



Open Call #2: Call for evaluators

Guidelines for Evaluators

Project website:	https://pgreact.eu/
Opening date	27th of March 2025
Closing date	29th of April 2025, 17:00h Brussels time
Open call platform:	Application link



Table 1: ACRONYMS

ACRONYMS	
PQC	Post Quantum Cryptography
CA	Consortium agreement
OC	Open call
FSTP	Financial Support for Third Parties
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
VAT	Value Added Tax Plus





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1. About the PQ-REACT project

Public key cryptography has developed into a crucial aspect of the digital communication infrastructure in all over the world during the past three decades. Mobile phones, internet shopping, social networks, and cloud computing are only just a few of the numerous applications supported by these networks which are of the utmost importance to our economy, security, and way of life.

The ability of people, organizations, and governments to communicate securely is crucial in such a connected world. Since there are currently no quantum computers that can perform Shor's and Grover's algorithms on long keys, the quantum threat is only theoretical at this point. However, it is clear that current cryptosystems like RSA, ECDSA, ECDH, and DSA will need to be replaced by alternatives, including post-quantum cryptography (PQC), (Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) or hybrid approaches, as soon as possible.

Several pertinent organizations have acknowledged the importance of addressing this issue as fast as possible. In this regard, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) recently launched an initiative to identify cryptographic algorithms resistant to quantum computer attacks by 2022 and make them accessible by 2024.

The main objective of PQ-REACT project is to design, develop and validate a framework for a faster and smoother transition from classical to quantum resistant solutions for a wide variety of contexts and usage domains.

This framework will include PQC migration paths and cryptographic agility methods and will develop a portfolio of tools (including an actual quantum computer) for validation of post quantum cryptographic systems, that will allow users to switch to quantum resistant cryptography, taking under consideration their individualities and various contexts.

1.2 PQ-REACT Open calls

Understanding the critical role that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play in technological innovation and implementation, PQ-REACT will launch open calls that attract these businesses. The aim is to engage SMEs in contributing to the development, testing, and scaling of post-quantum solutions, thereby enriching the project with diverse perspectives and expertise.

There will be 2 Open calls within this project. The financial support to third parties within the PQ-REACT will be in the form of a grant awarded (lump-sum) after a call for proposals. The overall budget for both calls is 900,000 €.

The criteria for calculating the exact amount of financial support to be granted to each Open call Project is based on the requirements established in the call text and based on the type and length of the Use Cases, which have a maximum duration of 12 months.



Table 1: PQ-REACT OPEN CALLS OVERVIEW

OPEN CALL	TYPE OF PROJECT	FUNDING per PROJECT	DURATION
Open Call #1	Develop (single applicant)	EUR 50,000	6 months
Open Call #2	Implement (consortium-based)	EUR 162,500	12 months

PQ-REACT will run two open calls that will allow the selected SMEs, Universities and Research Centers or NGO's and foundations to obtain optimized solutions to solve cryptographic encryptions based on classic algorithms that currently protect data and infrastructure.

As a result of these Open Call Projects, they will help test and validate the implemented framework in a number of different scenarios and use cases.

These guidelines are intended for the **Open Call #2 – IMPLEMENT** specifically.

The second open call will open: **2nd of April 2025**

The call will close: **27th of May 2025 at 17:00 CEST Brussels time**

The call for evaluators will open: **27th of March 2025**

The call for evaluators will close: **29th of April 2025 at 17:00h Brussels time**

All the supporting documents for the Open call for evaluators can be found on the PQ-REACT [website](#).



2. What are we looking for

2.2 Evaluators profile

PQ-REACT is looking for independent evaluators who can assess the quality of the received applications within the Open Call #2 – IMPLEMENT, shortly after the call is closed at the end of May. The evaluators should meet the following criteria:

- Expertise or background:
 - Expertise in Post Quantum Cryptography: Evaluators should have a strong understanding of post-quantum cryptography innovation, including the ability to evaluate projects based on their innovativeness, feasibility, and potential to go beyond the state-of-the-art.
 - and/or*
 - Entrepreneurial, Investment, or Innovation Background: Evaluators should have experience in entrepreneurship, investment, or innovation to effectively assess the proposals in the context of the PQ-REACT project.
- At least 5 years of experience in business-related activities and/or being an entrepreneur.
- Experience in evaluating proposals for the European Commission or similar.
- **Comply with the liability, admissibility, and eligibility rules of the PQ-REACT project.** For more information, please refer to sections 4.2 Evaluator's Liability, 4.3 Admissibility Criteria, and 4.4 Eligibility Criteria.

