

Council
of the National Science Centre
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RESOLUTION NO 136/2020

OF THE COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTRE

of 11 December 2020

on the terms of and regulations on awarding funding for research tasks to be carried out by the Polish research teams, funded by the NCN under the SHENG 2 Polish-Chinese Funding Initiative

Pursuant to Article 18 (4) of the Act on the National Science Centre of 30 April 2010 (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1384, hereinafter: the “NCN Act”) and pursuant to the Cooperation Agreement between the National Science Centre (the “NCN”) and National Natural Science Foundation of China (the “NSFC”) entered into on 28 March 2018, the Council of the National Science Centre hereby lays down **the terms of and regulations on awarding funding for research tasks to be carried out by the Polish research teams¹, funded by the NCN under the SHENG 2 Polish-Chinese Funding Initiative.**

1. General provisions

- 1.1. Under SHENG 2, funding shall be awarded to research projects carried out jointly by Polish and Chinese research teams for which international cooperation is essential.
- 1.2. The terms of awarding funding for research tasks carried out by the Chinese research teams and funded by the NSFC under SHENG 2 shall be set forth by the NSFC.

2. Addresses of the call

The call is addressed at Polish research teams that apply for funding of a research project jointly with the Chinese research teams. The Polish part of the research project shall be managed by the principal investigator in the Polish research team, while the Chinese part of the project shall be managed by the principal investigator in the Chinese research team.

3. Eligible applicants

- 3.1 Proposals for the NCN funding of the Polish part of the research project under SHENG 2, hereinafter the “NCN proposals”, may be submitted by the entities specified in Article 27 (1) of the NCN Act, hereinafter the “applicants”.
- 3.2 Proposals may also be submitted by applicants for which project funding shall constitute state aid granted pursuant to the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education passed pursuant to Article 37 (2) of the NCN Act.

¹ A research team means the principal investigator alongside members of research team, if applicable in the proposal.



- 3.3 Should an applicant be a natural person, a group of entities or entity for which project funding constitutes state aid cannot be the host institution for the project.
- 3.4 Should an applicant be a group of Polish entities specified in Article 27 (1) (2) of the NCN Act, an NCN proposal shall be submitted by the leader of the group of entities named in the research project cooperation agreement, entered into by the entities acting as the host institution for the research project. The entity that employs the principal investigator shall act as the leader of the group of entities.
- 3.5 Where a research project is to be carried out by at least two Polish entities, they must form a group of entities referred to in Point 3 (4) and only in that legal form may they apply for NCN funding. Each entity in the group of entities shall have its own budget, however, the budget for salaries and scholarships referred to in Point 2 (1) of **Annex 2** hereto must be the same for all entities in the group. NCN proposals submitted by a group of Polish entities shall have only one principal investigator. If two or more entities cannot form a group of entities pursuant to Article 27 (1) (2) of the NCN Act, they shall not be eligible to apply for NCN funding of a joint research project.
- 3.6 Entities under forced administration or in liquidation or subject to bankruptcy proceedings cannot act as applicants or host institutions for a research project.

4. Terms of entry

- 4.1 The following NCN proposals may be submitted under the call:
 - 1) to carry out research tasks that neither is nor was funded by the NCN nor from any other sources;
 - 2) which constitute basic research as defined in Article 2 (1) of the NCN Act;
 - 3) which cover academic disciplines in the area of Life Sciences, selected disciplines in the area of Physical Sciences and Engineering and Social Sciences, as specified in **Annex 1** hereto;
 - 4) which cover research based on sustainable and complementary contribution of the Polish and Chinese research teams;
 - 5) which cover research projects planned for 36 months;
 - 6) in which a principal investigator is at least a PhD holder;
 - 7) in which the requested funding for the entire duration of the Polish part of the research project is no less than 250,000 PLN;
 - 8) in which the budget of the Polish part of the project in the joint project description (JPD) is calculated based on the exchange rate published by the National Bank of Poland on the date hereof (1 EUR = 4.4385 PLN); and
 - 9) which cover all elements specified in Point 6 (5) hereof.

