



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Directorate G - Industrial technologies
RTDDG.3 G.5 - Research Fund for Coal and Steel

Brussels, 28 January 2013
RTD G.5/AH/RB

15th SAG MEETING
23 January 2013
CDMA Building
21 rue du Champ de Mars
Brussels

ACTIVITY REPORT

A. Meeting minutes

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. The draft agenda and the minutes of the previous SAG meeting, held on 25 January 2012, were approved without modification. Some of the highlights of the RFCS over the year 2012 were presented, in particular the 10th Anniversary RFCS event, held in Luxembourg on 19-20 September 2012, and successful introduction of the new electronic submission system (SEP), which proved to be reliable and easy to use. The Chairpersons of the Technical Groups had been invited only for the afternoon session.

The Commission services presented the current SAG composition as well as the updated reserve list. It was mentioned that, as agreed during the last SAG meeting, some of the SAG members proposed both male and female candidates and that the reserve list was now very reasonable with around 50% female candidates available. There are currently 4 members whose mandate will expire in 2013. The Chairman reminded the participants of the meeting that the first vacancy will be allocated to the first position of the current reserve list, as agreed at the last SAG meeting. However, having 10 females on the reserve list, the subsequent vacancies could be filled in by female candidates. If two of the four vacancies were to be filled with female candidates, this would represent progress towards the objective of the Commissioner whilst maintaining a good degree of continuity and expertise.

The Commission presented the updated composition of the nine Steel Technical Groups (TGS). Explanations were given on the changes compared to the 2012 composition. The provisional dates and places for the TGS spring meetings were indicated. It was explained that in 2012 a re-nomination of all TG members was necessary in order to comply with the new EC rules of procedures for technical groups, stating that members have to be appointed to represent the interest of the sector, and not anymore in their personal capacities. The Chairman mentioned that similar re-nomination exercise will be necessary for the SAG

members, but this will require modification of legal base. It was confirmed that, following the publication of the Monitoring and Assessment exercise it is anticipated that any legal basis revision would be proposed in the first half of 2014. At this time it is anticipated that the rules relating to expert advisory group nominations will be aligned with the general EC rules.

The available budget and the main figures from the 2012 evaluation were presented. At the cut-off date for 2012, the RFCS received 164 proposals in the steel sector, 47 were resubmissions. The members were reminded of the evaluation criteria by funding instrument and the different evaluation steps. Expert participation requirements and the expert background statistics were presented.

Two SAG members attended the evaluation exercise as observers and presented the synthesis of their reports. They confirmed that the process was in accordance with the manual of evaluation procedure and qualified it as mature, reliable and streamlined. It was noted that the evaluation exercise has evolved and improved over the years to a stable and a highly professional consolidated process, integrating suggestions of observers, SAG members and the experience of the scientific officers. Consensus meetings are smooth with an efficient and "standardized" role played by the scientific officers, respecting their mission. The introduction of remote evaluation, further improvement of the individual evaluation forms and discussion on size of TGs, in particular size of TGS8 were recommended.

The Chairman stressed that the Commission Services are open to the suggestion of remote evaluation and it would be seriously considered for introduction as part of the response to the Monitoring and Assessment exercise. He confirmed that the EC would continue to explore the possibility of introducing remote reading of proposals if technically achievable. It was however not clear that this could be introduced in 2013 and in any case a new system would have to be fully tested before introduction.

It was agreed by the SAG members that issues related to the evaluation process and the size of TGs may be discussed in an "ad hoc" working group.

The list of proposals in the ranking established by the evaluation has been made available to the members via CIRCA prior to the meeting. This list featured (1) proposals to be recommended for funding, (2) proposals on the reserve list, (3) proposals for which there are insufficient funds and (4) proposals below the threshold on one or two evaluation criteria. The bonus point was indicated in the ranking list table. The Chairman presented the ranking list of the Steel related evaluated proposals. The ranking list of proposals was unanimously adopted.

The possibility to improve the process after the evaluation step to facilitate the work of beneficiaries during negotiation stage was discussed. The Chairman pointed out that there is the possibility for electronic negotiations, e.g. NEF in FP7. This would require IT studies to assess the most suitable mechanism for developing and supporting a suitable IT support platform, drawing on the benefits where possible of H2020 central systems.

