APPROVED

by the National Research Programme

“Research and Sustainable Use of Local Resources for the Development of Latvia” 2023-2025

 of the Implementation and Monitoring Commission

(established by Order No. 64 of 24 May 2024 of the Minister of Agriculture) Decision No. 1 of 12 June 2024.

**Regulation of the third open tender for project applications of the National Research Programme “Research and Sustainable Use of Local Resources for the Development of Latvia 2023-2025”**

**I. General issues**

1. The regulations of the third open tender for project applications of the National Research Programme “Research and Sustainable Use of Local Resources for the Development of Latvia 2023-2025” (the Regulation) determine the procedure by which the Latvian Council of Science (the council) organises and implements the third open tender (the tender) for the project applications (the project application) of the National Research Programme “Research and Sustainable Use of Local Resources for the Development of Latvia” for 2023-2025 (the programme), following the Cabinet Regulation No. 560 “Procedures for the Implementation of State Research Programme Projects” of 4 September 2018 (the Cabinet Regulation) and in line with the order of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 502 “On the national research programme “Research and Sustainable Use of Local Resources for the Development of Latvia 2023-2025” of 9 August 2023 (the Cabinet Order).

2. The Regulation has been drawn up on the basis of paragraph 16 of the Cabinet Regulation on the thematic objectives of the sub-programmes of the Programme as set out in paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Cabinet Order.

3. The total State budget funding available for the Tender is EUR 4,000,000 (four million euro) (the total funding of the tender). The total funding of the tender is to be used in conformity with paragraph 36 of the Cabinet Regulation:

3.1. to finance projects;

3.2. to implement the measures under paragraph 37 of the Cabinet Regulation.

4. The project implementation period is 16 months from the date of entry into force of a project implementation agreement (the project agreement). Within the framework of the project agreement, the project implementation period may be extended for the time 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 6 (six) months.

5. The tender will finance two projects for the sub-programmes referred to in point 10 of the Regulation, with the following maximum funding:

5.1. Implementation of the tasks of the sub-programme under paragraph 6 of the Cabinet Order - EUR 2,040,000 (two million forty thousand euro);

5.2. Implementation of the tasks of the sub-programme under paragraph 7 of the Cabinet Order - EUR 1,800,000 (one million eight hundred thousand *euro*).

6. The council launches the Tender following the procedure under paragraph 17 of the Cabinet Regulation and administers, supports, monitors and controls the implementation of the project under the project agreement in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Cabinet Regulation.

7. The project applicant who complies with the provisions of paragraphs 2.12 and 9.1 of the Cabinet Regulation (the project applicant), prepares the project application in line with Annex 1 "Project Application" to the Regulation (the project application). The deadline for submitting a project application is up to 30 calendar days from the day of the Tender announcement or 15 July 2024 at 17:00 (the deadline for the submission of project applications).

8. The council states in the call for tenders:

8.1. the name of the tender;

8.2. the total funding of 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 project applicant submits a project application for the tender for one of the sub-programmes specified in paragraph 5 of the Cabinet Order and for all the objectives of the relevant sub-programme. A project applicant may submit more than one project application for the tender for each of the sub-programmes specified in paragraph 5 of the Cabinet Order.

When submitting a project application for one of the sub-programmes specified in paragraph 5 of the Cabinet Order, the project applicants provide in the project application that the deliverables under paragraph 9 of the Cabinet Order will be achieved during the implementation of the project.

10. To achieve the overarching objective of the programme and the objectives of the sub-programmes under paragraph 5 of the Cabinet Order, each sub-programme provides for the following tasks:

10.1. the sub-programme “***Sustainable use of agricultural, including fisheries, resources for the production of safe, quality and healthy food in Latvia***” has the following thematic objectives and sub-objectives:

 10.1.1. the development of sustainable, quality and competitive agricultural production in an environmentally friendly agricultural sector:

* to analyse the impact of reduced synthetic plant protection products load on the productivity and yield quality of the most widely cultivated crop, winter wheat, by comparing and testing more environmentally friendly technology modules in an integrated cropping system in different regions of LV;
* to study the technological elements of the cultivation of economically important fruit trees, bush fruits and vegetables, including smart solutions to reduce the use of synthetic plant protection products;
* to investigate new or little-studied pathogens of crops and horticultural plants in relation to changes in climate and cultivation technologies.

