Annex 1 – Evaluation of the multi-technique pipeline projects.

Stage 1. Eligibility check

Verify:

- PI eligibility
- Minimum two CERIC facilities involved
- At least one Partner Facility
- Required endorsements
- Project duration (12–24 months)
- Budget within limits
- Complete documentation

Only eligible proposals proceed.

Stage 2. Scientific and technical review

Reviewers will evaluate both scientific merit and the ability to strengthen CERIC as a distributed RI.
The criteria identified in consultation with the BoD and indicated in the call are the following:

1. the scientific use case;
2. the expected impact of the proposed activity on the overall quality and capability of CERIC;
3. the quality and clear structure of the proposed implementation;
4. the number of CERIC facilities and of CERIC countries involved;
5. co-funding made available by the facilities involved;
6. the potential of the projects to build the base for attracting external funding.

Evaluation Methodology: weighted score
Each criterion will have **a different weight assigned.** The maximum score a proposal can get is then calculated as the sum of the weighted score for all the individual criteria, where:

weighted score for an individual criterion = 5 (max possible score) x weight.

For example, for the scientific use case, the maximum weighted score is: 5x0.25=1.25

Criterion	Weight	Max points
the scientific use case	0.25	1.25
the expected impact of the proposed activity on the overall quality and capability of CERIC	0.25	1.25
the quality and clear structure of the proposed implementation	0.20	1
the number of CERIC facilities and of CERIC countries involved, their role and commitment	0.15	0.75
sustainability and potential of the projects to build the base for attracting external funding	0.15	0.75
Total	1	**5**

The **maximum score of a proposal is 5 points. Proposals with the higher score are awarded, but they have better chances if they are stronger in the first 2-3 criteria.**

Evaluation criteria:

1. The scientific use case	
Objective:	Evaluate the scientific relevance, novelty and appropriateness of the proposed use case, and whether the development of the requested pipeline is justified by a clear scientific need.
Questions:	• Is the scientific challenge important? • Are the proposed pipelines likely to solve an important limitation or unmet need? • Is the multi-technique approach key to the challenge? • Is there a convincing rationale for combining the selected CERIC techniques? • Is the expected scientific outcome sufficiently ambitious while remaining realistic? • Is there evidence of demand from the scientific community or potential future users? • • Is the scientific challenge clearly described? Are objectives clearly defined?
Score descriptors	5. Excellent • Outstanding scientific case; • Clearly demonstrates the necessity of a multi-technique approach; • High novelty and strong scientific relevance; • Likely to enable significant new scientific opportunities. 4. Very Good • Strong scientific motivation; • Multi-technique approach is well justified; • Good scientific relevance with only minor weaknesses. 3. Good • Scientifically sound; • Objectives are relevant but originality or justification could be strengthened; • Some aspects remain insufficiently explained. 2. Fair • Scientific case is only partially convincing; • Limited novelty; • Weak justification for developing the proposed pipeline. 1. Poor • Scientific rationale is unclear or not adequately demonstrated; • No convincing need for the proposed activity.

2. The expected impact of the proposed activity on the overall quality and capability of CERIC	
Objective:	Assess how the proposed activity strengthens CERIC's scientific capabilities, competitiveness and service portfolio.
Questions:	2.1 Does it create new capabilities currently unavailable? 2.2 Will the project create reusable protocols? 2.3 Will it improve interoperability between facilities? 2.4 Will the project significantly improve CERIC's existing services or create new ones? 2.5 Could it improve efficiency, accessibility or reproducibility? 2.6 Will multiple facilities benefit? 2.7 Does it strengthen integration across CERIC? 2.8 Could it increase CERIC's visibility within the European Research Area?
Examples include:	• common sample holders and sample environments; • harmonized workflows • Standardised experimental protocols • metadata standards • Software tools and digital solutions • reference samples • Data pipelines and data processing workflows
Score descriptors	5. Excellent • Expected to produce substantial impacts and lasting improvements. • High strategic value for CERIC. • Strong enhancement of infrastructure capabilities. 4. Very Good • Clear positive impact. • Significant improvement of existing services or capabilities. 3. Good • Moderated impact expected. • Benefits are meaningful although relatively limited. 2. Fair • Impact is modest or only partially demonstrated. 1. Poor • Little or no expected benefit for CERIC, with little institutional value.

