



CHAIRMAN OF THE RESEARCH COUNCIL OF LITHUANIA

**ORDER
ON THE APPROVAL OF THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURE OF THE
EXPERT EVALUATION OF PROJECTS AND THEIR REPORTS**

January 29, 2018, V-43
Vilnius

Following the Regulation of the Research Council of Lithuania approved by the Seimas (Lithuanian Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania on June 22, 2017 Resolution XIII-499 'On the Approval of the Regulations of the Research Council of Lithuania', Clause 23.14, and having assessed the proposals delivered in the protocol decision of the Committee on Humanities and Social Sciences of November 13, 2017 HSM-P-28 08 and the Committee on Natural and Technical Sciences of November 13, 2017 GTM-P-28 of the Research Council of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the Council):

1. I a p p r o v e the Description of the Procedure of the Expert Evaluation of the Projects and their Reports attached.
2. I d e c l a r e void the Resolution of the Research Council of Lithuania of April 3, 2017 VIII-6 'On Approval of the Description of the Procedure of the Expert Evaluation of Projects and their Reports'.

Chairman of the Council

Dainius H. Pauža

APPROVED BY
Chairman of the Research Council of
Lithuania
Order of January 29, 2018, V-43

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURE OF THE EXPERT EVALUATION OF THE PROJECTS AND THEIR REPORTS

CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Description of the Procedure of the Expert Evaluation of the Projects and their Reports (hereinafter referred to as the Description) determines the procedure for organising the work of the experts of the Research Council of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the Council) and their commissions, the principles of expert evaluation of the proposals for research funding and dissemination projects (hereinafter referred to as the proposals) and scientific or dissemination reports, and the procedure for the adoption of the results of such an evaluation. The terms used in the Description correspond to the General Rules of the Research Council of Lithuania for the Competitive Funding of Research and Dissemination projects. The provisions of the Description apply to the activities supported by the Council, as provided for in the legislation governing the administration of these areas and to the extent not inconsistent with them.

2. Proposals and reports are evaluated by an expert commission that organises its work in accordance with the provisions of Chapter III of the Description. An expert evaluation of the reports can also be carried out by individual experts. An expert commission may use an additional expert to evaluate the specific proposal or report.

3. Expert commissions are set up whilst individual and additional experts are appointed in accordance with the procedure established by the General Rules of Expert Activities (hereinafter referred to as the Rules) approved by the Council.

4. When setting up an expert commission in accordance with the general requirements established in the Rules, it is taken into account that:

4.1. the expert commission must consist of at least four members (including its head);

4.2. one expert can individually evaluate up to 20 proposals (reports);

4.3. a proposal must be individually evaluated by:

4.3.1. at least one expert, if the project's estimated value does not exceed EUR 10,000;

4.3.2. at least two experts, if the project's estimated value exceeds EUR 10,000 but does not exceed EUR 100,000

4.3.3. at least three experts, if the project's estimated value exceeds EUR 100,000 but does not exceed EUR 500,000;

4.3.4. at least four experts, if the project's estimated value exceeds EUR 500,000;

4.4 a report must be individually evaluated by:

4.4.1. at least two experts, at least one of them not having individually evaluated the proposal (when the scientific report is assessed) for the project which report is being evaluated;

4.4.2. at least one expert (when evaluating the dissemination report).

4.5. During additional period of time allocated by the decision of the Chairman of the Council, the submitted output which have been planned within the scope of the project (hereinafter referred of the planned output) should be evaluated at least by one expert (usually one of individual experts who have evaluated final scientific (dissemination) report).

5. The results of the expert evaluation of proposals or reports are submitted to:

5.1. the Committee on Humanities and Social Sciences or the Committee on Natural and Technical Sciences (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) of the Council, if it has set up an expert commission (appointed individual experts);

5.2. the executive group and the Committee (together with the proposals of the executive group), if the executive group coordinates the implementation of the activities supported by the Council and the Committee has set up an expert commission (appointed individual experts);

5.3. the Chairman of the Council, if he has set up an expert commission.

CHAPTER II

PRINCIPLES FOR THE EXPERT EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS AND REPORTS

6. Proposals, reports, and planned output are evaluated according to expert evaluation forms approved by the Chairman of the Council. These forms establish the specific evaluation criteria, taking into account the area of activities supported by the Council, the nature of the call for proposals, and the type of scientific (dissemination) report (annual or interim and final). When evaluating the proposals, the evaluation involves the idea of the project and its implementation plan, the competence of the project implementers, their readiness to achieve the objectives of the project and the importance and dissemination of the results of the project, whilst the evaluation of the reports and planned output involves the coherence of the research performed and the results obtained with the plans and their value.

7. If provided by other legislation or indicated in the call for proposals an expert evaluation of proposals may be made in two-steps, i.e. first it aims to evaluate whether the projects are in line with the topic of the call.

8. After evaluating the proposals according to all criteria specified in the expert evaluation form, the expert commission categorises the projects into eligible and non-eligible for funding.