10.1.2. The social and economic impact of the European Green Deal on Latvian agriculture and rural space, as well as the creation of new knowledge for the development of a sustainable bio-economy and rural space:

* to propose solutions for the development of a sustainable and viable agricultural sector under different scenarios for achieving the objectives of the Green Deal, by:
* an assessment of the farming practices most relevant to the implementation of the Green Deal challenges in Latvia, assessing both the practices already in place and the additional measures needed to achieve the Green Deal objectives, and their impact on farm incomes, production, trading, competitiveness, employment and rural space;
* an assessment of the distribution of costs and investment burdens between stakeholders (farmers, consumers, public measures, EU funds) for the most appropriate management practices identified to achieve the objectives of the Green Deal;

- an assessment of Latvia's strengths and weaknesses compared to other EU Member States in achieving the Green Deal objectives most directly related to agriculture.

10.1.3. the development of new knowledge, approaches and methods to promote a safe and quality food and feed chain, to improve animal health, welfare and protection and to reduce risks to public health and the environment in accordance with the 'one health' principle, while promoting the development of technological solutions and new products for the production of high-quality and competitive food products:

* to analyse the link between the development of antimicrobial resistance and the use of antibiotics in cattle and pig sheds, to study the spread of the most important infectious agents to expand existing knowledge and find new solutions to reduce the threat caused by resistance;
* to collect food consumption data of the Latvian population (age group 19-64 years), on industrially produced and home-produced alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, with a particular focus on beverages with added herbs or their products, food supplements, as well as products specific to Latvia - teas, smoked fish and meat. To promote safe food chain and to contribute to the reduction of risks to public health, conduct an exposure assessment of the potential hazards in the above product groups. To compare and evaluate the consumption data and exposure assessment results with those of previous Latvian research publications;
* To generate new knowledge for a sustainable food system (and the processing of by-products of food production into high-value products that comply with food regulations, preserving biologically active compounds) and the use of environmentally friendly and recyclable packaging materials in food.

10.1.4. implementing an integrated approach to ensure sustainable exploitation of inland waters for fisheries productivity and high quality ecosystem services:

* development of an integrated stock assessment method for economically valuable lake fish stock using data from recreational, commercial and scientific fishing data (fishing gear, hydroacoustic measurements and electrofishing);
* risk-benefit analysis of contamination and nutritional value of economically valuable fish as a food product.

10.2. the sub-programme “***Innovative forest management and new forest services, products and technologies for Latvia's growth***” has the following thematic objectives and sub-objectives:

10.2.1. development of forest management practices, improving forest productivity and capacity to play a long-term role in climate change mitigation, enhancing the integration of biodiversity values and facilitating the production of a range of forest ecosystem products and services in a changing environment:

* impact of pine stand restoration and management methods on genetic diversity. Increasing the adaptation capacity of pine forests through forest breeding methods;
* cause-effect relationships between changes in the productivity and area of pine forest stands. Recommendations for more nature-friendly pine forest management techniques. Recommendations for the establishment of pine forest stands in areas to be reclaimed. Interactions and effects of different tree growth improvement measures on the productivity and quality of pine stands;
* clarification of the impact of biotic risk factors on the health of pine forest ecosystems and forest stand, and recommendations for increasing the vitality of pine forests;
* recommendations for ensuring a favourable protection status for protected species in commercial pine forests. Impact of forestry on the environment - a quantitative assessment of the impacts of the pine forest management cycle.

10.2.2. analysis and development of recommendations on the socio-economic aspects, including public benefits, for the development of multi-purpose forest management, new forest services, products and technologies:

* estimation of the long-term socio-economic impacts of scenarios of restrictions on the management of commercial pine forests, based on long-term projections and scientific data.

