APPROVED

by the Decision No. 1 of the Implementation and Monitoring Commission of the National Research Programme

"Public Health"

(established by Order No. 01-01.1/137 of the Minister for Health on 9 October 2023)

dated 19 October 2023.

**The Regulations for the Open Call for Project Applications of the National Research Programme “Public Health”**

**I. General provisions**

1 The Regulations for the Open Call for Project Applications of the National Research Programme “Public Health” (hereinafter referred to as - the Regulations) stipulates the procedures by which the Latvian Council of Science (hereinafter referred to as - the Council) organises and implements the open call (hereinafter referred to as - the Call for Proposals) for project applications (hereinafter referred to as - the Project Application) of the National Research Programme “Public Health” (hereinafter referred to as - the Programme), on the basis of the Cabinet Regulation No. 560 of 4 September 2018 “Procedures for the Implementation of National Research Programme Projects” (hereinafter - the Cabinet Regulation) and in compliance with the provisions of the Cabinet Order No. 629 of 26 September 2023 “On the National Research Programme “Public Health”” (hereinafter referred to as - the Cabinet Order).

2 The Regulations have been prepared on the basis of Paragraph 16 of the Cabinet Regulation.

3 The total state budget funding available for the Call for Proposals under the Programme is 3,750,000 *euro* (three million seven hundred and fifty thousand *euro*) (hereinafter referred to as - the total funding of the Call for Proposals). Of which 262,500 euro (two hundred and sixty-two thousand five hundred *euro*) is intended to cover administrative costs (7%). The total funding of the Call for Proposals is to be used in conformity with Paragraph 36 of the Cabinet Regulation:

3.1 to finance projects;

3.2 to implement the measures referred to in Paragraph 37 of the Cabinet Regulation.

4 The project implementation period is 24 months from the date of entry into force of a project implementation agreement (hereinafter - the Project Agreement). Within the framework of the Project Agreement, the project implementation period may be extended for the time period and in accordance with the procedures laid down in Paragraph 39 of the Cabinet Regulation. A project shall be financed over a period of at least 12 (twelve) months.

5 The call for proposals is planned for financing six projects with the following maximum project funding per task set out in Paragraph 6 of the Cabinet Order is determined:

5.1 For the task under Sub-paragraph 6.1 of the Cabinet Order - 300,000 euro (three hundred thousand *euro*);

5.2 For the task under Sub-paragraph 6.2 of the Cabinet Order - 600,000 euro (six hundred thousand *euro*);

5.3 For the task under Sub-paragraph 6.3 of the Cabinet Order - 1,000,000 euro (one million *euro*);

5.4 For the task under Sub-paragraph 6.4 of the Cabinet Order - 500,000 euro (five hundred thousand *euro*);

5.5 For the task under Sub-paragraph 6.5 of the Cabinet Order - 687,500 euro (six hundred and eighty-seven thousand five hundred *euro*);

5.6 For the task under Sub-paragraph 6.6 of the Cabinet Order - 400,000 euro (four hundred thousand *euro*).

6 The Council shall launch the call for tenders in accordance with the procedure laid down in Paragraph 17 of the Cabinet Regulation and shall administer, support, monitor and control the implementation of the project under the Project Agreement in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Cabinet Regulation.

7 A project applicant who complies with the provisions of Sub-paragraphs 2.12 and 9.1 of the Cabinet Regulation (hereinafter referred to as - the Applicant) shall draft a project application in accordance with Annex 1 “Project Application” to the regulations (hereinafter referred to as - the Project Application). The deadline for submitting a project application is up to 30 calendar days from the day of the call for proposals (hereinafter referred to as - the Deadline).

8 The Council shall state in the call for tenders:

8.1 the name of the tender;

 8.2 the total funding for the tender;

 8.3 the deadline for the submission of project applications;

 8.4 a website containing the information needed to submit project applications.

9 The applicant shall submit a project application covering only one task stipulated in

Sub-paragraphs 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 or 6.6 of the Cabinet Order. The Project Applicant may submit more than one project application for each of the tasks set out in Sub-paragraphs 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 or 6.6 of the Cabinet Order.

