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**THE NORWEGIAN FINANCIAL  
MECHANISM**

**THE POLISH BASIC RESEARCH  
PROGRAMME**

**A GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS**

**THE POLS CALL**

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**Norway**

grants



NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTRE  
POLAND

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## GLOSSARY

Project Promoter = Applicant = Host Institution

Principal Investigator (PI) = the incoming researcher planning to implement a research project at a Polish Host Institution under the POLS call

Programme Operator = National Science Centre (NCN), Poland

ZSUN/OSF = electronic submission system (Integrated System of Services for Science/Service/Financing Streams): <https://osf.opi.org.pl>

Call edition = NCN calls in which proposals are submitted by the same date

Regulation = [Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021](#)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The terms and conditions of the Guide for Applicants have been developed on the basis of the Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021. The Guide for Applicants specifies in detail the responsibilities of the participants in the POLS call and is prepared in accordance with the [Guideline for Research Programmes – Rules for the establishment and implementation of programmes falling under the Programme Area “Research”](#).

The Guide for Applicants complements the [POLS call announcement](#) and the [Guide for Evaluators](#). Both applicants and evaluators are kindly asked to familiarise themselves with the procedures described herein.

## 2. GENERAL INFORMATION

### 2.1 About the Basic Research Programme

There are two main objectives of the Norway and EEA grants: (i) to reduce economic and social disparities in Europe; and (ii) to strengthen bilateral cooperation of the Beneficiary countries and the Donor States (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein).

The main goal of the Basic Research Programme implemented by the National Science Centre is to enhance research-based knowledge development in Poland. Basic research should be understood as “experimental or theoretical endeavours undertaken to gain new knowledge of the foundations of phenomena and observable

facts, without any direct commercial use". Projects which generate new solutions or social innovations are warmly welcomed, but the project grants will not support activities such as commercialisation, development or enhancement of products or any other direct commercial use, etc.

The programme is designed, through competitive and open calls for proposals for research projects, to promote high-quality research. During the Basic Research Programme period, three open calls were announced: GRIEG, IdeaLab and POLS. The Programme is organised in cooperation with the Research Council of Norway.

## 2.2 Allocation for projects in the POLS call

The POLS call receives financial support from Norway Grants (85%) and the Polish national contribution (15%). The budget of the call is EUR 7,000,000.

The minimum amount of a project grant is EUR 100,000 and the maximum amount is EUR 200,000 (including indirect costs).

## 2.3 Expected results of the POLS call

The POLS call will be implemented through curiosity-driven research projects undertaken by excellent incoming researchers of any nationality (including Polish) at Polish host institutions providing a high-quality research environment.

Expected results of the POLS call are:

- Peer reviewed scientific publications with international outreach in line with the programme's open access policy<sup>1</sup>;
- Knowledge transfer, sharing experience and best practices;
- Increasing the internationalisation of the research arena in Poland;
- Increasing the potential of the PI and host institutions to successfully apply for international funding, including ERC grants;
- Development of the capacity of Polish research institutions to host incoming researchers.

## 2.4 Areas of the call

The POLS call will support research projects in all areas of basic research.<sup>2</sup> Based on the provisions of the MoU between Poland and Norway, scientists working within polar

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.coalition-s.org/>

<sup>2</sup> The list of 25 NCN panels determined by the Resolution of the Council of the National Science Centre (87/2019).

research and social science research are particularly invited to submit proposals to this call.

Twenty-five research discipline-specific evaluation panels are grouped in the three main domains: HS – Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; NZ – Life Sciences; ST – Physical Sciences and Engineering. The applicant should choose the main discipline panel. All panels are presented on the website: <https://www.ncn.gov.pl/finansowanie-nauki/panele-ncn?language=en>

<b>HS – Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences</b>		<b>NZ – Life Sciences</b>		<b>ST – Physical Sciences and Engineering</b>	
HS1	Fundamental questions of human existence and the nature of reality	NZ1	Molecular biology, structural biology, biotechnology	ST1	Mathematics
				ST2	Fundamental constituents of matter
HS2	Culture and cultural production	NZ2	Genetics, genomics	ST3	Condensed matter physics
HS3	The study of the human past	NZ3	Cellular and developmental biology	ST4	Chemistry
HS4	Individuals, institutions, markets	NZ4	Biology of tissues, organs and organisms	ST5	Materials
HS5	Norms and governance	NZ5	Human and animal non-infectious diseases	ST6	Computer science and informatics
HS6	Human nature and human society	NZ6	Human and animal immunology and infection	ST7	Systems and communication engineering
		NZ7	Diagnostics tools, therapies and public health	ST8	Production and processes engineering
		NZ8	Evolutionary and environmental biology	ST9	Astronomy and space science
		NZ9	Fundamentals of applied life sciences and biotechnology	ST10	Earth science