10.2.3. the development of a circular forest bio-economy and the development of innovative technologies and products for using local forest resources to produce competitive and sustainable products, promoting the rational use of wood and developing wood construction in line with the Green Deal:

* the technologies and products to expand the use of wood-based materials in construction in line with the European Green Deal;
* biorefining technologies for the integrated use of forest resources to produce higher value-added products;
* use of wood processing and residues to produce polymer composites and insulation materials;
* original solutions for innovative products based on logging side streams, wood working and processing residues and non-wood materials;
* increasing the efficiency and accuracy of the use of wood resources, smart technology solutions.

11. When preparing the project application, the project applicant envisages:

11.1. the results of the project in conformity with paragraph 12 of the Cabinet Regulation (the scientific results) and indicates the numerical indicators of such results in the Information System of the State Scientific Activity (the Information System) in project application Part A “General Information”, Chapter 4 “Project Results”, having regard to the tasks laid down for each sub-programme in Paragraph 10 of the Regulation and results laid down in Paragraph 9 of the Cabinet Order;

11.2. the implementation of the thematic objectives and sub-objectives of the sub-programmes referred to in points 10.1 or 10.2 of the Regulation, setting out the implementation plan for these thematic objectives and sub-objectives in Part I “Thematic and horizontal objectives and deliverables” of the project application;

11.3. The implementation of all the common (horizontal) objectives set out in point 8 of the Cabinet Order, including a plan for the implementation of these objectives in Part I of the project application;

11.4. the achievement of at least one result for each of the outcomes set out in paragraph 9 of the Cabinet Order, including focusing more on tradeable research results, and the plan for achieving these results is indicated in Part I of the project application;

11.5. making scientific publications open-access and depositing research data in appropriate repositories (using the FAIR[[1]](#footnote-1) principles).

**II. Conditions of participation of the project applicant and cooperation partner in the project**

12. To confirm the project applicant's compliance with the provisions of sub-paragraphs 2.12 and 9.1 of the Cabinet Regulation, the applicant uploads Part D of the project application, “Project applicant’s certification”, completed and signed with a secure electronic signature bearing a timestamp (the project applicant’s certification), to the information system. If it is not possible to provide a secure electronic signature with a timestamp, the applicant follows the procedure set out in point 18 of Annex 2 “Methodology for the preparation and submission of the project application and the final scientific report” (the submission methodology) to the Regulation.

13. The project cooperation partner complies with the provisions of sub-paragraph 2.18 of the Cabinet Regulation. The project applicant engage project cooperation partners in accordance with the provisions of sub-paragraph 9.3 of the Cabinet Regulation. To certify the cooperation within the project, the project applicant ensures that the project cooperation partner signs Part E “Certification of the project cooperation partner – scientific institution” (the certification of the project cooperation partner – scientific institution) or Part F “Certification of the cooperation partner – public institution” (the certification of the project cooperation partner – public institution) of the project application with a secure electronic signature bearing a timestamp which the project applicant attaches to the project application. If a secure electronic signature cannot be provided, the project cooperation partner proceeds in accordance with point 22 or 26 of the submission methodology.

14. To certify compliance of the project applicant or the project cooperation partner – scientific institution with sub-paragraph 2.12 of the Cabinet Regulation, the head of the respective scientific institution submits the financial management and accounting policy and the financial turnover report of the scientific institution (Part G “Financial turnover report form” of the project application) for the years 2021, 2022 and 2023. 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 are attached as an annex to the project applicant’s certification and to the certification of the project cooperation partner – scientific institution, in accordance with sub-chapters 3.2 and 3.3 of the submission methodology.

15. The documents under paragraph 14 of the Regulation are not provided by the project applicant or project cooperation partner who has been recognised as meeting the definition of a research organisation in the open tender of Fundamental and Applied Research Projects 2024[[2]](#footnote-2) or the open tenders of the national research programmes 2024.

16. Within the framework of the project implementation, the project cooperation 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 cooperation partner, subject to the provisions of sub-paragraph 14.2 of the Cabinet Regulation.

