**Annex 7**

to the State Research Programme

“Education”

Regulations for the Second Open Call for Proposals

**Methodology for Carrying Out the Expert Evaluation**

**(for the Project Proposal, Mid-term/Final Scientific Reports of the Project)**

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# Introduction

The Methodology for Carrying Out the Expert Evaluation (hereinafter – the Methodology) has been developed in accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 560 of 4 September 2018, Procedures for the Implementation of State Research Programme Projects (hereinafter – the Cabinet Regulation), and in compliance with Cabinet Order No. 567 of 5 September 2023, Regarding the State Research Programme “Education” (hereinafter – the Cabinet Order), and the Regulations for the Second Open Call for Proposals (hereinafter – the Open Call) of the State Research Programme “Education” (hereinafter – the Regulations) approved on 19 June 2024 by the Implementation and Monitoring Commission of the State Research Programme “Education” (hereinafter – the Commission).

The Methodology has been developed for the international experts who carry out the scientific evaluation of the Project Proposals and the mid-term and final scientific reports of the project.

According to Section 35, Paragraph one of the Law on Scientific Activity, State research programmes are State commissions for the performance of scientific research in a specific economic, educational, cultural, or other sector of priority to the State with the purpose of promoting the development of such sector.

The target audience of the Methodology – project applicants (hereinafter – the Project Applicant) of the Second Open Call for Proposals (hereinafter – the Open Call) of the State Research Programme “Education” (hereinafter – the Programme) who prepare Project Proposals and the necessary documentation for submission within the framework of the Open Call.

As a State commission, the Programme serves as a policy implementation mechanism that identifies and researches matters of importance for the sustainability and development of Latvia, which need to be the focus of the work of Latvian scientific institutions, and defines relevant scientific research tasks to address them. In view of the above, the Programme creates favourable conditions for achieving sustainable development goals of Latvia.

The Programme intends to bring together the strongest research teams, involving researchers from the fields of education and science in order to achieve the project goal.

The Programme was created and is funded by the Ministry of Education and Science (hereinafter – the Ministry). State budget funds in the total amount of EUR 4,500,000 have been granted for the implementation of the Programme and the implementation period lasts from 2023 to 2026. The Open Call of the Programme was organised in 2023, foreseeing funding for one Project Proposal in each of the tasks provided for in Paragraph 5 of the Cabinet Order, thus funding for a total of six projects. In total, 4 (four) projects were approved as a result of the Open Call. The Project Proposals submitted in respect of the tasks of the Programme provided for in Sub-paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Cabinet Order did not reach the quality threshold of the consolidated evaluation and therefore the Open Call ended without any results in the respective two tasks. The Second Open Call of the Programme is organised to ensure the implementation of the Programme task provided for in Sub-paragraph 5.3 of the Cabinet Order. The Open Call foresees funding for one project, i.e. the maximum project funding of EUR 500,005 (five hundred thousand and five euros) and the minimum project funding of EUR 300,000 (three hundred thousand euros).

According to the Cabinet Order, the overarching objective of the Programme is to contribute to evidence-based decision-making with regard to the development of the education system and the achievement of the strategic education development objectives, and also to generate new knowledge and practical solutions at educational institution, municipality, and national levels.

In order to achieve the overarching objective of the Programme, Sub-paragraph 5.3 of the Cabinet Order provides for the following objective and task of the Programme: to build the capacity of educators, educational institution management and municipality education specialists with regard to effective change and innovation management, ensuring the improvement of the educational institution performance, the quality of education management, and strengthening the learner-centred approach. The achievement of the objective requires studying and profiling of the thinking and behaviour patterns (including beliefs, convictions, values) of educators, educational institution management and municipality education specialists, and also elaborating and validating solutions (including specific policies, professional development models, other tools) that would contribute to their development and improvement at the educational institution, educational institution founder, municipality, and national levels.

The following sub-tasks have been identified for the implementation of the aforementioned task:

* + - sub-task: to carry out a detailed and data-based case study and assessment of existing approaches to education governance and management capacity development at national, municipality, and educational institution levels, including the analysis of current policy options and approaches used in the educational institution and municipality;
    - sub-task: to identity the current good practice examples for the purpose of assessing educational governance and management capacity in the context of effective change (national reforms) and innovation management, ensuring the improvement of the educational institution performance, the quality of education management, and strengthening the learner-centred approach;
    - sub-task: to analyse the current behaviour and thinking patterns of educators, educational institution management and municipality education specialists and to make a description of the current profiles, and also to create sample profiles (preferred profiles). It is understood that a profile is a description of the way of thinking, behaviour, attitudes, and values of staff;
    - sub-task: to evaluate the current programmes for the training and professional competence development of the heads of educational institutions (where applicable – municipality education specialists), analysing them in the context of scientific literature and international good practice. Based on scientific literature and current good practice (Latvian and international), to prepare a situation assessment, a competence framework for the heads of educational institutions and municipality education specialists, and also a conceptual model for competence development of educational institutions (where applicable – municipality education specialists), offering specific proposals for the content and implementation principles of training and professional competence development programmes;
    - sub-task: to propose practical solutions (approaches, models, profiles, principles) for strengthening and developing the capacity for change and innovation management and governance at the national (policy), municipality (founder), and educational institution levels;
    - sub-task: the research covers general (including pre-school) and vocational education.