### 3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

#### 3.1 Eligibility of Principal Investigator (PI)

An eligible Principal Investigator under the POLS call is an incoming researcher who:

a) holds a PhD degree, conferred by the date of the deadline for proposal submission. At the stage of proposal submission, the PI declares whether he or she holds a PhD degree. Should the proposal be granted funding, the Applicant (Project Promoter) will confirm in the Project contract that the relevant documents certifying the award of the PhD degree have been checked;

b) has not resided or carried out his or her main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Poland for at least 24 months prior to the call deadline (June 16, 2020), unless as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention. At the stage of proposal submission, the PI declares if he or she has resided and carried out his or her main activity outside Poland. Should the proposal be granted funding, the NCN will check the relevant documents prior to signing the Project contract. The documents should confirm the exact period of stay outside of Poland and should indicate specific dates "from ...to...". These documents could for example be: flat rental contracts, bills, a certificate of employment, a residence permit, insurance contracts, tax declarations etc.

c) in the 24 months before the call deadline has not had the role of PI in a research project carried out in Poland (including projects funded by the NCN). This must be confirmed by a statement at the stage of proposal submission;

The researcher can apply as PI for only one proposal in the POLS call and cannot apply to any other NCN call in the same call edition (NCN calls in which proposals are submitted by the same date).

#### 3.2 Eligibility of the Applicant (Project Promoter)

The eligible Applicants (Project Promoters) are:

- Research organisations, as defined in the Commission Regulation (Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014, declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty), and as specified in Article 27, section 1, point 1, 3-6 of the Act on the National Science Centre, established as a legal person in Poland,
- Enterprises as defined in the Commission Regulation (Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty), established in Poland.

These are:

- universities;
- federations of science and HE entities;
- research institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences, operating pursuant to the Act on the Polish Academy of Sciences of 30 April 2010 (Journal of Laws of 2018, item 1475);
- research institutes operating pursuant to the Act on Research Institutes of 30 April 2010 (Journal of Laws of 2018, item 736);
- international research institutes established pursuant to separate provisions and operating in the Republic of Poland;
- the Łukasiewicz Centre, operating pursuant to the Act on the Łukasiewicz Research Network (Journal of Laws 2019, item 534);
- institutes operating within the Łukasiewicz Research Network within the meaning of the Act on the Łukasiewicz Research Network (Journal of Laws 2019, item 534);
- the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences;
- other institutions involved in research independently on a continuous basis;
- scientific and industrial centres within the meaning of the Act on Research Institutes (Journal of Laws of 2018, item 736);
- research centres of the Polish Academy of Sciences within the meaning of the Act on the Polish Academy of Sciences of 30 April 2010;
- scientific libraries;
- companies operating as R&D centres within the meaning of the Act on Certain Forms of Support for Innovative Activity of 30 May 2008 (Journal of Laws of 2018, item 141).
- companies conducting research in another organisational form than laid down above, i.e. all enterprises as defined in the Commission Regulation (Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty), established in Poland.

It is required that the Project Promoter employs the PI from the duration of the project and provide him/her with quality research environment for its implementation. The Project Promoter (the Applicant) has the scientific and administrative responsibility for the project. Should the submitted research proposal be selected for funding, the Project Promoter has to sign the Project contract with the NCN, which is the Programme Operator. The Project Promoter is responsible for submitting annual reports and a final report to the NCN, Poland.

### 3.3 Project Promoters which are subject to exclusion from the possibility of receiving funding

Project Promoters which are subject to exclusion from the possibility of receiving funding cannot submit proposals. This eligibility criterion shall be verified during the eligibility check based on the Project Promoter's statement.

In accordance with article 9.2 of the Guidelines for Research Programmes, grants may not be awarded to potential participants who are, at the time of the grant award procedure, bankrupt or being wound up, convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct, not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes, the subject of a judgment for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money-laundering or any other illegal activity, subject to a conflict of interests or guilty of misrepresenting information.

