

**From:** JEGA Lucian <Lucian.JEGA@ec.europa.eu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 15, 2024 11:53 AM  
**To:** Hlavenková Lucia <lucia.hlavenkova@minedu.sk>; sekretariatMV21-27 <sekretariatMV21-27@mirri.gov.sk>  
**Cc:** GUIN Muriel <Muriel.Guin@ec.europa.eu>; JANKOVSKA Ivana <Ivana.JANKOVSKA@ec.europa.eu>; EMPL-B5-UNIT@ec.europa.eu; BOIJMANS Pascal <Pascal.Boijmans@ec.europa.eu>; REGIO-SLOVAKIA@ec.europa.eu; EPALZA Teresa <Teresa.EPALZA@ec.europa.eu>; cohesion.permrep@mzv.sk; Sloboda, Boris <boris.sloboda@mirri.gov.sk>; Drotár, Matúš <matus.drotar@mirri.gov.sk>; Kerestešová, Daniela <daniela.kerestesova@mirri.gov.sk>; Beňová, Barbora <barbora.benova@mirri.gov.sk>; STRAKA Jaroslav <Jaroslav.STRAKA@ec.europa.eu>; JARY Josef <Josef.JARY@ec.europa.eu>; MIKYSKA Andrej <Andrej.MIKYSKA@ec.europa.eu>; KOCCMAN Ctibor <Ctibor.KOCCMAN@ec.europa.eu>; SIKOROVA Tereza <Tereza.SIKOROVA@ec.europa.eu>; MATOUSOVA Ivona <Ivona.MATOUSOVA@ec.europa.eu>; PACHTA Lukas <Lukas.PACHTA@ec.europa.eu>; Németh Albert <albert.nemeth@minedu.sk>; Paľková Veronika <veronika.palkova@minedu.sk>; Švagerková Pavla Mária <pavla.maria.svagerkova@minedu.sk>; Grznárik Ľubomír <lubomir.grznarik@minedu.sk>  
**Subject:** RE: SK // 21-27 // Programme Slovakia // draft selection criteria No 56

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Dear Lucia,

Thank you very much for your detailed and clarifying replies to our comments. Having consulted colleagues from DG EMPL, we have no further comments regarding the selection criteria.

What remains still open to discussion is our reaction to the intended calls included in the second document submitted to which we have not received a response yet. However, we understand from your message that this will not be included on the agenda of the sub-cttee mtg on 20/5, but latter on once more concrete discussions with partners and potential applicants will have taken place. We would like to be involved in these discussions, notably in what concerns our comments sent earlier.

@sekretariatMV21-27: Dear Jana, may I kindly reiterate the request to have this exchange briefly summarised and included for the record (as REGIO-EMPL comments) in the minutes of the sub-cttee mtg next Mon 20/5 that we will not be able to attend. Many thanks in advance!

We wish you a fruitful meeting next Monday and look forward to receiving the minutes and the final documents.

Best regards,  
Ivana and Lucian

**From:** Hlavenková Lucia <[lucia.hlavenkova@minedu.sk](mailto:lucia.hlavenkova@minedu.sk)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 14, 2024 10:45 AM  
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**Subject:** RE: SK // 21-27 // Programme Slovakia // draft selection criteria No 56

Dear Lucian and Ivana,

Thank you for the additional comments to the criteria.

First, we would like to address a specific issue related to the **intended calls**, as there seems to be a misunderstanding: the project lists sent to you on 05/04/2024 were **not intended for commenting, but for information only** (to share more information about our planned interventions which are not finally prepared and will be discussed with partners and potential beneficiaries as part of preparation of calls, some of them in 2025). We apologise if this was not clear enough. They will not be submitted to the sub-committee mtg on 20/5/2024 (last minute decision), out of concern that they might distract from the approval of the criteria or even condition their approval.

We have accepted all but one comment (adding a new scoring criterion to replace the one moved from 3.4). You will find **our explanations** in your email below.

A revised document is attached (SK version).

We hope that your comments were taken into account sufficiently and the suggested solution (concerning the criterion 3.2, see explanation below) is acceptable to you. We need to send the revised document to the sub-committee **by 15/5/2024**.

Thank you.

Kind regards

**Lucia Hlavenková**  
manažér programovania

odbor programovania pre oblasť vzdelávania | sekcia štrukturálnych fondov EÚ  
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PROSÍM, VÁŽTE SI NAŠE ŽIVOTNÉ PROSTREDIE A SPRÁVU VYTLAČTE IBA VTEDY, AK JU NAOZAJ BUDETE POTREBOVAŤ!

