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If a whole or part of a paragraph has been amended, the date of the amending regulation appears in square brackets at the end of the paragraph. If a whole paragraph or sub-paragraph has been deleted, the date of the deletion appears in square brackets beside the deleted paragraph or sub-paragraph.

Republic of Latvia

Cabinet

Regulation No. 333

Adopted 2 June 2020

**Regulations Regarding the Implementation of the Activity “Baltic Research Programme” and the Activity “Grants” of the Programme “Research and Education” of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the Period 2014-2021**

*Issued pursuant to*

*Section 15, Clause 12 of the Law on the Management of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the Period 2014-2021*

**I. General Provisions**

1. The Regulation prescribes the following in relation to the activity “Baltic Research Programme” and the activity “Grants” of the programme “Research and Education” of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the Period 2014–2021 (hereinafter – the Programme):

1.1. the objective, the available financing, and the results to be achieved;

1.2. the Programme Operator, the agency and its obligations;

1.3. the requirements for the project applicant and project partners;

1.4. the project application assessment criteria;

1.5. the conditions for the activities to be supported activities and for the eligibility of costs;

1.6. the conditions for the unilateral notice of termination of a project agreement;

1.7. the procedures for the implementation of activities of the bilateral cooperation fund.

2. The following terms are used in the Regulation:

2.1. project of non-economic nature – a project which is a project application approved in accordance with the procedures laid down in this Regulation and which corresponds to the following criteria:

2.1.1. the project is implemented by a research organisation in the activity “Baltic Research Programme” (hereinafter – the Baltic Research Programme) or the project is implemented by a higher education institution of Latvia in the activity “Grants” (hereinafter – the Grant Programme);

2.1.2. the activities to be supported and referred to in Paragraph 21 or 23 of this Regulation are implemented in the project, and they are of non-economic nature;

2.2. open access is free of charge, open, immediate, constant, random online access without any restrictions to full-text publicly funded results of scientific studies that enables a user to process them in an automated manner (read, download, copy, disseminate, print, search, and quote or use in any other lawful way) through freely available applications:

2.2.1. pending open access – a type of open access which envisages that the result of a scientific study that has not been published in an open access format will be available in an open access format after an embargo period (a period during which a publication is stored in a repository as “closed”, namely, the full text of the publication is not available openly);

2.2.2. gold open access – a type of open access which envisages that the final version of results of a scientific study is immediately and freely available publicly to any Internet user free of charge. Results of a scientific study in gold open access may be published in open access journals in a monograph series retaining the copyright to the work, or in hybrid journals selecting a random access option;

2.3. activity of non-economic nature – operating activity of a research organisation which does not fall within the scope of the activity specified in Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and which can manifest itself as follows:

2.3.1. education activities in order to achieve an increase in the number and qualification of the staff;

2.3.2. independent research and development in order to obtain more knowledge and better understanding, including joint research and development by involvement of the research organisation in efficient cooperation;

2.3.3. distribution of research results without exclusivity and discrimination, including using teaching, free access data bases, open publications, or open source software;

2.3.4. activities related to knowledge and technology transfer, if:

2.3.4.1. the activities related to knowledge and technology transfer are performed by a division of the research organisation or a subsidiary of the research organisation (such commercial company in which the participation share of the parent undertaking exceeds 50 per cent or in which the parent undertaking has the majority of votes and which conforms to the definition of the research organisation referred to in Sub-paragraph 2.8 of this Regulation), the research organisation together with other research organisations or the research organisation with third parties, concluding agreements regarding certain services in an open call for proposals;

2.3.4.2. any profit from such activity is reinvested in operating activities of the research organisation;

2.4. effective cooperation – cooperation which corresponds to the definition laid down in Article 2(90) of Commission Regulation 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 (hereinafter – Commission Regulation No 651/2014);

2.5. fundamental research – a research category corresponding to Article 2(84) of Commission Regulation No 651/2014;

2.6. quality threshold – the minimum number of points required for each quality assessment criterion referred to in Annexes 1 and 2 to this Regulation together which is indicated in the evaluation of the project application;

2.7. research data – documents in digital form, except for scientific publications, which have been collected or created in the research process and used as evidence, or considered necessary in order to validate the findings and conclusions resulting from the research;

2.8. research organisation – an entity governed by public or private law regardless of its legal status or type of funding the principal objective of which is to carry out fundamental or industrial research or experimental development independently or to widely disseminate the results of such activities in the form of training, publications, or knowledge transfer. If such research organisation performs an economic activity, the funding, costs, and revenues of this economic activity should be accounted for separately. Merchants whose influence on such entity can be crucial, for example, shareholders or stockholders, may not have an access privilege in respect of the research results created thereby;

2.9. Donor Programme partners – the Research Council of Norway, the Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills, and the National Agency for International Education Affairs in Liechtenstein;

2.10. industrial research – a research category which corresponds to the definition laid down in Article 2(85) of Commission Regulation No 651/2014.

[*25 January 2022*]

3. The objective of the Programme is to promote the development of thorough research-based knowledge by improving the following:

3.1. in the Baltic Research Programme – research performance of the Baltic States at an international level through cooperation of research organisations of Latvia, donor countries, Estonia, and Lithuania in the field of fundamental research and industrial research;

3.2. in the Grant Programme – skills and competences of doctoral students, students of master’s degree, bachelor’s degree and vocational study programmes (hereinafter jointly – the students) of higher education institutions, academic and administrative staff of higher education institutions (hereinafter – the academic and administrative staff) in the field of higher education and research by promoting bilateral cooperation and exchange in the field of higher education between higher education institutions of Latvia and donor countries.

