

## **Regulations for the Open Call for 2021 Fundamental and Applied Research Projects**

### **1. General Provisions**

1. The Regulations for the Open Call for 2021 Fundamental and Applied Research Projects (hereinafter – the Regulations) prescribe the procedures by which the Latvian Council of Science (hereinafter – the Council) organises and implements the open call for 2021 fundamental and applied research projects (hereinafter – the open call) and administers the State budget funds allocated for the funding of the fundamental and applied research projects (hereinafter – the project) on the basis of the procedures laid down in Cabinet Regulation No. 725 of 12 December 2017, Procedures for Evaluating Fundamental and Applied Research Projects and Administering the Financing Thereof (hereinafter – Cabinet Regulation No. 725).

2. The Regulations have been drafted on the basis of Paragraph 10 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725. The submitter of the project proposal (hereinafter – the submitter of the project proposal) shall, in accordance with the procedures and to the extent laid down in the Regulations, submit for the open call the project proposal form in accordance with Annex 1 of the Regulations “Project Proposal” (hereinafter – the project proposal).

3. The total State budget funding available for the open call amounts to **EUR 14,808,202** (fourteen million eight hundred eight thousand two hundred and two euros) (hereinafter – the project funding) which in accordance with Paragraph 26 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725 shall be used for:

- 3.1. funding the projects;
- 3.2. organising the expert-examination of project proposals, mid-term scientific reports of the project and final scientific reports of the project, remuneration of foreign independent scientific experts (hereinafter – the expert) and also communication measures.

4. The time limit for the submission of project proposals is four calendar months from the date of announcement of the open call (hereinafter – the time limit for the submission of the project proposals).

5. The Council shall announce the open call in accordance with Paragraph 9 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725. The following shall be indicated in the announcement for the open call:

- 5.1. title of the open call;
- 5.2. funding of the open call;
- 5.3. time limit for the submission of the project proposals;

5.4. website which includes the necessary information and documentation for the submission of project proposals.

6. The open call shall be implemented in all science sectors specified in Cabinet Regulation No. 49 of 23 January 2018, Regulations Regarding the Sectors and Subsectors of Science of Latvia (hereinafter – Cabinet Regulation No. 49), which within the scope of the open call are divided into six groups (hereinafter – the science sector groups):

- 6.1. natural sciences;
- 6.2. engineering and technology;
- 6.3. medical and health sciences;
- 6.4. agricultural, forestry and veterinary sciences;
- 6.5. social sciences;
- 6.6. humanities and arts.

7. The total duration of the implementation of the projects shall be three years (36 months). The project shall be implemented in rounds where the duration of one round is one year or 12 months (hereinafter also – the round).

8. The maximum amount of the funding for one project is EUR 300,000 (three hundred thousand euros) and the minimum amount of the funding is EUR 150,000 (one hundred fifty thousand euros).

## **2. Requirements for the Submitter of the Project Proposal and Cooperation Partner of the Project**

9. The submitter of the project proposal shall comply with the definition of the submitter of the project proposal specified in Sub-paragraph 2.7 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725, considered in conjunction with the requirements for conformity with the status of a research organisation laid down in Article 2(83) of Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty.

10. If necessary, for the achievement of the project objective, the submitter of the project proposal may attract a cooperation partner or cooperation partners in compliance with Paragraph 7 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725. Upon implementing a project jointly with cooperation partners, the submitter of the project proposal shall take full responsibility for the project implementation and fulfilment of the obligations.

11. If the submitter of the project proposal attracts a cooperation partner, the payment of the direct eligible costs specified in Sub-clause 18.1 of the Regulations shall be planned in the project budget in the following amount:

- 11.1. for the submitter of the project proposal – not less than 51 per cent;
- 11.2. for the cooperation partner – not less than 20 per cent.

### **3. Conditions for the Participation of the Principal Investigator, Participants of the Project, Including Students**

12. The principal investigator, lead participant of the project and participant of the project specified in the project proposal shall comply with the provisions laid down in Sub-paragraphs 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725 in accordance with the provisions specified in Paragraph 8 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725.

13. Within the scope of the open call, upon submitting a project proposal, students of higher education institutions<sup>1</sup> and applicants for a scientific degree (hereinafter – the students) shall be planned in the composition of the scientific team. The total workload of the students shall not be less than 1.0 of the full-time equivalent (hereinafter – the FTE) in each round of the project implementation (in total during the project implementation – 3.0 FTE), considering that each student is employed in the project for at least 0.25 FTE in the respective round of the project implementation.

14. If during the project implementation a student finishes studies of a certain level and not later than within four months thereafter begins studies of the next level, the respective four-month period can be deemed to be in line with the condition for the involvement of students referred to in Clause 13 of the Regulations. If during the project implementation a student successfully finishes studies or defends a doctoral thesis, until the conclusion of the project implementation the involvement of this person shall be deemed to be in line with the condition for the involvement of students referred to in Clause 13 of the Regulations.

