

Pursuant to Article 13, paragraph 1, item 3) of the Law on the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia (“Official Gazette of the RS” no. 95/18 – hereinafter: the Law) and Article 10, paragraph 1, item 4) of the Statute of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia no. UO 2/19 of 17th April 2019, at the 9th session held on 31st October 2019, the Managing Board of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia passed the following

Serbian Science and Diaspora Collaboration Program: Knowledge Exchange Vouchers – Act on goals, implementation method and conditions for project financing

I. INTRODUCTORY PROVISIONS

Article 1

The Act on Serbian Science and Diaspora Collaboration Program: Knowledge Exchange Vouchers (hereinafter: the Act) regulates the Program goals, announcement conditions and the procedure for implementation of public calls within the Program framework, and in particular the application procedure and conditions for submission of project proposals, procedure and criteria for evaluation of proposals, procedure for monitoring the project outputs, procedure for evaluating the project results, conditions for financing, as well as the rights and obligations of beneficiaries of project funds. The Act defines the persons who may be the beneficiaries of the program, conditions to be met by the host institutions, the method of selection of project proposals and the manner of utilization of funds.

This Program is the first out of three Programs planned within the framework of development of collaboration with the diaspora, and represents a financial incentive enabling science and research organizations (hereinafter: SRO) to develop collaboration with the diaspora and improve their capacities through short-term visits made by Serbian researchers to experts in the diaspora and support to the joint activities, and it is realized in the form of vouchers.

Article 2

The term Diaspora denotes citizens of the Republic of Serbia who reside abroad, and Serbian nationals – expatriates from the territory of the Republic of Serbia and their descendants.¹

At the time of submission of the application, persons specified in paragraph 1 of this Article cannot have permanent and/or temporary residence in the Republic of Serbia for at least one year from the date of announcement of the Public Call for this Program.

¹ The term diaspora in this Program does not include the territory of former Yugoslavia.

Article 3

The Program of Development of Cooperation with the Diaspora (hereinafter: Diaspora) is implemented with the total value of EUR 800,000 and is financed from the budget of the Republic of Serbia.

Article 4

The Program is designed for individual researchers and/or teams of researchers led by a Principle Investigator who seek to establish cooperation with experts from the diaspora dealing with development and research (hereinafter: Project Partner).

If an individual researcher submits a Project Proposal jointly with a partner from the diaspora, the term Principle Investigator shall hereinafter denote such researcher, notwithstanding the absence of a project team.

Article 5

The Program goal is to establish scientific collaboration with the diaspora for the purpose of advancing and exchanging knowledge, establishing or improving the scientific collaboration, joint work on scientific research and research and development problems and challenges, publishing joint papers and patents, supporting the development of new services, product commercialization, transfer of technologies, expanding the network and collaboration with the diaspora, as well as preparation of joint project proposals in order to apply for foreign funding. The Program supports fundamental and applied research in all fields of research, without any pre-defined priority topics.

Article 6

The Principle Investigator may be a researcher from Serbia who fulfils the following conditions:

- s/he has authored published and reviewed scientific papers and other science and research results in the subject area of the Project Proposal;
- s/he is employed at an accredited SRO in Serbia.

All members of the project team are researchers who are or will be employed at an accredited SRO (or an innovation centre founded by an accredited SRO) for the duration of Project, and they hold research or academic title which is their equivalent in higher education. The members of the project team field of work should be compatible with the expertise of the Project Partner.

The Project Partner is an expert from the diaspora who has worked in research and development for at least 5 years and has relevant experience in their field.

The expert from the diaspora may be a researcher employed at a foreign SRO, or an expert employed at a company or institution dealing with research and development.

If the expert from the diaspora is employed at an SRO abroad, then besides the condition laid down in paragraph 3 of this Article, s/he must hold a PhD diploma, be the author of

published and reviewed scientific papers in the subject area of the Project Proposal and have other results in science and research.

If the expert is employed at a company or an organization other than an SRO, then besides the condition laid down in paragraph 3 of this article s/he must hold a PhD diploma or be the Head of a laboratory, a development or research department.

Article 7

The Project duration is up to one year.

Article 8

The maximum amount per Project is up to EUR 10,000 in dinar counter value according to the middle exchange rate of the National Bank of Serbia, and it is awarded in the form of vouchers.

Article 9

The Principle Investigator submits a Project application that comprises the following documents:

1. Project Proposal on a separate form,
2. CVs of the Principle Investigator, all members of the team from Serbia, and the Project Partner (including publications), merged into a single document,
3. Letter of Consent of the Host Institution employing the expert from the diaspora, endorsing the Project Proposal and stating that the members of the project team will be granted access and opportunity to work on its premises, in compliance with the Project Proposal,
4. Signed declaration of the SRO, the Principle Investigator and the members of the project team on acceptance of the Program conditions and consent to the Project Proposal, made out in accordance with the template that forms an integral part of the documentation,
5. Proof that the members of the project team fulfil the stipulated conditions, in accordance with the specifications defined in the Instructions.