9. The expert commission arranges projects selected for funding in order of priority. More than one order of priority for projects selected for funded may be created if indicated in the task assigned to the expert commission.

10. The evaluation of proposals in the expert commission is considered as completed when:

10.1. decisions on all proposals assigned for the evaluation of the commission are made;

10.2. projects are categorised as eligible and non-eligible for funding;

10.3. summary evaluations of all the proposals are provided;

10.4. order(s) of priority for projects selected for funding is (are) created;

10.5. the Committee or the Chairman of the Council, who has set up the expert commission, has confirmed the results of the work performed.

11. The evaluation of reports in the expert commission is considered as completed when:

11.1. decisions on all reports assigned for the evaluation of the commission are made;

11.2. summary evaluations of all reports are provided;

11.3. projects whose reports were interim (annual) are divided into those whose implementation is proposed to be continued and those whose implementation is proposed to be terminated, whilst projects whose reports were final are divided into implemented, unimplemented, or those who were proposed to set additional period of time for the submission of the planned output;

11.4. the Committee or the Chairman of the Council, who has set up the expert commission, has confirmed the results of the work performed.

12. An individual expert is considered to have completed the work when he or she provides an evaluation of the report according to the expert evaluation form of the report specified in Clause 6 of the Description. An individual expert appointed to prepare a summary evaluation of the report is considered to have completed the work when the actions specified in Clauses 11.2-11.4 of the Description are performed. An individual expert who has performed the evaluation of planned output is considered to have completed the work when he or she provides the evaluation according to the expert evaluation form of the output specified in Clause 6 of the Description and when the Committee approves the results of the work performed.

13. An additional expert is considered to have completed the work when he or she provides an evaluation of the proposal or report according to the expert evaluation form specified in Clause

6 of the Description.

CHAPTER III WORKING PROCEDURE OF THE EXPERT COMMISSION

14. The work of the expert commission consists of an individual and a group evaluation of proposals or reports. An individual expert evaluation is performed by one expert without consulting the other members of the expert commission. During group evaluation, the experts discuss the results of the individual evaluation and seek a general opinion on the evaluation of each proposal or report.

15. The head of the expert commission makes the decisions on the organisation of the work of the commission and is responsible for the timing and the quality of the assigned work.

16. The members of the expert commission are individually familiarised with the task and the evaluation procedure prior to the start of the individual evaluation, and the composition of the expert commission is disclosed to its members only after the start of the group evaluation.

17. Proposals or reports for individual evaluation are distributed by the head of the expert commission in order to avoid the circumstances specified in the Rules that could lead to an expert's conflict of interest. The head of expert commission does not perform individual evaluations.

18. A member of the expert commission shall refuse to evaluate the proposal or the report, if he or she sees a potential conflict of interest. Such a member of the expert commission does not participate in the meeting of the expert commission when discussing the proposal or the report; he or she leaves the premises where the meeting takes place indicating the cause of the conflict of interest.

19. Individually evaluating proposals and reports experts shall submit their conclusions only after careful consideration of the material submitted for evaluation. Evaluations must be based on arguments; the score or the indication of the compliance to the criterion made by the expert must be consistent and with a detailed and clear evaluation comment.

20. Experts provide evaluations in the electronic system in accordance with the expert evaluation form of the proposal or report. Scores or compliance to the criterion and evaluation comments indicated in the individual evaluation of the proposal or the report are submitted for group evaluation.

21. Each member of the expert commission shall be granted access to all proposals or reports evaluated by the commission. The head of the commission shall have the opportunity to familiarise him or her with the individual evaluations being performed and completed.

22. In case the member of the expert commission does not submit the individual evaluation due to unforeseen circumstances, the head of the expert commission shall appoint another member of the commission for an individual evaluation.

23. In order to prepare summary evaluations of proposals or reports and to set up a project order of priority (in the evaluation of proposals), the material submitted for evaluation and its individual evaluations are discussed at the meeting of the expert commission. A meeting is considered legitimate if at least half of the expert commission members and the head of the expert commission take part in it. The aim is to have at least one of the experts who have individually evaluated the proposal or report attend the meeting. At the beginning of the meeting, the principles of expert evaluation and the procedure of group evaluation of proposals or reports assigned to the commission are discussed. Then the evaluation of each proposal or report is examined, the arguments of the individual evaluation experts and the opinions of other members of the commission are heard. If the proposal or report is evaluated by an additional expert who is not normally present at the meeting, the meeting is familiarised with his evaluation submitted. A common opinion is aimed for which may fundamentally differ from the opinions of the experts who have evaluated the proposal or report individually. On failing to reach a common opinion the question shall be put to a vote. A decision shall be deemed adopted if more than half of the members of the expert commission participating in the meeting voted for its adoption. The votes

of the members of the expert commission who abstained from the decision are allocated to those who voted against. The meetings of the expert commission are closed. Council members delegated by the Committee, employees of the Research Foundation of the Council administering the relevant area of activities supported by the Council as well as other persons related to the implementation of the relevant area of activities supported by the Council may attend the meetings as observers.

