



DEFRA

Defence-related Research Action

Call for proposals 2026

Platform Evaluation guidelines

For Remote evaluators



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PART I: ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS

1 APPOINTMENT AS AN EVALUATOR

On the basis of your prior agreement to contribute to the evaluation procedure, you received an **appointment email** from the DEFRA secretariat.

This email:

- formally appoints you as evaluator
- lists the research proposal(s) you are appointed to evaluate
- confirms the financial conditions for the evaluation contribution

As attachment to this email you will receive an empty **note of credence**, you can fill out with your contact details, account number, and details of the provided services. The completed note of credence should be sent to defra@mil.be, so they can arrange the payment for the performed evaluations.

You may contact the DEFRA secretariat via email at any stage of the procedure: defra@belspo.be

The **remote evaluation** is carried out on an online evaluation Platform, which can be accessed via the following link.

<https://belspo.aimsgrants.com/>

Evaluators will not have access to proposal(s) other than the ones they are evaluating. There will be 3 remote evaluators for each proposal. Each evaluator will be reviewing the proposal individually and independently from the 2 co-evaluators.

1.1 Access TO THE PLATFORM

The DEFRA secretariat will create your profile in the platform and activate it as user. As a result, you will receive three emails:


- one regarding your registration on the platform,
- one stating you have been added as a user to BELSPO,
- and one with your assigned evaluation.

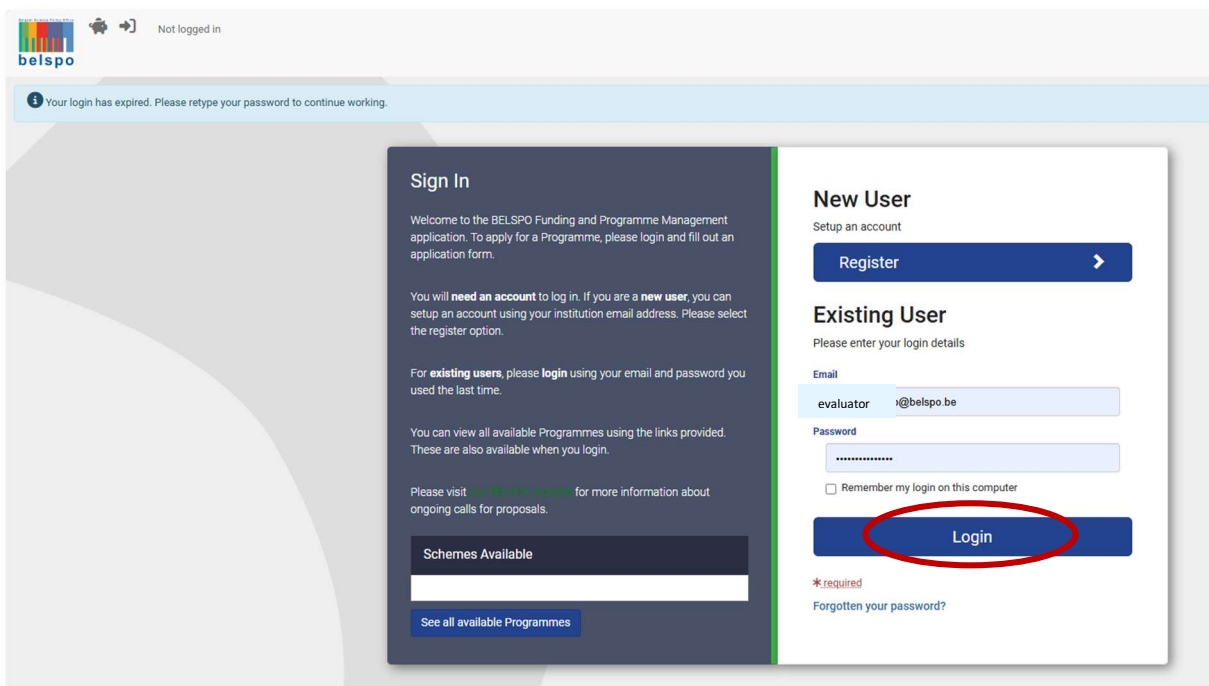
These emails allow you to access the platform, but you will not be able to review any proposals until you receive a third and last email containing the link to the task of reviewing a given Full Proposal.

