

Non-official translation

APPROVED

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DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT FINANCING CONDITIONS NO. 6 UNDER MEASURE 09.3.3-LMT-K-712 “DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENTIFIC COMPETENCES OF SCIENTISTS, OTHER RESEARCHERS AND STUDENTS THROUGH PRACTICAL RESEARCH ACTIVITIES” OF PRIORITY AXIS 9 “EDUCATING THE SOCIETY AND STRENGTHENING THE POTENTIAL OF HUMAN RESOURCES” OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION FUNDS’ INVESTMENT IN 2014–2020

CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Guidelines for Applicants No. 6 under Measure 09.3.3-LMT-K-712 “Development of Scientific Competences of Scientists, other Researchers and Students through Practical Research Activities” of priority axis 9 “Educating the Society and Strengthening the Potential of Human Resources” of the Operational Programme for the European Union Funds’ Investment in 2014–2020 (hereinafter – the Guidelines for Applicants) establish the requirements for the Applicants preparing and submitting applications for financing projects co-funded from European Union (hereinafter – the EU) structural funds (hereinafter – the application) according to the activity “Improvement of researchers’ competences by brain gain and reintegration” under Measure 09.3.3-LMT-K-712 “Improvement of Scientific Competences of Scientists, other Researchers and Students through Practical Research Activities” (hereinafter – the Measure) of priority axis 9 “Educating the Society and Strengthening the Potential of Human Resources” of the Operational Programme for the European Union Funds’ Investment in 2014–2020 approved by Commission Decision of 8 September 2014, approving certain elements of the Operational Programme for the European Union Funds’ investment in 2014-2020 for support from the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund and a special appropriation for the Youth Employment Initiative under the investment for growth and job goals in Lithuania (the European Commission notified of the said Decision by Document No C(2014)6397) as subsequently amended by the Commission’s implementing decision of 24 September 2018 (the European Commission notified of the said Decision by Document No C(2018)6019) (hereinafter – the Operational Programme) when implementing according to these Guidelines for Applicants projects co-funded from EU structural funds (hereinafter – the Projects), as well as institutions engaged in the evaluation and selection of applications, and the supervision of project implementation.

2. The Guidelines for Applicants have been drawn up in regard to:

2.1. the plan for the implementation of the implementing measures of the priority under the Operational Programme for the EU Structural Funds’ Investment in 2014–2020 approved by Order No V-380 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 23 April 2015 “On the Approval of the Plan for the Implementation of Implementing Measures of the Priority under the Operational Programme for the EU Structural Funds’ Investment in 2014–2020, and of the Description of the National Computation of Monitoring Indicators (hereinafter – Measure Implementation Plan);

2.2. the Project Administration and Financing Rules approved by Order No 1K-316 of the Minister of Finance of the Republic of Lithuania of 8 October 2014 “On the Approval of the Project Administration and Financing Rules” (hereinafter – the Project Rules);

2.3. the Description of the Computation of Monitoring Indicators of the Operational Programme for the EU Funds' Investment in 2014–2020 approved by Order No. 1K-499 of the Minister of Finance of the Republic of Lithuania of 30 December 2014 “On the Approval of the Description of the Computation of Monitoring Indicators of the Operational Programme for the EU Funds' Investment in 2014–2020 (hereinafter – Description of the Computation of Monitoring Indicators of the Operational Programme);

2.4. the action plan for 2019–2020 under the Programme for Development of Studies, Scientific Research and Experimental (Socio-Cultural) Development for 2013–2020 approved by Order No V-110 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania of 8 February 2019 “On the Approval of the Action Plan for 2019–2020 under the Programme for Development of Studies, Scientific Research and Experimental (Socio-Cultural) Development for 2013–2020” (hereinafter – Development Programme Action Plan for 2019–2020);

2.5. the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania;

2.6. the priority project selection criteria of the Measure activity “Improving the Qualification of Researchers in Carrying out High-Level R&D Projects” approved by Resolution No 44P-4(40) of the meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Operational Programme for the EU Funds' Investment in 2014–2020 held on 8 May 2019 ;

2.7. recommendations regarding the compliance of project costs with the requirements of the European Union Structural Funds approved by the Operational Programme for Human Resources Development, the Economic Development Operational Programme, the Cohesion Promotion Operational Programme, and by Protocol No 34 of the Monitoring Committee of the Operational Programme for the EU funds' Investment in 2014–2020 of 4 July 2014, and published at the EU structural funds' website www.esinvesticijos.lt (hereinafter – Recommendations Regarding the Compliance of Project Costs with the Requirements of the European Union Structural Funds);

2.8. the standard lists of eligible research and/or technological production of research and dissemination projects approved by Order No V-2017 of the Chairman of the Research Council of Lithuania of 31 October 2014 “Regarding the Approval of Standard Lists of Eligible Research and/or Technological Production of Research and Dissemination Projects” (hereinafter – the Standard Lists of Eligible Research and/or Technological Production of Research and Dissemination Projects);

2.9. the General Rules of the Research Council of Lithuania for the Experts and their Activities approved by Order No V-42 of the Chairman of the Research Council of Lithuania of 29 January 2018 “Regarding the Approval of the General Rules of the Research Council of Lithuania for the Experts and their Activities”;

2.10. the General Rules of the Research Council of Lithuania for the Competitive Funding of Research and Dissemination Projects approved by Order No V-45 of the Chairman of the Research Council of Lithuania of 29 January 2018 “On the Approval of the General Rules of the Research Council of Lithuania for the Competitive Funding of Research and Dissemination Projects” (hereinafter - the Rules of Competitive Funding).