15. The remuneration of the staff of the scientific team specified in Sub-paragraph 2.2 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725 that is involved in the project implementation shall be determined within the scope of the project in accordance with the remuneration policy and remuneration rates of the submitter of the project proposal and cooperation partner of the project (if any).

### **4. Activities to be Supported and Costs**

16. The submitter of the project proposal shall implement the project in accordance with Paragraph 6 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725.

17. The submitter of the project proposal shall indicate in Chapter 3 “Project Results” of Part A of the project proposal the expected results to be achieved until the conclusion of the project implementation and also shall indicated how much of the results it is expected to achieve until the mid-term stage of the project implementation:

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with Section 44, Paragraph one of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

- 17.1. original scientific articles (at least one is a mandatory requirement):
  - 17.1.1. original scientific articles the quoting index whereof reaches at least 50 per cent of the average quoting index of the sector which have been submitted or accepted for publication in the magazines or conference symposia included in Web of Science Core Collection or SCOPUS databases;
  - 17.1.2. original scientific articles which have been submitted or accepted for publication in the magazines or conference symposia included in Web of Science Core Collection or SCOPUS databases;
  - 17.1.3. original scientific articles which have been submitted or accepted for publication in the scientific publications or conference symposia included in ERIH PLUS database;
  - 17.1.4. other anonymously reviewed scientific articles in international magazines and collections of articles, except for conference materials;
  - 17.1.5. other anonymously reviewed scientific articles in the magazines and collections of articles of Latvia, except for conference materials;
- 17.2. conference materials (except for SCOPUS and Web of Science Core Collection indexed):
  - 17.2.1. conference materials – full text;
  - 17.2.2. conference materials – summaries up to 1 page;
- 17.3. reviewed scientific monographs or manuscripts thereof;
- 17.4. manuscripts included in manuscript databases (preprints) and other publications published under the responsibility of the authors (non-reviewed);
- 17.5. scientific databases and data sets developed within the scope of the project;
- 17.6. technology rights – patents and other intangible assets;
  - 17.6.1. prototype of a new product or new technology, including techniques;
  - 17.6.2. new non-commercial treatment and diagnostic techniques;
- 17.7. intellectual property licences or transfer agreements:
  - 17.7.1. registered in international institutions (for example, WIPO, EPO);
  - 17.7.2. registered in Latvia;
- 17.8. reports on action policy recommendations and on the impact of action policy;
- 17.9. project proposal submitted in an international or national call for research and development projects;
- 17.10. successfully defended master's thesis within the thematic focus of the project;
- 17.11. doctoral thesis successfully defended according to certain procedures within the thematic focus of the project;
- 17.12. other project results according to the specific nature of scientific research complementary to those listed above.

18. The submitter of the project proposal shall include in Chapter 4 “Project Budget” of Part A of the project proposal information on the eligible costs items of the project. The submitter of the project proposal has the right to include the following in eligible costs:

## 18.1. direct eligible costs:

18.1.1. remuneration of the members of the scientific team involved in the project implementation who work on the basis of the concluded employment contract, including mandatory social insurance contributions of the employer, the allowance for a paid leave, sickness allowance disbursed in proportion to the period of employment in the project. The remuneration shall correspond to the salary of a specialist laid down in the internal laws and regulations of the submitter of the project proposal and must be compatible with the activities to be accomplished in the project and the time period spent for such activities and also the intensity of the activities to be accomplished in the project;

18.1.2. expenses of local and foreign official travels and work (service) trips for the members of the scientific team in accordance with the regulatory framework on the procedures for reimbursement of expenses relating to official travels (for example, participation in conferences, including participation fee, daily allowance, hotel (accommodation) expenses, travel (transport) expenses, expenses related to the purchase of an insurance policy during the official travels). The most cost-effective vehicle shall be used for the purposes of the project. Prices of flight tickets may not exceed the prices of economy class tickets of the relevant flight. costs incurred in connection with entertainment are not eligible costs;

18.1.3. acquisition costs (applicable to the fixed assets purchased within the scope of the project and at the disposal of the submitter of the project proposal and the cooperation partner which are used for research and purchase costs of technical knowledge, patents and other intellectual property right licences (hereinafter – the intangible assets) purchased from external sources) if the transaction is carried out under circumstances of competition and there have been no secret agreements. If the period of use of the fixed assets or intangible assets within the scope of the project does not cover the whole period of their useful life, only such depreciation costs shall be considered eligible costs which conform to the time period of project implementation. The abovementioned costs shall be calculated in proportion to the period and intensity of use of the fixed assets or intangible assets according to the accounting procedures and good accounting practice;

18.1.4. purchase costs and supply costs of the inventory, instruments and materials necessary for the project implementation (for example, physical, biological, chemical and other materials, test animals and storage thereof, reagents, chemicals, laboratory vessels, medicinal products, cooling agents, heat carriers, carrier gases, oils, energy materials and electricity, insofar as it is used for research) which have been accounted in accordance with the laws and regulations governing accounting;