5. Restrictions on NCN proposal submission

- 5.1 A person named as the principal investigator in an NCN proposal under SHENG 2 must not be a person who represents the host institution for the project.
- 5.2 In a given edition² of the call, one may be named as the principal investigator in one proposal only.
- 5.3 The person named as principal investigator in the NCN proposal submitted to SHENG 2 cannot be a person who, on the end of the call for proposals:
 - a) acts as the principal investigator³ in three or more research projects funded under NCN calls;

² Understood as NCN calls for proposals closed on the same day.

³ Acting as principal investigator applies to the period from the date of signing the funding agreement for the project under an NCN call until the day of submitting the final report on the completion of the research project.



- b) acts as the principal investigator in two research projects funded under NCN calls and is named as the principal investigator in another proposal under evaluation or recommended for funding;
- c) acts as the principal investigator in a research project funded under NCN calls and is named as the principal investigator in two other proposals under evaluation or recommended for funding;
- d) is named as the principal investigator in three other proposals under evaluation or recommended for funding under NCN calls.

The above restrictions shall not apply to the proposals submitted or projects funded under the following calls for proposals:

- TANGO, DIOSCURI;
- EXPRESS CALL TO FUND RESEARCH ON COVID-19;
- CEUS-UNISONO, in the case of which joint proposals submitted to the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) acting as the lead agency under the *Stand-Alone Projects* programme, concern research into crises like epidemics and pandemics covered by fast-track merit-based evaluation (*FWF Urgent Funding for Research Into Humanitarian Crises like Epidemics and Pandemics*).

- 5.4 A person to carry out a research activity in a proposal which has been submitted to the MINIATURA call and for which the funding decision has not become final cannot be named as the principal investigator in an NCN proposal submitted under SHENG 2.
- 5.5 The principal investigator must be a person employed by the host institution for the research project under an employment contract at least on a half-time basis for the entire project duration period.
- 5.6 The principal investigator must reside in Poland for at least 50% of the project duration period. This period includes business trips necessary for the project, in particular involving fieldwork, participation in conferences and/or library and archive research.
- 5.7 Proposals comprising overlapping research tasks cannot be submitted in the same edition of the call.
- 5.8 An NCN proposal comprising research tasks overlapping with research tasks to be carried out in another proposal that has been already submitted in any NCN call or with respect to which an appeal has been initiated, may only be submitted only once the funding decision has become final.

6. Submission of proposals (procedure and dates)

- 6.1 The call is open to NCN proposals accompanied by Joint Project Descriptions (JPD, , as specified in Point 6 (5) (4)) drafted by the Polish and Chinese research teams as well as CVs together with publication lists of the principal investigators of research teams and members of the Polish and Chinese research teams (as specified in Point 5 (5) (5)).
- 6.2 An NCN proposal is drafted and submitted to the NCN by the Polish research team on terms and conditions laid down herein and in the call announcement.
- 6.3 NCN proposals must be submitted to the NCN electronically via the ZSUN/OSF electronic submission system available at www.osf.opi.org.pl by **15 March 2021, 4 p.m. CET**.
- 6.4 Chinese applicants must submit a set of documents to the NSFC, as required thereby, via the electronic submission system available at <http://isisn.nsf.gov.cn/egrantweb/> at <https://elan./> by **15 March 2021, 4 p.m. CST**.
- 6.5 NCN proposals must include:
 - 1) title of the research project (*in Polish and in English*);
 - 2) project description (*up to 4500 characters in English*);



