APPROVED
By Order No. A-135 of
the Director of the State Research Institute
Centre for Physical Sciences and Technology
of 14 November 2025

The Guidelines for the Selection of Project Leaders for Projects Implemented under the Programme "My First Research Team"

SECTION I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. **The Guidelines for the Selection of Project Leaders for Projects Implemented under the Programme "My First Research Team"** (hereinafter – *the Guidelines*) establishes the procedure for organising the selection of project leaders for research and experimental development (hereinafter – *R&D*) projects funded and implemented by the **State Research Institute Centre for Physical Sciences and Technology** (hereinafter – *FTMC*) under the Measure of Progress No. 12-001-01-01-01 *"Improving the Environment of Science and Studies"* for 2022–2030, in accordance with the **Project Financing Conditions Description No. 2**, approved by Order No. V-327 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of 24 March 2025 (hereinafter – *the MPK Description*).

2. **Terms used in the Guidelines:**

2.1. **R&D project application** – an application prepared by the candidate for R&D project leader using the form provided in Annex 1 to the Guidelines.
2.2. **R&D project leader** – a researcher leading an R&D project implemented under the Programme "My First Research Team", who meets the conditions and requirements set out in the MPK Description and in the Research Council of Lithuania (hereinafter – *RCL*) recommendations for early-career researchers (project leaders).
2.3. **Expert** – an independent researcher recommended by the FTMC Scientific Council, holding a doctoral degree and possessing the academic and/or practical competences necessary to evaluate R&D projects, who performs the individual evaluation of applications.
2.4. **Expert group** – a group composed of individual experts who jointly analyse the individual evaluations of R&D project applications and submit a consolidated recommendation. The number of expert groups is set according to the number of submitted applications, their distribution by scientific fields and/or areas, and, if relevant, Smart Specialisation priorities.
2.5. **Evaluation Commission** – a commission, approved by order of the FTMC Director, consisting of at least 7 members, which evaluates Part A of the R&D project application. The Commission includes the FTMC Deputy Director for Science and at least three senior FTMC researchers; representatives of FTMC management bodies or international institutions may also be included.

SECTION II

PROCEDURE FOR ANNOUNCING THE SELECTION AND SUBMISSION OF R&D PROJECT APPLICATIONS

3. FTMC shall announce a call for applications for candidates to apply for the position of an R&D project leader (to submit R&D project applications), indicating:

3.1. the requirements for the scientific competence of R&D project leaders;
3.2. the main conditions for the implementation of the R&D project (duration, budget, requirements for the composition of the team, workload requirements, etc.);
3.3. the list of Research, Experimental Development and Innovation (Smart Specialisation) priorities;
3.4. the deadline and method for submitting R&D project applications;
3.5. contact persons;
3.6. any other relevant information.

4. The call shall be published in Lithuanian and English on the FTMC website, on FTMC social media accounts, and, if necessary, on the European Commission's researcher portal EURAXESS.

5. Applications submitted after the deadline indicated in the call shall not be evaluated.

6. The R&D project application shall be prepared using the form provided in Annex 1 to the Guidelines, which consists of **Part A** (information about the candidate for R&D project leader; candidate's experience, competences; alignment of the project with FTMC strategic/prioritised objectives; alignment with Smart Specialisation priorities), **Part B** (R&D project description) and mandatory annexes:

   6.1. a **narrative CV**, containing information that allows a qualitative assessment of the candidate's contribution to the advancement of scientific knowledge, significance of research outputs and the impact of the results, prepared in line with DORA[1] principles;
   6.2. a **list of works** (scientific publications, conference presentations and other scientific / technological outputs, such as patents). No more than ten of the most significant scientific publications (preferably without co-authorship with the doctoral supervisor) and presentations at international scientific conferences shall be indicated;
   6.3. documents relating to childbirth, maternity/paternity or parental leave, and documents proving long-term incapacity for work (if applicable).

SECTION III

PROCEDURE FOR EVALUATING R&D PROJECT APPLICATIONS

7. After the deadline for the submission of R&D project applications has expired, an administrative check shall be carried out to verify whether:

   7.1. all mandatory documents have been submitted;
   7.2. the candidate for R&D project leader meets the requirements set out in point 2.2 of the Guidelines.