18.1.5. costs of external services (including work according to contracts for work performance), costs of ensuring research services (for example, inspection, testing, certification and other costs in order to ensure such research data which are comparable to the research carried out in other countries), costs of technology right protection, translation and also other service costs necessary for the implementation of the primary activities of the project;

18.1.6. costs of information and publicity measures (including costs of

publishing scientific studies);

18.2. indirect eligible costs which are not directly related to the achievement of the project results, but support and ensure corresponding circumstances for the implementation of the activities to be supported and achievement of results, including the purchase of fixed assets. The indirect eligible costs shall be planned as one item of costs, applying the single rate of indirect costs in the amount of 10 per cent from the sum total of the direct eligible costs referred to in Sub-clause 18.1 of the Regulations. If the submitter of the project proposal attracts a cooperation partner, the indirect eligible costs of the project shall be divided between the submitter of the project proposal and the cooperation partner in proportion to the division of the direct eligible costs of the project between the submitter of the project proposal and the cooperation partner of the project.

## **5. Procedures for the Drawing Up and Submission of the Project Proposal**

19. The submitter of the project proposal shall fill out the project proposal and submit it in the National Information System of Research Activity (hereinafter – the Information System) in accordance with Annex 2 “Methodology for the Drawing Up and Submission of the Project Proposal, Mid-term Scientific Report of the Project, Final Scientific Report of the Project and Financial Statement of the Project” of the Regulations (hereinafter – the submission methodology) within the time limit for the submission of the project proposals specified in the announcement for the open call.

20. In order to ensure timely selection of experts, the submitter of the project proposal (or the principal investigator specified in the project proposal) shall, within three calendar months from the date of announcement of the open call, indicate the following information in Chapter 1 “General Information” of Part A of the project proposal:

- 20.1. the number of the relevant project proposal;
- 20.2. draft summary of the project;
- 20.3. science sector of the project in compliance with the provisions laid down in Clauses 21 and 22 of the Regulations;
- 20.4. seven key words.

21. In accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 49 the submitter of the project proposal shall indicate in Chapter 1 “General Information” of Part A of the project proposal the relevant science sector in which the project will be implemented or if the project is cross-sectoral – the principal science sector in which it is planned to implement the project.

22. In accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 49 the submitter of the project proposal may indicate up to three science sectors in Chapter 1 “General Information” of Part A of the project proposal and the affiliation of the project proposal to any of the science sector groups defined in Clause 6 of the Regulations shall be determined

on the basis of the science sector which has been indicated the first.

23. In order to certify the project proposal, the submitter of the project proposal shall add the certification of the submitter of the project proposal to the Information System. If the submitter of the project proposal has attracted a cooperation partner, Part E “Certification of the Cooperation Partner of the Project” of the project proposal (hereinafter – the certification of the cooperation partner of the project) shall be also uploaded to the Information System. The certification of the submitter of the project proposal and the certification of the cooperation partner of the project shall be drawn up and submitted in accordance with the submission methodology.

## **6. Procedures and Conditions for Inviting the Project Secretary**

24. The Council shall invite project secretaries in accordance with Sub-paragraph 2.6 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725. The number of project secretaries shall be determined by the Council by taking into account the number of the submitted project proposals. The Council shall define the responsibilities of a project secretary in compliance with the provisions laid down in Clause 27 of the Regulations and by taking into account the stage of the open call and the stage of project implementation (administrative evaluation of project proposals, scientific evaluation of project proposals, mid-term scientific reports of the projects, final scientific reports of the projects or preparation of the reports on the scientific usefulness of the projects). For the purpose of organising the scientific evaluation of project proposals, mid-term scientific reports of the projects and final scientific reports of the projects, the Council shall invite project secretaries according to the procedures of an open call.

25. The requirements for a project secretary shall be as follows:

25.1. absence of legal employment, civil legal or service relationships with the relevant submitter of the project proposal, principal investigator or lead participant of the project;

25.2. absence from the composition of scientific teams of the project proposals submitted in the open call

25.3. a master’s degree (preferably – a scientific doctoral degree);

25.4. organisational skills and experience, preferably experience in work with similar research project programmes or international organisation experience;

25.5. proficiency in English is required to a level necessary for day-to-day communication and paperwork in English;

25.6. communication skills, preferably experience in day-to-day work with experts;

25.7. computer literacy, preferably experience in work with the database of European Commission experts and with the Information System and also other science-related databases.

26. The Council shall conclude a work-performance contract with the project secretary selected within the scope of a public procurement, while also the project secretary shall sign the certification on the absence of conflicts of interest and a commitment to respect confidentiality which becomes an integral part of the aforementioned contract.

