**8.2.1. Criteria for Evaluation of SO Project Applications**

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| Title of the operational programme | Growth and Employment |
| Title and number of the priority axis  | 8. Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning |
| Title and number of the specific objective (SO)  | 8.2.1. To reduce fragmentation of study programmes and to strengthen sharing of resources |
| Selection type of project applications | Open selection of project applications |
| Responsible institution | Ministry of Education and Science |
| Selection round of project applications | round 2 and forthcoming (if applicable) project application selection rounds*(Study programmes in EU languages (other than Latvian) and joint doctoral programmes, excluding pedagogic study programmes)* |
| **1. COMMON CRITERIA** | **Evaluation system** | **Impact of the criterion on decision-making****(R[[1]](#footnote-1); A[[2]](#footnote-2))** |
| **Yes or No** |  |
| 1.1. | The project applicant meets the requirements of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations set for project applicants for the implementation of the specific objective (hereinafter CM Regulations on SO implementation)[[3]](#footnote-3). |  | R |
| 1.2. | The project application form completed using a computer. |  | R |
| 1.3. | The project applicant has sufficient administrative, implementation and financial capacities to implement the project. |  | A |
| 1.4. | On the date of project application, the project applicant and project cooperation partner (if applicable) have no tax debts in the Republic of Latvia, including mandatory social security contribution debts exceeding for each separately a total of EUR 150. |  | A |
| 1.5. | The project application has been submitted to the Cohesion Policy funds management information system for 2014–2020. |  | A |
| 1.6.  | The project application form has been completed in Latvian in compliance with the requirements of Regulations No. 784 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 16 December 2014 “Procedures by which the institutions involved in the management of European Union Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund shall ensure preparation of programming documents and implementation of such funds in the 2014–2020 programming period”, the project application contains all the documents required by the project selection regulations, they have been prepared in Latvian or accompanied by a certified translation into Latvian. |  | A |
| 1.7. | The financial data in the project application are indicated in EUR. |  | A |
| 1.8. | Financial calculations in the project application are arithmetically correct and comply with the requirements of the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO and with the project application form in Annex 1 to Regulations No. 784 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 16 December 2014 “Procedures by which the institutions involved in the management of European Union Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund shall ensure preparation of programming documents and implementation of such funds in the 2014–2020 programming period”. |  | A |
| 1.9. | The amount of funding in the project application to be provided by the European Social Fund (ESF) corresponds to the allowable project funding set by the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO. |  | A |
| 1.10. | The ESF funding intensity indicated in the project application does not exceed the maximum ESF funding intensity set by the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO. |  | A |
| 1.11. | The total costs included in the project application (total eligible costs, total ineligible costs and total costs of the project), planned eligible activities and cost items correspond to those set by the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO, incl. do not exceed the set cost item amounts, and: | - | - |
| 1.11.1. are related to project implementation; |  | A |
| 1.11.2. are necessary for the implementation of the project (implementation of the project activities, meeting the needs of the target group, addressing the problem defined); |  | A |
| 1.11.3. ensure the achievement of the project objective and indicators. |  | A |
| 1.12. | The project implementation deadlines correspond to the project implementation period set by the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO. |  | A |
| 1.13. | The project objective corresponds to the objective stated in the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO. |  | A |
| 1.14. | The results to be achieved and monitoring indicators are precisely defined in the project application, they are justified, measurable and foster the achievement of indicators set by the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO. |  | A |
| 1.15. | Project activities planned in the application: |  |  |
| 1.15.1. correspond to those set by the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO and provide for a link to the relevant eligible activities; |  | A |
| 1.15.2. are precisely defined and justified, and address the problems defined by the project; |  | A |
| 1.15.3. are clear and realistic, with precisely defined deadlines and results. |  | A |
| 1.16. | The publicity and information measures planned in the project application comply with the conditions of the General Regulation[[4]](#footnote-4) and the CM Regulations No. 87 of 17 February 2015 “Procedures by which the compliance with communication and visual identity requirements shall be ensured in the implementation of the European Union structural funds and the Cohesion Fund in the 2014 –2020 programming period. |  | A |
| 1.17. | The project application identifies, describes and assesses project risks, evaluates their impact and likelihood, and defines mitigation measures.  |  | A |
| 1.18. | The project cooperation partner (if applicable) meets the requirements of the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO. |  | A |
| 1.19. | The project application defines the project cooperation partner’s activities planned within the project and complying with the eligible activities (if applicable) under the CM regulations on the implementation of the SO. |  | A |
| **2. SPECIFIC ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA** | **Evaluation system** | **Impact of the criterion on decision-making****(R; A)** |
| **Yes or No** |
| 2.1. | The project application is accompanied by a development and consolidation plan of the study programmes (*applies to the whole project).*  |  | A |
| 2.2. | The project application is accompanied by a communication and publicity plan (*applies to the whole project).* |  | A |
| 2.3. | ***Capacity to implement the doctoral programme which development is envisaged within the project*** (if applicable): The project application shows that the doctoral programme to be developed within the project is based on adequate research capacity of the higher education institution (HEI), which is demonstrated by: |  | A |