3. The definitions used in the Guidelines for Applicants shall be interpreted as defined in the legal acts referred to in Article 2 of the Guidelines for Applicants, the Rules of Distribution of Responsibilities and Functions among Institutions in the Implementation of the Operational Programme for the EU Funds' Investment in 2014–2020 approved by Resolution No 528 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 4 June 2014 “Regarding the Distribution of Responsibilities and Functions among Institutions in the Implementation of the Operational Programme for the EU Funds' Investment in 2014–2020”, and the Rules of Administration of the Operational Programme for the EU Funds' Investment in 2014–2020 approved by Resolution No 1090 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 3 October 2014 “On the Approval of the Rules of Administration of the Operational Programme for the EU Funds' Investment in 2014–2020”.

4. The implementation of the Measure is administered by The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter – the Ministry) and the Research Council of Lithuania (hereinafter – the Implementing Authority or the RCL).

5. The form of financing under the Measure shall be a non-repayable subsidy.

6. The project selection under the Guidelines for Applicants shall be carried out as a single-stage tender.

7. According to the Guidelines for Applicants, the plan is to allocate up to EUR 5 792 400 (five million seven hundred ninety-two thousand four hundred euro) of EU Structural Funds (the European Social Fund) for the implementation of projects: **up to EUR 1 737 720** (one million seven hundred and thirty-seven thousand seven hundred twenty euro) **is planned for projects in the areas of humanitarian and social sciences** and **up to EUR 4 054 680** (four million fifty-four thousand six hundred eighty euro) - **for projects in the areas of physical, biomedical, technological and agricultural sciences.**

8. According to the Guidelines for Applicants, one call for applications shall be launched for up to EUR 5 792 400 (five million seven hundred ninety-two thousand four hundred euro). When passing a decision regarding funding of the projects, subject to an agreement from the Ministry, Implementing Authority shall have the right to increase the sums referred to in this Article, without exceeding the amount allocated for the Measure specified in the Measure Implementation Plan or infringing any legitimate expectations of applicants.

9. The aim of the Measure is to improve scientific qualification of students, researchers and scientists in the performance of practical research activities and exchange of scientific ideas, promoting the creation and development of scientific communication and networking.

10. The activity financed according to the Guidelines for Applicants is to enhance the competences of researchers by brain gain and reintegration (hereinafter – the Activity). Projects led by **highly qualified researchers** from abroad (hereinafter – a Head of Research) shall be financed according to the Guidelines for Applicants.

11. **A Head of Research** shall be a researcher who out of the last 6 years prior to the call of applications has been continuously engaged in research and development (R&D) activities for at least 5 years in research institutions abroad and/or a research department of an organization or an enterprise; implementing a project and supervising its implementation.

12. Lithuanian and foreign scientists and other researchers may be members of project research groups.

13. The purpose of the activities referred to in Article 10 of the Guidelines for Applicants is to attract highly qualified researchers from abroad, to bring together groups of researchers, to initiate and carry out highest-level research, which would contribute to the training of research fellows of Lithuania, improvement of competences of researchers and the development of research activity areas or topics implemented by the host institution.

14. The plan is to launch a call for applications according to the activity indicated in Article 10 of the Guidelines for Applicants in 1st quarter of 2019.

CHAPTER II REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANTS

15. According to the Guidelines for Applicants, eligible applicants (Beneficiaries) are universities and research institutions included in the Open Information, Counselling and Guidance System www.aikos.smm.lt, and compliant with the requirements set out for the Applicant's (Beneficiaries) institution.

16. Branches of legal entities may be applicants (Beneficiaries).

17. The possibility to submit application in cooperation with partners is not foreseen.

18. Applicants (Beneficiaries) shall have the following capacities for the implementation of the project:

18.1. an infrastructure necessary to carry out research;

18.2. administrative resources required for the management of the project.

19. Heads of Research of projects financed according to the Guidelines for Applicants shall be subject to the following requirements:

19.1. a Head of Research in **humanities** shall be an active researcher over the last 10 years (this period shall not include maternity leave, parental or child care leave until the child reaches the age of 3):

19.1.1. having published at least 10 research articles in international peer reviewed periodic research journals and/or peer-reviewed research publications, or having published 3 scientific monographs (without co-authors), or having published 2 scientific monographs (without co-authors) and at least 3 research articles in international peer reviewed periodic research journals and/or peer-reviewed research publications, or having published 1 scientific monograph (without co-authors) and at least 6 research articles in international peer-reviewed periodic research journals and / or peer-reviewed research publications, or having published 1 scientific monograph (without co-authors), a scientific source publication and at least research articles international peer-reviewed periodic research journals and/or peer-reviewed research publications, or having compiled 3 published monographs with introductions consolidating their texts or 3 scientific source publications, and published at least 5 scientific articles in international peer reviewed periodic research journals and/or peer-reviewed research publications;

19.1.2. having led successfully completed R&D projects in the field of humanities;

19.1.3. having supervised over doctoral students of humanities and/or post-doctoral researchers during their internship;