27. The main responsibilities of the project secretary shall be as follows:

27.1. ensuring the selection and attraction of experts for the expert-examination of the project proposals, scientific evaluation of the mid-term scientific reports of the project and final scientific reports of the project, while gathering and submitting to the Council the information which contains the contact details, specialisation and references of the expert;

27.2. ensuring the conclusion of a contract with experts by completing the form of the expert contract specified by the Council and also performance of the verification of the information provided by the expert in the expert contract;

27.3. ensuring of communication with experts, verification of the individual and consolidated evaluations of project proposals, mid-term scientific reports of the projects and final scientific reports of the projects provided by the experts, whether they have been completed in compliance with the project evaluation methodology;

27.4. participation in the coordination of the meetings of the consultative groups of experts organised by the Council, including ensuring the notification of experts thereof and also chairing and keeping a record of the meetings of the consultative groups of experts;

27.5. gathering of information in cooperation with the Council in relation to the evaluations and expert-examinations of the project proposals, mid-term scientific reports of the projects and final scientific reports of the projects, including the results of scientific evaluations and content analyses of the evaluations submitted by the experts.

28. During the performance of the contract referred to in Clause 26 of the Regulations, the project shall ensure conformity with the requirements of the Council, while avoiding conflicts of interest. The project secretary shall respect confidentiality without disclosing the information acquired to third parties. If the project secretary is in a situation of the conflict of interest with the submitter of the project proposal, cooperation partner or members of the scientific team specified in the project proposal, the Council shall assign the organisation of the evaluation of the relevant project proposal, mid-term scientific report of the project or final scientific report of the project to another project secretary.

## **7. Administrative Evaluation of Project Proposals**

29. Upon expiry of the time limit for the submission of the project proposals, the Council shall ensure the evaluation of the project proposal within a period of two weeks in accordance with the administrative conformity criteria specified in Paragraph 12 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725 by completing Annex 3 “Form for the



Evaluation of Administrative Conformity of the Project Proposal” to the Regulations in compliance with Annex 4 “Methodology for the Evaluation of the Conformity of the Project Proposal with the Administrative Conformity Criteria” to the Regulations (hereinafter – the administrative evaluation methodology).

30. In accordance with Paragraph 13 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725 the Council shall, according to the science sector specified in Chapter 1 “General Information” of Part A of the project proposal and in compliance with the provisions laid down in Clauses 21 and 22 of the Regulations (if other sectors have been specified additionally, according to the science sector which has been indicated the first in the project proposal), hand over the project proposals to the relevant expert commission (hereinafter – the expert commission) for the provision of an opinion of the conformity of the topic of the project with the requirements referred to in Sub-paragraph 12.3 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725, i.e. whether the topic of the project proposal complies with one or several priority directions in science specified in Cabinet Order No. 746 of 13 December 2017, Regarding Priority Directions in Science for 2018–2021.

31. The expert commission shall, by complying with the time period referred to in Clause 29 of the Regulations, provide to the Council an opinion of the conformity of the project proposal with the administrative conformity criterion referred to in Sub-paragraph 12.3 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725 in accordance with the administrative evaluation methodology.

32. If the information specified in Chapter 1 of Part A of the project proposal does not correspond to the competence of the relevant expert commission, it shall inform thereof the Council which shall hand over the project proposal for the provision of an opinion to another expert commission or shall invite an expert from another expert commission for the examination of the specific project proposal. The aforementioned shall be specified in the minutes of the respective meeting of the expert commission. If in relation to the evaluation of the project proposal any of the members of the expert commission is in a situation of the conflict of interest, the latter shall be specified in the minutes of the respective meeting of the expert commission and the relevant member of the expert commission shall not take part in the preparation of the opinion referred to in Clauses 30 and 31 of the Regulations.

33. The Council shall, in accordance with the procedures laid down in Clause 29 of the Regulations, hand over the list of evaluated project proposals and summary of the evaluation to the fundamental and applied research project implementation and supervision commission (hereinafter – the evaluation commission) established by the Council which is acting in accordance with Paragraph 10<sup>1</sup>.2 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725 and the Council shall take a decision in accordance with Paragraph 14 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725.

## **8. Selection of Experts for the Scientific Evaluation of the Project Proposal, Mid-term Scientific Report of the Project and Final Scientific Report of the Project**

34. The project secretary shall perform the selection of at least two experts to ensure the scientific evaluation of each project proposal, mid-term scientific report of the project and final scientific report of the project in accordance with Annex 5 to the Regulations “Guidelines for the Selection of Experts for the Evaluation of the Project Proposal, Mid-term Scientific Report of the Project and Final Scientific Report of the Project” (hereinafter – the guidelines for the selection of experts).

35. The project secretary shall draw up the list of experts for the scientific evaluation of each project proposal, mid-term scientific report of the project and final scientific report of the project. The list shall be drawn up by taking into account the conditions referred to in Paragraph 16 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725, the guidelines for the selection of experts and undesirable experts (if applicable) specified in Clause 9 of the certification of the submitter of the project proposal and also:

35.1. publications and other scientific activities listed in the curriculum vitae of the expert in the database of the European Commission experts or another international database of experts, attesting to the scientific qualification of the expert, previous evaluation competence and work experience in the science sector of the project proposal, and conform to the keywords specified in the project proposal and the information stated in the summary;

35.2. if two or more science sectors are specified in the project proposal, the experts must conform to two or more science sectors or at least one of the experts must have relevant experience in two or more science sectors specified in the project proposal;

35.3. if several experts are equally suitable, taking into account the conditions specified in this Clause, the criteria in the following sequence shall be used for the selection of the most suitable expert – Hirsch index score, the number of publications indexed in Scopus or Web of Science Core Collection databases, previous experience in the evaluation of projects. Such expert shall be attracted for scientific evaluation whose Hirsch index score is equal to or higher than the score of the principal investigator (in compliance with the principles of peer review), with the highest number of publications indexed in the aforementioned databases and most extensive experience in the evaluation of projects.