8. The administrative check shall be performed within no more than 3 working days. If, during the administrative check, it is determined that not all mandatory documents have been submitted or that essential information required for proper evaluation of the R&D project application is missing, the candidate shall be informed of the need to correct the deficiencies within no more than 1 working day. If the candidate fails to submit the mandatory annexes and/or requested information, the R&D project application shall not be considered further.

1 The Declaration on Research Assessment, https://sfdora.org/about-dora

9. Only applications that pass the administrative check shall be forwarded for expert evaluation.

10. Expert evaluation consists of the following components:

    10.1. evaluation of the competence of the candidate for R&D project leader;
    10.2. evaluation of the R&D project description.

11. The evaluation referred to in point 10.1 shall be carried out by the Evaluation Commission, which evaluates Part A of the R&D project application using the form provided in Annex 2 to the Guidelines.

12. The evaluation referred to in point 10.2 shall be carried out by independent experts – first individually, and subsequently within expert groups – using the form provided in Annex 3 to the Guidelines.

13. The expert evaluation of the R&D project shall be carried out ensuring anonymity between the applicant and the evaluator (blind method).

14. Only those applications that receive the mandatory minimum score under point 10.1 shall be forwarded for evaluation under point 10.2. The score assigned by the Evaluation Commission, as recorded in the minutes of the Commission meeting, shall constitute the final evaluation under point 10.1.

15. At least two experts shall be appointed to individually evaluate each R&D project application.

16. Once the individual evaluations have been completed, the R&D project description shall be evaluated in expert groups composed of the experts who performed the individual evaluations. Expert groups are formed taking into account the number of submitted applications, their distribution by scientific fields and/or areas, and, if necessary, the Smart Specialisation priorities.

17. Experts evaluating R&D project applications shall adhere to the principles of impartiality and confidentiality.

18. During the evaluation in expert groups, the experts shall discuss the individual evaluations and seek a common position regarding the evaluation of each R&D project application.

19. A consolidated expert evaluation report shall be prepared for each R&D project application using the form provided in Annex 3 to the Guidelines. The evaluation of the expert group, as recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the expert group, shall constitute the final evaluation under point 10.2.

20. Members of the Evaluation Commission and experts shall sign an Impartiality Declaration using the form provided in Annex 4 to the Guidelines.

21. The acceptance of R&D project applications, administrative checks and expert evaluations shall be organised by FTMC staff appointed by order of the Director of FTMC.

SECTION IV

PROCEDURE FOR RANKING R&D PROJECT APPLICATIONS

22. After the expert evaluation has been completed, the R&D project applications shall be ranked by the persons specified in point 21 of the Guidelines.

23. For ranking purposes, the scores awarded under points 10.1 and 10.2 shall be summed.

24. The applications shall be listed in descending order according to their total score. A priority list shall be compiled.

25. If two or more applications receive the same total score, priority shall be given to the application with the higher score under point 10.2. The list of applications shall be approved by order of the Director of FTMC. The four highest-ranked applications shall be financed. A reserve list shall be drawn up.

26. The four selected candidates shall be requested to submit R&D project forms in accordance with the format established by the Research Council of Lithuania (RCL). The final list of candidates shall be approved in accordance with the procedure established by the RCL.

27. Upon recommendation from the RCL, additional applications from the reserve list may also be financed.

SECTION V

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

28. Candidates shall be informed of the results of the selection by email within 3 working days from the approval of the list. An anonymised version of the summaries of expert evaluations shall be provided together with the information.

29. A candidate may submit an appeal within 5 working days from the date of notification of the evaluation results; appeals may be submitted only concerning factual errors[2] or procedural violations[3].

30. Disagreement with the expert's opinion shall not constitute grounds for appeal.

31. An appeal must specify: the decision being appealed, the date of the decision, the justification for the appeal, the evidence supporting it, and the request submitted by the candidate.

32. Appeals that do not meet the established requirements shall not be examined.

33. Appeals shall be examined by an Appeal Commission composed of five members appointed by the Director of FTMC.

34. The Appeal Commission shall adopt a decision within 5 working days from the date of receipt of the appeal.

[2] A factual error means a situation in which factual circumstances (data) or information are incorrectly assessed, a relevant fact (document) is not taken into account, or a legal norm is incorrectly applied.
[3] A procedural violation means a failure to comply with the procedures established in the competition conditions or a violation of the procedural rules regulated by FTMC.

