

Information Brochure

National Science Centre

ul. Twardowskiego 16

30-312 Kraków

tel. +48 12 341 90 03

fax: +48 12 341 90 99

e-mail: biuro@ncn.gov.pl

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National Science Centre

The National Science Centre (NCN) is a government executive agency established in the follow-up to the research funding reform of 2010. The Centre supports basic research, i.e. empirical or theoretical studies that seek to gain new knowledge of the fundamentals behind phenomena and observable facts, undertaken without the goal of direct commercial application. The mission of the NCN is to promote the growing importance of Polish research on the international arena and to boost its quality and efficiency thanks to a competitive grant system. The Centre thus announces regular calls for research projects, doctoral scholarships, postdoctoral fellowships and research activities. In 2019, it has a budget of over PLN 1.3 billion slated to fund basic research.

The Act of 30 April 2010 on the National Science Centre came into force on 1 October 2010. The NCN officially started its activities on 4 March 2011 and the first calls for research proposals were announced less than three weeks later. The NCN is supervised by the Minister of Science and Higher Education and the calls are designed by a Council of twenty-four distinguished researchers. The Office of the NCN is managed by a Director.

The National Science Centre funds basic research also in cooperation with foreign institutions funding scientific

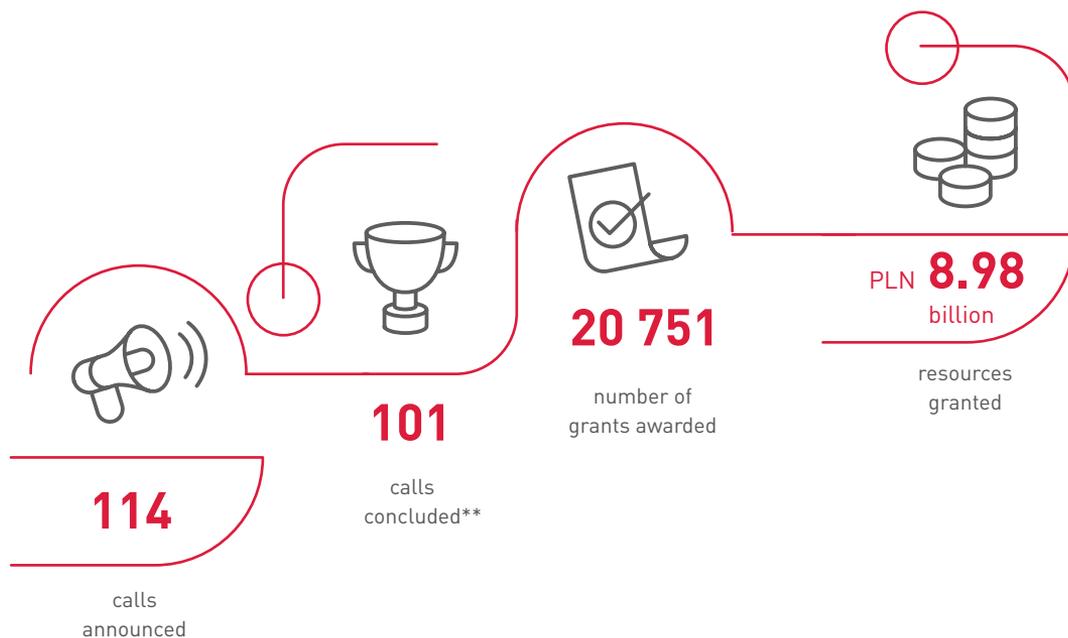
research. In collaboration with the Max Planck Society (MPG) from Germany, the NCN implements the DIOSCURI programme aimed at establishing Centres of Scientific Excellence in Poland. Furthermore, the National Science Centre coordinates the QuantERA programme engaging 32 agencies that support research in the field of quantum technologies with the co-funding from the European Union awarded under the Horizon 2020 programme.

The Centre also operates the basic research part of the “Research” programme within the framework of the EEA and Norway Grants. In February 2020, the National Science Centre launched the CEUS-UNISONO call for proposals within the Central European Science Initiative (CEUS) associating the research agencies from Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovenia along with the National Science Centre. Under the CEUS-UNISONO scheme, research projects will be carried out jointly by research teams from these countries. In February 2020, the National Science Centre received a Marie Skłodowska-Curie COFUND grant for the POLONEZ BIS scheme targeting researchers coming to Poland from other countries. The first call for proposals under that scheme will be announced in 2021.

The NCN in figures

(MARCH 2011 – DECEMBER 2019)

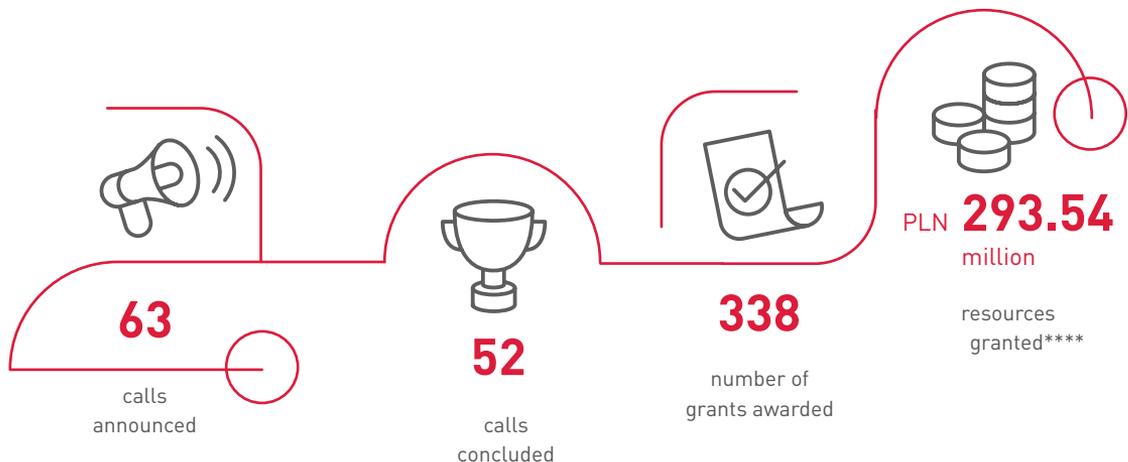
Domestic calls*



* The data correspond to domestic calls currently offered by the NCN, as well as suspended calls.

