



CHAIRMAN OF THE RESEARCH COUNCIL OF LITHUANIA

ORDER ON THE APPROVAL OF THE GENERAL RULES FOR THE EXPERTS OF THE RESEARCH COUNCIL OF LITHUANIA AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

13 October 2023 No V-550
Vilnius

In accordance with sub-paragraph 19.13 of the Regulations of the Research Council of Lithuania, approved by the Resolution No 375 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 20 April 2022 “On the Approval of the Regulations of the Research Council of Lithuania”:

1. I a p p r o v e the attached General Rules for Experts of the Research Council of Lithuania and their Activities (hereinafter referred to as “the Rules”).

2. I n s t r u c t the Communication and Organisation Unit of the Research Council of Lithuania to prepare a Description of the Procedures for the Administration of the Expert Database referred to in Paragraph 6 of the Rules by 31 December 2023.

3. I d e c l a r e invalid the Order of the Chairman of the Council of 29 January 2018 No V - 42 “On the Approval of the General Rules for the Experts of the Research Council of Lithuania and their Activities” and all its amendments.

Chairman

Gintaras Valinčius

APPROVED BY
Order No V-550 of the
Chairman of the Research Council
of Lithuania
of 13 October 2023

GENERAL RULES FOR THE EXPERTS OF THE RESEARCH COUNCIL OF LITHUANIA AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The General Rules for the Experts of the Research Council of Lithuania and their Activities (referred to as “the Rules”) lay down the requirements for experts of the Research Council of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as “the Council”), the general principles of their selection and activities, as well as the provisions on remuneration for expert work.

2. The Council, in order to fulfil the aims and functions set out in the Regulations of the Research Council of Lithuania, uses experts to evaluate competitive and non-competitive objects - to perform expert work.

3. The following terms are used in the Rules:

3.1. an **Expert** is a person who has the knowledge and competence in regards to the object to be evaluated;

3.2. **Expert work** means research and experimental development (R&D) activities carried out by persons with high professional qualifications and/or scientific competence, the purpose of which is to provide new, in-depth knowledge about the subject under evaluation, which is needed for the decision-making bodies to make informed decisions or to make reasoned proposals on science and innovation policy to external bodies;

3.3. **Competitive object of evaluation** means the object of an R&D competitive funding area (usually a project application submitted to a call for proposals for a programme or instrument administered by the Council, or a report on a project that has been awarded a grant in a call for proposals and has been funded);

3.4. **Non-competitive object of evaluation** means an object that is not within the scope of competitive funding (e.g. evaluation of the results of a scientific/art activity, of the right to implement doctoral studies, of an impact assessment analysis/review of a programme or instrument, of a draft plan for membership of an international research infrastructure).

4. Other terms used in the Rules correspond to the terms used in the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania and in the General Rules of the Research Council of Lithuania for the Competitive Funding of Research and Dissemination Projects (hereinafter referred to as “the General Rules”), approved by the Order of the Chairman of the Council of 4 April 2019 No V-176.

CHAPTER II REGISTRATION IN THE EXPERT DATABASE

5. A person who may be called upon to carry out expert work for the Council must have registered on his/her own initiative in the Council’s Expert Database (hereinafter referred to as the “EDB”), or have consented to be registered in the EDB by e-mail at the Council’s invitation.

6. The EDB collects and manages the personal data, contact and other information of the Council’s experts.

7. The procedures for the administration of the EDB, the related functions of the Council administration, the expert committees and the procedures for informing and updating experts and

persons seeking or invited to become experts shall be laid down in the Description of the Procedures for the Administration of the Expert Database, approved by the Chairman of the Council.

CHAPTER III REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COUNCIL'S EXPERTS

8. The Council's scientific expert should have obtained a doctoral degree and have published significant peer-reviewed publications; having an experience of expert work, of carrying out (participating in or leading) projects in international or Council-administrated programmes or instruments, of international scientific work, of training researchers and of disseminating the results of scientific activities is an advantage.

9. The Council's art expert must meet at least one of the following requirements:

9.1. he/she must be a recognised artist - a creator or performer of works of art who has created or performed works of art (culture) which have won recognition from the Lithuanian and/or foreign public and art professionals: have been awarded prestigious international or national prizes or other high awards; and/or have educated recognised artists;

9.2. he/she must should have obtained a doctoral degree in art or science and have experience in artistic/creative activity, training of artists and/or dissemination of art.

10. The Council's expert practitioner may be a person who has the competences required to qualitatively assess objects to be evaluated. At least one of the following requirements applies to such an expert practitioner:

10.1. to have experience of working in a company or institution involved in R&D and/or innovation activities;

10.2. to have managerial experience in a research and higher education institution;

10.3. to have experience in public administration in a field related to science or studies;

10.4. to have managerial experience in the organisation of scientific (art) activities and international scientific cooperation.