Any potential participant who has committed an irregularity in the implementation of any other action under financing provided by the European Union or under financial contributions provided by the EFTA States in relation to the EEA Agreement may be excluded from the selection procedure at any time, with due regard being given to the principle of proportionality.

Project Promoters are excluded from the possibility of receiving funding in particular pursuant to:

- art. 207 section 4 of the Act on Public Finance of August 27, 2009 (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 869, as amended);
- art.12 section 1 item 1 of the Act of the consequences of entrusting work to foreigners who are contrary to the provisions on the territory of the Republic of Poland of June 15, 2012 (Journals of Laws of 2012, item 769,as amended);
- art. 9 section 1 item 2a of the Act on the Liability of Collective Entities for Acts Prohibited Under Penalty of October 28, 2002 (Journals of Laws of 2019, item 628, as amended).

### 3.4 Eligible duration of the projects

The duration of the projects may be 12 or 24 months.

This may be extended up to 12 months, without additional funds. The end of the period for eligibility of expenditures in POLS projects is 30 April 2024.

## 4. COSTS AND EXPENDITURES

Please use the exchange rate of the Polish National Bank on the day of the call announcement to calculate whether the project budget in PLN is within the eligible limits.

**Please note** that there must be no double financing of any part of the project by any other source of funds.

### 4.1 General principles on the eligibility of expenditures

Eligible expenditures of projects are those actually incurred within the project, which are in accordance with Chapter 8 of the Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and meet the following criteria:

- they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the Project contract (**please note that any expenditures incurred after 30 April 2024 will not be eligible**);
- they are connected with the subject of the Project contract and they are indicated in the detailed budget for the project;
- they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;
- they must be used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective(s) of the project and its expected outcome(s) in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in the accounting records of the Project Promoter and determined according to the applicable accounting standards in Poland and according to generally accepted accounting principles;
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- they comply with the requirements of applicable public procurement law; detailed requirements concerning public procurement are described in the Guidelines of the National Focal Point, available at <https://www.eog.gov.pl/strony/zapoznaj-sie-z-funduszami/podstawy-prawne/>

Expenditures are considered to have been incurred when the cost has been invoiced, paid and the subject matter delivered (in the case of goods) or performed (in the case of services and work). Exceptionally, costs in respect of which an invoice has been issued in the final month of eligibility are also deemed to be incurred within the dates of eligibility if the costs are paid within 30 days of the final date for eligibility. Overheads and depreciation of equipment are considered to have been incurred when they are recorded on the accounts of the Project Promoter.

The Project Promoter's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the expenditures and revenue declared in respect of the project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

The eligibility of expenditures is checked during the proposal evaluation. The evaluators will pay attention to the composition of the budget.

Please note that eligibility of expenditures is also verified during the evaluation of the annual reports and the final report and during the external control and audit.

## 4.2 Eligible direct expenditures

The eligible direct expenditures for a project are those expenditures which are identified by the Project Promoters, in accordance with their accounting principles and usual internal rules, as specific expenditures directly linked to the implementation of the project and which can, therefore, be booked to it directly. The following direct expenditures are eligible:

- costs of staff assigned to the project;
- cost of new or second-hand equipment;
- travel and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the project;
- costs of consumables and supplies;
- costs entailed by other contracts;
- costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the project contract for each project.

All costs budgeted in the project (e.g. equipment, consumables and supplies, etc.) will be charged to the programme, VAT included. However, VAT is not considered an eligible cost in case the entity can reclaim the VAT from the national tax authorities in conformity with national indirect tax regulations.

### 4.2.1 Costs of staff assigned to the project

#### Principal Investigator

The PI shall receive a full-time employment with the salary of PLN 190,000 per year comprising the actual salary plus social security charges and other statutory costs included in the remuneration.

During the period of receiving the remuneration from the POLS project, the PI must meet all of the following conditions:

- a) he or she cannot receive other remuneration granted under the heading of direct costs in research projects funded by the NCN;

- b) he or she is not receiving remuneration from another employer pursuant to an employment contract, including an employer with a registered office outside of Poland;
- c) he or she is not receiving a pension from the social security system.

#### Costs of other staff assigned to the project under an employment contract

The following staff members may be assigned to the project:

- researchers – co-investigators including master and PhD students (scholarships are not eligible under this call);
- persons employed at specialist auxiliary posts – technicians, lab managers and other specialist research-supporting staff directly involved in the project as well as administrative staff to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which would not be carried out if the project was not undertaken.