The following conditions must be taken into account by the Project Applicant:

* + - to develop a well-considered and balanced research design by selecting such research methods and technologies that are appropriate for scientific activity and research, including innovative research methods and technologies such as design-based research, with an emphasis on practical solutions;
    - to use data sets collected in Latvia, including the State Education Information System (SEIS), the Open Data Portal of Latvia, the Central Statistical Bureau, and other data;
    - to use international comparative research and international good practice in relation to national contexts and needs;
    - systematic reviews and meta-analyses should be an essential part of the research;
    - to assess the current solutions, proposing improvements or developing new solutions to achieve the research results;
    - to base the focus of the research on a feasibility study based on an analysis of the current policy priorities and ongoing reforms;
    - to ensure active involvement of the user (target group) in the validation of the research results in practice at all levels, i.e. educational institution, municipality, national level, through continuous improvement of the research results based on the validation. Where applicable, use research methods to validate research results that allow the identification of causal links based on experimental or quasi-experimental methods;
    - the sample and solution testing set must be representative in nature;
    - to assess the need (depending on the planned research topic) for collaboration between different disciplines and sub-disciplines to ensure the quality of the research objectives;
    - to develop internal project monitoring and risk management mechanisms for the quality implementation of the research, including the establishment of a project steering committee.

# 1. Terms Used

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| **No.** | **Term** | **Definition** |
| **1.** | **Scientific Group** | Scientific staff and scientific technical staff (persons who have the necessary technical knowledge and experience in one or more fields and who, under the supervision of scientists, participate in scientific activities by carrying out technical tasks. Scientific technical staff (engineers, technicians, laboratory technicians, technologists, operators) involved in the implementation of the project. The scientific group shall be composed of the project manager, the project principal investigators (if required) and the project implementers. |
| **2.** | **Scientific Staff** | Senior researchers, researchers, scientific assistants, academic staff[[1]](#footnote-1) and students of a higher education institution. |
| **3.** | **Project Applicant** | The Project Applicant is a scientific institution registered in the Register of Scientific Institutions of the Republic of Latvia (an entity governed by public or private law) or a higher education institution corresponding to the definition of a research organisation[[2]](#footnote-2). The Project Applicant is responsible for the implementation of the project and the overall achievement of the project results. |
| **4.** | **Project Cooperation Partner – Scientific Institution** | A scientific institution registered in the Register of Scientific Institutions of the Republic of Latvia (an entity governed by public or private law) or a higher education institution corresponding to the definition of a research organisation, participating in the project with its own staff or research infrastructure. |
| **5.** | **Project Cooperation Partner – Public Institution** | A public institution which is required to carry out scientific activities by an external legal enactment, the regulations or articles of association thereof, and is engaged in the implementation of the project with property, intellectual property, funding or human resources in the possession or ownership thereof. |
| **6.** | **Project Manager** | A scientist who manages the project and ensures its implementation. The project manager plans and supervises the execution of the project tasks, is responsible for his or her own activities and those of other persons involved in the project in accordance with the tasks set out in the project, scientific ethical norms, timely preparation and submission of documentation describing the scientific progress of the project in accordance with the procedure provided for in the Cabinet Regulation.  The project manager is registered in the National Scientific Activity Information System (hereinafter – the Information System). |
| **7.** | **Principal Investigators** | The scientists implementing the project or sub-project and responsible for the implementation of the parts thereof. |
| **8.** | **Project Implementers** | Members of the scientific group who carry out individual scientific tasks in the implementation of the project and are responsible for carrying out relevant parts of it. |
| **9.** | **Students of the Higher Education Institution** | A student of the bachelor degree study programme, a student of the vocational study programme, a student of the master’s degree study programmes (master’s programme student), a resident in medicine, and a doctoral student are students involved in the Scientific Group of the project.[[3]](#footnote-3) Students of the higher education institution must be involved in the project according to the provisions of Paragraphs 21–24 of the Regulations. |
| **10.** | **Project Contact Person** | A natural person who is registered in the Information System, fills in information on the Project Proposal, uploads its annexes, and also, where necessary, maintains contact with the staff of the Latvian Council of Science and the staff of the Ministry of Education and Science during the project submission and implementation. The Project Applicant shall indicate the Project Contact Person in Chapter 1 “General Information” of Part A of the Project Proposal. If the project has cooperation partners, their contact persons are likewise indicated. The contact person and the project manager can be the same person. |

# 2. Scientific Expert Evaluation of the Project Proposal

1. The scientific evaluation process of all Project Proposals submitted within the scope of the Open Call shall be organised by the Council.