- 3) research project's abstract for the general public (*1 standard page in Polish and 1 standard page in English*);
- 4) JPD in PDF format, drafted in accordance with the template in the annex to the call announcement (*in English*);
- 5) CVs with publication lists of the principal investigators and members of the Polish and Chinese research teams performing the research project pursuant to the terms of the call; in the case of papers of members of the Polish research teams that have been accepted for publication, letters of acceptance from publishers should be attached confirming that the papers have been accepted for publication or DOI should be quoted. The publication list should include a maximum of 10 of the most relevant papers published or accepted for publication (in the case of members of the Polish research teams with letters of acceptance from publishers) in the proposal submission year or over the period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year⁴.
CVs together with publication lists must be provided for those Polish research team members who are not selected in an open call procedure and hold at least a PhD degree. Names of persons to be selected in an open call procedure, including persons to be employed as post-docs from the NCN budget, must not be provided in either the NCN proposal or joint project description. CVs together with publication lists must be drafted according to the template provided in the call announcement (*in English*);
- 6) research plan (*in Polish and in English*) presenting the research tasks to be carried out by the Polish research team;
- 7) information on the required qualifications and scope of work planned by each Polish co-investigator in the research project (*in English*);
- 8) budget of the Polish part of the research project (*in English*) drafted in compliance with **Annex 2** hereto;
- 9) information on expected international cooperation in the research project, including cooperating foreign research institutions (*in English*);
- 10) information on the data management plan concerning data generated or used by the Polish research team in the course of a research project, as required by the proposal (*in English*);
- 11) information on the ethical aspects of the project concerning research task to be performed by Polish research teams, including consents, opinions, permits and/or approvals necessary to carry out the project in compliance with generally applicable laws and best practices adopted for a specific academic discipline, as required by the proposal (*in English*);
- 12) in the case of research projects which include clinical trials with a medicinal product or a medical device, a detailed justification of the non-commercial nature of the trials (*in English*);
- 13) in the case of research projects covering research being performed or completed by the principal investigator of the Polish research teams, or with respect to which the principal investigator of the Polish research teams applies for funding under other NCN calls or from other sources, description of similar research tasks with reasons justifying the need to have them funded under the project (*in English*);
- 14) in the case of research projects to be carried out in a host institution that does not receive any institutional core funding for research activity, information on research carried out in the last 2 years with a publication list and information concerning research equipment and other instruments crucial to research (*in English*);

⁴ In the case of the Polish principal investigator and members of the Polish research team, this period may be extended by the long-term (in excess of 90 days) documented sick leaves or physiotherapy leaves granted on account of being unfit to work. In addition, the period may be extended by the number of months of a child care leave granted pursuant to the Polish Labour Code and in the case of women, by 18 months for every child born or adopted, whichever manner of accounting for career breaks is preferable.



- 15) in the case of research projects to be carried out by a group of Polish entities, a research project cooperation agreement including (*inter alia*) identification of the parties to the agreement and its leader; subject-matter and term of the agreement covering the research project duration period; authorisation for a representative of the leader to act on behalf of the entire group of entities in the procedure for the allocation of funding and performance of the research project; obligation of the leader to provide the other parties with information received from the NCN; signatures of the authorised representatives of all members of the group of entities (*in Polish*);
 - 16) in the case of an entity, for which project funding constitutes state aid, detailed specification of costs and other documents and declarations related to applying for state aid via the NCN, as required by the proposal (*in Polish*); and
 - 17) administrative declarations of the principal investigator and Polish host institution for the project, as required by the proposal.
- 6.6 Information in the NCN proposal must be consistent with information in the JPD and CV together with a publication list.
 - 6.7 Under SHENG 2, a JPD may be attached to one NCN proposal only.
 - 6.8 The NCN accepts only complete NCN proposals that meet all the requirements set forth herein and in the call announcement.