9.1 When submitting a project application:

9.1.1 For the task set out in Sub-paragraph 6.1 of the Cabinet Order, the Applicant shall also include in the application the sub-tasks set out in Sub-paragraphs 10.1.1, 10.1.2, and 10.1.3 of these Regulations;

9.1.2 For the task set out in Sub-paragraph 6.2 of the Cabinet Order, the Applicant shall include in the application at least two sub-tasks set out in Sub-paragraphs 10.2.1, 10.2.2, 10.2.3, 10.2.4, and 10.2.5 of these Regulations;

9.1.3 For the task set out in Sub-paragraph 6.3 of the Cabinet Order, the Applicant shall include in the application at least three sub-tasks set out in Sub-paragraphs 10.3.1, 10.3.2 and 10.3.3, 10.3.4, 10.3.5, and 10.3.6 of these Regulations;

9.1.4 For the task set out in Sub-paragraph 6.5 of the Cabinet Order, the Applicant shall also include in the application the sub-tasks set out in Sub-paragraphs 10.5.1, 10.5.2, and 10.5.3 of these Regulations;

9.1.5 For the task set out in Sub-paragraph 6.6 of the Cabinet Order, the Applicant shall include in the application at least one of the sub-tasks set out in Sub-paragraphs 10.6.1, 10.6.2, and 10.6.3 of these Regulations.

9.2 When submitting a project application:

9.2.1 For the task set out in Sub-paragraph 6.1 of the Cabinet Order, the Applicant must achieve the results set out in Sub-paragraphs 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.5 of the Cabinet Order during the project implementation;

9.2.2 For the task set out in Sub-paragraph 6.2 of the Cabinet Order, the Applicant must achieve the results set out in Sub-paragraphs 7.2 and 7.5 of the Cabinet Order during the project implementation;

9.2.3 For the task set out in Sub-paragraph 6.3 of the Cabinet Order, the Applicant must achieve all the results set out in Paragraph 7 of the Cabinet Order during the project implementation;

9.2.4 For the task set out in Sub-paragraph 6.4 of the Cabinet Order, the applicant must achieve the results set out in Sub-paragraphs 7.2 and 7.5 of the Cabinet Order during the project implementation;

9.2.5 For the task set out in Sub-paragraph 6.5 of the Cabinet Order, the Applicant must achieve all the results set out in Paragraph 7 of the Cabinet Order during the project implementation;

9.2.6 For the task set out in Sub-paragraph 6.6 of the Cabinet Order, the Applicant must achieve all the results set out in Paragraph 7 of the Cabinet Order during the project implementation.

10 In order to achieve the objectives of the Programme, the following tasks and sub-tasks shall be established:

10.1 To develop new knowledge, approaches and methods to improve health literacy of residents:

10.1.1 To conduct a population-based study on the level of health literacy among the residents of Latvia in different groups of age, gender, income level, statistical regions, occupation, patients with certain chronic diseases and other groups;

10.1.2 To identify the most important factors influencing/connected to health literacy (including limiting factors and confounders) and identifying risk groups;

10.1.3 To conduct a study on public attitude towards topical patient rights issues with a view to improving patient rights ;

 10.2 To develop new knowledge, approaches and methods for the development and effective use of human capital of healthcare:

10.2.1 To assess the relevance of health education to the needs of public and healthcare, including the usefulness of investments in the education, development and protection of human resources for health, and identify opportunities for optimisation of resources;

10.2.2 To identify mechanisms for more effective attraction and retention of human resources, identify working conditions that promote a healthy work-life balance and strengthen the mental health of staff and reduce the risks of occupational diseases; and to approbate the tool for analysis of the experiences of medical practitioners;

10.2.3 To evaluate the digital competences of medical practitioners and develop a competency framework for digital competences of medical practitioners;

10.2.4 To identify the conditions and ways for the development and involvement of the leadership capacity of medical practitioners in strategic decision-making and participation in the improvement of treatment and care;

10.2.5 To approbate, pilot and improve the human resources planning model[[1]](#footnote-1), developed within the framework of the European Commission's DG Structural Reform Support project No. REFORM/SC2021/09 "On Health Workforce Strategy in Latvia"[[2]](#footnote-2) to enable better collection, analysis and planning of human resources data;

 10.3 To develop new knowledge, approaches and methods to reduce preventable and medically avoidable mortality from non-infectious diseases:

10.3.1 To identify opportunities for medically preventable mortality reduction in patients suffering from cardiovascular diseases;

10.3.2 To conduct benchmark measurement of the quality of in-patient healthcare services in medical institutions in the priority areas (cardiovascular, oncology, mother-child), taking into account the volume of services provided and the work of specialists and other criteria;

10.3.3 To determine the effectiveness and quality of publicly funded cancer screening and other health care programmes in oncology (Green Corridor, Yellow Corridor), including post-screening examinations;

10.3.4 To evaluate the use of artificial intelligence in mammography;

10.3.5 To develop and validate an assessment tool to assess risk factors for postnatal depression;

10.3.6 To identify trends (type, intensity) of health services received by persons who have committed suicide or attempted suicide;

 10.4. To gain knowledge for the development of a human biomonitoring programme to assess the prevalence of pesticides, heavy metals and certain organic pollutants in samples taken from the residents of Latvia and to determine whether residues of banned pesticides originate from environmental contamination, food or household products;

