

European Metrology Programme for Innovation and Research (EMPIR)

Call 2014

Industry

Research Potential

Support for Impact

**Report of the Independent Observer
Imelda Lambkin**

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1. Introduction

1.1 Terms of Reference

This report provides the findings of the Independent Observer (Imelda Lambkin), following completion of the EMPIR Review Conference held in Prague, 17 – 20 November 2014.

The position of the Independent Observer is described in Section 6.5 of the EMPIR Call Process Guide 6: Evaluating EMPIR Projects [Document: P-CLL-GUI-106 Version: 1.0; Approved: EMRP Programme Manager 2014-06-18], which states that:

The European Commission may send an 'Independent Observer' to the review conference and consensus group meeting(s). He/she does not participate directly in the evaluation procedure. He/she will have access to all areas of the evaluation process, and will report back his/her observations and opinions on the process to the European Commission.

The main function of the Independent Observer is therefore to ensure that the EMPIR evaluation process is being implemented in accordance and compliance with the rules that are set out in the Decision.

The specific tasks of the Independent Observer were defined by the EMPIR Programme Manager as follows:

- 1) To act as an independent observer during the EURAMET EMPIR 2014 selection process;
- 2) To prepare, and review the Call and Selection documentation;
- 3) To attend the Prague Review Conference and Consensus Groups on the 17th to 20th November 2014;
- 4) To provide a draft report to the EMRP Programme Manager for factual checking by 5th December;
- 5) To take due regard of comments made by the EMRP Programme Manager on the draft. EURAMET comments will be limited to factual matters, the opinions remaining those of the observer.
- 7) To produce a final report by the end of December 2014 (subject to timely response to the draft by EURAMET);
- 8) The report may be produced in two parts, the first part reporting on the process and in a form that could be made public, while recommendations to EURAMET on improvements to the process that could be made in future years could be reserved for a second part which would not be made generally available.

It was noted that:

- A) The final report will be provided - unabridged - to the European Commission by EURAMET and shall be of a suitable quality for this purpose;
- B) All relevant personnel, including the Referees, will be instructed to provide full cooperation to enable completion of the task;
- C) Full and unfettered access will be provided to all relevant aspects of the call and selection process to enable completion of the task;
- D) The independent observer is bound by confidentiality, and shall only discuss the outcome and provide the report to those who have a legitimate right of access (which includes, should they so choose to contact you directly, the relevant Unit of the European Commission). EURAMET reserves the right to publish the report.

This report therefore deals with the process that was carried out to implement the Review Conference and arrive at the Single Ranked list of proposals submitted for each of the EMPIR 2014 Calls (Industry, Research Potential and Support for Impact). The recommendations to EURAMET are included in a separate report. Both reports follow the format of the 2012 and 2013 reports to ensure consistency of approach.

1.2 My Approach

My observations are based on the following inputs:

- Briefing meeting with the EMPIR Programme Manager, Dublin [Ireland], 14 October 2014;
- Review of Independent Observer reports and recommendations for 2012 and 2013 EMRP Calls;

- Review of Call documentation and briefing materials;
- Attendance at the Review Conference (17-20 November), involving:
 - Industry:
 - 09:00 - 19:15 hrs Monday 17th November 2014 Day 1;
 - 08:30 - 16:00 hrs Tuesday 18th November 2014 Day 2;
 - Research Potential:
 - 09:00 - 16:00 hrs Wednesday 19th November 2014;
 - Support for Impact:
 - 09:00 - 16:00 hrs Thursday 20th November 2014.
- Informal discussions during the Review Conference with Referees, JRP Representatives (for Industry only), the Programme Manager, other members of the Management Support Unit (MSU), the Chair and the Deputy Chair;
- Review of feedback questionnaires;
- Feedback from the EMPIR Committee meeting that followed the Review Conference.

I am satisfied that I had free and open access to all information, presentations and discussions that constituted the 2014 Stage 2 evaluation of proposals.

1.3 Structure of the Report

The report aims to cover the whole of the 2014 Stage 2 process from launch of the Call to the decision on the projects that will be funded. It therefore covers the period from the opening of the Call in June 2014 to the EMPIR Committee meeting following the Review Conference in November 2014.

In keeping with the structure of the 2012 and 2013 reports, it comprises of sections on the background/scope of the Call for proposals, selection of referees and the remote evaluation, the Review Conference and subsequent feedback from decisions at the post-evaluation EMPIR Committee meeting. The report concludes with my findings regarding compliance with the rules, quality of the process and impact of changes that were introduced in 2014.