** The figure does not include TANGO calls concluded by the National Centre for Research and Development.

International calls***



*** The data correspond to bilateral and multilateral calls organized within the framework of international cooperation, the POLONEZ call co-funded within the „Horizon 2020” EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation under the „Marie Skłodowska-Curie” grant agreement no. 665778, calls within the framework of the EEA and Norway Grant and DIOSCURI call.

**** The figure includes the contribution of the NCN, the funds provided by the European Commission and grants awarded under DIOSCURI call.

Organization structure

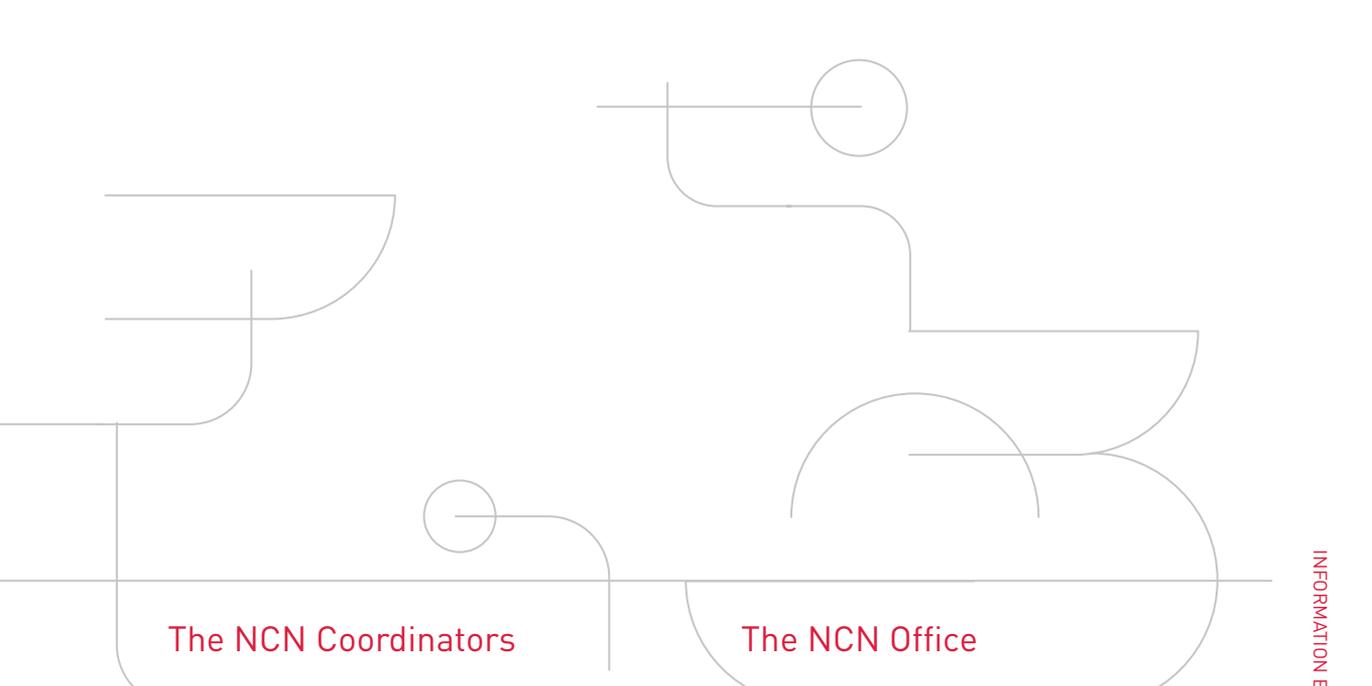


The NCN Director

In charge of running the National Science Centre, the Director oversees the completion of its tasks and its financial management, as well as representing it to the outside world. The Director also acts as an independent legal representative on behalf of the NCN.

The NCN Council

The Council of the National Science Centre is made up of twenty-four scholars from various disciplines, who define the priority areas of basic research in accordance with the state's development strategy, lay down the terms and conditions for calls for research proposals, allocate funding and announce calls for doctoral scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships. It is also the responsibility of the Council to appoint the members of expert teams that evaluate research proposals.



The NCN Coordinators

Coordinators organize the efforts of expert teams and conduct calls for research proposals, making sure that the peer review process is correct, impartial and fair. They must hold at least a doctoral degree and are selected by way of an open competition. Coordinators manage three distinct teams at the National Science Centre: Art, Humanities and Social Sciences, Physical Sciences and Engineering and Life Sciences.

The NCN Office

Made up of several divisions and more than ten teams, the NCN office is the administrative core of the Centre, responsible for providing information for applicants, providing ongoing support for current calls and organizing expert team meetings. The Office is also the first line of support to grant recipients who carry out the projects, it handles the process of signing grant agreements, oversees their implementation, initiates international funding cooperation and, in partnership with the Council, the Coordinators and „Research Area” Committee, launches calls under the EEA and Norway Grants programme.

NCN Management



DIRECTOR
PROF. ZBIGNIEW BŁOCKI

Professor at the Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science of the Jagiellonian University since 1990. Prof. Błocki has spent several years abroad, e.g. in Sweden, Germany and the US, including as a Fulbright scholar, and delivered numerous lectures at research centres all over the world.

