

Score grid for SBO projects with a finality in security and defence – version 2026

Scientific dimension (S)[†]

Scientific dimension S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<p>S1 Innovative value of the basic research question</p> <p>(criterion weight: x2)</p>	<p>Serious shortcomings in at least two, or critical shortcomings in at least one of the three characteristics. Potential critical shortcomings may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The proposal contains structural flaws or offers virtually no added value to the international state-of-the-art. or <input type="checkbox"/> The project involves almost no real scientific challenges that may be expected from projects of this nature/size. or <input type="checkbox"/> Reaching any of the scientific goals is evaluated as conceptually unrealistic within the boundaries of a single project. 	<p>Minor shortcomings in at least two, or serious shortcomings in at least one of the three characteristics. Potential serious shortcomings may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The added value to the international state-of-the-art and to ongoing research is limited. or <input type="checkbox"/> The proposal shows a limited level of scientific challenges and its high-risk/high-gain nature is on the low side. or <input type="checkbox"/> The majority of the scientific goals are conceptually unrealistic within the boundaries of a single project or are not formulated clearly enough to allow full assessment. 	<p>Minor shortcomings in one of the three characteristics. Potential minor shortcomings may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The added value to the international state-of-the-art and to ongoing research is less pronounced or elaborated. or <input type="checkbox"/> Part of the project is characterised by a lower level of scientific challenges or less inventive ideas, concepts and strategies. or <input type="checkbox"/> The majority of the scientific goals are clear and conceptually realistic within the boundaries of a single project. Some of the goals are less realistic, or lack clarity. 	<p>The proposal fully fits the three characteristics of innovative, high-risk/high-gain basic research, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The scientific goals build upon and offer substantial added value to the international state-of-the-art and to ongoing research. and <input type="checkbox"/> The proposal qualifies as basic research with a clear high-risk/high-gain profile. and <input type="checkbox"/> The scientific goals are clear and, given the currently available background knowledge and substantiation of the project's rationale, sufficient evidence is available to believe that the scientific goals are conceptually realistic within the boundaries of a single project, irrespective of the approach, planning and track record of the applicants. 	<p>The proposal fully fits the three characteristics of innovative, high-risk/high-gain strategic basic research and, in addition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The proposal is highly innovative and unique. It distinguishes itself in an outstanding manner from ongoing strategic research efforts at the international level ("pioneering project"). and <input type="checkbox"/> The proposal, if scientifically successful, has the potential to highly accelerate international research activities. 					
<p>S2 Quality of the research approach</p> <p>(criterion weight: x2)</p>	<p>Serious shortcomings in at least two, or critical shortcomings in at least one of the three characteristics. Potential critical shortcomings may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The description of the research approach is entirely unclear, up to the point where assessment becomes impossible. or <input type="checkbox"/> The approach is, in its entirety, insufficiently substantiated. or <input type="checkbox"/> The realisation of the scientific goals is not feasible with the proposed research approach. 	<p>Minor shortcomings in at least two, or serious shortcomings in at least one of the three characteristics. Potential serious shortcomings may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Major parts of the description of the research approach are unclear or poorly structured. or <input type="checkbox"/> Major parts of the research approach are lacking thorough substantiation. or <input type="checkbox"/> Structural adjustments are needed in order to reach the scientific goals. 	<p>Minor shortcomings in one of the three characteristics. Potential minor shortcomings may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Some details in the description and/or the structure of the research approach are not entirely clear. or <input type="checkbox"/> Some minor parts of the research approach could be better substantiated. or <input type="checkbox"/> The approach contains some gaps or superfluous activities in attainment of the scientific goals. 	<p>The proposal fully fits the three characteristics of a good research approach, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The research approach is clearly described for all scientific goals. and <input type="checkbox"/> A thorough substantiation of the research approach is provided (how it will lead to reaching the scientific goals in the best possible way) and <input type="checkbox"/> The research approach shows no important gaps or shortcomings (i.e., the best possible research approach was chosen). 	<p>The proposal fully fits the three characteristics of a good research approach and, in addition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The approach includes a full identification of research risks and a well-designed prioritisation of "fall back" research options. 					