17. If the project cooperation partner is involved in the implementation of the project, including with its own human resources, 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 cooperation partner in the implementation of the project with its own human resources is indicated in Part A “General Information” of the project application, Chapter 2 “Scientific Group”.

**III. Conditions for participation of the scientific group in the project**

18. The project applicant forms a scientific group for the implementation of the project, in accordance with the provisions of sub-paragraph 2.22 of the Cabinet Regulation.

19. In the project application, the project manager, principal investigator and project promoters must comply with the requirements of sub-paragraphs 2.13, 2.14 and 2.15 of the Cabinet Regulation. The remuneration of the staff of the scientific group involved in the execution of the project is determined following the remuneration policy and rates of remuneration of the project applicant and of the project cooperation partner (if any).

20. 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 tender, the council contacts all the project applicants concerned and ask them to indicate, within one working day, for which project application the scientist is the project manager and in what capacity the scientist will be in the other project applications (if applicable).

21. The workload in full-time equivalent (FTE) of one person, being the project manager, the principal investigator and the promoter other than the student, is 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.

22. For the students - promoters included in the scientific groups under the project application and in the case of project implementation, the total average workload of all students over the duration of the project is at least 1.0 FTE.

23. The project application, as well as the project implementation, requires that each student is occupied by the project for at least 0.25 FTE on average during the project implementation.

24. If a student completes a level of study during the project and starts the next level of study within four months at the latest, their involvement in the project during this four-month period is deemed to be in conformity with points 22 and 23 of the Regulation regarding involvement of the student in the project.

25. If a doctoral student successfully completes the doctoral study programme and defends their doctoral thesis during the project period, from that moment, their involvement in the project is deemed to be in conformity with points 22 and 23 of the Regulation regarding involvement of the student in the project.

**IV. Activities and costs to be supported**

26. The project applicant completes 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.

27. The project applicant includes information on the direct eligible cost items of the project following sub-paragraph 14.1 of the Cabinet Regulation in Chapter 3 “Budget” of Part A of the project application.

28. 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, are planned as a single cost item, applying a flat rate of indirect costs of up to 15 (fifteen) per cent of the total amount of direct eligible costs under sub-paragraph 14.1 of the Cabinet Regulation, except for direct eligible costs under sub-paragraph 14.1.6 of the Cabinet Regulation incurred in relation to the costs of external services (including work under work-performance contracts). Within two weeks from the date of signing the Agreement on the implementation of the project, the project applicant and the cooperation partner(s) (if any) must develop and approve internal procedures for the use and control of the indirect eligible costs of the project, which the council is entitled to request and the project applicant (implementer) presents it to the council. If the project applicant involves a cooperation partner(s), the indirect eligible costs of the project are divided between the project applicant and the cooperation partner(s) in proportion to the division of the direct eligible costs of the project between the project applicant and the project cooperation partner(s). During the project implementation, the project applicant does not provide information and supporting documents on the use of indirect eligible costs when preparing and submitting the financial report under sub-paragraph 44.1 of the Cabinet Regulation.

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

29. 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.

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

31. To certify the project application as a whole, the project applicant signs Part D of the project application “Project applicant’s certification” using a secure electronic signature with a timestamp.

**VI. Administrative assessment of project applications**

32. The council ensures the administrative assessment of project applications following Annex 3 “Methodology for the assessment of the conformity of the project application with the administrative assessment criteria” to the Regulation, assessing the conformity of the project application with the administrative criteria under paragraph 19 of the Cabinet Regulation and the additional administrative criteria under point 33.3 of the Regulation within two calendar weeks from the deadline for the submission of project applications.

33. The project application is assessed according to the following administrative assessment criteria:

33.1. Administrative criteria laid down in Sub-paragraphs 19.1 and 19.2 of the Cabinet Regulation, which may be supplemented (the supplementable administrative criteria);

33.2. 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 (the non-supplementable administrative criteria);

33.3. Additional administrative criteria which cannot be supplemented:

33.3.1. cover all the common (horizontal) objectives of the programme under Paragraph 8 of the Cabinet Order;

33.3.2. cover all the results under Paragraph 9 of the Cabinet Order to be achieved during the programme implementation.