7. Evaluation of proposals (procedure and criteria)

- 7.1 Proposals submitted to the call are subject to an eligibility check and merit-based evaluation.
- 7.2 Eligibility check and merit-based evaluation of proposals submitted under SHENG 2 is carried out by the NCN and the NSFC in parallel.
- 7.3 Eligibility check and merit-based evaluation of proposals submitted to the NSFC is carried out according to the NSFC rules.
- 7.4 Eligibility check and merit-based evaluation of proposals submitted to the NCN is carried out according to the NCN rules.
- 7.5 Eligibility check of proposals at the NCN is carried out by the coordinators.
- 7.6 Eligibility check performed at the NCN comprises:
 - 1) verification of proposal's completeness;
 - 2) verification whether the proposal meets all the eligibility criteria set forth herein and in the call announcement;
 - 3) verification whether the expenditures outlined in the NCN proposal and JPD, as regards the Polish part of the research project, conform to the principles set forth in **Annex 2** hereto (Costs in research projects funded by the NCN under SHENG 2);
 - 4) verification whether the data in the JPD complies with information in the NCN proposal.
- 7.7 A proposal may also be rejected as ineligible at a later stage of evaluation.
- 7.8 Only proposals approved as eligible by both the NCN and the NSFC are accepted for merit-based evaluation at the NCN and the NSFC.
- 7.9 NCN proposals, including joint Polish-Chinese funding proposals are subject to merit-based evaluation.
- 7.10 The merit-based evaluation at the NCN is performed by the research teams and external reviewers
- 7.11 Under SHENG 2, the merit-based evaluation at the NCN is performed in two stages:
 - a) Stage 1 - qualification **based on the information provided in the NCN proposals and annexes thereto, including in the joint Polish-Chinese funding proposals. It involves** individual reviews drafted by two members of the Expert Team. In the case of a proposal which is assigned an auxiliary review panel specifying disciplines other than the NCN panels to which the proposal is submitted, the chair of the Expert Team may decide to seek another opinion from a member of another Expert Team. All individual



reviews are agreed by the Expert Team evaluating the proposal in a panel to which it has been submitted. Approved for the second stage are proposals from the highest places of the ranking list whose aggregate cost equals up to twice the sum of financial resources allocated by the Council for the call in specific disciplines or groups of disciplines. The amount of the funds is determined by the Council on the basis of an analysis of costs for each project in the proposals filed in specific disciplines or groups of disciplines and the priorities set by the Council.

- b) Stage II – specialist evaluation **based on the information provided in the NCN proposals and annexes thereto, including in the joint Polish-Chinese funding proposals. It consists** of individual reviews made by external reviewers who are not members of the Expert Team reviewing the proposal in stage I of merit-based evaluation. Then, the Expert Team decides on the final evaluation of the proposal based on the specialist reviews, analyses of and discussions on the proposals.

7.12 In the course of merit-based evaluation of proposals at the NCN, the following criteria are reviewed in particular:

- 1) compliance with the criteria of basic research, as defined in Article 2 (1) of the NCN Act;
- 2) scientific achievements of the principal investigators and members of the Polish and Chinese research teams, including publications in renowned academic press/journals,
- 3) evaluation of other projects carried out by the principal investigators and members of the Polish and Chinese research teams and funded by the NCN and/or from other sources,
- 4) scientific level of research or tasks to be performed,
- 5) innovative nature of the research problem addressed,
- 6) impact of the research project on the advancement of the academic discipline,
- 7) evaluation of feasibility of the project's completion;
- 8) justification of the costs as regards the subject and scope of research, and
- 9) whether or not international cooperation is complementary and legitimate for the research project.

7.13 The following principles apply to the evaluation of proposals by the Expert Team:

- 1) the project budget of the Polish part of the research project cannot be modified,
- 2) the percentage contribution of specific criteria in the individual assessment of proposals is specified in **Annex 3** hereto,
- 3) each proposal is allotted a score which is of a supplementary nature and is a starting point to the discussion on the final score by the Expert Team,
- 4) decisions of the Expert Team on the final score of a proposal is based on an analysis thereof and a discussion on the legitimacy of funding the proposal against other proposals reviewed in the call,
- 5) the final score of the proposal at a given stage of the merit-based evaluation is reflected in its position on the ranking list after stage I or the ranking list after stage II, both lists being compiled by the Expert Team;
- 6) proposals with a zero score or “no” decision agreed by the Expert Team in any reviewed criterion cannot be recommended for funding. It does not apply to the following criteria: data management, ethics issues in research and justification of the costs as regards the subject and scope of research regard to the Chinese research teams; and
- 7) proposals deemed incompliant with any requirements of the call announcement by the Expert Team cannot be recommended for funding.

