

# **Methodology for evaluating applications for tenders (unofficial consolidated text No 33)**

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## A. GENERAL

The Methodology for evaluating applications for the co-financing of research activities (hereinafter: the Methodology) is based on the provisions of the [Research and Development Activity Act](#) (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 22/06 – official consolidated text, 61/06-ZDru-1, 112/07, 9/11, 57/12-ZPOP-1A), [Rules on criteria for establishing compliance with the conditions for being the head of a research project](#) (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 53/16) and [Rules on procedures for financing, co-financing, evaluating and monitoring the implementation of research activities](#) (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 52/16 and subsequent, hereinafter: Rules of Procedure).

The Methodology sets out the threshold values, minimum grades, criteria with the accompanying number of points and a more detailed description of the assessment procedures as laid out in the Rules of procedure.

### I. Quantitative grades

Researcher's quantitative grades measure research performance of the researcher, i.e. published research with the emphasis on research quality (grades **A<sub>1</sub>**, **A'**, **A''** and **A<sup>1/2</sup>**), whereas grade **A<sub>3</sub>** is used to measure the performance of the researcher in acquiring research funding other than Agency funding.

The threshold values are defined as follows:

#### Grade **A<sub>1</sub>**

Grade **A<sub>1</sub>** comprises four elements:

- SICRIS (COBISS) points: threshold value 1500 points, grade 4
- Above average scientific excellence A'': threshold value A''/1500, grade 1
- Above average scientific excellence A: threshold value A/1500, grade 1
- Above average scientific excellence A<sup>1/2</sup>: threshold value A<sup>1/2</sup>/1500, grade 1

The joint threshold value for **A<sub>1</sub>** is 7 points.

The threshold value for **A<sub>3</sub>**, which is in accordance with the Rules of procedure determined as close to the highest values achieved by Slovenian researchers, amounts to 15 FTE of the price category of the C research programme in the preceding year for grade 10.

The data for calculating the **A<sub>3</sub>** grade are obtained by the Agency directly from the research organizations (hereinafter: RO) by means of a form and instructions laid out at the beginning of each calendar year.

If a RO carries out the role of the distributor of project funds outside the Agency (grantholder), **A<sub>3</sub>** takes into account only the RO's own use of funds (the share distributed by the RO to other

project partners is not taken into account for A<sub>3</sub>). Funding from companies taken into account must be generated as cumulative net inflows from the companies to the RO. This means that only the difference between revenues and expenses earned in operations with a company in relation to the projects for businesses and other less complex co-operation with companies taken into account for A<sub>3</sub> can be claimed by the RO as funding from companies.

## **II. Minimum quantitative entry requirements**

Unless specified otherwise in this Methodology, the entry requirement to be fulfilled by the researchers for all calls is as follows:

$$A_1 \geq 0,3, CI \geq 1 \text{ and } A_3 \geq 0,$$

where CI is the number of pure citations. This entry requirement is also used for members of permanent and temporary expert bodies. For researchers who have already retired and no longer fulfil this requirement, data in the year of retirement will be used.

To verify the fulfilment of requirements for the composition of programme and project groups when evaluating the interim or annual report for the past financing period or year, the composition of the programme or project group from the report on annual distribution of research hours for the past financing period and evaluation of bibliographical indicators of research performance are considered as of 31 December for the past year, or, at the latest, as of 31 January of the current year.

## **III. Quantitative entry requirements for mentors and programme/project leaders**

In addition to the requirement laid out in the previous paragraph, candidates for mentors and programme/project leaders must also fulfil the requirements listed below as minimum values for each parameter. Researchers with young doctor or young mentor status must fulfil the requirements for young doctors or young mentors where expressly required.

The candidates must meet the following requirements:

$$A_{1/2} \geq 400 \text{ or } A' \geq 200 \text{ or } A'' \geq 50 \text{ or basic requirement and } A' > 0.$$

Candidates for major research project leaders must also fulfil the additional requirement:  $A'' > 0$ .

Regardless of the provisions of the second paragraph, the entry requirement for leaders of post-doctoral projects is:

$$A_1 > 0 \text{ and } A' > 0.$$

The basic requirement for candidates for programme/project leaders and mentors to young researchers is:

$$A_1 \geq A_1 \text{ minimum, } CI \geq CI \text{ minimum and } A_3 \geq A_3 \text{ minimum.}$$

The tables below contain the information of the requirements for each discipline and field. The field is listed if it is considered an exception and therefore has different requirements than the discipline. For fields that are not listed, the requirements for the discipline are applicable.