2 PART II: GUIDELINES

2 LOG IN TO THE PLATFORM

You may access the platform by clicking on the links provided in the emails, or copy the following address in your internet browser: <https://belspo.aimsgrants.com/>

Under Existing User, enter the email address and system-generated password you have received in the email. And  click Login.



The screenshot shows the BELSPO login interface. At the top left, there is a 'belspo' logo and a 'Not logged in' status. A blue banner at the top contains the message: 'Your login has expired. Please retype your password to continue working.' The main content is divided into two columns. The left column is titled 'Sign In' and contains instructions for new and existing users, along with a 'Schemes Available' section and a 'See all available Programmes' button. The right column is titled 'New User' and 'Existing User'. The 'Existing User' section has a 'Please enter your login details' prompt, followed by 'Email' and 'Password' input fields. The 'Email' field contains 'evaluator@belspo.be'. The 'Password' field is masked with dots. Below the password field is a checkbox for 'Remember my login on this computer'. A red circle highlights the 'Login' button. At the bottom of the 'Existing User' section, there is a '* required' note and a 'Forgotten your password?' link.

2.1 GET FAMILIAR WITH THE DASHBOARD

The **Dashboard** is your home page in the Platform. It is made of different sections:

- **Welcome:** welcome message with 2 buttons:
 - Edit my details – allows you to edit your personal details – you need not do this.
 - Register an organisation – allows you to link yourself to an organisation – you need not to do this.
- **How to Apply:** general information on how to apply to the different BELSPO programmes.
- **Upcoming Tasks :** here you will find all your pending tasks in relation to your applications.
- **My Applications :** here you will find the list of all your applications and their status.
- **My Meetings:** here you will find any Panel meetings you may have been invited to participate in.
- **See all available programmes:** leads you to the BELSPO open programmes.

You can always come back to the Dashboard by clicking on the Paper-tray icon.

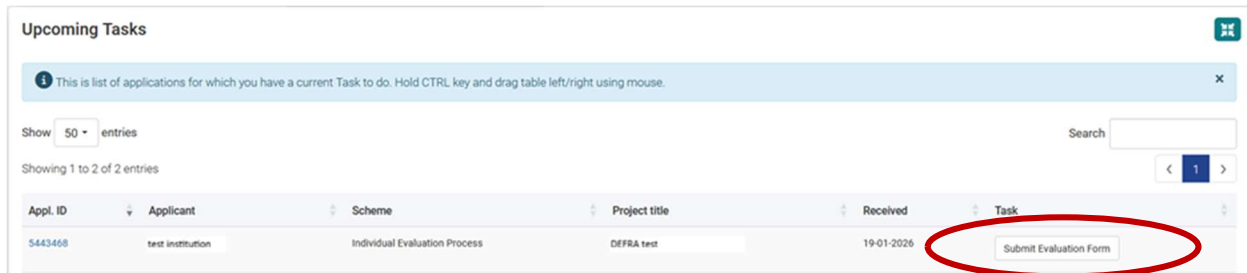
Appl. ID	Applicant	Scheme	Project title	Received	Task
329271	TEST INSTITUTION	Individual Evaluation Process	TEST - Full Proposal 2025	28-04-2025	Please, review your assigned application

App. ID	Institution	Scheme Name	Region Name	Project Title	Creation Date	Application Status	Relationship Type
329271	TEST INSTITUTION	P4Science	Head Office	TEST - Full Proposal 2025	28-04-2025 13:07	Full Proposal Submitted	Evaluator

3 ACCESS THE FULL PROPOSAL DOCUMENTS AND THE INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION FORM IN THE PLATFORM