2. If the Project Proposal meets the administrative evaluation criteria, the Council shall, in accordance with the provisions laid down in Chapter VII, invite two or more suitably qualified experts to perform the scientific expert evaluation of the Project Proposal.

3. Prior to obtaining access to the Project Proposal in the Information System, the expert shall:

3.1. declare that he or she has no conflict of interest and also undertake to comply with confidentiality requirements by signing and sending to the Council, by electronic mail, Annex 5 to the Regulations “Declaration of Absence of Conflict of Interest and Maintenance of Confidentiality” (hereinafter – the Declaration of the Expert);

3.2. conclude a contract with the Council – Annex 6 to the Regulations “Service Contract for Scientific Evaluation” (hereinafter – the Service Contract).

4. The Council shall, upon receipt of the Declaration of the Expert and after conclusion of the Service Contract, give the expert access to the Project Proposal and to all the necessary information in the Information System to carry out an appropriate evaluation of the Project Proposal.

5. The expert shall evaluate the Project Proposal by applying his or her professional qualifications and experience in the relevant field of science and by justifying his or her evaluation with scientific evidence.

6. In the course of the expert evaluation, the expert shall cooperate with the Council and also comply with the instructions given by the Council pertaining to the performance of the expert evaluation in accordance with the Regulations and the Service Contract.

7. In accordance with Paragraph 44 of the Regulations, the expert is allowed to evaluate only 20 pages of the Project Proposal and up to seven additional pages if there are declarations from the social partners, letters of recommendation on cooperation, etc.

**2.1. Individual Evaluation of the Project Proposal**

8. The expert shall complete and approve the individual evaluation of the Project Proposal (hereinafter – the Individual Evaluation) which has been drawn up in accordance with Annex 8 to the Regulations “Form for Individual/Consolidated Evaluation of the Project Proposal Expert Evaluation” in the Information System within two calendar weeks after concluding the Service Contract and obtaining access to the Project Proposal and all necessary information, unless another time limit is specified in the Service Contract.

9. In the Individual Evaluation, the expert shall evaluate each criterion and provide a score in points, taking into account the considerations set out in Paragraph 13 of the Methodology.

10. The expert shall evaluate the criteria and assign a score from 1 to 5 points for each criterion where:

10.1. excellent – 5 points (excellent Project Proposal, meets or exceeds the highest standards in the relevant field of science, any shortcomings in the Project Proposal are minor);

10.2. good – 4 points (good Project Proposal, meets the requirements of the criterion in the relevant field of science, but there are some shortcomings);

10.3. satisfactory – 3 points (satisfactory Project Proposal, generally meets the requirements of the criterion in the relevant field of science, with some shortcomings that will make it difficult to implement the project and achieve high results);

10.4. weak – 2 points (weak Project Proposal, partial or only general compliance with the requirements of the criterion in the relevant field of science, identifiable shortcomings that make it difficult to successfully implement the project and achieve its objectives);

10.5. unsatisfactory – 1 point (unsatisfactory Project Proposal, does not meet the requirements of the relevant field of science for the criterion, and the information provided is insufficient for the assessment under the criterion, and there are significant shortcomings that make the implementation of the project and the achievement of the objectives questionable);

10.6. if the score of the Project Proposal in a given criterion exceeds the requirements of the previous lowest score but does not fully meet the requirements of the next highest score, half point scores, i.e. 0.5, may also be given.

11. The expert shall provide a reasoned justification for the scoring of each scientific criterion. The expert shall explain in the justification the score awarded, using his or her professional qualifications and experience in the relevant field of science.

12. Within three calendar days following the date of receipt of the Individual Evaluation, the Council shall assess the compliance of the Individual Evaluation with the considerations referred to in Paragraphs 27, 28, and 29 of the Cabinet Regulation, and also with the Methodology, where necessary, returning the Individual Evaluation to the expert for specification/revision/improvement, justifying the reasons for the return thereof. In the event of such return, the expert shall update, revise, and validate the Individual Evaluation in the Information System within three calendar days following the date of receipt of the notification from the Council, sent by electronic mail, of the return of the Individual Evaluation of the expert.