**From:** JEGA Lucian <[Lucian.JEGA@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Lucian.JEGA@ec.europa.eu)>

**Sent:** Thursday, May 9, 2024 11:06 AM

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**Subject:** RE: SK // 21-27 // Programme Slovakia // draft selection criteria No 56

Dear Lucia,

Thank you for the revised documents submitted. Please find our comments (REGIO & EMPL) below and attached:

- Criterion 3.4 Project expenditure was transformed to an exclusion criterion (currently no. 3);

This makes sense but leaves the remaining part of expenditure (up to 25%) not assessed/scored. In other selection criteria (e.g. #13), the "**The rate of eligibility of project expenditure**" is also scored based on the amount of possible ineligible expenditure, i.e. the less ineligible expenditure, the more

points. This may be important in distinguishing between projects of otherwise similar scores.

Please consider adding a similar scoring criterion to replace the one moved from 3.4 (scored) to 3 (exclusion).

**Explanation:**

This criterion is cross-sectional – the recommendation for its application should be universal, irrelevant of political objectives. However, we have not come across this criterion very often, on the contrary, in PO1 and PO4 (referenced here due to the thematic compatibility with skills) such criterion is rather the exception than the rule. Other subjects (apart perhaps from the Ministry of Investment (RSO1.2)) have not adopted it, although their criteria may have been more recently approved or are in the approval process: the Ministry of Economy (PO1, approved in November 2023), the Ministry of Health (PO4, approved in March 2024), or the Government Office (marginalised Roma communities, currently in the approval process). Such criterion is not found among the criteria for ESF+ either, but no doubt the issue is applicable here too. Concerning the remaining part of expenditure, in the case of identification of ineligible project expenditure, the beneficiaries will be penalized, with or without this scoring criterion, through the actual reduction of the total eligible expenditure of the project (up to a maximum of 25% of requested project expenses). We consider this measure a sufficient penalty and are not inclined to add another new criterion only to observe it.

In addition, all other approved criteria by Min Edu should perhaps be amended to reflect this approach.

**RE:** The request should also be extended to other Intermediary Bodies / Managing Authority. Based on our experience, given how administratively and time-consuming the whole approval process is, the request may be hard to comply with and irrelevant of the subject concerned. At the same time, we would like to inform you that the selection and evaluation criteria that are applied within the P SK Specific objective 1 for the field of research are based on the national mandatory VAIA methodology and it is not possible to modify them individually beyond the scope of the mentioned material.

Finally, please consider amending the last phrase in the subject matter of assessment along these lines: "In case of exceeding the set financial limits or in case of specific expenses that are overestimated (up to a maximum of 25% of the requested project expenses), these expenses will be reduced and the project will not be disqualified."

**RE:** Accepted, the last phrase was amended.

- Criterion 3.1 Project implementation plan, where the method application of the scored criterion was reset to a non-model situation and original aspects were reassessed (removed or redefined or newly added);

**Comment**

**Inclusion of Informal Comment No. 1 – Set the non-model situation** — a number of factors are considered in criteria 3.1 and 3.2. The method of applying the scoring criteria accurately describes the allocation of points in the model situation, but the possibility is not

addressed if some facts are fully fulfilled by the applicant and others at all. It is recommended to establish a procedure in a “non-model”

Not clear what to understand from this comment. If by 'model situation' is meant 'ideal situation', then a procedure to handle 'non-ideal' situations is already present in the lower scores, isn't it? Else, please explain.

RE: In the original concept, the method application of scored criterion considered only model (ideal) situations: when all aspects (facts or factors) are without reservation, the project is awarded 5 points; when all aspects are partially fulfilled, the project is awarded 3 points; when all aspects meet the criterion at minimum, the project receives 1 point; and when all aspects do not meet the criterion at all, the project is eliminated (0 points). The system did not consider other (many) combinations, e.g.: 4 aspects were without reservation and 1 aspect did not meet the criterion at all. Given the number of aspects considered in this criterion and the number of combinations that could occur, **the Ministry of Investment recommended to establish the method application of scored criterion in a non-model approach** (informal comment). So, in the current new concept, the scores should be read as following: when all aspects (fact or factors) are without reservation, the project is awarded 5 points; when a maximum of 3 aspects have reservations, but these do not pose a risk to the project, the project is awarded 3 points (remaining aspects are without reservations); when 4 or more (or all) aspects have reservations, but these do not pose a risk to the project, the project is awarded 1 point (remaining aspects, if any, are without reservations); when the reservations identified are so severe, that they pose a risk to a project, the scoring of 0 points is applied – when at least one aspect does not meet the criterion at all, the project is eliminated, although other aspects may be without reservations and/or have reservations that do not pose a risk.