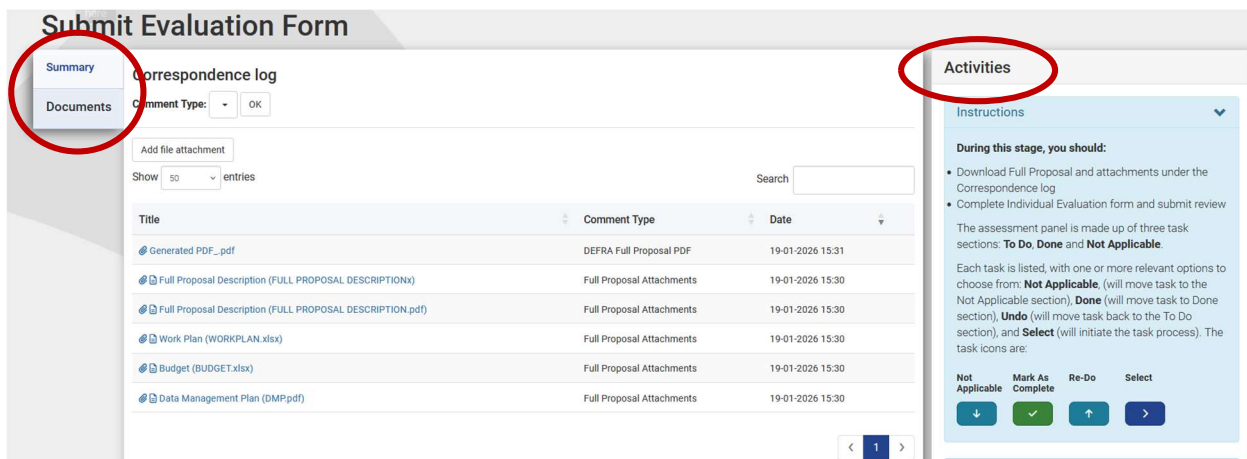
3.1 ACCESS THE FULL PROPOSAL AND THE INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION FORM IN THE PLATFORM

Under Upcoming Tasks, there is a list of the Full Proposals you have been assigned to evaluate. Next to each Full Proposal, Click on the task [Submit evaluation form](#).



3.2 LAYOUT OF THE PAGE 'PLEASE, REVIEW YOUR ASSIGNED APPLICATION'

You will land on the 'Please, review your assigned application page' in which you will have access to the documents of the Full Proposal and from which you will be able to access the online Individual Evaluation form.



The two tabs on the left let you navigate between:

- **Summary:** Shows the Standard Details of the Full Proposal, such as the Application ID, the programme and the call, the type of project, the acronym, the title of the project, the summary, etc.
- **Documents:** Shows the Correspondence Log of the Full Proposal; here you will find all the documents that compose the Full Proposal.

The Activities box on the right, contains instructions regarding what you should do and how to use the To-Do list of tasks.

The screenshot shows the 'Activities' section of a platform. On the left, there is a 'Instructions' panel with a dropdown arrow. The instructions state: 'During this stage, you should: Download Full Proposal and attachments under the Correspondence log; Complete Individual Evaluation form and submit review. The assessment panel is made up of three task sections: To Do, Done and Not Applicable. Each task is listed, with one or more relevant options to choose from: Not Applicable, Done, Undo, and Select. The task icons are: Not Applicable (down arrow), Mark As Complete (green checkmark), Re-Do (up arrow), and Select (right arrow)'. On the right, there is a 'To Do' section with a task 'DEFRA Individual Evaluation' and a 'Select' button. Below it is a 'Done' section, and then a 'Not Applicable' section. Each section has a 'Task' label and a 'Re-Do' button.

Users of the platform may mark these activities as 'Not applicable' or 'Complete' which will put the activities under the 'Not Applicable' or 'Done' sections. Evaluators do not have the possibility to do this, they can only use the 'Select' button next to the task 'Individual Evaluation' to access the Individual Evaluation Form.

3.3 DOWNLOAD AND READ THE FULL PROPOSAL DOCUMENTS

The documents that compose the Full Proposal appear under the Correspondence Log (Documents tab).

The list of documents should contain at least a PDF of the Full Proposal, the Full Proposal Description, the Data Management Plan, and two Excel files: Gantt Chart and Budget Table document.

🖱️ Click on the titles of the files to download them to your computer and read them.

Documents you will need for the evaluation of the proposal:

Files listed		Explanation:
Title	Comment Type	What the file contains
Generated PDF_.pdf	DEFRA Full Proposal PDF	<i>This file contains a short description of the Full Proposal and details of the consortium partners. Note, there may be 2 files names this way, this is because BELSPO has asked the applicants to resubmit their Full Proposal. In this case, you must only evaluate the one that bears the most recent date.</i>
Full Proposal Description	Full Proposal Attachments	<i>This file contains the elaborate proposal description.</i>
Data Management Plan	Full Proposal Attachments	<i>This PDF contains the Data Management Plan.</i>
Gantt chart	Full Proposal Attachments	<i>This is an Excel file containing the calendar and workplan of the project</i>
Budget Table document	Full Proposal Attachments	<i>This is an Excel file containing the budget of the project</i>

3.4 ACCESS THE INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION FORM

Under the To Do section of the Activities, 'Individual Evaluation' task, click on the 'Select' arrow. You arrive to the Individual Evaluation Form.