13. The expert shall complete the Individual Evaluation in the Information System (see Annex 8 to the Regulations “Form for Individual/Consolidated Evaluation of the Project Proposal Expert Evaluation”) according to the following criteria and considerations:

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| **Individual/Consolidated Evaluation of the Project Proposal Expert Evaluation** | | | |
| Project title:  Expert(s): | | | |
| **1.** | **Criterion: Scientific Quality of the Project** | | Maximum 5 points |
| **1.1.** | Consideration: contribution towards the achievement of the overarching objective and objective of the Programme and towards ensuring the implementation of the thematic tasks thereof | *The expert shall justify the score in points given by taking into account the fulfilment of the criterion as a whole and the fulfilment of each criterion consideration.*  *1. Specific information for the criterion is given in Chapter 1 “Scientific Excellence” of the Project Proposal and also in Sub-chapter 2.5 “Scientific Results of the Project and Ensuring Availability Thereof” and Sub-chapter 3.1 “Project Applicant and Scientific Group”, but it is the Project Proposal as a whole that should be taken into account when assessing the criterion.*  *2. The scientific excellence of the project, including the selected research strategy and methodological solutions, the ability to generate new knowledge or technological insights, and also the ability to build and develop an interdisciplinary and inclusive team of internationally competitive scientists using research methods and technologies that are recognised among scientists worldwide, shall be assessed according to the specificities of the relevant scientific field or fields and the project, and also the specificities of the institutions of the Project Applicant and the project cooperation partners (if any).*  *3. The overarching objective of the Programme and the objective and task provided for in Sub-paragraph 5.3 of the Cabinet Order and the horizontal tasks of the Programme, the results (in accordance with Paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Cabinet Order) and their feasibility shall be taken into account in the evaluation, and also it shall be evaluated whether the Project Proposal is adequate for achieving the overarching objective and objectives of the Programme in accordance with the thematic area of the project and the envisaged time frame for implementation.*  *4. Evaluation of the overall potential of the project to develop the knowledge base in the education and science sectors to develop State research and innovation systems that address societal challenges.*  *5. The expert shall also evaluate whether the Project Applicant has complied with the following conditions when completing the application:*  *- to develop a well-considered and balanced research design by selecting such research methods and technologies that are appropriate for scientific activity and research, including innovative research methods and technologies such as design-based research, with an emphasis on practical solutions;*  *- to use data sets collected in Latvia, including the State Education Information System (SEIS), the Open Data Portal of Latvia, the Central Statistical Bureau, and other data;*  *- to use international comparative research and international good practice in relation to national contexts and needs;*  *- systematic reviews and meta-analyses should be an essential part of the research;*  *- to assess the current solutions, proposing improvements or developing new solutions to achieve the research results;*  *- to base the focus of the research on a feasibility study based on an analysis of the current policy priorities and ongoing reforms;*  *- to ensure active involvement of the user (target group) in the validation of the research results in practice at all levels, i.e. educational institution, municipality, national level, through continuous improvement of the research results based on the validation. Where applicable, use research methods to validate research results that allow the identification of causal links based on experimental or quasi-experimental methods;*  - *the sample and solution testing set must be representative in nature;*  *- to assess the need (depending on the planned research topic) for collaboration between different disciplines and sub-disciplines to ensure the quality of the research objectives;*  *- to develop internal project monitoring and risk management mechanisms for the quality implementation of the research, including the establishment of a project steering committee.* | |
| **1.2.** | Consideration: the scientific quality, reliability, and novelty of the research |
| **1.3.** | Consideration: the scientific quality of the selected research strategy and methodological solutions, and also the suitability for the achievement of the specified objectives |
| **1.4.** | Consideration: the ability of the project to generate new knowledge or technological insights |
| **1.5.** | Consideration: the contribution of the cooperation partners (if any), their scientific capacity, planned cooperation quality |
| **2.** | **Criterion: Impact of Project Results** | | Maximum 5 points |
| **2.1.** | expected transfer of the acquired knowledge and skills to further activity and the development of scientific capacity | *The expert shall justify the score given by taking into account the fulfilment of the criterion as a whole and the sub-criteria thereof. Criteria-specific information is given in Chapter 2 “Impact” of the Project Proposal, but the assessment of the criterion must take into account the Project Proposal as a whole.*  *The results and their expected impact, including the planned transfer of results in further activity and the development of scientific capacity, the possibilities for further development of research shall be assessed according to the specificities of the relevant field or fields of science and specificities of the project, and also the specificities of the institution of the Project Applicant and the specificities of the institutions of the project cooperation partners (if any).*  *The expert shall assess how effectively the project engages students and young scientists in relation to the overall workload of the scientific group, including a plan for engaging students and building the capacity of the scientific group within the framework of the project. Information on the workload of the project scientific group, including students, can be found in Chapter 2 “Scientific Group” and Chapter 3 “Budget” of Part A “General Information” of the Project Proposal.*  *Sustainability of the project results is assessed in relation to the expected scientific publications and the dissemination of the project results in scientific conferences. Information on the dissemination of the project results can be found in the Project Proposal description (Part B), Sub-chapter 2.5 “Scientific Results of the Project and Ensuring Access Thereto”. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring the sustainability of results, following the principles of Open Access, Open Data, FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable), and also to the selection of the Project Applicant for data deposition.*  *The potential of the project to raise public awareness of the project results and to increase the socio-economic impact of the project results should be taken into account (Sub-chapters 2.2-2.5 of the description of the Project Proposal). Evaluation of whether the plans described in the Project Proposal for applying and transferring the results of the research to end-users are adequate and feasible. Evaluation of the collaboration of the Project Applicant with other scientific institutions and also with public institutions, NGOs, and entrepreneurs.