

17th June 2019

Announcement of the IdeaLab call ‘Managing threats’

The Scientific Coordinators announce the IdeaLab call for ground-breaking, interdisciplinary research projects targeting social challenges facing European societies now and in the future, financed from the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism. This IdeaLab call is for projects addressing the topic ‘Managing threats’. The IdeaLab call is part of the Basic Research Programme operated by the National Science Centre under the EEA and Norway Grants and is prepared in cooperation with the Research Council of Norway. The programme has allocated €4,434,011 for projects developed at the IdeaLab.

You are invited to apply if you:

- have a master’s degree (or equivalent) or a PhD¹;
- are or will be affiliated during the project implementation period with an organisation established as a legal person in Poland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein;
- are interested in pursuing collaborative research between institutions from these countries;
- are fluent in English;
- are ready to participate for the whole week of 21-25 October 2019 in an IdeaLab workshop in Poland.

in addition you should:

- be interested in developing and carrying out a research project concerning social challenges and involving specialists from various fields – humanities, social sciences as well as life and physical sciences and engineering;
- enjoy stepping outside your area of expertise or interest, are positively driven, enjoy creative activity, can think innovatively, are keen on team work and have good communication skills;
- be eager to engage in the innovative formula of the IdeaLab call.

¹ During the IdeaLab workshop projects will be created and partnerships will be formed among the Participants. Workshop Participants may become Principal Investigators in projects if they have at least a PhD and are or will be affiliated with a Polish research organisation during the project implementation period.

Objectives

The overall objectives of the EEA and Norway Grants are to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in Europe and to strengthen relations between Poland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

The main objective of the Basic Research Programme implemented by the National Science Centre, is enhanced research-based knowledge development. 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.

The Programme will support bilateral or multilateral research projects involving Participants from both Poland on the one side, and Norway and/or Iceland and/or Liechtenstein on the other. The objective of this support is to foster long-term strategic partnerships and increased participation in Horizon Europe.

IdeaLab topic: Managing threats

Challenges arising from the complex processes of our times, such as globalisation, technological change (for example, the increasing use of robots, artificial intelligence, gene editing), issues of environment and climate change, demographic change, major waves of migration, geopolitical instability and many others, bring with them uncertainties (implying threats and, in some cases, opportunities) that European societies have to face².

Globalisation has brought new opportunities and resources; it has also proven conducive to major migratory movements, undermined environmental sustainability and brought with it economic and social-political instability. Humankind appears to be losing the race with climate change caused by us, and there is a growing sense of helpless inertia from doing too little, too late. Basic democratic norms and the integrity and liberty of the individual are challenged by major waves of populist, collectivist (nationalist and religious) and authoritarian assaults. New communication technologies have created a highly inclusive, yet complex and compartmentalized global public sphere, where 'democratization' of information and cultural goods is accompanied by disinformation, manipulation, spread of conspiracy theories and the impairment of the social status of scientific knowledge. Automation and robots relieve the burden of heavy and hazardous physical work and routine tasks, but they put the social fabric under strain and raise questions about social organisation in the future. Novel gene editing methods allow modification of human genetic material as well as in germ cells. Rapid development in neurosciences may lead to technologies that allow human minds to be affected and even read. Thus, in an environment that is felt to be as much enabling as threatening, individual, social and institutional action is shaped by the need to respond to perceived threats and uncertainties.

² ESPAS report 'Global trends to 2030. Challenges and choices for Europe'.

It may be difficult to tell imaginary threats from real ones, but the impact of the former is no less significant than the impact of the latter. Acting in response to threats and uncertainties may be constructive, but it may also generate unfavourable outcomes, such as disorder, more uncertainty, new dilemmas and, eventually, a flight from freedom.

The objective of this IdeaLab workshop is to encourage Participants to think outside the box about the challenges outlined by the call, to find new insights and/or new knowledge that may provide the foundations for action as well as solutions offering multi-angle and interdisciplinary approaches to managing various types of threats. The event will provide an unconventional arena for Participants from a variety of backgrounds to meet and unleash new ideas supporting society today and in the future.