Besides, it is difficult to understand what is the reason for removing "**cooperation with partners**". Please explain.

RE: The description of cooperation with partners was removed as an independent aspect only to be covered by an overarching aspect “description of the course of project implementation” in this criterion. Thus removal due to duplicity with the new aspect having a wider coverage. This new aspect was taken from the Mandatory methodology of management, financing and evaluation of support for research, development and innovation (VAIA). Cooperation with partners is an essential (necessary) part of the description of activities, will be defined at the call level in the instruction for the beneficiaries and will be monitored through a project indicator.

Furthermore, the new wording seems weaker than the previous (all deletions considered) - see our suggestions in bold below:

Current text:

"The project implementation plan is assessed: description of the expected course of project implementation, **the factual quality and the content of the project**, project outputs, feasibility and logical linkage **of activities**, timeline, including linking **of activities** to the project budget."

Old text:

"The proposed way of implementing the project, the factual quality and the content of the project shall be assessed; feasibility and logical linkage of project activities,

chronological follow-up of project activities, cooperation with partners from the employer environment, timeline, including linking activities to the project budget."

RE: Accepted, the suggestions in bold were returned to the subject matter of assessment of the criterion. Changes were reflected in the method application of the scored criterion as well (new aspect).

- Criterion 3.2 Expected results, where the method application of the scored criterion was reset to a non-model situation and duplicities with other criteria (concerning expected outputs and results and their attainability) were removed. Renamed to Project indicators;

Comment

**Inclusion of Informal Comment No 2 – clarification of the focus of the criterion**

— in criterion 3.2, we recommend specifying what will be considered to be the impact of the project and what is the link between measurable indicators and results and impacts of the project (or between measurable result indicators and project results);

Not clear how the modifications made address the above comment.

In addition, changing the name of the criterion does not seem to make too much sense, i.e. the subject of the assessment are the **expected results**, whilst the "**project indicators**" are only a tool to measure fulfilment of the expected results.

The new text proposed could be added to the old one, but not replace it, as it shifts the focus from the results to their measurement.

RE: The modifications tried to remove duplicities between the original criterion 3.2 (Expected results) and criterion 2.1 (Impact of project implementation). The two criteria seemed very similar: with the former focusing on expected results (and impact and measurable indicators) and with the latter only generally defined (without specifications or aspects), it was reasonable to assume that the criterion 2.1 was focusing on not only impact, but on other related aspects, including expected results, as well. To comply with the comment of the Ministry of Investment and with the intention not to divide related aspects among two different criteria any further, we decided to remove the expected results from the criterion 3.2. Since the duplicities were eliminated, no specification about what is to be considered to be the impact of the project were required in the criterion 2.1. Furthermore, this modification enabled us to remove any potential duplicities with the criterion 3.1 regarding project outputs (with a new aspect that was added in the subject matter of assessment of the criterion 3.1).

Concerning the changes you recommend, we have no objection, however, to address it properly, we need to secure that these changes will not create duplicities or unnecessary questions about the demarcation lines with the scored criterion 2.1 again. **We propose to make the changes in the scored criterion 2.1 instead of the criterion 3.2.** In this way, we could also comply with document of VAIA ([Mandatory methodology of management, financing and evaluation of support for research, development and innovation](#), chapter 4.2.1), according to which expected results are assessed under the criterion / aspect Impact of project. In the revised document (SK version) we have thus added one new aspect in the subject matter of assessment of the criterion 2.1 (the planned scale of the impact of the project, the adequacy of the

expected outputs and results) and made changes in the method application of scored criterion. No additional changes to the maximum and minimum scores were required.

We hope this proposal has taken your comment into account sufficiently.

Re the **indicators**, could you please briefly explain how they will be chosen. Will there be a list of common indicators at the call level from which the applicants can choose, will they be fixed from the outset? In the first case, is the assessment going to take into account the quality of the choice made (i.e. if more/less relevant indicators are chosen)?

RE: Yes, a list of indicators is a compulsory annex of the call and indicators will be fixed by the Ministry of Education.

- the maximum score and the minimum score to be achieved in order for the project to be considered successful (per project and per evaluation area) were recalculated;

Agreed

- a new condition/rule on the minimum score per scored criterion was added (a project cannot obtain a value 0).

Agreed

Re the **intended calls**, it would be important to receive your reaction in due time to be able to finalise our assessment before the sub-committee mtg.

