

**CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR PROGRAM
BOARD MEMBERS FOR PROJECT EVALUATION - PROGRAM FOR
DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECTS IN THE FIELD OF ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE**

Date of publication: April 10, 2020

Reference number **SFRS/Call/2020/01**

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NOTICE OF CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

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

Date of publication: April 10, 2020

Reference number SFRS/Call/2020/01

1. Contracting Authority:

The Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia, Masarikova 5, 11 000 Belgrade

2. Reference number:

SFRS/Call/2020/01

3. Registration procedure

The objective of this Call for Expression 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 (hereinafter referred as to the: "Science Fund") as a part of the Program for Development of Projects in the field of Artificial Intelligence (hereinafter referred as to the: "Program").

Interested candidates are invited to submit a filled-in Registration form and CV in the English language to the following email address: ai-pb@fondznanauku.gov.rs by 00:00 CET on Friday, May 01, 2020.

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

4. Information to be provided

Interested candidates should submit an application that consists of a filled-in Registration form and CV to the following email address: ai-pb@fondznanauku.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 by sending an application 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 Science Fund.

Candidates who meet the requirements defined in Section 10 will be considered as the potential Program Board Members. Further selection will be performed based on the criteria stipulated in Section 12 of this Call.

The Science Fund will sign contracts with the 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 Members.

Based on the specification of the Public Call for Project Proposals within the Program, the Science Fund will contact the Program Board Members and check their availability, define deadlines, scope of work and send Evaluation guidelines for the Program.

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

7. Program Description

The Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia has launched a Public Call for the Program for Development of Projects in the field of Artificial Intelligence on November 29, 2019.

The aim of the Program is to encourage excellence and relevance of scientific research in Serbia in the field of artificial intelligence, to promote the application of scientific research results in the field of artificial intelligence for the purpose of development of the Serbian economy and strengthening of its defense abilities, to strengthen excellence and development of human resources in the field of artificial intelligence for the science and economy of Serbia and to improve international cooperation in the said field of science and innovations.

The Program is designed for scientists and researchers who are employed in scientific and research organizations (SROs) in the Republic of Serbia.

The Act on the Program for Development of Projects in the field of Artificial Intelligence (hereinafter referred as to the: "Program Act") regulates the Program goals, the announcement conditions and the procedure for implementation of public calls within the Program framework, and in particular the application procedure and conditions for the submission of Project Proposals, the procedure and the criteria for the evaluation of Proposals, the procedure for monitoring the Project outputs, the procedure for evaluating the Project results, terms of financing, as well as the rights and obligations of beneficiaries of Project funds.

The Program Act and all necessary documentation of the Program may be accessed [HERE](#).

The Public Call for Project Proposals was open until January 31, 2020.

8. Fields covered by the Call for Program Board Members

The Program is implemented within two sub-programs:

- 1) Sub-program designed for the development of basic scientific research in the field of artificial intelligence (new algorithms, etc.) – PRVI_O;
- 2) Sub-program designed for the application of artificial intelligence to various fields of life and work in order to expedite social, technological, cultural and economic development of the Republic of Serbia – PRVI_P.

The **basic thematic areas** of the Program include:

1. General artificial intelligence,
2. Machine learning,
3. Natural language processing,
4. Planning,
5. Knowledge reasoning,
6. Computer vision and speech communication,
7. Intelligent systems.

Besides these predefined thematic areas, researchers were enabled to propose an additional area in the field of artificial intelligence.

Interested candidates for Program Board Members within these and other thematic areas in the field of artificial intelligence are invited to apply within their respective areas of expertise. The Science Fund will select three Program Board Members whose areas of expertise mostly match the thematic areas of the Project Proposals to be evaluated.

9. Place of delivery

The services performed by the Program Board Members will be provided remotely.

The Science Fund will organize and host online periodical meetings of the Program Board Members through online platforms.

The Program Board assignment for the Program for Development of Projects in the field of Artificial Intelligence is expected to start on May 18, 2020 and finish no later than June 15, 2020.

10. Inclusion criteria

Minimum required qualifications of the Program Board Members 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:

- a) For research experts:
 - at least 5 years of relevant working experience, overall and in R&D in the field of artificial intelligence (universities, research organizations, labs or company research branches);
 - experience in project management (leadership role in conducting projects in the field of artificial intelligence within industry or research organizations);
 - experience in evaluation of the project proposals within international and/or national research programs, overall and in the field of artificial intelligence (peer reviewer, panel member/program board member/ member of selection committee);
 - peer-reviewed scientific publications in the field of artificial intelligence.

b) for experts from industry:

- experience in project and product development in the field of artificial intelligence (leadership role in conducting projects in the field of artificial intelligence within industry or research organizations), in particular experience with EU-funded programs;
- experience in evaluation of the project proposals within international and/or national research programs, overall and in the field of artificial intelligence (peer reviewer, panel member/program board member/ member of selection committee).