Costs of staff comprising actual salaries plus social security charges and other statutory costs included in the remuneration are eligible provided they comply with the Project Promoter's standard policy on remuneration. Timesheets should be used so that the actual time is recorded against a project to form the basis of the costs charged. If persons are contracted to work 100% of their time on a single project (whether they are working full-time or part-time), timesheets are not necessary as their costs can only be charged to that activity. In all other cases, timesheets are required. This includes persons who might be contracted to work on two or more projects, since it is essential when charging to have a means of recording and verifying the actual time applied to each activity.

Remuneration for the other members of the scientific team and additional staff supporting the implementation of the project cannot exceed per year:

- PLN 120,000 – a researcher;
- PLN 100,000 – a person employed as a specialist auxiliary post.

**Please note** that the above amounts concern full-time employment for a full year. In the case of part-time employment and/or employment for less than the entire year, the maximum amount is proportionally calculated.

#### The costs of persons working under a contract other than an employment contract

The costs of natural persons working with the Project Promoter under a contract other than an employment contract may be incurred as costs of staff, provided the requirements of the applicable public-procurement law are complied with and the following conditions are fulfilled:

- the natural person is assigned to the project and named in the project team;

- the natural person works under the instructions of the Project Promoter and, unless otherwise agreed with the Project Promoter on the premises of the Project Promoter;
- the results of the work belong to the Project Promoter; and
- the costs are not significantly different from the costs of the staff performing similar tasks under an employment contract with the Project Promoter.

#### **4.2.2 The cost of new or second-hand equipment**

Where new or second-hand equipment is purchased, only the portion of the depreciation corresponding to the duration of the project, and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the project may be considered eligible expenditure.

In the event that the Programme Operator determines, based on a justification provided in the project proposal, that the equipment is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project, the entire purchase price of that equipment may be eligible by way of exception. The entire purchase price of a single piece of equipment cannot exceed PLN 500,000. Requirements of the applicable public-procurement law must be complied with.

In the case of the Project Promoter applying for State aid, the costs of research equipment qualify as eligible costs to the extent and for the period in which they are used for the implementation of the research project. If the research equipment and devices are not used for the purpose of the research project over the entire period of use, only depreciation costs corresponding to the period of the project's completion, calculated pursuant to the accounting regulations, are deemed eligible costs.

Where the entire purchase price of the equipment is eligible, the Project Promoter:

- keeps the equipment on its own for a period of at least five years following the completion of the project and continues to use that equipment for the benefit of the overall objectives of the project for the same period;
- keeps the equipment properly insured against losses such as fire, theft or other normally insurable incidents both during the implementation of the project and for at least five years following the completion of the project; and
- sets aside appropriate resources for the maintenance of the equipment for at least five years following the completion of the project.

The Programme Operator may release any Project Promoter from the above obligations with respect to any specifically identified equipment where the Programme Operator is satisfied that, having regard to all relevant circumstances, continued use of that equipment for the overall objectives of the project would serve no useful economic purpose.

#### **4.2.3 Travel and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the project**

The travel and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the project must be in accordance with the applicable national rules. As a general rule, travel costs should be limited to the project's necessities and calculated on the basis of economy class travel on public transport. The Programme will cover actual expenses for travel, accommodation, medical insurance and conference fees. For subsistence allowances, the Project Promoter shall follow the national rules.

#### **4.2.4 The costs of consumables and supplies**

The costs of consumables and supplies must be identifiable and assigned to the project. The type of consumables (reagents, office supplies, small laboratory equipment, etc.) should be indicated, with justification for the estimated total costs. Requirements of the applicable public-procurement law must be complied with.

#### **4.2.5 Costs entailed by other contracts**

The costs of other contracts linked to the implementation of the project are eligible for the Project Promoter, provided this complies with the applicable rules on public procurement and the Regulation.

#### **4.2.6 Costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the project contract for each project**

The costs of the Project Promoter's opening and maintaining a separate interest-bearing bank account dedicated to the payments of the project grant are eligible.

All reported publications should have Green or Gold access<sup>3</sup>. Open Access costs are eligible under the Basic Research Programme.

### **4.3 Indirect costs in projects**

Indirect eligible costs will be determined by applying a flat rate of 25% of the total direct eligible costs, excluding direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the Project Promoter, as well as financial support to third parties<sup>4</sup>.

