

**CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR
MEMBERS OF THE PROGRAM BOARD FOR PROJECT
EVALUATION**

Date of publication: September 20, 2019

Reference number SFRS/Call/2019/03

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NOTICE OF CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

for the establishment of the Program Board of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia

Date of publication: September 20, 2019

Reference number SFRS/Call/2019/03

1. Contracting Authority:

Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia, Nemanjina 22-26, 11 000 Belgrade

2. Reference number:

SFRS/Call/2019/03

3. Registration procedure

The objective of this Call for Expressions of Interest is to set up a Program Board for the second-stage evaluation of Project Proposals that will be submitted to the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia (SF) as a part of the Program for Excellent Projects of Young Researchers (PROMIS).

Interested candidates are invited to submit a filled-in Registration form and CV in the English language to the following email address: promis@fondznanaku.gov.rs, by 00:00 CET on Friday, October 09, 2019.

Submission forms received after the deadline stipulated above will not be taken into consideration.

4. Information to be provided

Interested candidates should submit a filled-in Registration form and CV to the following email address: promis@fondznanaku.gov.rs.

The Science Fund reserves the right to request supporting documents that confirm the information provided in the Registration form and CV, such as copies of degrees or diplomas, employers' certificates, references etc.

5. General description of the procedure

Natural persons are invited to submit an expression of interest in accordance with the rules set out in this Call. The Science Fund will perform an assessment of submitted applications for Program Board members and invite those applicants who meet both inclusion and assessment criteria to sign a contract with the SF.

Experts who meet the requirements defined in Section 9 will be considered for potential Program Board members. Further selection will be performed based on the criteria stipulated in Section 11.

The Science Fund will sign contracts with selected Program Board members. The signed contract entails no obligation on the part of the Science Fund concerning the allocation of Project Proposals for evaluation to the Program Board member.

Based on the specifications for each call, the Science Fund will contact the Program Board member and check his/her availability, define deadlines, scope of work and send evaluation guidelines for PROMIS.

The application procedure for Project Proposals is performed in English, due to the international evaluation process. The submitted Project Proposals are in English and the Program Board members shall perform their work in English.

6. Engagement of Program Board Members resulting from this Call

Services of the Members of the Program Board resulting from this Call will be used for tasks to be carried out in accordance with the requirements stipulated in the Terms of Reference. Members of the Program Board identified through this call may be contacted in the future for additional expert tasks

7. Fields covered by the Call for Program Board Members

Applications that will be received under this call will be classified based on their nature into the following fields:

1. Natural sciences,
2. Technology and engineering sciences,
3. Medical sciences,
4. Biotechnical sciences,
5. Social sciences,
6. Humanities,
7. Industry.

Interested candidates are invited to apply within their respective areas of expertise.

8. Place of delivery

The services performed by the Program Board members will be provided remotely and in person. Project evaluation meetings will be based in Belgrade, on the premises of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia.

The evaluation activities will last up to 15 working days of remote work and 5–10 working days in person (one stay in Belgrade).

9. Inclusion criteria

Minimum required qualifications of the Program Board member are:

Education:

- a) for research experts: university degree – PhD;
- b) for experts from industry: university degree – bachelor's degree or equivalent (master's degree is preferred).

Work experience (minimum 10 years) of relevant working experience:

- a) for research experts: relevant working experience in R&D (universities, research organizations, labs or company research branches) and experience in project management (leadership role in conducting R&D projects within industry or research organizations);
- b) for experts from industry: experience in project management (leadership role in conducting R&D projects within industry or research organizations), in particular experience with EU-funded programs.

Previous experience in international research program and proposal evaluation a program director, chair, expert reviewer or a panel member will be considered an asset.

All applicants who meet the listed criteria will be considered as candidate for Program Board members for Project Evaluation.

10. Exclusion criteria

Experts shall be excluded from participation if:

- a) they have a conflict of interest in connection with the contract; a conflict of interest could arise in particular as a result of economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional ties or any other relevant connection or shared interest;
- b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment of a competent authority which has the force of res judicata;
- c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Science Fund can justify including by decisions of international organizations;
- d) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such an illegal activity is detrimental to Serbia's and EU financial interests;
- e) they are subject to an administrative penalty for being guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Science Fund as a condition of participation in a procurement procedure or failing to supply information, or being declared to be in serious breach of their obligation under a contract covered by the budget.

Before signing a contract, the Program Board members shall provide a declaration on their honor stating that they are not in one of the situations of exclusion listed above. In case of doubt, they may be requested to provide supporting evidence of non-exclusion.

11. Assessment criteria

The candidates will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Areas of expertise;
- Education;
- Work experience (number of years);
- Type of work experience (academia, research, industry, government, consulting, NGO);
- Scientific experience (journal publications, conference publications, other scientific results);
- Project experience (coordinated projects, participated projects, particularly PI and other lead positions, types of projects including funding sources, duration, and budget).
- Peer review experience (number of performed reviews in the past 5 years, funding sources, project types and budgets of the reviewed projects).
- Experience in international research program and proposal evaluation.

Candidates should apply within their respective areas of expertise defined in Section 7. Criteria for each area will be considered specifically.

Selection of the Program Board members will be performed by the Science Fund in two stages:

1. Assessment of the expertise and experience of the identified Program Board candidates according to the criteria listed in this section, and ranking the Program Board candidates accordingly.

2. The Science Fund will select the best ranked candidate for each area of expertise. The selected candidates will be invited to negotiate contract as the Science Fund Program Board members.

12. Conditions of remuneration and reimbursement of experts

The payments for services will be made based on a daily fee. The Program Board members shall be remunerated at a price of 450 euros per day (8 working hours). The Program Board members shall provide their services remotely and in person, in Belgrade, on the Science Fund premises.

The Program Board members are expected to participate in evaluation meetings to be held in Belgrade for the total duration of 5 to 10 working days. Candidates will be reimbursed for Science Fund authorized travel (economy class) and related expenses (to include, tickets, hotel, subsistence, taxis, visa, etc.).

TERMS OF REFERENCE

for

Program Board Member of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia

Date of publication: September 20, 2019

Reference number SFRS/Call/2019/03

1. Background

The Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia (SF) is a public organization that supports scientific and research activities. It was established in 2019, with the aim of providing funds and supporting conditions for the continuous development of scientific and research activities in the Republic of Serbia necessary for the advancement of a knowledge-based society.

The activities of the Science Fund are targeted at scientific research, as well as technological and developmental programs. The goal is to achieve the strategic objectives of the scientific and technological development of the Republic of Serbia.

Within the programs of the Science Fund, projects are funded through competitive public calls. The aim of the projects is to provide high-level research, innovative results, competitiveness at international level and relevance to society in general.

Information relating to the programs may be accessed on the [SF WEBSITE](#).

The Science Fund has established a two-stage evaluation process for the Program for Excellent Projects of Young Researchers (PROMIS). The first stage is performed by Peer Reviewers and the second stage by the Program Board.

The evaluation by the Program Board will be based on the scoring performed by the Peer Reviewers and on a live project presentation event. The Program Board is an independent expert body which will consist of 5-7 members.

In order to secure objectivity, transparency and quality of the evaluation of project proposals submitted within PROMIS, the SF has established a selection process for the members of the Program Board.

The Program Board is to be established in accordance with best international practices and in accordance with the Science Fund's documents. It is to be an independent decision-making body comprised of highly qualified individuals. The function of the Program Board is that of an independent body within the SF's evaluation process. The Program Board is responsible for making the final decision on projects which are to be financially supported by the SF. The Program Board works in synergy and makes decisions using consensus in order to assess all incoming project proposals. There shall be one member of the Program Board for each of the following six research fields: natural sciences, technology and engineering sciences, medical sciences, biotechnical sciences, social sciences, humanities; and one from industry.

2. Scope of work

The general functions and responsibilities of the Program Board members are:

- Evaluating Project Proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in the Evaluation Guidelines for the program PROMIS, including assessment and scores provided by Peer Reviewers (from the first evaluation stage);
- Submitting comments and scores for Project Proposals in the Program Board Evaluation Form via email (except where and if requested otherwise).
- Participation in evaluation meetings of the Program Board (as stipulated in Section 8 of the Call for Proposals).

Each Program Board member must declare any conflict of interest prior to undertaking the evaluation of a particular Project Proposal.

The role and responsibilities of the Program Board members are as follows:

- Sign the Declaration of impartiality and confidentiality provided by SF.
- Receive access to the Project Proposal to be evaluated through email or an online portal.
- Examine Project Proposal documents.
- Within five days of receiving the Project Proposal for evaluation, examine the assigned Project Proposal and inform SF for any concern.
- Evaluate all Project Proposals assigned to them for conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest in accordance with the SF Confidentiality and Prevention of Conflict of Interest Policy and inform the SF team if any issues exist.
- Within 3 weeks of receiving access to the Project Proposal documents, prepare a written evaluation (using the Program Board Evaluation Form), based on the defined evaluation criteria and judgment of merit. The evaluation must give concise, pertinent and well justified comments for each criterion of the evaluation grid, in a wording that may be given directly to the applicant, if requested. Strong and weak points must be reflected. In particular, comments should not include only the summary of the Project Proposal, but should provide short critical analysis in line with (but not limited to) the respective questions of the evaluation grid. Within the evaluation, the Program board member can require clarifications from the applicant and/or suggest a rebalance of the proposed budget.
- Assign numerical scores according to Evaluation Guidelines of the Program.
- Complete and send the Program Board Evaluation Form for each Project Proposal according to the described procedure.
- Program Board members will summarize the Project Proposals assigned to them and discuss merits of each Project Proposal during the evaluation meeting.

Following the finalization of the scoring table, the Science Fund will inform the applicants about the evaluation results and initiate the financing decision phase.

At the conclusion of the evaluation phase, the Program Board will:

Prepare a written evaluation (using the Program Board Evaluation Form) for each Project Proposal assigned, based on the defined evaluation criteria and judgment of merit. The Program Board must give concise, pertinent and well justified comments for each criteria of the evaluation grid, in a wording that will be given directly to the applicant. Strong and weak points must be reflected.

Program Board will complete and submit the Program Board Evaluation Form for each Program Proposal and assign the appropriate status.

During and following the live project presentation event, the Program Board members will:

- Give an introductory speech to all groups of applicants who will attend the final project presentation event, explaining the concept of the event and its goals;
- Thoroughly be prepared for discussions for each preselected Program Proposal, which will be presented at the final project presentation event;
- The Program Board will provide each applicant with a 10-minute time window to present their Program Proposal through a PowerPoint presentation, followed by a 10-minute time window for specific questions that the Program Board may have for the Program Proposal;
- Following the presentations of preselected Project Proposals, assign a numerical score in the scoring table supplied by the SF (from 0 to 5, with 0 being poor and 5 being excellent) for each Program Proposal and each evaluation criterion;
- Perform the necessary budget clearing for each pre-selected Program Proposal to optimize the use of available financing within the present public call.

After the Program Board assigns numerical scores to all Program Proposals in the final scoring table supplied by the Science Fund during the final evaluation event, the final scoring table will display the final scores for all Program Proposals and sort them from highest to lowest.

Following the finalization of this scoring table and based on the amount of available funds, the Program Board will confirm the Program Proposals which will be selected for financing, and will also:

- Prepare a written evaluation (using the Program Board Financing Decision Form) for each Program Proposal assigned, based on the defined evaluation criteria and judgment of merit. The Program Board must give concise, pertinent and well justified comments for each criteria of the evaluation grid, in a wording that will be given directly to the applicant. Strong and weak points must be reflected. In particular, comments should not include only the summary of the Program Proposal, but should provide a critical analysis in line with (but not limited to) the respective questions of the evaluation grid.
- Submit the Program Board Financing Decision Form for each Program Proposal to be posted on the Science Fund portal and assign the appropriate status (Approved or Not approved) for each Program Proposal.

3. Experience and qualifications

Minimum required qualifications of the Program Board member are:

Education:

- a) for research experts: university degree – PhD;
- b) for experts from industry: university degree – bachelor’s degree or equivalent (master’s degree is preferred).

Work experience (minimum 10 years) of relevant working experience:

- a) for research experts: relevant working experience in R&D (universities, research organizations, labs or company research branches) and experience in project management (leadership role in conducting R&D projects within industry or research organizations);

- b) for experts from industry: experience in project management (leadership role in conducting R&D projects within industry or research organizations), in particular experience with EU-funded programs.

Previous experience in international research program and proposal evaluation a program director, chair, expert reviewer or a panel member will be considered an asset.

The application process for Project Proposals is performed in English, due to the international evaluation process. Submitted Project Proposals are in English and the Program Board members shall perform their work in English. Therefore, the Program Board member must be able to work in English.

4. Timing and duration

The present Science Fund's Call for Project Proposals that will have a need for Program Board project evaluation is PROMIS (Program for excellent projects of young researchers). The application process for PROMIS is performed in English, due to the international evaluation process. The Project Proposals submitted are in English and the Program Board members shall perform their work in English.

The Program Board assignment for PROMIS is expected to start on October 21, 2019. Generally, the Program Board members are expected to provide their services upon the timely notification by the SF team.

The Program Board's work will be done remotely and in person, in Belgrade, on the Science Fund premises.

The Program Board members are expected to participate in second-stage evaluation meetings to be held in Belgrade, whose total duration will be 5 to 10 working days.

The following breakdown of time effort per program is:

- For the second-stage evaluation phase – 15 working days of remote work and 5 – 10 working days in Belgrade

5. Reporting obligations

The Program Board member shall report directly to the SF team in the following manner:

- After receiving the Project Proposal for evaluation, the Program Board member shall provide the results of the evaluation of the Project Proposal along with comprehensive comments and relevant scores, in written form via the email or portal, within specified deadlines – using the Program Board Evaluation Form.
- Following the evaluation process, each Program Board member is obliged to submit a filled in Time-sheet, demonstrating their engagement in the evaluation of Project Proposals.

6. Input by the Science Fund

The SF team will provide necessary documentation and templates, as well as access to the Project Proposals to be evaluated.

The Evaluation Guidelines will be provided to Program Board member. The Evaluation Guidelines will serve as guidance on how to conduct the evaluation and how to provide adequate feedback for the Project Proposals.

7. Terms of payment

The payments for services will be made based on deliverables submitted for the second phase of evaluation and based on time sheets submitted for the implementation phase, as stipulated in Section 5 of this TOR.

The remuneration for one work day (8 hours) is 450 euros (excluding costs for travel and accommodation in Belgrade). Candidates will be reimbursed for Science Fund authorized travel (economy class) and related expenses (tickets, hotel, subsistence, taxis, visa, etc.).

The SF shall administer a Contract with the Program Board member. The Program Board member shall submit an Invoice for the conducted services. The SF shall provide the template of the Invoice to the Program Board member.

8. Confidentiality and conflict of interest

The Program Board member shall comply with the SF Confidentiality Policy and Prevention of Conflict of Interest Policy and to maintain confidentiality on all information that is not in the public domain. The Program Board member shall not be involved in another assignment that represents a conflict of interest to the prevailing assignment.

9. Other potential engagements

The Science Fund is launching the present Call for Expressions of Interest to establish a list of Program Board members to assist in the project evaluation process.

The Program Board members identified through this Call may be contacted in the future for additional expert tasks, including analysis and monitoring programs managed by the SF, evaluation of proposals received within future calls for proposals, monitoring and evaluation of projects, project outputs and reports, or any other tasks relating to the programs of the SF.

10. Other information

General terms and conditions applicable to the call for expressions of interest:

All documents submitted by experts become the property of the Science Fund and will be regarded as confidential.

The rights relating to the services completed within the contract and those pertaining to their duplication and publication will remain the property of the Science Fund.

Any document based, in full or in part, on the work completed under this contract, may only be transmitted or published with permission of the Science Fund.

Submission of an application in response to the present Call for Expressions of Interest implies acceptance by the Program Board member of all provisions and conditions stipulated in the present Call for Expressions of Interest. The Program Board member will waive their own terms of business.

11. Processing of personal data

If processing replies to the present Call for Expressions of Interest involves recording and processing of personal data (such as: name, address and CV), such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.

12. Code of conduct

The expert shall perform the contract to the highest professional standards. The expert shall have sole responsibility for complying with all legal obligations incumbent on them, notably those arising from employment law, tax law and social legislation.

13. Call documentation

The following documents are annexed to the Call and form an integral part of it:

Annex 1: Registration form for the Program Board member, which should be filled in and sent by email together with an updated CV.