

INSTRUCTIONS

for participation in the procedure for the selection of associated partners in relation to a project proposal under grant scheme BG05M2OP001-1.001 "Creation and development of Centres of excellence", funded by operational programme "Science and Education for Smart Growth" 2014-2020

1. Introduction

The University of Food Technologies - Plovdiv (UFT) in partnership with Agricultural University – Plovdiv, the Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" and the Medical University - Plovdiv intends to apply under grant scheme BG05M2OP001-1.001 "Creation and development of Centres of excellence", funded by operational programme "Science and Education for Smart Growth" 2014-2020, priority axis: 1 „Research and technological development“. The Center of excellence (CoE) is a: "top-level research complex conducting research in accordance with the best international standards and practice. The performance of the CoE will be evaluated in terms of the quality, quantity and impact of its research output (e.g. publications in the top 10% of scientific publications in journals in the corresponding area). This complex should possess an extensive pool of top-level researchers, a well-defined organisational structure and own research agenda."

The activities under the procedure must lead to the development of excellent and market-oriented research in accordance with the thematic areas of the Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation¹ (ISSS), as the present CoE with lead partner UFT will be realized under Component 3: „Industry for healthy living and biotechnology“ from ISSS.

According to the Guidelines for applicants of the procedure, eligible under the present selection procedure are the following **candidates**: research and development institutes, universities and/or their main units, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Agricultural Academy. The eligible candidates can apply in a consortium comprising other candidates from the abovementioned ones and together with the following **partners**: existing Centers of excellence, other public and private "scientific organisations" (according to §1, point 1 from the Additional Provision of the Law for Promotion of Scientific Research), non-government organisations (if they are registered as "scientific organisations") and/or innovative clusters. In addition to the candidates and the partners described above, "**associated partners**" can also participate in the project implementation. In the meaning of § 1 (1) of Ordinance of the Council of Ministers №162/2016² "associated partners of the grant applicants" are all natural persons and legal entities and consortia thereof constituting an interested party with regard to the project implementation and involved in the implementation of the project activities, which do not spend grant funding.

In the framework of the present procedure, among the submitted applications, UFT and its partners will select up to 10 associated partners from each of the following categories:

- Research and development organizations
- Business organisations (companies)
- Municipal administrations

¹<https://www.mi.government.bg/bg/themes/inovacionna-strategiya-za-inteligentna-specializaciya-na-republika-balgariya-2014-2020-g-i-proces-na-i-1470-287.html>

²<http://www.eufunds.bg/images/16P162.pdf>

The ranking of the associated partners will be made in a descending order according to the received points (see point 4. Criteria and evaluation methodology).

2. Associated partners

Eligible associated partners under the present procedure shall be legal entities supporting the project implementation. They must be selected on the basis of an unconditional open, transparent and non-discriminatory procedure, allowing the participation of any interested economic operator. The **expenditure** incurred by the associated partners **will not be eligible** for reimbursement under the operational programme. It is not obligatory for the associated partners to be eligible beneficiaries under the operational programme or candidates/partners under the present procedure.

In the event of engagement of **municipalities** as associated partners under the procedure, the project applicant must submit a letter of support for the project implementation from the municipality on whose territory the project activities will be implemented.

The associated partners must be selected on the basis of an unconditional open, transparent and non-discriminatory procedure held by the applicants, backed up by clear criteria of association. The associated partners may be included during the entire term of implementation of the grant award contract. The applicant must ensure public access to the call for selection of associated partners and to the selection criteria by publishing the latter in at least two public sources. In the course of evaluation only associated partners having been selected on the basis of an unconditional open, transparent and non-discriminatory procedure and having signed a partnership declaration with the applicant for a minimum term of five years will be subject to evaluation.

Associated partners will be ineligible if they:

- a) Have a member of the management or supervisory body, or a person temporarily performing such duties, including procurators or commercial agents, which are in close links within the meaning of §1 (1) of the Supplementary Regulations to the Law on Conflict of Interest Prevention and Ascertainment with regard to the Head of the Managing Authority of operational programme “Science and Education for Smart Growth” 2014-2020
- b) Fall in the cases referred to in articles 21 or 22 of the Law on Conflict of Interest Prevention and Ascertainment.