19.2. a Head of Research in **social sciences** shall be an active researcher over the last 10 years (this period shall not include maternal leave, parental or child care leave until the child reaches the age of 3):

19.2.1. having published at least 2 monographs (without co-authors) and at least 10 research articles in peer-reviewed periodic scientific journals and / or peer-reviewed scientific articles (2 authors' sheets of monographs or studies equates to 1 research article), or at least 20 research articles in peer-reviewed periodic scientific journals and / or peer-reviewed research publications (2 authors' sheets of monographs or studies equates to 1 research article), of which at least 10 articles should be published in journals having an impact factor;

19.2.2. having led successfully completed R&D projects in the field of social sciences;

19.2.3. having supervised over doctoral students of social sciences and/or post-doctoral researchers in their internship;

19.3. a Head of Research in **physical, biomedical, technological and agricultural sciences** shall be an active researcher:

19.3.1. having published at least 10 research articles as the main author (the main author shall be understood in the Guidelines for Applicants as the first, the last author and the corresponding author) in foreign periodic scientific journals of Q1/Q2 in the Clarivate Analytics Web of Science database over the last 10 years (this period shall not include maternal leave, parental or child care leave until the child reaches the age of 3). He/she shall have a patent registered at the European Patent Office, the United States Patent and Trademark Office or the Japan Patent Office, a species of plants or animals, or a cell line registered abroad, or a microorganism strain equated to one scientific article;

19.3.2. having led successfully completed R&D projects in the respective field.

20. The Beneficiary (the institution referred to in Article 15 of the Guidelines for Applicants) may implement more than one project at a time if it has sufficient infrastructure and administrative and financial resources necessary to implement the projects in a quality manner. The Head of Research may lead one project financed under the Guidelines for Applicants only.

21. The applications in respect of whose a Head of Research or another principal member of the research group (a research group shall be understood in the Guidelines for Applicants as a Head of Research carrying out the research, principal and non- principal members of the research group) a decision has been passed regarding the infringement of academic ethics shall not be considered for a period of five years from the effective date of the decision of the Ombudsman for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania. The applications that indicate as

the head of the forthcoming research a researcher who has previously led a project financed by the RCL, which has been terminated or non-implemented, shall not be considered for a period of three years from the effective date of the decision of the RCL.

22. The applicant and the Head of Research shall comply with the requirements set out in Chapters I and II of the Guidelines for Applicants on the deadline for the submission of applications as indicated in the call.

Chapter III REQUIREMENTS FOR PROJECTS

23. Projects shall comply with the general requirements set forth in Section 10 of the Project Regulations.

24. Projects shall comply with the special project selection criterion approved by Resolution No 44P-17.1(19) of the meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Operational Programme for the EU Funds' Investment in 2014–2020 held on 8 September 2016 – “Projects shall comply with the provisions of the action plan for 2019–2020 under the Programme for Development of Studies, Scientific Research and Experimental (Socio-Cultural) Development for 2013–2020 approved by Order No V-110 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania of 8 February 2019 “On the Approval of Action Plan for 2019–2020 under the Programme for Development of Studies, Scientific Research and Experimental (Socio-Cultural) Development for 2013–2020”. Projects shall be in line with the action provided for in sub-clause 2.1.4.1 of the action plan for 2019–2020 of the Operational Programme and the beneficiary (applicant) specified next to the action.

25. The selection of projects shall be carried out following the priority selection criteria referred to in Annex 2 to the Guidelines for Applicants. The projects shall receive points for the compliance with the priority project selection criteria; the maximum score according to each criterion is indicated in Annex 2 to the Guidelines for Applicants. According to the Guidelines for Applicants, the minimum score required to collect is 60 of which at least 10 points shall be collected according to the selection criterion referred to in Article 1 of Annex 2 to the Guidelines for Applicants, at least 15 points – according to the project selection criterion referred to in Article 2 of Annex 2 to the Guidelines for Applicants, at least 25 points – according to the criterion specified in Article 3 of Annex 2 to the Guidelines for Applicants and at least 15 points – according to the project selection criteria listed in Article 4 of Annex 2 to the Guidelines for Applicants.

26. If a project receives less than 60 points in the assessment of its benefit or quality, or the project fails to collect the minimum score referred to in Article 25 hereof according to each priority project selection criterion, the application shall be rejected.

27. The duration of the projects submitted according to the Guidelines for Applicants shall be **no shorter than 36 months and no longer than 48 months** from the date of signing a grant agreement. If the Head of Research starts working in the project later than the effective date of the grant agreement according to Article 30 of the Guidelines for Applicants, the duration of the project shall be shortened respectively.

28. In certain cases in view of some objective reasons, which the Beneficiary was not able to foresee at the time of the submission and the assessment of the application, the duration of the projects specified in Article 27 hereof may be extended in accordance with the procedure specified in the Project Regulations, but in any case, for no longer than 6 months, and without prejudice to the time limits referred to in sub-s 213.1 and 213.5 of the Project Regulations.

29. The project activities shall be launched from the effective date of the grant agreement, but no later than within six months. The beginning of project activities is considered to be the date at which the Head of Research is employed in the project.

30. The Head of Research shall start working in the project no later than within six months from the effective date of the grant agreement, and work in the project throughout the entire project

execution period. The employment contract of the Head of Research shall contain a condition for his/her work in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania at least 840 hours per year.