24. The expert commission may hold meetings electronically, i.e. questions of the meeting can be submitted, and the members of the expert commission can send their opinions via e-mail. These meetings are legitimate if at least 2/3 of all members of the expert commission have expressed their opinion within a period (not less than one working day) appointed by the head of the expert commission. On failing to reach a common opinion, the decision shall be deemed adopted if more than half of the members of the expert commission participating in the meeting voted for its adoption. The votes of the members of the expert commission who abstained from the decision are allocated to those who voted against.

25. Having regard to the evaluations of each proposal or report adopted by the expert commission, one of the experts who participated in the meeting, on the instructions of the head of the commission, prepares an initial summary evaluation, filling in the electronic system with the same individual evaluation form as that of the proposal or report. Each member of the commission shall have an opportunity to familiarise them with all preliminary summary evaluations. The head of the expert commission is responsible for ensuring that the initial summary evaluation is the one agreed upon at the meeting of the expert commission. If the report was evaluated by individual experts, initial summary evaluation shall be prepared by one of them who is assigned by the Committee or the Chairman of the Council. When preparing a summary evaluation the expert may consult another expert who has individually evaluated the report.

26. Each principal investigator has access to the initial summary evaluation of the proposal, with the exception of the scores based on the evaluation criteria and the final conclusion. The principal investigator shall indicate the factual errors of the evaluation of the proposal in the electronic system only if he or she considers they are present (adjustment, completion or amendment of the proposal according to expert comments is not allowed) within three working days after sending the information on such an opportunity to his or her email indicated in the application. If the principal investigator does not indicate the factual errors of the evaluation of the proposal, the summary evaluation is not changed and is considered final. If the principal investigator indicates factual errors of the evaluation of the proposal, the expert commission shall consider them and prepare a final summary evaluation in accordance with the procedure described in Clause 25 of the Description. The head of the expert commission is responsible for ensuring that the factual errors of the evaluation of the proposal indicated by the principal investigators are duly taken into account in the final summary evaluations (if any).

27. According to the final summary evaluations of proposals accepted at the meeting of the expert commission and the total evaluations of each proposal established therein, the project order(s) is created. Specific provisions for the creation of an order of priority are indicated on the expert evaluation forms or in the order of the Chairman of the Council on the approval of the expert evaluation form if several proposals are evaluated to be the same.

28. Each principal investigator has access to the initial summary evaluation of the report. The principal investigator may provide the explanation on the evaluation of the report or the additional information asked by the experts in the electronic system, within three working days after sending the information on such an opportunity to his or her email indicated in the agreement. If a report is proposed for correction, a different deadline may be set for the submission of explanations or the corrected report. If the principal investigator does not submit the explanations and/or additional material, the summary evaluation is not changed and is considered final. If the principal investigator submits the explanations and/or additional material, the expert commission shall consider them and prepare a final summary evaluation in accordance with the procedure described in Clause 25 of the Description. If the report was evaluated by individual experts, the

expert who has performed the initial summary evaluation reviews the explanations and submitted additional material, and prepares the final summary evaluation. While preparing it, the expert may consult another expert who has individually evaluated the report. The head of the expert commission or individual expert who has performed the summary evaluation is responsible for ensuring that the explanation(s) and additional material provided by the principal investigators are duly taken into account in the final summary evaluations.

29. The head of the expert commission assesses the work of the members of the commission, signs the minutes of the meetings and presents the results of the expert evaluation in accordance with the provisions of Clause 5 of the Description. If the report was evaluated by individual experts, the expert who prepared the summary evaluation provides the expert evaluation results according to the provisions of Clause 5 of the Description. The remuneration for the expert evaluation to each member of the commission (individual, additional experts) is calculated according to the procedure on the payment of experts approved by the Chairman of the Council.

30. Members of the collegial body delegated by the committee who participated as observers at the meeting of the expert commission shall submit to the Committee a written report on the work of the expert commission, specifying how the approved expert evaluation regulations and the rules of procedure of the expert commission were followed, how it was aimed to avoid conflicts of interest (if any), how common opinion on the evaluation of the proposal or report was reached, whether the factual evaluation errors or explanations provided by the principal investigator regarding the evaluation of the report and/or additional material (if any) were taken into account and, if necessary, submit proposals regarding the improvement of the expert evaluation procedure. The Committee may, having regard to the report submitted, request the expert commission to improve or re-perform the works referred to in Clauses 10 or 11 of the Description.

CHAPTER IV FINAL PROVISIONS

31. When the Chairman of the Council approves the results of the call for proposals, each principal investigator can make them familiar with the final summary evaluation of the proposal.

32. When the Chairman of the Council makes the decision on the evaluation of the reports, each principal investigator can make them familiar with the final summary evaluation of the report.

33. If the principal investigator and the implementing institution disagree with the decision of the Chairman of the Council based on the expert evaluation of the proposal or report, they can submit an appeal according to the bases, procedures and terms specified in the General Rules of the Research Council of Lithuania for the Competitive Funding of Research and Dissemination projects.