The documents defined in paragraph 1, items 1-3 are completed and submitted in English, while the documents defined in paragraph 1, items 4-5 are completed and submitted in Serbian.

Article 10

Project Proposal should include project objectives, planned activities, the correlation between the proposed Project activities and the designed long-term objectives, compatibility between the researchers in Serbia and abroad, the expected results and the financial plan, including the manner of utilization of the funds.

Article 11

The Project funds may be used to cover travel expenses of the researchers from Serbia, including transportation, accommodation, per diem and local transport abroad, travel insurance, costs of issuance of visas and residence permits, and the like. The eligible costs also include procurement of consumables used in Project implementation, as well as Project dissemination costs.

The stay of the team members abroad is limited to up to three months per researcher, either in continuity or over multiple visits, in accordance with the Project needs. It is possible to have several team members stay abroad at the same time. The funds must be used within 12 months from the date of signature of the Contract on financial support to implementation of the approved Project by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia (hereinafter: the Contract).

The funds from the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia will be disbursed to the SRO employing the Principle Investigator and members of the project team. The overhead expenses of the SRO are permitted in the amount of up to 5% of the total Project budget.

Article 12

The Project funds may not be used for salaries or fees; travel expenses of the experts from the diaspora, travel expenses of persons outside of the team; procurement, lease, upgrade, repair, or depreciation of equipment; payment of interest or debt to any party; costs of project implementation (or activities) that are already financed from another source; and other services.

Article 13

The funds approved for the Project shall be disbursed to the SRO employing the Principle Investigator and the members of the project team from Serbia in accordance with the following schedule: 50% of the approved Project budget within fifteen days upon signature of the contract on award of voucher and implementation of the project, and the remaining 50% upon utilization of the funds and approval of the report on activities carried out until the date of submission of the report.

Article 14

The Principle Investigator is obligated to prepare an interim report upon utilization of 50% of the funds, and a final report within 30 days upon Project completion.

Each report shall comprise two sections, one on the implemented activities and Project results and the other on utilization of the funds. The reports are submitted on the form provided by the Science Fund and signed by the Principle Investigator, the SRO, and a representative² of the host institution in which the project activities were carried out.

The Principle Investigator and the accredited SRO in Serbia that is the Project holder shall sign both sections of the report, i.e. the section on the implemented activities and Project

² Head of laboratory or department, Director, Dean, or another person authorized to sign the report.

results and the section on utilization of the funds. The host institution of the Project Partner shall sign the section on the implemented activities and accomplished Project results.

Upon receipt of the report (interim and final), the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia provides the Principle Investigator and the SRO with the acknowledgment of receipt, a request for modifications, or recommendation for measures to be undertaken in case the report is not acceptable.

In case the report is not acceptable, the Science Fund may halt further disbursement of funds or request reimbursement.

The Principle Investigator is obligated to inform the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia in writing of all unforeseen circumstances or irregularities during the period of Project implementation.

If during Project implementation it becomes necessary to modify the proposed and approved activities, as well as results, the Science Fund must be informed in writing and requested a written consent to continuance of Project implementation.

The Principle Investigator is obligated to inform the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia within the final report of all the results accomplished until the moment of Project completion.

The Principle Investigator is obligated to keep informing the Science Fund in writing for a period of 12 months upon Project completion in case the Project results are related to continued cooperation, publication of joint scientific results, or submission of applications for foreign funds.

Article 15

Utilization of funds related to implementation of the Project that is approved for financial support under the Program is executed in compliance with the law and the Contract.

The Principle Investigator is obligated to provide the Science Fund with relevant documentation related to costs specified in paragraph 1 of this Article in accordance with the approved Project Proposal or upon the Fund's written request.

The SRO employing the Principle Investigator / members of the project team is obligated to make reimbursement of the unused and/or unjustifiably used Project funds within 15 days upon receipt of the Fund's request.

Article 16

The Principle Investigator is obligated to manage the Project conscientiously, responsibly, and in accordance with legal provisions regulating the science and research, environmental protection, protection of human rights and prohibition of discrimination, gender equality, protection of intellectual property, personal data protection, prevention of conflict of interest, and other provisions essential for lawful implementation of project activities.

All disbursements shall be made in dinars (RSD) according to the middle exchange rate of the National Bank of Serbia on the day of payment, to the separate portion of the current

account of the SRO that is used solely for the Programs of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia.

The Principle Investigator and all members of the project team are obligated to apply the cooperation on this Project towards improvement of their knowledge, skills, work methodologies, knowledge transfer at the SRO in which they are employed. The members of the project team are obligated to continue their employment in the Republic of Serbia for at least one year upon completion of the Project (or to be registered and recorded at the National Employment Service of the Republic of Serbia). Otherwise, the member of the project team is obligated to repay the double amount received or utilized within the Program on the activities by this particular member of the project team.

Article 17

The Science Fund monitors the Project implementation by evaluating the reports on Project results.