31. Project activities shall be carried out in the Republic of Lithuania. Project activities may be carried out in other Member States of the EU if the products, results and the benefit (or a part thereof corresponding to the financial contribution of the Republic of Lithuania) created while carrying out the activities thereof are allocated to the Republic of Lithuania. The location of project activities performance shall be the location where project activities are being carried out by the project team as defined in the Recommendations Regarding the Compliance of Project Costs with the Requirements of the European Union Structural Funds.

32. Scientists and researchers are the eligible project target groups. According to the Guidelines for Applicants, a Head of Research, key research group members (in the Guidelines for Applicants, a key research group member is understood as a person carrying out essential research work, usually lasting throughout the whole project implementation period, whose scientific competence is important in the evaluation of application) and non-key research group members (in the Guidelines for Applicants, a non-key research group member is understood as a person doing work assigned to him/ her to achieve research objectives, thus contributing to project implementation) shall be considered project participants, as provided in the Project Regulations.

33. A project shall pursue the following Measure implementation monitoring indicators:

33.1. mandatory indicators:

33.1.1. “Implemented R&D projects” (indicator code P.S.396); minimum target value – 1 project;

33.1.2. “Researchers having participated in ESF activities for studying according to non-formal education programmes” (indicator code P.S.395). Minimum target value – 1 person;

33.1.3. “Researchers from abroad attracted to education and research institutions using ESF investment” (indicator code P.S. 392). Minimum target value – 1 person;

33.2. non-mandatory indicator “Researchers who have gone abroad to improve their professional knowledge using ESF investment” (indicator code P.S.393). Minimum target value is not set.

34. The computation of the indicators of monitoring of the implementation of the Measure indicated in Article 33 of the Guidelines for Applicants shall be subject to the Description of the Computation of Monitoring Indicators of the Operational Programme. Descriptions of computation of all monitoring indicators of the implementation of the Measure are published on the EU Structural Funds’ website www.esinvesticijos.lt.

35. Project preparedness requirements are not applicable.

36. There shall be no project restrictions that could have an adverse impact on the implementation of the principles of gender equality, non-discrimination based on gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, beliefs and views, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religion.

37. There shall be no project actions that could adversely affect the implementation of the sustainable development principle.

38. According to the Guidelines for Applicants, state aid, as defined in Article 107 of Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (OJ 2010 C 83, p. 47), and *de minimis* aid, which is in line with the provisions of the Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to *de minimis* aid (OJ 2013 L 352, p. 1) shall not be provided.

39. A project may not have been or be financed from the budget of the state of the Republic of Lithuania and/or municipal budgets, other monetary resources at the disposal of the state and/or municipalities, EU structural funds or other measures of the EU financial assistance or other international support, and where granted EU structural funds, such measures would be recognized eligible for financing and/or paid more than once.

40. The physical project implementation indicators shall be planned in accordance with, but without limitation to, the Standard Lists of Eligible Research and/or Technological Production of Research and Dissemination Projects.

41. Projects shall not be subject to continuity of investment and post-financing reporting requirements.

CHAPTER IV REQUIREMENTS FOR ELIGIBLE PROJECT COSTS AND THEIR FINANCING

42. Project costs shall be in line with the requirements for project costs defined in Chapter VI of the Project Regulations and the Recommendations Regarding the Compliance of Project Costs with the Requirements of the European Union Structural Funds.

43. Eligible project costs are expenses incurred and paid from the beginning of the implementation of project activities till the end of their implementation (except for the expenses of relocation of Heads of Research, members of the research group and their family members to the Republic of Lithuania, which may be paid before the start of the implementation of the activities, but not earlier than the date of approval of the report on selected projects specified in Article 79 of the Guidelines for Applicants), but not later than within the deadlines specified in sub-clauses 213.1 and 213.5 of the Project Regulations.

44. Eligible project costs shall be reimbursed according to unit costs and a flat rate. The amount of eligible project costs shall be determined for each project individually in the course of the evaluation of the eligibility of the project, taking into account the eligibility of project costs, but within the maximum financing amount allocated for the project as set out in Article 45 of the Guidelines for Applicants.

45. EUR 1 000 000.00 (one million euro) is the maximum financing amount to be allocated for the project.

46. The Beneficiary may be paid an advance payment. The maximum amount of the advance payment for the project shall be 30 percent of the project financing amount, unless the grant agreement provides for a lower maximum amount of the advance payment. The maximum amount of the advance payment and the procedure of its payment are laid down in the grant agreement and in Section 21 of the Project Regulations.

47. The maximum part of the project eligible for financing shall be equal to 100 % of the total eligible expenses of the project.

48. Applicants may contribute to the implementation of projects on their own initiative and/or using funds of other sources.

49. The share of eligible project costs that is not covered by financing amount allocated for the project shall be financed from the funds of the Beneficiary.