Best regards,  
Ivana & Lucian

**From:** Hlavenková Lucia <[lucia.hlavenkova@minedu.sk](mailto:lucia.hlavenkova@minedu.sk)>

**Sent:** Monday, April 29, 2024 2:14 PM

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**Subject:** RE: SK // 21-27 // Programme Slovakia // draft selection criteria No 56

Dear Mr Jega,

Thank you for your comments on the selection criteria.

A revised SK document is attached. This document not only includes changes made on the basis of your recommendations (indicated by comments in blue), but also revisions that were recommended by the Ministry of Investment (sent on 9-April-2024).

These revisions include:

- Criterion 3.4 Project expenditure was transformed to an exclusion criterion (currently no. 3);
- Criterion 3.1 Project implementation plan, where the method application of the scored criterion was reset to a non-model situation and original aspects were reassessed (removed or redefined or newly added);
- Criterion 3.2 Expected results, where the method application of the scored criterion was reset to a non-model situation and duplicities with other criteria (concerning expected outputs and results and their attainability) were removed. Renamed to Project indicators;
- the maximum score and the minimum score to be achieved in order for the project to be considered successful (per project and per evaluation area) were recalculated;
- a new condition/rule on the minimum score per scored criterion was added (a project cannot obtain a value 0).

You will find our reactions to your comments in the EN version (but without changes) and in your email below in red. We have accepted all but two comments, for which we offer explanations.

We hope that your comments were taken into account sufficiently, if not, additional revisions will be made.

We would also like to thank you very much for sharing your observations to the intentions for calls with us (an information material). We will prepare reactions separately and send them as soon as possible.

We remain available for any further discussion and clarification.

Kind regards

**Lucia Hlavenková**  
manažér programovania



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**Subject:** RE: SK // 21-27 // Programme Slovakia // draft selection criteria No  
56

Dear colleagues,

Thank you for the draft documents concerning the selection criteria #56 and  
the intentions for calls that will be discussed in the 8<sup>th</sup> PO1 sub-committee mtg  
on 20/5.

Please note 20-May is a public holiday for the Commission, therefore our  
presence will not be possible. Hence, we would like to ask you to consider the  
present and all subsequent exchanges 'for the record' and include a summary  
of it in the minutes.

Please find below and attached our comments (EMPL's included):

Exclusion criteria:

1. Please consider including an exclusion criterion 1.1 "*Contribution of the project to the objectives and activities of the Programme Slovakia 2021-2027 and to the results of the Partnership Agreement*" (as it was done for selection criteria #36 (BOD 10...) and #43 (BOD-5...), herewith attached)  
**Ministry of Education – Accepted, a new exclusion criterion was included.**
2. Criterion 1.2 '*Compliance of the project with the Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation of the Slovak Republic 2021-2027 (SK RIS3 2021+)*', **subject matter of assessment:** To ensure consistency with previously approved selection criteria (i.e. #43) please consider adding something along these lines:  
*"This compliance is assessed by verifying the demonstrable implementation of the project within one of the priority areas set out in the individual R & I Strategy for Smart Specialisation Strategy of the Slovak Republic 2021-2027 (SK RIS3 2021+)"*  
**Ministry of Education – Accepted, this additional line was added.**

Scored criteria:

3. Please add a line for the total of minimum points required for a project to pass (second table on page 4)  
**Ministry of Education – Explanation required:**  
The second table (page 4) defines the minimum number of points for each evaluation area, however their sum (currently in the revised SK version:  $4+4+7=15$ ) **is not identical** with the minimum score of points required for a project to pass. The minimum score of points that needs to be obtained by a project, is defined by another condition/rule as „the sum of the scores of each evaluation area 1-3 is at least 21 points (inclusive)“ (note: the number of points changed due to the change in number of scored criteria – criterion 3.4 became an exclusion criterion). This means that if a project achieves 4-4-7 points in evaluation areas 1-2-3 respectively, it will meet the condition of minimum score of points per evaluation area, but fail at the condition of minimum score of points per project. If we add a new line for the total of minimum points in the second table as suggested, it will have no special meaning or significance, on the contrary, it may be misleading – a project needs a score of at least 21 points, not 15 points. An example: a scenario with a project obtaining a score of 4 points, 8 points and 9 points in evaluation areas no. 1, 2 a 3 respectively would mean that the project is successful because both the condition of minimum score of points per evaluation area and at the same time the condition of minimum score of points per project ( $4+8+9=21$  points) are fulfilled.  
If you find our explanation acceptable, we propose to leave the second table without this line.
4. Criterion 2.1 '*Impact of project implementation*', **subject matter of assessment:** please include more details on how the impact is going be measured; these could include expected outputs and results, selected

indicators to help measure the impact, the sustainability of the project etc.