He sat on the NCN Council between 2010 and 2015 until he was appointed the NCN Director in March 2015. Since November 2015, he has also served as a member of the Science Europe Governing Board, an association that brings together European research-funding organizations.

In the past, he has headed the Institute of Mathematics at the Jagiellonian University and acted as Vice Chair of the Executive Organizing Committee of the 6th European Congress of Mathematics in Kraków in 2012. In 2010-2015, at the Jagiellonian University, he coordinated a research project funded within the framework of the International PhD Projects selection of the Foundation of Polish Science. He also served as principal investigator in a project funded under the Ideas Plus programme. He is the winner of the Zaremba Prize of the Polish Mathematical Society (2007) and the Polish Prime Minister's Award for outstanding research achievements (2008). In 2014, he received the Jagiellonian Laurel.



CHAIR OF THE NCN COUNCIL
PROF. MAŁGORZATA
KOSSOWSKA

Psychologist, Humanities Professor, Head of the Department of Social Psychology and Centre for Social Cognitive Studies at the Institute of Psychology of the Jagiellonian University. She has penned more than 80 articles in Polish and international journals, as well as authored or co-authored eight books.

She has won multiple awards for research achievements, including the Tadeusz Tomaszewski Award for top publications in psychology, a Lifetime Achievement Medal from the Polish Association for Social Psychology and the Jagiellonian Laurel. In 2001, she received the „Zostańcie z nami” [„Stay with Us”] scholarship awarded by „Polityka” weekly.

She headed the Institute of Psychology of the Jagiellonian University in 2008-2012, served as the President of the Polish Association of Social Psychology (2008-2014), Board Member of the European Association of Social Psychology, and corresponding member of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Since 2012, she has held the office of Deputy Dean at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University. She has sat on the NCN Council since 2012.

NCN calls

The National Science Centre supports basic research conducted within the framework of projects, doctoral scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships, as well as individual research activities designed to contribute to broader basic research. Calls for proposals are open to all researchers irrespective of age and experience.

The call portfolio of the NCN currently includes domestic calls targeted at various groups of researchers, as well as international calls launched by the NCN in bi- and multilateral cooperation with foreign research-funding agencies and a number of multilateral programmes launched by international consortia and networks such as ERA-NET, of which the Centre forms part. The special offer includes the DIOSCURI programme, managed jointly with Max Planck Society (MPG), aimed to establish Centres of Scientific Excellence throughout Central and Eastern Europe, and POLS call funded under the EEA and Norway Grants. Proposals for domestic and bilateral calls launched by the NCN may be submitted in three areas – groups of sciences:

-  Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences,
-  Physical Sciences and Engineering,
-  Life Sciences.

Researchers may submit proposals on behalf of entities that employ them (e.g. universities, institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences, research institutes) or apply for funding as physical persons. Most funding schemes also provide resources for the purchase of research equipment, with the exception of large research infrastructure. Proposals need to be drafted in accordance with call guidelines, written in Polish and English, and submitted to the NCN electronically through the OSF system before the submission deadline.

Funding is awarded to the best basic research projects, conducted by principal investigators able to demonstrate the required research experience and capability.

DOMESTIC CALLS

regular NCN-funded* calls for research proposals, scholarships, fellowships and research activities that contribute to basic research, launched in accordance with the call schedule once or twice per year, targeted at various groups of researchers

* The exception is the TANGO call, funded entirely by the National Centre for Research and Development.

OPUS

for research projects, targeted at all researchers irrespective of research experience.

The OPUS call for proposals, which will be announced in September 2020 is also open to international research projects to be carried out jointly with foreign research teams whose research tasks will be funded by NCN's partner agencies based on the recommendations of the National Science Centre acting as the so-called "lead agency" in charge of merit-based evaluation of proposals. In 2020, research teams from Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Switzerland and Germany will participate in the scheme.

PRELUDIUM

for research projects, targeted at researchers without a PhD; the formal opening of the PhD procedure is not a prerequisite for eligibility

PRELUDIUM BIS

for research projects addressed at institutions operating doctoral schools

SONATINA

for research projects, targeted at researchers who earned their PhD no earlier than 3 years before the submission of the proposal

SONATA

for research projects, targeted at researchers who earned their PhD between 2 and 7 years before the submission of the proposal

SONATA BIS

for research projects aimed at setting up a new research team, targeted at researchers who earned their PhD between 5 and 12 years before the submission of the proposal

MINIATURA

for research activities, targeted at researchers who earned their PhD up to 12 years before the submission of the proposal

MAESTRO

for pioneering research projects, targeted at experienced researchers

TANGO

enabling researchers to turn the results of their basic research projects into solutions and products capable of being directly socially and economically beneficial

INTERNATIONAL CALLS

calls targeted at researchers with a PhD or higher degree, organized within the framework of international cooperation

BILATERAL COOPERATION

calls launched in cooperation with the foreign research-funding institutions and organizations

BEETHOVEN CLASSIC

for research projects in Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, carried out by Polish-German teams

DIOSCURI

launched in cooperation with the Max Planck Society (MPG), aiming to establish DIOSCURI Centres of Scientific Excellence in Poland

CEUS-UNISONO

for bilateral or trilateral research projects carried out jointly by research teams from Poland, Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovenia, submitted for merit-based evaluation to the following partner agencies: Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung – FWF, Grantová agentura České republiky – GAČR, or Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije – ARRS

SHENG

for research projects carried out by Polish-Chinese teams

OPUS

(to be announced in September 2020) open to domestic and international research projects whose merit-based evaluation is performed by the NCN. Projects may be submitted in the following areas:

- Life Sciences and Physical Sciences and Engineering, to be performed by Polish-German research teams,
- in all research areas, to be performed by Polish-Swiss research teams and
- in all research areas, to be performed in bilateral or trilateral cooperation by research teams from Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria and Slovenia

DAINA

for research projects carried out by Polish-Lithuanian teams

MULTILATERAL COOPERATION

calls for international research projects, usually funded from the resources of the EU Framework Programme, launched by the NCN in cooperation with foreign research-funding agencies. This group includes, for instance, initiatives such as ERA-NET Co-fund financed within the „Horizon 2020” EU Framework Programme.