A separate report has been prepared for EURAMET with comments and suggestions for improvement of the process.

2. Call for Proposals

2.1 Process

In 2014 EURAMET issued calls for joint research for “Metrology for Industry” and “Research Potential” following a two stage process. Stage 1 was launched in February and requested the contribution of “Potential Research Topics” (PRTs) or “Research Potential Topics” (RPOTs) respectively.

Industry: interested parties were invited to submit ideas in the form of PRTs to advance measurement science and technology in Industry. Stage 1 offered the chance for all stakeholders from any country to influence the R&D projects undertaken by the European metrology community by identifying the challenge, problem or opportunity for the PRT. Previous Industry calls had taken place in 2010 and 2012 so that the current call included the requirement to state how the proposed activity would advance beyond the state of the art.

Research Potential: interested parties were invited to submit RPOTs which should include some research and development activities and in this respect differ from the technical assistance nature of cooperation. They do not need to address fundamental scientific challenges. An important element of RPOTs is the collaboration between NMIs/DIs that are less experienced in a relevant field with NMIs/DIs with greater experience, with the aim of establishing and developing metrology capabilities and the potential for metrology research. This was the first Research Potential call.

The highest priority research topics received in Stage 1 provided the basis for Stage 2.

The EMPIR Committee selected thirty three “Selected Research Topics” (SRTs) for Industry and nine SRTs for Research Potential from the PRTs submitted at Stage 1 [84 for Industry and 15 for Research Potential].

Stage 2 requested project proposals against the SRTs that EURAMET published following Stage 1 with a Stage 2 Call launch in June 2014.

- Some SRTs contained inputs from more than one single PRT as similar ideas were combined where appropriate. These SRTs were the basis of the Joint Research Projects (JRPs) which consortia were invited to submit.
- Some countries declared a strategic priority for inclusion in particular projects. Coordinators were requested to seek the involvement of partners from these countries.
- EURAMET provided a web based meeting area to facilitate communications between participants: to register an interest in participating in research, to advertise skills and or equipment and to identify potential consortium partners.

All eligible Industry proposals were put forward to be evaluated at the Review Conference in Prague (17-18 November 2014). All eligible Research Potential proposals were put forward to be evaluated remotely by the Referees in a process without proposers attending the Review Conference (Consensus Group Meeting, 19 November 2014).

EURAMET issued a Call for Support for Impact projects (SIPs) for the first time, designed to increase the impact from completed i-MERA Plus and EMRP projects in August 2014.

- These are coordination and support actions with a clear focus on dissemination and exploitation activities based on research outputs from a completed iMERA-Plus, EMRP or EMPIR Joint Research Project.
- A key requirement is an external request for the work from an organisation ready to take up the outputs of the project and move them on to impact outside the metrology community. Without such a willing recipient expressing support for the proposal and identifying the actions they will take with the outputs of the project, the proposal would have no evidence of the route to impact and should not be funded.

The Consensus Group Meeting for SIPs took place in Prague without proposers attending (20 November 2014).

Number of project proposals received:

- Industry: 32
- Research Potential: 8
- Support for Impact: 10

No proposals were submitted to the Industry SRT-i03: Metrology for innovation in pharmaceutical formulation and manufacturing and Research Potential SRT-r05: Traceable AFM measurement capability.

2.2 Changes for the 2014 Call

The EMPIR Programme Manager advised that the following main changes had been made to the Call process and/or documentation:

- Guide 5 (Submitting administrative data for EMPIR Projects) refers proposers to the Horizon 2020 Annotated Model Grant Agreement for eligibility of costs, making specific references to particular sections of that document.
- Guide 6 (Evaluating EMPIR Projects) provides for three evaluation criteria based on the Rules for Participation in the Horizon 2020 Programme [i.e. excellence, impact and the quality and efficiency of implementation] in contrast to previous use of four criteria [FP7]. Referees were alerted to the limited grant preparation phase necessitating that proposals must be evaluated as submitted and not on potential if certain changes are made.
- Form 6a (Code of Conduct and Declaration) uses the Horizon 2020 conditions.
- Referees were selected from the EURAMET Referee Database which was set up in January 2014 for the EMPIR programme, in contrast to use of the European Commission FP7 database in the past. EURAMET also maintains privileged access to the European Commission's Horizon 2020 Expert Database.
- The proposers for Research Potential were not invited to the Review Conference.
- There was no Researcher Grant scheme in EMPIR and thus no REGs to be evaluated at the Review Conference or linked Stage 3 process in 2015.

