

The Director-General

23 January 2026

Ref.: CL/4533

Subject: **Call for Nominations for the fourth edition of the UNESCO–Russia  
Mendeleev International Prize in the Basic Sciences**

Sir/Madam,

The UNESCO–Russia Mendeleev International Prize in the Basic Sciences aims to recognize and reward, each year, major achievements in the development, dissemination and international cooperation in the field of the basic sciences. It is named after Dimitri Mendeleev, whose periodic table emphasizes the need for international scientific collaboration.

This Prize, established by the Executive Board of UNESCO in 2019, is awarded each year to two laureates, each receiving a reward of \$250,000.

In accordance with the Statutes of the Prize, nominations shall be submitted by the governments of UNESCO Member States, in consultation with their National Commissions for UNESCO; non-governmental organizations in official partnerships with UNESCO and active in relevant fields covered by the Prize; UNESCO Chairs; category 2 institutes and centres under the auspices of UNESCO; and international scientific unions and universities. Self-nominations will not be considered.

I invite you, in consultation with your National Commission for UNESCO, to nominate your country's most qualified candidates for the fourth edition of the UNESCO–Russia Mendeleev Prize. Furthermore, I would like to emphasize the importance that the Prize attributes to a better representation of candidates from UNESCO's two Global Priorities, Africa and Gender Equality.

Increasing the visibility and recognition of outstanding women scientists in the basic sciences is critical for building inclusive scientific communities and inspiring future generations, including upcoming young female scientists.

All applications must be submitted online via a template available on the [webpage of the Prize](#), by **15 March 2026 at the latest**, in English or French. The Statutes of the Prize are also attached herewith. Any enquiries regarding the nomination process should be addressed directly to the Secretariat of the Prize (tel.: +33 (0)1 45 68 10 61; e-mail: [mendeleevprize@unesco.org](mailto:mendeleevprize@unesco.org)).

Please accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Khaled El-Enany  
Director-General

Enclosures: Statutes of the Prize

cc: National Commissions for UNESCO  
Permanent Delegations to UNESCO

To Ministers responsible for relations with UNESCO



## **ANNEX**

### **STATUTES OF THE UNESCO–RUSSIA MENDELEEV INTERNATIONAL PRIZE IN THE BASIC SCIENCES**

#### **Article 1 – Purpose of the Prize**

The purpose of the UNESCO–Russia Mendeleev International Prize in the Basic Sciences is to recognize and reward major achievements in terms of development, diffusion and international cooperation in the basic sciences, which had a significant transformational impact on a regional or global scale.

The Prize aims to promote and honour the basic sciences, defined to include the disciplines of chemistry, physics, mathematics and biology, and as providing the foundations on which scientific knowledge can be propagated and which are fundamental to the advancement of innovation and sustainable development.

The proposed Prize contributes to generating scientific research, technology and innovation, as well as push the production and application of scientific knowledge to the centre of societal and economic development, in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Prize aims to recognize and reward achievements that are conducive to socio-economic transformation and development on a regional or global scale, based on:

- (i) excellence in research in the basic sciences fields;
- (ii) basic sciences education and popularization;
- (iii) international or regional cooperation in the basic sciences.

The Prize has the ambition to be gender transformative in the sense that candidatures of women scientists will be encouraged, through the network of the International Basic Sciences Programme (IBSP), category 2 centres, UNESCO Chairs in science, International Scientific Unions and Universities, in line with UNESCO's Global Priority on Gender Equality. The objective of the Prize is in conformity with UNESCO's policies and is related to the Programme of the Organization in the field of the sciences, including the basic sciences, technology and innovation and knowledge for sustainable development.

The Prize intends to serve as a lever for strengthening global capabilities in science, as well as highlighting role models capable of attracting youth into basic sciences studies and careers and empowering them in the fields of chemistry, physics, mathematics and biology.

The Prize represents above all an enduring legacy of the International Year of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements led by UNESCO, with a lasting awareness and appreciation of the basic sciences and their fundamental role for providing solutions to development challenges in the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Prize is named after Dmitri Mendeleev whose life and career imbedded the three components of research and education, cooperation, and scientific and technological knowledge dissemination, which are reflected in the criteria of attribution of the Prize, giving it a unique value.

The proposed Prize complies with the Revised Overall Strategy for UNESCO Prizes as adopted by the Executive Board.

## **Article 2 – Designation, periodicity, geographical distribution and amount of the Prize**

2.1 The Prize shall be entitled “UNESCO–Russia Mendeleev International Prize in the Basic Sciences”.

2.2 The Prize shall be funded by the Government of the Russian Federation, and shall consist of a recurrent payment of US\$850,000 per year for its six-year period (2020–2025), which shall cover both the monetary value of the Prize and the costs of administering the Prize. A gold medal and a diploma will be given to each of the recipients. Any interest that may accrue shall be added to the overall contribution.

2.3 All funds received and the interest accrued thereon shall be kept in a special interest-bearing account for the Prize (see financial regulations in Annex II).

2.4 The full staff support and operating/management costs of the Prize, including all costs related to the administration and public information activities, and the overhead costs to be applied and charged against the funds in the special account, estimated at US\$350,000, shall be fully covered by the Russian Federation. The related special account is to be established under the financial regulations for the Prize.