Schedule of already announced and to be announced multilateral programmes can be found on p. 22.

EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS

calls funded within the framework of EEA and Norway Grants scheme



for research projects, targeted at foreign researchers who wish to conduct research in Poland

Domestic calls

The detailed conditions of each programme may vary across different editions. The most up-to-date information on current calls is published on the official website of the National Science Centre upon their announcement.

MAESTRO

A call targeted at experienced researchers who wish to conduct pioneering research projects, often with an interdisciplinary perspective, which are essential for scientific progress, expand the current state of knowledge and may likely lead to significant scientific discoveries. The call is open to researchers with a PhD degree or higher, who have published a minimum of 5 papers in renowned academic journals and coordinated at least two research projects selected through a call for proposals procedure within the 10 years prior to the submission of the proposal.

to be carried out by research teams from Poland in cooperation with their partners from Germany (in the area of Life Sciences and Physical Sciences and Engineering), Switzerland, Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovenia, whose merit-based evaluation will be performed by the NCN acting as the lead agency.

OPUS

A call for research proposals open to all researchers irrespective of research experience. The projects may be carried out by the principal investigator alone or by research teams including an adequate number of assistant researchers.

MINIATURA

A call for research activities that contribute to broader basic research. It aims to support researchers in applying for funds awarded by the NCN. The opportunity is open to individuals who earned their PhD up to 12 years before submission of the proposal, have never coordinated a research project and have not won any NCN-funded PhD scholarships or fellowships. In addition, as of the day on which the proposal is filed, the person applying for funds must be employed by the applicant on the basis of an employment contract.

In September 2020, we will open an OPUS call for proposals (the so-called OPUS-LAP) for research projects

PRELUDIUM

A call for research projects carried out by researchers without a PhD degree. Projects funded under the PRELUDIUM scheme may take anywhere between one and three years to complete and are supervised by thesis advisors or academic tutors. The subject of research should be related to the applicant's doctoral dissertation.

PRELUDIUM BIS

A call for research projects addressed at institutions operating doctoral schools. The objective of the call is to support PhD student education in doctoral schools and fund research projects carried out by PhD students as part of their doctoral dissertations.

TANGO

A call for research projects enabling to turn basic research results into economic and social practice, organised jointly by the National Science Centre (NCN) and the National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR). The objective of the call is to boost the commercialization of technologies based on basic research results obtained in initial projects funded under NCN calls. The principal investigator must be a person who has already coordinated an initial project or received a consent from the principal investigator of the initial project. Depending on the research progress, projects will be carried out under one of the three tracks: A, B or C. The track will be selected depending on (i.e.) the amount of funding and project duration.

SONATINA

A call targeted at researchers who earned their PhD up to three years before the submission of the proposal. The grant includes full-time employment as a researcher and provides funds for the completion of the research project at the host institution.

SONATA

A call for research projects carried out by researchers with a PhD degree. The objective of the call is to support principal investigators in innovative basic research, including the use of cutting-edge research equipment and/or methodology. The call is open to researchers who earned their PhD between 2 and 7 years prior to the submission of the proposal.

SONATA BIS

A call for research projects that aim to establish a new research team, carried out by researchers with a PhD or a higher degree, who earned their PhD between 5 and 12 years prior to the submission of the proposal. The call is open to outstanding young researchers wishing to set up their own research team to conduct particularly innovative research projects.

Schedule of NCN domestic calls, bilateral calls for proposals and calls for proposals carried out pursuant to the Lead Agency Procedure in 2020



CEUS-UNISONO

Submission start date: **continuous call,
announced on 24 February**

Results (at the latest): **first results:
second half of 2020**



OPUS 19
PRELUDIUM 19
POLS

Submission start date: **16 March**

Submission deadline: **16 June**

Results (at the latest): **December 2020**



SONATA BIS 10
MAESTRO 12
DAINA 2

Submission start date: **15 June**

Submission deadline: **15 September**

Results (at the latest): **March 2021
DAINA 2 – May 2021**



OPUS 20 + LAP
PRELUDIUM BIS 2
SONATA 16
BEETHOVEN CLASSIC 4

Submission start date: **15 September**

Submission deadline: **15 December**

Results (at the latest) **June 2021**

LAP – depend on the time of accepting evaluation results by partner agencies

BEETHOVEN CLASSIC 4 – October 2021



SONATINA 5
SHENG 2

Submission start date: **16 December**

Submission deadline: **16 March**

Results (at the latest): **SONATINA 5 – September 2020, SHENG 2 – October 2021**



MINIATURA 4

ongoing application, from 4 May* to 30 September 2020

* The submission start date may change.

International cooperation

The principal tasks of the NCN include the initiation and development of international cooperation projects aimed at funding basic research. Ever since its inception, the Centre has collaborated with foreign research support institutions to launch joint calls for international proposals. The principles of proposal review are drawn up collectively by the partner organizations involved in the call. Submitted projects should show high academic quality and present the advantages of international cooperation. The funding is dispensed to all project participants in parallel through appropriate funding agencies.

Furthermore, every year we launch multilateral calls for proposals carried out jointly with foreign research funding agencies under international networks supporting particular areas of research. In such programmes as ERA-NET Cofund, the call budget includes domestic funds and funds from the EU Horizon 2020 framework programme. Other initiatives are financed exclusively from each agency's domestic funds.