7.14 Proposals for which the total funding requested from the NCN to cover the Polish part of the projects is not in excess of the funds allotted by the Council for SHENG 2 within



individual disciplines or groups of disciplines are recommended for funding by the Expert Team.

7.15 In justified instances, the coordinator may, having consulted the Expert Team, change the order of proposals on the list of proposals recommended for funding by the NCN Expert Team.

7.16 The Director may decide to award funding for research projects which are partially within the limit of resources designated for research tasks financed by the NCN, in so far as they are also recommended by the NSFC.

7.17 The list of proposals recommended for funding by the NCN Expert Team is the basis for the final ranking list compiled pursuant to comparison of the results of merit-based evaluation performed by the NCN and the NSFC. Funding in SHENG 2 can be awarded to projects recommended by both the NCN and the NSFC.

8. Selection of experts (criteria and procedure)

8.1 Pursuant to Article 18 (7) of the NCN Act, the NCN Council shall appoint the NCN Expert Team to evaluate proposals for funding of the Polish-Chinese research projects in SHENG 2.

8.2 In its selection, the Council shall follow the following principles:

- 1) candidates shall be selected from among eminent Polish and foreign researchers who are at least PhD holders, including former winners of NCN calls, considering their research achievements and experience in assessment of research projects in Poland and abroad and experience in performance of research projects funded under calls in Poland and abroad;
- 2) an important element of the assessment shall cover information available from bibliometric sources for tracking researchers' achievements, subject to the specific nature of respective research domains and information from available lists of recipients of funds granted in the calls for research projects conducted in Poland and abroad.

8.3 The detailed criteria and procedure for selecting Expert Teams shall be set forth by the Council in the document: "Expert Teams of the National Science Centre – establishing and appointing".

9. Funding decision

9.1 A funding decision shall be taken and results of the call shall be announced by the end of November 2021.

9.2 The results of the call shall be announced by way of a decision of the NCN Director.

9.3 In the event of a breach of the call procedure or other formal infringements related to actions performed by the NCN, the Polish applicant may lodge an appeal against the decision of the NCN Director with the Committee of Appeals of the NCN Council within 14 days of the date the decision is served. Chinese applicants may appeal against any actions performed by the NSFC according to the NSFC rules.

9.4 The Committee of Appeals of the NCN Council shall decide on the appeal within 3 months of the date the appeal is lodged.

9.5 If the appeal is deemed legitimate by the Committee of Appeals of the NCN Council, the funding decision concerning the research project carried out by the Polish research team shall be issued provided that the NSFC shall also award funds for the research project carried out by the Chinese research team.

9.6 The funding decision referred to in Point 9 (5) shall have no legal or financial consequences to the other applicants whose proposals have been recommended for funding under the call, even if the amount of funds available for the call has already been used.



9.7 Under SHENG 2, the Polish research teams shall be awarded funding pursuant to a decision of the NCN Director to carry out research projects that shall receive parallel funding from the NSFC for the Chinese research teams.

10. Call budget

The NCN Council decides to award **25,000,000 PLN** for research tasks to be carried out by the Polish research teams under the Polish-Chinese research projects in SHENG 2.

Prof. Dr hab. Małgorzata Kossowska
President of the Council of
the National Science Centre

The English version of this Resolution does not constitute a sworn translation and has been prepared as an auxiliary document for your convenience. In the event of any doubts as to the interpretation of its provisions, the Polish version shall prevail.