The observed results of these changes are discussed later in Section 7 (Conclusions).

3. Selection of Referees

EURAMET provides a registration facility for Referees requiring submission of a completed Datasheet and CV. To qualify as a referee, applicants must have at least four years relevant experience and be prepared to work in English.

Guide 8 (Registering as a Referee for EMPIR) describes the registration process.

Referees are selected from the EURAMET Referee Database which was set up in January 2014 for the EMPIR programme. EURAMET also maintains privileged access to the European Commission’s Horizon 2020 Expert Database which may be used in certain circumstances to identify potential referees.

The selection process for the current call involved the matching of Referees to the 2014 SRTs based on the use of keywords in their profiles e.g. “industry” for the Industry Programme and confirmation of availability for the Review Conference.

The referees are independent experts, acting in a personal capacity and must declare any links to a particular consortium. They sign the Form 6a (Code of Conduct and Declaration) prior to commencement. The referees are responsible for ‘evaluating the merits of each application against the given evaluation criteria’ and reporting results on the relevant forms while maintaining confidentiality. This generally includes attendance at the review conference or consensus group meeting for the evaluation of proposals.

EURAMET selects referees based on skills, experience and knowledge; geographical diversity, gender, private and public sectors (where appropriate) and an appropriate turnover of referees from year to year.

Proposals are evaluated by at least three appropriate referees.

The EMPIR analysis of the Referees was provided for review:

CALL	Industry	Research Potential	Support for Impact
Number of Referees	48	10	11
Previous EURAMET referee	64.6%	70%	63.6%
Previous European Commission evaluation	64.6%	60%	72.7%
Average age	50	53	49
Gender	72.9% male 27.1% female	60% male 40% female	81.8% male 18.2% female
Type of organisation	Higher Education Establishments 35.4% Non-research Commercial sector including SMEs 16.7% Private / Commercial Research Centres 8.3% Private Non-profit Research Centres 8.3% Public Research Centres 27.1% No information given 2.1%	Higher Education Establishments 50.0% Non-research Commercial sector including SMEs 10.0% Private Non-profit Research Centres 10.0% Public Research Centres 30.0%	Higher Education Establishments 9.1% Non-research Commercial sector including SMEs 36.4% Non-research International Organisations (Association of States) 9.1% Private / Commercial Research Centres 36.4% Private Non-profit Research Centres 9.1%
Organisation country	7	8	8
Nationalities	22	8	10

My interpretation of this analysis is that every effort is made to achieve a diverse range of Referees with due consideration of previous evaluation experience, background (type of organisation, nationality) and gender. The balance of experienced referees and newcomers appears appropriate and is in keeping with typical European Commission Call profiles. The representation of industry and private sectors is strong with 25% of Referees for the Industry Call, 10% for Research Potential and almost 73% for Support for Impact.

A conflict of interest was identified for one Referee at the Review Conference prior to commencement of the Industry Poster Sessions. The Referee attended a closed meeting with the EMPIR Programme Manager, the Deputy Chair and the Independent Observer and was invited to withdraw from the conference. The Programme Manager and the Referee agreed to a follow up action to clarify the rationale for withdrawal.

Another conflict of interest was identified for one Referee during the Poster Session. The Referee was removed from any further activity for the specific JRP proposal.

4. Remote Evaluation

The remote evaluation commenced in October with an email to the Referees from the EMRP-MSU, which thanked them for agreeing to act as an EMPIR Referee. The emails were customised by Targeted Programme (i.e. industry, research potential or support for impact) and provided the following information:

- Evaluation group they would join;
- Full list of proposals that they would evaluate;
- Link to a password-protected web-page containing the Information for Referees, including all of the proposals for their Targeted Programme;
- Matrix showing which proposals each person would specifically focus on at the Review Conference;
- Preview of what they would be required to do at the Review Conference or Consensus Group Meetings (and what documentary material would be provided);
- Guidance on selective reading;
- Concluding remarks on what they should do if they discover a conflict of interest;
- E-mail address and telephone number for the EMRP-MSU.

It was noted that referees may be asked to focus on subjects other than their most specialist subjects to ensure the group includes at least 2 “specialists” and one “generalist” and that this meets EC requirements, aiming to balance the tendency to mark favourite subjects slightly higher. Referees were instructed to focus preparation on the JRP proposals in their own group, but also familiarise themselves with the JRPs in other groups to enable meaningful plenary discussions.