The indirect costs should be used to provide the PI with an appropriate working space. The indirect costs can include salaries for administrative staff providing support for the PI which are not part of staff costs (financial department representatives, acquisitions responsible, PR officer etc).

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<sup>3</sup> Gold open access is where an author publishes the article in an online open access journal. Green open access is where an author publishes the article in any journal and then self-archives a copy in a freely accessible institutional or specialist online archive known as a repository, or on a website.

<sup>4</sup> Third parties: organisations/individuals that are involved in a project but have not signed the project contract. Depending on the Project Promoter's needs, third parties can be directly involved in the implementation of the project tasks or not.

#### 4.4 Subcontracting

As a general rule, the expertise and resources needed to implement a project should be available within the project. However, the subcontracting of research tasks is possible as long as it is clearly stated and justified in the project proposal and contract. Subcontracting may cover only a limited part of the planned research tasks. Examples of subcontracting are contracts with public or private entities or natural persons for a clinical study, opinion survey, testing or analysis of samples, measurements using equipment not available on the premises of the Project Promoter.

Subcontracting is based on business conditions and is therefore eligible, provided that the awarding of the contract complies with the applicable rules on public procurement and the Regulation.

Subcontractors have no direct obligations under the project contract. Therefore, the Project Promoter must ensure that the subcontractors comply with obligations under the Basic Research Programme.

In the case of contracts with natural persons, costs qualify as subcontracting when the work is done without the direct supervision of the Project Promoter. Typically, contracts of commission are regarded as subcontracting.

Contracts to purchase goods, works or services, which are necessary for the implementation of the project, but are not scientific services needed to carry out the research activities in the project, are not considered subcontracting.

The transfer of project costs intended to increase the eligible costs for “subcontracting” is considered to reflect a significant change in the project, and normally requires an amendment.

#### 4.5 Excluded costs

The following costs will not be considered eligible:

- interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges;
- charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs, except costs related to accounts required by the FMC/NMFA, the National Focal Point or the applicable law and costs of financial services imposed by the project contract;
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- exchange losses;
- recoverable VAT;
- costs that are covered by other sources;
- fines, penalties and costs of litigation, except where litigation is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project;
- excessive or reckless expenditure.

#### 4.6 State aid

If funding of a research project by the National Science Centre constitutes State aid for the Project Promoter, State aid will be granted under conditions regulated by the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 9 September 2015 on the terms and mode for granting State aid via the National Science Centre (Journal of Laws of 2015, item 1381). The Regulation is in accordance with the Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty.

**Please note** that all documents concerning proposals for State aid must be signed with a qualified electronic signature in the PAdES format.

Detailed information can be found in the [section State aid](#).

#### 4.7 Co-financing requirements

Grants from the programme may be up to 100% of total eligible project costs, provided all applicable National and EU rules on State aid are complied with.

Any remaining costs of the project have to be provided or obtained by the Project Promoter.

#### 4.8 Budgetary flexibility

Applicants should note that during the course of the project, budgetary flexibility is given in order to allow for appropriate project management. Reallocation of funds among the cost categories does not require prior approval of the Programme Operator and would not result in an addendum to the contract. Cost categories are defined as one of the main sub-heads of the budget which are the cost of staff assigned to the project, the cost of new and second-hand equipment and other costs.

Such reallocation cannot exceed 15% of the total eligible costs of a Project Promoter and cannot exceed PLN 100,000.

For reallocation above this limit, a contract amendment will be required before the date the modification should take place. The request must be fully substantiated and justified. If the request is deemed unfunded by the Programme Operator, the Project Promoter will be advised in writing.

The 15% rule is NOT applicable to indirect costs and the full-time salary of the PI, which cannot be changed.

Please note that if funding a research project constitutes State aid for the Project Promoter, each cost reallocation (also below the 15% limit) will require the approval of the Programme Operator.

## 5. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL

### 5.1 Rules and procedures for submission of proposals

Proposals must be written in English, with title and summary for the general public also in Polish. The proposals shall be submitted electronically via the ZSUN/OSF platform (Integrated Services for Science/Funding Stream Support), available online (<https://osf.opi.org.pl/>). To submit an application the applicant must be registered as a user of the system and follow the instructions given in the ZSUN/OSF system. **The application deadline is June 16, 2020, at 16.00 CEST.**

Correcting or revising proposals after this deadline will not be possible.