The IdeaLab will fund projects that:

- respond to the challenge of the IdeaLab call, Managing threats;
- generate new insights and/or new knowledge that may provide the foundations for action as well as solutions offering multi-angle and interdisciplinary approaches to managing various types of threat;
- may involve solutions that require 'something to happen' – typically an intervention by public authorities so that the projects shall be expected to comprise well-thought-through strategies and expertise for making 'that' happen;
- represent an interdisciplinary perspective involving specialists from various fields – humanities, social, life and natural sciences as well as engineering;
- create links between science and the public through the involvement of the public sector, NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders;
- will make their results openly available in internationally refereed high-quality journals, in line with the [open access policy of the programme](#).

The IdeaLab call procedure

The IdeaLab procedure is used to select research projects for funding. The procedure consists of three stages.

First stage: individual application for participation in the IdeaLab workshop using the Participant's application form – **submission deadline August 19, 2019, 24.00 CEST**

An international Panel of Experts shall select workshop Participants by the end of September 2019.

Second stage: IdeaLab workshop in Poland – **October 21-25, 2019**

- development of project ideas together with other workshop Participants and forming of research groups, including assignment of the future Principal Investigators;

- elaboration of project ideas by the above research groups led by the future Principal Investigators using the project-idea form – **submission deadline October 24, 2019, 21:00 CEST;**
- presentation of the project ideas to the Panel of Experts and evaluation by the Panel;
- list of the assessment of project ideas is available at the end of the workshop.

Third stage: submission of the full-proposal form by the applicant, i.e., the Polish research organisation with which the Principal Investigator is or will be affiliated during the project implementation – **submission deadline December 16, 2019, 24.00 CET**

The Panel of Experts reviews consistency of the full proposal with the project idea developed during the workshop and any recommendations. The ranking list is prepared with the involvement of the Basic Research Programme Committee.

By the end of March 2020, the final decisions with regard to the project grants will be taken by the Director of the National Science Centre.

What is an IdeaLab?

The IdeaLab call is designed to develop ground-breaking research and innovation projects. The main element of the IdeaLab is a residential interactive workshop involving around 30 Participants, a Panel of Experts (Workshop Director and mentors) and, if required, a number of independent stakeholders.

IdeaLabs have a highly multidisciplinary mix of Participants and require knowledge and expertise from a broad range of disciplines and cultures, to drive lateral thinking and radical approaches to address research challenges.

Over an intense, five-day period, this cross-disciplinary group of Participants exchanges ideas and reconceives the world from new perspectives that challenge current approaches. They then hammer out research projects that have the potential to generate new solutions to this freshly defined and focused problem.

For more information about the method please consult chapter 2 of the Guide for applicants.

FIRST STAGE: INDIVIDUAL APPLICATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE IDEALAB WORKSHOP

Who are we looking for?

Knowledge and expertise from a broad range of disciplines and cultures will be required. The IdeaLab is intended to bring together people who would not typically be collaborating with each other. We are looking for people who show the ability to think outside the box about challenges arising from processes like globalisation, technological change, environment and climate change, economic development, etc.

The Participants should represent competences relevant for finding new insights or new knowledge foundations for action as well as solutions that offer multi-angle and interdisciplinary approaches to managing various types of threats and uncertainties. We are looking for people who not only are specialists in their individual fields but also have an inquisitive nature and the ability to integrate their knowledge into new ideas that border on other disciplines, approaches and ways of thinking. The call is directed to individuals who are interested in the call topic and motivated by the innovative approach to project formulation.

Individuals from research institutions, public sector, special interest organisations, NGOs, private entities and any other organisation established as a legal person in Poland, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway are invited to prepare their applications. The minimum requirement is a completed master's degree (or equivalent). However, a PhD is a minimum requirement for Principal Investigators, who are or shall be employed in a Polish research organisation.

How to apply?

To participate in the IdeaLab workshop, please fill in the Participant's application form, which must be submitted in English and should include a description of the following:

1. your qualifications: please provide a brief summary focusing on those relevant to this IdeaLab;
2. how your interests and experience will contribute to the topic of this cross-disciplinary IdeaLab;
3. your skills and experience in communicating your research to a non-specialist audience;
4. your skills and experience in team-work and cross-disciplinary cooperation;
5. how you expect to adapt to, and contribute in the intensive IdeaLab setting which involves: using novel approaches, developing ground-breaking ideas, establishing new relationships and working with new partners, delivering creativity under pressure;
6. reflect on what makes you think innovatively, and how you function when asked to step outside your area of expertise.