The following guides were recommended for reading:

JRPs -

- Guide 4: Writing Joint Research Projects (JRPs) (which explains what a good JRP proposal would look like);
- Guide 6: Evaluating EMPIR Projects (which explains the evaluation and marking process);
- Form 6c: JRP Evaluation (the JRP marking sheet).

SIPs -

- Guide 7: Writing Support for Impact Projects (SIPs) (which explains what a good SIP proposal would look like);
- Guide 6: Evaluating EMPIR Projects (which explains the evaluation and marking process);
- Form 6d: SIP Evaluation (the SIP marking sheet).

The password-protected web-pages were specific to each Targeted Programme and contained more detailed information, including:

JRPs -

- Guide 4: Writing Joint Research Projects (JRPs): a set of instructions given to the proposers on what to include in their proposal.
- Guide 6: Evaluating EMPIR Projects: explains how the evaluation process will work, explains role and gives marking guidance for JRPs.
 - Form 6a: Code of Conduct and Declaration;
 - Form 6b: Payment to Referees;
 - Form 6c: JRP Evaluation (marking sheet).
- Call Budget and Features: EMPIR Call 2014.
- JRP Proposals in zip files: documents submitted by the proposers together with the SRT supporting document published by EURAMET listed by Group.
- Logistics information for the Review Conference or Consensus Group Meeting including agenda and hotel/travel information.
- Link to the Call web page so that they could see the briefing information for the proposers.

SIPs -

- Guide 7: Writing Support for Impact Projects (SIPs): explains how to write a Support for Impact (SIP) proposal for an EMPIR Call.
- Guide 6: Evaluating EMPIR Projects: explains how the evaluation process will work, explains role and gives marking guidance for EMPIR Projects.
 - Form 6a: Code of Conduct and Declaration;
 - Form 6b: Payment to Referees;
 - Form 6d: SIP Evaluation (marking sheet);
- Call Budget and Features: EMPIR Call 2014;
- SIP Proposals in zip files: documents (Protocol and Support Letters) submitted by the proposers;
- Logistics information for the Consensus Group Meeting including agenda and hotel/travel information;
- Link to the Call web page so that they could see the briefing information for the proposers.

For Industry the Referees were instructed to pre-read the JRP proposals prior to the Review Conference but were not required to mark them in advance. The Referees were divided into five Groups (average: 9 Referees; 6 proposals).

For Research Potential and Support for Impact the collated referees' evaluation forms (6C or 6D forms) were made available. Referees were reminded that they must not discuss proposals with proposers or other referees at this time. However at this point referees would be interested to compare their views with those of other referees for the same proposals and compare their marks with those for other proposals. The discussion at the consensus group meeting would be about referees agreeing a set of marks for each proposal in order to produce a ranked list.

5. Review Conference and Consensus Group Meetings: Preliminaries

The Review Conference was scheduled for four days to cover all aspects of the 2014 Call. The conference opened with a welcome address by the EMRP Programme Manager followed by an overview of the EMPIR Strategy and Vision by the EMPIR Deputy Chair.

The first two days focussed on Industry with briefings, informal discussion within each specific Group of Referees (chaired by the facilitators) and discussions with the JRP Representatives (poster sessions and formal Q&A sessions), the marking of individual JRPs and developing consensus on the Single Ranked List.

Each Industry consortium that had submitted a JRP proposal was invited to send a single representative to the Review Conference. The consortium was required to prepare and bring a poster to:

- Complement the interactive discussions with the referees;
- Present the key aspects of the proposal in a clear and concise manner;
- Help the referees evaluate the proposal against the three evaluation criteria; and
- Prepare the representative for the review conference (particularly the question and answer session).

The JRP Representatives were provided with Guide 6 (Evaluating EMPIR Projects).

The third and fourth days focussed on Research Potential and Support for Impact respectively with briefings, discussion of the collated referees' evaluations, marking and development of consensus on the Single Ranked List.

The sections below summarise the process for the briefings, discussion within each specific Group of Referees (chaired by the facilitators) and discussions with the JRP Representatives for the Industry Programme. The process for the marking of individual JRPs and developing consensus on the Single Ranked List is discussed in the following section 6.