CHAPTER IV PRINCIPLES FOR SELECTING EXPERTS

11. When selecting experts and setting up an Expert commission (appointing an individual expert):

11.1. it shall be determined what competencies are needed to ensure a quality evaluation;

11.2. consideration shall be given to whether the Council's expert has related competencies that are not directly relevant to the object to be evaluated and the task assigned to him/her, but which may be useful in the performance of his/her expert work;

11.3. it shall be ensured that the expert work does not give rise to a conflict of interest, by assessing the circumstances known to the Council, as set out in the Council expert's pledge (form provided as the Annex to the Rules);

11.4. consideration shall be given to whether the Council expert is restricted from evaluating the objects to be evaluated of programmes or instruments administered by the Council on the basis of the circumstances set out in the Description of the Avoidance of Potential Conflicts of Interest approved by the Chairman of the Council, or in the General Rules;

11.5. an expert of the Council who is subject to the restrictions on submitting applications set out in the General Rules on the grounds of violation of the academic ethics, or on the grounds of the termination or non-implementation of a project that he/she has led, shall not be invited to participate in the evaluation.

12. The legal acts approved by the Chairman of the Council regulating the implementation of programmes or instruments administered by the Council or the procedure for expert evaluation

may lay down additional principles for the composition of the Expert Commission (appointment of an individual expert), and may provide that the Commission may include persons delegated by the Lithuanian public administration authorities to carry out the work of the Expert Commission (group).

13. Expert commissions shall be set up (approved) and individual experts shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Council, specifying the expert task to be carried out.

14. Proposals to the Chairman of the Council regarding possible members of expert commissions (individual experts) shall be made by the Council's expert committees within the areas of expertise, and, on mandate from the Chairman of the Council, by the Council's administration.

15. In the case of the evaluation of proposals for interdisciplinary projects, reports on such projects or otherwise, the Chairman of the Council may, at the request of the head of the Expert Commission or on the proposal of the Council's Expert Committee, designate an additional expert(s) to evaluate the specific object of evaluation.

CHAPTER V PRINCIPLES OF EXPERT ACTIVITIES

16. The Council's expert must be guided by the following basic principles when carrying out the expert task entrusted to him by the Council:

16.1. professionalism - to evaluate the objects of evaluation in his/her own field of interest and in related fields of scientific (art) interest (fields of activity) in a highly responsible manner, taking into account latest achievements in these fields; he/she must impartially assess the competence and experience of the group of implementers, and must determine the value of the object to be evaluated in an objective manner;

16.2. impartiality - when expressing an opinion or proposing a decision, he/she must be guided by objective criteria, avoiding subjectivity, prejudices (both positive and negative) and biases (both positive and negative) related to the subject of the evaluation and/or the applicant;

16.3. confidentiality - all information/materials relating to the expert evaluation may be used only for the purposes of the evaluation and its improvement; the objects to be evaluated, the composition of the Expert Commission, the opinions of its members expressed in the course of taking the expert evaluation decisions, and part or all of the results of the evaluation may not be disclosed;

16.4. honesty - to be guided by conscience, to take responsibility for the work assigned, to strive for fairness; to behave honourably towards the persons being assessed and towards the members of the Expert Commission and other colleagues;

16.5. transparency - to comply with the applicable legislation published in advance, to conduct the evaluation in accordance with the established procedures; to achieve credibility in the evaluation; to provide clear and reasoned conclusions on the object of the evaluation;

16.6. equality - the expert evaluation shall not be influenced by the applicants' gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, religion, beliefs or opinions, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, religion, if known to the expert.

17. An expert shall not represent the interests of research and higher education institutions or business, shall not exaggerate or belittle the achievements and importance of any scientific area or field, shall be guided by his/her own competence, shall carry out the assigned work in a correct and timely manner, and shall respect and protect the copyrights and intellectual property rights of the object of the evaluation.

18. In accordance with the principles set out in paragraph 16 of the Rules, relations within the Expert Commission must be based on goodwill, respect, collegiality and tolerance of the other person's opinion.

19. The Head of the Expert Commission shall ensure that the Expert Commission adheres to the above principles of the expert activities. An individual expert shall comply with the above principles of expert activities insofar as they apply to an individual.

20. Before commencing expert work for the Council, the expert must have signed a pledge (form provided as the Annex to the Rules).

CHAPTER VI REMUNERATION FOR EXPERT WORK

21. The work of the expert shall be remunerated in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Council's Regulations; the remuneration shall be determined in accordance with the Description of Procedures for Remuneration of Experts approved by the Chairman of the Council.

22. Persons delegated by Lithuanian public administration authorities (paragraph 12 of the Rules), who are bound by employment relations with the Lithuanian public administration authorities that delegated them, shall not be paid remuneration for their work, unless other legal acts stipulate otherwise.