It was agreed by SAG members that possibility of electronic negotiations should be discussed by the ad-hoc working group.

The rapporteur of Monitoring & Assessment Expert Committee presented the status of the Monitoring and Assessment exercise, in particular the draft Assessment Report. He presented the methodology of the assessment of the projects co-funded under the RFCS Programme for the period 2003-2010, and the results of this exercise in terms of qualitative and quantitative benefits. Following the presentation, the potential and real benefits were discussed. It was concluded that assessment of the real benefits is the important deliverable

for the programme. It was stressed that the assessment report indicated a very good return on funds invested in the Programme.

The Chairman then made a short presentation describing a coordinated approach to the follow up of the Monitoring and Assessment exercise including a combined ad-hoc CAG/SAG meeting. Various issues under discussion would be categorised in either 'minor' or 'more extensive' some of which could lead to a change in the RFCS Legal Basis. SAG members agreed to establish an ad-hoc CAG/SAG Working Group with a mandate to propose concrete recommendations.

The TGS chairmen presented finished and running projects, as well as the future research trends in their field. In the absence of TG chairman, the projects were presented by the chairman substitute or the Commission officer in charge of the corresponding TG.

The wish to share the information on projects between TGS in a more systematic way (e.g. TG-related workshops, shared TGS space on CIRCA) was raised by several TGS chairmen. It was also mentioned that the size of TGS should be discussed, e.g. by redistribution of the parameters between different TGS.

The meeting between the ESTEP Working Group Chairmen and the Technical Group Chairmen of 14 December 2012 had been very fruitful and produced a clear and precise set of research priorities. The number of priorities decreased from 11 to 9. The Commission presented statistics on the use of the 2012 priorities in the last call and the proposed set of 9 annual priorities for 2013. The SAG agreed on list of priorities for integration in the 2013 Information package.

The Commission presented the tentative 2013 planning. It was agreed that the 16th SAG meeting will take place on Wednesday 22 January 2014.

The Chairman made reference to the revision of the Financial Regulations. He informed the SAG members about removal of the requirement for interest bearing accounts for GA's signed after 1 January 2013.

The Chairman recapped the main actions to be undertaken: the setting up of an ad-hoc CAG/SAG Working Group, which will work on issues such as the possible introduction of remote evaluations and of electronic negotiations, improvement of individual assessment forms, the size and shape of TGS, etc.

Finally, he reminded the meeting of the need to nominate independent observers for the next evaluation session and to send to the Commission Services the names of potential experts from industry. He closed the meeting by thanking the SAG members, the TG chairpersons and the ExCo rapporteur for their highly constructive input.

B. List of participants

Commission services:

Chairman: DG RTD G5 Head of Unit
DG RTD G5 Officers

Present Members:

Mr ABBRUZZESE	CSM
Ms AUSSERSDORFER	VOEST-ALPINE
Mr CHEFNEUX	ARCELORMITTAL
Mr DAHLMANN	STEEL INSTITUTE VDEH
Mr DE LAMBERTERIE	ESTEP
Mr GIBELLIERI	EMF
Mr GODEC	IMT
Mr HOFFMANN	ARCELORMITTAL
Mr MARIQUE	CRM
Mr MOONEN	TATASTEEL
Mr OBESO CARRERA	UNIV OVIEDO
Mr PIKE	TATASTEEL
Ms QUANTIN	ARCELORMITTAL
Mr RAAB	HZ
Mr RANTA-ESKOLA	RUUKKI
Mr REDENIUS	SZMF
Mr SCHWEDLER	IMZ
Mr SIEVERING	EUROFER
Ms TEODORESCU	INTEC
Mr VAN DEN HOOGEN	TATASTEEL
Mr WIJK	SANDVIK STEEL
&	
2 observers	

Present invited experts:

Mr BIRAT	Chair of TGS2
Mr CRAHAY	Chair of TGS5
Mr DE SANTIS	Chair of TGS3
Mr GROOT	Chair of TGS4
Mr HERMAN	Chair of TGS6
Mr KROOS	Chair of TGS9
Mr STEILER	Monitoring & Assessment Expert Committee