Each application has a unique identification code (assigned by ZSUN/OSF) which will remain the same throughout the duration of the project. Any technical issues about using ZSUN/OSF can be resolved by contacting technical support via e-mail (see the link below)

<https://osf.opi.org.pl/app/toModule.do?prefix=/adm&page=/uwagi.do>

or by phone [+48 \(22\) 35 17 101](tel:+48223517101) or [+48 \(22\) 35 17 104](tel:+48223517104) or [+48 \(22\) 35 17 089](tel:+48223517089) (on working days between 8.15 am – 4.15 pm). Further contact details are available on the homepage of ZSUN/OSF.

Versions of proposals sent on paper, removable electronic storage medium, by email or by fax will not be regarded as having been received by the Programme Operator.

You can find details of the [proposal submission procedure](#) on the NCN website under the section POLS – call documentation.

When you plan to submit a proposal in the POLS call, you should:

- 1) review the template of the proposal form, where you can see what information and annexes are needed to complete the electronic proposal form in ZSUN/OSF;
- 2) decide how long the project should last: 12 or 24 months;
- 3) find out about the internal procedures of the Project Promoter that may affect the proposal and project performance (cost planned in the project, procedure for acquiring signature(s) or authorised representative(s) of the institution to confirm submission of the proposal);
- 4) prepare:
  - an abstract of the research project (1 page, in English);
  - a short description of the project containing the proposed work plan (up to 2 pages, in English);
  - a description of the research project (up to 12 pages, in English);

- a justification of the choice of the host institution and sustainability of the collaboration (up to 2 pages in English)
- a budget (in English);
- a summary of the project for the general public (in Polish and in English);

5) prepare acceptance letters from publishers confirming that your work has been accepted for publication (if you decide to include papers that have not been published yet);

6) prepare annexes required if the Project Promoter is applying for State aid.

## 5.2 The project application form

The project application form has the following components:

- Duration – choose 12 or 24 months;
- Basic research – indicate that the proposal includes basic research;
- General Information – provide the proposal title and key words in Polish and English, research field, primary NCN review panel, auxiliary NCN review panels;
- Applicant – provide the status of the Project Promoter;
- Information on the participating entity – provide basic administrative data of the Applicant (Project Promoter);
- Justification of the choice of the host institution and sustainability of the collaboration (up to 2 pages in English)
- State aid – include required information concerning State aid;
- Schedule – provide information on the planned research tasks;
- Similar research tasks – indicate if you are applying for funding of the research tasks included in the POLS proposal also from other sources and list the authors of the project descriptions, please disclose any consultant involved in the preparation of the project application here;
- Short description presenting the proposed work plan (up to 2 pages) – upload the description of the proposed work plan;
- Detailed description of the proposal (up to 12 pages) – upload the project description;
- Ethical issues – address any ethical issues;
- Abstract (up to 4,500 characters with spaces) – provide an abstract;
- Abstract for the general public – upload an abstract in Polish and in English;

- International cooperation – provide information on international cooperation, especially indicate if the project aims at strengthening bilateral relations between Poland and Norway, through collaboration with a Polish-Norwegian cooperation, for example financed by GRIEG, POLNOR or H2020;
- Project team – include information on the PI, should you plan a project team, also provide information on other team members;
- Principal Investigator (PI) – provide basic information on the PI, include information on career breaks, if any;
- Principal Investigator academic and research track record – provide information on academic and research career, publication record, artistic achievements, information on research project management under NCN, other domestic or international calls, most important research achievement, research experience, prizes and awards;
- Personnel costs – include the full-time employment salary of the PI and estimate other personnel costs, if any;
- Research equipment – estimate costs of the research equipment, provide requested basic information on equipment, description and justification;
- Other direct costs – estimate other direct costs;
- Total costs – are calculated automatically;
- Specific cost breakdown – provide a specific cost breakdown if funding constitutes State aid for your project;
- Data management – answer questions regarding data management;
- Read and sign the PI declaration;
- Upload required entity's confirmations.

All documents (descriptions, abstract, confirmations, publications) uploaded to the OSF system shall be in PDF format.

NB! Remember to check the completeness of your application and to submit it electronically by **June 16, 2020, 16.00 CEST**.