 10.5 To develop new knowledge, approaches and methods for assessment and containment of the risks of prevalence of antimicrobial resistance, as well as to provide knowledge on new approaches and methods for improvement of HIV containment policies and new cost-effective approaches for expanding public vaccination coverage:

10.5.1  To identify the prevalence of HIV in the community, including by modelling the number of undiagnosed HIV cases, evaluating the effectiveness of HIV control policies, including by identifying the degree of adherence of HIV-positive patients, the influencing factors, as well as evaluating the measures implemented so far to promote adherence of HIV-positive patients;

10.5.2 To implement a point prevalence study on antibiotic consumption and healthcare-associated infections in healthcare facilities providing healthcare services to patients with acute health conditions; implement a study on screening practices and options for patients at risk, taking into account the increase in multi-drug resistant bacteria, including due to forced displacement and specific war injuries caused by the hostilities in Ukraine;

10.5.3 To conduct evaluation of cost-effectiveness of vaccination, identifying the economic benefits and return on investment of the vaccination policy implemented to date (including using cost of illness and statistical lifetime value approaches; combining the calculation with the cost of the immunisation programme);

 10.6 To develop new knowledge, approaches and methods to measure, monitor and improve health outcomes of children:

10.6.1 To assess the timeliness of diagnosis of chronic diseases (obesity and other chronic diseases prevalent in the child population) and the factors influencing it in the child population;

10.6.2 To assess changes in schoolchildren's health as a result of the COVID-pandemic and LONG-COVID;

10.6.3 To identify adverse childhood experiences of violence among young people in Latvia and their relationship to health status and self-rated health.

**II. Project applicant and the collaborating partner project participation conditions**

11 In order to certify the applicant’s compliance with Sub-paragraphs 2.12 and 9.1 of the Cabinet Regulation, the applicant shall upload through the National Scientific Activity Information System (hereinafter - information system) Part D of the project application, “Applicant’s certification”, filled in and signed with a secure electronic signature, and bearing a time stamp (hereinafter - applicant’s certification), to the information system. If it is not possible to provide a secure electronic signature with a time stamp, the project applicant shall proceed in accordance with Paragraph 18 of Annex 2 to the Regulations "Methodology for the preparation and submission of the project application, the mid-term scientific report and the final scientific report" (hereinafter referred to as the "Submission Methodology").

12 The project partner complies with the provisions of Sub-paragraph 2.18 of the Cabinet Regulation. The project applicant shall engage project partners in accordance with the provisions of Sub-paragraph 9.3 of the Cabinet Regulation. In order to certify the cooperation within the project, the project applicant shall ensure that the project partner signs Part E “Certification of the project partner - scientific institution” (hereinafter referred to as “Certification of the project partner - scientific institution”) or Part F “Certification of the project partner - public institution” (hereinafter - Certification of the project partner - public institution) of the project application with a secure electronic signature bearing a time stamp which the project applicant shall attach to the project application. If a secure electronic signature cannot be provided, the project collaboration partner shall proceed in accordance with Paragraph 22 or 26 of the Submission Methodology.

 13 In order to certify the conformity of the project applicant or the project partner - scientific institution with the provisions of Sub-paragraph 2.12 of the Cabinet Regulation, the head of the scientific institution concerned shall submit the financial management and accounting policy of the scientific institution and the financial turnover report (Part G of the project application “Financial turnover report form”) for 2020 -2022 . If the scientific institution has private investors, it must provide a free-form declaration that the results of the research related to the project application will not be used for commercial purposes. The documents referred to in this Paragraph shall be attached as an annex to the project applicant’s certification and to the certification of the project collaboration partner, the scientific institution, in accordance with Sub-chapters 3.2 and 3.3 of the Submission Methodology.

14 The documents referred to in Paragraph 13 of the Regulations shall not be provided by the project applicant or project collaboration partner which has been recognised as meeting the definition of a research organisation in the open call for proposals of Fundamental and Applied Research Projects 2023[[3]](#footnote-3) or the open calls for proposals of the National Research programmes 2023.

15 Within the framework of the project implementation, the project partner may be eligible for funding from the indirect eligible costs allocated to the project in proportion to the share of direct eligible costs allocated to the project partner, subject to the provisions of Sub-paragraph 14.2 of the Cabinet Regulation.

16 If the project partner is involved in the implementation of the project, including with human resources of its own, they will participate in the implementation of the project as principal investigators or promoters (which may include students in accordance with Section 44(1) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions). Information on the involvement of the project partner in the implementation of the project with its own human resources shall be indicated in Part A “General information” of the project application, Chapter 2 "Scientific Group".

