

# Information Brochure

**National Science Centre**

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# National Science Centre

The National Science Centre (NCN) is a government executive agency established to support basic research, i.e. experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts, without any direct commercial application or use in view. The mission of the NCN is to boost the quality and efficiency of Polish research thanks to a competitive grant system and to promote its growing importance on the international stage. The Centre thus publishes regular calls for research projects and research activities. In 2021, it has a budget of over PLN 1.3 billion slated to fund basic research.

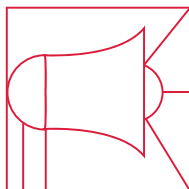
The Act of 30 April 2010 on the National Science Centre came into force on 1 October 2010. The NCN officially started its activities on 4 March 2011 and the first calls were announced less than three weeks later. The NCN is supervised by the Minister of Education and Science and the calls are designed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

The National Science Centre also funds basic research in cooperation with foreign institutions that support science. In collaboration with the Max Planck Society from Germany, the NCN implements the DIOSCURI programme aimed at establishing Centres of Scientific Excellence in Poland. National Science Centre is also the coordinator of programmes launched by QuantERA (network of research agencies operating in the field of Quantum Technologies) and CHANSE (European research funding institutions operating in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences) with the support of the EU funds awarded under the Horizon 2020. The Centre also operates the „Research” programme within the framework of the EEA and Norway Grants. In September 2021, with the support of Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions COFUND (MSCA), we are launching the first POLONEZ BIS call for incoming researchers as a follow-up to the POLONEZ call.

# The NCN in figures

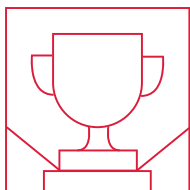
MARCH 2011 –  
DECEMBER 2020

## Domestic calls\*



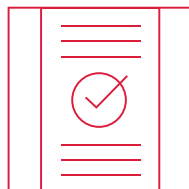
**125**

calls  
announced



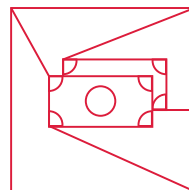
**114**

calls  
concluded\*\*



**22,859**

grants  
awarded



PLN  
**10.42**

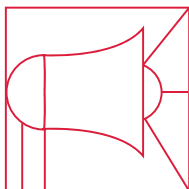
billion

funds  
awarded

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

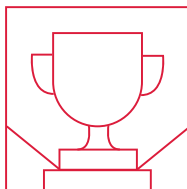
\*\* The figure does not include TANGO calls concluded by the National Centre for Research and Development and calls launched jointly with NAWA.

## International calls\*



**75**

calls  
announced



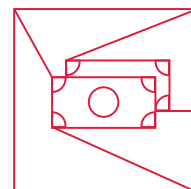
**67**

calls  
concluded



**436**

grants  
awarded



PLN  
**543.98**

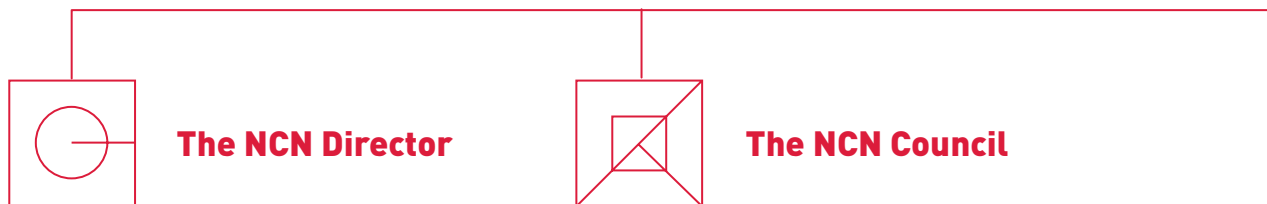
million

funds  
awarded\*\*

\* 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 Grants, calls launched jointly with the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA) and DIOSCURI call.

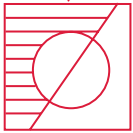
\*\* The figure includes the contribution of the NCN, the funds provided by the European Commission and grants awarded under DIOSCURI call.

# Organization structure



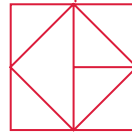
In charge of running the National Science Centre, the Director oversees the completion of its tasks and its financial management, as well as representing it to the outside world.