Scientific dimension S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
S3 Project planning & resources	<p>Serious shortcomings in at least two, or critical shortcomings in at least one of the three characteristics. Potential critical shortcomings may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There is a substantial mismatch in either direction between the research workload and the requested level of person power and resources, amounting to more than 33 % of the requested budget. or <input type="checkbox"/> The project, in its entirety, is not feasible within the requested time frame and/or with the requested resources / the required staffing. or <input type="checkbox"/> The project planning is unrealistic, not substantiated or virtually absent. 	<p>Minor shortcomings in at least two, or serious shortcomings in at least one of the three characteristics. Potential serious shortcomings may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Allocation of the research tasks within research groups or between consortium partners is seriously flawed. or <input type="checkbox"/> Consortium partners either work in relative separation from each other, or the research tasks have an excessive overlap. or <input type="checkbox"/> There is a considerable mismatch in either direction between the research workload and the requested level of person power and resources, amounting to more than 20 % and less than 33 % of the requested budget. or <input type="checkbox"/> The project planning is flawed and needs structural adjustments. 	<p>Minor shortcomings in one of the three characteristics. Potential minor shortcomings may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There is some mismatch, overlap or vagueness in the allocation of research tasks within the individual research groups and/or between the consortium partners. or <input type="checkbox"/> There is a slight mismatch in either direction between the research workload and the requested level of person power and resources, amounting to less than 20 % of the requested budget. or <input type="checkbox"/> The project planning contains minor inconsistencies or is in need of small adjustments or specification. 	<p>The proposal fully fits the three characteristics of a good project planning, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The allocation of research tasks within the individual research groups and/or among the consortium partners are clear and appropriate, with sufficient mutual interaction. and <input type="checkbox"/> All resources are properly justified. The workload and the requested level of staffing and resources (including consumables, heavy research equipment and/or major subcontracting, if applicable) are appropriate and fully in line with the objectives of the project's tasks. and <input type="checkbox"/> The project planning is suitable, with clear and realistic objectives, performance measures, milestones and deliverables. 	<p>The proposal fully fits the characteristics of a good project planning and, in addition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The research plan is focused on reaching a high level of integration and synergy amongst consortium partners during execution. and <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate progress monitoring mechanisms are foreseen, allowing timely (re)scheduling. Also, alignment of interdependent activities, time monitoring, etc. are included. 					

Utilisation dimension (U)

Utilisation dimension U	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<p>U1 Relevance/Strategic importance and applicability amongst which in Flanders</p> <p>(criterium weight: x2)</p>	<p>Serious shortcomings in at least two, or critical shortcomings in at least one of the three characteristics. Potential critical shortcomings include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The proposed research approach is focused only on knowledge creation. or <input type="checkbox"/> The scientific goals and/or the research approach are unlikely to result in utilisation in the foreseeable future. or <input type="checkbox"/> The application potential is lacking, unclear, insufficiently elaborated, of very little socio-economic relevance, or exclusive to a single company. 	<p>Minor shortcomings in at least two, or serious shortcomings in at least one of the three characteristics. Potential serious shortcomings include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There is a mismatch between the scientific part of the project or its quality and the utilisation objectives. or <input type="checkbox"/> The application potential is real, but with limited socio-economic value. or <input type="checkbox"/> The application potential is real, but utilisation will unlikely take place in Flanders. or <input type="checkbox"/> The application potential is real, but there is no focus on the domain of security and defence. 	<p>Minor shortcomings in one of the three characteristics. Potential minor shortcomings include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A number of research objectives may not really be required for the intended application, but their number is limited. or <input type="checkbox"/> While a sizable utilisation potential is to be expected, the description is rather generic with limited substantiation. or <input type="checkbox"/> There is utilisation potential in Flanders, but major or key parts of the expected utilisation are located outside of Flanders. or <input type="checkbox"/> While a sizable utilisation potential is to be expected, the focus on the domain of security and defence is limited. 	<p>The proposal fully fits the three characteristics of large-scale economic utilisation potential, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The research approach is fully aligned with the intended utilisation in the domain of security and defence and contains no superfluous sub-aspects. and <input type="checkbox"/> The project has high utilisation potential in the domain of security and defence. A major stride forwards and well-substantiated socio-economic added value is to be expected. and <input type="checkbox"/> A predominant part of the expected utilisation value chain is located in Flanders. 	<p>The proposal fully fits the three characteristics of large-scale utilisation potential and, in addition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The utilisation in the domain of security and defence is the driving force behind the research approach. and <input type="checkbox"/> The project offers a breakthrough value of a disruptive nature for a large group of companies or across companies with different activities within the domain of security and defence. and <input type="checkbox"/> The utilisation value is expected to give a substantial competitive edge to the Flemish region within the domain of security and defence. 					