50. The following are the categories of eligible and ineligible expenses according to the Guidelines for Applicants:

| Expense category No. | Expense category name | Requirements and explanations |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | Land | Ineligible for financing. |
| 2. | Real estate | Ineligible for financing. |
| 3. | Construction, reconstruction, repair and other works | Ineligible for financing. |
| 4. | Plant, equipment and other assets | Ineligible for financing. |

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|----|---|--|
| 5. | Project execution | Personnel costs and all other statutory costs related to employment obligations shall be reimbursed according to unit costs (sub-clauses 51.1 and 51.2 of the Guidelines for Applicants); |
| 6. | Informing about the project | Expenses of this category have been included in the expense category “Indirect expenses and other expenses according to a flat project cost rate”. |
| 7. | Indirect expenses and other expenses according to a flat project cost rate | <p>Eligible for financing according to a flat rate (sub-clause 51.3 of the Guidelines for Applicants).</p> <p>These expenses include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. service costs; 2. cost of acquisition of long-term and short-term assets; 3. costs of depreciation (amortization) of short-term assets owned by the Beneficiary, if public funds (including of other countries) were not used to acquire these assets; 4. costs of business trips, traveling or internships of the project personnel; 5. project publicity costs. Solely the mandatory project information measures according to sub-clauses 450.1, 450.2 and 450.6 of the Project Regulations shall be eligible for financing; 6. costs of relocation of the Head of Research, research group members and their family members to the Republic of Lithuania; 7. indirect project costs (project administration and related costs). |

Note. The project budget table of the Application form shall be completed in accordance with the instructions for completing project budget forms presented in the Recommendations Regarding the Compliance of Project Costs with the Requirements of the European Union Structural Funds.

51. The following project execution costs shall be reimbursed while executing the project:

51.1. The salary of the Head of Research and all other statutory costs related to employment obligations shall be reimbursed applying unit costs which are set up during the assessment of application’s eligibility for funding while taking into account a netto salary of the Head of Research over the past 12 months prior to submission of the application;

51.2. The salary of project personnel (except the Head of Research) and other statutory costs related to employment obligations shall be reimbursed applying unit costs. Unit costs are set in accordance with the Report on Setting the Fixed Salary Tariffs in Research Projects. The report is published on the website of the EU Structural Funds at <http://www.esinvesticijos.lt/lt/dokumentai/supaprastinto-islaidu-apmokejimo-tyrimai> and the website of the Implementing Authority www.lmt.lt;

51.3. according to sub-clause 433.3 of the Project Regulations, project costs other than those specified in sub-clause 51.1 of the Guidelines for Applicants, shall be reimbursed by applying a flat rate, which accounts for 40 percent of salary expenses and expenses of related employer obligations.

52. Costs covered in application of unit costs indicated in Article 51 of the Guidelines for Applicants and the flat rate shall comply with the following provisions:

52.1. expenses covered applying unit costs and a flat rate shall comply with the provisions of Section 35 of the Project Regulations;

52.2. applicants shall have the right to indicate in their applications lower unit cost values than the maximum values set in the Guidelines for Applicants;

52.3. ineligible expenses are expenses listed in Section 34 of the Project Regulations.

53. Application preparation expenses and cross-financing expenses are ineligible.

54. Expenses incurred by the Beneficiary shall be reimbursed by way of compensating the expenses in regard to the unit costs set forth in the grant agreement and the documents submitted to substantiate the achieved result (i.e. summary certificates on computation of the expenses specified in line 5 of the Table presented in Article 50 of the Guidelines for Applicants and documents substantiating the achievement of the physical project execution indicator). The documents to be submitted are specified in the grant agreement. Unit costs and the flat rate valid at the time of the call for applications shall be set in the grant agreement, and may not be changed throughout the entire project execution period. If a managing or an audit institution determine at the time of the execution of the project that unit costs/a flat rate were set inappropriately, the adjusted rate or conditions of its application shall apply in covering expenses of actions carried out from the effective date of the rate or its application conditions.

55. If any income is generated in the course of the execution of the project, such income shall be evaluated and recovered no later than with the last payment claim in accordance with the procedure set forth in Article 447 and Article 448 of the Project Regulations.

CHAPTER V

DRAWING UP APPLICATIONS, INFORMING AND CONSULTING APPLICANTS; SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

56. In order to receive funding, applicants shall complete an application. A partly completed application form in PDF format is available on the EU Structural Funds' website www.esinvesticijos.lt, under the section "Financing", the "Related documents" of the published call for applications.

57. Applicants shall complete the application, and shall submit it together with the Annexes referred to in Article 62 of the Guidelines for Applicants before the deadline for the submission of applications specified in the call for applications via the website for the exchange of data of projects co-funded from the European Union Structural Funds (hereinafter – DMS), or, in case functionalities of the DMS are not implemented, applications shall be submitted to the Implementing Authority in writing in accordance with the procedure set forth in Section 12 of the Project Regulations.

58. In accordance with the Article 57 of the Guidelines for Applicants, if an application is submitted in writing, it may be submitted in one of the following ways:

58.1. a signed paper application and its Annexes drawn up in the Lithuanian language shall be submitted to the Implementing Authority, presenting the application and its Annexes recorded in electronic medium. The content of the original application and its electronic version shall be identical. If determined that the content of the electronic version of the application does not match the content of the original application, the information provided in the original application shall prevail. An application may be submitted by registered mail, via a courier, or served in person at the address indicated in the call for applications;

58.2. an electronic document signed by a secure electronic signature shall be sent to the Implementing Authority to the e-mail address indicated in the call for applications. When the application is submitted using this method, documents presented along and/or digital copies of the documents enclosed do not need to be certified by an electronic signature.

59. If applications are submitted via the DMS, the applicant shall log-in to the DMS through the State Information Resources Interoperability Platform, and register as a DMS user.