Monitoring of the implementation of projects is prescribed by relevant documents of the Science Fund and by the law.

II PUBLIC CALL

Article 18

The Public Call for submission of Project Proposals for implementation of the Serbian Science and Diaspora Collaboration Program for the year 2019 comprises the following:

- the Program title;
- Program goals;
- duration of projects;
- conditions to be fulfilled by participants in the project;
- the total budget for implementation of the Program under the Public Call;
- the manner of submission of Project Proposals;
- list of the required documentation and forms;
- procedure for evaluation of project proposals;
- other information relevant for Program implementation and accomplishment.

The Public Call is published on the website of the Science Fund (www.fondzanauku.gov.rs).

III. APPLICATION TO THE PUBLIC CALL

Article 19

The application including a Project Proposal is submitted exclusively in electronic form, along with the documentation stipulated in the Public Call announced on the website of the Science Fund.

The Proposal must be complete and comprise all the required attachments. Incomplete proposals shall not be taken into consideration.

The Proposal is submitted by the researcher who is the Principle Investigator.

Article 20

Participation in projects within the framework of this Public Call implies that:

- a researcher may take part in only one Project Proposal within this Public Call;
- a project team may submit a Project Proposal with only one foreign institution / SRO / company within this Public Call, which employs at least one expert from diaspora;
- an SRO from Serbia may implement multiple projects with the same foreign SRO / institution, but with different programme participants within these collaborations;
- a Project Partner (as well as the foreign institution where s/he is employed) may partake in multiple projects within the Program, provided that project teams on each project are composed of different members.

IV. PROCEDURE OF EVALUATION OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

Article 21

The evaluation criteria are:

- 1) Excellence – assessment of scientific underpinnings and quality, innovation and excellence of the idea on which the Project is based;
- 2) Impact – assessment of the Project's potential for resolution of challenges within the Public Call;
- 3) Implementation – evaluation of the team and the capacities for successful project implementation.

Article 22

Once the Call is launched, the Science Fund periodically, and at least once every 15 days, collects and examines the incoming applications and performs evaluation of projects.

Evaluation of projects is performed by the Program Board for evaluation (hereinafter: Program Board).

Program Board members have been selected and appointed in the Act on procedures for preparation of the Program and selection of Project Proposals, and the Act on procedures for selection of expert body members and reviewers of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia.

Program Board for evaluation of the program “Serbian Science and Diaspora Collaboration Program: Knowledge Exchange Vouchers” comprises three members. Program Board members review the received Project Proposals periodically, at least once every two weeks, complete the evaluation form that forms an integral part of the project documentation, and provide a written declaration (in electronic form) on whether they consent to having the proposal accepted for support. If they are opposed, a written justification is provided to the Principle Investigator. The evaluation form consists of 12 questions, each valued with 2 points. A project must receive a minimum of 16 points, while the total number of points that an evaluator may award a Project is 24.

Article 23

Program Board recommends to the Scientific Council a list of projects that fulfil all conditions for financing. The list of projects is considered at the next session of the Scientific Council, after which the Scientific Council issues its consent to the recommended ranking list and provides it to the Managing Board, along with its opinion on the list.

At its next session, the Managing Board decides on the final list of projects accepted for financing.

The procedure is carried out repeatedly until the funds have been depleted.

Article 24

The Fund shall notify the applicants of the evaluation results within 60 days from the date of receipt of the Project Proposal.

The Public Call shall remain open until the allocated funds have been depleted.

An application may be rejected as incomplete pursuant to Article 19 of this program and as inadmissible if any of the conditions laid down in the Public Call have not been met, or for another justified reason for rejection. In that case, the Fund shall notify the Principle Investigator of the decision and reasons for rejection.

Article 25

For Project Proposals approved for financing, a Contract shall be signed with the Science Fund.

VI. PROMOTION AND VISIBILITY OF PROJECT RESULTS

Article 26

It is the obligation of the Principle Investigator to ensure promotion of the Project and visibility of the Project results through issuance of scientific publications, promotion in the mainstream and social media, and in other ways.

The Principle Investigator and the members of the project team are obligated to have the joint collaboration project activities, and in particular parts of visits and stay with the Partner from diaspora, documented in multimedia form, including short video clips and photographs.

It is suggested to have papers jointly published in leading journals, as well as at leading international conferences in the field. In papers that are published in journals and presented at

conferences, the Principle Investigator and members of the project team are obligated to state that the results have been achieved on the Project financed by the Science Fund.

The Principle Investigator is obligated to enable access to Project results to interested parties at any time over the duration of the Project, and for at least one year following Project completion.

It is recommended that primary data collected during Project implementation be systematically consolidated, structured and formatted electronically, and to be made freely accessible (open data). Intellectual property must be observed throughout the course of the Project, particularly in cases of collaboration and activities including product commercialization.

Article 27

This Act shall enter into force upon receipt of the approval of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, on the day of its publication on the bulletin board of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia.