

Council
of the National Science Centre
KR.0003.96.2020

RESOLUTION NO 96/2020
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTRE
of 14 September 2020
**on the terms of the OPUS call for research projects, including projects carried out
pursuant to the Lead Agency Procedure (LAP)**

Pursuant to Article 18 (4) of the Act on the National Science Centre of 30 April 2010 (uniform text in Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1384, hereinafter referred to as the “NCN Act”), the Council of the National Science Centre hereby lays down the terms of the OPUS call for research projects, including projects carried out pursuant to the Lead Agency Procedure.

I. Addressees of the call

§1. The call is addressed at researchers at all stages of their academic careers, who are planning research projects, including in cooperation with foreign research teams pursuant to the Lead Agency Procedure¹, hereinafter referred to as the “LAP Cooperation”, under which the NCN acts as the lead agency.

§2. Under the LAP Cooperation, research projects may be planned with the participation of foreign research teams from:

- a) the Czech Republic, Austria or Slovenia pursuant to the cooperation agreement between the NCN and the Austrian Science Fund (*Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung, FWF*), Czech Science Foundation (*Grantová agentura České Republiky, GAČR*) or Slovenian Research Agency (*Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije, ARRS*) or
- b) Germany pursuant to the cooperation agreement between the NCN and the German Research Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG*) or

¹ Cooperation carried out pursuant to the Lead Agency Procedure means cooperation between research funding agencies where funding proposals may be submitted under national calls launched thereby, for research projects to be carried out jointly with foreign research teams that apply for parallel project funding to the agencies involved in the LAP Cooperation, i.e. partner agencies. An agency in charge of merit-based evaluation of proposals under its national call acts as the lead agency.

c) Switzerland pursuant to the cooperation agreement between the NCN and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), where foreign research teams apply for funding of their respective research projects to their relevant research funding agencies under programmes launched in cooperation with the NCN pursuant to the Lead Agency Procedure.

§3. Polish research teams may use large international research equipment in their research projects as well as cooperate with foreign partners from foreign research institutions that are not applying for funding for that purpose within the framework of programmes launched by partner institutions referred to in 0.

II. Eligible applicants

§4. Research project funding proposals, hereinafter referred to as the “proposals”, may be submitted by entities referred to in Article 27 (1) of the NCN Act, hereinafter referred to as the “applicants”.

§5. Proposals may also be filed by applicants, for which funding of the research project will constitute state aid granted pursuant to the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education adopted pursuant to Article 37 (2) of the NCN Act.

§6. Where the applicant is a group of Polish entities defined in Article 27 (1) (2) of the NCN Act, the proposal shall be submitted by the leader. The principal investigator’s employer shall act as the leader of the group of entities.

§7. Where the applicant is a natural person, the research project cannot be carried out by a group of entities or entity for which funding of the research project will constitute state aid.

§8. An entity that is under receivership, in liquidation or subject to bankruptcy proceedings cannot be an applicant or host institution for a research project.

III. Terms of entry

§9. The call shall be open to research project funding proposals, hereinafter referred to as the “OPUS proposals” or proposals for funding of research projects within the framework of the LAP cooperation, hereinafter referred to as the “OPUS LAP proposals”.

§10. The following OPUS proposals may be submitted under the call:

- 1) to carry out research that has not been funded by the NCN or from other sources;
- 2) which comprise basic research laid down in Article 2 (1) of the NCN Act in any of the academic disciplines defined in the NCN panels adopted by the NCN Council;
- 3) which cover a research project planned for a period of 12, 24, 36 or 48 months;



- 4) which comply with the Regulations on awarding funding for research tasks funded by the National Science Centre as regards research projects, adopted by the NCN Council, hereinafter referred to as the "Regulations"; and
- 5) which cover all elements laid down in 0.

§11. Proposals submitted under the OPUS call shall include:

- 1) research project title (in Polish and in English);
- 2) project's abstract (up to 4500 characters in English);
- 3) project's abstract for the general public (1 page in Polish and 1 page in English),
- 4) research project description:
 - a) short description (up to 5 pages in English);
 - b) full description (up to 15 pages in English).

The description shall contain the scientific goal of the project, significance of the project, general concept and work plan, research methodology and project literature applicable to the subject of the project.

- 5) work plan presenting research tasks (in Polish and in English);
- 6) information on the research team (in English), including:
 - a) information on the principal investigator, including:
 - academic and research career;
 - 1-10 most important papers published or accepted for publication (letter of a acceptance required) in the proposal submission year or over the period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year², with 1-3 of them attached as PDF files;
For research in art, 1-10 most important papers published or accepted for publication (letter of acceptance required) or artistic achievements and achievements in research in art in the proposal submission year or over the period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year². If more than one paper is listed, 1-3 of them should be attached as PDF files;
 - information on research project management³ or other funding awarded under NCN calls or other national or international calls in the proposal submission year or within 10 years prior to proposal submission year² as well as information on participation, in that period, in research projects not funded from the Polish

²This period can be extended by long-term (in excess of 90 days) documented sick leaves or physiotherapy leaves granted on account of being unfit to work. In addition, this period may be extended by the number of months of a child care leave granted pursuant to the Labour Code and in the case of women, by 18 months for every child born or adopted child, whichever manner of accounting for career breaks is preferable.