**III. Conditions of the Scientific Group for the Participation**  **in he Project**

17 The project applicant shall form a scientific group for the implementation of the project, in accordance with the provisions of Sub-paragraph 2.22 of the Cabinet Regulation.

18 In the project application, the project manager, the main project contractors and project contractors must comply with the provisions laid down in Sub-paragraphs 2.13, 2.14 and 2.15 of the Cabinet Regulation. The remuneration of the staff of the research group involved in the execution of the project shall be determined in accordance with the remuneration policy and rates of remuneration of the project applicant and of the project collaborating partner (if any).

19 A scientist may only be named as a project manager in one project application per tender. If a scientist is listed as a project manager in more than one project application under the call, the Council will contact all the applicants concerned and ask them to indicate, within one working day, for which project application the scientist is project manager and in what capacity the scientist will be project manager for the other project applications (if applicable).

20 The workload in full-time equivalent (FTE) of one person, being the project manager, the main project contractor and project contractor, other than the student, shall be planned in such a way that the workload indicated in a single project application, as well as in the case of project implementation, does not exceed 1,0 FTE.

21 For the students included in the research groups indicated in the project application, and in the case of project implementation, the total average workload of all students over the duration of the project shall be at least 2.0 FTE.

22 The project application, as well as the project implementation, shall require that each student is employed in the project for at least 0.25 FTE on average during the project implementation period.

23 If a student completes a level of studies during the project period and starts the next level of study within four months at the latest, his/her involvement in the project during the four-month period shall be deemed to be in conformity with that laid down in Paragraphs 21 and 22 of the Regulations regarding engagement of the student in the project implementation.

24 If a doctoral student successfully completes the doctoral study programme and defends his/her doctoral thesis during the project period, his/her involvement in the project shall henceforth be deemed to be in conformity with that laid down in Paragraphs 21 and 22 of the Regulations regarding engagement of the student in the project implementation.

**IV. Activities and Costs to be Supported**

25 The applicant shall complete Part H of the project application “Non-economic activities”, which provides information on the conformity of the activities planned in the project application with Sub-paragraph 2.2 of the Cabinet Regulation.

26 The project applicant shall include the information on the eligible cost items of the project in Part A, Chapter 3 “Budget” of the project application in conformity with Paragraph 14 of the Cabinet Regulation. 14.

27 Indirect eligible costs which are not directly related to the achievement of the project results, but support and ensure appropriate conditions for the implementation of the activities to be supported under the project and for the achievement of the results, shall be planned as a single cost item, applying a flat rate of indirect costs of 15 (fifteen) per cent of the total amount of costs referred to in Paragraph 14.1 of the Cabinet Regulation, except for direct eligible costs referred to in Sub-paragraph 14.1.6 of the Cabinet Regulation incurred in relation to the costs of external services (including work under business contracts). The project applicant and the cooperation partner(s) (if any) must have established and approved internal procedures for the use and control of the indirect eligible costs of the project, the board of which is entitled to request and the project applicant (implementer) shall present to the board. If the project applicant engages a cooperation partner(s), the indirect eligible costs of the project shall be shared between the project applicant and the cooperation partner(s) in proportion to the direct eligible costs of the project shared between the project applicant and the project partner(s). The project applicant, when preparing and submitting the financial report referred to in Paragraph 44.1 of the Cabinet Regulation, shall not provide the information and supporting documents on the use of indirect eligible costs calculated at the flat rate of indirect costs laid down in Paragraph 14.2 of the Cabinet Regulation.

**V. Procedure for the preparation and submission of the project application**

 28 The project application shall be completed and submitted to the Council in electronic form in the Information System within the deadline for the submission of project applications.

29 The applicant shall complete and submit the project application in accordance with the submission methodology.

 30 In order to certify the project application as a whole, the applicant shall sign Part D of the project application “Applicant’s Confirmation” using a secure electronic signature with a time stamp.

**VI. Administrative assessment of project applications**

31 The administrative assessment of Project Applications shall be carried out by the Council according to Annex 3 to the Regulations “Methodology for the assessment of the conformity of the project application with the administrative assessment criteria”, assessing the conformity of the project application with the administrative criteria laid down in Paragraph 19 of the Cabinet Regulation and the additional administrative criteria laid down in Sub-paragraph 32.3.1 of the Regulations within two calendar weeks from the deadline for the submission of project applications.

