

Approved by the Board of Trustees of the
Russian Science Foundation on 28.01.2014
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**PROCEDURES FOR CARRYING OUT EXPERT EVALUATIONS OF ACADEMIC AND
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS SUBMITTED FOR
CONTESTS HELD BY THE RUSSIAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION**

1. These Procedures have been adopted in accordance with Paragraph 3 of Part 9 of Article 11 of Federal Law of the Russian Federation No. 291-FZ “On the Russian Science Foundation and on Introduction of Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation” dated November 2, 2013.
2. These Procedures set forth the rules for carrying out expert evaluations of academic and science and technology programmes and projects (hereinafter expert evaluations and projects, respectively) submitted for contests held by the Russian Science Foundation (hereinafter, the Foundation).
3. Expert evaluations shall be conducted by the Foundation’s expert councils established in accordance with the Statute on Expert Councils of the Russian Science Foundation, as well as by specialists in the fields of science and technology engaged in the activities of the Foundation’s expert councils (hereinafter, the Foundation’s experts) in accordance with these Procedures and with the Criteria for Competitive Selection of Academic and Science and Technology Programmes and Projects Submitted for Contests Held by the Russian Science Foundation.
4. Projects shall be referred for expert evaluation once they have been registered in the Foundation’s information and analytical system (hereinafter, the Foundation’s IAS) and a hard copy of a project proposal has been submitted to the Foundation in accordance with the established procedure (hereinafter, the proposal).
5. The first stage of the expert evaluation consists of assessing the submitted proposal materials by the Foundation’s experts and the preparation of expert conclusions on each project. The Foundation’s expert council or bureau may resolve to hold the first stage of an expert evaluation in two phases. The first phase involves expert evaluations of all proposals allowed to take part in the contest. The second phase involves expert evaluations of proposals that have passed the first phase and collected the largest number of points. The number of such proposals should be a multiple of the expected number of contest winners, normally by a factor of 3 or 4. The expert council section or bureau may also decide to allow any proposals that failed to collect the necessary number of points, but which were received polarizing assessments.
 - 5.1. When a two-stage contest is held, the Foundation’s expert council or bureau may decide to conduct an expert evaluation of proposals selected for the first stage of the contest by members of the Foundation’s expert council, which shall result in a selection of projects recommended to enter the second stage of the contest. The results of the selection (the expert evaluation at the first stage of the contest) shall be approved by the Foundation’s expert council or bureau and submitted to the Foundation’s Board.
6. Proposals shall be allocated to the Foundation’s experts by expert council section coordinators (if one exists) of the relevant expert council of the Foundation, or by members of the Foundation’s expert council authorized by the Foundation’s expert council. The allocation of proposals shall be performed in accordance with classifier codes indicated by project managers in their proposals.
7. Information on experts appointed to conduct an expert evaluation shall be confidential. The Foundation’s experts shall be denoted only by their personal codes in any documents related to the expert evaluation. Access to this information shall be granted to the Chairperson of the Foundation’s expert council, the coordinators of the relevant sections (in accordance with their field or academic discipline), authorized employees of the Foundation, or members of the Foundation’s expert council authorized by the Foundation’s

expert council.

8. “Conflicts of interest” are not permitted upon the allocation of proposals among the Foundation’s experts or during an expert evaluation – a situation where any expert council section coordinator, expert council member or expert of the Foundation:

- has a working relationship or other professional or civil law relationship with at least one of the main implementers of an organization submitting a proposal;

- is or was in close family relations with one of the main implementers of the project under consideration;

- is an academic supervisor of one of the main implementers of the project under consideration or has co-authored academic papers (publications) with one of the main implementers of the project under consideration in the two years immediately preceding the date that the contest was announced;

- is a participant in a proposal submitted for the contest that may potentially be in competition with the project under consideration;

- is for any other reason has a personal interest in the results of the expert evaluation that could affect the objectivity of the consideration of the project.

Expert council members must report any conflicts of interest to the Chairperson of the Foundation’s expert council upon the allocation of proposals for expert evaluation or during the consideration thereof. In such cases, these proposals shall, upon instruction from the Chairperson of the Foundation’s expert council, be allocated to another member of the Foundation’s expert council for expert evaluation, and any expert council members with a conflict of interest may not be involved in the consideration of such proposals.

9. Prior to conducting an expert evaluation, the Foundation’s expert must familiarize themselves with the procedures and criteria for the competitive selection of projects, as well as with local regulations and any of the Foundation’s documents pertinent to carrying out the expert evaluations.

10. Within three days of receiving the proposal materials, the Foundation’s expert must report any “conflicts of interest” or the inability on his/her part to prepare a qualified and objective conclusion on the project via the IAS to the Foundation’s expert council section coordinator of the relevant expert council of the Foundation (if one exists) or to a member of the Foundation’s expert council authorized by the Foundation’s expert council. In such cases, another expert of the Foundation shall be appointed to prepare an expert conclusion on the project. The expert’s consent to conduct an expert evaluation shall be confirmed via the Foundation’s IAS, also within three days of receiving the proposal materials. If the expert has not confirmed his/her consent to conduct the expert evaluation within this three-day period, the proposal may be reassigned to another expert, and the expert that failed to confirm his/her consent to conduct the expert evaluation shall be informed about this via the Foundation’s IAS.