35. The candidate shall be informed of the decision within 3 working days from the date on which the decision is adopted. If the appeal is upheld, the Director of FTMC may amend the decisions specified in the Guidelines.

SECTION VI

FINAL PROVISIONS

36. Employment contracts with the selected R&D project leaders shall be concluded in accordance with the internal procedures established by FTMC.

37. The implementation of R&D projects shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements and procedures established by the Research Council of Lithuania (RCL).

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Annex 1

APPLICATION FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COMPETITION UNDER THE MEASURE 'MY FIRST RESEARCH TEAM'

PART A

I. INFORMATION ABOUT THE CANDIDATE FOR THE POSITION OF R&D PROJECT LEADER

Name	
Surname	
ORCID, Web of Science Researcher ID, Research Gate or other identifier	
Telephone number	
Email address	
Year of PhD award	
Doctoral thesis supervisor	
Doctoral thesis topic	
Institution where the dissertation was prepared/defended	
Research area/field	
Duration of maternity, paternity or parental leave *(if applicable)*	*from .... to .....*
Periods of long-term incapacity for work *(if applicable)*	*from .... to .....*

II. CANDIDATE'S EXPERIENCE AND COMPETENCIES

Highlight up to 5 most significant achievements according to the criteria below:

1. Experience in implementing R&D activities

Understood as the ability to conduct scientific research within research groups or in consultation with other researchers, expanding the boundaries of knowledge and contributing to the implementation of R&D; understanding of the application possibilities of one's research results in cultural, social, and economic contexts; ability to use knowledge critically to analyze, evaluate, and summarize new and complex ideas or opportunities, either independently or with the help of senior researchers or mentors.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

2. Experience in organizing R&D activities

Understood as the ability to prepare and/or participate in national and/or international research, experimental development and/or innovation, and scientific dissemination projects and/or programs implemented by institutions; ability to collaborate with other researchers and work in research groups.

Indicate activity and role:

1.

2.
3.
4.
5.

3. Dissemination of R&D results and impact assessment
Understood as the ability to publish research results in national and/or international scientific publications and to present them at scientific events.
<u>Not to be filled out.</u> The narrative CV and list of works (publications, conference papers, and other works) submitted by the candidate will be evaluated.

4. Experience in expert activities
Understood as participation in research networks and/or scientific societies, reviewer and/or expert or working groups, preparation of expert opinions, or equivalent activities:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

5. Other relevant information
Experience in supervising doctoral students as a scientific supervisor or consultant, supervising postdoctoral researchers, or other relevant information (e.g., awards, prizes, supervision of student works, or other activities):
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

III. R&D PROJECT COMPLIANCE WITH SMART SPECIALIZATION

Indicate the compliance of the R&D project with the Smart Specialization concept.			
Research, Experimental Development and Innovation Priority *(select <u>only</u> one):*		**Priority topic** *(select no more than two):*	
1. Health technologies, biotechnologies and safe food	☐	1.1. Molecular technologies for medicine and biopharmaceuticals	☐
		1.2. Advanced applied technologies for personal and public health	☐
		1.3. Advanced medical engineering for early diagnosis and treatment	☐
		1.4. Safe food and sustainable agrobiological resources	☐
2. New production processes, materials and energy efficiency	☐	2.1. Photonic and laser technologies	☐
		2.2. Advanced materials and constructions	☐
		2.3. Flexible product development, production and process management technologies	☐
		2.4. Strengthening energy efficiency and smart energy	☐

		solutions	
		2.5. Use of renewable energy sources	☐
3. ICT technologies, inclusive and creative society	☐	3.1. Artificial intelligence, big and distributed data, multidisciplinary analysis, processing and implementation	☐
		3.2. The Internet of Things	☐
		3.3. Cyber security	☐
		3.4. Financial technologies and block chains	☐
		3.5. Audiovisual media, design technologies and social innovation	
		3.6. Smart transport systems	☐
Briefly describe how the R&D project aligns with the selected Smart Specialisation priority and topic.			