36. Not less than two experts shall perform the individual evaluation of the relevant project proposal, mid-term scientific report of the project and final scientific report of the project. One of the experts shall develop the consolidated evaluation of the project proposal, mid-term scientific report of the project and final scientific report of the project (hereinafter – the rapporteur).

37. The Council shall conclude with the expert an expert contract which stipulates the rights and obligations of both parties, the amount of remuneration and also responsibility thereof.

38. If during the evaluation of the project proposal, mid-term scientific report of the project and final scientific report of the project the project secretary discovers non-compliance in the actions of the expert with regard to the certification on the absence of conflicts of interest and a commitment to respect confidentiality which has been enclosed to the expert contract, the project secretary shall inform thereof the Council and shall invite a new expert in compliance with the procedures laid down in Clauses 34, 35, 36, and 37 of the Regulations and the guidelines for the selection of experts.

### **9. Scientific Evaluation of the Project Proposal**

39. The expert shall evaluate the project proposal in accordance with the criteria specified in Paragraph 19 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725 and considerations thereof specified in Paragraphs 20, 21, and 22 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725 in compliance with Annex 6 to the Regulations “Methodology for the Evaluation of the Project Proposal, Mid-term Scientific Report of the Project and Final Scientific Report of the Project” (hereinafter – the scientific evaluation methodology), completing and confirming Annex 7 to the Regulations “Form for the Individual and Consolidated Evaluations of the Project Proposal” in the part regarding the individual evaluation in the Information System within three weeks from the date of concluding the expert contract.

40. The rapporteur shall, within a month from the date of receipt of the individual evaluations of both experts for the relevant project proposal, prepare the consolidated evaluation of the project proposal in accordance with Annex 7 to the Regulations “Form for the Individual and Consolidated Evaluations of the Project Proposal” in compliance with the scientific evaluation methodology. Both experts shall confirm the consolidated evaluation of the project proposal (hereinafter – the consolidated evaluation in points) in the Information System and shall submit it to the Council.

41. Taking into account the consolidated evaluation in points provided by experts for the project proposal, the Council shall calculate the consolidated evaluation in percentage for each project proposal by using the following formula:

$$K = \frac{(A \times 50) + (B \times 30) + (C \times 20)}{5}$$

(hereinafter – the consolidated evaluation in percentage) where:

41.1. K – consolidated evaluation of the project proposal in percentage;

41.2. A – evaluation of the criterion referred to in Sub-paragraph 19.1 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725 (the proportion thereof is 50 per cent of the consolidated

evaluation of the project proposal of experts in accordance with Paragraph 24 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725);

41.3. B – evaluation of the criterion referred to in Sub-paragraph 19.2 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725 (the proportion thereof is 30 per cent of the consolidated evaluation of the project proposal of experts in accordance with Paragraph 24 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725);

41.4. C – evaluation of the criterion referred to in Sub-paragraph 19.3 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725 (the proportion thereof is 20 per cent of the consolidated evaluation of the project proposal of experts in accordance with Paragraph 24 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725).

42. The quality threshold in the consolidated evaluation in points of the project proposal shall be at least four points for the criterion specified in Sub-paragraph 19.1 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725, at least three points for the criterion specified in Sub-paragraph 19.2 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725, at least three points for the criterion specified in Sub-paragraph 19.3 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725 and at least ten points for all criteria specified in Paragraph 19 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725. Such project proposals the consolidated evaluation in points whereof does not qualify for the quality threshold referred to in this Clause shall be rejected.

43. Taking into account all consolidated evaluations in percentage of project proposals, the Council shall draw up the list of project proposals in descending order of the consolidated evaluation in percentage of project proposals, while indicating the compliance of each project proposal with the relevant group of science sectors (hereinafter – the list of project proposals).

## **10. Funding of Projects**

44. Not later than within three months from the final date for the submission of the project proposals and in compliance with the provisions laid down in Clauses 41, 42, 43, and 45 of the Regulations, in accordance with Sub-paragraph 25.2 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725, upon evaluating the opinion of the evaluation commission, the Council shall take one of the following decisions:

44.1. decision on funding of the project;

44.2. decision on rejection of the project if the funding of the open call is insufficient to provide funding for the project which reached the quality threshold;

44.3. decision on rejection of the project if the project proposal has not reached the quality threshold.