32 The project application will be assessed according to the following administrative evaluation criteria:

32.1 Administrative criteria laid down in Sub-paragraphs 19.1 and 19.2 of the Cabinet Regulation, which may be supplemented (hereinafter referred to as - supplementable administrative criteria);

32.2 Administrative criteria laid down in Sub-paragraphs 19.3, 19.4, 19.5, 19.6, 19.7 and 19.8 of the Cabinet Regulation, which may not be supplemented (hereinafter referred to as - non-supplementable administrative criteria);

32.3 In addition to the administrative criterion, which cannot be supplemented:

32.3.1 Cover all the common (horizontal) tasks of the programme as defined in Paragraph 8 of the Cabinet Order.

33 The Council, taking into account the results of the administrative assessment of the project application, shall complete the form set out in Annex 4 to the Regulations “Administrative Assessment Criteria Form”, taking into account Paragraph 20 of the Cabinet Regulation.

34 If the project application does not meet one of the administrative criteria:

34.1 If the project application does not comply with any of the supplementable administrative criteria, the Council shall request the applicant to update the project application by sending a letter to the applicant's official e-mail address. The applicant shall submit the updates within one working day of the date of the Council's letter, by sending a letter to the Council's official e-mail address: pasts@lzp.gov.lv;

34.2 If a project application does not comply with one of the non-supplementable administrative criteria or if a project application does not comply with one of the additional administrative criteria which is not fulfilled after the submission of an updated project application, the Council shall, after the completion of the administrative appraisal, send to the Programme Implementation and Monitoring Commission (hereinafter referred to as - the Commission) a list of project applications evaluated against the administrative criteria which do not comply with the administrative criteria set out in the Regulations, together with the reasons for each non-compliance. The Commission shall evaluate the list and, in accordance with Sub-paragraph 8.3.2 of the Cabinet Regulation, make a decision to reject the project application.

**VII. Scientific Assessment of the Project Application**

35 The Council shall, in accordance with that laid down in Chapter III. of the Cabinet Regulation, organise the scientific expert assessment of project applications (hereinafter referred to as - the assessment), carrying out the assessment activities set out in Chapter VII of the Regulations.

36 For the assessment of the project application, the Council shall, in accordance with Paragraph 7.5 of the Cabinet Regulation, select and engage two or more scientific experts (hereinafter - the expert) who meet the requirements set out in Paragraphs 23 and 24 of the Cabinet Regulation in order to qualify for the assessment of programme tasks set out in Paragraph 6 of the Cabinet Order. An expert may carry out the assessment of several project applications according to his/her scientific qualifications and experience.

37 The Council shall ensure that the expert who has agreed to carry out the assessment of the project application signs and submits to the Council the documents referred to in Annex 5 to the Regulations “Confirmation of absence of conflict of interest and respect of confidentiality” by uploading them into the Information System.

38. The Council shall enter into a contract for carrying out the expert assessment with each expert using the form of Annex 6 Regulations “Contract for Carrying out the Expert Assessment” (hereinafter referred to as - the Expert Assessment Contract). The Expert Assessment Contract may be adjusted during the contracting process in conformity with the content of the project application and the specificities of the expert assessment.

39 The Expert shall assess the Project Application by awarding one to five points for each scientific assessment criterion laid down in Paragraph 26 of the Cabinet Regulation as follows:

39.1 Scientific quality of the project in accordance with the considerations set in Paragraph 27 of the Cabinet Regulation;

39.2 Impact of the project results in accordance with the considerations set in Paragraph 28 of the Cabinet Regulation;

39.3 Feasibility of the project and the safeguards in accordance with the considerations set in Paragraph 29 of the Cabinet Regulation;

40 Within two calendar weeks from the date of conclusion of the expert assessment agreement, each expert shall assess the project application by completing the individual project application expert-examination form (hereinafter - the individual expert assessment) in the information system, in accordance with Annex 8 to the Regulations “Individual/consolidated assessment form for the expert-examination of the project application” in accordance with Annex 7 to the Regulations “Methodology for carrying out the expert-examination (for the project application, mid-term/closing scientific report of the project)” (hereinafter referred to as - the Methodology for carrying out the expert-examination).

41 After receipt of the individual experts assessments on all project applications in the Information System, the Council shall, via online video conference (real-time video and audio transmission) organise and implement within five working days an expert panel discussion for the experts responsible for the preparation of the consolidated expert evaluation of the project applications, setting up an expert panel referred to in Sub-paragraphs 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, and 6.6 of the Cabinet Order (hereinafter referred to as - the panel).

42 If only one project application is submitted for the tasks set in Sub-paragraphs 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, and 6.6 of the Cabinet Order, the Council shall not organise a panel on that project application and the examination of such project application shall be carried out in accordance with the procedure set out in Paragraph 25 of the Cabinet Regulation.