*  *The expert shall also evaluate the feasibility of the Programme tasks and sub-tasks provided for in Sub-paragraph 5.3 of the Cabinet Order. The task of the Programme provided for in Sub-paragraph 5.3 of the Cabinet Order: to build the capacity of educators, educational institution management and municipality education specialists with regard to effective change and innovation management, ensuring the improvement of the educational institution performance, the quality of education management, and strengthening the learner-centred approach. The achievement of the objective requires studying and profiling of the thinking and behaviour patterns (including beliefs, convictions, values) of educators, educational institution management and municipality education specialists, and also elaborating and validating solutions (including specific policies, professional development models, other tools) that would contribute to their development and improvement at the educational institution, educational institution founder, municipality, and national levels.*  *The sub-tasks of the task provided for in Sub-paragraph 5.3 of the Cabinet Order are as follows:*   * + - sub-task: to carry out a detailed and data-based case study and assessment of existing approaches to education governance and management capacity development at national, municipality, and educational institution levels, including the analysis of current policy options and approaches used in the educational institution and municipality;     - sub-task: to identity the current good practice examples for the purpose of assessing educational governance and management capacity in the context of effective change (national reforms) and innovation management, ensuring the improvement of the educational institution performance, the quality of education management, and strengthening the learner-centred approach;     - sub-task: to analyse the current behaviour and thinking patterns of educators, educational institution management and municipality education specialists and to make a description of the current profiles, and also to create sample profiles (preferred profiles). It is understood that a profile is a description of the way of thinking, behaviour, attitudes, and values of staff;     - sub-task: to evaluate the current programmes for the training and professional competence development of the heads of educational institutions (where applicable – municipality education specialists), analysing them in the context of scientific literature and international good practice. Based on scientific literature and current good practice (Latvian and international), to prepare a situation assessment, a competence framework for the heads of educational institutions and municipality education specialists, and also a conceptual model for competence development of educational institutions (where applicable – municipality education specialists), offering specific proposals for the content and implementation principles of training and professional competence development programmes;     - sub-task: to propose practical solutions (approaches, models, profiles, principles) for strengthening and developing the capacity for change and innovation management and governance at the national (policy), municipality (founder), and educational institution levels;     - sub-task: the research covers general (including pre-school) and vocational education. | |
| **2.2.** | opportunities for research development, including contributions to the preparation of new projects for submission to calls for proposals under the European Union’s Framework Programme for Research and Innovation “Horizon Europe” and other research and innovation support programmes and technology initiatives |
| **2.3.** | the research will generate knowledge or policy recommendations and solutions relevant to the sector, the economy, and society |
| **2.4.** | sustainability of the knowledge generated and a qualitative dissemination plan, including planned scientific publications and public outreach |
| **2.5.** | the implementation of the research contributes to strengthening the scientific capacities of the research staff, including students |
| **3.** | **Criterion: Project Feasibility and Provisions** | | Maximum 5 points |
| **3.1.** | quality of the research work plan and its relevance to the objective. The intended resources are adequate and sufficient for the achievement of the objective. It is intended to ensure efficient use of resources in the research. The planned work stages and tasks are clearly defined, relevant, and reliable | *The expert shall justify the score given by taking into account the fulfilment of the criterion as a whole and the sub-criteria thereof. Specific information for the criterion is given in Chapter 3 “Implementation” of the Project Proposal and in Part C “Curriculum Vitae” of the Project Proposal, but the evaluation of the criterion must take into account the Project Proposal as a whole.*  *Feasibility of the project, including the prepared research work plan, the envisaged management and quality control of the research, information provided on the data management plan, the envisaged resources, accessible infrastructure, shall be evaluated according to the specificities of the relevant field or fields of science and specificities of the project, and also the specificities of the Project Applicant and the cooperation partner(s) (if any).*  *The expert shall evaluate the relevance of the scientific qualifications and experience of the project manager and the principal investigators to the achievement of the project objectives and the performance of the tasks envisaged on the basis of the curriculum vitae submitted in Part C “Curriculum Vitae” of the Project Proposal.*  *The planned implementation of the project shall be evaluated in relation to the completed Project Proposal in Chapter 3 “Budget” of Part A “General Information” which foresees the costs of the project team’s salary, material and technical support, travel and publication costs.*  *The expert shall also evaluate whether internal monitoring and risk management mechanisms are in place (research teams/steering committee).* | |
| **3.2.** | scientific qualifications of the project manager and of the key project implementers on the basis of the submitted curriculum vitae (CV) |
| **3.3.** | appropriate research management, including quality management, is intended. The management organisation allows to follow the progress of the research. Potential risks have been evaluated and a plan for the prevention thereof or minimisation of the negative impact thereof has been developed |
| **3.4.** | there is the research infrastructure necessary for carrying out the research, including access to another research infrastructure of cooperation partners (if applicable) |
| **3.5.** | the institution carrying out the research and the cooperation partners (if applicable) have the necessary knowledge and expertise |
| Expert recommendations for project implementation | | *The expert shall make recommendations (if any) to the project implementer to ensure a more successful implementation of the project.* | |
| Potential risks in project implementation | | *The expert shall indicate the risks (if any) in the implementation of the project and whether they are low, medium, or high.* | |