The 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 publish 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 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 staff 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. DR HAB. ZBIGNIEW BŁOCKI



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

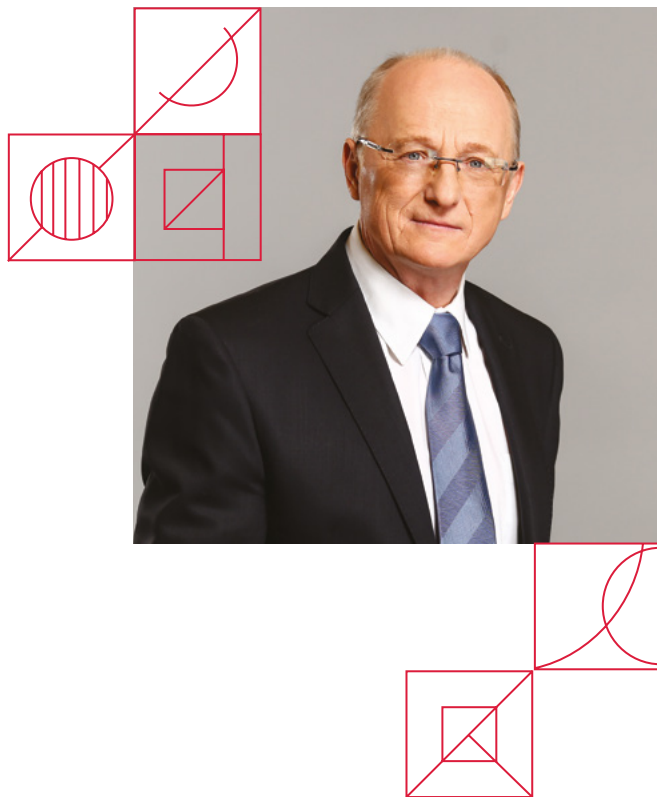
He sat on the NCN Council between 2010 and 2015 until he was appointed the NCN Director in March 2015. Since November 2015, he has also served as a member of the Science Europe Governing Board, an association that brings together European research-funding organizations.

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 Stanisław 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.



**PRESIDENT OF THE NCN COUNCIL**  
**PROF. DR HAB. JACEK KUŹNICKI**



Neuroscientist and biochemist, member of the Polish Academy of Science, Head of the Laboratory of Neurodegeneration at the International Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology (IIMCB) in Warsaw. Author of over 150 publications available in the Web of Science database and over 3500 citations, with an H-index of 37. Doctoral supervisor of 16 PhD dissertations.

Winner of the Officer's Cross of Polonia Restituta (2008). Winner of many awards and prizes, such as the Crystal Brussels Prize for outstanding FP7 achievements in the individual category (2013), Officer's and Knight's Crosses of Polonia Restituta (2008 and 1998), Professorial Subsidy Program Award from the Foundation for Polish Science (2004-2007), Prime Minister's Award for Scientific Achievements (2003) and the Mozolowski Award for Outstanding Young Biochemists from the Polish Biochemical Society (1977).

Co-founder and director of the IIMCB (2001-2018), member of the Scientific Policy Committee (2011-2014), member of the Board of the European Calcium Society (since 2008), honorary Head and one of the founding members of BioEducation, organiser and director of the Polish centenarians Programme. Visiting professor (1992-1995) and post-doc (1981-1984) at the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, USA. NCN Council member since 2018.

# NCN calls

The National Science Centre supports basic research conducted within the framework of projects and research activities. Calls for proposals are open to all researchers irrespective of age and experience. Most of our calls are open to foreign researchers. The call documents are always available in English and only some parts of the proposal form must be completed in Polish.

The call portfolio of the NCN currently includes domestic calls, 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 MPG, which aims to establish Centres of Scientific Excellence throughout Central and Eastern Europe.

Proposals may be submitted in three areas – groups of sciences:



Researchers may submit proposals on behalf of the organizations that employ them (e.g. universities, institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences, research institutes) or apply for funding individually. Most funding schemes 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 ZSUN/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 and research activities, launched in accordance with the call schedule once or twice per year, targeted at various groups of researchers



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

The OPUS call for proposals announced in September is also open to international research projects to be carried out jointly with foreign research teams from the Czech Republic, Austria, Slovenia, Switzerland and Germany, 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 funding proposals (the so-called OPUS LAP/Weave).