COOPERATION WITH AUSTRIA, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, SLOVENIA, SWITZERLAND, GERMANY, CHINA AND LITHUANIA

In February 2020, we announced the CEUS-UNISONO call for proposals for bilateral or trilateral research projects to be carried out by research teams from Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria and Slovenia. In September 2020, the OPUS call for proposals will be open to bilateral and trilateral research projects to be carried out by research teams from Poland and Germany (in the area of Life Sciences and Physical Sciences and Engineering) or Switzerland, as well as bilateral or trilateral research projects to be carried out jointly with partners from Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovenia, whose merit-based evaluation will be performed by the NCN acting as the lead agency.

In 2020, we began preparations for the second edition of the DAINA call for proposals for Polish-Lithuanian research projects. We are planning to announce the DAINA call for proposals in June 2020. In 2020, we are also planning to announce the BEETHOVEN CLASSIC 4 call for Polish-German research projects in the area of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and the SHENG 2 call for Polish-Chinese research projects in the selected research domains.



We launched the DIOSCURI call for proposals in cooperation with the German Max Planck Society. As a result, the first two Dioscuri Centres of Scientific Excellence were officially opened at the Nenecki Institute of Experimental Biology Polish Academy of Sciences in September 2019. In December 2019, we announced the third edition of the DIOSCURI call for proposals.

POLONEZ BIS

In spring 2020, preparations for the next edition of the POLONEZ scheme (POLONEZ BIS) began. The European Commission funding awarded under the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions Programme will allow us to launch new calls from September 2021 onwards and invite 120 foreign researchers to Poland.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN SCIENCE PARTNERSHIP – CEUS

In June 2019, we signed a cooperation agreement with research funding agencies from Austria and Slovenia, pursuant to which the multilateral CEUS programme was launched in February 2020. Under the calls announced by the participating agencies, research teams from Poland, Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovenia may be awarded funding for bilateral or trilateral research projects. The winning projects will be recommended for funding based on the results of merit-based evaluation performed by one of the partner institutions involved in the programme, known as the lead agency. In February 2020, we announced CEUS-UNISONO call for proposals, under which funding may be applied for the Polish research teams involved in

the projects that are subject to merit-based evaluation performed by one of the partner agencies. In September 2020, we will open an OPUS call for proposals for research projects to be carried out by the research teams from Poland, Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovenia, whose merit-based evaluation will be performed by the National Science Centre acting as the lead agency.

MULTILATERAL LEAD AGENCY INITIATIVE – WEAVE

In 2020, we will continue to prepare for launching a multilateral programme WEAVE in cooperation with several of Science Europe's member organisations. The programme will be aimed at creating a scheme for joint funding of international research projects pursuant to the Lead Agency Procedure, which relies on mutual trust as regards the quality of peer-review among organisations undertaking such cooperation. Not unlike in the case of the CEUS programme, the merit-based evaluation of bilateral or multilateral research projects will be carried out by the so-called "lead agency" under its domestic call for proposals. Other funders will ensure funding of research projects recommended for funding based on the results of merit-based evaluation performed by the lead agency. We are planning to sign the cooperation agreement with the agencies participating in the programme in 2020. First WEAVE calls for proposals will be launched in 2021.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS ENGAGING THE NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTRE

Name	Number of organizations	Number of countries	Network supports:
BiodivERsA	35	23	research in conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity
CHIST-ERA	23	21	research Information and Communication Science and Technologies
EqUIP	20	15 (Europa) + Indie	collaboration between Europe and India in the Social Sciences and Humanities
ERA-CAPS	20	18	research in Molecular Plant Sciences (healthy, safe and sufficient food, plant-based products – chemicals and energy, sustainable agriculture, forestry and landscape)
ForestValue	31	19	research, development and innovation in the forest-based sector
HERA	26	25	establishing the humanities in the European Research Area and funding as well as coordinating transnational research projects in this area of knowledge
JPI AMR	30	28	research on antimicrobial resistance
JPI Urban Europe	25	18	interdisciplinary research projects that respond to the challenges of modern cities and urban areas
JPND	29	24	research aimed at finding causes, developing cures, and identifying appropriate ways to care for those with neurodegenerative diseases
M-ERA.NET	43	32	research in the area of material science and engineering
NORFACE	25	19	research in social sciences [poświęcone dotychczas m.in. migracjom, przyszłości państwa opiekuńczego oraz nierównościom społecznym]
QuantERA	31	26	research projects in the field of Quantum Technologies
Solar-Driven Chemistry	5	5	research in the field of solar-driven chemistry

CALLS LAUNCHED BY INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS:
already announced and to be announced

Area	Programme	Topic	Call for proposals	Application deadline (pre-proposals)	Application deadline (full proposals)
Interdisciplinary	BiodivClim (Biodiversa network)	<i>BiodivClim- Biodiversity and Climate Change</i>	2 September 2019	5 November 2019	21 April 2020
	BiodivRestore (Biodiversa network)	<i>ERA-NET Cofund action on conservation and restoration of degraded ecosystems and their biodiversity, including a focus on aquatic systems</i>	IV quarter 2020	2021	2021
	EN-UAC (JPI Urban Europe)	<i>Urban Accessibility and Connectivity</i>	17 December 2019	17 March 2020	22 September 2020
	EN UTC (JPI Urban Europe network)	<i>Enhancing Urban Transformation Capacities</i>	IV quarter 2020	2021	2021
NZ – Life Sciences	JPcofuND2 (Call 2020) (JPND network)	<i>Novel imaging and brain stimulation methods and technologies related to Neurodegenerative Diseases</i>	7 January 2020	3 March 2020	30 June 2020
	JPI AMR-ACTION (JPI AMR network)	<i>New and improved interventions to inhibit or limit the development of AMR in humans, animals and the environment</i>	IV quarter 2020/	February 2021	June 2021
ST – Physical Sciences and Engineering	CHIST-ERA IV (Call 2019)	<i>Explainable Machine Learning-based Artificial Intelligence (XAI) Novel Computational Approaches for Environmental Sustainability (CES)</i>	3 December 2019	14 February 2020	23 June 2020
	CHIST-ERA IV (Call 2020)	<i>Advanced Brain Computer Interfaces for Novel Interactions; Towards Sustainable ICT.</i>	IV quarter 2020	2021	2021

