |  |
| Date of birth |  |
| Town of birth |  |
| Country of Birth |  |
| First Nationality |  |
| Second Nationality  (if applicable) |  |
| Organisation name  (if applicable) |  |
| Street |  |
| Town/City |  |
| Country |  |
| Postal code |  |
| PO Box |  |
| Telephone |  |
| Mobile telephone |  |
| Fax Number |  |
| E-mail |  |
| Above contact information (address + telecommunication) is | Private  Business |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Professional details & areas of expertise** | |
| Current position |  |
| Number of years of relevant professional experience |  |
| **Complementary information** | |
| Achievements in my area(s) of expertise | **Please give below the highlights of your professional career relevant to the requirements of this call for expressions of interest** (Maximum 1000 characters) |
| Studies, works, publications related to the areas of expertise listed hereabove | Please provide a list of studies, works, theses, patents, publications and other significant work you have done **(Maximum 1000 characters)** |
| **Languages** | |
| Languages | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Languages | Written | Reading | Conversation | | English | * Elementary * Average * Good * Mother tongue | * Elementary * Average * Good * Mother tongue | * Elementary * Average * Good * Mother tongue | | [please insert] | * Elementary * Average * Good * Mother tongue | * Elementary * Average * Good * Mother tongue | * Elementary * Average * Good * Mother tongue | | [please insert] | * Elementary * Average * Good * Mother tongue | * Elementary * Average * Good * Mother tongue | * Elementary * Average * Good * Mother tongue | |  |  |  |  | |
| Additional information related to this call for expressions of interest |  |

I hereby state that the information provided in this application is correct.

**Name** [please insert]

Done in [Place]

Date [please insert]

**Signature**

1. Council Regulation (EU) 2021/2085 of 19 November 2021, establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe and repealing Regulations (EC) No 219/2007, (EU) No 557/2014, (EU) No 558/2014, (EU) No 559/2014, (EU) No 560/2014, (EU) No 561/2014 and (EU) No 642/2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/work-as-an-expert [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Commission Decision C(2007)5858 of 5 December 2007 establishing rules on the reimbursement of expenses incurred by people from outside the Commission invited to attend meetings in an expert capacity (available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/experts\_manual/regl\_experts\_en.pdf).](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/experts_manual/regl_experts_en.pdf)) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)