Language proficiency:

- Excellence in English.

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

11. Exclusion criteria

Candidates 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.

12. Assessment criteria

The candidates will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Areas of expertise in the field of artificial intelligence;
- Education;
- Work experience (overall and in the field of artificial intelligence (number of years));
- Language proficiency;
- Type of work experience (academia, research, industry, government, consulting, NGO);
- Scientific experience in the field of artificial intelligence (number of journal publications, number of conference publications, other scientific results);

- Project experience in the field of artificial intelligence (number of coordinated projects, number of participated projects, particularly PI and other lead positions, types of projects including funding sources, duration, and budget);
- Peer review experience (number of performed peer reviews, overall and in the field of artificial intelligence in the past 5 years, funding sources, project types and budgets of the reviewed projects);
- Experience as a panel member/program board member/member of selection committee (number of participation as a panel member/program board member/member of selection committee, overall and in the field of artificial intelligence in the past 5 years, including funding sources, project types and budgets of the reviewed projects).

Candidates should apply within their respective areas of expertise defined in Section 8 of this Call. 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 candidates for Program Board Members according to the criteria listed in this section and section 10, and ranking the candidates accordingly.
2. The Science Fund will select the best three ranked candidates for the Program Board. The selected candidates will be invited to negotiate Contract as the Program Board Members of the Science Fund.

13. Conditions of remuneration

The payments for services will be made based on a daily fee. The Program Board Members shall be remunerated at a price of 450 EUR per day (8 working hours). The Program Board Members shall keep their track and submit timesheets to the Science Fund indicating their amount of work. The total effective duration of expected work shall not exceed 15 workdays.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

for

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

Program for Development of Projects in the field of Artificial Intelligence

Date of publication: April 10, 2020

Reference number SFRS/Call/2020/01

1. Background

The Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia is a public organization that supports scientific and research activities. It was established in March 2019, with the aim of providing funds and supporting the 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 work of the Science Fund is in line with and contributes to the strategic objectives of scientific and technological development of the Republic of Serbia.

The Science Fund's programs are devised to support research activities, including basic scientific research and applied scientific research and its commercial use and potential, as well as to boost technological development of the Republic of Serbia.

The Science Fund's programs also focus on developing human resources, stimulating international cooperation, collaboration and exchange, investment in the scientific and research organizations in Serbia (SROs) infrastructure by providing equipment and core support, as well as assisting the development of laboratories and institutions of strategic importance. In addition, the Science Fund is supporting the publishing of scientific and research and development (R&D) findings and results in internationally acclaimed publications and those of strategic importance for the Republic of Serbia.

The Science Fund's programs are driven by scientific excellence and quality. They are realized through public calls for Project Proposals, and projects are funded in the form of grants through public competition. 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 [Science Fund website](#).

The Science Fund has established a two-stage evaluation process for the Program for Development of Projects in the field of Artificial Intelligence. The first stage is performed by Peer Reviewers and the second stage by the Program Board. The points given in the first stage of the evaluation will not be transferred to the second stage of the evaluation.

The Program Board is an independent expert body which will consist of three members.

In order to secure objectivity, transparency and quality of the evaluation of Project Proposals submitted within the Program, the Science Fund has established a selection process for the Program Board Members.

The Program Board is to be established in accordance with the best international practices and in accordance with the Science Fund's internal acts. 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 Science Fund's evaluation process. The Program Board is responsible for making the shortlist for each sub-program of Proposals which are qualified in both stages of the evaluation and which will be financed within the available funds of the sub-programs. There will be three Program Board Members who will evaluate Project Proposals for both sub-programs.

2. Scope of work

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

- Evaluation of Project Proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in the Evaluation Guidelines for the Program, consulting/taking into consideration assessment and scores provided by the 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 meetings of the Program Board (organized remotely).