Area	Programme	Topic	Call for proposals	Application deadline (pre-proposals)	Application deadline (full proposals)
ST – Physical Sciences and Engineering	M-ERA.NET 2 (Call 2020)	<i>Integrated computational materials engineering; Innovative surfaces, coatings and interfaces for extreme conditions; High performance composites; Multifunctional materials; New strategies for health applications; Materials for additive manufacturing industry</i>	17 March 2020	16 June 2020	19 November 2020
	M-ERA.NET 3 (Call 2021)	<i>ERA-NET for research and innovation on materials and battery technologies, supporting the European Green Deal</i>	I quarter 2021	2021	2021
	QuantERA II	<i>Quantum technologies</i>	I quarter 2021	2021	IV quarter 2021/ I quarter 2022
	SOLAR	<i>Solar driven chemistry</i>	IV quarter 2020/ I quarter 2021	2021	IV quarter 2021/ I quarter 2022
HS - Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	CHANSE (HERA i NORFACE networks)	<i>Transformations: Social and cultural dynamics in the digital age</i>	I quarter 2021	2021	2021



Funded under the „Horizon 2020“ EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation:
 CHIST-ERA IV – grant agreement no. 857925; JPCofuND2 – grant agreement no. 825664; M-ERA.NET 2 –
 grant agreement no. 685451; EN-UAC – grant agreement no. 875022; BiodivClim – grant agreement no. 869237.

CALLS FOR PROPOSALS FUNDED UNDER THE EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS 2014-2021

Under the 3rd edition of the Basic Research Programme within the framework of the EEA and Norway Grants, three calls for proposals have been planned:

-  **GRIEG:** call for proposals for Polish-Norwegian research projects, with a budget of EUR 37.34 million,
-  **IdeaLab:** innovative, interdisciplinary call for proposals for research projects targeting material social challenges, targeting co-investigators from Poland, Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein, with a budget of EUR 4.43 million,
-  **POLLS:** call for proposals supporting researcher mobility with small grants, targeting foreign researchers wishing to carry out research in Poland, with a budget of EUR 7 million.

Two calls for proposals (GRIEG and IdeaLab) were announced in 2019, while the third one (POLLS) was announced in March 2020.

NCN Experts

NCN experts are specialists in their respective fields engaged in reliable, comprehensive and impartial evaluation of proposals submitted to NCN calls and reports on the implementation of NCN grants pursuant to the applicable rules and regulations adopted by the NCN Council. NCN experts must use their skills, experience and knowledge in any actions and evaluations they carry out.

NCN Experts may be divided into three categories:

- 1.** expert team members – a group of experts selected by the NCN Council among prominent researchers and appointed by the NCN Director to evaluate proposals in a given discipline or groups of disciplines. They evaluate proposals at the first stage of evaluation, discuss on the joint evaluation of each proposal at the meetings and jointly decide on the future of the proposals, including the list of proposals recommended for funding following the second stage of evaluation,
- 2.** external experts – experts performing individual evaluation at the second stage of evaluation in most of the NCN calls,
- 3.** members of fixed teams – experts evaluating the reports on the implementation of grants awarded by the NCN.

In 2019, 1648 expert team members were appointed who reviewed a total number of 10 771 proposals at the first stage of evaluation. Members of the expert team appointed in 2019 included 243 researchers affiliated abroad who comprise 15% of all experts appointed. 8112 external experts participated in the second stage of evaluation, delivering 9886 of reviews. 96% of them were foreign experts who delivered 9464 evaluations.

NCN experts must be driven by actions aimed at promoting the development of Polish science and support research that deserves promotion and financial support within their competencies. They perform their tasks in compliance with the confidentiality provisions as regards the evaluation procedure, evaluation alone as well as evaluators. They must adhere to the ethical rules adopted by the NCN Council.

Proposal review

The objective of the National Science Centre is to grant funding to top research projects selected through a two-stage peer review process. As a general rule, the Council of the NCN takes into account, in carefully considered proportion, both the quality of the project as such, and the achievements of the researchers involved.

The review procedure begins with a formal evaluation performed by NCN Coordinators, which involves checking the completeness and correctness of the submission. The proposals then undergo a two-stage peer review by dedicated expert teams.