³ Acting as a principal investigator also means managing/ coordinating the work of a research group in international research projects or programs.



- budget, selected under EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation;
- description of the most important research achievement;
 - research experience gained in Poland or abroad;
 - the most important national or international distinctions for research and/or other activity in research in art;
- b) information on the required qualifications and scope of work planned by each investigator in the research project;
- 7) research project budget drafted pursuant to the Regulations (in English);
 - 8) in the case of research projects involving large international research equipment to be used by the Polish research teams or cooperation with partners from foreign institutions, information on international cooperation as well as description of benefits that may result from such cooperation (in English).
 - 9) information on the data management plan concerning data generated or used in the course of a research project, as required by the proposal (in English);
 - 10) information on the ethical aspects of the project, including any consents, opinions, permits and/or approvals necessary to carry out the project pursuant to generally applicable laws and best practices adopted for a specific academic discipline, as required by the proposal (in English);
 - 11) in the case of research projects which include clinical trials with a medicinal product or a medical device, a detailed justification of the non-commercial nature of the trials (in English);
 - 12) in the case of research projects covering research being performed or completed by the principal investigator, or with respect to which the principal investigator applies for funding under other NCN calls or from other sources, description of similar research tasks with reasons justifying the need to have them funded under the project (in English);
 - 13) in the case of research projects to be carried out in host institutions that do not receive any operating support for research, information on research carried out over the last 2 years, together with a list of publications and information on research equipment and other instruments crucial to research (in English);
 - 14) in the case of research projects to be carried out by a group of Polish entities, a research project cooperation agreement containing, inter alia, the parties to the agreement and its leader; subject-matter and term of the agreement covering the performance period of the research project; authorisation of leader's representative to



act on behalf of the entire group of entities in the procedure for the allocation of funding and performance of the research project; obligation of the leader to provide the other parties with information received from the NCN; signatures of the authorised representatives of all members of the group of entities (in Polish);

- 15) administrative declarations by the principal investigator and the host institution for the project, as required by the proposal; and
- 16) in the case of entities for which project funding will constitute state aid, a detailed breakdown of costs as well as other documents and declarations related to the proposal for state aid via the NCN, as required by the proposal (in Polish).

§12. The following OPUS-LAP proposals may be submitted under OPUS 20:

- 1) to carry out basic research that has not been funded by the NCN or from other sources;
- 2) which comprise basic research laid down in Article 2 (1) of the NCN Act in any of the academic disciplines defined in the NCN panels adopted by the NCN Council, subject to point 3 (b);
- 3) under which research is based on a balanced and complementary contribution by all research teams within the framework of:
 - a) bilateral or trilateral cooperation between Polish research teams and teams from the Czech Republic, Austria or Slovenia, whereas the Polish research team must apply to the NCN:
 - for at least 40% of the total project budget (applies to bilateral projects) or
 - for at least 25% of the total project budget (applies to trilateral projects),
 - b) bilateral cooperation between Polish research teams and teams from Germany in the area of Life Sciences and Physical Sciences and Engineering,
 - c) bilateral cooperation between Polish research teams and teams from Switzerland;
- 4) under which each research team involved in a project is managed by a principal investigator, whereas the Polish part of the project is managed by the principal investigator of the Polish research team;
- 5) which cover a research project planned for a period of 24, 36 or 48 months, whereas the project period must be the same for all research teams involved in the project;
- 6) which comply with the Regulations;
- 7) which cover all elements defined in 0 hereof.

§13. OPUS-LAP proposals must include the following elements, taking into account all research tasks to be carried out jointly by the Polish research team and foreign research teams:

- 1) research project title (in Polish and in English);
- 2) project's abstract (up to 4500 characters in English);



- 3) project's abstract for the general public (1 page in Polish and 1 page in English),
- 4) research project description:
 - a) short description (up to 5 pages in English);
 - b) full description (up to 15 pages in English);

The description shall contain the scientific goal of the project, significance of the project, general concept and work plan, research methodology and project literature applicable to the subject of the project.