An evaluator must not work for an organization that aims to participate in the PQ-REACT project OC#2 or for an organization that is currently involved in the PQ-REACT consortium.

The evaluators will be responsible for providing a neutral but technical/scientific and/or commercial review of the received applications, generally focusing on, but not limited to, the following aspects:

- Quality and relevance of the proposed project or initiative.
- Technical feasibility and innovation potential.
- Alignment with the objectives and focus of the technologies of PQ-REACT.
- Potential impact and scalability of the proposed solution.
- Consideration of ethical, legal, and regulatory aspects.
- Evaluation of the applicant's expertise, track record, and capacity to execute the project.

It is important to note that the number of applications per evaluator depends on various factors:

- the availability of evaluators',



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- time and,
- the number of applications submitted.

You will be notified of the number of proposals during the contract signing, and you will have access to the details of the proposals once the contract is signed and you log in to the [SPLORO platform](#) for evaluations. For specific dates, please refer to Section 3 of this document.

3. Tentative timeline of activities

Important dates to remember and take into consideration when applying:

- PQ-REACT Open Call #2 duration: 02.04.2025 – 27.05.2025 at 17:00h Brussels time
- **Call for evaluators:** 27.03.2025 – 29.04.2025 at 17:00h Brussels time
- Evaluators applications evaluation: 30.04.2025 – 16.05.2025
- Contracting with selected evaluators: 19.05.2025 - 30.05.2025
- Onboarding webinar with evaluators: 03.06.2025 at 11:00h Brussels time (1 hour)
- Applicants' proposals evaluation: 11.06.2025-26.06.2025

4. Evaluators selection process

Evaluators will be selected by the PQ-REACT team members based on their competences and needs for the OC #2.

4.1 Expression of interest

If you are interested in becoming an evaluator, please create an evaluator profile on the SPLORO platform, complete all the necessary fields in the Application form (see Annex 1) and upload your CV (in .pdf format).

Apply here: [PQ REACT Evaluators Call 2](#)

If you know someone else who might be qualified for this task and might be interested, please forward this information to them. By applying to PQ-REACT Call for Evaluators, applicants automatically accept all the rules and conditions described below.





4.2 Evaluators' liability

By applying to the PQ-REACT evaluator Call and registering on the SPLORO platform, the expert:

- understands that submitting an application (registration) does not guarantee selection as an evaluator for any of the open calls.
- understands that they will need to provide a signed Code of Conduct, along with any other requested documents, if selected to serve as an evaluator for a specific open call published on the SPLORO platform.
- confirms that the team in charge of the OC#2 will inquire about their availability to perform the evaluation within the specified timeframe for the given open call, to attend an informative session (if necessary), and a debriefing session after selection (if necessary).
- confirms interest in being informed about future opportunities to act as an evaluator in ongoing and upcoming open calls.
- ensures that they will only evaluate applications from applicants with whom they have no Conflict of Interest (Col).

All evaluators must sign a declaration of no conflict of interest and a contract which includes a Confidentiality agreement with the PQ-REACT consortium prior to the start of the evaluation.

4.3 Admissibility Criteria

To be admissible for this call, the applicant must meet the following criteria.

- To submit a complete application at any time starting from **27.03.2025 to 29.04.2025 at 17:00h Brussels time**. Applications must be completed in all parts and in English.
- To submit the application through the SPLORO platform, as indicated in this call, using the provided form on the platform, and a CV must be attached as a **.pdf** file as part of the application (CV must be legible, accessible, and printable). **Paper or email submissions are NOT eligible.**

If the applicant meets the above criteria, the application will proceed to the eligibility phase explained below.

4.4 Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for selection as an evaluator for PQ-REACT Open Call #2, the applicant must meet the following criteria:

- The application form must be properly completed and in English.
- The applicant must be legally registered:
 - If from Spain: NIF registered in the Impuesto Actividades Económicas (IAE)





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- If from a Member State (except for Spain): VAT Number or tax registration number registered in the VIES
 - If NOT from a Member State – no VAT Number / no Tax Identification Number / no registration in VIES is required. It is required that they are able to issue legal invoices.
- To have at least 5 years of experience in business-related activities and/or being an entrepreneur.
- To have availability during onboarding session and evaluation period:
 - Onboarding session: 03.06.2025 at 11:00h Brussels time (1 hour)
 - Evaluation period: 11.06.2025-26.06.2025

If the eligibility criteria are met, the expert evaluation will be conducted by the PQ-REACT team members. To formalize the collaboration, unless otherwise specified, selected evaluators will be required to sign a declaration of no conflict of interest (see [Annex 2](#)), and the contract with Sploro prior to the start of the evaluation.