4. The results and outcomes of the Programme to be achieved, their indicators, sources of inspection, and frequency of reporting shall be indicated in Annex 3 to this Regulation.

5. The Programme shall be implemented in the form of an open call for proposals. A project application in the Baltic Research Programme shall correspond to at least one of the sub-themes of the open call for proposals indicated in Annex 4 to this Regulation.

6. The project applicant shall be the following:

6.1. in the Baltic Research Programme – a scientific institution registered in Latvia which qualifies for the status of a research organisation;

6.2. in the Grant Programme – a higher education institution of Latvia.

7. A project partner:

7.1. shall determine the maximum financing available for a project in the Baltic Research Programme from the total financing available for the Baltic Research Programme according to the number of the following mandatory project partners:

7.1.1. if there are at least two mandatory project partners – one research organisation registered in Estonia or Lithuania and one research organisation registered in a donor country, then the amount of the project shall be from EUR 300 000 to 800 000;

7.1.2. if there are three mandatory project partners – one research organisation registered in Estonia, one research organisation registered in Lithuania, and one research organisation registered in a donor country, then the amount of the project shall be from EUR 300 000 to 1 000 000;

7.2. an additional optional project partner in the Baltic Research Programme:

7.2.1. a research organisation registered in Latvia;

7.2.2. a third country research organisation which is registered outside donor countries and Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the principal objective of which is to carry out fundamental research, industrial research, or experimental development independently or to widely disseminate the results thereof in the form of training, publication, or knowledge transfer. The third country research organisation shall not receive financing from the total financing available for the Baltic Research Programme;

7.3. the financing available for a project in the Grant Programme from the total financing available for the Grant Programme shall be from EUR 10 000 to EUR 200 000 if at least one mandatory project partner – a higher education institution established in a donor country – is involved.

8. The Programme Operator shall be the Ministry of Education and Science.

9. The State Education Development Agency shall perform the functions of the agency in the Grant Programme and until 31 December 2021 – in the Baltic Research Programme. Starting from 1 January 2022, the functions of the agency in the Baltic Research Programme shall be performed by the Latvian Council of Science.

[*29 June 2021*]

10. The agency shall:

10.1. develop regulations regarding selection of project applications for the Baltic Research Programme and the Grant Programme (including a condition therein that a project application form shall be prepared and completed in the English language, annexes to the project application shall be added in the Latvian or English language, a description of the project (containing not more than 3200 characters) indicating the objective of the project, the principal activities, and the results to be achieved, and a certification of the project applicant shall be in the Latvian language) which shall be coordinated with the Programme Operator and the managing authority prior to approval;

10.2. announce selections of project applications for the Baltic Research Programme and the Grant Programme;

10.3. establish a commission for the assessment of project applications for the Grant Programme;

10.4. take a decision to approve, conditionally approve, or reject a project application for the Baltic Research Programme or the Grant Programme, control the fulfilment of the condition, and notify the project applicant of its fulfilment;

10.5. enter into a project agreement for the Baltic Research Programme and the Grant Programme with the beneficiary of co-financing;

10.6. supervise and control implementation of a project for the Baltic Research Programme and the Grant Programme, including perform inspections on sites where such project is implemented;

10.7. update and implement a communication plan for the Baltic Research Programme and the Grant Programme in cooperation with the Programme Operator.

11. The total financing available for the Programme amounts to EUR 10 000 000 from which the co-financing from the State budget accounts for 15 per cent or EUR 1 500 000 and the co-financing from the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism accounts for 85 per cent or EUR 8 500 000.

12. The distribution of the total financing available for the Programme shall be as follows:

12.1. the total financing available for the Baltic Research Programme amounts to EUR 8 541 272 from which the co-financing from the State budget accounts for 15 per cent or EUR 1 281 191 and the co-financing from the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism accounts for 85 per cent or EUR 7 260 081;

12.2. the total financing available for the Grant Programme amounts to EUR 582 866 from which the co-financing from the State budget accounts for 15 per cent or EUR 87 430 and the co-financing from the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism accounts for 85 per cent or EUR 495 436;

12.3. the total financing available for administrative expenditure of the Programme amounts to EUR 875 862 from which the co-financing from the State budget accounts for 15 per cent or EUR 131 379 and the co-financing from the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism accounts for 85 per cent or EUR 744 483.

[*29 June 2021 / The new wording of Sub-paragraphs 12.1 and 12.2 shall come into force on 14 September 2021. See Paragraph 36 and the official publication No. 2021/183.DA3*]

13. The agency shall, within one month from the day of entering into a project agreement, disburse an advance to the beneficiary of co-financing which may not exceed the following:

13.1. in the Baltic Research Programme – 40 per cent of the total eligible costs of the project;

13.2. in the Grant Programme:

13.2.1. 80 per cent of the total eligible costs of the project if the duration of the project is 12 months;

13.2.2. 40 per cent of the total eligible costs of the project if the duration of the project is 24 or 30 months.

14. The Programme committee shall decide on the issues related to the implementation of the Baltic Research Programme, for example, approval of the project application assessment criteria, approval of the guidelines for project applicants and evaluators of project applications, making of proposals for approval, conditional approval, or rejection of project applications. The Programme committee shall consist of eight researchers – two from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Norway. Operation of the Programme committee shall be determined by the regulations of the Programme committee which shall be prepared by the Programme Operator and approved by the Programme committee.