45. The Council shall allocate the funding of the open call for projects in each group of science sectors to the project proposals which have reached the quality threshold in the list of project proposals in two rounds in the following order:

45.1. in the first round 30 per cent of the funding of the open call is allocated for project implementation to each group of science sectors in equal parts, and funding is allocated to projects in accordance with the consolidated evaluation in

percentage of the project proposal in descending order;

45.2. in the second round 70 per cent of the funding of the open call is allocated for project implementation by adding the share of the funding of the open call remaining in the first round (if any) proportionally to the amount of the requested funding in each group of science sectors in project proposals evaluated above the quality threshold against the total amount of funding requested in project proposals, and allocate funding to projects in accordance with the consolidated evaluation in percentage of the final project proposal in descending order.

46. The project proposals included in the list of project proposals which have qualified for the quality threshold, but no funding of the open call has been allocated thereto, shall be included in the reserve list of project proposals in descending order (hereinafter – the reserve list of project proposals).

47. If the submitter of the project proposal, the project of which has received the funding of the open call, and the principal investigator do not conclude with the Council Annex 8 to the Regulations “Contract on Implementation and Funding of Fundamental and Applied Research Project” (hereinafter – the project contract) within the time period specified in Clause 52 of the Regulations, on the basis of the decision of the Council referred to in Sub-clause 44.1 of the Regulations, the relevant funding shall be allocated to the funding of the open call for the next project from the reserve list of project proposals in descending order according to the consolidated evaluation in percentage of the project proposal in the relevant group of science sectors.

48. If there are several project proposals in the list of projects included in one group of science sectors which are the last, whereto the funding of the open call must be allocated and where to an equal percentage rate has been granted in the consolidated evaluation in percentage, the funding of the open call shall be allocated to the project with the highest score in terms of the first criterion specified in the consolidated evaluation in points of the project proposal (Sub-clause 19.1 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725) (hereinafter – the first criterion). If project proposals obtain the same score in terms of the first criterion, the funding of the open call shall be allocated to the project which in accordance with the information specified in the consolidated evaluation in points of the project proposal has obtained the highest score in terms of the second criterion (Sub-paragraph 19.2 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725) (hereinafter – the second criterion). If in terms of the first criterion and the second criterion project proposals obtain the same score, the Council shall, via electronic mail, invite experts who prepared the relevant consolidated evaluation in points of the project proposal. The experts shall, within one week from the invitation of the Council sent via electronic mail and by mutual agreement, provide to the Council via electronic mail an opinion on the project proposal which out of all project proposals with the same score should receive the funding of the open call, taking into account the scientific quality of each project proposal. Taking into account the opinion provided by experts, in respect of each project proposal the

Council shall take one of the decisions referred to in Clause 44 of the Regulations.

49. If, taking into account Clauses 45, 46, 47, and 48 of the Regulations, the funding of the open call for project implementation has not been spent completely, the Council shall take the decision on the allocation of the unspent funding of the open call to project proposals with the highest score of the consolidated evaluation in percentage included in the reserve list of project proposals without taking into account the division thereof into groups of science sectors.

50. If, taking into account Clause 49 of the Regulations, project proposals from the reserve list of project proposals, without taking into account the division into groups of science sectors, have obtained the same score in the consolidated evaluation in percentage of the project proposals, the funding of the open call shall be allocated to the project which has obtained the highest score in terms of the first criterion in the consolidated evaluation in points. If project proposals in terms of the first criterion in the consolidated evaluation in points have obtained the same score, the funding of the open call shall be allocated to the project which has obtained the highest score in terms of the second criterion in the consolidated evaluation in points. If project proposals in terms of the first criterion and the second criterion in the consolidated evaluation in points have obtained the same score, the Council shall, via electronic mail, invite experts who prepared the relevant consolidated evaluations in points of the project proposal. The mentioned experts shall, within one week from the invitation of the Council sent via electronic mail and by mutual agreement, provide to the Council via electronic mail an opinion on the project proposal which out of all project proposals with the same score should receive the funding of the open call, taking into account the scientific quality of each project proposal. Taking into account the opinion provided by experts, in respect of each project proposal the Council shall take one of the decisions referred to in Clause 44 of the Regulations.

51. In addition to the provisions laid down in Paragraphs 27, 28, and 29 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725, the Council shall, by using the Information System, send the consolidated evaluation in points to each submitter of the project proposal without revealing the identity of experts.

52. On the basis of the decision of the Council in relation to the funding of the project (Sub-clause 44.1 of the Regulations), not later than until 30 December 2021, the Council shall conclude the project contract with the submitter of the project proposal and the principal investigator. The content of the project contract may be revised prior to signing thereof, taking into account the specific nature of the project. On the date of the entry into force of the project contract and within the meaning of the Regulations, the submitter of the project proposal together with the principal investigator shall be recognised as and hereinafter in the Regulations shall be referred to as the project implementer.

53. If the funding of the open call has been allocated to the relevant project in accordance with the decision specified in Sub-clause 44.1 of the Regulations, the submitter of the project proposal and the cooperation partner (if any) shall, in compliance with the provisions laid down in Paragraph 7 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725, conclude a cooperation contract which stipulates financial conditions, the procedures for dispute resolution and non-disclosure of confidential information, rules on the entry into force of the contract, duration of the contract, procedures for the termination thereof, detailed cooperation plan and budget, taking into account the information specified in the project proposal and also the rules on intellectual property rights. The submitter of the project proposal shall submit the cooperation contract to the Council within two calendar weeks from the date of concluding the project contract.