IV. COMPLIANCE OF THE R&D PROJECT WITH FTMC STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Compliance of the R&D project with FTMC strategic objectives
Briefly describe how the R&D project results will contribute to the implementation of FTMC's strategic objectives.

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PART B

V. DESCRIPTION OF THE R&D PROJECT

Research area	principal	
	related	
Research field	principal	
	related	
Title		
Acronym		
Keywords		

Abstract	*up to 2000 characters*

Relevance of the project idea
Describe the novelty and ambition of the R&D project idea, define the problem under investigation and its significance for science/technology, provide an analysis of the current state of research, identify existing gaps, and explain how the project will address them. It is also necessary to demonstrate the expected progress compared to existing studies and indicate the project's continuity and possibilities for utilizing the results.

Project objectives, tasks, methods, work plan, risks and their management plan
Indicate the project's objective, its specific tasks (it is recommended to formulate each task in one sentence), research methods, and the planned sequence of activities – a calendar work plan. Specify the main available equipment and/or data resources, identify possible risks and present their management plan – alternative ways of achieving project objectives to ensure timely and proper implementation. ***As the R&D proposal will be evaluated anonymously, the calendar plan should not include specific names of participants. Instead, indicate the approximate roles of project participants and their respective functions.***

Expected results

Briefly describe the expected impact of the project upon its completion, substantiating it with the obtained results and their possible applications.

Sample indicators:

Name of the planned result	***Planned target value by the end of the R&D project***
Number of articles (with Bachelor's and/or Master's students) published in Q1–Q2 international scientific journals	
Number of articles published in Q1–Q2 international scientific journals	
International R&D project application(s)	
Participation in scientific networks (ECIU, COST, etc.)	
Scientific presentation at a scientific conference	
Other scientific activities (specify)	
Researchers from abroad attracted to Lithuanian research and study institutions	
Researchers who went abroad to improve professional knowledge	
Other (specify, if applicable)	

International context
Briefly describe the planned international cooperation activities: involvement of foreign researchers in R&D activities

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(indicate the foreign research and higher education institutions or business entities from which researchers are expected to be involved, including institution name and country); indicate planned research visits and internships in foreign scientific institutions or companies. Information should remain anonymized.

PRELIMINARY BUDGET OF R&D PROJECT

No.	Expenditure item	Funds, EUR
1.	Salaries, social insurance and other contributions	
2.	Expenditure for goods and services; travel expenses	
3.	Expenditure for the acquisition of long-term assets	
4.	Indirect costs, 5,5%	
	TOTAL[4]:	

☐ I confirm that all information provided in this application and its annexes is accurate.

☐ I agree that my personal data may be processed for the purposes of evaluation and organization of the selection process, and may be transferred to a third party – RCL – to the extent necessary to carry out the selection.

ANNEXES:

1. Narrative CV of the candidate for the R&D project leader position.
2. List of works (publications, conference presentations, and other works).

Name, Surname, Signature

[4] The total R&D project expenditure may not exceed EUR 350,000.

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Annex 2

COMPETENCE EVALUATION FORM FOR THE CANDIDATE FOR R&D PROJECT LEADER

Name and surname of the candidate	....

Criterion	Score*	Justification
Experience in conducting R&D activities. *Assessment includes the candidate's ability to:* • *conduct scientific research;* • *generate new knowledge;* • *evaluate scientific ideas;* • *apply research results;* • *contribute meaningfully to research teams.* *5 – Excellent: extensive, clearly demonstrated and high-level experience.* *4 – Good: strong and solid experience with minor shortcomings.* *3 – Average: moderate, partially fragmented experience.* *2–1 – Satisfactory: limited or insufficiently demonstrated experience.* *0 – Insufficient: no verifiable relevant experience.*	(0-5)	
Experience in organising R&D activities. *Assessment covers:* • *participation in national and/or international projects;* • *involvement in teamwork;* • *contribution to project coordination or management;* • *assistance in preparing project proposals.* *5 – Excellent: major responsibilities or leadership roles in projects.* *4 – Good: active and meaningful participation.* *3 – Average: contributor-level involvement.* *2–1 – Satisfactory: minimal or limited involvement.* *0 – Insufficient: no evidence presented.*	(0-5)	
Dissemination of R&D results and ability to foresee impact. *Evaluated based on:* *the narrative CV; the list of works (publications, patents, conference presentations); demonstrated or potential impact of results.* *5 – Excellent: outstanding dissemination and strong impact indicators.* *4 – Good: solid and consistent dissemination activity.* *3 – Average: typical academic performance with modest impact.* *2–1 – Satisfactory: limited or irregular dissemination.*	(0-5)	