60. Within 3 days subsequent to the day of submission of the application via the DMS, the applicant shall provide the following information in English in the Application Submission and Reporting Information System of the Research Council of Lithuania: the general application information and the project description (project need, description of the selected solution and the

description of the expected result, project summary, capacity of the Beneficiary to implement the project and the description of the project management, project execution risks and their management, planned use of the project results following its completion, logical project rationale). The applicant shall log in through the website junkis.lmt.lt and register as a user, or he/she shall log in using the data earlier created by the user, if he/she had previously used the system. The applicant shall also upload the following documents in the system:

60.1. curriculum vitae of a Head of Research (in Lithuanian and English); along with other information, the curriculum vitae shall also specify the experience of a Head of Research in training researchers;

60.2. curriculum vitae of the key research group members (in Lithuanian and English);

60.3. a document certifying educational degree of a Head of Research (in the original language);

60.4. the list of scientific articles and other scientific output of a Head of Research:

60.4.1. scientific articles with comprehensive bibliographic information from *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science*; other scientific output with references to a publicly available source, which would allow verifying the information provided (in the original language) – for a **Head of Research in physical, biomedical, technological and agricultural sciences**;

60.4.2. comprehensive bibliographic information, references to database, or a publicly available source, which would allow verifying the information provided (in the original language) – for a **Head of Research in humanities and social sciences**;

60.5. lists of major scientific articles and other scientific outputs of key research group members (no more than 10 in the past 10 years):

60.5.1. with comprehensive bibliographic information from *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science* and references to a publicly available source, which would allow verifying the information provided (in the original language) – **for research group members working in the fields of physical, biomedical, technological and agricultural sciences**;

60.5.2. with comprehensive bibliographic information, references to database, or a publicly available source, which would allow verifying the information provided (in the original language) – **for research group members working in the fields of humanities and social sciences**.

61. In case of a temporary failure of DMS functionalities, leading to applicants' inability to submit applications or annex (-es) thereto on the last day of the deadline for the submission of applications, the Implementing Authority shall extend the deadline for the submission of applications for 7 days and/or create a possibility to submit applications and annexes thereto by other means, and shall announce thereof in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 82 of the Project Regulations.

62. Applicants shall submit the following annexes along with their applications:

62.1. a letter signed by the head of the applicant's institution or his/her authorized person regarding the capacities of the applicant's institution (Beneficiary) to implement the project, and a project performance guarantee (a standard form of the letter is available on the website of the EU structural assistance www.esinvesticijos.lt and the website of the Implementing Authority www.lmt.lt) (in the Lithuanian language);

62.2. copies of documents granting maternal leave, parental or child care leave, if the Head of Research seeks to take advantage of the exclusion of the duration of maternal leave, parental or child care leave until the child reaches the age of 3 from the periods specified in Article 11 of the Guidelines for Applicants;

62.3. copies of all authorizations to sign the respective documents (if they are signed by someone other than the head of the institution);

62.4. copies of documents proving the participation of the national research institute in the training of researchers together with a university (-ies) (e.g. a document proving that the national research institute carries out research necessary for the preparation of a doctoral thesis; a list of doctoral theses prepared by the national research institute for the past 5 years) (applicable when seeking to prove that the national research institute is involved in the training of researchers).

62.5. statement (-s) from the previous place (-s) of employment signed by the Head (-s) Manager (-s) stating a netto salary of the Head of Research in the past 12 months prior to the submission of application;

62.6. copy (-ies) of employment contract (-s) with foreign institution (-s) and/or statement from foreign organization (-s) or company (-ies) signed by the Head of Research Department (or authorized person) stating the past/current employment relationships demonstrating at least 5 years of work experience abroad;

63. The deadline for the submission of applications is defined in the call for applications published on the website of the EU structural assistance www.esinvesticijos.lt and on the website of the Implementing Authority www.lmt.lt.

64. Applicants shall be informed and consulted in accordance with the procedure laid down in Section 5 of the Project Regulations. Information on specific consultants of the Implementing Authority and their contact details shall be provided in the call for applications published in accordance with the Guidelines for Applicants on the website of the EU structural assistance www.esinvesticijos.lt and on the website of the Implementing Authority www.lmt.lt.

65. The Implementing Authority shall carry out assessments of the eligibility for funding of projects in accordance with the procedure laid down in Sections 14 and 15 of the Project Regulations, in accordance with the requirements of Annex 1 to the Guidelines for Applicants, also the evaluation of the benefit and quality of projects in accordance with the requirements of Sections 14 and 16 of the Project Regulations, according to the requirements laid down in Annex 2 of the Guidelines for Applicants. Results of the evaluation of the eligibility of all projects submitted under the call for applications shall be indicated in the project eligibility evaluation report.

66. The evaluation of applications shall be carried out in the following manner:

66.1. the assessment of the eligibility for funding during which compliance with the requirements set forth in Annex 1 to the Guidelines for Applicants and the special project selection criterion indicated in Article 24 of the Guidelines for Applicants is assessed;

66.2. applications that meet the eligibility for funding requirements shall further be referred for the benefit and quality assessment.

67. Applications shall be divided into 2 parts before conducting a cost-benefit analysis of projects:

67.1. applications in the field of social sciences and humanities;

67.2. applications in the field of physical, biomedical, technological and agricultural sciences.

