

## ANNEX 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Terms of Reference (ToR) for External Experts (external assessors) assisting in the assessment of the Concept Notes and Full applications received in the framework of Call for Proposals for the Fellowships for Belarusian Lecturers, Scientists, and PhD Students at the EU Higher Education and Research Institutions**

### 1. BASIC INFORMATION

1. **Deliverable(s) and Sub-Deliverable(s) No and Title(s):** Selection of Belarusian candidates for Fellowships to Belarusian Lecturers, Scientists, and PhD Students through applications received in the framework of the SALT (Support to Advanced Learning and Training) programme.
2. **Beneficiaries involved/Target Groups:** Belarusian lecturers, scientists, and PhD students.
3. **Location:** home based without travel.
4. **Duration:** January 1- February 20, 2024
5. **Number of WD/hours:**
6. Preparation to evaluation procedure: 9 hours
7. Allocated time per Concept note: 2 hours
8. Allocated time per Full application: 3 hours

It is expected that an external expert will assess up to 10 applications.

### 2. BACKGROUND

**2.1. Description of current situation:** The Central Project Management Agency (CPMA) is entrusted to implement the action EU4Belarus- Support to Advanced Learning and Training (SALT II), which is part of a larger programme EU4Belarus: Reinforcing resilience and Democratisation Programme. SALT II is intended to last till the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2025, and enjoys the European Commission's financial contribution of 4 million euros.

The CPMA in consultation with the Clearing House is responsible for the organization of the selection process and Evaluation Committee for assessment of applications and selection of applicants for the fellowship grant scheme.

#### 2.2. Overall objective

To recruit experts (assessors) to assist the Contracting Authority in the selection of the best proposals received under EU4Belarus programme Fellowships to Belarusian Lecturers, Scientists, and PhD Students at EU Higher Education and Research Institutions within SALT II (Support to Advanced Learning and Training), and to achieve a high-quality, complete, and coherent selection process of projects in line with the criteria set in the guidelines for applicants.

#### 2.3. Description of the evaluation process:

To select the best full applications received under this Call for Proposals and to achieve a high-quality, complete, and coherent selection process of the projects independent, impartial and highly competent external assessors need to be hired. The external assessors will carry out the assessment of the applications, consisting of Concept note and Full application, in accordance with the published evaluation grids. The applications shall be provided in English. Each application must be assessed individually by at least two assessors, working independently of each other. Each application must be assessed on its own merits and not by comparing different applications. The external experts (assessors) are expected to bring their own experience of the sector and the project implementation to provide the analysis of each proposal. The external experts are required to submit their evaluations

(evaluation grids) to the Evaluation Committee by its set rules. These assessments will be used by the Evaluation Committee in the process of selecting the applications for financing.

The external assessors are bound by a declaration of impartiality and confidentiality to be signed. If the external assessor believes there might be a situation of conflict of interest in relation to one or more applicants, he/she must inform the Contracting Authority immediately. In addition, strict confidentiality is required from the external assessors involved in the implementation of this contract, notably on the assessments of the individual full applications.

The expert cannot apply to the current call and be the supervisor of any applicant (provide supportive documents).

The Evaluation Committee is appointed by the Contracting Authority, comprising a non-voting Chairperson, a non-voting Secretary and the odd number of voting members (minimum of three). Its role is to advise the Contracting Authority on contract awards in accordance with pre-established criteria.

The Chairperson is responsible for coordinating the evaluation process in accordance with the procedures in the PRAG and for ensuring its impartiality and transparency. The Secretary is responsible for carrying out all administrative tasks related to the evaluation procedure.

The external experts work under the supervision of the Evaluation Committee. Should the assessments not satisfy the quality expected by the Contracting Authority and/or the clarifications on certain statements/scores are necessary, it may return the evaluation grid to the external expert and ask for the clarifications and the corrections. The mentioned clarifications and the corrections are included in the external evaluators estimated working days.

### **3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

**3.1. Objective of the assignment:** Following a predefined set of evaluation criteria provided in the Guidelines for Applicants of the Call for Proposals and based on the EU grant management procedures PRAG, the Evaluation Committee will perform the assessment of the Concept notes and Full applications submitted. The formation of the Evaluation Committee requires external experts (assessors) who can read and assess the applications, providing comments and justification for scoring and ranking applicants.

Assessors will carry out the technical assessment of Concept notes and Full applications in accordance with guidelines to be provided by the Contracting Authority and which are based on the published evaluation grids. Over 60 full applications are expected. Each Concept note and Full application has to be assessed individually by 2 experts.

#### **3.2. Tasks:**

1. Experts may be invited to attend the meetings of the Evaluation Committee as observers to present the results of their assessments, provide explanations, and answer any questions from the Evaluation Committee members as defined by PRAG, which is applicable to the present call (available on the internet at this address ePRAG - EXACT External Wiki - EN - EC Public Wiki (europa.eu) and described in the Guidelines for applicants for Fellowships for Belarusian Lecturers, Scientists, and PhD Students at EU Higher Education and Research Institutions at <https://www.cpva.lt/en/international-cooperation/calls-for-proposals/884/k82> , coupled with the set Rules of Procedure to be approved at the first meeting.
2. Perform the assessment of the applications received and evaluate the Concept notes and Full applications as per evaluation grid provided and supply justification of the marks given. At least two experts must assess each Concept note and each Full application, working independently of each other.
3. Fill in and present assessment forms with marks for each candidate.
4. Provide additional explanation of individual cases through discussions if needed for the Evaluation Committee to make decisions and ranking.

#### **3.3. Outputs:**

1. The number of applications (Concept notes and Full applications) evaluated.
2. The evaluation forms are fully completed (including the exhaustive explanation and justification of the scores, and the overall comment / conclusion) to be accepted by the Evaluation Committee.

#### **4. EXPERT PROFILE OR EXPERTISE REQUIRED**

- Have an advanced academic degree (e.g. PhD or its equivalent),
- Minimum 5 years of professional experience in academic or research environment, preferably with some international experience,
- Experience with EU or other donors' grants schemes/ scholarship schemes, and familiarity with academic exchange schemes and procedures is an advantage,
- Fluency in English,
- Working knowledge of Belarusian and Russian is an advantage,
- Understanding of the current Belarusian academic context is an advantage.