14.1If the increase in the eligible financing is available for the Baltic Research Programme, such financing shall be granted to the project applicant of the open call for proposals of the Baltic Research Programme whose project application has been rejected within the abovementioned call for proposals due to insufficient financing and has been included in the reserve list of project applications established by the Programme committee.

[*29 June 2021 / Paragraph shall come into force on 14 September 2021. See Paragraph 36 and the official publication No. 2021/183.DA3*]

15. The cooperation committee chaired by a representative of the Programme Operator shall examine and decide on the issues related to the implementation of the Grant Programme, for example, approval of the assessment criteria, coordination of the annual report, verification of progress towards results, objectives, outcomes, and strengthening of a bilateral relationship. Operation of the cooperation committee shall be determined by the regulations of the cooperation committee which shall be prepared by the Programme Operator, coordinated with the Donor Programme partner, and approved by the Minister for Education and Science.

16. The project applicant and the project partner shall implement a project of non-economic nature within the Baltic Research Programme. The project applicant and the project partner shall implement a project for which aid from the public resources cannot be qualified as aid for commercial activity within the Grant Programme.

16.1If unlawful aid for commercial activity is established (namely, a project does not correspond to Paragraph 16 of this Regulation), the beneficiary of co-financing has an obligation to repay the unlawful aid for commercial activity received by the beneficiary of co-financing within the project from the resources which are free from aid for commercial activity in accordance with the conditions of Chapters IV and V of the Law on Control of Aid for Commercial Activity.

[*25 January 2022*]

17. A project application shall be evaluated by the following:

17.1. in the Baltic Research Programme – the Programme committee which also performs the functions of the commission for the evaluation of project applications according to the project application assessment criteria specified in Annex 1 to this Regulation by inviting external experts;

17.2. in the Grant Programme – the commission for the evaluation of project applications according to the project application assessment criteria specified in Annex 2 to this Regulation by inviting external experts.

18. The maximum period for the eligibility of project costs shall expire on 30 April 2024.

19. A project applicant in the Baltic Research Programme shall ensure dissemination of research results and research data without exclusivity and discrimination, including using teaching, free access databases, open publications, or open source software.

**II. Supported Activities of the Project and Conditions for the Eligibility of Costs of the Programme and the Project, and Conditions for the Unilateral Termination of the Project Agreement**

20. The following administrative costs of the Programme Operator and the agency shall be eligible within the scope of the Programme:

20.1. the direct eligible costs which are directly related to ensuring administration of the Programme, including costs related to the staff remuneration;

20.2. the indirect eligible costs, including costs related to the lease of premises, public utilities, purchase of stationery, equipment, and software, and other costs which are indirectly related to the administration of preparation and implementation of the Programme and calculated as a uniform rate in the amount of 10 per cent of the direct eligible costs related to the staff remuneration.

21. Only fundamental and industrial research activities of non-economic nature may be supported in projects within the scope of the Baltic Research Programme:

21.1. research which includes one of the following categories – fundamental research or industrial research;

21.2. knowledge and technology transfer (in conformity with Sub-paragraph 2.3.4 of this Regulation) which is implemented in conformity with one of the following conditions:

21.2.1. an intellectual property licensing contract is entered into with he licensee, and the amount of remuneration is specified in an open, transparent, and non-discriminating competition-based tender procedure;

21.2.2. the beneficiary receives a remuneration for all economic advantages transferred to the licensee which is equivalent to the market price for intellectual property rights arising from the activity performed within the scope of the project of the research organisation. If it is not possible to determine a market price, proof of the market price is a public auction of the intellectual property in accordance with the laws and regulations regarding organisation of auctions or documented negotiated procedure between the research organisation – the licensor – and the licensee as a result of which the licensor has acquired the highest price for his or her intellectual property rights;

21.3. it is ensured that research results are publicly available in open access databases, scientific periodicals of Latvia, journals or collections of conference papers included in the Web of Science or SCOPUS databases, and other collections;

21.4. activities which promote learning of new scientific methods, mobility and long-term cooperation of doctoral students, applicants for an academic degree, scientists in future research projects between research organisations of Latvia, donor countries, Estonia, and Lithuania by facilitating knowledge transfer, development of national economic, and ensuring of public needs;

21.5. communication and publicity measures of the project.

22. The following costs of studies of non-economic nature shall be eligible within the scope of the Baltic Research Programme:

22.1. the direct eligible costs of the project:

22.1.1. the costs related to the remuneration for work of the administrative and implementation staff – the work remuneration, and also other mandatory payments to be made for the benefit of the employee, including mandatory State social insurance payments of the employer. The project partner from Norway may apply a standard rate of one unit to the costs of remuneration according to the rules of its organisation. Costs related to the remuneration for work of the administrative staff of the project shall not exceed 10 per cent of the direct eligible costs;

22.1.2. the costs of official travels and work journeys in accordance with the regulatory framework regarding the procedures for the reimbursement of expenditures related to official travels, including reimbursement of such travel costs of doctoral students, scientists, and external experts which is substantiated and necessary for the project implementation in accordance with the procedures laid down in laws and regulations;

22.1.3. the depreciation costs related to the fixed assets at the disposal of the project applicant and project partner which are used in the project;

22.1.4. the acquisition costs of the inventory, instruments, and materials necessary for the project implementation, including the costs of materials, equipment, and similar products incurred directly as a result of the project;

22.1.5. any other costs necessary for the project implementation – costs related to publicity, participation in scientific conferences, forums, or the organisation costs thereof, and other costs that are substantiated and necessary for the project implementation;

22.1.6. the costs of external services which are only used for the purposes of the project, including costs of a work-performance contract, costs of an author’s contract, translation costs, costs of the external audit if costs of the project applicant and project partner exceed EUR 325 000. The costs of external services shall not exceed 15 % of the total costs of the project;

22.2. the indirect eligible costs of the project incurred directly as a result of direct eligible costs and eligible for the project. The indirect eligible costs of the project shall be calculated as a uniform rate in the amount of 25 per cent of the total eligible costs of the project minus the costs of external services. If the project partner from Norway applies the standard rate of one unit referred to in Sub-paragraph 22.1.1 of this Regulation, the indirect costs are not applied to this project partner.