- 5) work plan presenting research tasks to be performed by the Polish research team (in Polish and in English) and each foreign research team involved in the project (in English);
- 6) information on the research teams involved in the project (in English), including:
 - a) information on the principal investigators, including:

- academic and research career;
- 1-10 most important papers published or accepted for publication (letter of a acceptance required) in the proposal submission year and over the period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year⁴, with 1-3 of them attached as PDF files;

For research in art, 1-10 most important papers published or accepted for publication (letter of acceptance required) or artistic achievements and achievements in research in art in the proposal submission year or over the period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year⁴. If more than one paper is listed, 1-3 of them should be attached as PDF files;

- information on research project management³ or other funding awarded under NCN calls or other national or international calls in the proposal submission year or within 10 years prior to proposal submission year as well as information on participation, in that period, in research projects not funded from the Polish (national) budget, selected under EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation;
- description of the most important research achievement;
- research experience gained in Poland or abroad;
- the most important national or international distinctions for research and/or other activity in research in art;

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

- b) information on the required qualifications and scope of work planned by each investigator in the research project;
- 7) research project budget of the Polish research team drafted pursuant to the Regulations and research project budget of the foreign research team drafted pursuant to the applicable rules of the relevant partner agency (in English);
- 8) in the case of research projects to be carried out pursuant to the LAP cooperation or involving large international research equipment to be used by the Polish research teams or cooperation with partners from foreign institutions, information on international cooperation as well as description of benefits that may result from such cooperation (in English);
- 9) information on the data management plan concerning data generated or used in the course of a research project, as required by the proposal (in English);
- 10) information on the ethical aspects of the project, including any consents, opinions, permits and/or approvals necessary to carry out the project pursuant to generally applicable laws and best practices adopted for a specific academic discipline, as required by the proposal (in English);
- 11) in the case of research projects including clinical trials with a medicinal product or a medical device, a detailed justification of the non-commercial nature of the trials (in English);
- 12) in the case of research projects covering research being performed or completed by the principal investigators, or with respect to which the principal investigators apply for funding under other NCN calls or from other sources, description of similar research tasks with reasons justifying the need to have them funded under the project (in English);
- 13) in the case of research projects to be carried out in Polish institutions that do not receive any operating support for research, information on research carried out over the last 2 years, together with a list of publications and information on research equipment and other instruments crucial to research (in English);
- 14) in the case of research projects to be carried out by a group of Polish entities, a research project cooperation agreement containing, inter alia, the parties to the agreement and its leader; subject-matter and term of the agreement covering the performance period of the research project; authorisation of leader's representative to act on behalf of the entire group of entities in the procedure for the allocation of funding and performance of the research project; obligation of the leader to provide the other



- parties with information received from the NCN; signatures of the authorised representatives of all members of the group of entities (in Polish);
- 15) administrative declarations by the principal investigator and the host institution for the project, as required by the proposal; and
 - 16) the case of entities for which project funding will constitute state aid, a detailed breakdown of costs as well as other documents and declarations related to the proposal for state aid via the NCN, as required by the proposal (in Polish).

IV. Evaluation of proposals

§14. Proposals shall be evaluated pursuant to the Regulations.

§15. In the evaluation of OPUS proposals, the following criteria shall be reviewed in particular:

- 1) compliance with the criteria of basic research laid down in Article 2 (1) of the NCN Act;
- 2) quality and innovative nature of research or tasks to be performed;
- 3) impact of the research project on the advancement of the scientific discipline;
- 4) assessment of the feasibility of the proposed project;
- 5) scientific achievements of the principal investigator, including publications in renowned academic press/journals;
- 6) evaluation of other projects carried out by the principal investigator and funded by the NCN or from other sources;
- 7) principal investigator's participation in research projects funded under EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation;
- 8) relevance of the costs to be incurred with regard to the subject and scope of the research; and
- 9) preparation of the proposal and compliance with other requirements set forth in the call announcement.

§16. In the evaluation of OPUS-LAP proposals, the following criteria shall be reviewed in particular:

- 1) compliance with the criteria of basic research laid down in Article 2 (1) of the NCN Act;
- 2) quality and innovative nature of research or tasks to be performed;
- 3) impact of the research project on the advancement of the scientific discipline;
- 4) assessment of the feasibility of the proposed project;
- 5) balanced and complementary contribution by all research teams to the research project;

- 6) scientific achievements of the principal investigator, including publications in renowned academic press/journals;
- 7) evaluation of other projects carried out by the principal investigator for the Polish part of the research project and funded by the NCN and from other sources, and evaluation of other projects carried out by the principal investigators;
- 8) principal investigator's participation in research projects funded under EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation;
- 9) relevance of the costs to be incurred with regard to the subject and scope of the research; and
- 10) preparation of the proposal and compliance with other requirements set forth in the call announcement.

V. Funding decision

§17. In the case of OPUS proposals, the call shall be concluded within 6 months of the proposal submission date.

§18. In the case of OPUS-LAP proposals, the call shall be concluded within 11 months of the proposal submission date.

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

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

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