4.5 Evaluation by the PQ-REACT Team

The evaluation process for applicants will be based on three categories:

- Technical Experience
- Business Experience
- Expertise in Horizon Europe or similar R&I proposal evaluations and mentoring

Each category will be scored from 0 to 5 by two members of the PQ-REACT team. The final score will be the average of both evaluations. Applicants scoring below 3 are considered below the threshold.

If there is a discrepancy of more than 20% between the two scores, a third evaluator from the PQ-REACT team will assess the applicant, and their score will become the final evaluation.

The selection process will start with the highest-scoring applicants, ensuring as much as possible gender and geographical balance.

4.6 Communication of results

After the evaluation process is completed, all applicants will be informed of their results. Only selected experts will be contacted for contract signing.

In relation to the selection process of external evaluators as subcontractors for PQ-REACT, please note that the selection of candidates will be conducted as a subcontracting process from Sploro. Consequently, you acknowledge and agree that additional feedback may not be provided beyond the final decision regarding your inclusion as an evaluator for the programme. Neither the helpdesk



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nor the partners involved in this process will engage in discussions or provide explanations concerning the decisions made on the selected profiles. Requests for reasons pertaining to the non-selection of candidates will not be addressed.

4.7 Conflict of interest

Evaluators must not have a conflict of interest at the time of their appointment and must sign a statement stating that they do not have one. They must also notify the consortium if such a conflict arises in any of the applications to which they have been allocated. When an evaluator reports a potential conflict of interest or it is brought to the project consortium's attention in any way, the project consortium will assess the circumstances and any objective aspects of information available. If the consortium determines that there is a conflict of interest, the evaluator will be removed from the application's evaluation. All potential conflicts of interest will be thoroughly investigated. More information can be found [HERE](#).

4.8 Confidentiality

All information connected to the evaluation process is absolutely confidential, thus evaluators are bound by secrecy. They are not permitted to reveal any information regarding the applications submitted, as well as the outcomes of the assessment and selection, to anyone. They are also not permitted to use the application's concepts for their own purposes.

Evaluators are also asked to refrain from disclosing their evaluator's role on social media in order to avoid any biases and/or influence from potential candidates.

4.9 Data protection

PQ-REACT requires access to Personal and Entity Data in order to process and evaluate applications. As Open Call coordinator, Sploro will act as the Data Controller for all data submitted through the Sploro's platform for this purpose. To ensure the safety and security of this data, the Sploro's platform has been designed and operates under strict compliance with The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). Therefore, all applicants are required to accept the Sploro's platform terms to ensure full coverage. For more information regarding the data privacy policy and security measures implemented by Sploro, please refer to their website at <https://sploro.eu>.

Essential data may be shared with consortium partners and/or project associates, ensuring confidentiality and integrity, solely for the purpose of fulfilling the evaluation of the proposal.





4.10 Language proficiency

English is the only official language for the PQ-REACT project. Submissions done in any other language will not be eligible and will not be evaluated. This means that all the communication and materials will be in English, and all deliverables will only be accepted if in English.

All communication during the evaluation should also be done in English.

5. Payment conditions

As an integral part of the evaluation process, it is mandatory for all evaluators to be legally registered.

- For the evaluators from Spain: NIF is required along with registration in the Impuesto de Actividades Económicas (IAE).
- For the evaluators from a Member State (Other than Spain): To be registered in the [VIES](#) (VAT Information Exchange System) before engaging in the assessment of proposals. The VIES registration ensures that evaluators possess valid VAT identification numbers, contributing to the transparency and credibility of the evaluation process. This measure aligns with international standards and is crucial for handling financial transactions associated with the compensation system outlined below.
- For the evaluators NOT from a Member State: No VAT Number / no Tax Identification Number / no registration in VIES is required. It is required to be able to issue legal invoices.

In the evaluation process, each evaluator has the opportunity to receive **45 EUR** per hour.

It is estimated that the individual evaluation (including the evaluation report) of a proposal may take up to three and a half hours.

In case a consensus meeting is necessary, it is estimated that half an hour will be also invested at a cost of 45 EUR per hour.

This compensation system aims to recognise and value the time and effort dedicated by the evaluators, encouraging their comprehensive participation in the evaluation process.