In view of the above, the associated partners must submit a declaration of no conflict of interest (Annex IIa), to be completed and signed by all persons authorised to represent the partner (irrespective of whether the type of representation is joint and/or separate and/or otherwise).

The associated partners may collaborate with the applicant on the preparation and/or the technical implementation of the project, or of project activities specified in advance in the Project Justification. The associated partners and the applicant/leading partner must complete a declaration of partnership (Annex IIIa), in which all collaborative activities must be specified.

The associated partners **MAY NOT** enjoy preferential access under more favourable conditions to the research and development infrastructure and to the results generated by it.

3. Minimum requirements for the candidates for associated partners

In order for an organization to be eligible to apply under this procedure, it has to meet the following minimum requirements, depending on the type associated partner.

3.1. Research and development organisations

Each candidate has to meet the following minimum requirements:

- To be an organisation registered in Bulgaria, in another European Union country, in a country from the European Economic Area (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) or in Switzerland
- To carry out its research and development activity in the field of “Industry for healthy living and biotechnology“, according to ISSS:
 - Methods for clean production, storage, processing and for reaching the end users of specific Bulgarian ingredients, tools and products (incl. yogurt, honey and bee products, bread, wine, dairy and meat products, essential oils, beer, herbs and herbal products, cosmetics)
 - Production of specialized food and beverages (baby and children’s, "space" food)
 - Production of tools, equipment and supplies for medical and dental diagnostics and therapy, and/or participation in supra-national production chain
 - Personal medicine, diagnostics and individual therapy, therapeutic and medicinal forms and means
 - Medical and health tourism with an emphasis on personalization options (small-scale and personal tourism)
 - Nano-technologies in service of medicine
 - Bio-technologies with direct application for healthy lifestyle
 - "Blue" technologies and application of new methods and technologies in the sustainable use of river and marine resources
 - Production of plants for the production of environmentally clean electricity and industrial water
 - Green economy
- To meet the definition for one of the following organisations:
 - Research and development institute: institute or academic specialized unit of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and/or the Agricultural Academy and/or research institute in the meaning of art. 60 of the Law on Administration
 - University and/or its basic unit in the meaning of art. 25, paragraph 2 from the Law on Higher Education
 - Existing Center of excellence
 - Public or private research organisation (according to §1, point 1 from the Additional Provision of the Law for Promotion of Scientific Research, a “scientific organisation” is a legal person, which undertakes scientific research in compliance with the acting legislation)
 - Non-government organisation³
 - Innovation cluster⁴

³Provided that its main activity at registration falls within the definition of research and knowledge dissemination organisation set out in item 15 (ee) of the Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation. Any legal entity member of the non-profit legal entities must fall within the definition set out in §1 (1) of the Supplementary Regulations to the Law for Promotion of Scientific Research.

If the organisation is a foreign legal entity, it has to fall within one of the abovementioned categories according to the law of the country of incorporation.

3.2. Business organisations (companies)

Each candidate has to meet the following minimum requirements:

- To be an organisation registered in Bulgaria, in another European Union country, in a country from the European Economic Area (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) or in Switzerland
- To operate in the field of “Industry for healthy living and biotechnology” of ISSS
- To cover the definition for one of the following organisations:
 - Micro-, small, medium-sized or large enterprise according to the Law on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, registered under the Commercial Law or the Law on Cooperatives (or under the equivalent national legislation, if established abroad), having separate legal personality
 - Non-government organisations

3.3. Municipal administrations

Each candidate has to meet the following minimum requirements:

- To be a municipal administration according to the Law on Local Government and Local Administration

In the event that any of the candidates for associated partner does not meet the minimum requirements set out above, it shall not be allowed for evaluation.

4. Criteria and evaluation methodology

This methodology provides guidance for the evaluation under each criterion and for determining the integrated evaluation of the offer, including the relative weighting given to each criterion. The methodology is applied to all admitted offers that shall be subject to evaluation.