Utilisation dimension U	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<p>U2 Utilisation approach and knowledge transfer</p> <p>(criterion weight: x2)</p>	<p>Serious shortcomings in at least two, or critical shortcomings in at least one of the three characteristics. Potential critical shortcomings include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There is a clear mismatch between the profiles of the users (*) and the envisaged project results or the goals of the call. or <input type="checkbox"/> The project seems purely supply driven with little to no demand from the field. or <input type="checkbox"/> The utilisation plan is unrealistic, not substantiated or absent. or <input type="checkbox"/> Results can be directly commercialised or a major part of the project virtually coincides with the normal research horizon of the companies. 	<p>Minor shortcomings in at least two, or serious shortcomings in at least one of the three characteristics. Potential serious shortcomings include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary interactions with relevant users (*) have remained limited, with virtually no impact from these users on the project design. or <input type="checkbox"/> Structural adjustments are needed to the utilisation plan and/or to the composition of or interactions with the users (*) in order to reach the utilisation goals in the domain of security and defence. or <input type="checkbox"/> There are gaps or weaknesses in the description of the follow-up path. 	<p>Minor shortcomings in one of the three characteristics. Potential minor shortcomings include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-project interactions with users (*) and their impact on the project design are only demonstrated to a limited extent. or <input type="checkbox"/> A limited number of aspects in the utilisation plan are insufficiently substantiated, or the composition of the users (*) could be improved (stakeholders in the domain of security and defence are either missing or redundant). or <input type="checkbox"/> There is good potential for follow-up R&D, but either the user (*) commitment or the concreteness of the follow-up trajectory is less clear. 	<p>The proposal fully fits the three characteristics of a good approach to knowledge transfer, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The project is relevant to all users (*) and vice versa. No important users are missing. The impact of early interactions with these users on the project design is fully substantiated. and <input type="checkbox"/> The utilisation plan is thorough, including evidence for intensive involvement of the users (*) during the project and plans to assess and validate the effectiveness of the project's outcomes. and <input type="checkbox"/> In the letters of intent, there is clear self-reported commitment of the users to engage in concrete follow-up R&D. 	<p>The proposal fully fits the three characteristics of a good approach to knowledge transfer and, in addition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> At least one user (*) carries out parallel R&D activities whose objectives tie in directly, but do not overlap, with the subject matter of the project. and <input type="checkbox"/> The need for the proposed solution within the application field is apparent from the letters of intent. and <input type="checkbox"/> All foreseeable bottlenecks and obstacles for utilisation have been discussed, as well as clear mitigation strategies (e.g., fall back scenarios). 					
<p>U3 Added value of the project in terms of Sustainable Development Goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable adverse effects for achieving one or more of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Possible negative points or points of concern with regard to one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). or <input type="checkbox"/> Incompatibility with current or announced legislation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Significant (potential) contributions to reaching one or more of the eligible Sustainable Development Goal Indicators are present, but remain almost unrecognised in the proposal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Development Goals are not applicable for this proposal and are awarded a baseline score of "7". or <input type="checkbox"/> Positive and thoroughly substantiated contribution to any of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The project and the anticipated follow-up R&D&I activities in the post-project phase show a high level of ambition to improve the integration of eligible Sustainable Development Goal indicators, as defined in the SBO manual on Sustainable Development criterion U3, into government's policy, with socio-economic organisations and/or to achieve a sustainability oriented system innovation or transition in society. This is thoroughly elaborated and substantiated in the project application. 					