43 Within three working days of the conclusion of the panel, the expert responsible for the preparation of the expert consolidated assessment of the project application concerned, taking into account the individual expert assessments of the project application concerned, shall complete the consolidated expert assessment form for that project application (hereinafter - the consolidated expert assessment) in the Information System, having regard to Annex 8 to the Regulations “Individual/consolidated assessment form for the examination of the project application”, and within three working days agree it with the other experts involved in the expert assessment of the relevant project application who have individually assessed the project application and submit it to the information system. If the experts are unable to agree on a consolidated assessment due to a difference of opinion, the experts shall inform the Council. In this case, the Council shall engage an additional expert (hereinafter referred to as the additional expert) who shall first carry out an individual evaluation of the project application concerned within the time limit and in accordance with the procedures laid down in Paragraph 40 of the regulations, submitting the expert’s individual evaluation, and then the additional expert shall consult the individual evaluations of the original experts. The additional expert shall prepare a consolidated assessment within the two calendar weeks, by agreeing with the expert whose individual assessment gives a total score closer to the total score given by the additional expert in his/her individual assessment. The additional expert, following coordination with the other expert, submits the consolidated assessment in the information system.

44 The expert is only allowed to assess 15 pages of the project application, with up to three additional pages if there are supporting documents from the social partners, letters of recommendation on cooperation, etc.

**VIII. Decision to grant funding or reject a project application**

45 On the basis of the consolidated expert assessments submitted in the Information System, the Council shall, within three working days, calculate in the Information System the consolidated score for each project application (hereinafter referred to as the consolidated score) using the following formula,$K=\left(3A × 0,3\right)+\left(3B × 0,5\right)+\left(3C × 0,2\right), $ where:

45.1 K - consolidated score;

45.2 A - assessment of the scientific criterion (scientific quality of the project) referred to in Paragraph 27 of the Cabinet Regulation and its ratio is 30% of the consolidated mark (K);

 45.3 B - assessment of the scientific criterion (impact of project results) referred to in Paragraph 28 of the Cabinet Regulation and its ratio is 50% of the consolidated score (K);

 45.4 C - assessment of the scientific criterion (feasibility of the project implementation and provision) referred to in Paragraph 29 of the Cabinet Regulation  and its ratio is in the amount of 20% of the consolidated score (K).

46 The quality threshold for the consolidated peer review referred to in Paragraph 45 of the Regulations for the criterion laid down in Sub-paragraph 26.1. of the Cabinet Regulation (scientific quality of the project), at least three points for the criterion laid down in Sub-paragraph 26.2. of the Cabinet Regulation (impact of the project results), at least three points for the criterion laid down in Sub-paragraph 26.3 of the Cabinet Regulation (feasibility and support) and at least ten points for all scientific criteria laid down in Paragraph 26 of the Cabinet Regulation in total.

47 The Council shall forward to the Commission:

47.1 The list of the experts’ assessments of the project applications within five working days of the date of submission of the consolidated experts’ marks of all project applications to the information system and application of the formula in Paragraph 44 of the Regulations. This list shall rank the project applications in order of priority according to the score obtained in the consolidated assessment in the tasks set out in Paragraph 6 of the Cabinet Order (hereinafter referred to as the "list of project applications"), in accordance with Paragraph 32 and Sub-paragraph 33.1 of the Cabinet Regulation, and shall make the project applications included in this list and the experts’ consolidated assessments available in the information system in view mode;

47.2 A summary of the recommendations made by the experts in their consolidated evaluations for each project application (hereinafter referred to as "the experts’ recommendations").

 48 In accordance with Sub-paragraph 33.1 of the Cabinet Regulation, the Commission shall, within one week of receipt of the list of project applications and the recommendations of the experts, adopt the decision provided for in Sub-paragraph 8.3.1 or 8.3.2 of the Cabinet Regulation for each project application included in the list of project applications. The decisions made by the Council shall be forwarded to the applicants.

**IX. Entering into a project agreement and financing**

49 Within 10 calendar days from the date of adoption of the decision on granting funding for the implementation of the project referred to in Sub-paragraph 8.3.1 of the Cabinet Regulation, the Council shall conclude a project agreement with the project applicant (hereinafter referred to as - the Project Implementer), using Annex 9 to the Regulations “Agreement on the Implementation of the Project of the National Research Programme “Public Health””. If the Commission has decided on the necessity and validity of implementing the experts’ recommendations, the Council shall include the recommendations in the preparation of the project agreement. The wording of the project agreement may be adjusted during the project preparation process to reflect the specific content of the project.

50 Project costs are eligible from the date on which the Commission has adopted, per the provisions of Paragraph 8.3.1 of the Cabinet Regulation. the decision to grant funding for the project. In the event of non-compliance with the terms of the project agreement, the project and the Regulations, the Council shall require the project implementer to refund all or part of the financing granted to the project, in accordance with the terms of the project agreement.