CHAPTER VII FINAL PROVISIONS

23. A person registered within the Council's EDB may be proposed for expert evaluation by other institutions at the request of those institutions: by submitting (agreeing to submit) data to the EDB, a person may agree to be proposed as an expert to other institutions without being approached separately. Consent may be withdrawn at any time.

24. In the first quarter of each year, the Council shall publish on the website www.lmt.lt a list of the Council's experts who have carried out an expert evaluation during the previous calendar year, i.e. who have completed their expert evaluation not earlier than the first day of the period and not later than the last day of the period. The list indicates if the expert has only carried out an evaluation of non-competitive objects. In addition, the Council may publish a list of experts on terms other than those specified in this paragraph, if other legislation so provides.

25. A Council expert who fails to comply with the principles for the activities of experts as set out in the Rules, or who fails to declare a conflict of interest in violation of the pledge he/she has signed (paragraph 20 of the Rules), shall be struck off from the Council's experts by a decision of the Chairman of the Council and shall not be allowed to become an expert of the Council again for one year from the date on which that decision is taken.

26. An Expert of the Council who has been found to have violated academic ethics by a final decision of the Ombudsman for Academic Ethics and Procedures (hereinafter referred to as "the Ombudsman"), or by a court decision based on the Ombudsman's decision, that has become final, if the violation corresponds to the most serious forms of conduct violating the principles of academic ethics, as specified in paragraph 17 of the Recommendations to Scientific and Study Institutions on the Preparation, Adoption and Implementation of Codes of Academic Ethics, adopted by the Ombudsman by Order No V-38 of 25 August 2020 "On the Approval of the Guidelines for Scientific and Study Institutions on the Development, Adoption and Implementation of the Codes of Academic Ethics", shall be struck off from the Council's experts and shall not be allowed to become an expert of Council for a period of five years from the day on which the decision becomes final.

27. The registration of a person with the EDB does not create an obligation for the Council to call on him/her for expert tasks.

(Form of pledge of the expert of the Research Council of Lithuania)

PLEDGE OF THE EXPERT OF THE RESEARCH COUNCIL OF LITHUANIA

....., 20...

I,,
(*Name and surname*)

being an expert of the Research Council of Lithuania (an individual expert) and carrying out the expert tasks assigned to me, promise and undertake to adhere to the following principles of impartiality, confidentiality, honesty and transparency:

a) when expressing an opinion or proposing a decision, I shall be guided by objective criteria, avoiding subjectivity, prejudices (both positive and negative) and biases (both positive and negative) related to the subject of the evaluation and/or the project implementers;

b) I shall use all material related to expert evaluation only for the purposes of evaluation and its improvement; I shall not disclose the objects to be evaluated, the composition of the Expert Commission, the opinions of the members of the Expert commission expressed in the course of taking expert evaluation decisions and part or all the results of the evaluation;

c) I shall follow my conscience, feel responsible for the work assigned, rely on the ideals of truth-seeking and behave honourably towards the persons being assessed, the members of the Expert commission and other colleagues;

d) I shall comply with the applicable legislation published in advance, to conduct the evaluation in accordance with the established procedures; I shall draw clear and reasoned conclusions about the evaluation object; I shall thoroughly and carefully examine the remarks made by the applicant taking into account the evaluation and, if necessary, correct the evaluation of the evaluation object.

If one of the following occurs:

1) a person who has an interest in the evaluation of an object is related to me through marriage or affinity, i.e. a spouse, children (adopted children), their spouses and their children (adopted children); my and my spouse's parents (foster parents), grandparents, brothers and sisters, their spouses and their children (adopted children), cousins and their spouses;

2) I have submitted a request (as a principal investigator or implementer) to participate in the programme or measure of the Research Council of Lithuania, competing for a share the same funds;

3) a person who has an interest in the evaluation of an object is a researcher who is related to me by direct or indirect (one level above or below) administrative subordination¹ in at least one legal entity;

4) a person who has an interest in the evaluation of an object is a researcher working with me in the smallest administrative unit of at least one legal entity;

5) a person who has an interest in the evaluation of an object is my co-author of results of the research activities that are not older than five years, calculating in the year's accuracy;

¹ administrative subordination is understood in both directions: both direct subordination - manager (deputy manager)-subordinate and subordinate-manager (deputy manager), and indirect subordination - higher level manager (deputy manager)-lower level manager (deputy manager)-subordinate, and subordinate-lower level manager (deputy manager)-higher level manager (deputy manager).

6) a person who has an interest in the evaluation of an object was (is) involved in the same project as myself during the last five years;

or in the event of other circumstances not listed in paragraphs 1 to 6 that potentially cause a conflict of interest,

I undertake to immediately notify the person organising the work of an expert commission (or an individual expert) and not to participate in any discussion on issue that causes the conflict of interest.

.....
(Signature)

.....
(Name and surname)