0 – Insufficient: no evidence of dissemination.		
Experience in expert activities. *Including:* *reviewing scientific papers; membership in scientific societies; participation in expert panels or working groups; provision of scientific expertise.* *5 – Excellent: extensive expert activity.* *4 – Good: regular participation in expert work.* *3 – Average: some experience.* *2–1 – Satisfactory: limited.* *0 – Insufficient: no experience presented.*	(0-5)	
Awards, prizes, involvement in study processes, supervision of students, and other relevant activities. *Such as:* *academic awards and recognitions; supervision of students; involvement in teaching activities; other academically relevant merits.* *5 – Excellent: significant achievements well documented.* *4 – Good: clear, measurable accomplishments.* *3 – Average: moderate achievement record.* *2–1 – Satisfactory: minimal achievements.* *0 – Insufficient: none provided.*	(0-5)	
TOTAL SCORE:	*(Minimum required score: 18 points)*	
The R&D project complies with the Smart Specialisation priorities and thematic areas.	YES / NO	*If NO is selected, a brief comment shall be provided.*
The R&D project complies with the strategic objectives of FTMC.	YES / NO	*If NO is selected, a brief comment shall be provided.*

** Scores must be given in whole numbers.*

_____

Name, surname, signature and date of the Chair of the Evaluation Commission

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Annex 3

EXPERT EVALUATION REPORT FOR THE R&D PROJECT APPLICATION

Title of the R&D project	
Name and surname of the candidate for R&D project leader	

Criterion	Score*	Justification
Relevance of the project idea	(0-5)	
Project objectives, tasks, methodology, work plan, risks and risk management	(0-5)	
Expected impact (results) and dissemination	(0-5)	
International context	(0-5)	
TOTAL SCORE:	*(Minimum required score: 15 points)*	

** Scores must be given in whole numbers.*

Scoring guidelines:

5 — Excellent. No shortcomings or only very minor inaccuracies. Strengths must be clearly indicated.

4 — Good. Minor shortcomings that do not affect feasibility. Both strengths and weaknesses must be listed.

3 — Average. Some shortcomings; not all aspects meet expectations. Feasibility is not threatened.

2 — Satisfactory. Significant shortcomings or unclear elements. Weaknesses must be stated.

1 — Unsatisfactory. Major weaknesses or insufficient information. The criterion is not met.

0 — Cannot be evaluated. Evidence is insufficient to assess the criterion.

_____

Name, surname, signature and date of the Expert / Head of the Expert Group

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Annex 4

DECLARATION OF IMPARTIALITY

_____

(name, surname)

Date: ___ / ___ / 20___, No.: ____

I, the undersigned, acting as a member of the FTMC Evaluation Commission or as an expert evaluating R&D project applications submitted under the measure “My First Research Team”, hereby declare that I shall comply with the following principles of impartiality, confidentiality, integrity and transparency:

1. I shall base my opinion or recommendations solely on objective criteria, without favouring or discriminating against any applicant, research direction or methodology.
2. I shall use all documents and information related to the evaluation exclusively for the purpose of evaluation. I shall not disclose the opinions of other Commission members or experts, interim or final evaluation results, any other information not intended for public disclosure.
3. I shall act honestly, responsibly, ethically and respectfully towards applicants, FTMC staff and other evaluators.
4. I shall adhere to the applicable legal acts and procedures, providing clear and justified evaluation.

I confirm that none of the following circumstances apply to me:

- A person with an interest in an R&D project application is my spouse, or a close relative (parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild or any other close family relation).
- A person with an interest in the application is employed in the same FTMC division/unit as I am.
- There exists any other situation which could reasonably raise doubts regarding my impartiality.

If any of the above circumstances arise or become known to me at any stage of the evaluation process, I commit to immediately inform the Director of FTMC and to withdraw from evaluating the relevant application.

_____ _____

(Signature) (Name, surname)