51 Subject to a minimum project financing period of 12 months, the amount of the advance payment per project financing period shall be specified in the project agreement. If the Project Implementer needs to extend the project implementation period on the basis of Paragraph 39 of the Cabinet Regulation, it may be extended by up to one year for the consolidation and publication of results without additional funding, for which the Project Implementer shall submit a substantiated application to the Council at least three calendar months before the end of the project period on the need for the extension and Annex 6 to the project agreement - "Results consolidation plan".

52 Where a project involves a project partner, the Project Implementer shall conclude a cooperation agreement setting out the financial conditions, the arrangements for settling disputes and for non-disclosure of confidential information, the rules governing the entry into force, duration, termination, a detailed cooperation plan and budget, taking into account the project application, as well as the rules on intellectual property rights. The cooperation agreement shall be submitted by the Project Implementer to the Council within two calendar weeks of the date of mutual signing of the project agreement. The Project Implementer is responsible for transferring the advance and final instalments of the project to the project partners within the time limits and in accordance with the procedures laid down in the cooperation agreements.

**X. Submission and Assessment of the Mid-term and Final Scientific Report of the Project**

53 The project implementer shall submit to the Council, through the Information System, the mid-term scientific report of the project within one month from the date on which half of the project implementation period has elapsed; and the final scientific report of the project within one month of the end date of the project as laid down in the project agreement. Where the duration of the project has been extended in accordance with Paragraph 51 of the Regulations, the Project Implementer shall submit the final scientific report within one month of the expiry of the extension period in the information system.

54 The Council shall ensure that experts who meet the requirements laid down in Paragraphs 23 and 24 of the Cabinet Regulation are involved in the assessment of the project’s mid-term scientific report and final scientific report of the project in accordance with the procedure laid down in Paragraph 46 of the Cabinet Regulation.

55 The Council:

55.1 shall ensure that the mid-term scientific report or the final scientific report of the project is evaluated by at least two experts within two months in accordance with the procedure laid down in Paragraph 46 of the Cabinet Regulation, by filling out Annex 10 to the Rules “Project mid-term/individual/consolidated evaluation form for the final scientific report” in accordance with the methodology for carrying out the expert evaluation. If the experts cannot agree on a consolidated assessment of the mid-term scientific report or the final scientific report of the project, the Council shall engage another expert who shall assess the mid-term scientific report or the final scientific report of the project and, taking into account the contributions of the experts previously engaged, i.e. the individual evaluations of the mid-term scientific report and the final scientific report of the project, prepare and submit in the information system a consolidated evaluation of the mid-term scientific report and/or of the final scientific report of the project, subject to prior coordination with the other experts who have provided individual evaluations of the mid-term scientific report and of the final scientific report of the project;

55.2 shall summarise the recommendations included in the consolidated expert evaluation of the mid-term scientific report or the final scientific report of the project and submit them for consideration by the Commission, which shall decide, within its terms of reference, on the necessity and feasibility of implementing those recommendations in the execution of the project concerned, instructing the Council to amend the project agreement accordingly, if necessary.

**XI. Mid-term and final report of the council on the implementation of the programme**

 56 The Council shall, in accordance with Sub-paragraph 7.6 and Paragraph 50 of the Cabinet Regulation, prepare the mid-term or final report of the Council on the implementation of the programme (hereinafter - the Council’s report) within four months of the completion of the evaluation of mid-term scientific reports or final scientific reports of all projects of the Programme. In order to ensure transparency of information, the Council may group together all the projects in the Programme when preparing the Council’s report.

 57 The content of the Council report shall include:

57.1 Statistics on funded projects (human resources involved, MSc/PhD theses defended);

57.2 The results achieved and a description of them in line with the programme’s objective and tasks in conformity with the Cabinet Decision;

57.3 A description of the scientific cooperation (e.g. at international level, consortia, planned applications to international Research and innovation programmes of the European Union, including Horizon Europe);

57.4 Socio-economic impact of project results (measures implemented at mid-term, concrete measures implemented at closure in line with the common (horizontal) objectives of the programme);

 57.5 Information on the publication of project results in open access, as well as in repositories suitable for depositing research data (using FAIR principles);

57.6 Other information as decided by the Commission.

**XII. Information and Publicity Requirements**

58 The Project Implementer undertakes to publish the project information (including on the project implementation, scientific group, activities and achieved results) on the Project Implementer’s website and undertakes to ensure that this information is maintained and updated according to the achieved project results for at least five years from the date of signing of the certificate of acceptance-delivery on project execution as laid down in Sub-paragraph 59.1.2 of the Cabinet Regulation, which is an annex to the project agreement.