23. The activity to be supported in the Grant Programme shall be mobility of students, academic and administrative staff which is implemented in bilateral cooperation in the field of higher education and science and which ensures mutual recognition of the achieved study results, cooperation of the academic and administrative staff, promotes the development of study programmes, the international cooperation of higher education institutions, and the implementation of mobility of students, academic and administrative staff, and career development strategies.

24. The following shall be provided for in the Grant Programme:

24.1. student exchange between higher education institutions of Latvia and donor countries:

24.1.1. three to 11 months of exchange;

24.1.2. reduced mobility (duration – five working days);

24.1.3. online mobility (minimum duration – 20 hours);

24.2. academic and administrative staff exchange between higher education institutions of Latvia and donor countries:

24.2.1. one to four weeks of exchange;

24.2.2. reduced mobility (duration – two working days);

24.2.3. online mobility (minimum duration – 8 hours).

[*29 June 2021 / The new wording of Paragraph shall come into force on 14 September 2021. See Paragraph 36 and the official publication No. 2021/183.DA3*]

25. Priority should be given in the Grant Programme to mobility which produces synergy with the Baltic Research Programme and provides for the involvement of students in the projects implemented within the scope of the Baltic Research Programme.

26. The standard rates of one unit shall be eligible in the Grant Programme:

26.1. the travelling expenses for mobility of students, academic and administrative staff according to the distance class: EUR 275 if the specific distance class is 500–1999 km, EUR 360 if the specific distance class is 2000–2999 km. The distance calculator in the Erasmus+ programme approved by the European Commission shall be used to determine the distance class;

26.2. the accommodation expenditures for mobility of students:

26.2.1. from Latvia to a donor country – EUR 1200 a month. If the duration of mobility cannot be expressed in full months, the amount of the accommodation expenditures for five working days shall be EUR 350 and for an incomplete month which is at least 14 calendar days it shall be EUR 600;

26.2.2. from a donor country to Latvia – EUR 1000 a month. If the duration of mobility cannot be expressed in full months, the amount of the accommodation expenditures for five working days shall be EUR 350 and for an incomplete month which is at least 14 calendar days it shall be EUR 500;

26.3. the accommodation expenditures for mobility of the academic and administrative staff:

26.3.1. from Latvia to a donor country – EUR 500 per two working days, EUR 1250 per one mobility week, EUR 2200 per two mobility weeks, EUR 3000 per three mobility weeks, EUR 4000 per four mobility weeks;

26.3.2. from a donor country to Latvia – EUR 300 per two working days, EUR 750 per one mobility week, EUR 1250 per two mobility weeks, EUR 2000 per three mobility weeks, EUR 3000 per four mobility weeks;

26.4. the administrative costs of the project – EUR 350 per one participant in mobility if the total number of participants in mobility of a sending higher education institution does not exceed 100 participants, EUR 200 per one participant in mobility if the total number of participants in mobility of a sending higher education institution exceeds 100 participants.

[*29 June 2021; 25 January 2022*]

27. If a student or a representative of the academic and administrative staff in the Grant Programme is a person with disabilities, additional costs which are directly related to the achievement of the project objective shall be eligible in the amount of 100 per cent of the actual costs eligible in the project.

28. The following costs shall not be eligible within the scope of the Programme:

28.1. investments in infrastructure;

28.2. losses caused by foreign exchange rate fluctuations;

28.3. payment for financial transactions;

28.4. costs covered from other sources;

28.5. fines, sanctions, and legal expenditures, except for the case if litigation is necessary for the achievement of the project objectives and is related thereto;

28.6. all payments, including advance payments and expenditures for the deliveries actually made, the works carried out, and the services provided outside the eligibility period of the project expenditures specified in the project agreement, except for costs in respect of which an invoice has been issued in the last month of the eligibility period of expenditures, and a payment for the services provided or goods supplied has been made within 30 calendar days after the end date of the eligibility period;

28.7. interest on debt, payments for servicing loans, and a late payment charge;

28.8. value added tax to be recovered;

28.9. the programme costs not referred to in Paragraphs 20, 22, 26, and 27 of this Regulation.

29. The agency has the right to unilaterally terminate the project agreement if the agency establishes the following:

29.1. all expenditures of the project have been recognised as irregular expenditures;

29.2. the project objective has not been achieved according to the project agreement;

29.3. the beneficiary of co-financing does not use the values created or acquired within the scope of the project for the purposes intended in the project;

29.4. the violation committed by the beneficiary of co-financing has led to the circumstances which adversely affect or may affect the achievement of the objective, outcome, or performance indicators of the Programme;

29.5. the requirements for the project implementation indicated in the repeated request by the agency have not been complied with during the project implementation according to the terms and conditions of the project agreement, including according to the procedures and within the time period specified in the project agreement.