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



call for research projects addressed at institutions operating doctoral schools



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



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



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 year of proposal submission



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

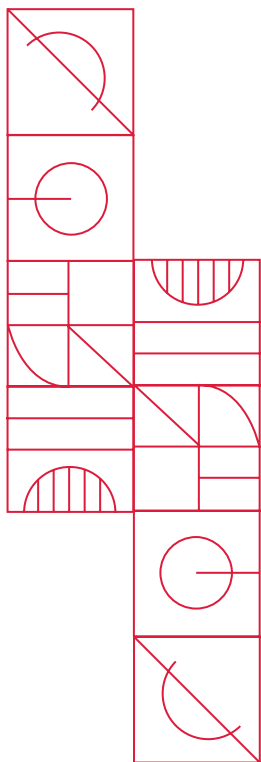


for pioneering research projects, targeted at experienced researchers



enabling scientists, engineers and researchers to turn their basic research projects into solutions and products capable of being directly socially and economically beneficial

# INTERNATIONAL CALLS



## BILATERAL COOPERATION

calls launched in cooperation with foreign research supporting institutions and organizations



**SHENG**

for research projects carried out by Polish-Chinese teams launched in cooperation with the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC)



**DAINA**

for research projects carried out by Polish-Lithuanian teams launched in cooperation with the Research Council of Lithuania (RCL)



**DIOSCURI**

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



## WEAVE PROGRAMME: WEAVE-UNISONO AND LAP/WEAVE UNDER THE OPUS CALL

for international research projects in all academic disciplines, launched by the NCN in cooperation with foreign research funding agencies pursuant to the Lead Agency Procedure.

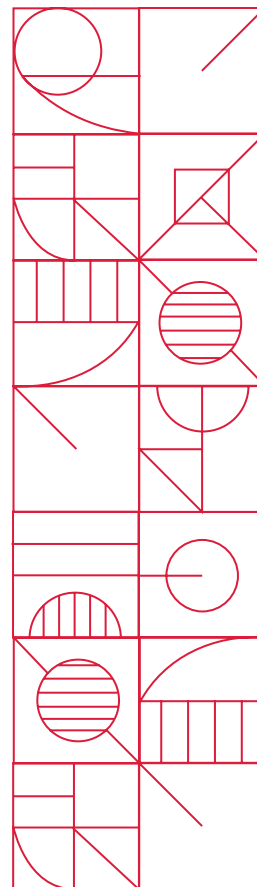
## COOPERATION WITH THE SUPPORT OF EU FUNDS



for research projects carried out by incoming researchers at the Polish host institutions

## 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.



# Domestic calls

The detailed conditions of each programme may vary across different editions. The most recent information on current calls is published on [www.ncn.gov.pl](http://www.ncn.gov.pl).

## MINIATURA

A call for research activities aimed at supporting researchers in applying for funds awarded by the NCN. The opportunity is open to individuals who earned their PhD up to 12 years before the year of proposal submission, have never coordinated a research project and have not previously 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.

## SONATINA

A call targeted at researchers who earned their PhD up to three years before the year of proposal submission. 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 year of proposal submission.

## 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 year of proposal submission. The call is open to outstanding young researchers wishing to set up their own research team to conduct particularly innovative research projects.



## TANGO

A call for research projects enabling to turn basic research results with significant innovative potential into economic and social practice. It is a joint initiative of the NC) 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.



## PRELUDIUM

A call for research projects carried out by researchers without a PhD degree. Projects funded under the PRELUDIUM scheme may take one, two or three years to complete and are supervised by thesis advisors or academic tutors. The subject of research does not have to 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. The principal investigator is the doctoral supervisor of the PhD dissertation.



## 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 year of proposal submission.



## 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.

In September 2021, we are launching the so-called OPUS LAP/Weave call for research projects carried out by research teams from Poland in cooperation with their partners from the Czech Republic, Austria, Slovenia, Switzerland and Germany, whose tasks will be funded by the partner agencies of the National Science Centre based on the recommendations of the latter acting as the lead agency in charge of the merit-based evaluation of proposals.

# International cooperation

**Ever since its inception, the National Science Centre has collaborated with foreign research support institutions to launch joint calls for international proposals. The National Science Centre cooperates with other agencies, thus developing European research policy and participating in the operations of Science Europe or Coordination and Support Actions co-funded by the European Union.**

Each year, the National Science centre launches multilateral calls carried out jointly with foreign research funding agencies under multilateral networks to support particular academic disciplines. The National Science Centre is a programme coordinator of QuantERA in the field of Quantum Technologies and CHANSE in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences. The budget of ERA-NET Cofund programmes includes domestic funds and funds from EU Horizon 2020. Other bilateral and multilateral initiatives are supported only by the domestic funds of particular agencies. In 2021, we are launching a new POLONEZ BIS call to support the mobility of incoming researchers with the aid of MSCA.