## 2.2. Consolidated Evaluation of the Project Proposal

14. Once the experts have completed and validated their Individual Evaluation in the Information System, the Council shall give each expert access to the Individual Evaluation completed by the other expert and also disclose the identity of the other experts to each expert.

15. One of the experts shall complete the Consolidated Evaluation in accordance with Annex 8 to the Regulations “Form for Individual/Consolidated Evaluation of the Project Proposal Expert Evaluation” in the Information System, following the conditions under Paragraphs 6 to 13 of the Methodology. All experts (unless the exception referred to in Paragraph 43 of the Regulations applies) shall validate the Consolidated Evaluation in the Information System within two weeks after the validation of the last Individual Evaluation in the Information System.

16. The Consolidated Evaluation is the agreement between all experts (unless the exception referred to in Paragraph 43 of the Regulations applies) on the Final Evaluation of the Project Proposal, so that the expert preparing the Consolidated Evaluation would consult with other experts on the following matters:

16.1. score of each criterion in points;

16.2. justification for the scores of each criterion, compiled from the justifications provided by all the experts in their individual evaluations.

17. The Council shall examine the Consolidated Evaluation referred to in Paragraph 15 of the Methodology once it has been validated in the Information System. If the Council establishes any inconsistencies with the Methodology or the Regulations for the Open Call, it has the right to return the Consolidated Evaluation to the experts for revision and validation.

18. In the event of a return of the Consolidated Evaluation, the experts must revise and agree on the Consolidated Evaluation within three calendar days, validating it in the Information System in accordance with Paragraphs 15 to 16 of this Methodology.

# 3. Scientific Expert Evaluation of the Mid-term and Final Scientific Reports of the Project

19. Prior to the evaluation of the mid-term or final scientific report in the Information System, the expert shall declare that he or she has no conflict of interest and undertake to respect the confidentiality requirements by signing and sending to the Council the Declaration of the Expert and by concluding the Scientific Evaluation Contract with the Council.

20. The Council shall, upon receipt of the Declaration of the Expert, give the expert access to the mid-term or final scientific report of the project and to all the information necessary for the evaluation thereof.

21. The Council shall provide each expert with access to the mid-term or final scientific report and to the application for the same project. If a final report of the project is being evaluated, the Council shall additionally provide the expert with access to the mid-term report of the same project.

22. The expert shall evaluate the mid-term or final scientific report of the project by applying his or her knowledge in the relevant field of science and by providing scientific justification for his or her opinion.

## 3.1. Individual Evaluation of the Mid-term and Final Scientific Reports of the Project

23. Within two weeks following the date of concluding the Service Contract for Scientific Evaluation with the Council, the expert shall carry out an individual evaluation of the mid-term or the final scientific report by completing Annex 10 to the Regulations “Individual/Consolidated Evaluation of the Mid-term/Final Scientific Report” in the Information System and validation thereof in the Information System.

24. The expert shall award one of two scores to the mid-term scientific report:

24.1. proceed with the project;

24.2. do not to proceed with the project.

25. The expert shall award one of two scores to the final scientific report:

25.1. project objective has been achieved;

25.2. project objective has not been achieved.