30. Beneficiaries of co-financing and their project partners shall perform purchase of goods and services for the needs of the project in conformity with the public procurement framework and in an open, transparent, and non-discriminatory manner.

**III. Measures for the Introduction of the Bilateral Cooperation Fund**

31. In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding, an amount of EUR 100 000 (hereinafter – the financing of the bilateral cooperation fund) has been granted for the implementation of initiatives of the bilateral cooperation fund (hereinafter – the fund initiatives) which is the financing of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism in the amount of 100 per cent. Involvement of a partner of a donor country shall be mandatory for the implementation of the fund initiatives.

32. The fund initiatives shall constitute the following:

32.1. activities in order to strengthen bilateral relationships between a donor country and Latvia;

32.2. promotion of the partnership of projects for the Programme prior to and during development of project applications;

32.3. establishment of a cooperation network, preparation of joint project applications, exchange of experience, knowledge, good practices between beneficiaries of co-financing, project partners, and authorities of a donor country, or international organisations;

32.4. activities in order to strengthen cooperation, promote exchange of experience and good practice between the Programme Operator, the agency, and similar authorities in donor countries and other beneficiary countries, and also international provided that that at least one authority of a donor country is involved in the activity.

[*29 June 2021*]

33. If the fund initiatives referred to in Paragraph 32 of this Regulation are implemented by the beneficiary of co-financing of the bilateral cooperation fund who:

33.1. is other than the Programme Operator or the agency, then one of the following cases shall be applicable:

33.1.1. the beneficiary of co-financing shall initially cover expenditures from its own funds and shall, within 30 calendar days after implementation of the initiative of the bilateral cooperation fund has been completed, prepare and submit to the agency a report on the implemented measures and their expenditures together with the documentation supporting expenditures;

33.1.2. the agency shall, within 30 working days from the day of entering into an initiative contract of the bilateral cooperation fund, disburse an advance according to the amount specified in the contract. The beneficiary of co-financing shall, within 30 calendar days after implementation of the initiative of the bilateral cooperation fund has been completed, prepare and submit to the agency a report on the implemented measures and their expenditures together with the documentation supporting expenditures;

33.2. is the Programme Operator or the agency, it shall, within 30 days after implementation of the initiative of the bilateral cooperation fund has been completed, prepare a report on the implemented measures and their expenditures and submit it together with the documentation supporting expenditures to an independent auditor or the internal audit body of the Ministry of Education and Science for auditing.

[*29 June 2021*]

34. The Programme Operator shall develop a plan for the fund initiatives to be implemented within the scope of financing of the bilateral cooperation fund for the entire period of the implementation of the Programme. The plan shall be approved and proposals for the fund initiatives shall be coordinated by the following:

34.1. the Programme committee – in respect of the Baltic Research Programme;

34.2. the cooperation committee – in respect of the Grant Programme.

35. The Programme Operator has the right to submit the fund initiative to the committee for the bilateral cooperation fund after coordination thereof with the Programme committee or the cooperation committee in order to receive additional financing from the bilateral cooperation fund.

**IV. Closing Provision**

[*29 June 2021*]

36. Amendments regarding the new wording of Sub-paragraphs 12.1 and 12.2, Paragraph 24, Sub-paragraphs 26.2.1 and 26.2.2 of this Regulation and the supplementation of this Regulation with Paragraph 14.1 shall come into force as soon as the amendment to the relevant contract for the implementation of the Programme of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the Period 2014–2021 (hereinafter – the Programme contract) enter into effect. After receipt of the amendments to the Programme contract from the managing authority, the Programme Operator shall publish a relevant notification in the official gazette *Latvijas Vēstnesis*.

[*29 June 2021*]

Prime Minister A. K. Kariņš

Minister for Education and Science I. Šuplinska

**Annex 1**

Cabinet Regulation No. 333

2 June 2020

**Project Application Assessment Criteria in an Open Call for Proposals within the Activity “Baltic Research Programme” of the Programme “Research and Education” of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the Period 2014-2021**

**1. Administrative criteria**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Administrative criteria | Evaluation”Yes”/“No”\* |
| 1. | The project application has been prepared in the English language and submitted electronically by using the electronic system for the submission of project applications within the time period indicated in the announcement of the open tender | N |
| 2. | The project applicant and the project partner from Latvia, where applicable, are a scientific institution registered in Latvia which corresponds to the criteria for the status of a research institution specified in Sub-paragraph 2.8 of this Regulation | N |
| 3. | The project partners are at least one research organisation registered in Estonia or Lithuania and at least one research organisation registered in a donor country | N |
| 4. | Certification of the project applicant has been signed by the responsible official of the project applicant or a person whose signatory rights are certified by a document issued by the project applicant | N |
| 5. | The project application has been fully completed and all annexes indicated in the regulations regarding selection of project applications have been appended thereto | N |
| 6. | Activities planned in the project application are of non-economic nature in accordance with Sub-paragraph 2.3 of this Regulation | P |
| 7. | Calculations of eligible costs are correct and correspond to the requirements laid down in the regulations regarding selection of project applications | P |
| 8. | Eligible costs of the project correspond to the eligible costs indicated in Paragraph 22 of this Regulation, and the project financing indicated in the project application corresponds to the amount of the project financing indicated in Sub-paragraphs 7.1.1 and 7.1.2 of this Regulation | P |
| 9. | The project applicant and the Latvian project partner (where applicable) do not have any tax debts in the Republic of Latvia, including debts of mandatory State social insurance contributions, which exceed EUR 150 in total for each of them | P |

Notes.