4 INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION FORM

4.1 LAYOUT OF THE INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION FORM

DEFRA Individual Evaluation

1. Full Proposal SECTION

Instructions on how to navigate this form

- ▶ Click **Save Draft** to save your progress.
- ▶ Click **Save Draft & continue** to save your progress and go to the next section.
- ▶ Click **Save Draft & exit** to submit your evaluation to BELSPO.

You will be asked if you want to submit your entire form now.

If mandatory questions remain unanswered, a list with the sections that still need to be completed will appear. However, the content of your answers is your responsibility. If the form has been adequately completed, you will be able to answer "YES, I want to submit the form now". After which, the evaluation cannot be adjusted.

Return to Index Print Form Generate new PDF

1. Full Proposal (Incomplete) - next section ▶▶

1.1 General Information - Application ID QUESTION

Welcome to the individual evaluation form!

Please make sure to carefully read the information in the blue boxes of this form to ensure the correct completion of your evaluation. Below you can find the links to the accompanying documents you need to go through before starting your evaluation. The Full Proposal and its annexes can be found by clicking on the task that's displayed on your dashboard.

Attention
The Application ID is the unique identifier of the application. Please always mention the ID in email communication with BELSPO.

The evaluation form consists of different **sections**. You can navigate between the sections by clicking the tabs.

Each section contains one or more **questions**.

Under the title of each question, there is a **blue box**. This box contains information that provide general information regarding the question, and/or instructions on how to fill in the question.

At the bottom of the page:

- Click **Save Draft** to save the progress you to move from one section to the other.
- Click **Save Draft & Continue** to save the progress and move to the next section (tab).
- Click **Save Draft & exit** to submit the Full Proposal.

Save Draft

Save Draft & continue »

Save Draft & exit

4.2 SECTION 1: FULL PROPOSAL

Question 1.1 contains general information of the full proposal you are evaluating.

But more importantly it contains the links to the

- The information file for evaluators.
- The evaluation guidelines that will guide you through the platform.
- The evaluation matrix ...

Question 1.2 contains the acronym and title of the proposal you are evaluating. If this does not match the acronym and title you have received in the confirmation e-mail, please contact the DEFRA secretariat (defra@belspo.be).

In **Question 1.3** enter you last and first name.

Question 1.4: contains 3 declarations

The first two declarations, on conflict of interest and GDPR, are mandatory to tick.

The third declaration ask if we can store your data (name, e-mail and affiliation) so we can contact you for future evaluations. This one is not mandatory.

4.3 SECTIONS 2 – 8: EVALUATION CRITERIA

Sections 2 until 8 contain questions on the evaluation criteria that have to be assessed. These criteria are also described in the **Evaluation matrix** available under Question 1.1. You must compulsorily provide an **'appreciation'** followed by a **'comment'** for each of questions.

2.1 Project Objectives

Please, evaluate section 1. **Project Objectives** of the Full Proposal.

Are the project objectives clear and coherent? Are the project objectives SMART defined?

Please select -

Search

Please select

Insufficient

Deficient

Weak

Reasonable

Good

Excellent

APPRECIATION MARK

Insufficient:
Given the lack of information, this criterion cannot be evaluated

Deficient:
The research objectives are unclear AND contradictory.

Weak:
The research objectives are badly defined OR do not align with each other.

Reasonable:
The research objectives are mostly clear and sufficiently aligned.

Good:
The research objectives are clear and align with each other and they are SMART defined.

Excellent:
The research objectives are fully and exceptionnally well described with an outstanding alignment and they are perfectly SMART defined. *

Comments

(You may enter up to 2000 chars.)

COMMENTS

4.3.1 APPRECIATION SCALE

APPRECIATION SCALE

Insufficient information Deficient Weak Reasonable Good Excellent

Each category in the appreciation scale is linked to a different statement for each sub-criterion. These statements are displayed in the **Evaluation Matrix** that is available under **Question 1.1**.

Be sure to have the **Information document with the Submission and Evaluation guidelines** and the **Evaluation Matrix** by your side when evaluating the proposal.

4.3.2 COMMENTS

Comments justifying the choice of appreciation are **mandatory** and must be in agreement with the appreciation chosen for each sub-criterion. Comments will be articulated texts (no schematic bullet-points allowed) that will explicitly refer to the content of the proposal without being a summary of the proposal sub-section.

There is a 2000 character limit (including spaces). So, please, be concise while also providing sufficient feedback of good quality to work with. Should your feedback be deemed as 'insufficient' or 'of low quality', you will be asked to reformulate your comments.

4.4 SECTION 9: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND QUESTIONS

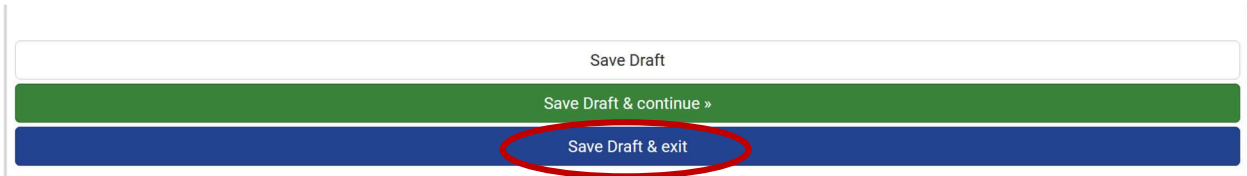
In **section 9** you must provide:

- Strengths of the project in short bullet points.
- Weaknesses of the project in short bullet points
- Recommendations for the applicants. What can they do to improve their proposal.
- Up to 5 questions the applicants will have to answer in writing before their presentation in front of the Scientific Evaluation Committee.

5 SUBMIT THE INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION FORM

Once you have completed all the sections, you can submit the Individual Evaluation Form. Wherever you find yourself in the form, go to the bottom of the page.

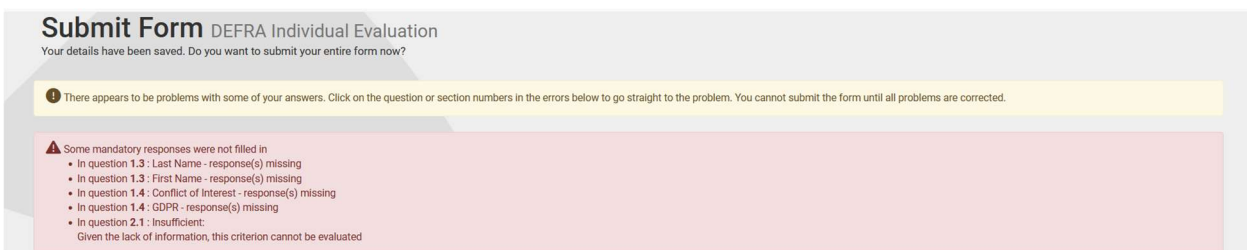
🔗 Click on Save Draft & Exit



5.1.1 IF YOU HAVE NOT COMPLETED ALL THE REQUIRED SECTIONS

If you have not completed all the required sections, the following message will appear:

'There appears to be problems with some of your answers. Click on the question or section numbers in the errors below to go straight to the problem. You cannot submit the form until all problems are corrected'.



Each incomplete answer will be noted on the red box. By clicking on the number of the number of the question, the Platform will take you to the section where the information is missing.

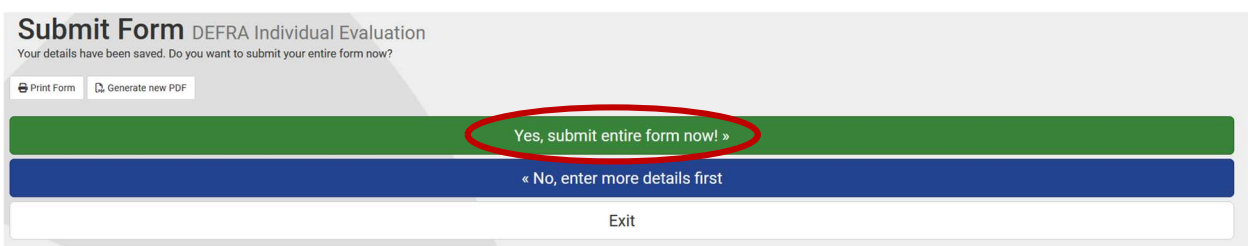
Complete the missing information.

🔗 Click on Save Draft & Exit

5.1.2 IF YOU HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE FORM:

🔗 If you have successfully completed all required sections, the following screen will appear:

- Click on Yes, submit entire form now! If you are sure you want to submit. Note that the submission cannot be undone.
- Click on No, enter more details first, if you want to keep editing the Expression of Interest.



6 ACCESS YOUR INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION FORM

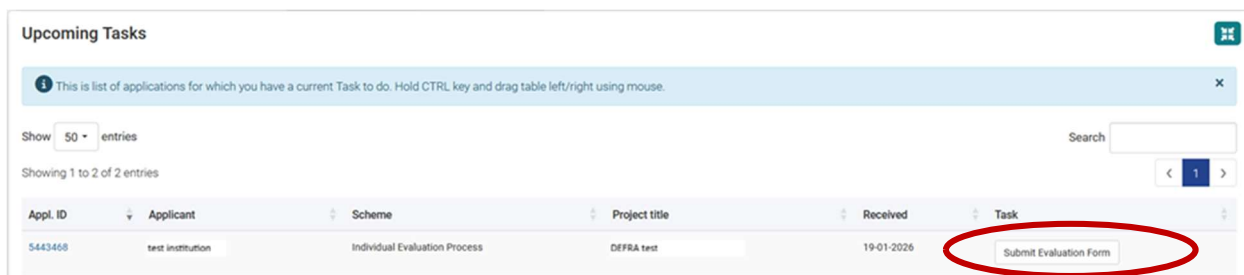
6.1 BEFORE YOU HAVE SUBMITTED THE INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION FORM

If you save your progress but do not submit your Individual Evaluation Form, you will find the application on your Dashboard in two places:

6.1.1 UNDER UPCOMING TASKS:

Upcoming tasks lists all the applications for which you have tasks to accomplish in the online platform.

Click on [Submit Evaluation form](#) to access the form and keep editing.

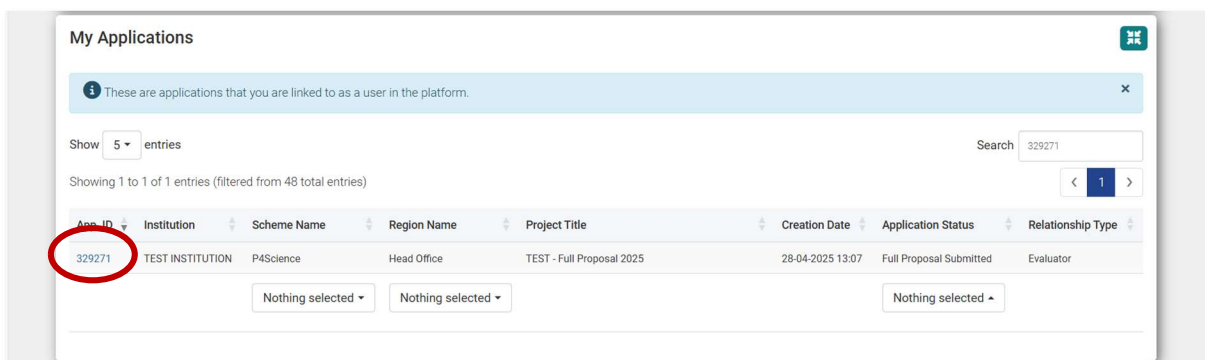


Appl. ID	Applicant	Scheme	Project title	Received	Task
5443468	test institution	Individual Evaluation Process	DEFRA test	19-01-2026	Submit Evaluation Form

- **Appl. ID** : Is the unique identifier of the application in the BELSPO Platform. The ID number is a hyperlink. By clicking on the ID you will be led to the documents of the application.
- **Applicant**: This is the institution to which the Coordinator of the application belongs.
- **Scheme**: This is the programme under which the application has been submitted.
- **Project title**: This is the title of the application.
- **Received**: This is the date you have received a task in the system in regards to this application. In this case, while the Individual Evaluation Form is not submitted, your task is to submit it.
- **Task**: This is the task that you have to do on the platform.

6.1.2 UNDER MY APPLICATIONS:

My applications lists all applications you are reviewing.