5.1 Briefing for the Referees

The Referees were briefed on EURAMET, the context of the 2014 EMPIR Call and on the evaluation criteria and marking rules for JRPs or SIPs. The Referees were reminded of their roles, their obligations and the tasks.

For Industry the Referees were split into their allocated Groups with the facilitator and note-taker. For Research Potential and Support for Impact the Referees remained in Plenary Session. I observed this process for Industry Group 5 and for the Research Potential and Support for Impact Plenary Sessions. The sessions started with introductions i.e. introducing the Referees/groups to each other, setting out the Referees to take the lead on evaluation of each JRP or SIP proposal and providing the logistics/details of the process.

5.2 Briefing for the JRP Representatives (Industry only)

A parallel briefing session was organised for the JRP Representatives. The Programme Manager outlined what they should expect at the Review Conference i.e. an explanation of the evaluation process. They were then briefed on what to expect if successful. This included the steps required to agree a contract with EURAMET, including the timescales.

5.3 Poster Sessions with the JRP Representatives (Industry only)

The Poster Sessions were scheduled to allow 15-20 minutes of discussion between the Referees and the JRP Representative for each proposal. Referees were asked to focus initially on the posters for which they were nominated as specialists or generalists, then on others in their group and finally on any other posters outside their own groups.

The sessions were facilitated in a time-efficient manner designed to prevent excess time being allocated to one poster over another. The timing, at 15-20 minutes per referee, allowed for animated discussion with the JRP representative and few sessions finished earlier than the allotted time. The meeting room layout fitted the sessions well given the small informal meeting style of 1-2 Referees with the JRP Representative.

5.4 Preparation for Formal Interviews (Industry only)

After the poster sessions, the JRP Representatives had a 3 hour period prior to their formal Q&A sessions, allowing them to 'regroup' i.e. to consider the content of their informal discussions with the Referees and to contact other consortium members as needed prior to the next session.

The Referees returned to Breakout Sessions chaired by the MSU facilitators to discuss their first impressions of the proposals and develop questions for the Q&A Sessions with the JRP Representatives. The facilitators explained the purpose of the session, which was to agree a shortlist of final questions for the formal interviews with the JRP Representative.

For each JRP proposal, the lead Referee was invited to chair the process and reach a consensus on the final questions. I attended all 5 Industry Sessions for 1-2 proposals each. In all cases the MSU facilitators played a strong role, maintaining the focus of the Referees on the questions while allowing for detailed discussion of individual views on the proposals. Discussion topics common to each Group included e.g. discrepancies between the SRT and JRP and differentiation between incremental advances and real innovation.

In keeping with the 2013 process, webcams were provided to aid the finalisation of the questions. They were used in only 2 of the 5 Industry Sessions with mixed results.

5.5 Formal Interviews with JRP Representatives (Industry only)

The final Breakout Sessions were the Q&A sessions chaired by the referees with assistance from the MSU facilitators. The JRP Representatives had a maximum of 10 minutes to answer the prepared questions using the same process as in 2013:

- JRP Representatives attended for their proposals on an individual basis;
- The nominated lead Referee for each project asked the questions;
- When time permitted, other Referees asked additional questions.

While attending Industry Group 1(2 proposals) and Group 3 (3 proposals), I observed that the JRP Representatives were generally very competent, responding well in a challenging situation (with an average of 9 Referees and the MSU facilitators present).

The Referees were reminded that they should not interact with the JRP Representatives after the session.

6. Review Conference and Consensus Group Meetings: Evaluation

6.1 Marking the JRPs and SIPs

The Referees were reminded of the tasks and scoring criteria, with particular emphasis on the Horizon 2020 changes related to the limited grant preparation phase, by the Programme Manager prior to commencement of the Sessions. The sessions were chaired by the MSU facilitators with the assistance of the Referees.

A consensus mark was agreed for each proposal against the evaluation criteria and one marking sheet was completed per proposal. The referees who led the proposal under discussion also led the process while all Referees could comment.

I attended Industry Groups 1 (4 proposals) and 2 (1 proposal) and the Research Potential and Support for Impact sessions. The facilitators maintained focus on the task at hand while complying with process requirements. They used a standard Marking Wall Chart (matrix sheet with all of the JRPs / SIPs (vertical) and the criteria (horizontal) to work up the scores. The EMPIR Marking Guidance (0 = Fail to 5 = Excellent; half marks may be given) was clearly displayed.

Total Scores were added to the Marking Wall Chart subsequent to the review of all proposals. The discussion notes were reviewed to finalise both score and comments. The Total Weighted Scores were calculated.