Given the dynamic nature of the evaluation process, where assignments are made to align with the evaluator's experience and knowledge, it is important to note that a specific minimum number of evaluation sessions cannot be guaranteed. However, the precise details of the evaluator's work will be formally communicated via email by the PQ-REACT consortium.

Each evaluator will sign a contract for evaluating the proposals with SPLORO.

The evaluator is required to prepare an invoice and forward it to SPLORO at the end of their performed service (details will be specified in the contract signed between the evaluator and SPLORO). Each invoice submitted by the evaluator must clearly state:



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- The reference of the contract: PQ-REACT Call#2
- Identification of the evaluator.
- The number of evaluations performed and hours per evaluation.
- The EVALUATOR's address, international bank details & VAT N° (if applicable).

SPLORO will make a single payment via bank transfer. All payments will be made to the bank account provided by the evaluator, strictly in euros, to bank accounts that accept euros. The transfer will be made to the evaluator's account within 60 days of receiving the invoice.

It is important to note that SPLORO is not subject to any commercial tax, including VAT, and the amount indicated as fee per hour is therefore considered as all-inclusive.

6. Applications evaluation procedure

The evaluation process to be followed during the selection of the applicants is shown in the following figure 1. Before entering the programme, a two-step evaluation takes place.

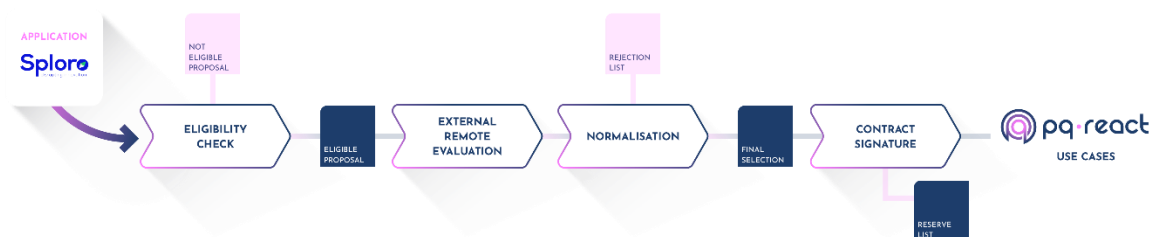


Figure 1. Startup evaluation process

6.1 Step 1: Eligibility criteria for applicants

This step is done by Sploro. All the applications you will receive for evaluation will already have gone through this stage.

An automatic filtering to discard non-eligible proposals will be conducted. Applications marked as non-eligible will get a rejection letter including the reasons for being declared as non-eligible. No further feedback on the process will be given.



6.2 Step 2: External remote evaluation

All activities will be carried out individually on the SPLORO platform. On June 3rd, 2025, at 11:00h Brussels time, an online webinar will be conducted with the selected evaluators, where the evaluation process will be explained step by step, with special attention to the evaluation criteria. Additionally, they will be briefed on how the SPLORO platform functions.

After the webinar, the evaluators will be sent a manual for the platform and all the necessary documentation for the evaluation process.

It is important to note that a single evaluator can assess up to 30 proposals, as specified in the contract they must sign once selected.

Each proposal will then be assigned to 2 evaluators, and consequently, 2 individual evaluation reports will be prepared for each proposal, which should be based on the assessment of 3 main criteria:

- 1) Technical Excellence
- 2) Impact
- 3) Implementation

The evaluators will score each award criterion on a scale from 0 to 5:

Table 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE SCORING SCALE

DEFINITION	
0	Proposals fails to dress the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information
1	Poor – criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses
2	Fair – proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses
3	Good – proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present
4	Very good – proposal addresses the criterion well, but a small number of shortcomings are present
5	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor

The total score will be calculated as an average of the score of the 3 different criteria. The threshold for each criterion will be three (3), while the overall score threshold will be ten (10). That means if a proposal receives less than 3 in one criterion or less than 10 overall score, will not be recommended for funding by the independent evaluators and will be automatically rejected.





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Each evaluator will score a proposal without knowing the evaluation of their colleague, thus preventing one evaluator from influencing the other. Therefore, the same evaluation can receive very different scores.

The normalization method will be employed to address this, which will be explained in the evaluator's manual. This method ensures a more balanced distribution of scores and reduces the possibility of biases and distortions. All proposals will be ranked based on their scores at the end of the evaluation process. This method will be applied by the PQ-REACT consortium.

At the event that a divergence in the scores of over 20% persists, the two evaluators will hold a consensus meeting. The evaluators will then review their scores and a total score is calculated as a mathematical average of their new scores, not including any normalisation process.