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 the Science Fund.
- Receive access to the Project Proposal to be evaluated through email.
- Examine Project Proposal documents.
- Within five days of receiving the Project Proposal for evaluation, examine the assigned Project Proposal and inform the Science Fund 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 Science Fund Confidentiality and Prevention of Conflict of Interest Policy and inform the Science Fund team if any issues exist.
- Form a preliminary shortlist of Proposals based on the scoring performed by the Peer Reviewers.
- 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. Assign numerical scores according to the Evaluation Guidelines of the Program. Besides numerical scores, 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 (not limited to) the respective questions of the evaluation grid. Within the evaluation, the Program Board Members may require clarifications from the applicant and/or suggest a rebalance of the proposed budget in its entirety or in individual items specified in Article 8 of the Program Act.
- Form a shortlist for each sub-program of Proposals which are qualified in both stages of the evaluation and which will be financed within the available funds of the sub-programs.

- Complete and send the Final Evaluation Report for each Project Proposal according to the described procedure.

The preliminary shortlist is a part of the Final Evaluation Report, which is to be signed by the Chair and Program Board Members and forwarded to the Scientific Council of the Science Fund, which gives an opinion about the shortlist.

The shortlist is thereafter forwarded to the Management Board of the Science Fund. The Management Board makes the final decision on adoption of the final list of Projects in each sub-program that are approved for financing by the Science Fund under the Program and on the amount of funds allocated to each Project.

3. Experience and qualifications

Minimum required qualifications of the Program Board Members 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:

- a) for research experts:
 - at least 5 years of relevant working experience, overall and in R&D in the field of artificial intelligence (universities, research organizations, labs or company research branches);
 - experience in project management (leadership role in conducting projects in the field of artificial intelligence within industry or research organizations);
 - experience in evaluation of the Project Proposals within international and/or national research programs, overall and in the field of artificial intelligence (peer reviewer, panel member/program board member/ member of selection committee);
 - peer-reviewed scientific publications in the field of artificial intelligence.
- b) for experts from industry:
 - experience in project and product development in the field of artificial intelligence (leadership role in conducting projects in the field of artificial intelligence within industry or research organizations), in particular experience with EU-funded programs;
 - experience in evaluation of the Project Proposals within international and/or national research programs, overall and in the field of artificial intelligence (peer reviewer, panel member/program board member/ member of selection committee).

Language proficiency:

- Excellence in English.

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 Members must be able to work in English.

4. Timing and duration

The Program Board assignment for the Program for Development of Projects in the field of Artificial Intelligence is expected to start on May 18, 2020 and finish no later than June 15, 2020.

Generally, the Program Board Members are expected to provide their services upon the timely notification by the Science Fund team.

The Program Board work will be done remotely, and the transfer of documents will be sent via email.

The following time of effort per Program is:

- For the second-stage evaluation phase – 15 working days of remote work.

5. Reporting obligations

The Program Board Members shall report directly to the Science Fund team in the following manner:

- After receiving the Project Proposal for evaluation, the Program Board Members shall provide the results of the evaluation of the Project Proposal along with comprehensive comments and relevant scores, in written form via email, 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 the engagement in the evaluation of Project Proposals.

6. Input by the Science Fund

The Science Fund 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 Members. 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 stage of evaluation and based on the time sheets submitted for the implementation phase, as stipulated in Section 5 of this Terms of Reference.

The remuneration for one workday (8 hours) is 450 EUR.

The Science Fund shall administer a Contract with the Program Board Member. The Program Board Member shall submit an Invoice for the conducted services. The Science Fund 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 Science Fund Confidentiality Policy and Prevention of Conflict of Interest Policy and 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 Expression 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:

- a) Establishing, analysis and monitoring programs managed by the Science Fund, as a Program Board Member;
- b) Evaluation of proposals received within future calls for Project Proposals (evaluating Project Proposals as a Peer Reviewer; evaluating Project Proposals as a Program Board Member);
- c) Evaluation and monitoring of Projects (evaluating Project outputs and reports; Project monitoring and site visits or any other tasks relating to the analysis and/or monitoring of Programs and Projects);
- d) Specific studies and analyses related to the Science Fund activities;
- e) Support to the Science Fund during public events;
- f) Any other tasks relating to the programs managed by the Science Fund.

10. Other information

General terms and conditions applicable to the Call for Expression of Interest:

All documents submitted by Program Board Members 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 the permission of the Science Fund.

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

11. Processing of personal data

If processing replies to the present Call for Expression of Interest involves recording and processing of personal data (such as: name, address and CV), such data will be processed pursuant to regulations of the Republic of Serbia governing the protection of personal data and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679.

12. Code of conduct

The Program Board Members shall perform the Contract to the highest professional standards. The Program Board Members 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 Members, which should be filled in and sent by email together with an updated CV.