4.1. Criteria for evaluating the research and innovation capacity of associated partners - research and development organizations

Criteria	Points
1. Publications in scientific journals and books, refereed in SCOPUS or WoS, in the last 5 years (2011-2015) (RD₁)	<i>Maximum: 30 points</i>
Over 250 publications	30
Between 125 and 250 publications	20
Between 100 and 124 publications	10
Between 50 and 99 publications	5
Between 1 and 49 publications	1
Without publications	0

⁴A structure or an organised group of independent parties (such as innovative start-ups, small, medium and large enterprises, as well as research and knowledge dissemination organisations, non-for-profit organisations and other related economic actors) designed to stimulate innovative activity by promoting sharing of facilities and exchange of knowledge and expertise and by contributing effectively to knowledge transfer, networking, information dissemination and collaboration among the undertakings and other organisations in the cluster.

Criteria	Points
2. Percentage (%) of the most cited publications during the past 5 years (2011-2015) - publications among the most cited 1% publications in the respective scientific area according to Essential Science Indicators in Web of Science (RD₂)	<i>Maximum: 30 points</i>
Over 1.5% most cited publications	30
Between 1.0% and 1.5% most cited publications	20
Between 0.51 and 0.99% most cited publications	10
Between 0.3% and 0.5% most cited publications	5
Under 0.3% most cited publications	1
Without most cited publications	0
3. Number of grants received from the European Research Council (RD₃)	<i>Maximum: 20 points</i>
Over 2 grants from ERC	20
2 grants from ERC	10
1 grant from ERC	5
0 grants from ERC	0
4. Role of coordinator positions in projects under the EU framework programmes (FP7) or “Horizon 2020“(RD₄)	<i>Maximum: 20 points</i>
Over 5 coordinator positions	20
5 coordinator positions	10
4 coordinator positions	5
3 coordinator positions	1
Under 3 coordinator positions	0
MAXIMUM POINTS (RD₁+RD₂+RD₃+RD₄)	100

4.2. Criteria for evaluating the research and innovation capacity of associated partners – business organisations

Criteria	Points
1. Investments in the respective project field during the past five years (2011-2015 r.) (BO₁)	<i>Maximum: 40 points</i>
For the past 5 years the partner has invested >5.00% from its income in R&D	40
For the past 5 years the partner has invested from 4.01% to 5.00% from its income in R&D	30
For the past 5 years the partner has invested from 3.51% to 4.00% from its income in R&D	20
For the past 5 years the partner has invested from 3.00% to 3.50% from its income in R&D	10
For the past 5 years the partner has invested less than 3.00% from its income in R&D	0
2. Availability of innovation strategy, incl. availability of policies and rules regarding intellectual property rights (BO₂)	<i>Maximum: 30 points</i>
The partner has a developed innovation strategy, policies and rules regarding intellectual property rights	30
The partner does not have a developed innovation strategy, policies and rules regarding intellectual property rights	0
3. Participation in ongoing and/or completed innovations projects (national or European) during the past five years (2011-2015) (BO₃)	<i>Maximum: 30 points</i>
The partner has participated in more than 5 R&D and/or innovation projects with public R&D organisations/universities.	30
The partner has participated in 5 R&D and/or innovation projects with public R&D organisations/universities.	25

Criteria	Points
The partner has participated in 4 R&D and/or innovation projects with public R&D organisations/universities.	20
The partner has participated in 3 R&D and/or innovation projects with public R&D organisations/universities.	15
The partner has participated in 2 R&D and/or innovation projects with public R&D organisations/universities.	10
The partner has participated in 1 R&D and/or innovation project with public R&D organisations/universities.	5
The partner has not participated in R&D and/or innovation project with public R&D organisations/universities.	0
MAXIMUM POINTS (BO₁+BO₂+BO₃)	100