54. The project implementer shall commence the implementation of the project not later than in January 2022. Project costs shall be eligible from 3 January 2022 and until 30 December 2024, inclusive. In case of failure to fulfil the provisions of the project contract and the Regulations, the Council shall request from the project implementer to repay, in whole or in part, the funding allocated to the project in accordance with the terms and conditions of the project contract.

55. On the basis of the provisions laid down in Paragraph 5 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725, it is possible to extend the project implementation period for a period up to one year to consolidate the project results without allocating additional funding and the project implementer shall submit to the Council a reasoned submission regarding the aforementioned and also Annex 10 to the project contract “Plan for the Consolidation of Results”.

### **11. Submission and Evaluation of the Mid-term Scientific Report of the Project and Final Scientific Report of the Project and Financial Statement of the Project**

56. In accordance with Sub-paragraph 33.2 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725 the project implementer shall, within one month from the last date of the 18th month of the project, submit in the Information System the mid-term scientific report of the project, whereas in accordance with Sub-paragraph 33.3 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725 – shall, within one month after the final date of the project implementation, submit in the Information System the final scientific report of the project (Annex 7 to the project contract “Form for the Mid-term / Final Scientific Report of the Project”). If, taking into account the provisions laid down in Clause 55 of the Regulations, the Council has taken the decision to extend the project implementation period, the project implementer shall submit the final scientific report of the project in the Information System within one month after expiry of the extension period of the project. The project implementer shall complete and submit the financial statement of the project in the Information System within one month after the end of the previous financial year.<sup>2</sup> If the project implementation period has been extended, the

financial statement of the project on the remaining amount shall be submitted in the Information System within 1 month after the end of the extended project implementation period. In accordance with Paragraph 45 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725 the financial statement of the project shall be examined within one calendar month from the date of the submission thereof in the Information System. If the financial statement of the project conforms to the requirements of Cabinet Regulation No. 725, the Regulations and the project contract, the Council shall approve the financial statement of the project.

57. The project implementer shall complete the mid-term scientific report of the project and the final scientific report of the project in accordance with Chapter 4 of the methodology.

58. The project secretary shall attract the same experts for the scientific evaluation of the mid-term scientific report of the project and the final scientific report of the project who evaluated the relevant project proposal. If this is not possible, the project secretary shall select experts in accordance with Clauses 34, 35, 36, and 37 of the Regulations and the guidelines for the selection of experts.

59. Prior to the evaluation of the mid-term scientific report of the project and final scientific report of the project, the expert shall sign the certification and conclude the expert contract in accordance with Clause 37 of the Regulations.

60. The expert shall complete and approve the individual evaluation of the mid-term scientific report of the project and the final scientific report of the project in the Information System within three weeks from the date of concluding the expert contract. If necessary, the expert may request the Council to extend the time period for the performance of the individual evaluation by one week.

61. The rapporteur shall, within one week from the date of approval of the individual evaluations of both experts of the mid-term scientific report of the project or the final scientific report of the project, complete the consolidated evaluation in points of the mid-term scientific report of the project and final scientific report of the project (Annex 9 to the Regulations “Form for the Evaluation of the Mid-term / Final Scientific Report of the Project”) by providing the evaluation in accordance with Paragraphs 34, 35, and 36 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725. Both experts shall approve the consolidated evaluation of the mid-term scientific report of the project and final scientific report of the project in the Information System.

62. If during the evaluation of the mid-term scientific report of the project and final scientific report of the project the project secretary discovers non-compliance in the actions of the expert with regard to the certification, the project secretary shall inform thereof the Council and the Council shall invite a new expert in accordance with the Regulations.



63. After receipt of the consolidated evaluation of the mid-term scientific report of the project and the final scientific report of the project, the Council shall act in accordance with Paragraphs 35 and 36 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725. If the Council discovers that the funding allocated for the project implementation has not been used in accordance with the provisions laid down in the contract, the Council shall act in accordance with Paragraphs 48 and 50 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725.

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<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to Section 4 of the law On Budget and Financial Management, a financial year shall begin on 1 January and end on 31 December.

## **12. Procedures by which the Council Prepares Reports on the Scientific Usefulness of the Projects**

64. On the basis of the mid-term scientific and final scientific reports of the projects, the Council shall prepare a report on the scientific usefulness of the projects (hereinafter – the report of the Council) in accordance with Paragraph 37 of Cabinet Regulation No. 725 which shall include information on:

64.1. the mid-term scientific reports of the projects and final scientific reports of the projects;

64.2. the use of funding of the open call allocated to the projects and involvement of the scientific staff;

64.3. numeric indicators of the results achieved in the projects;

64.4. sustainability monitoring of the project results, including contribution to the development of priority directions in science.