It is mandatory that the selected Participants are able to participate in the IdeaLab workshop for the entire week of October 21-25, 2019. Your agreement to attend all five days of the IdeaLab is confirmed by signing the Participant's statement.

The Host organisation, where the Participant plans to implement the research tasks is indicated in the application form. The Participants are or will be affiliated with the Host organisation during the project implementation period. Confirmation of the person(s) authorised to represent the organisation is required by signing the Host organisation's statement.

The Participant's application form is submitted electronically using an online form available at <https://idealab.ncn.gov.pl> **The application deadline is August 19, 2019 at 24.00 CEST.** For more information about the procedure for applying for participation in the IdeaLab workshop please consult section 3.1 of the Guide for applicants.

Selection of Participants

The National Science Centre administration shall carry out the application eligibility check using a check-list. The following criteria will be taken into account in the eligibility check:

- Was the application sent before the deadline date and time established in the call and using the Programme Operator's electronic submission tool?
- Does the Host organisation qualify as a legal person established in Poland, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway?
- Are the two required statements – the Participant's statement and the Host organisation's statement – present, complete and signed?
- Are all fields of the application form filled in and written in English? Is the text within the limits set in the call documentation?

Participants will be selected based on their individual qualifications by the international Panel of Experts. The selection is based on the following criteria:

- relevance of your expertise to the challenges in the call;
- your ability to develop new, adventurous and highly original research ideas;
- your potential to contribute to research at the interface between areas of expertise;
- your ability to work in a cross-disciplinary team and to communicate.

Detailed information on the selection procedure is described in the document Guide for evaluators – Participant selection. Participants shall be selected and informed about the results in September.

SECOND STAGE: IDEALAB WORKSHOP

What will happen during the IdeaLab workshop?

The IdeaLab workshop is a residential event lasting from 21-25 October 2019. Participants are required to attend the entire IdeaLab. The participation costs (travel, catering, accommodation) shall be covered by the National Science Centre.

English is the working language under the Basic Research Programme both during the proposal stage and the project implementation and reporting phase. Communication during the workshop will be in English. Therefore, Participants need to be fluent in English to discuss research and prepare the project ideas in writing.

During the workshop creative and innovative techniques are used to deepen the understanding of the topic and challenges of the call. Participants get to know each other and get insight into the competences and expertise available. They then form research groups around the project ideas that they start to develop. The competences of one Participant may be needed in several project ideas. It will be possible to be involved in and contribute to several project ideas.

However, as the workshop develops, Participants will have to decide to which research groups they will finally commit.

The Participants also decide who will be the Principal Investigator in each project. This person shall be responsible for the elaboration of the project idea, assembling the input from the Participants involved and submitting the project-idea form, including the project budget.

Participants should include in the project idea: information concerning the novelty of the project, how it is related to other projects and ongoing research in the thematic area of the call, the interdisciplinarity of the proposed research, risks and how they are going to be dealt with. The project idea should contain a justification of why it should be funded and an explanation as to what is the 'wow' factor as well as a description of the objectives of the project, methodology and challenges being addressed. The members of the partnership are indicated and a description of how each team member is contributing is included. Details concerning the required information are in the project-idea form.

Project ideas in English are submitted electronically on a pen drive. **The deadline for submission of the project ideas is October 24, 2019, 21.00 CEST.**

During the last day of the IdeaLab (October 25th) the project ideas are presented by the Participants and evaluated by the international Panel of Experts. The assessment will be available at the end of the workshop.

Eligibility criteria for project ideas

Workshop Participants may become Principal Investigators in projects created during the workshop if they have at least a PhD and are or will be affiliated with a Polish research organisation as defined in article 27 section 1, point 1, 3-6 of the Act on the National Science Centre of 30 April 2010. Eligible partnerships created during the workshop should consist at least of the Principal Investigator and a workshop Participant from Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway. There are no limits concerning the number of partners in the partnership.