4.3. Criteria for evaluating the capacity of associated partners – municipal administrations

Criteria	Points
1. Participation in completed R&D or infrastructure projects (with national or European funding) during the past five years (2011-2015) (MA₁)	<i>Maximum: 50 points</i>
The partner has participated in the realization of 1 or more R&D or infrastructure projects	50
The partner has not participated in the realization of any R&D or infrastructure projects	0
2. Registered R&D organizations or companies in the thematic field of “Industry for healthy living and biotechnology“ of ISSS (MA₂)	<i>Maximum: 50 points</i>
There are over 10 registered R&D organisations or companies in this thematic field on the territory of the municipality	50
There are between 5 and 10 registered R&D organisations or companies in this thematic field on the territory of the municipality	35
There are between 1 and 4 registered R&D organisations or companies in this thematic field on the territory of the municipality	15
On the territory of the municipality there are no registered R&D organisations or companies in this thematic field	0
MAXIMUM POINTS (MA₁+MA₂)	100

The integrated evaluation (IE) of each of the associated partners is calculated for each participant as follows:

- Research and development organisations

$$IE_{RD} = RD_1 + RD_2 + RD_3 + RD_4$$

- Business organisations

$$IE_{BO} = BO_1 + BO_2 + BO_3$$

- Municipal administrations

$$IE_M = MA_1 + MA_2$$

The ranking will be done in a descending order according to the points received. Among the submitted proposals UFT and its partners shall select up to 10 associated partners from each category.

5. Evidence that should be provided by the associated partners for meeting the evaluation criteria

Every candidate for an associated partner should present the following evidence certifying that the organization covers the evaluation criteria.

5.1. Associated partners – research and development organizations

1. A list containing objectively verifiable information concerning the publications of the members of the applicant/partners research team in scientific journals and books, refereed in SCOPUS⁵ or Web of Science (WoS⁶) in the relevant ISSS thematic area of the proposal, in the last 5 years (2011-2015).

A joint list must be prepared, arranged in the following order: surname of the author in alphabetical order, and then the next authors. The list should contain:

- The authors of the publication with the names of the relevant members of research team in bold⁴;
 - Publication title;
 - The name of the journal / book, year, volume, initial and final page of the publication;
 - Scientific field of the publication related with the relevant ISSS thematic area;
 - Internet link to the reference of the publication in SCOPUS or WoS;
2. Extract of graph/table and/or other data/information in Web of Science, certifying the percentage of publications of the associated partner in the last 5 years (2011-2015), falling within the 1% most cited publications in the respective area according to the Essential Science Indicators in Web of Science.
 3. Copies of contracts for grants received by the associated partner from the European Research Council⁷ - authenticated on each page with a signature, stamp and text “true copy”.
 4. Copies of contracts for financing of projects under the EU Framework Programmes and Horizon 2020, certifying that the associated partner has performed the role of a coordinator (coordinator of the entire project; the functions of the National Coordinator will be not be taken into account) - authenticated on each page with a signature, stamp and text “true copy”.

5.2. Associated partners – business organisations

1. Reference for the R&D activities for 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015⁸ (depending on the number of completed financial years) - authenticated on each page with a signature, stamp and text “true copy”.

⁵ <https://www.scopus.com/home.uri>

⁶

<http://login.webofknowledge.com/error/Error?PathInfo=%2F&Alias=WOK5&Domain=.webofknowledge.com&Src=IP&RouterURL=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.webofknowledge.com%2F&Error=IPError>

⁷ <https://erc.europa.eu>

Only the costs referred to in line “R&D expenditure - total (110 +120)”, code 100 for the respective scientific area/areas shall be taken into account.

2. Profit and loss statements for 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 (depending on the number of completed financial years) - authenticated on each page with a signature, stamp and text “true copy”.

Only the revenues listed in row "Total Group I", code 15000 shall be taken into account.

3. Innovation strategy, policies and rules regarding intellectual property rights.
4. Copies of research or innovation project contracts implemented in collaboration with research organizations (authenticated on each page with a signature, stamp and text “true copy”).