65. In addition to the provisions laid down in Clause 64 of the Regulations, the Council shall gather information on the submission and evaluation process of the project proposal, mid-term scientific report of the projects and final scientific report of the projects and the results thereof.

## **13. Information and Publicity Requirements**

66. In the case of the funding of the project, the project implementer shall, in accordance with the procedures and within the time periods laid down in the project contract, ensure the provision of information to the Council which ensures informing of the communication society concerning the implementation of projects funded within the scope of the open call. The Council shall gather the aforementioned information and ensure the availability of such information to the public.

67. In publications and activities related to the distribution and publicity of the project results (except for conference theses up to one page) which are financed from the funding allocated to the project, the project implementer shall ensure information on the funding source, indicating the open call and project titles and also the number of the relevant project and fundamental and applied research logo (available on the website of the Council under section About us – Graphic signs). If the project implementer fails to specify the aforementioned information, the relevant costs related to the distribution and publicity of the project results may not be regarded as eligible costs in accordance with the procedures laid down in Sub-clause 18.1.6 of the Regulations and may not be associated with the results of the relevant project. “Guidelines for Publishing Activities Implemented within the Scope of FARP and SRP Projects” (approved by Order No. 13 of 14 April 2021 of the Council) are available at: [https://lzp.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/publicesanas\\_vadlinijas.pdf](https://lzp.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/publicesanas_vadlinijas.pdf).

68. The project implementer undertakes to publish the project information (including information on the project implementation, scientific team, activities and the results achieved) on the website of the project implementer and undertakes to ensure the maintaining and supplementing of such information according to the project results achieved. The project implementer shall ensure at least two informative activities for the publicity of the project after the mid-term stage of the project implementation and conclusion thereof.

69. The project implementer shall cooperate with the Council and take part in public awareness and communication activities organised by the Council, including the development of materials on projects, creation of content and joint seminars on the progress of the project implementation.

## 14. Closing Provisions

70. Information on project proposals funded in the open call shall be published by the Council on the website [www.lzp.gov.lv](http://www.lzp.gov.lv) and shall be uploaded in the Information System.

71. Questions related to the preparation of a project proposal and submission thereof shall be sent to the following electronic mail address: [flpp@lzp.gov.lv](mailto:flpp@lzp.gov.lv). Answers to the questions asked by the submitter of the project proposal shall be sent by the Council electronically, whereas frequently asked questions and answers shall be published on the website of the Council: [www.lzp.gov.lv](http://www.lzp.gov.lv). Other questions related to the open call shall be sent to the aforementioned electronic mail address.

Annexes:

1. Annex 1 “Project Proposal”;
2. Annex 2 “Methodology for the Drawing Up and Submission of the Project Proposal, Mid-term Scientific Report of the Project, Final Scientific Report of the Project and Financial Statement of the Project”;
3. Annex 3 “Form for the Evaluation of Administrative Conformity of the Project Proposal”;
4. Annex 4 “Methodology for the Evaluation of the Conformity of the Project Proposal with the Administrative Conformity Criteria”;
5. Annex 5 “Guidelines for the Selection of Experts for the Evaluation of the Project Proposal, Mid-term Scientific Report of the Project and Final Scientific Report of the Project”;
6. Annex 6 “Methodology for the Evaluation of the Project Proposal, Mid-term Scientific Report of the Project and Final Scientific Report of the Project”;
7. Annex 7 “Form for the Individual / Consolidated Evaluation of the Project Proposal”;
8. Annex 8 “Contract on Implementation and Funding of Fundamental and Applied Research Project” (hereinafter – the Contract) with annexes thereto:
  - Annex 1 to the Contract “Project Proposal”;
  - Annex 2 to the Contract “Calculation of the Value of Project Results in Percentage from the Total Costs of the Project”;

Annex 3 to the Contract “Report on the Impact of the Project”;

Annex 4 to the Contract “Fundamental and Applied Research Project Changes in the Budget of the Project (up to 20 %)”;

Annex 5 to the Contract “Fundamental and Applied Research Project Changes in the Scientific Team of the Project (above 50 %)”;

Annex 6 to the Contract “Agreement on Amendments to the Budget of the Project of the Fundamental and Applied Research Project (above 20 %)”;

Annex 7 to the Contract “Form for the Mid-term / Final Scientific Report of the Project”;

Annex 8 to the Contract “Description of Results”;

Annex 9 to the Contract “Deed of Acceptance and Transfer Regarding the Fulfilment of the Fundamental and Applied Research Project Tasks”;

Annex 10 to the Contract “Plan for the Consolidation of Results”;

Annex 11 to the Contract “List of the Scientific Team”.

9. Annex 9 “Form for the Evaluation of the Mid-term / Final Scientific Report of the Project”.

Coordinated with the Ministry of Education and Science on 30 April 2021 (letter reference No. 4-28e/21/1658) and with the Fundamental and Applied Research Project Implementation and Supervision Commission (minutes No. 8 of the meeting of 12 April 2021 of the Fundamental and Applied Research Project Implementation and Supervision Commission).

Acting Director of the Latvian Council of Science

D. Laipniece