The eligible duration of projects is 24 or 36 months. Expenditures incurred after 30 April 2024 shall not be eligible.

The costs of the project shall be established during the IdeaLab workshop. Under the call, funds may be awarded for remuneration of the research team, scholarships for under- and post-graduate students, purchase or manufacturing of research equipment and other costs crucial to the research project. Rules concerning the eligibility of costs are described in the Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, guidelines, especially the Guideline for research programmes and Basic Research Programme Agreement. For further information concerning the eligibility of costs please consult chapter 4 of the Guide for applicants.

The programme has allocated €4,434,011 for projects developed at the IdeaLab. We intend to fund 3-6 projects. The minimum grant amount is €500,000 and the maximum amount is €1,500,000. Please, use the exchange rate of the Polish National Bank of the day of the call announcement to calculate if the project budget in PLN is within the eligible limits. It is expected that the eligible costs claimed by the Liechtenstein, Icelandic and Norwegian entities

participating in the project shall normally not exceed 40% of the total eligible costs of the project.

Evaluation of project ideas

The submitted project ideas will be evaluated by the international Panel of Experts on the last day of the workshop based on the submitted application form and the presentation of the project idea.

The relevance in relation to the objective and priorities of the IdeaLab call under the Basic Research Programme shall be evaluated by the Panel of Experts. If a project idea is found to be not relevant, the experts prepare a written justification and the proposal is rejected.

Project ideas will be assessed based on the following criteria:

Criterion 1 – Scientific and/or technical excellence – weight 50%

1.1 Wow factor – Boldness in scientific and innovative thinking

1.2 Holistic perspective. Inter- and transdisciplinary

1.3 Scientific feasibility of the proposed project

Criterion 2 – The potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of the project's results, that will be relevant for managing threats, for example, in practical solutions, strategies, policy advice or social innovations – weight 25%

Criterion 3 – Quality and efficiency of implementation and management, including quality and implementation capacity of the partnership and contribution to capacity and competence building – weight 25%

3.1 Team and team dynamics

3.2 Expertise and experience relevant to the project

3.3 Project organisation, assets and appropriateness of costs with regard to the scope of the research

The sub-criteria under criteria 1 and 3 have only an auxiliary character to guide the experts regarding issues that should be taken into consideration in the assessment. The project ideas shall be scored against the three assessment criteria, each on a scale from 0 to 5. Score values indicate the following assessments.

- 0 – The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.
- 1 – Poor. The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- 2 – Fair. While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses.
- 3 – Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary.

- 4 – Very Good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible.
- 5 – Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

Detailed information on the selection procedure is described in the document Guide for evaluators – assessment of project ideas and full proposals.

THIRD STAGE: FULL-PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

What are the eligibility criteria at the full-proposal stage?

All partnerships created during the IdeaLab workshop who submitted and presented the project idea for evaluation by the international Panel of Experts are eligible to submit a full project proposal as long as their application was not rejected based on the relevance criterion. The project idea developed during the workshop is an attachment to the full proposal. The project idea cannot be changed.

The full proposal is submitted by the applicant, which is the research organisation specified in article 27 section 1, point 1, 3-6 of the Act on the National Science Centre of 30 April 2010, established as a legal person in Poland, employing the Principal Investigator. The partners are organisations established as legal persons in Poland, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway, employing the workshop Participants as research team leaders. The Principal Investigators and the research team leaders at the partner organisation do not need to be employed by the applicant or partner before the beginning of the project implementation specified in the project contract.

The full proposal contains a breakdown of project costs into years and cost categories. The total cost requested in the project-idea form must not change. The breakdown of costs presented in the full proposal has to be consistent with the budget in the project idea to be eligible.

The full proposal contains a project schedule divided into work packages. The research tasks planned in the schedule have to be consistent with the project idea to be eligible.

If funding of a research project by the National Science Centre will constitute State aid for the applicant or project partners, 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 of granting State aid via the National Science Centre (Journal of Laws of 2015, item 1381).

How to submit the full proposal?