1. \* Project applications shall be evaluated with “Yes” (correspond) or “No” (do not correspond) according to the administrative criteria. If the evaluation is negative (N), the project application shall be rejected.

2. P – the decision may be taken to approve the project provided that the project applicant will ensure that the project corresponds to the criterion within the time period specified in the decision.

**2. Quality assessment criteria**

The project application shall be evaluated according to three quality assessment criteria. Scores shall be awarded in each quality assessment criterion. Each quality assessment criterion shall be evaluated on a 0–5 rating scale, and each criterion shall have a different quality threshold value (score) for the project application to qualify for approval in the list of projects passing further. The assessment threshold shall be 0.5 scores. All quality assessment criteria shall have equal weight, and project applications shall be arranged according to the total scores gained in all quality assessment criteria.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Criterion | Aspects under assessment | Score | Quality threshold value |
| Scientific and/or technological excellence | 1) conceptual perspective and objectives to be achieved have been defined clearly;  2) complementary scientific value of the project;  3) quality and efficiency of the research methodology and corresponding work plan;  4) innovative approach and innovation potential | 0–5 | 4 |
| Quality and efficiency of the project implementation and management, added value of international cooperation | 1) correspondence of competences and capacities of the project manager and project partners to the tasks of the project and its objectives to be achieved;  2) correspondence of the work plan to the achievement of the objectives and results of the project;  3) required resources and their use (staff remuneration, travelling expenses, external services, and other costs) have been substantiated clearly;  4) appropriate environment and materials and technical facilities required for the performance of research;  5) training of scientific staff;  6) mutual complementarity of competences and skills of the project applicant and project partners, sustainability of their international cooperation, and vision of future cooperation possibilities after the project implementation | 0–5 | 3.5 |
| Planned impact of dissemination and use of the project activities and results | 1) correspondence of the project application to the objectives of the Baltic Research Programme and sub-themes of the call for tenders;  2) added value of the research to the development of knowledge in the Baltic region;  3) relevance of the research theme in the international arena;  4) transfer of project results to appropriate target groups and their practical use, including clear, appropriate, and efficient targets of the planned knowledge transfer | 0–5 | 3.5 |

Note. The total score of the project application is from 0 to 15. The quality threshold value (score) for the project application to qualify for approval in the list of projects passing further shall be 12.5 scores.

**3. Rating scale**

Scores for each quality assessment criterion correspond to the following evaluation:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Score | Evaluation | Explanation |
| 0 | Insufficient | The project application does not correspond to the criterion, it misses information or information is incomplete which does not allow to provide a quality evaluation |
| 1 | Poor | The project application does not correspond overall to the criterion or significant deficiencies can be established in it |
| 2 | Fair | The project application corresponds overall to the criterion, however, it contains significant deficiencies |
| 3 | Good | The project application corresponds to the criterion, however, several deficiencies have been established in it |
| 4 | Very good | The project application to a very large extent corresponds to the criterion, individual deficiencies have been established |
| 5 | Excellent | The project application fully corresponds to all aspects of the assessment criterion, and even if some deficiencies have been established, they are minor |

Note. If the evaluation of the project application in the respective criterion exceeds requirements of the previous lowest evaluation but does not fully comply with the requirements of the next highest evaluation, the evaluation can also be expressed by giving half point scores.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Score | Evaluation |  |
| 0 | Insufficient |  |
| 0.5 | Very poor |  |
| 1 | Poor |  |
| 1.5 | Almost fair |  |
| 2 | Fair |  |
| 2.5 | Almost good |  |
| 3 | Good |  |
| 3.5 | Almost very good |  |
| 4 | Very good |  |
| 4.5 | Outstanding |  |
| 5 | Excellent |  |

**4. Criteria in case the same total score is awarded to a project application**

Project applications that have received the same evaluation shall be arranged according to the following quality assessment criteria:

1. Project applications shall be arranged according to the scores awarded in the criterion “Scientific and/or technological excellence”.

2. Project applications shall be arranged according to the scores awarded in the criterion “Quality and efficiency of the project implementation and management, added value of international cooperation”, including added value of cooperation to the Baltic region and sustainability of bilateral cooperation.

3. Priority should be given to supporting project applications with a balanced gender composition (project applicant’s lead participants of the project).

Minister for Education and Science I. Šuplinska

**Annex 2**

Cabinet Regulation No. 333

2 June 2020

**Project Application Assessment Criteria in an Open Call for Proposals within the Activity “Grants” of the Programme “Research and Education” of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the Period 2014-2021**

**1. Administrative criteria**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Administrative criteria | Evaluation”Yes”/“No”\* |
| 1. | The project application has been prepared in the English language and submitted electronically by using the electronic system for the submission of project applications within the time period indicated in the announcement of the open tender | N |
| 2. | The project applicant is an accredited higher education institution of Latvia | N |
| 3. | The project partner is a higher education institution of a donor country | N |
| 4. | Certification of the project applicant has been signed by the responsible official of the project applicant or a person whose signatory rights are certified by a document issued by the project applicant | N |
| 5. | The project application has been fully completed and all annexes indicated in the tender regulations regarding selection of project applications have been appended thereto | N |
| 6. | The duration of the project implementation corresponds to the duration of the project implementation indicated in the regulations regarding selection of project applications, and the planned duration of exchange of students, academic and administrative staff corresponds to Paragraph 24 of this Regulation | P |
| 7. | Eligible costs of the project correspond to the eligible costs and standard rates of one unit indicated in Paragraphs 26 and 27 of this Regulation, and the project financing indicated in the project application corresponds to the amount of the project financing indicated in Sub-paragraph 7.3 of this Regulation | P |
| 8. | The letter of intent of the project partner has been signed by the responsible official of the project partner or a person whose signatory rights are certified by a document issued by the project applicant | N |
| 9. | The project applicant does not have any tax debts in the Republic of Latvia, including debts of mandatory State social insurance contributions, which exceed EUR 150 in total | P |

Notes.