3. The quality and clear structure of the proposed implementation	
Objective:	Evaluate whether the implementation plan is realistic, coherent and well organised
Questions:	3.1 Is the work plan realistic and feasible within the proposed duration? 3.2 Are work packages logically organised? 3.3 Are milestones and deliverables clearly identified? 3.4 Are responsibilities allocated? 3.5 Is the timeline realistic? 3.6 Are risks identified? 3.7 Are mitigation measures convincing? 3.8 Is the requested budget well distributed between partners? 3.9 Are required resources appropriate? (e.g. personnel, consumables, travel) 3.10 Is there a proper justification for personnel to be hired? 3.11 Does the foreseen added value justify the allocated funds? 3.12 Are in-kind contributions adequate?
Include assessment of:	• Gantt chart • Work package descriptions. • Resource allocation. • Deliverables and milestones • governance • timeline • budget
Score descriptors	5. Excellent • Highly detailed and coherent implementation plan. • Excellent project management approach. • Risks were thoroughly analysed and mitigation measures seem efficient. • Very high confidence in successful implementation. 4. Very Good • Well-structured plan with only minor shortcomings. 3. Good • Generally feasible implementation. • Some aspects require clarification. 2. Fair • Important elements are insufficiently described. • Feasibility is uncertain. 1. Poor • Poorly structured implementation. Serious doubts regarding feasibility.

4. The number of CERIC facilities and of CERIC countries involved, their role and commitment	
Objective	Assess the potential of enhanced integration across the CERIC consortium
Questions	4.1 How many facilities are involved in the proposal? 4.2 How many CERIC countries are represented? 4.3 Are partners complementary and meaningfully involved? 4.4 Are partners committed? (e.g. providing in-kind resources, allocating expertise, etc).
Score descriptors	5. Excellent • Broad participation involving several facilities (>3) and multiple CERIC countries (>3). • Strong collaboration with clearly complementary roles. • The roles are balanced, all facilities involved benefit equally. • Excellent commitment from the main partners: the in-kind contributions are well balanced, and their value is higher than the funding requested 4. Very Good • Good participation of facilities (>2) and multiple CERIC countries (>2). • Well-balanced roles of the facilities and clear complementarity. • Very good commitment from the main partners: the in-kind contributions are well balanced, and their value is at least equal to the funding requested 3. Good • Adequate consortium (at least 2 facilities, of which 1 PF) and additional strategic partners. • Some opportunities for broader integration remain. • The partners' roles may be slightly unbalanced, or their commitment may not be clearly stated. 2. Fair • Limited participation. • Somewhat unbalanced collaboration, complementarity is not evident. • Not enough commitment from partners 1. Poor • Limited participation. • Unbalanced collaboration, lacking complementarity. • Poor commitment from partners

5. Sustainability and potential of the projects to build the base for attracting external funding.	
Objective	Assess whether the proposed activity is likely to continue beyond the project's lifetime and generate opportunities to attract external funding for CERIC.
Questions	5.1 Is there a realistic strategy for seeking external funding? Are target funding programmes identified? 5.2 Will the project establish new collaborations supporting future proposals? 5.3 Do the activities have a clear potential to obtain resources for operation and development beyond the project's lifetime?
Examples of external funding opportunities	• Planned Horizon Europe proposals. • ERC Synergy preparation. • MSCA initiatives. • ESFRI collaborations. • National funding opportunities. • Industrial partnerships. • New international collaborations. • Technology demonstrators. • Preliminary datasets supporting future grant applications.
Score descriptors	5. Excellent • A strong, credible pathway to attract significant external funding. • Sustainability is clearly explained. 4. Very Good • Good prospects for future proposals and collaborations. • Very good sustainability strategy. 3. Good • Some potential for attracting external funding. • Sustainability appears feasible. 2. Fair • Future funding opportunities are only vaguely described. • Sustainability strategy not considered or weak 1. Poor • No convincing evidence of follow-up potential.