34. Considering the results of the administrative assessment of the project application, the council completes Annex 4 “Administrative assessment criteria form” to the Regulation following paragraph 20 of the Cabinet Regulation.

35. If the project application fails to comply with any of the following:

35.1. supplementable administrative criteria, the council requests the applicant to update the project application by sending a letter to the applicant's official e-mail address. The project applicant submits the updates within one working day of the date of sending the council's letter, by sending a letter to the council's official e-mail address: pasts@lzp.gov.lv;

35.2. non-supplementable administrative criteria or if the project application does not comply with any of the supplementable administrative criteria that has not been met after the submission of the updated project application, the council, after the completion of the administrative assessment, sends the Programme Implementation and Monitoring Commission (the commission) a list of project applications evaluated against the administrative criteria which do not comply with the administrative criteria under the Regulation, together with the reasons for each instance of non-compliance. The commission evaluates the list and, following sub-paragraph 8.3.2 of the Cabinet Regulation, decides whether to reject the project application.

**VII. Scientific assessment of the project application**

36. Following the provisions of Chapter III of the Cabinet Regulation, the council organises the scientific examination of project applications (the examination).

37. For the evaluation of the project application, the council, in accordance with sub-paragraph 7.5 of the Cabinet Regulation, selects and engages two or more scientific experts (the expert) who meet the requirements laid down in paragraphs 23 and 24 of the Cabinet Regulation to qualify for the evaluation of the sub-programme objectives specified in paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Cabinet Order. The expert may assess several project applications depending on his/her scientific qualifications and experience.

38. The council ensures that the expert who has agreed to evaluate the project application signs Annex 5 “Declaration of absence of conflict of interest and maintenance of confidentiality” to the Regulation and submits it to the council, by uploading it into the information system.

39. The council concludes a contract with each expert for the performance of the examination using the form under Annex 6 “Service contract for scientific evaluation” to the Regulation (the service contract). The service contract may be adjusted during the contracting process in conformity with the content of the project application and the specificities of the examination.

40. The expert assesses the project application following paragraph 26 of the Cabinet Regulation.

41. Each expert evaluates the project application within two calendar weeks from the date of conclusion of the examination contract by completing the individual evaluation form of the project application (the expert's individual evaluation) in the information system following Annex 8 “Project application examination individual/consolidated assessment form” to the Regulation and Annex 7 “Methodology for carrying out the examination (for the project application, final scientific report)” to the Regulation (the examination methodology).

42. After receiving the expert's individual evaluation on all project applications in the information system, the council will, via online videoconference (real-time image and audio transmission),organise and implement an expert panel discussion for those experts responsible for the consolidated expert evaluation of the project applications, setting up an expert panel for the project applications submitted for each sub-programme (the panel).

43. If only one project application is submitted for the performance of the sub-programme, the council does not organise a panel on that project application and this project application is assessed in line with paragraph 25 of the Cabinet Regulation.

44. Within three working days of the end of the panel, the expert responsible for the preparation of the consolidated expert evaluation of the project application concerned, considering the expert's individual evaluations of the project application concerned, completes the consolidated expert evaluation of the project application concerned (the consolidated expert evaluation) in the information system, following Annex 8 “Project application examination individual/consolidated assessment form” to the Regulation, and within three working days, agrees it with the other experts involved in the examination of the project application concerned, who have individually assessed that project application, and submits it to the information system. If the experts are unable to agree on a consolidated assessment due to a difference of opinion, the experts inform the council thereon. In this case, the council engages an additional expert (the additional expert) who at first, carries out an individual assessment of the project application concerned following the time limit and procedures under point 41 of the Regulation, submitting the expert’s individual evaluation, and thereafter, the additional expert consults the original experts' individual assessments. The additional expert prepares a consolidated assessment within the two calendar weeks, by agreeing with the expert or experts whose expert's individual evaluation gives a total score closer to the total score given by the additional expert in their individual assessment. The additional expert, following coordination with the other expert or experts, submits the consolidated assessment in the information system.

45. The expert is only allowed to assess 20 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, and similar documents.

46. On the basis of the consolidated expert evaluation submitted in the information system, the council, within three working days, calculate in the information system the consolidated score for each project application (the consolidated score) using the following formula $K=\left(3A × 0,3\right)+\left(3B × 0,5\right)+\left(3C × 0,2\right), $ where:

46.1. K – consolidated score;

46.2. A – assessment of the criterion (scientific quality of the project) referred to in Paragraph 27 of the Cabinet Regulation and its ratio is 30% of the consolidated score (K);

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

46.4. C – assessment of the criterion (feasibility of the project implementation and provisions) referred to in Paragraph 29 of the Cabinet Regulation and its ratio is 20% of the consolidated score (K).

47. The quality threshold for the consolidated score under point 46 of the Regulation is at least two points for the criterion laid down in sub-paragraph 26.1 of the Cabinet Regulation (scientific quality of the project) at least two 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 of the project implementation and provisions) and at least seven points for all scientific criteria laid down in paragraph 26 of the Cabinet Regulation in total.

48. The council sends the commission:

48.1. the list of the project application examination within five working days of the date of submission of the experts' consolidated score of all project applications to the information system and application of the formula in point 46 of the Regulation. This list ranks the project applications in the order of priority according to the score obtained in the consolidated evaluation for each sub-programme of the programme (the list of project applications), in line with Paragraph 32 of the Cabinet Regulation.

48.2. experts' consolidated score with the recommendations for each project application (the experts recommendations).

48.3. Upon the commission's request, the council provides anonymised individual expert evaluations and gives the commission members access to the panel discussion under point 42 of the Regulation.

**VIII. Evaluation of project applications against sector-specific criteria**

49. After receiving the list under point 48 of this Regulation, within one week, the commission assesses the project application against the following sector-specific criteria in accordance with Annex 9 “Methodology for assessing the eligibility of a project application against sector-specific criteria” to this Regulation (the sector-specific criteria), by completing Annex 10 “Individual/overall sector-specific evaluation criteria form” to this Regulation:

49.1. evaluation of the actions and results planned in the project application:

49.1.1. the actions planned in the project application are in line with the objectives and sub-objectives under the Regulation and involve the use of methodological approaches based on data and evidence that could contribute to the achievement of the stated objectives of the programme;

49.1.2. the planned actions have been developed based on an understanding of the existing situation in the particular sector - current issues, problems and trends in the field of the thematic objective, and the implementers of the project application have previous experience in solving them, for example, by implementing the strategic specialisation of the institution of the project applicant or cooperation partner, by performing/engaging in applied research, sectoral working groups, there is cooperation with sectoral public organisations;

49.1.3. adequate material and technical resources will be used to carry out the planned actions and the implementers of the project application have appropriate research expertise and experience, as evidenced by the experience of the project manager and principal investigator involved (signed curricula vitae of the project manager and principal investigator attached to Part C “Curriculum Vitae” of the project application, and statements signed by the signatory of other institutions, if any, involved in the implementation of the project application, attached to Part J “Other documents” of the project application).

49.2. Evaluation of the results foreseen in the project application:

49.2.1. the research is expected to result in the preparation and submission to the Ministry of Agriculture of reports with specific proposals, solutions for each thematic objective and sub-objective defined in the Regulation, including taking into account national and European Union policies and trends in the field of the respective thematic objective;

49.2.2. the research is expected to lead to the development of original solutions, new services, products and innovative technologies appropriate to the objective, given the limited time available.

50. The commission assesses the project application by awarding points for each sub-criterion of the sectoral criterion under points 49.1-49.2 of this Regulation.

51. The commission calculates the total score of each project application for the sectoral criteria using the following formula:

S=(a+b+c+d+e), where

50.1. S – the overall score for the sectoral criteria of the project application;

50.2. a, b, c, d, e – the score in points for each sub-criterion of the sector-specific assessment under points 49.1-49.2 of this Regulation.

52. The total maximum score to be obtained in the evaluation of the sectoral criteria is 4.5 points, which, according to sub-paragraph 33.2 of the Cabinet Regulation, corresponds to 30 per cent of the total maximum amount of points awarded in the scientific criteria.

53. The commission adds up the score referred to in point 52 of the Regulation and the score indicated for each project application in the list referred to in point 48.1 of the Regulation and establishes the overall list of project applications for the tender (the overall list of project applications).

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

54. Within one week of the submission of the overall list of project applications and receipt of the expert recommendations, following paragraph 35 of the Cabinet Regulation, the commission takes a decision specified in sub-paragraph 8.3.1 of the Cabinet Regulation on each project application included in the overall list of project applications, considering the funding available for the tender specified in the Regulation and following sub-paragraph 8.3.2 of the Cabinet Regulation, the commission decides whether to reject the project applications. The council sends the decisions made by the commission to the project applicants.

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

55. Within 10 calendar days from the date of the decision under sub-paragraph 8.3.1 of the Cabinet Regulation on granting of funding for the implementation of the project, the council enters into a project agreement with the project applicant (the project implementer) using Annex 11 “Agreement on the Implementation of the Project of the National Research Programme “Research and Sustainable Use of Local Resources for the Development of Latvia 2023-2025”” to the Regulation. If the commission has decided on the necessity and substantiation of implementing the experts’ recommendations, the council includes the recommendations in the preparation of the project agreement. The wording of the project agreement may be adjusted during the agreement preparation process to reflect the specific content of the project.

56. Project costs are eligible from 1 March 2024, taking into account the specificities of the sector. In the event of non-compliance with the terms of the project agreement, the project and the Regulation, the council requires the project implementer to refund all or part of the financing granted to the project, in accordance with the terms of the project agreement.

57. Subject to a minimum project financing period of 6 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 submits 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 “Results consolidation plan” to the project agreement.

58. Where a project involves a project cooperation partner, the project implementer concludes 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 project implementer submits the cooperation agreement to the council within two calendar weeks of the date of mutual signing of the project agreement. The project implementer is responsible for transferring part of the advance and final instalments of the project to the project cooperation partners within the time limits and in accordance with the procedures laid down in the cooperation agreements.

**X. Submission and assessment of the final scientific report of the project**

59. The project implementer submits to the council, through the information system, the final scientific report of the project within one month after the end date of the project as specified in the project agreement. Where the duration of the project has been extended following point 57 of the Regulation, the project implementer submits the final scientific report within one month of the expiry of the extension period, in the information system.

60. The council ensures 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 final scientific report of the project in line with the procedure under paragraph 46 of the Cabinet Regulation.

61. The council:

61.1. ensures that at least two experts evaluate the final scientific report of the project within two months in accordance with the procedure under paragraph 46 of the Cabinet Regulation, by filling out Annex 12 “Individual/consolidated evaluation form of the final scientific report of the project” to the Regulation in conformity with the methodology for carrying out the examination. If the experts cannot agree on a consolidated assessment of the final scientific report of the project, the council engages another expert who assesses the final scientific report of the project and, considering the individual assessments by the experts previously engaged, prepare and submit in the information system a consolidated assessment of the final scientific report of the project, subject to prior coordination with the other experts who have provided individual assessments of the final scientific report of the project;

61.2. summarises the recommendations included in the consolidated expert evaluation of the final scientific report of the project and submits them to the commission for consideration, which decides, within its scope of authority, 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. Final report of the council on the implementation of the programme**

62. Following sub-paragraph 7.6 and paragraph 50 of the Cabinet Regulation, the council prepares the council's final report on the implementation of the programme (the council report), coordinates it with the commission within four months after the day of the final evaluation of all final scientific reports of the programme projects.

63. The content of the council report includes:

63.1. statistics on funded projects (human resources involved, MSc/PhD theses defended);

63.2. The results achieved and their description in line with the programme’s objective and tasks in conformity with the Cabinet Order;

63.3. a description of the scientific cooperation (for example, at international level, consortia, planned applications to international research and innovation programmes of the European Union, including Horizon Europe);

63.4. socio-economic impact of project results (concrete measures implemented at closure in line with the common (horizontal) objectives of the programme);

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

63.6. other information as decided by the commission.

**XII. Information and publicity requirements**

64. 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.

65. The project implementer, following the procedures and deadlines laid down in the project agreement, provides publicity information to the Ministry of Agriculture and the council, which carries out communication and public information activities for the implementation of the project financed under the tender. The council compiles this information and makes it available to the public. The project implementer cooperates with the council and participates in public information and communication activities organised by the council, including the preparation of information on the project and its results.

66. To promote the visibility of the project, the project implementer uses the common graphic identity of the state research programmes[[3]](#footnote-3) as a basis and may additionally create a visual identity mark describing the project and including an abbreviation of the project name, which is consistent with the common graphic identity of the state 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 state research programmes.

67. The project implementer and project cooperation partners (if applicable) 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, participating in conferences or otherwise presenting project results and activities, or use the project’s visual identity mark under point 66 of the Regulation. “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>. The visual identity mark may be omitted if this is not permitted by the scientific publication or journal concerned.

**XIII. Closing issues**

68. Questions regarding the preparation and submission of the project application are 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.

69 Information on project applications approved by the commission is published on the websites: [www.zm.gov.lv](http://www.zm.gov.lv) and [www.lzp.gov.lv](http://www.lzp.gov.lv).

Agreed with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Education and Science.

**Annexes**

**Annex 1** “Project application”;

**Annex 2** “Methodology for the preparation and submission of the project application and the final scientific report”;

**Annex 3** “Methodology for the assessment of the conformity of the project application with the administrative assessment criteria”;

**Annex 4** “Administrative conformity assessment criteria form”;

**Annex 5** “Declaration of absence of conflict of interest and maintenance of confidentiality”;

**Appendix 6** “Service contract for scientific evaluation”;

**Annex 7** “Methodology for carrying out the examination (for the project application, final scientific report)”;

**Annex 8** “Project application examination individual/consolidated assessment form”;

**Annex 9** “Methodology for assessing the eligibility of a project application against sector-specific criteria”;

**Annex 10** “Individual/overall sector-specific evaluation criteria form”;

**Annex 11** “Agreement on the Implementation of the Project of the National Research Programme “Research and Sustainable Use of Local Resources for the Development of Latvia 2023-2025””:

Annex 11.1 “Project application”;

Annex 11.2 “Breakdown of Funding”;

Annex 11.3 “Recommendations for the Project Implementation”;

Annex 11.4 “Calculation of the Value of Project Results as a Percentage of the Total Project Cost”;

Annex 11.5 “Certificate of Acceptance-Transfer on the Implementation of the Project of the National Research Programme”

Annex 11.6 “Plan for the Consolidation of Results”;

Annex 11.7 “Financial Statement for the Implementation of the Project of National Research Programme of 20\_\_\_”;

Annex 11.8 “Changes to the Contractual Amount up to 30% for a Project of the National Research Programme”;

Annex 11.9 “Changes in the Scientific Group of a Project of the National Research Programme Exceeding 20%”;

Annex 11.10 “Final Scientific Report Form of a Project”;

Annex 11.11 “List of Results”;

Annex 11.12 “Content Report”;

Annex 11.13 “List of the Scientific Group”.

Annex 11.14 “Changes in the Scientific Group for the project of the National Research Programme (project manager - principal investigator)”;

**Annex 12** “Individual/consolidated evaluation form of the final scientific report of the project”.

**Annex 13** “Establishing, Maintaining and Implementing a Plan for Research Data Management”.

1. Findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable, see here - <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For more information, see here <https://www.lzp.gov.lv/lv/fundamentalo-un-lietisko-petijumu-projektu-2024-gada-atklatais-konkurss> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://izm.gov.lv/images/VPP_grafiska/VPP_GRAFISK_IDENTITTE.pdf> (other materials here in the introduction - <https://izm.gov.lv/lv/zinatne/valsts-petijumu-programmas>) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)