68. Each part of applications listed in Article 67 of the Guidelines for Applicants shall further be broken down into application groups, taking into account the total number of applications and their number by research fields approved by Order No V-93 of the Minister of Education and Science of 6 February 2019 “On the Approval of Research Fields”, and given the topics of the projects. The number of applications in the groups should be no less than 15 (except for cases when the number of applications in parts of applications referred to in Article 67 of the Guidelines for Applicants is less than 15), and no more than 30. The groups of applications compiled by the Committee of Humanities and Social Sciences and/or the Committee of Natural and Technical Sciences of the Implementing Authority (hereinafter – the Committee) shall be approved by an order of the Chairman of the Implementing Authority, and shall be published on the website of the Implementing Authority within 5 working days, indicating a conditional name of the group of applications, and the application codes assigned to the group.

69. In the course of the evaluation of applications, the Implementing Authority may ask applicants to provide any missing information and/or documents. Applicants shall provide the information and/or documents within the term set by the Implementing Authority.

70. Applications shall be evaluated for no longer than 90 days from the last day of the deadline for the submission of applications indicated in the call for applications. The assessment of project eligibility shall last no longer than 40 days from the last day of the deadline for the submission of applications indicated in the call for applications, and the evaluation of the benefit

and quality of projects as well as the project selection shall take no longer than 50 days from the day of approval of the project eligibility evaluation report. If the eligibility assessment is completed earlier than in 40 days, the evaluation of the benefit and quality of projects may last longer, but the total duration of the evaluation of applications may not exceed 90 days.

71. In case of a failure to evaluate applications within the set period of time (when referring to other institutions or carrying out inspections at the project implementation and/or administration site is necessary for the evaluation of applications, also in cases when the amount in all applications received exceeds the amount allocated for financing under the call for applications), the evaluation term may be extended by a decision of the Implementing Authority. The Implementing Authority shall notify applicants of the new term for the evaluation of applications via the DMS, or, when functionalities of the DMS have not been installed, - in writing, also notifying the Ministry.

72. Applications shall be rejected for reasons referred to in Articles 19, 21 and 26 of the Guidelines for Applicants, or Sections 14–16 of the Project Regulations in the manner specified therein. Applicants shall be notified of a rejection of their applications through the DMS, or, in case functionalities of the DMS have not yet been installed, - in writing within 3 working days from the date of adoption of the decision to reject the application.

73. The project benefit and quality assessment shall be performed by foreign experts appointed by the Committee, whose work shall consist of an individual assessment and an assessment in a group of experts. 3 experts shall be appointed for individual assessment of each application; an additional expert (-s) may be appointed by a reasoned decision of the respective Committee, if the application provides for research of interdisciplinary nature. Groups of experts of each application group shall be formed from experts appointed for individual assessment of applications for each application group formed in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 68 of the Guidelines for Applicants. Experts shall conduct an individual assessment individually without consulting other members of the group regarding the assessment of a specific application. In the course of a group assessment, experts shall discuss the results of the individual assessment and seek a consensus concerning the assessment of each application. The assessment of the group of experts recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the group of experts shall be considered the final evaluation of the benefit and quality of the project.

74. If research (activities) provided for in several applications for the same call essentially match, the eligible project shall be the one with the highest score.

75. Upon the completion of the project benefit and quality assessment, a report on the evaluation of project benefit and quality shall be drawn up for each group of applications. The report shall present a list of evaluated applications ranked according to the score assigned to the applications within the framework of the benefit and quality assessment (from the highest down), also indicating the score assigned to the application according to each priority project selection criterion. If applications score the same number of points, they shall be ranked in the priority order in accordance with Article 151 of the Project Regulations.

76. When allocating funds for projects having received a passing score in the evaluation of benefit and quality, solely the projects attributed to the same part of applications indicated in Article 67 of the Guidelines for Applicants shall compete for financing. In the absence of competition in a particular part of applications, the remaining unallocated funds may be allocated for projects of another part of applications. If the funds allocated under the Guidelines for Applicants are insufficient to finance all projects of one or several projects of one of the parts of applications, and/or there are unallocated funds remaining, then:

76.1. lists of the remaining projects having received a passing score by parts of applications where projects are ranked in the order of priority by the number of points they received in the evaluation of benefit and quality (from the highest down) shall be drawn up;

76.2. unallocated funds shall be distributed for projects in observance of the order of priority set in Article 75 of the Guidelines for Applicants.

77. The final discussion of the assessment of applications shall be held, and the composition of the group engaged in the discussion of the final assessment shall be approved by

the Implementing Authority in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 146 of the Project Regulations. The principles of activities of the group engaged in the discussion of the final assessment shall be set forth in an order approving the composition of the group, or in its Rules of Procedure.

78. Having agreed with the Ministry, the Implementing Authority may decide not to hold a final discussion of the assessment of applications referred to in Article 77 hereof, provided the amount allocated to the call for applications is sufficient to fund all the applications submitted under that call and recognized as eligible during the benefit and quality assessment.

79. Having completed the evaluation of applications, the Implementing Authority shall draw up a report on selected projects in accordance with the provisions of Section 17 of the Project Regulations. The list of the applicants whose projects were or were not selected for financing, the financing amount allocated for each project and the total financing amount distributed under a call for applications shall be published on the website of the EU structural assistance www.esinvesticijos.lt and the website of the Implementing Authority www.lmt.lt no later than within 7 days from the day of approval of the report on selected projects, informing applicants thereof through the DMS, or, in case such functionalities of the DMS have not yet been installed, - in writing (shall not apply if applications were rejected in the course of the assessment of applications).