### **1. Grade A<sub>1</sub>**

a. A<sub>1</sub> minimum is specified in the following table:

<b>Discipline/Field</b>	<b>A1 minimum</b>
Natural Sciences, Engineering, Medical Sciences, Biotechnical Sciences, Social Sciences, Archaeology, Geography	0.5

Humanities, Law, National Issues	1
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b. For researchers with young doctor status, the A1 minimum is set out in the following table:

Discipline/Field	A1 minimum
Natural Sciences, Engineering, Medical Sciences, Biotechnical Sciences, Social Sciences, Archaeology, Geography	0.4
Humanities, Law, National Issues	1

## 2. Pure citations

The minimum number of pure citations, CI minimum, is listed in the tables. If the field is not listed in the table, the value set out for the discipline shall apply.

a. The minimum number of pure citations, CI minimum, for leaders of research projects and programmes, as well as young researcher mentors, is listed in the following table:

Discipline/Field	CI minimum
Humanities, Law, National Issues	1
Social Sciences, Archaeology, Geography	5
Mining and Geotechnology, Geodesy, Transport, Hydrology, Psychology, Sport	15
Engineering, Biotechnical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Geology	50
Medical Sciences, Biology, Computationally Intensive Methods and Applications, Chemical Engineering, Energy Engineering, Materials	100
Natural Sciences, Microbiology and Immunology, Biotechnology	200

b. The minimum number of pure citations, CI minimum, for leaders of research projects and young researcher mentors with young doctor or young mentor status is listed in the following table:

Discipline/Field	CI minimum
Humanities, Law, National Issues	1
Social Sciences, Mining and Geotechnology, Transport, Hydrology	5
Engineering, Mathematical Sciences, Geology, Forestry, Wood and Paper Industry, Plant Production and Processing, Geography	10
Natural Sciences, Medical Sciences, Biotechnical Sciences	20

## 3. Other quantitative conditions

A3 minimum is equal to 0 for leaders of research projects and research programmes.

## IV. Appointing additional reviewers and replacement of reviewers

The reviewers are appointed by the temporary expert body. If during the assessment procedure individual reviewers decline cooperation or fail to respond or an insufficient number of reviewers is found in a research field given the contents of the applications, and no new reviewers can be appointed from the list of reviewers previously annually approved by the SCA, the temporary expert body appoints additional reviewers for implementing the assessment procedure or proposes that the reviewers be replaced.

## **B. RESEARCH PROJECTS**

### ***I. Entry conditions***

The entry conditions are determined pursuant to the Rules of procedure. The quantitative grades set out in chapter A. GENERAL are used as entry conditions in this Methodology.

Any bibliographical units with a larger number of citations with no full bibliographical record in the WoS can be listed by the applicant as exceptional research achievements on the application for the project leader in the form: ARRS-RPROJ-JR-Prijava/20xx (hereinafter: application form). If the A or CI value of a researcher is greater than the limit value, the applicant can list this as part of the exceptional research achievements in the application form.

The Agency will assess the candidates for project leaders according to the discipline and field stated by the applicant in the application form.

The share of funding earmarked for interdisciplinary research by discipline is set by a public call. An application for interdisciplinary research is made to the underlying discipline and field and state the additional discipline and field included in the submitted interdisciplinary research project.

The data on field capacity per research field in view of decommitted funds due to concluded projects is published by the Agency in advance for each year, taking into account the value of the call.

### ***II. Reviewers' assessment and application selection procedure***

The assessment of applications is conducted in accordance with the Rules of procedure.

The reviewers assess the applications based on application form ARRS-RPROJ-JR-Prijava/20xx, or ARRS-RPROJ-JR-Prijava/20xx-I and ARRS-RPROJ-JR-Prijava/20xx-I, in cases of a two-phase assessment procedure. Each application is assessed by at least two foreign reviewers.

The reviewers evaluate the individual evaluation factors by completing an evaluation sheet: ARRS-RPROJ-EvalForm-x/20xx).

Numeric and descriptive grades for each evaluation factor (criteria and indicators) are entered into the evaluation sheet.

The temporary expert body divides the applications for evaluation into groups of approximately ten applications. If there are more than 10 proposals for a research field, the temporary expert body will divide them into subfields or integrated substantive sets assessed by the same reviewers.

In appointing reviewers for the interdisciplinary field, the temporary expert body must take into account that the reviewers cover the main interdisciplinary fields related to the project content stated in the application form.

The evaluations of the reviewers comprise the following:

BT grade - for basic projects and basic post-doctoral projects comprising three individual grades on the basis of criteria, indicators and means of grade evaluation, as is set out in Table B and Table C.

BA grade - for applied projects and applied post-doctoral projects comprising four individual grades on the basis of criteria, indicators and means of grade evaluation, as set out in Table B and Table C.