1. \* Project applications shall be evaluated with “Yes” (correspond) or “No” (do not correspond) according to the administrative criteria. If the evaluation is negative (N), the project application shall be rejected.

2. P – a decision may be taken to approve the project provided that the project applicant will ensure that the project corresponds to the criterion within the time period specified in the decision.

**2. Quality assessment criteria**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Criterion | Aspects under assessment | Score | Quality threshold value |
| Correspondence of the project | Correspondence of the planned project to the internationalisation strategy of the higher education institutions involved, justification of selection of the planned staff and/or student mobility | 0–30 | 15 |
| Quality of the project development and implementation | Explicitly described duties, areas of responsibility, and division of tasks among the higher education institutions involved, quality of the procedure for selecting participants in mobility, including criteria for the selection of participants, support provided to participants in mobility, recognition of the planned period of student mobility (European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)) | 0–40 | 20 |
| Impact and dissemination | The likely impact of the project on the participants in mobility and the higher education institutions involved at local, regional, and national level. Quality of publicity measures the objective of which is to disseminate project results at a level of units of higher education institutions and higher education institution as a whole, and also more widely in a beneficiary country and donor country | 0–30 | 15 |

Notes.

1. The total score of the project application is 0–100. The quality threshold value (score) for the project application to qualify for approval in the list of projects passing further shall be 60 scores.

2. Additional 10 points shall be awarded to the project application planning a synergy with projects of the Baltic Research Programme.

**3. Rating scale**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The maximum score of quality assessment criteria | Rating scale | | | |
| very good | good | fair | poor |
| 40 | 34–40 | 28–33 | 20–27 | 0–19 |
| 30 | 26–30 | 21–25 | 15–20 | 0–14 |

Notes.

1. Very good – the project application fully describes all questions contained in the project application form. All the required information has been fully included in the project application for its assessment, there are no significant deficiencies.

2. Good – the project application sufficiently describes all questions contained in the project application form, although separate additions would be necessary. Sufficiently clear information has been provided regarding almost all aspects of the project.

3. Fair – the project application overall provides the minimum necessary information, yet it contains deficiencies. The information requested has been included in part, but in respect of individual issues information cannot be found or is unclear.

4. Poor – the project application does not provide the information necessary for its assessment.

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**Annex 3**

Cabinet Regulation No. 333

2 June 2020

**Results and Outcomes to be Achieved by the Activities “Baltic Research Programme” and “Grants” of the Programme “Research and Education” of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the Period 2014–2021, Their Indicators, Sources of Inspection, and Frequency of Reporting**

[*29 June 2021*]

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Planned results and outcomes | Results or outcomes to be achieved by the Programme | Indicators | Unit of measurement | Source of inspection | Frequency of reporting | Starting stage | Starting year | Target value |
| Result of the Baltic Research Programme | Performance of the Baltic research improved at an international level | Number of peer-reviewed scientific publications submitted jointly1 (broken down by donor countries and types of scientific publications2) | Number | Evidence of the publication submitted | Each year | 0 | N/A | 50 |
| Number of joint project applications for future financing (broken down by donor countries and types of applications) | Number | Copy of an application for the granting of financing | Each year | 0 | N/A | 11 |
| Number of applications registered jointly for the protection of intellectual property (broken down by donor countries) | Number | Copies of applications submitted, a reference to registration | Each year | 0 | N/A | 3 |
| Outcome of the Baltic Research Programme | Exchange of research knowledge performed | Number of scientists supported (broken down by beneficiary countries3, genders, levels of education4) | Number | Reports of the beneficiary of co-financing | Twice a year | 0 | N/A | 35 |
| Result of the Grant Programme | Skills and competences of students and academic and administrative staff improved in the field of higher education and science | Number of students with credits of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) | Number | Reports of the beneficiary of co-financing | Each year | 0 | N/A | 30 |
| Outcome of the Grant Programme | Learning mobility promoted in the field of higher education (students and academic and administrative staff) between the beneficiary country and donor countries | Academic and administrative staff from donor countries that participated in mobility (number, breakdown by formats (on-site mobility, including shortened, or online mobility), genders, and donor countries) | Number | Reports of the beneficiary of co-financing | Twice a year | 0 | N/A | 20 |
| Academic and administrative staff from Latvia that participated in mobility (number, breakdown by formats (on-site mobility, including shortened, or online mobility), genders, and donor countries) | Number | Reports of the beneficiary of co-financing | Twice a year | 0 | N/A | 35 |
| Students from donor countries that participated in mobility (number, breakdown by formats (on-site mobility, including shortened, or online mobility), genders, and donor countries) | Number | Reports of the beneficiary of co-financing | Twice a year | 0 | N/A | 8 |
| Students from Latvia that participated in mobility (number, breakdown by formats (on-site mobility, including shortened or online mobility), genders, and donor countries) | Number | Reports of the beneficiary of co-financing | Twice a year | 0 | N/A | 28 |
| Result of bilateral cooperation | Cooperation improved between the organisations of beneficiary countries and donor countries involved in the Programme | Satisfaction with the partnership (level) (broken down by types of countries) | Measurement from 1 to 7 | Survey results | Each year | 5.725 | 2021 | 4.56 |
| Level of trust between the organisations of beneficiary countries and donor countries involved in cooperation (broken down by types of countries) | Measurement from 1 to 7 | Survey results | Each year | 65 | 2021 | 4.56 |
| Part of the organisations involved in cooperation which use the knowledge acquired from bilateral partnerships (broken down by types of countries) | Percentage | Survey results | Each year | N/A | N/A | ≥ 50 % and an increase in comparison with the original state |
| Outcome of bilateral cooperation | Cooperation promoted between donor countries and the beneficiary country | Number of projects within the scope of which cooperation has been established with the project partner of the donor country (broken down by donor countries) | Number | Contract entered into with the beneficiary of co-financing (copy).  Partnership contract entered into between the beneficiary of co-financing and project partners (copy) | Twice a year | 0 | N/A | 14 |