26. The expert shall evaluate the final scientific report of the project against the following criteria:

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| **Individual/Consolidated Evaluation of the Mid-term/Final Scientific Reports of the Project** | | |
| Project title:  Expert(s): | | |
| **1.** | **Criterion: Scientific Quality of the Project** | |
| *The expert shall evaluate how the scientific group of the project has achieved the objectives of the Project Proposal up to the moment of delivery of the mid-term/final report. Basically, Chapter 1 “Scientific Excellence” of the mid-term/final scientific report shall be taken into account, while linking it to the mid-term/final scientific report as a whole and to the Project Proposal. Here, the expert shall provide comments and suggestions to fully achieve the objective of the project and perform the tasks to the highest scientific quality, or on research opportunities after the end of the project in order to achieve scientific excellence. The relevant Programme-specific tasks and planned results shall be taken into account when providing comments and it shall be also evaluated whether the project is progressing towards the achievement of the overarching objective and objectives of the Programme.*  *The expert shall evaluate whether the results achieved by the scientific group of the project in the relevant time period reflect the high research capacity thereof and whether the results described are sufficient for supplementing the knowledge base of the field(s) of science.* | |
| **2.** | **Criterion: Impact of Project Results** | |
| *The expert shall evaluate how the scientific group of the project has achieved the objectives of the Project Proposal up to the moment of delivery of the mid-term/final report. Basically, Chapter 2 “Impact” of the mid-term/final scientific report shall be taken into account, while linking it to the mid-term/final scientific report as a whole and to the Project Proposal. In this section, the expert shall provide comments and suggestions to fully achieve the intended impact and ensure the dissemination of the knowledge gained to the scientific community and communication to the public at large, or for post-project activities.*  *The expert shall evaluate whether the project has resulted in a more internationally competitive field of education sciences and whether the scientific community has become more internationally competitive and capable.*  *The expert shall evaluate whether the results of the research have been tested against the user. Have the results of the research been validated at all levels, i.e. educational institution, municipality, national levels. Control groups were used to validate the results. Is the scope of the validation such that the quality standard of the deliverables of the research project is met. Whether the project results have been improved after validation. The expert shall evaluate how the project implementer has selected the target groups of the project, whether their opinions have been sought in a quality way and whether the activities have been effective for informing of the public. The expert shall also evaluate cooperation with public institutions, NGOs, and entrepreneurs (e.g. provision of recommendations, participation in policy planning, etc.).*  *The expert shall provide evaluation and comments on the implementation of the plan to make the project results and scientific knowledge available both in Latvia and internationally (including by publishing results in open access journals and depositing newly generated research data in research data repositories according to the principles of “as open as possible” and FAIR, i.e. findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable.*  *The expert shall also evaluate the capacity building activities of the project implementer for students and the scientific group and also the progress of the student involvement plan.*  *The expert shall also evaluate progress in the implementation of the Programme task and sub-tasks thereof provided for in Sub-paragraph 5.3 of the Cabinet Order:*  *- task: to build the capacity of educators, educational institution management and municipality education specialists with regard to effective change and innovation management, ensuring the improvement of the educational institution performance, the quality of education management, and strengthening the learner-centred approach. Studying and profiling of the thinking and behaviour patterns (including beliefs, convictions, values) of educators, educational institution management and municipality education specialists, and also elaborating and validating solutions (including specific policies, professional development models, other tools) that would contribute to their development and improvement at the educational institution, educational institution founder, municipality, and national levels.*   * + - sub-task: to carry out a detailed and data-based case study and assessment of existing approaches to education governance and management capacity development at national, municipality, and educational institution levels, including the analysis of current policy options and approaches used in the educational institution and municipality;     - sub-task: to identity the current good practice examples for the purpose of assessing educational governance and management capacity in the context of effective change (national reforms) and innovation management, ensuring the improvement of the educational institution performance, the quality of education management, and strengthening the learner-centred approach;     - sub-task: to analyse the current behaviour and thinking patterns of educators, educational institution management and municipality education specialists and to make a description of the current profiles, and also to create sample profiles (preferred profiles). It is understood that a profile is a description of the way of thinking, behaviour, attitudes, and values of staff;     - sub-task: to evaluate the current programmes for the training and professional competence development of the heads of educational institutions (where applicable – municipality education specialists), analysing them in the context of scientific literature and international good practice. Based on scientific literature and current good practice (Latvian and international), to prepare a situation assessment, a competence framework for the heads of educational institutions and municipality education specialists, and also a conceptual model for competence development of educational institutions (where applicable – municipality education specialists), offering specific proposals for the content and implementation principles of training and professional competence development programmes;     - sub-task: to propose practical solutions (approaches, models, profiles, principles) for strengthening and developing the capacity for change and innovation management and governance at the national (policy), municipality (founder), and educational institution levels;     - sub-task: the research covers general (including pre-school) and vocational education. | |
| **3.** | **Criterion: Project Feasibility and Provisions** | |
| *The expert shall evaluate how the scientific group of the project has achieved the objectives of the Project Proposal up to the moment of delivery of the mid-term/final report. Basically, Chapter 3 “Implementation”of the mid-term/final scientific report shall be taken into account, while linking it to the mid-term/final scientific report and to the Project Proposal as a whole. In this section, the expert shall provide comments and suggestions for adjustments (in the case of a mid-term report) to the work plan or research opportunities after the end of the relevant project.*  *The expert shall evaluate whether the management of the project has been effective, including taking into account the overall progress of the project. The expert shall evaluate the information provided by the project implementer on the development and maintenance of data management plans. Whether the risk plan described in Sub-chapter 3.3 “Project Management and Risk Plan” of the project description has been implemented in cases where the risks materialised, and whether the solutions are credible.*  *The expert shall evaluate how the internal monitoring and risk management mechanisms of the project (research teams/steering committees) functioned, how they influenced the delivery and quality of the results.*  *In addition, the expert shall evaluate and indicate whether students and applicants for a scientific degree have been sufficiently involved in the project implementation by the specified stage. Students must be involved with a total workload of at least 3.0 FTE during the implementation of the project.* | |
| ***Mid-term Project Evaluation*** | | |
| **Proceed with the project/**  **Do not to proceed with the project** | | *If the expert evaluation of the mid-term scientific report of the project is “Proceed with the project”, the expert may skip any final conclusions.*  *If the expert evaluation of the mid-term scientific report of the project is “Do not proceed with the project”, the expert shall provide final conclusions with an explanation and additional reasons on the progress of the project and the risks identified to the achievement of the project objective.* |
| **Potential risks in project implementation** | | *If the expert evaluates the mid-term scientific report of the project with the score “Proceed with the project”, the expert shall indicate the risks (if any) to the project and whether they are low, medium, or high.* |
| **Conclusions** | | *If the expert evaluation of the mid-term scientific report of the project is “Proceed with the project”, the expert may skip any final conclusions.*  *If the expert evaluation of the mid-term scientific report of the project is “Do not proceed with the project”, the expert shall provide final conclusions with an explanation and additional reasons on the progress of the project and the risks identified to the achievement of the project objective.* |
| ***Final Project Evaluation*** | | |
| **Project objective has been achieved.**  *Project objective has been achieved – the overall score as a percentage is between 85% and 100% and more.*  **Project objective has not been achieved,**  **objective rating as a percentage.**  *The project objective has not been achieved, it does not correspond partially – the overall score as a percentage is between 25% and 84%.*  *The project objective has not been achieved, it does not correspond at all – the overall score as a percentage is between 0% and 24%.* | | *The expert shall provide a target score as a percentage in the overall score of the final scientific report of the project according to the rating scale set out in Paragraph 30 of the Methodology.* |