## 6. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

A detailed description of the review process and the selection criteria can be found in "Guide for Evaluators". The evaluation process is based on a number of well-established principles:

- **Excellence** – the projects selected for funding must demonstrate high quality; in the context of the criteria set out in the call;

- **Transparency** – the funding decisions are based on clearly described rules and procedures, and the applicants should receive adequate feedback on the outcome of the evaluation of their proposals;
- **Fairness and impartiality** – all proposals submitted to the call are treated equally. They are evaluated impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants;
- **Confidentiality** – all proposals and related data, knowledge and documents communicated to the Programme Operator are treated in confidence;
- **Efficiency and speed** – evaluation, award and contract preparation should be as rapid as possible, commensurate with maintaining the quality of the evaluation and respecting the legal framework;
- **Ethical and security considerations** – any proposal which contravenes fundamental ethical principles may be excluded at any time from the process of evaluation, selection and award.

The proposals will be evaluated by panels composed of internationally recognised experts. The experts will be invited to evaluate the proposals that are related to their field of expertise. They must be resident and working outside Poland and Norway.

The pool of experts is established by the Programme Operator in cooperation with the RCN. The experts will be chosen by the NCN Council. Experts will be selected on the basis of their expertise, experience in evaluating project proposals at international level and appropriate range of competencies. The NCN will, whenever possible, take into account the need for gender balance among the experts.

The evaluation process consists of the following steps:

- eligibility check performed by the Programme Operator according to a check list contained in chapter 4 of the Guide for Evaluators
- individual evaluation, based on the information provided in the proposal about the academic and research track record of the PI and the proposed work plan;
- threshold check performed by the NCN coordinators;
- individual evaluation of the proposals that pass the threshold, based on all the information included in the proposal;
- consensus assessment;
- expert panel review and
- Programme Committee selection meeting.

## 7. FUNDING DECISIONS

The Programme Operator issues individual decisions regarding funding for the projects, based on the final ranking lists approved by the Programme Committee. The decisions of the NCN Director are submitted to the Project Promoter and to the PI in accordance with the [Rules for delivering the NCN Director's decisions](#).

The decision of the Director may be [appealed](#) to the Appeal Committee of the Council of the NCN.

A number of proposals may be kept on reserve lists, separate for each of the three domains (HS, NZ and ST). These proposals will be conditionally recommended for funding, in case of withdrawal of successful proposals or the availability of additional budget from other sources. Projects on the reserve list will be also ranked.

The lists of selected projects are published on the Programme Operator's website. Applicants are given access to the evaluation results with justifications.

## 8. NEGOTIATION OF PROPOSALS

The Project Promoters of proposals that have not been rejected, and for which funding is available, are invited to begin negotiations.

In addition to any issues raised in the Evaluation Summary Report, the applicants may receive requests for further administrative, legal, technical and financial information necessary for the preparation of the project contract. The Programme Operator may request changes, including modifications to the budget. The Programme Operator must justify all requested changes.

If it proves impossible to reach an agreement with a Project Promoter within a reasonable deadline, the negotiations may be terminated and the proposal rejected by the Director of the NCN. Negotiation of proposals from the reserve list may begin once it is clear that a sufficient budget has become available to fund one or more of these projects.

The Programme Operator may also terminate negotiations if the Project Promoter proposes to modify the project to the extent that it becomes significantly different from the proposal that was evaluated.

## 9. APPEALS

Project Promoters who wish to [appeal](#) the final results may send their complaints directly to the Programme Operator's headquarters, within 14 days from the date of receiving the decision of the NCN Director. The obtained appeals of Project Promoters are proceeded by the Appeal Committee of the NCN Council. The decision of the Council Appeal Committee may be appealed at the administrative court.

**Please note** that comments and scores given by experts and members of panels will not be subject to appeals. Grounds for appeals include conflicts of interest and errors in administrative procedure.

## 10. CONTRACTING OF PROJECTS

With regard to each grant, a trilateral Project contract between the NCN, the Project Promoter and the PI will be concluded for the term of the grant.

The project contract will set out the terms and conditions of grant assistance, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the parties. In particular, it will include provisions that ensure that the Project Promoter undertakes to comply fully with the provisions of the legal framework of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 referred to in Article 1.5 of the Regulation that is relevant for the implementation of the project, including any obligation that is valid after the project has been completed.