2.5 The Prize shall be awarded every year to two individual prize-winners at each edition, on an initial basis for three biennia (six editions of the Prize in total).

2.6 The Award Ceremony of the Prize should be organized through in-kind contributions from the Russian Federation. All costs of the Award Ceremony will be the responsibility the Russian Federation.

## **Article 3 –Conditions/Qualifications of candidates**

The candidates shall have earned recognition for their significant achievement/contribution to:

- (i) research in the basic sciences in the form of a published communication;
- (ii) basic sciences education and dissemination;
- (iii) international or regional cooperation in the basic sciences.

Prizes may be conferred upon two individuals only who have promoted basic sciences advancement in education, research or international cooperation for societal transformation.

## **Article 4 – Designation/Selection of Prize-winners**

The prize-winners shall be selected by the Director-General of UNESCO on the basis of the assessments and recommendations made to him/her by an international jury. Particular attention should be given to women candidates.

## **Article 5 – Jury of the Prize**

5.1 The jury shall consist of seven independent members being personalities with a recognized reputation in the field covered while also taking into consideration the need for equitable geographical distribution, gender equality and the principle of non-payment of honoraria. They shall be appointed by the Director-General of UNESCO for a two-year period for a maximum period of six years, with a possibility to renew each of them. Representatives and relatives of Members of the Executive Board cannot be appointed as jurors. Jurors involved in a real or potential conflict of

interest shall recuse themselves from further deliberations or be asked by the Director-General to do so. The Director-General may replace members of the jury for this reason.

5.2 The jury shall elect its own chair and deputy chair. Members shall receive no remuneration for their work, but will receive allowances for travel and accommodation when required. A quorum of five jurors present will be required for jury deliberations to proceed. The working languages for jury deliberations will be English and French.

5.3 The jury shall conduct its business and deliberations in conformity with these Statutes and shall be assisted in the performance of its task by a member of the UNESCO Secretariat designated by the Director-General. Decisions shall be taken by consensus to the extent possible and otherwise by secret ballot until a simple majority is obtained. A member shall not take part in the vote concerning a nominated candidate from his or her country.

5.4 The jury shall meet once a year for deliberation on the Prize-winners.

5.5 The jury shall send an assessment on the nominations and accompanying recommendations to the Director-General of UNESCO at the latest two months before the award ceremony.

#### **Article 6 – Nomination of candidates**

6.1 When UNESCO has received the funding of the Prize as well as the staff support and operating/management costs of the Prize, as indicated in Article 2 above, the Director-General of UNESCO shall officially invite the submission of nominations to the Secretariat of the Prize, by 15 March every year, from the governments of Member States, in consultation with their National Commissions, as well as from non-governmental organizations maintaining official partnerships with the Organization, from UNESCO Chairs, category 2 centres, international scientific unions and universities.

6.2 Nominations shall be submitted to the Director-General by the governments of Member States, in consultation with their National Commissions, by non-governmental organizations maintaining official partnerships with UNESCO and active in relevant fields covered by the Prize, by UNESCO Chairs, category 2 centres, international scientific unions and universities. A self-nomination cannot be considered.

6.3 Each nomination shall be accompanied by a written recommendation, which shall include, in English or French, *inter alia*:

- (a) a description of the candidate's background and achievements;
- (b) a summary of the work or the results of the work, publications and other supporting documents of major importance, submitted for consideration;
- (c) a definition of the candidate's contribution to the Prize's objectives.

#### **Article 7 – Procedure for the awarding of the Prize**

7.1 The Prize shall be awarded by the Director-General or his/her representative at an official ceremony held for that purpose in alternation at UNESCO's premises at Headquarters (whenever possible during the General Conference or the Executive Board) and in the Russian Federation. In the extraordinary case where this is not possible, UNESCO shall choose a suitable place in any member state of UNESCO for the award ceremony. UNESCO shall present to the Prize-winners a financial award of US\$500,000, as well as a gold medal and a diploma. UNESCO shall officially announce the names of the Prize-winners and highlight their achievements.

7.2 If a work being rewarded has been produced by several persons, the Prize shall be awarded to the principal authors/contributors. In no case may a prize amount be divided between more than two persons.

7.3 The Prize-winners, if possible, shall give a lecture on a subject relevant to the achievement for which the Prize has been awarded. Such a lecture shall be organized during or in connection with the Prize ceremony.

7.4 The work produced by a person since deceased shall not be considered for a Prize. If, however, a Prize-winner dies before he has received the Prize, then the Prize may be presented posthumously.

7.5 Should a Prize-winner decline the Prize, the jury shall submit a new proposal to the Director-General.

#### **Article 8 – Sunset clause – mandatory renewal of the Prize**

8.1 Six months prior to the agreed end of the term of the Prize, the Director-General of UNESCO together with the donor will undertake a review of all aspects of the Prize and determine its continuation or termination. The Director-General will inform the Executive Board of UNESCO about the results of this review.

8.2 In case of termination of the Prize, any unspent balance shall be returned to the donor unless otherwise agreed, in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the Prize.

#### **Article 9 – Appeals**

No appeals shall be allowed against the decision of UNESCO with regard to the award of the Prize. Proposals received for the award of a Prize may not be divulged.

#### **Article 10 – Amendments to the Statutes of the Prize**

Any amendment to the present Statutes shall be submitted to the Executive Board for approval.