**3.2. Consolidated Evaluation of the Mid-term and Final Scientific Reports of the Project**

27. Once the experts have completed and validated their Individual Evaluation of the mid-term or final scientific report in the Information System, the Council shall give each expert access to the Individual Evaluation completed by the other expert and also disclose the identity of the other experts to each expert.

28. One of the experts shall complete the Consolidated Evaluation in accordance with Annex 10 to the Regulations “Form for Individual/Consolidated Evaluation of the Mid-term/Final Scientific Reports of the Project” in accordance with the conditions laid down in Paragraphs 24 to 26 of the Methodology and shall upload the evaluation in the Information System and all experts shall validate the evaluation in the Information System within one week.

29. In the consolidated evaluation, the experts shall agree on a single score for the mid-term or final scientific report and summarise the comments made in the individual evaluations.

**3.3. Evaluation of the Objective of the Final Scientific Report**

30. In the consolidated valuation of the final report, both experts shall agree on a consolidated percentage score with the following meaning:

The project objective has been achieved – the overall score as a percentage is between 85% and 100% and more. The score is given if the project has been carried out with good or excellent scientific quality and has met or exceeded the expected objectives and scientific results. Where there is non-performance or other minor shortcomings, but the existing scientific results are of good scientific quality, e.g. the scientific articles are published in high quality journals, so that these shortcomings have not affected the achievement of the objective. If recommendations are given in the mid-term scientific quality evaluation of the project for further implementation of the project, the recommendations have been taken into account or a reasoned justification shall be given for disregarding them.

Project objective has not been achieved, it does not correspond partially – the overall score as a percentage is between 25% and 84%. The score is awarded if the project has been carried out with sufficient scientific merit, the planned results of the project have been partially achieved, which has affected the overall achievement of the project objectives. If recommendations are given in the mid-term scientific quality evaluation of the project for further implementation of the project, the recommendation have been taken into account partially or not at all, and the reasons for not taking them into account are not sufficiently substantiated.

Project objective has not been achieved, it does not correspond at all – the overall score as a percentage is between 0% and 24%. The score is awarded if the project has been carried out with insufficient scientific quality, the planned results have been entirely or almost entirely not achieved, and the overall objective of the project has therefore not been achieved, or has been achieved to an insufficient extent. If recommendations are given in the mid-term scientific quality evaluation of the project for further implementation of the project, the recommendation have not been taken into account and also no reasoned justification is given.

31. Taking into account Paragraph 26 of the Methodology, the Council shall calculate the refundable part of the funding as follows:

31.1. if the percentage of the expert objective score referred to in Sub-clause 2.20 of the Contract is between 60% and 65%, a flat rate of 5% shall be applied;

31.2. if the percentage of the expert objective score referred to in Sub-clause 2.20 of the Contract is between 50% and 59%, a flat rate of 10% shall be applied;

31.3. if the percentage of the expert objective score referred to in Sub-clause 2.20 of the Contract is below 50%, a flat rate of 25% shall be applied.

1. Section 27, Paragraph one of the Law on Higher Education Institutions [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Article 2(83) of Commission Regulation (EU) No [651/2014](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/651/oj/?locale=LV) of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty (Official Journal of the European Union, 26 June 2014, L 187/1) (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/651/oj/?locale=LV>) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Section 44, Paragraph one of the Law on Higher Education Institutions [↑](#footnote-ref-3)