As a result of cooperation with the German Max Planck Society in the DIOSCURI call, the first two Dioscuri Centres

of Scientific Excellence were officially opened in September 2019 at the Nenecki Institute of the Polish Academy of Science. The third edition of the call was launched in December 2020.

## **BILATERAL COOPERATION**

In 2021, the second edition of the DAINA funding opportunity for Polish-Lithuanian research projects was launched. In 2021 we are also planning to announce the results of BEETHOVEN CLASSIC 4 for Polish-German research projects in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and SHENG 2 for Polish-Chinese research projects in all academic disciplines. In 2021, researchers may submit their proposals for Polish-German research projects under the Weave programme.



## INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS ENGAGING THE NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTRE

<b>Name</b>	<b>Number of organizations</b>	<b>Number of countries</b>	<b>Research area supported by the network</b>
<b>BiodivERsA</b>	39	25	conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity
<b>CHANSE</b>	27	24	humanities and Social Sciences with a special focus on social and cultural dynamics in the digital age
<b>CHIST-ERA</b>	28	25	information and communication science and technologies
<b>EqUIP</b>	20	15 Europe) + India	collaboration between Europe and India in the Social Sciences and Humanities
<b>ERA-CAPS</b>	20	18	molecular plant sciences (healthy, safe and sufficient food, plant-based products – chemicals and energy, sustainable agriculture, forestry and landscape)
<b>ForestValue</b>	31	19	research, development and innovation in the forest-based sector
<b>HERA</b>	26	25	establishing the humanities in the European Research Area and funding as well as coordinating transnational research projects in this area of knowledge
<b>JPI AMR</b>	30	28	antimicrobial resistance
<b>JPI Urban Europe</b>	25	18	interdisciplinary research projects that respond to the challenges of modern cities and urban areas
<b>JPND</b>	29	24	research aimed at finding causes, developing cures and identifying appropriate ways to care for those with neurodegenerative diseases
<b>M-ERA.NET</b>	50	36	materials science and engineering, low carbon energy technologies and materials for future batteries technologies supporting the European Great Deal
<b>NORFACE</b>	25	19	social sciences (migration, future of the welfare state, social inequalities, etc.)
<b>QuantERA</b>	38	30	quantum technologies
<b>Solar-Driven Chemistry</b>	6	6	solar-driven chemistry
<b>Trans-Atlantic Platform (T-AP)</b>	18	13	humanities and social sciences

INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS COORDINATED BY  
THE NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTRE



QuantERA is a network of 39 organisations from 31 countries that fund research in the field of Quantum Technologies (QT). The aim of the programme, which is coordinated by the National Science Centre, is to launch calls for international research projects.

QuantERA's other aims include:

- supporting international cooperation in the field of QT,
- mapping the development of public policies in QT,
- cooperating under the EU Quantum Technology Flagship initiative,
- developing an ethical and responsible approach to research and innovation,
- widening scientific excellence,
- cooperating with QT stakeholders.

The NCN has achieved two EC grants totalling 26.5 mln Euro. The total budget is 85 mln Euro.



Collaboration of Humanities and Social Sciences in Europe (CHANSE) is an ERA-Net Cofund coordinated by the National Science Centre and carried out by 27 research funding institutions from 24 European countries. CHANSE's goals include financing of high-quality international research projects and inspiring collaboration between researchers and various stakeholder groups, such as: NGOs, cultural institutions, legislators, policy makers, schools, etc. The main goal of the CHANSE programme is to announce a call for international research projects under the theme Transformations: Social and Cultural Dynamics in the Digital Age. Projects recommended for funding under the call will help to understand how digital innovations give rise to social and cultural changes, and how they are also influenced by society and culture.

The CHANSE Programme builds on the experience of two existing networks: HERA and NORFACE, which support research in Humanities and Social Sciences respectively. The project budget is 36 mln Euro, of which 10 mln Euro has been granted under the European Union's Horizon 2020.