The Project contract will contain an explicit reference to the programme agreement and the Regulation and, as a minimum, provisions on the following:

- a) the obligation regarding reporting that enables the Programme Operator to comply with its reporting obligations to the NMFA and the National Focal Point;
- b) the maximum amount of the project grant in PLN and Euro and the maximum project grant rate;
- c) the eligibility of expenditures and requirements regarding submission of proof of expenditures;
- d) the method for calculating indirect costs and their maximum amount;
- e) the first and final dates of eligibility of expenditures;
- f) modifications to the project;
- g) ensuring that the access requested in relation to monitoring, audits and evaluations is provided without delay;
- h) ensuring that obligations regarding information and communication are complied with;
- i) the right of the Programme Operator to suspend payments and request reimbursement from the Project Promoter in case decision on such actions is taken by the NMFA, Programme Operator or the National Focal Point;
- j) the resolution of disputes and jurisdictions;
- k) a detailed budget, which may allow for up to 5% contingency;

## 11. REPORTING AND PAYMENTS

### 11.1 Payment model

The Project Promoter is obliged to open and maintain a separate bank account indicated in the project contract.

Payments towards the projects will be in the form of advance payment and interim payment(s). The Programme Operator will ensure the timely transfer of those payments.

Payments of the project grant shall take the form of advance instalments and provide the projects with a positive cash flow. The first advance instalment will be transferred to the Project Promoter within 30 days from the signature of the project contract. Further advance instalments (interim payments) will be transferred to the project in accordance with an individual pre-defined schedule of payments based on the project budget, as stipulated in the project contract. These interim payments are made twice a year, each corresponding to 50% of the planned annual project budget. The interim payments may be paid when at least 70% of the previous advance instalment(s) has been reported as incurred in the form of a certified statement. The Programme Operator shall monitor the level of incurred expenditure and amend the annual budget annexed to the project contract when appropriate.

The payment model will be specified in the project contract.

### 11.2 Annual reporting

During the course of the project, the Project Promoter submits an annual report within 60 days of the end of each reporting period set out in the project contract. The first technical report must contain the progress of the work for at least 6 months of the project's implementation. The annual report must comprise:

- A technical report containing:
  - an explanation of the work carried out;
  - an overview of the progress of work towards the objectives of the project, including milestones and deliverables identified in the project contract. The report must include explanations justifying the differences between work expected to be carried out in accordance with the project contract and that actually carried out;
  - details on the exploitation and dissemination of the results, and – if required in the project contract – an updated plan for the exploitation and dissemination of the results;
  - a summary for publication by the Programme Operator.

- A financial report containing:
  - An individual financial statement for the reporting period concerned;
  - An explanation of the use of resources and the information on subcontracting.
- A summary financial statement from the Project Promoter consolidating the individual financial statement for the reporting period concerned.

### 11.3 Final reporting

The Project Promoter submits a final report within 60 days after the end of the project. If the implementation of the project ends in the first 6 months of the year, then the annual report for the previous year is not requested separately. This final report must comprise:

- A final technical report containing:
  - 1) an overview of the results and their exploitation and dissemination;
  - 2) the conclusion on the project;
  - 3) the socio-economic impact of the project: a report covering the wider societal implications of the project, in the form of a questionnaire, including gender equality actions, ethical issues, efforts to involve other actors and to spread awareness, as well as the plan for the use and dissemination of the foregoing;
  - 4) a summary for publication by the Programme Operator.
- A final financial report containing:
  - 1) a final individual financial statement for the final reporting period, as defined in the project contract;
  - 2) a final summary financial statement from the Project Promoter consolidating the individual financial statement for the all reporting periods and including the request for payment of the balance (final payment claim).

### 11.4 Reporting on scientific publications

During and after the project, the Project Promoter provides references and an abstract of all scientific publications relating to the results of the project no later than 60 days following publication.

As part of the final project report, the Project Promoter will be required to submit a full list of publications relating to the results of the project.

All reported publications should have Green or Gold access.

**Please note** that Open Access costs are eligible under the Polish Basic Research Programme.

All publications must include the following statement to indicate that the results of the project were generated with the assistance of financial support from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism:

***“The research leading to these results has received funding from the Norway Grants 2014-2021 operated by National Science Centre under Project Contract No xxx.”***

## 12. CONTACT

National Science Centre – Programme Operator

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Please contact the EEA and Norway Grants Team or the Proposal Processing Department at the NCN with all queries concerning the Basic Research Programme and the POLS call. We will endeavour to answer your questions sent by e-mail as soon as possible, within 5 working days at the latest. Answers to the questions will be published in the FAQ to ensure equal access to information for all applicants.