Proposals may solely be filed electronically via ZSUN/OSF, available at <https://osf.opi.org.pl>. In the full-proposal form you can find out about information and annexes needed to complete the electronic proposal form in ZSUN/OSF. **The deadline for full proposal submission is**

December 16, 2019, 24.00 CET. For more information about the full proposal submission procedure, please consult section 3.3.5. of the Guide for applicants.

Evaluation of full proposals

The National Science Centre Scientific Coordinators shall carry out the eligibility assessment of the full proposals. In order to be retained, the full proposals must fulfil all of the following administrative eligibility criteria:

- Full proposals must be submitted by an eligible applicant (Project promoter) – a research organisation 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;
- Project partners (any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial as well as non-governmental organisations) have to be established as a legal person in Poland, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway;
- Full proposals must be submitted via the electronic proposal submission system ZSUN/OSF before the submission deadline of 16 December 2019, 24.00 CET;
- Full proposals must meet the criterion concerning the number of Participants – at least one Polish research organisation and one entity from Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway;
- The Principal Investigator who is or will be affiliated with the Project promoter must have a PhD;
- Recipients of NCN scholarships and persons newly employed as post-docs must be selected in an open call. Proposals shall be rejected if the name of the person(s) shall be indicated in the application.
- The project idea attached to the full proposal must be identical to the project idea submitted during the IdeaLab workshop. All fields of the project-idea form must be filled in and written in English.
- All fields of the full-proposal form must be filled.
- The minimum grant amount is €500,000 and the maximum amount is €1,500,000. The exchange rate of the Polish National Bank of the day of the call announcement must be used to calculate if the project budget in PLN is within the eligible limits.
- Full proposals must comply with the language requirements set out in the full-proposal form: all fields must be filled in English unless specifically indicated in the application form.
- All administrative forms specified in the full-proposal form must be present and duly signed by the person(s) authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation. The Principal Investigator's declaration must be present and signed.
- A statement that the project complies with the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including accessibility for people with disabilities and the principle of equality between women and men must be signed.

- A statement that the applicant and partners are not excluded from the possibility of receiving funding must be signed. (For more information, please consult section 3.3.4. of the Guide for Applicants.)
- The content of the proposal must relate to the scope of the call.

The expert assessment shall be conducted to review the consistency of the full proposal with the project idea developed during the workshop and any recommendations. Only complete proposals that comply with all the requirements set out in the call documentation shall be accepted. Following the assessment the preliminary ranking list shall be prepared.

The preliminary ranking list is submitted to the Programme Committee, which shall review the ranked list of projects and may modify the ranking of the projects in justified cases. The justification for modifications shall be detailed in the minutes of the meeting of the Programme Committee. The minutes and the final ranking list are submitted to the National Science Centre.

When and how will the results be announced?

The call results shall be announced on the National Science Centre's website and communicated to the applicants by way of a decision by the National Science Centre Director by the end of March 2020 at the latest.

The decision of the Director may be appealed against to the Appeal Committee of the Council of the National Science Centre, in the event of a breach of the call procedure or other formal infringements. The appeal shall be lodged within 14 days of the effective delivery of the decision.

Call documentation:

1. Call announcement
2. Guide for applicants
3. Participant's application form
4. Project-idea form
5. Full-proposal form
6. Guide for evaluators – Participant selection
7. Guide for evaluators – assessment of project ideas and full proposals

The documents listed above have been approved by the Basic Research Programme Committee and must be followed by the applicants to meet the eligibility criteria of the IdeaLab call.

Contact Persons

National Science Centre – Programme Operator
Barbara Świątkowska
Phone: +48 12 341 9150
e-mail address: barbara.swiatkowska@ncn.gov.pl

Please, contact the EEA and Norway Grants Team at the National Science Centre with all queries concerning the Basic Research Programme and the IdeaLab 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.

Research Council of Norway – Donor Programme Partner

PhD Aleksandra W. Haugstad

Mobile: +47 922 82 462

e-mail address: awh@rcn.no

Lena Cappelen Endresen

Mobile: +47 970 06 137

e-mail address: lce@rcn.no

In case of specific issues concerning applicants from the Donor States the Donor Programme Partner in the Basic Research Programme is the Research Council of Norway.