STAGE 1 – QUALIFICATION CHECK

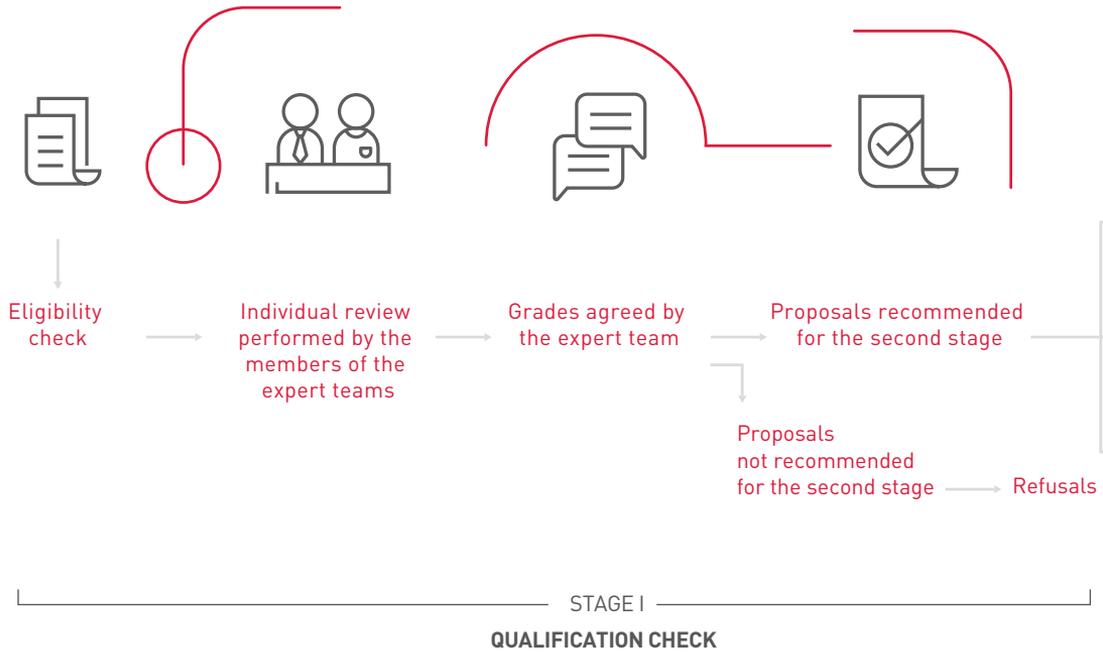
The proposals are first assessed individually by two experts working independently. Individual evaluations serve as a point of departure for debate during the first panel session. The decision to reject or approve the proposal is taken collectively by the team as a whole. Subsequently, the members prepare a shortlist of projects admitted to stage two of the peer review process.

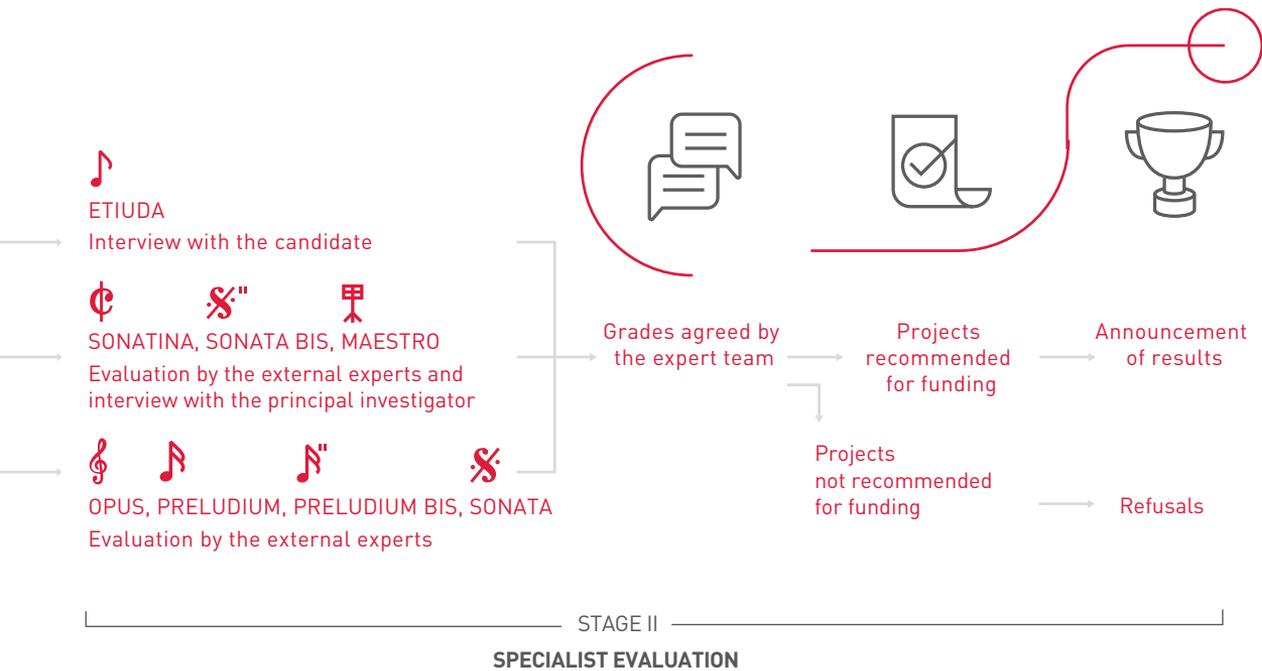
STAGE 2 – SPECIALIST EVALUATION

Stage two may be conducted in one of three ways, depending on the type of call. Proposals submitted in the OPUS, PRELUDIUM, PRELUDIUM BIS and SONATA calls are evaluated by at least two working independently, often foreign experts, whose reviews are later discussed by the expert team during the second panel session. External experts are nominated by NCN coordinators, based on the recommendations of team members. The second stage of the review process in the SONATINA, SONATA BIS and MAESTRO calls includes an interview with the principal investigator. In ETIUDA call the specialist evaluation is based on an interview with the candidate.

The procedure (scheme on p. 26-27) applies to most domestic calls from the current NCN portfolio, with the exception of MINIATURA, which involves a simplified, one-stage review process. Proposals submitted in TANGO call are evaluated by NCBR. Proposals in international calls are assessed based on separate principles described in dedicated call documents.

Proposal review





Young researchers

One of the priorities of the National Science Centre is to support the growth of young researchers who have not yet earned their PhD or did so within the last 7 years. The PRELUDIUM, PRELUDIUM BIS, SONATINA, SONATA, ETIUDA i FUGA, where they do not need to compete against more experienced researchers, are specifically designed for this group. In 2011-2019 a total of 51 calls addressed to young researchers were announced.