The phrase:

“The expected impact of project implementation on **skills development** within the relevant field/sector is assessed.”

Should read:

“The expected impact of project implementation on **development of skills for RIS3** within the relevant field/sector is assessed.”

Ministry of Education – Accepted, details were included and the phrase was modified.

To avoid any risks of duplicities with criteria 3.1 and 3.2 (after their revision), where expected outputs (attainability) and indicators (realistic values) are being assessed, criterion 2.1 focuses on the impact and benefits on the individual level and sustainability of the expected outputs and results. Method of application of the scored

criterion was slightly modified to better reflect changes in the subject matter.

5. Criterion 2.2 ‘*Dissemination and exploitation of project results*’, **subject matter of assessment**: please elaborate more on the use of projects results after the end of the project.

Ministry of Education – Accepted, the use of project results was specified. Criterion 2.2 will focus on propagation of new / innovated educational program(s) (expected result of every project) and plan of use of infrastructure and/or other outputs after the end of the project. Method of application of the scored criterion was slightly modified to better reflect changes in the subject matter.

6. Criterion 3.1 ‘*Project implementation plan*’, **subject matter of assessment and method of application of scored criterion**: please consider including also trade unions among partners re “*cooperation with partners from the employer environment*.”

Ministry of Education – We could not proceed with the changes. Explanation: Criterion 3.1 was completely modified based on an informal comment from the Ministry of Investment (sent on 9/4/2024). Original aspects were reassessed and when necessary, removed, redefined or newly added. The concerned aspect „cooperation with partners from the employer environment“ was removed (due to duplicity) / subsumed under the redefined aspect „description of the expected course of project implementation“.

Given the situation, is the revised version of the criterion acceptable to you as opposed to the change proposed in your comment?

Intended calls for proposals:

1. Focus of the call:

**Support the preparation of human resources for RIS3 domains:**

Please clarify the following statement “Currently, **it is not possible to create other types of tertiary programs** than programmes at I., II. and III. degree with a standard duration of study as defined by the Act on Higher Education.” > how is this going to be overcome? Is the legislation going to be amended? If so, when and is there any draft available for informal consultation?

2. Subject of support:  
**Simulation centers in universities:** Activity “A. Construction of new or reconstruction of existing buildings:” > not clear how this is in line with the SK RIS3 2021+ or the National RDI Strategy (whose action plan includes RIS3 specific measures), or the priority areas to be supported under 1.4 – this is rather secondary to the main objective of 1.4, which is developing skills.  
Small (re)construction / modernisation works may be required for the installation of new equipment, but **(re)construction of existing/new buildings** as such raises doubts as it may shift too much financial resources (given the high associated costs) to the detriment of skills development. Please explain such choice.  
**Promoting skills development through micro-certificates:** the phrase “Development of courses (micro-certified) by universities in accordance with the defined definition and characteristics of these courses.” does not make too much sense. Please explain or rephrase.
3. Link to legislation/strategy:  
Please provide references to the specific provisions of all documents referred to therein. Please also give estimation of adoption and entry into force dates for legislation in the making (i.e. Law on Adult Learning)
4. Priority/specific objective/measure/activity of PSK:  
**Simulation centers in universities:** please give more details with regards to: “PSK-compliant actions: · supporting the creation and/or innovation and implementation of study programmes for the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> levels of higher education according to the needs of the RIS3 domains”, in particular on how is the **(re)construction of existing / new buildings** in line with the referenced action, which is mainly about creation/innovation/implementation of study programmes.
5. Indicative allocation (total eligible expenditure):  
**Simulation centers in universities:** please include indicative split per activity (A, B and C); please also clarify what the abbreviation “COV” stands for.

We remain available for further clarifications/discussions if needed.

Best regards,  
Ivana and Lucian

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**Subject:** SK // 21-27 // Programme Slovakia // draft selection criteria No 56

Dear Pascal, dear Muriel,  
 Dear DG REGIO and DG EMPL team,

Please find enclosed the draft selection criteria numbered 56 under  
 Programme Slovakia 2021 – 2027 for your formal observations or  
 comments regarding the following Specific Objective.

**The document is scheduled for formal discussion** at Sub - committee  
 meeting **PO1**, to be held on May 20, 2024.

Formal adoption is anticipated at the **Monitoring Committee** on June  
 17, 2024

Name of the document	Specific objective	Measure	Note
No 56 PSK_21_27_No56_RSO1.4_opatrenie_1.4.1_PO1_MSVMMSR	RSO1.4	1.4.1	Please find attached also information note PSK_21_27_No56_RSO1.4_opatrenie_1.4.1_PO1_MSVMMSR_informácia k vyzve

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