The Referees then established a ranked list of the proposals in their group and the Marking Wall Chart and accompanying signed marking sheets were provided to the MSU. In all cases the Referees were able to come to a consensus on the individual scores for both JRPs /SIPs and their prioritised lists of JRPs / SIPs. Finally the Referees were reminded to hand in all documentation and to delete all electronic files prior to departure.

For Industry I was able to observe progress through the marking phase across the Groups. While there was some variability in the time needed to score individual proposals, the procedure was scheduled and efficiently facilitated to complete it without negatively impacting on the process as a whole. From an early stage the Programme Manager circulated between the Groups to draft emerging scores, to obtain a preliminary view of the Single Ranked List and to prepare for the subsequent presentation of the list to the Referees.

6.2 Single Ranked List

The Single Ranked List for the JRPs / SIPs was developed by the EMRP-MSU using a pre-defined Excel template for ease of review and data sorting (illustrated by score, pass-fail, ranking and Industry Group).

The first draft of the Single Ranked List was presented to the plenary meetings of the Referees by selected members of the EMPIR Team, the Chair, Deputy Chair and Programme Manager:

- Industry: for the budget of €23M there were 14-15 proposals with a weighted mark of 16.5 or above. There were no ties to resolve. The EMPIR Chair led a discussion on 3 proposals with the same scores at or near the threshold with a view to understanding which proposal, if any, could be considered for funding if the budget became available from other sources. The Referees indicated that the current ranking should stand. No further voting or decision was required.
- Research Potential: for the budget of €1.5M there were 5 proposals with a weighted mark of 14.625 or above.
- Support for Impact: for the budget of €0.5M there were 6 proposals with a weighted mark of 17 or above. There was a tie at place 8 which was initially separated based on the Impact score and the referees confirmed that separation.

The Referees were thanked by the Chair, asked to sign and again reminded to hand in all documentation and to delete all electronic files prior to departure.

7. Conclusions

The main conclusions that I can draw from review of the 2014 EMPIR Call documentation, the process and my attendance at the Review Conference include the following:

- The process and procedures were carried out in accordance with the rules established in Decision No. 555/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on participation of the Union in EMPIR (15 May 2014), Regulation (EU) No. 1290/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the rules for participation and dissemination in Horizon 2020 (11 December 2013, with one derogation for the funding rate) and the draft Horizon 2020 Model Delegation Agreement for Article 185 Initiatives (September 2014).
- The evaluation process was transparent, fair and confidentiality was maintained. It was carried out in a time-efficient manner.
- The Call documentation and all correspondence with the Referees were of a very high standard, in keeping with the maturity of the EMRP-MSU team and their procedures which have been developed and refined over a substantial series of EMRP and iMERA Calls.
- The Review Conference was organised in a highly professional manner, ranging from the logistics (selection of venue, scheduling of activities, quality of catering) to the facilitation of the individual sessions (time efficiency, technical competency and unbiased nature).
- The Call outcomes (Single Ranked Lists) were of high quality suited to submission to the EMPIR Committee for timely approval.

Several of the changes to the Call process and procedures related to fit with Horizon 2020 guidelines. In my discussions on these changes with Referees, JRP Representatives and members of the MSU team I did not observe any major negative effects. In contrast, the changes were welcomed. In my opinion this was due to a) clarity in alerting the Referees early e.g. to the limited grant preparation phase necessitating that proposals would be evaluated as submitted and not on potential if certain changes are made and b) the welcoming of further consistency across national and European Call processes by applicants.

One of the highlights of the 2014 EMPIR Call process for me was the interactive activity between the JRP Representatives and the Referees for the Industry Programme. The Poster Sessions were dynamic, comprising rigorous challenging/defending of the proposals up to 6 or more times during the schedule as well as providing a networking activity for the metrology community. The formal interviews added to the challenging/defending activity and could be viewed as a training ground for career development. The feedback from both JRP Representatives and Referees was very positive. This is in stark contrast to the majority of national and European programmes and one which could be showcased to a broader community. I would recommend that the JRP Representative- Referee interaction be reinstated for the Research Potential Programme, despite the smaller scale of the Call. The career development and networking nature of the activity should make it worthwhile.

8. Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the EMPIR Chair, Deputy Chair, Programme Manager and the Management Support Office team for their support before, during and after the Review Conference. Every effort was made to assist me, to explain the relevant context and to ensure that I had free access to all information and documents.