11. Two to five experts from the Foundation shall be engaged in conducting the first stage of the expert evaluation for each proposal. The decision on the number of the Foundation’s experts to be engaged shall be made at a meeting of the Foundation’s Board based on a recommendation by the Chairperson of the relevant expert council of the Foundation.

12. The expert conclusion format shall be approved by the Foundation’s Board taking into account recommendations of the relevant expert council of the Foundation. In the closing part of an expert conclusion, the Foundation’s experts should express their meaningful personal opinion on the project’s scientific value and its strengths and weaknesses, and make recommendations on the amount of funding for the project if it is to be supported. The Foundation’s expert may recommend an adjustment to the amount of funding for the project subject to a mandatory justification for any such recommendation. The result of the first stage of the

expert evaluation shall be summarized in total points awarded in each part of an expert conclusion, which shall be taken into account by the expert council sections and the expert council for the subsequent evaluation of the proposal materials and in an expert conclusion review (the expert's personal opinion).

The requirements with regard to the format of the expert conclusion specified in the first part of this paragraph shall not apply when the Foundation's expert council members conduct expert evaluations of proposals cleared for participation in the first stage of a two-stage contest.

13. The maximum term for the preparation and submission of expert conclusions after the proposal materials have been received by the Foundation's expert shall normally be two weeks. If the Foundation's expert fails to submit an expert conclusion within the stated timeframe, the proposal may be reassigned to another expert, and the expert that failed to conduct the expert evaluation in time shall be informed about this via the Foundation's IAS.

14. The second stage of the expert evaluation consists of an assessment of the proposal materials by sections of the relevant expert council of the Foundation (if any), or by individual members of the Foundation's expert council as assigned by the Chairperson of such expert council of the Foundation. This evaluation shall be conducted taking into account the results of the first stage of the expert evaluation based on a consideration of the proposal materials and the expert conclusions made during the first stage of the expert evaluation. The sections shall consider proposals in accordance with the academic fields indicated in the proposals. A project may only be rejected for not matching the specialty field of a section of the Foundation's expert council if a recommendation to that effect has been made by at least one of the Foundation's experts.

15. A substantiated dissenting opinion of a section of the Foundation's expert council or of a member of the Foundation's expert council (if any) on the results of consideration of proposal materials by sections of the Foundation's expert councils shall be submitted to the relevant expert council of the Foundation in writing.

16. For projects that have been recommended funding as a result of the second stage of the expert evaluation, the Foundation's expert council shall draft a recommendation on the amount of funding, which may not exceed the amount of funding requested for the project under consideration. Recommendations made as a result of the second stage of the expert evaluation must take into account the funding quotas for the academic discipline (knowledge field) in relation to the total funds available through the Foundation for the relevant priority area of the Foundation's activities.

17. The results of the second stage of the expert evaluation shall be considered at a meeting of the relevant expert council of the Foundation, provided that any dissenting opinions submitted in writing by the Foundation's expert council members as a result of the second stage of the expert evaluation are considered separately, with a written decision to be made on each proposal.

18. Projects submitted for the contest that involve the participation of the Foundation's expert council members and which have received a funding recommendation as a result of the second stage of the expert evaluation, shall be additionally subjected to a secret vote at a meeting of the relevant expert council of the Foundation. The results of the vote shall be considered valid if at least two thirds of the council members took part in the meeting. A resolution to support a project shall pass if at least two thirds of the Foundation's expert council members that took part in the meeting voted for it.

19. The results of expert evaluation and funding recommendations by the Foundation's expert council for projects that received support shall be summarized in the minutes executed by the Foundation's expert council and submitted to the Foundation's Board.

20. The Foundation's experts and members of the Foundation's expert councils must ensure complete confidentiality with regard to any information about projects or their progress through the expert evaluation process that they become aware of in the course of their work, including: information on the authors or content of a given project (including any attachments thereto); information on how the expert evaluation is

proceeding; or information on the amounts of requested or recommended funding for projects.

21. The Foundation's experts and members of the Foundation's expert councils shall conduct expert evaluations in person and shall bear full responsibility for the validity of the findings, proposals and recommendations contained in their expert conclusions.

22. Once the contest results have been determined, the Foundation shall give project managers the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the expert conclusion reviews via their personal pages in the Foundation's IAS. In this case, the results of the expert evaluation shall be presented to applicant in the form of brief project reviews by experts and dissenting opinions of sections (members) of the Foundation's expert council (if any).

In case of a two-stage contest, only proposals cleared for participation in the second stage of the contest shall be granted access to expert conclusion reviews.