The BT or BA grade is the sum of individual scores, whereby the maximum total score is:

15 points for basic projects and basic post-doctoral projects (BT = BT1+BT2+BT3), 20 points for applied projects and applied post-doctoral projects (BA = BA1+BA2+BA3+BA4). In a single-phase procedure, the assessment encompasses the project leader and the entire project group. In a two-phase procedure, the first phase includes the assessment of the project leader and the second phase includes the assessment of the project leader and the entire project group.

**Table B: Evaluation of research project applications**

**Criteria and indicators for the evaluation of basic projects and basic post-doctoral projects**

<b>BT grade</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Maximum No. of points</b>
<b>BT 1</b>	Scientific excellence of researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exceptional achievements (indicator 1.3)</li> <li>- Proven ability to think independently and creatively (indicator 1.7)</li> <li>- Ability to draw up a proposal of study and manage studies (indicator 1.11)</li> </ul>	5
<b>BT 2</b>	Scientific, technological or innovation excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appropriate consideration of important research challenges (indicator 4.1)</li> <li>- Ambitious and exceptional goals (e.g. new methods and approaches to the development of fields) (indicator 4.2)</li> <li>- Clarity of concept, including the interdisciplinary aspect, and appropriateness of objectives (indicator 4.3)</li> <li>- Originality of the idea (indicator 4.4)</li> <li>- Suitability of proposed research methodology for achieving objectives (indicator 4.5.)</li> </ul>	5
<b>BT 3</b>	Quality and efficiency of implementation and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Suitability and efficiency of the work plan, including the appropriate assignment of tasks and allocation of funds (indicator 6.2)</li> <li>- Feasibility of scientific approach (indicator 6.3)</li> </ul>	5
	Total		15

**Criteria and indicators for the evaluation of applied projects and applied post-doctoral projects**

<b>BA grade</b>	<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Maximum No. of points</b>
<b>BA 1</b>	Scientific excellence of researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exceptional achievements (indicator 1.3)</li> <li>- Proven ability to think independently and creatively (indicator 1.7)</li> <li>- Ability to draw up a proposal of study and manage studies (indicator 1.11)</li> </ul>	5
<b>BA 2</b>	Scientific, technological or innovation excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clarity of concept, including the interdisciplinary aspect, and appropriateness of objectives (indicator 4.3)</li> <li>- Suitability of proposed research methodology for achieving objectives (indicator 4.5.)</li> <li>- Ambitiousness, innovation potential and exceptional nature of the project (e.g. exceeding current knowledge, new concepts and approaches) (indicator 4.8)</li> </ul>	5

<b>BA 3</b>	Potential impact due to the development, dissemination and application of expected research results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthening competitiveness and company growth by developing innovations that meet the needs of the European and global markets (indicator 5.2)</li> <li>- All other environmentally and socially important impacts, including impacts on cultural development (not included in the other indicators) (indicator 5.3)</li> <li>- Efficiency of proposed measures for applying and disseminating project results (including managing intellectual property rights), public presentations (popularisation) of the project and managing research data (indicator 5.5)</li> <li>- Anticipated project results (indicator 5.6)</li> <li>- Strengthening of innovativeness and integration of new knowledge (indicator 5.8)</li> </ul>	5
<b>BA 4</b>	Quality and efficiency of implementation and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Suitability and efficiency of the work plan, including the appropriate assignment of tasks and allocation of funds (indicator 6.2)</li> <li>- Suitability of project partners and project group (indicator 6.4)</li> <li>- Suitability of management considering the risks or exceeding current knowledge (indicator 6.12)</li> </ul>	5
	Total		20

**Table C: Evaluation of application criteria**

**The reviewers evaluate the criteria with a grade from 0 to 5 to one decimal place, whereby they consider the following descriptions, values and grade scales:**

Grade	Grade description	Numerical grade (number of points)
	The application does not meet the criterion or a grade cannot be given due to a lack of information.	0.0
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	The application does not comply with the criterion or has major faults.	1.0 – 1.9
<b>Inadequate</b>	The application complies with the criterion, but has significant faults.	2.0 – 2.9
<b>Good</b>	The application complies with the criterion, but has a number of faults.	3.0 – 3.9
<b>Very good</b>	The application complies with the criterion to a large extent, but has minor faults.	4.0 – 4.6
<b>Excellent</b>	The application fully complies with the criterion; any faults are negligible.	4.7 - 5.0

The following cannot be featured as selected projects or progress to the second assessment phase, if the assessment is carried out in two phases:

- a basic project or a basic post-doctoral project with a BT grade = BT1 + BT2 + BT3 less than 10 points or an individual BT1, BT2 or BT3 grade less than 3 points;
- an applied project or an applied post-doctoral project with a BA grade = BA1 + BA2 + BA3 + BA4 less than 12 points or an individual BA1, BA2, BA3 or BA4 grade lower than 3 points.