## MULTILATERAL CALLS: ALREADY ANNOUNCED AND TO BE ANNOUNCED

Area	Programme	Subject-matter of the call	Call for proposals	Application deadline (pre-proposals)	Application deadline (full proposals)
INTERDISCIPLINARY	<b>BiodivRestore (BiodivERsA network)</b>	<i>Conservation and restoration of degraded ecosystems and their biodiversity, including a focus on aquatic systems</i>	5 October 2020	7 December 2020	3 May 2021
	<b>EN-UTC Urban Transformation Capacities (JPI Urban Europe)</b>	<i>Urban circular economies Community-based developments and urban innovation ecosystems Robust and resilient urban infrastructure and built environment</i>	29 January 2021	15 April 2021	23 September 2021
HS	<b>CHANSE (Call 2021)</b>	<i>Transformations: Social and cultural dynamics in the digital age</i>	9 March 2021	7 May 2021	7 December 2021
	<b>T-AP: RRR (Call 2021)</b>	<i>Recovery, Renewal and Resilience in a Post-Pandemic World</i>	12 April 2021	Letter of intent by 14 June 2021	12 July 2021
NZ	<b>JPcofUND2 (sieć JPND, Call 2021)</b>	<i>Linking pre-diagnosis disturbances of physiological systems to Neurodegenerative Diseases</i>	4 January 2021	1 March 2021	29 June 2021
	<b>JPIAMR-ACTION (sieć JPI AMR, Call 2021)</b>	<i>One Health interventions to prevent or reduce the development and transmission of AMR</i>	14 January 2021	16 March 2021	12 July 2021
	<b>Forest Value Joint (Call 2021)</b>	<i>1) Sustainable and multifunctional use and management of forests to maximize their contribution to all SDGs, 2) Building with wood from various perspectives, 3) Analysis of benefits, synergies and trade-offs in the use of forest biomass</i>	19 January 2021	N/A (single-stage call)	13 April 2021

Area	Programme	Subject-matter of the call	Call for proposals	Application deadline (pre-proposals)	Application deadline (full proposals)
IS	<b>CHIST-ERA IV (Call 2020)</b>	<i>Advanced Brain-Computer Interfaces for Novel Interactions Towards Sustainable ICT</i>	7 January 2021	N/A (single-stage call)	1 March 2021
	<b>CHIST-ERA IV (Call 2021)</b>	<i>1) Nano-Opto-Electro-Mechanical Systems for ICT, 2) Foundations for Misbehaviour Detection and Mitigation Strategies in Online Social Networks and Media</i>	October 2021	December 2021	I quarter 2022
	<b>QuantERA II (Call 2021)</b>	<i>1) Quantum Phenomena and Resources, 2) Applied Quantum Science</i>	13 March 2021	13 May 2021	15 September 2021
	<b>M-ERA.NET 3 (Call 2021)</b>	<i>1) Modelling for materials engineering, processing, properties and durability, 2) Innovative surfaces, coatings and interfaces, 3) High performance composites, 4) Functional materials, 5) New strategies for advanced material-based technologies for health applications, 6) Materials for additive manufacturing</i>	15 March 2021	15 June 2021	17 November 2021
	<b>Solar-driven Chemistry (Call 2021)</b>	<i>Solar-driven Chemistry</i>	30 July 2021	29 October 2021	2 May 2022

## COOPERATION PURSUANT TO THE LEAD AGENCY PROCEDURE (LAP)

The National Science Centre participates in the programmes carried out pursuant to the Lead Agency Procedure (LAP) based on domestic calls launched by each participating institution in order to evaluate international research projects. Funding proposals for bilateral or trilateral research projects in all academic disciplines are subject to merit-based evaluation by the lead agency, i.e. the agency chosen in the call and appropriate for one of the research teams participating in the call. Proposals are evaluated alongside other proposals submitted to the call, including domestic ones.

First results of the CEUS-UNISONO call were announced in December 2020. CEUS-UNISONO is the call for bilateral or trilateral research projects carried out by research teams from Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Poland that was launched last year. The results of the OPUS call (concluded in December 2020) were announced in May 2021. For the first time, the call was open to international bilateral and trilateral proposals with partners from the Czech Republic, Austria and Slovenia, as well as Polish-Swiss and Polish-German proposals (Social Sciences and Physical Sciences and Engineering).

