



**СЕЛСКОСТОПАНСКА АКАДЕМИЯ
AGRICULTURAL ACADEMY**

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**PREPARATION GUIDELINES AND METHODOLOGY FOR THE EVALUATION
OF PROJECTS UNDER THE "POST-DOCTORAL STUDENTS" (PDs) MODULE OF
THE "YOUNG SCIENTISTS AND POST-DOCTORAL STUDENTS - 2" (YSPD-2)
NATIONAL PROGRAM AT
AGRICULTURAL ACADEMY (AA)**

Sofia, 2024

1. Guidelines for the preparation of the project proposal

The project proposal should be prepared according to the template attached to the call and should contain the following information:

- degree, academic position and name of the applicant;
- project topic;
- the duration of the project (in line with the period described in point 5.2 of the call for proposals of the YSPD-2 National Programme;
- the name of the host organisation within the structure of the AA;
- comprehensive information on points 1 to 8 of the project template proposal;
- a financial plan, which includes cost planning for *a maximum of 10 months* on the following eligible project implementation costs:
 - basic monthly salaries of newly recruited PDs and additional monthly remuneration of the PDs already recruited in the structural units of the AA;
 - for the implementation of the project proposal: mobility, materials and
 - supplies;
 - for monthly accommodation costs - only in case of recruitment of a PD in a structural unit for the appointment of a PD from another country or location;

The monthly remuneration of the PD should represent up to 85 % of the total eligible costs.

The monthly remuneration amounts of the PD may be:

- for basic monthly salaries for newly recruited PDs - not less than BGN 2000 and not more than BGN 3000 (including funds for employer's social security contributions and for additional remuneration for the degree of PhD);
- for additional monthly remuneration of PDs, employees of the structural units of the AA - not lower than BGN 400 and not higher than BGN 800 (including funds for employer's insurance).

The following costs may be used to implement the project proposal:

- mobility: for travel (travel, subsistence and accommodation), fieldwork, payment of fees for participation in scientific forums - up to 15 % of the funds under project costs;
- materials and consumables necessary for the implementation of the scientific research in the host organisation - *up to 25%* of the project funds.

In the case of recruitment of a PD from another country or location than that of the structural units of the AA, up to an additional BGN 1000 per month may be allocated for accommodation costs of the PD.

The maximum amount for each individual project of an internal PD is BGN 6 500.

The maximum amount for each individual external PD project is BGN 23 530.

Ineligible expenses

The following types of costs are considered inadmissible under the current procedure for the selection of project proposals:

- expenditure on activities carried out before the date of entry into force of the financing agreement under this procedure;
- expenditure already funded or subject to confirmed and secured funding from other sources;
- expenditure on the purchase of assets and the carrying out of activities not directly linked to the project proposal and the fundamental research envisaged therein;
- costs of fines, penalties and forfeitures incurred during the performance of the contract;
- consultancy costs for the preparation of the project proposal.

2. Methodology for evaluation of the project proposal

The indicators that will be used to evaluate the project proposals are:

1. Relevance and significance of the scientific issue in regional, national or global aspects.
2. Originality and innovativeness of the research, and realism of the project (of the work program and financial plan).
3. Research experience and competence of the candidate (including publications on the topic) and development of the theme from previous participation in stage 1 of the program.
4. Expected results and contributions from the implementation of the project:
 - Outcomes linked to new knowledge;
 - Contribution to solving problems related to societal challenges (if applicable);
 - Number of publications in editions indexed and refereed in Scopus and/or Web of Science, reflecting the results of the project;

- Number of applications for certificates/patents/utility models resulting from the implementation of the project.

The evaluation of proposals will be based on a scorecard (Table 1) and a rating scale (Table 2) by two reviewers appointed by order of the Director of the host organisation. The referees are habilitated persons registered with the National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID) in the relevant scientific field and professional direction.

Table 1. Candidate scorecard

| Scientific evaluation criteria for project proposals | Maximum score |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Relevance and significance of the scientific issues</p> <p>1.1. Significance of scientific objectives. Relevance of hypotheses</p> <p>Rationale:</p> | <p>20</p> <p>20</p> |
| <p>2. Originality and innovation of the scientific research and realism of the proposed methodology</p> <p>Rationale:</p> | <p>20</p> |
| <p>3. Research experience and competence of the candidate (including publications on the topic) and development of the theme from previous participation in stage 1 of the program.</p> <p>Rationale:</p> | <p>10</p> |
| <p>4. Expected results and contributions of the project implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes linked to new knowledge • Contribution to solving problems related to societal challenges (if applicable) • Number of publications in editions indexed and refereed in Scopus and/or Web of Science, prepared by the candidate (5 pts. per publication, but not more than 15 pts.) • Number of requests for certificates/patents/utility models with the participation of the applicant (5 points per request or no more than 15 points) <p>Rationale:</p> | <p>50</p> <p>10</p> <p>10</p> <p>15</p> <p>15</p> |
| <p>Recommendations to the applicant (optional)</p> | |

The final score is based on the scale in Table 2.

Table 2. Evaluation scale for PD project proposals

| Evaluation | Points |
|-------------------|----------------|
| "excellent" | 85 to 100 pts. |
| "very good" | 69 to 84 pts. |
| "good" | 53 to 68 pts. |
| "untenable" | < 52 pts. |

Only projects rated "excellent" will be funded, and if financial resources become available, the next projects in the ranking will be funded, with the exception of projects rated "untenable".

In the event of insufficient funds to support all applicants who have passed the administrative compliance, the ranking shall also be based on the following indicators as reflected in the Candidates' supplementary evaluation card:

- Publications in refereed journals indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science in 2023 - 10 points per publication;
- Certificates/patents/utility models claimed involving the applicant in 2023 - 10 points per application;
- Participation in scientific forums - conferences, seminars, roundtables, etc. in 2023 with paper, poster or presentation - 5 pts;
- Other (if applicable) - Courses and specialisations for the enhancement of training, including Erasmus+ training in 2023 - 2 points.

3. Project reporting conditions

The post-doctoral fellows are required to maintain proper accounting records and documentation of project expenditures incurred in accordance with the contract. The funds provided shall be spent in a targeted and legal manner for the implementation of the project activities detailed in the Work Programme. The Contractor may not modify or cancel activities under the Work Programme, except in exceptional cases (prolonged incapacity for work,

emergencies, disasters, etc.). The Contractor may not divert funds from the approved Financial Plan to implement other activities or tasks outside the Work Programme.

The postdoctoral fellow shall submit to the head of the organisation a Report on the scientific and financial implementation of the project within 20 days from the date of completion of the project. The report shall be evaluated by the selected reviewers according to approved criteria (Table 3) within 20 days of submission of the report.

Table 3. Criteria for project performance evaluation

| Evaluation | Criteria |
|-------------------|--|
| "excellent" | Full implementation of work programme tasks |
| "very good" | Over 85% completion of work programme tasks |
| "good" | Over 70% completion of work programme tasks |
| "unacceptable" | Less than 70% completion of work programme tasks |

Penalties for reports rated 'unacceptable' are determined by each organisation where the project was implemented.

The evaluations of the reviewers are sent to the director of the host organization and to the YSPD-2 National Programme Management Committee of the AA (Art. 3 of the Rules for transparent selection of applicants and allocation of YSPD-2 National Programme funds in the structural units of the Agricultural Academy) at: ssa_nauka@agriacad.bg.