80. Applicants shall have the right to file an appeal regarding the evaluation of benefit and quality of their applications with the Implementing Authority within 3 working days from the day of dispatch of information on the approval of the report on selected projects in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Rules of Competitive Financing.

81. Applicants shall have the right to appeal the decision to approve the report of selected projects in accordance with the procedure set forth in Section 43 of the Project Regulations no later than within 14 days from the day on which the applicant learned or should have learned about the appealed actions or omission of the Implementing Authority.

82. Having completed the evaluation of applications, the Implementing Authority shall, in the manner set forth in Section 18 of the Project Regulations and using the form provided in Annex 4 to the Guidelines for Applicants, draw up and present to the applicant a draft grant agreement and indicate the term of validity of the offer to sign the grant agreement. If the applicant fails to sign the grant agreement within the term of validity of the offer set by the Implementing Authority, the offer to sign the grant agreement shall be considered expired. The applicant shall have the right to apply to the Implementing Authority with a request to change the term for signing the grant agreement for objective reasons beyond the control of the applicant.

83. The original copy of the grant agreement may be drawn up and submitted in one of the below ways, depending on the form of the document chosen by the Beneficiary:

83.1. as a signed paper document;

83.2. as an electronic document signed by an electronic signature.

CHAPTER VI REQUIREMENTS FOR THE EXECUTION OF PROJECTS

84. Projects shall be executed following the requirements of the grant agreement, the Guidelines for Applicants and the Project Regulations.

85. Where the execution of project activities has not started within 6 months from the effective date of the grant agreement, the Implementing Authority shall have the right to unilaterally terminate the grant agreement in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Project Regulations.

86. While executing the project activities, the Beneficiary shall ensure the participation in project activities of representative of the target group indicated in Article 32 of the Guidelines for Applicants only, and shall undertake to have documents, which would substantiate the belonging of each member to the target group.

87. The Beneficiary shall provide the Implementing Authority through the DMS, or, when functionalities of the DMS have not been installed, - in writing, with information on each researcher carrying out a research, on the first day of his/her involvement in direct project activities once during the project execution period according to the project participant's questionnaire form, which the Implementing Authority shall present to the Beneficiary after the signing of the agreement.

88. If the researcher refuses to complete the participant questionnaire form and/or the Beneficiary is unable to provide data on the participant, the costs of participation of this researcher in project activities shall be considered ineligible. If the researcher is unable to complete the participant questionnaire form due to his/her disability and/or the Beneficiary has access to information in public registers or state or municipal information systems on researchers carrying out the research, or has information about researchers (and can substantiate its correctness during an on-site inspection), in such a case, the Beneficiary shall present the information on project participants laid down in the participant's questionnaire to the Implementing Authority, and the researcher shall not be required to complete the participant's questionnaire form.

89. In supervising the project execution, the Implementing Authority shall have the right to carry out an on-site inspection of the project. Representatives of the Ministry shall have the right to visit the project implementation and/or administration site individually or together with the Implementing Authority.

90. In the course of the project execution, the Beneficiary shall agree with the Implementing Authority on all deviations from the planned implementation of the project, changing its scope, expenses, extending the period of the project execution or otherwise changing the project or the obligations of the Beneficiary laid down in the grant agreement. Changes of the project execution or the grant agreement shall be approved with the Implementing Authority in accordance with the procedure laid down in the grant agreement.

91. The Beneficiary shall provide information about the project being executed or the already completed project in the manner set forth in Section 37 of the Project Regulations by selecting the actions for informing about the project proportional to the scope of project activities provided for in sub-clauses 450.1, 450.2 and 450.6 of the Project Regulations, and engaging in other activities intended for information about project activities.

92. The Beneficiary shall create a possibility for responsible officials of the European Commission, the European Court of Auditors, an audit institution and other institutions to access all the documents in the course of the execution of projects and for 2 years following the year when the decision was taken to approve the invoices submitted to the European Commission with included expenses of projects whose financing has ended, and/or when the end of project financing coincides with the reporting year for which the invoices are submitted to the European Commission, and to store the documents in the procedure stipulated in Article 488 of the Project Regulations in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 42 of the Project Regulations, except for documents, which are drawn up, submitted and received through the DMS.

93. If when executing the project the Beneficiary fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement, and/or violates legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania and/or the European Union, or if the research report submitted by the Beneficiary has received a negative assessment, the Implementing Authority shall have the right, by its unilateral decision, to reduce, suspend or terminate the financing of the project, and/or to terminate the grant agreement and/or to request the repayment of the project financing funds or a part thereof, following the requirements set forth in the decision of the Implementing Authority. Any violations of the grant agreement shall be investigated, and the decisions regarding such the identified violations shall be passed in the procedure set forth in the Project Regulations.

CHAPTER VII

PROCEDURE FOR AMENDING THE GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

94. Section 11 of the Project Regulations lays down the procedure for amending the Guidelines for Applicants.

95. If the Guidelines for Applicants is being amended after the projects have already been selected, the amendments shall, without violating the principle of equality, also apply in respect of the projects that have already been implemented in the cases specified in Article 91 of the Project Regulations.