59 The Project Implementer must provide in the manner and within the deadlines set in the project agreement:

59.1 Information about policy recommendations to the Ministry of Health;

59.2 Information and recommendations to the Ministry of Health on methodologies developed and used in the field of public health;

59.3 Information about policy proposals to other sectoral ministries;

59.4 Close cooperation with the sectoral ministries in communicating and distributing project results;

59.5 Information about the implementation of the project financed under the tender to the Council, which conducts the communication and public information activities. The Council shall compile this information and make it available to the public. The Project Implementer shall cooperate with the Council and participate in public information and communication activities organised by the Council, including the production of project design material, content development and joint workshops on the progress of the project.

60 To promote the visibility of the project, the project implementer shall use the common graphic identity of the National Research programmes[[4]](#footnote-4)as a basis and may additionally create a visual identity mark describing the project and including an abbreviation of the project name, which shall be consistent with the common graphic identity of the National Research programmes. If the project’s established visual identity is used, it shall be used only in conjunction with the common graphic identity (or programme logo) of the National Research programmes.

61 The Project Implementer and project collaboration partners (if applicable) shall refer to the name of the programme, the source of funding and the project number when carrying out public information activities, publishing scientific articles and other project results, when participating in conferences or otherwise presenting project results and activities, or shall use the project's visual identity mark referred to in Paragraph 60 of the Regulations. “The Guidelines for publicity activities under FLPP and VPP projects” (approved by Council Order No. 13 of 14 April 2021) are available here: <https://www.lzp.gov.lv/lv/media/25/download?attachment>.

**XIII. Closing provisions**

62 Questions regarding the preparation and submission of the project application shall be sent to the following e-mail address no later than two working days before the deadline for submission of the project application: vpp@lzp.gov.lv. Answers to questions sent by a project applicant are sent electronically, frequently asked questions and answers are published on the Council’s website [www.lzp.gov.lv](http://www.lzp.gov.lv). Other questions about the implementation of the Programme should also be sent to the above-mentioned e-mail address.

63 Information on project applications approved by the Commission is published on the websites: [www.vm.gov.lv](http://www.vm.gov.lv) and [www.lzp.gov.lv](http://www.lzp.gov.lv).

Approved by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and Science.

**Annexes**

**Annex 1** “Project Application”;

**Annex 2** “Methodology for the Preparation and Submission of the Project Application, the Mid-term Scientific Report, and the Final Scientific Report;

**Annex 3** “Methodology for the Assessment of the Conformity of a Project Application to the Administrative Conformity Criteria”;

**Annex 4** “Administrative Conformity Assessment Criteria Form”;

**Annex 5** “Confirmation of Absence of Conflict of Interest and Respect of Confidentiality”;

**Annex 6** “Agreement on the Performance of the Expert-examination”;

**Annex 7**”Methodology for Carrying out the Expert -examination (Project application, Mid-term/Final Scientific Report)";

**Annex 8** “Individual/Consolidated Assessment Form for the Expert-examination of the Project Application”;

**Annex** **9** “Agreement on the implementation of project of the National Research programme “Public Health””:

Annex 9.1 “Project Application”;

Annex 9.2 “Breakdown of Funding”;

Annex 9.3 “Recommendations for the Project Implementation”;

Annex 9.4 “Calculation of the Value of Project Results as a Percentage of the Total Project Cost”;

Annex 9.5 “Certificate of Acceptance-Transfer on the Implementation of the Project of the National Research Programme”

Annex 9.6 “Plan for the Consolidation of Results”;

Annex 9.7 “Financial Statement for the Implementation of the Project of National Research Programme of 20\_\_\_”;

Annex 9.8 “Changes to the Contractual Amount up to 30% for a Project of the National Research Programme”;

Annex 9.9 “Changes in the Scientific Group of a Project of the National Research Programme Exceeding 20%”;

Annex 9.10 “Mid-term/Final Scientific Report Form of a Project”;

Annex 9.11 “List of Results”;

Annex 9.12 “Content Report”;

Annex 9.13 “List of the Scientific Group”.

**Annex 10** “Individual/Consolidated Assessment Form of a Mid-term/Final Scientific Report of the Project”.

**Annex 11** “Establishing, Maintaining and Implementing a Plan for Research Data Management”.

1. To be available from 30.10.2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Information about the project is available at <https://www.vm.gov.lv/lv/veselibas-darbaspeka-strategija-latvija> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For more information, see here <https://www.lzp.gov.lv/lv/fundamentalo-un-lietisko-petijumu-projektu-2023-gada-atklatais-konkurss> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.lzp.gov.lv/lv/media/105/download?attachment> (see the introductory section of this page for the rest of the materials: <https://www.lzp.gov.lv/lv/valsts-petijumu-programma-vpp>) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)