Reviewers shall be notified about the limit values upon receiving the application.

If the assessment is carried out in a two-phase procedure, the applicants who progressed to phase two of the project selection (category A) are called upon by the Agency to submit an elaborated research project application using the ARRS-RPROJ-JR-Prijava/20xx-II form.

Within each discipline, at least 10% of the funds must be allocated to post-doctoral projects relative to the amount of funding for the selected applications within the discipline. At least 30% of funding for projects in the field of engineering, at least 20% in the field of biotechnology, at least 10% in the field of social sciences and at least 5% in the field of natural sciences and medicine must be allocated to applied projects. At least 20% of the approved funds in the Call must be awarded for projects carried out by young doctors (maximum 10 years after having defended their doctoral dissertation).

In the medical sciences, clinical research must demonstrate the participation of healthcare institutions/educational establishments in at least 30% of research hours. For each project application where the applicant chooses to conduct research in the field of clinical medicine, the applicant must specifically justify that it is a clinically oriented project, and the justification will be verified and confirmed/rejected by the international panel as part of the assessment process.

Each project has a mandatory field for a smaller project (€50,000), except for post-doctoral and major projects. These projects are usually awarded to applications placed at the bottom of the list of approved projects.

The candidates for co-financing of major projects will comprise:

- two best rated major natural science projects;
- two best rated major engineering projects;
- one best rated major medicine project;
- one best rated major biotechnology project;
- one best rated major social science project;
- one best rated major humanities project.

Major projects are not to be submitted for under the agreement with the Hungarian agency NKFIH and the Swiss agency SNSF and under the CEUS agreement with the Austrian agency FWF, the Polish agency NCN and the Czech agency GACR. Major projects are not to be applied for as interdisciplinary research.

### ***III. Basic research projects - Dr. Ales Debeljak Programme***

The call also includes allocations for basic research projects – Dr. Ales Debeljak Programme (hereinafter: basic research projects – AD Programme). The following provisions apply:

Approximate amount of funding for the AD Programme basic research projects: €1,200,000.00 per annum.

The value of an individual basic research project – AD Programme is €100,000.00 per annum for the period of 2 or 3 years.

The temporary expert body draws up a draft priority list of projects, starting with the 2 highest evaluated projects per research discipline, which must concern different fields within the discipline. In case all submitted projects within the discipline concern the same field, the priority list includes 2 projects concerning the same field.

If the draft priority project list contains fewer than 12 project submissions, the remainder of the funds for the public call (allocated for Item 2.c of the public call) is proportionately divided among those disciplines of the entire public call, for which the temporary expert body did not list 2 project submissions on the draft priority project list.

In case a basic research project – AD Programme is not selected within this programme, it can be submitted for consideration for basic research projects in line with the rules applicable for the selection of these projects.

The panel for each discipline including applications for (co-)financing basic research projects – AD Programme that fulfil the requirements of the public call and have not been listed on the draft priority project list based on indents 3 and 5 of this paragraph, additionally proposes up to three applications for the reserve list. The reserve list applications are considered by the SCA within the scope of its competence, adding on the draft priority project list up to the amount of the funds available for the public call (for Item 2.c of the public call), whereby the draft priority list may include more than two projects per research discipline.

If the number of applications that meet the tender conditions and are not graded below the prescribed project selection threshold is equal to or less than the maximum number of possible

selected applications in relation to the funds available, all applications will be included in the selection.

#### Requirements for submitting basic research programmes - AD Programme

On the closing date of the call, the leader of the submitted project must be living abroad for at least one year and must not be employed in the Republic of Slovenia. The requirement of living abroad for a period of one year is also considered fulfilled if the leader of the submitted project defended their doctoral dissertation abroad in 2019 or prior to the closure of the call.

On the closing date of the call, the leader of the submitted project must fulfil the requirement that no more than 10 years have passed since he defended his first doctorate.

The leader of the submitted project must be a citizen of the Republic of Slovenia on the closing date of the call.

The leader of the submitted project must be listed as working on the research project they lead for at least 680 effective research hours annually (40% of 1700 effective research hours). Upon concluding the agreement on co-financing a project successful on the call, the project leader must be listed as employed for research activities in a share of no less than 40%. The leader of the submitted project must fulfil the requirements for leaders of basic projects.

In case of a successful application, the researchers cannot submit a second project for consideration within the same or a similar mechanism, that is a mechanism for financing projects by researchers returning to the Republic of Slovenia from abroad.

#### ***IV. Panel***

The panel shall consist of the members of the temporary expert body and foreign reviewers who shall be at least the same in number as the members of the temporary expert body.