* Members of the advisory board, i.e., mainly economic stakeholders, combined with security-/defence-oriented government departments/entities, etc. who will take the initiative after the project has ended to realise the intended practical applications in case the project is scientifically successful.

R&D capacity, competence and infrastructure (C)

Capacity dimension C	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
C1 R&D capacity and competence; infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Essential research expertise or infrastructure is lacking. or <input type="checkbox"/> There is a high level of redundancy in the expertise of the consortium partners or their complementarity has not properly been substantiated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Important modifications are needed to the composition of the consortium and/or to the research infrastructure in order to appropriately carry out the research project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The overall expertise or infrastructure of the consortium is reasonable but there are some particular concerns or shortcomings to allow the optimal execution of the project. The available integration of the research expertise in the consortium leaves some room for improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The available research competences and infrastructure are very good and the complementarity and synergy within the consortium is sufficient. or <input type="checkbox"/> The available research competences and infrastructure are sufficient and the complementarity and synergy within the consortium is well pronounced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The available research competences and infrastructure are very good. Key partners of the consortium are "top level" research performers in the international context (at least recognised as "leaders" at the European level), and <input type="checkbox"/> The complementarity and synergy between the consortium partners is also very pronounced. The proposal involves a meaningful and needed research cooperation which, in addition, exceeds the boundaries of a single university or research institution. 					
C2 Competence and track record with regard to transfer and utilisation in the domain of security and defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No utilisation competences are present or demonstrated. or <input type="checkbox"/> The intentions for cooperation with potential users in previous project applications were artificial and/or were not put in practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The utilisation and transfer competences are very limited or virtually no evidence is given in the proposal. No effort is demonstrated to include a partner with transfer expertise in the project consortium. or <input type="checkbox"/> The interaction with users and the demonstrated efforts to transfer valorisable results during previous or ongoing strategic research projects was insufficient. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The competence and track record of the applicants in transfer of research results in the domain of security and defence exhibits certain deficiencies. or <input type="checkbox"/> The track record with regard to the effective transfer of valorisable results or the interaction with potential users in the domain of security and defence during previous or ongoing research projects has remained limited. or <input type="checkbox"/> Previous research projects have not yet led to a significant transfer and/or actual utilisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> (The partners of the consortium have a good track record with regard to the socio-economic transfer of research results in the domain of security and defence. or <input type="checkbox"/> The project is carried out by young start-up research teams with clear utilisation intentions in security and defence. Any shortcomings are compensated by the active support from utilisation experts.) and <input type="checkbox"/> Current research projects have not yet led to a significant transfer and/or actual utilisation in the domain of security and defence, but are characterised by intensive cooperation with relevant users in this domain and by a utilisation-oriented focus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> (The key partners in the consortium hold an undisputed leadership position in the transfer of research results to security and defence users in Flanders or beyond. or <input type="checkbox"/> The project is implemented by young start-up research teams who have already achieved a significant transfer in the domain of security and defence in the recent past.) and <input type="checkbox"/> Previous and/or ongoing projects have led to a significant transfer and/or actual utilisation in a newly created entity or by means of follow-up R&D projects funded by industry in the domain of security and defence. 					

† In determining the total score, the weight of each of the first two subcriteria on the S(cientific) and U(tilisation)-axis (i.e., S1, S2, U1 and U2) is double the weight of the other criteria.