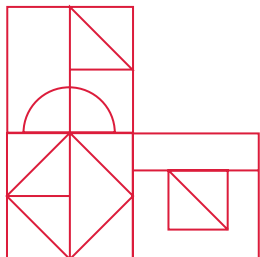


Since 2021, the NCN has continued cooperation with its partners from Austria (Austrian Science Fund, FWF), the Czech Republic (Czech Science Foundation, GACR), Slovenia (Slovenian Research Agency, ARRS), Switzerland (Swiss National Science Foundation, SNSF) and Germany (German Research Foundation, DFG) under the Weave Programme created with the support of Science Europe and based on the Lead Agency Procedure.

The NCN will invite bilateral and trilateral proposals in all academic disciplines under two calls within the framework of the Weave Programme, depending on who takes on the role of the lead agency (foreign partner institution or NCN):

- Weave-UNISONO for NCN proposals, for which joint proposals will be submitted to and evaluated by the **foreign partner institutions** acting as the **Lead Agency** (in 2021: FWF, GACR, ARRS, SNSF or DFG); the call was announced on 4 January 2021, or
- **OPUS, launched in the autumn**, for funding proposals for research projects performed in accordance with the Lead Agency Procedure and evaluated by the **NCN as the Lead Agency** (OPUS 22 + LAP/Weave was launched on 15 September 2021).

On 15 September 2021, the first POLONEZ BIS call was launched. The call is addressed at incoming researchers with a PhD degree or at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience, who have not resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies) in Poland for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the call announcement and have not managed any research project in a Polish research institution. The winning applicants will be ensured employment and funds for research projects in any academic discipline.



Funded under the "Horizon 2020" EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation:

CHIST-ERA IV – grant agreement no 857925, JPCofuND2 – grant agreement no 825664, BiodivRestore – grant agreement no 101003777; CHANSE – grant agreement no 101004509, EN-UTC – grant agreement no 101003758, JPIAMR-ACTION – grant agreement no 963864; M-ERA.NET 3 – grant agreement no 958174, QuantERA II – grant agreement no 101017733, ForestValue – grant agreement no 773324, POLONEZ BIS – grant agreement no 945339.

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

Under the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Basic Research Programme within the framework of the EEA and Norway Grants, three calls were launched:



**GRIEG:** call for proposals for Polish-Norwegian research projects in all academic disciplines, with a particular focus on polar research and social sciences,







**IdeaLab:** innovative, interdisciplinary call operated according to the 'sandpit' method by research teams from Poland, Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein for ground-breaking research projects addressing important scientific, geopolitical, social and economic challenges,



**POLS:** call for proposals supporting researcher mobility with small grants, targeting foreign researchers wishing to carry out research in Poland.

In April 2020, we announced the results of the GRIEG and IdeaLab calls. 28 Polish-Norwegian research projects totalling over 156 mln PLN were recommended for funding under the GRIEG call. Under IdeaLab, experts recommended three projects for funding totalling 17.5 mln PLN. The results of the POLS call were announced in December 2020 with 40 projects recommended for funding for a total amount of over 30.5 mln PLN.

# Schedule of 2021 domestic and bilateral calls based on the Lead Agency Procedure

Funding scheme	Submission start date	Submission deadline	Results (at the latest)
<b>Weave-UNISONO</b>	ongoing call, announced on 4 January; dates of calls for proposals for joint research projects as required by the Lead Agency; Polish research teams must submit their NCN proposals to the NCN as soon as possible following submission of the joint proposal to the Lead Agency ( no more than 7 calendar days)		first results: second half of 2021
 <b>DIOSCURI 4</b>	23 February	15 June	February 2022
 <b>OPUS 21</b>  <b>PRELUDIUM 20</b>	15 March	15 June	December
 <b>SONATA BIS 11</b>  <b>MAESTRO 13</b>	15 June	15 September	March 2022
 <b>OPUS 22 + LAP/Weave</b>  <b>PRELUDIUM BIS 3</b>  <b>SONATA 17</b>  <b>POLONEZ BIS 1</b>	15 September	15 December	June 2022 Weave – depends on when the evaluation results are accepted by the partner agencies
 <b>SONATINA 6</b>	15 December	15 March 2022	September 2022
 <b>MINIATURA 5</b>	ongoing call, open between 4 May and 30 September 2021		

# 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:

- **expert team members** – a group of experts selected by the NCN Council from 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 their joint evaluation of each proposal at meetings and jointly decide on the future of the proposals, e.g. whether or not a proposal will be recommended for funding.
- **external experts** – experts performing individual evaluation at the second stage of evaluation in most of the NCN calls,
- **members of fixed teams** – experts evaluating the reports on the implementation of grants awarded by the NCN.