5.3. Associated partners – municipal administrations

1. List of completed research or infrastructure projects (with national or European funding) over the past five years (2011-2015). The list should include:
 - Name of project
 - Implementation period (from month/year to month/year)
 - Total project budget and funding source
 - Brief description of the project
2. List of research and development organizations and companies registered on the territory of the municipality in the thematic area “Industry for healthy living and biotechnology” of ISSS. The list should include:
 - Name of the research and development organisation or company
 - Unified Identification Code (EIC) or equivalent registration number
 - Brief description of the activity of the research and development organization or the company

IMPORTANT!!!: In the event that the respective candidate is approved for participation in the project as an associated partner, it will be required to provide a translation by a ”sworn” translator of the above documents from/to English/Bulgarian language.

6. Documents that should be completed by the associated partners for participation in the procedure

In relation to its participation in the procedure, the applicants have to submit the following documents:

1. Application

⁸ The specified document is a part of the annual activity report. Pursuant to Article 92(3), Article 219(4), Article.252(2), Article.259(3) of the CITA and Article 51 of the ITNPA, the legal and natural persons together with their annual tax return submit also Annual Report of Operations (in force as of 01.01.2010).

Every candidate for participation in the procedure for selection of associated partners should complete an Application (Annex I) together with evidence for covering the evaluation criteria.

2. Declaration for avoiding the conflict of interest for the associated partner (Annex IIa).

The declaration certifies that the associated partner is not:

- Member of the management or supervisory body, including temporarily performing such duties, including a procurator or a trade representative in the associated partner represented by me, is not a related party in the meaning of § 1, point 1⁹ of the additional provision of the Law on Prevention and Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest with the Head of the Managing Authority of operational programme “Science and Education for Smart Growth” 2014-2020.
- Falls in cases of art. 21 or Art. 22 of the Conflict of Interest Prevention and Ascertainment Act.

The declaration shall be filled in and signed by the persons entitled to represent the associated partner (whether together and/or separately, and/or otherwise).

After the procedure, the selected associated partners have to sign:

1. Declaration on the activities carried out jointly with associated partners (Annex IIIa).

The declaration shall be signed and completed by the person entitled to represent the associated partner. In cases where the associated partner is represented by several individuals, the data should be filled in for all of them or for the person who is authorized to do so with a notarised power of attorney.

Only for associated partners – municipal administrations:

2. Letter of support for the realisation of the project from the municipality on whose territory the project activities will be implemented.

7. Schedule of the procedure

The procedure for selection of associated partners will be based on the following schedule:

N^o	Activity	Term
1	Announcing the procedure in at least two public sources	till 16 November 2016
2	Deadline for submission of requests for clarifications by the candidates	till 30 November 2016
3	Deadline for providing clarifications	till 5 December 2016
4	Deadline for submission of applications for participation in the procedure	till 12 December 2016; 17:00
5	Selection and notification of the selected associated partners	till 20 December 2016

⁹ “Related parties” are spouses or persons who are co-habiting, lineal relatives, collateral relatives - up to the fourth degree inclusive and relatives by marriage – up to the second degree inclusive, as well as individuals and legal entities with which the person holding public office has economic or political relationships that give rise to justifiable doubts regarding his/her impartiality and objectivity.

№	Activity	Term
6	Signing of the declaration of partnership between the UFT and selected associated partners	till 30 December 2016

The procedure has deadline for submission of applications till **12 December 2016 (17:00 h)**. The documents should be submitted on paper and in electronic format at the following address:

University of Food Technologies - Plovdiv
 26, Maritsa Blvd.
 Plovdiv 4000
Attention: Prof. Nikolay Menkov – Vice-rector

The envelope should contain the name of the candidate as well as the following text:

- **Procedure for the selection of associated partners in relation to a project proposal under grant scheme BG05M2OP001-1.001 "Creation and development of Centres of excellence", funded by operational programme "Science and Education for Smart Growth" 2014-2020**

After examining the documents and based on the application of the evaluation methodology, the University of Food Technologies will contact the organizations selected for being associated partners via the provided e-mail addresses and/or telephone.

Questions concerning the procedure can be sent to the following e-mail address: vicerector_inter@uft-plovdiv.bg