Notes.

1. Within the scope of this result, the word “jointly” shall mean the joint work of the Baltic States and donor countries involving the participation of at least one Baltic State and at least one donor country. Results in respect of these indicators shall be calculated on the basis of the projects implemented by Latvian project applicants.

2. Golden open access, pending open access, etc.

3. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania.

4. Within the scope of this Regulation, the levels of education shall mean the following: 1) a doctoral student; 2) an applicant for an academic degree; 3) a post-doctoral researcher; 4) a scientist.

5. The baseline assessment shall be performed by the Financial Mechanism Office.

6. Target value is ≥ 4.5 and an increase in the basic value.

**Annex 4**

Cabinet Regulation No. 333

2 June 2020

**Themes and Sub-themes of Project Applications in an Open Call for Proposals within the Activity “Baltic Research Programme” of the Programme “Research and Education” of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the Period 2014-2021**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Theme 1. Public health and e-health**  A project in this thematic area should create new knowledge of disease prevention and patient-oriented health care | |
| Sub-theme 1.1 | Population-based studies on behavioural factors related to health (consumption of alcohol and intoxicating substances and addiction, physical activity, sedentary lifestyle and diet, mental health) and their impact on disease prevention |
| Sub-theme 1.2 | E-health and integrated care |
| Sub-theme 1.3 | Cardiovascular disease or cancer prevention, related personalised patient-oriented care |
| **Theme 2. Migration and social inclusion**  A project in this thematic area should contribute to the study of migration processes and to addressing public challenges posed by migration, and also addressing other challenges related to social inclusion and inequality.  It is expected that, in addition to the challenges posed by immigration, the studies also focus on consequences of emigration such as brain drain and reduction of population.  A study should frame the impact on action policy by producing recommendations for action policy and also using other means. | |
| Sub-theme 2.1 | Research on social inclusion which covers analysis of inequality models and tendencies on a larger scale, for example, by studying economic inequality, educational inequality, geographical inequality, or inequalities in minority and majority groups |
| Sub-theme 2.2 | A study focusing on the migration of third-country nationals\* to the European Economic Area (EEA) countries / the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries, and also migration within the EEA/EFTA |
| Sub-theme 2.3 | Research on migration between the Baltic States and the Scandinavian countries |
| **Theme 3. Cybersecurity and public security**  A project in this thematic area should help addressing research challenges related to the public and private infrastructures (in particular critical infrastructure) and general digital security in the EEA/EFTA countries, in particular to protect people from malicious cyber activities | |
| Sub-theme 3.1 | Studies on cybersecurity investigating issues of data protection and security of online activities for public and private bodies/organisations and society at large |
| Sub-theme 3.2 | A study in the field of public security focusing on optimisation of various emergency services and functions of the criminal legal system |
| **Theme 4. Regional economic development, employment, labour market regulation, and social policy**  A project in this thematic area should help addressing challenges related to the effects of urbanisation, emigration of population, and ageing population on economically disadvantaged regions with a declining population and a slowdown in economic activity, productivity, and availability and quality of social services.  Detailed use of quantitative methods and comprehensive databases is particularly welcome in the project | |
| Sub-theme 4.1 | Challenges posed by social and economic transformations of regions in the context of a declining population, ageing, and low productivity |
| Sub-theme 4.2 | Solutions for ensuring availability of quality social services, viable and fair labour market policy scenarios |
| Sub-theme 4.3 | Solutions for strengthening welfare of regions by carrying out a comparative analysis of social and labour market action policies and their impact on citizens and households |
| **Theme 5. Innovative solutions for efficient and sustainable use of resources**  Studies in this thematic area should contribute to addressing globally relevant issues in respect of improvement in energy efficiency, decarbonisation, and accountable use of resources Projects can include research on materials, technologies, digital solutions, or socio-economic aspects in at least one of the sub-themes | |
| Sub-theme 5.1 | Effective urban energy systems (buildings, manufacturing, services, transport, and mobility) |
| Sub-theme 5.2 | Renewable energy for local energy systems |
| Sub-theme 5.3 | Alternate fuel for transport and heating supply |
| Sub-theme 5.4 | Waste as a resource, solutions for circular use of waste (it can refer to any type of waste such as food, materials, water, textile) |
| Sub-theme 5.5 | Safe and sustainable food systems |
| Sub-theme 5.6 | Sustainable management of water and water resources |

Note. \* Persons other than nationals of the European Union Member States, the European Economic Area, and the Swiss Confederation.

Minister for Education and Science I. Šuplinska