| 2.3.1. Research projects implemented by the HEI over the last three years and their attracted funding; |
| 2.3.2. Research areas defined in the HEI’s development strategy and their development plan, which are also available on its website; |
| 2.3.3. Capacities of academic and scientific staff available at the HEI; |
| 2.3.4. Research infrastructure available to the HEI. |
| 2.4. | The project application shows the appropriateness of the study and research infrastructure for the study programmes to be developed within the project *(applies to study programmes in the EU languages)*.  |  | A |
| 2.5. | The project application shows that the academic staff to be involved in the implementation of the new study programmes have adequate knowledge of the English language and teaching skills in an international environment *(applies to study programmes in the EU languages and joint doctoral programmes).* |  | A |
| 2.6. | The project application shows that the HEI follows a good practice in attracting foreign students and has created an organisational structure which fulfils, in a transparent and efficient manner, the tasks of attracting and supporting foreign students, and is capable of operating in a strategic and coordinated way (*applies to study programmes in the EU languages*).  |  | A |
| **3. QUALITY CRITERIA[[5]](#footnote-5)** | **Evaluation system[[6]](#footnote-6)** | **Maximum score: 30 points****Minimum necessary: 14.5[[7]](#footnote-7)/16[[8]](#footnote-8) points**  |
| **Score**  |
| 3.1. | **Contribution of the project to the performance of monitoring indicators** | **0–5**  | At least **1.5**[[9]](#footnote-9)/**3[[10]](#footnote-10)** points must be scored |
| 3.1.1. The share of study programmes closed, on the basis of which the new study programmes will be developed |  |
| 3.1.2. The share of new study programmes |  |
| 3.2. | **Relevance of the project:** | **0–5***(Evaluation unit – 0.5 points)* | At least **4** points must be scored |
| 3.2.1. The project corresponds to the objectives of higher education policy of Latvia; |
| 3.2.2. The project corresponds to the development and consolidation plan of the study programmes; |
| 3.2.3. The new study programmes to be developed within the project correspond to the HEI’s strategic specialisation, development needs of the economy and the demand of potential students; |
| 3.2.4. The new study programmes to be developed within the project correspond to the growth priorities set by the Smart Specialisation Strategy; |
| 3.2.5. The project complements other initiatives and projects implemented or ongoing at the higher education institution. |
| 3.3. | **Quality of project design and implementation:** | **0–5***(Evaluation unit – 0.5 points)* | Must score at least **3** points |
| 3.3.1. The substantive solution of the project (methodology) is innovative, the planned activities are contextually appropriate for the achievement of the objective, their reciprocal logic is justified and appropriate for the achievement of the planned results;  |
| 3.3.2. The activities planned within the project are sound and developed in a quality that enables achievement of the expected goals and results;  |
| 3.3.3. The project is economically feasible (profitable), with adequate resources envisaged for each project activity;  |
| 3.3.4. The overall project design ensures consistency between its objectives, substantive solutions, activities and planned budget. |
| 3.4. | **Quality of the project implementation team and the cooperation arrangements:** | **0–5***(Evaluation unit – 0.5 points)* | At least **3** points must be scored |
| 3.4.1. The project envisages close, reciprocally complementary and goal-oriented partnerships between higher education institutions participating in the project;  |
| 3.4.2. The project implementation staff (incl. that of the cooperation partner) have appropriate knowledge, skills, experience and management support to successfully implement all the activities planned within the project and achieve the set objective; |
| 3.4.3. An appropriate and varied range of experts has been attracted to project implementation to enable use of their diverse experiences, specialisation (foreign experts, technology experts, industry representatives etc.);  |
| 3.4.4. Roles and responsibilities of the staff involved in the project implementation are clear and appropriate and affirm the commitment or motivation of all actors involved to actively participate in conformity with their competences and tasks set by the project; |
| 3.4.5. The project envisages an efficient cooperation mechanism between all actors involved to ensure effective (qualitative, operative) coordination, decision-making and communication. |
| 3.5. | **Project impact and dissemination of the results:** | **0–5***(Evaluation unit – 0.5 points)* | At least **3** points must be scored |
| 3.5.1. The project will have a significant impact on the capacities of participating organisations (in particular, higher education institutions) and their development and modernisation in order to make them available to society as a whole and to the labour market, and to support their international cooperation capacities at local, regional, national or international level. |
| 3.5.2. The project will have an impact outside the participating organisations at a local, regional, national or international level. It envisages appropriate measures to monitor progress and evaluate the expected (short- and long-term) impact; |
| 3.5.3. The project envisages a clear and efficient plan for dissemination of results and includes appropriate measures, tools and channels to ensure efficient dissemination of results and outputs among stakeholders, both during and after project implementation;  |
| 3.5.4. The project includes appropriate measures and resources to ensure sustainability of its results and outputs after the completion.  |
| 3.6. | The HEI has **previous experience** of development and implementation of joint programmes with a foreign HEI.  | **1** | The criterion gives an additional point |
| 3.7. | It is planned to attract Latvian nationals having a degree from foreign higher education institutions and no previous employment relationship with the relevant HEI as academic staff (in the main job) for the implementation of the newly developed study programmes.  | **1** | The criterion gives an additional point |
| 3.8. | The project applicant has concluded an agreement with the Ministry of Education and Science on good practice of attracting foreign students and delivering studies. | **2** | The criterion gives an additional point |
| 3.9. | The activities planned within the project promote compliance with the horizontal principle of “Equal opportunities” (gender equality, disability, age and ethnicity): | **0–1** | The criterion gives an additional point |
| 3.9.1. The activities planned within the project do not promote compliance with the horizontal principle of “Equal opportunities”; | 0 |
| 3.9.2. The activities planned within the project promote compliance with the horizontal principle of “Equal opportunities”. | 1 |