App. ID	Institution	Scheme Name	Region Name	Project Title	Creation Date	Application Status	Relationship Type
329271	TEST INSTITUTION	P4Science	Head Office	TEST - Full Proposal 2025	28-04-2025 13:07	Full Proposal Submitted	Evaluator

- **Appl. ID** : Is the unique identifier of the application in the BELSPO Platform. The ID number is a hyperlink. By clicking on the ID you will be led to the documents of the application.
- **Institution**: This is the institution to which the Coordinator of the application belongs.
- **Scheme Name**: This is the programme under which the application has been submitted.
- **Region Name**: By default this will always say 'Head Office'.
- **Project title**: This is the title of the application.
- **Creation Date**: This is the date the application was created.
- **Application Status**: This is the status of the Application. As long as you have not submitted the Individual Evaluation Form, it will read 'Full Proposal Submitted'.
- **Relationship Type**: This is the role that you have in this application.

6.2 AFTER YOU HAVE SUBMITTED THE INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION FORM

6.2.1 UNDER MY APPLICATIONS:

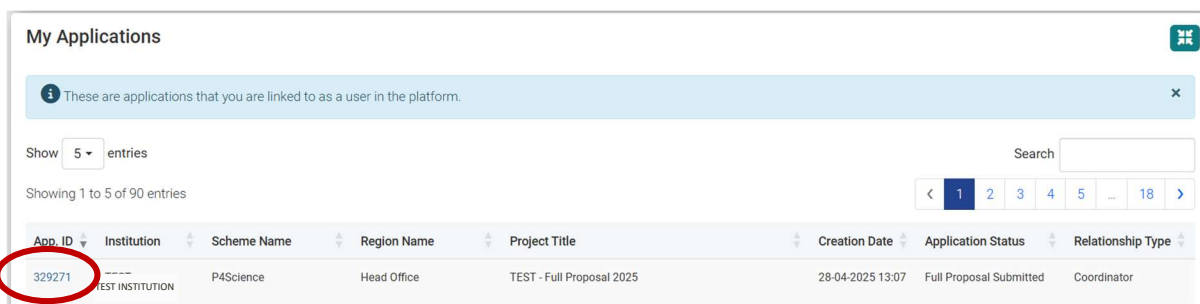
After submitting your Individual Evaluation Form, you will land back on the Dashboard.

The application to which you have been assigned as evaluator will not appear under My Upcoming Tasks unless BELSPO finds an issue while checking your work, in which case BELSPO will contact you to revise it, and the task 'Please, review your assigned application' will appear again.

Your assessment will only be visible under My Applications.

Now, Application Status will have changed from 'Full Proposal Submitted' to 'Decision in Progress'.

🔗 Click on the [Application Number](#) hyperlink to access your work once you have submitted it. You will arrive to the Application page.



App. ID	Institution	Scheme Name	Region Name	Project Title	Creation Date	Application Status	Relationship Type
329271	TEST INSTITUTION	P4Science	Head Office	TEST - Full Proposal 2025	28-04-2025 13:07	Full Proposal Submitted	Coordinator

6.2.2 THE APPLICATION PAGE:

Application page

The Application page is where all the information regarding the application is kept.

There are 2 tabs in this page: Summary and Documents. The Application page opens on the Documents tab.

- **Summary tab:** It is the technical sheet of your application. Contains the main information. These appear under the title ‘Standard Details’.
- **Documents tab:** The Documents tab contains all the documents of your application. These appear under the title ‘Correspondence Log’. At this point, you will only find your Full Proposal here.

The Documents tab

Click on Form Created Individual Evaluation .pdf with Comment type ‘Evaluation form’ to access your evaluation.

The screenshot shows the 'Application' interface. On the left sidebar, the 'Documents' tab is selected and circled in red. The main content area is titled 'Correspondence log' and contains a table with the following data:

Title	Comment Type	Date
Generated PDF_.pdf	Full Proposal PDF	29-04-2025 18:14
Gantt chart (Gantt chart test.xlsx)	Full Proposal Attachments	29-04-2025 18:13
Budget Table document (Budget table test.xlsx)	Full Proposal Attachments	29-04-2025 18:13
Form Created Expression of interest form	Expression of interest	28-04-2025 13:20

The entry 'Form Created Expression of interest form' is circled in red in the original image.