In the NCN calls concluded in 2019:

33 %

of the total awarded funding went to projects led by young researchers

54 %*

of all proposals were submitted by young researchers

60 %*

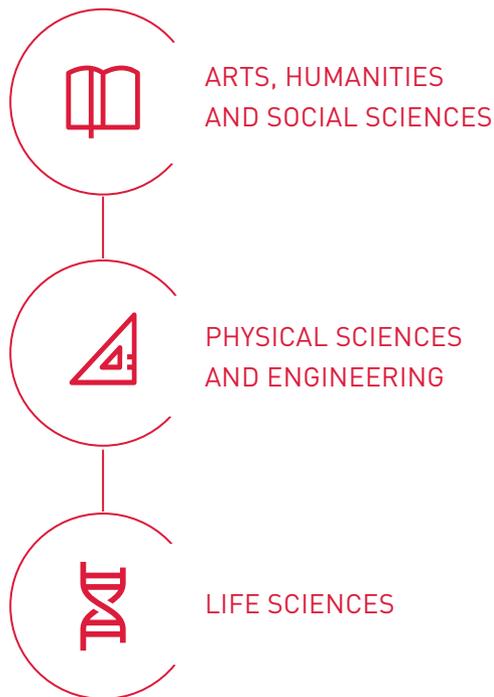
of projects qualified for funding were coordinated by young researchers.

* Because of the lack of data, the estimate does not include the TANGO call.

NCN Award 2019

The NCN Award is a distinction granted to researchers up to 40 years old for outstanding achievements in basic research documented with publications affiliated with a Polish research institution. The prize was founded by the Council of the National Science Centre in February 2013. The distinction is awarded by a chapter consisting of the Director, the Council and sponsors' representatives in three research areas: Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Life Sciences and Physical Sciences and Engineering.

The distinctions have already been awarded seven times. The NCN Award 2019 ceremony was held on 9 October 2019 at the Gallery of 19th-Century Polish Art in the Sukiennice, the branch of National Museum in Kraków.



Funders of the NCN Award 2019





Dr hab. Michał Wierzchoń

Institute of Psychology, Jagiellonian University

Achievement: interdisciplinary research into the consciousness, proposing an original theoretical model of consciousness



Dr Roman Szczęsny

Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics PAS

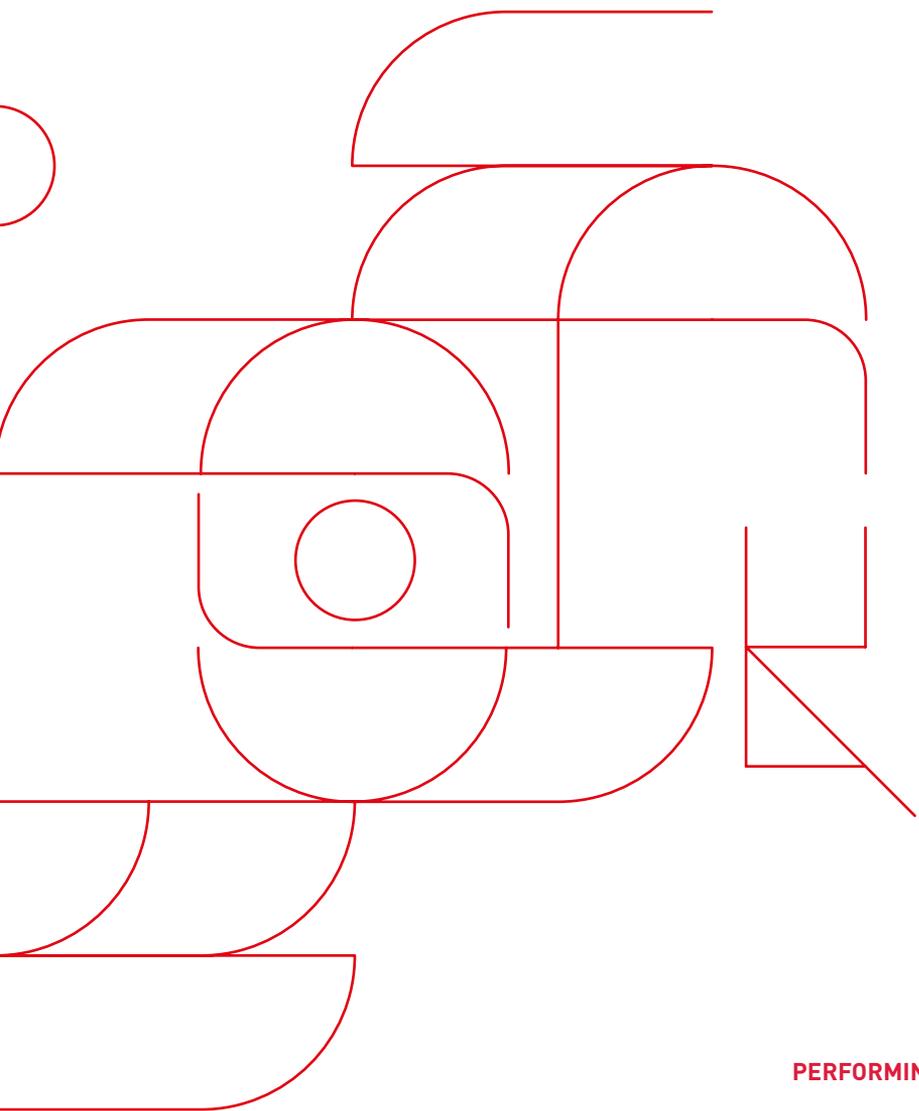
Achievement: discovering the mechanism of mitochondrial RNA degradation in human cells indicating the role of mitochondria in regulation of innate immune response



Dr hab. Dawid Pinkowicz

Faculty of Chemistry, Jagiellonian University

Achievement: Research into multifunctional molecular magnet and quantum nanomagnets – design, synthesis, and structural and physiochemical characteristics



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