Notes: The compliance of the project application with quality criteria is assessed against scores defined. Where necessary, the criteria indicate the minimum score for the project application to be approved.

1. In case of discrepancy of the criterion, the cooperation authority shall decide on rejection of the project application; [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In case of a discrepancy of the criterion, the cooperation authority shall decide on conditional approval of the project application, with consideration of the project selection regulations for the Specific Objective; [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Compliance of the project applicant’s legal status is assessed under the criterion; [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Weight of the criteria:

3.1. Contribution of the project to the performance of monitoring indicators — **30%**;

3.2. Relevance of the project — **20%**;

3.3. Quality of project design and implementation — **20%**;

3.4. Quality of the project implementation team and the cooperation arrangements — **10%**;

3.5. Project impact and dissemination of the results: - **10%**;

3.6. The HEI has previous experience of development and implementation of joint programmes with a foreign HEI — **2.5**%

3.7. The plans are to attract as academic staff (in the main job) for the implementation of the new study programmes Latvian nationals having a degree from foreign higher education institutions and no previous employment relationship with the relevant HEI —**2.5**%;

3.8. The project applicant has concluded an agreement with the Ministry of Education and Science on good practice of attracting foreign students and ensuring of their studies — 2.**5%**.

3.9. The activities envisaged within the project promote compliance with the horizontal principle of “Equal opportunities” (gender equality, disability, age and ethnicity) — 2.**5%**. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. For the assessment of criteria 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5, the expert applies the following approach: “**0 points** — The application fails to address the respective criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information (unless a “manifest clerical error has occurred”); **1 point —** Weak: the criterion is not sufficiently addressed, or there are serious deficiencies in the application; **2 points**— Fair: the application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are some significant shortcomings; **3 points**— Good: the application addresses the criterion well, but there is still a number of shortcomings; **4 points** — Very good: the application addresses the criterion very well, but there is still a small number of shortcomings; **5 points**— Excellent: the application successfully meets all the relevant aspects of the criterion; if there are shortcomings, they are minor.

Based on the expert evaluation form, the expert justifies the number of points awarded. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Applies to HEIs implementing 11 and less study programmes, excluding study programmes in the study direction “Education, Pedagogics and Sport”, which will be specified in round 1 of SO 8.2.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Applies to HEIs implementing 12 and more study programmes, excluding study programmes in the study direction “Education, Pedagogics and Sport”, which will be specified in round 1 of SO 8.2.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Applies to HEIs implementing 11 and less study programmes, excluding study programmes in the study direction “Education, Pedagogics and Sport”, which will be specified in round 1 of SO 8.2.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Applies to HEIs implementing 12 and more study programmes, excluding study programmes in the study direction “Education, Pedagogics and Sport”, which will be specified in round 1 of SO 8.2.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)