In 2020, 1,948 expert team members were appointed who reviewed a total number of over 12 thousand proposals at the first stage of evaluation. 39% of the expert team members appointed in 2020 were affiliated abroad. 8,669 external experts participated in the second stage of evaluation, delivering over 10,300 reviews. More than 95% of them were foreign experts who delivered over 9,800 evaluations.

NCN experts must be driven by actions aimed at promoting the development of Polish science and promote research that deserves financial support within their competencies. They perform their tasks in compliance with strict 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 evaluation

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**

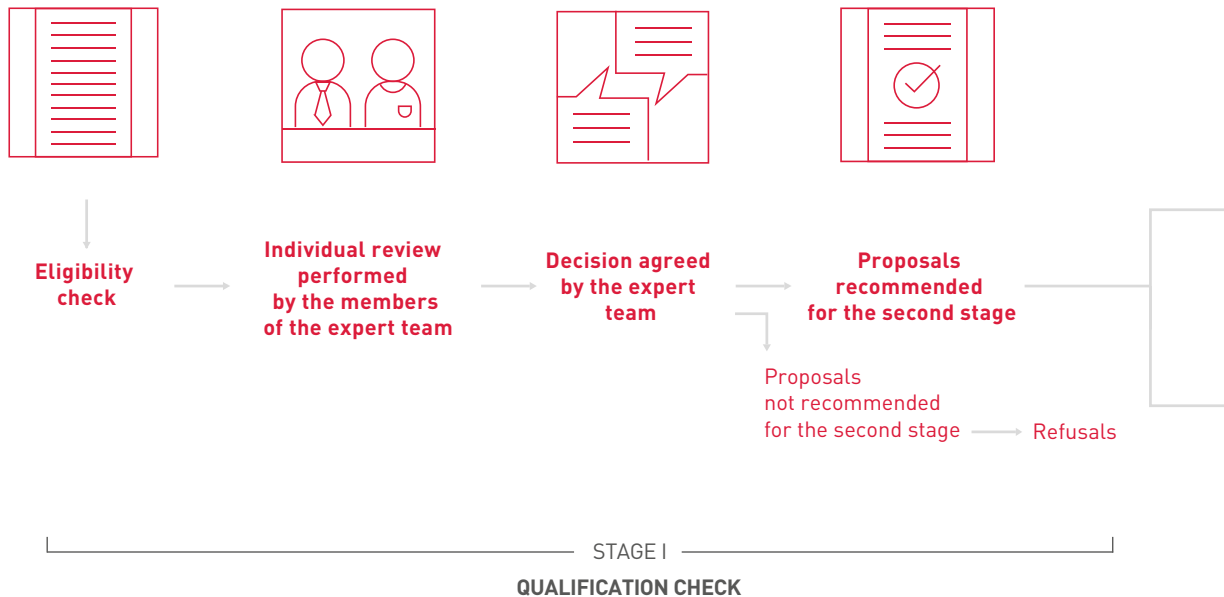
The proposals are first assessed individually by two experts working independently. Individual evaluations serve as a point of departure for debate during the first panel session. The decision to reject or approve the proposal is taken collectively by the team as a whole. Subsequently, the members prepare 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, often foreign, experts, working independently, 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, MAESTRO and POLONEZ BIS calls includes an interview with the principal investigator. In the ETIUDA call, the specialist evaluation is based on an interview with the candidate.

The procedure scheme presented on the following pages applies to most domestic calls from the NCN portfolio, with the exception of MINIATURA, which involves a simplified, one-stage review process. Proposals in international calls are assessed based on separate principles described in dedicated call documents.

# Proposal evaluation process





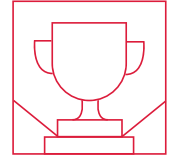
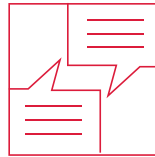
**SONATINA, SONATA BIS,  
MAESTRO, POLONEZ BIS**

**Evaluation by external experts and  
interview with the principal investigator**



**OPUS, PRELUDIUM,  
PRELUDIUM BIS, SONATA**

**Evaluation by external experts**



**Decision agreed  
by the expert  
team**

**Projects  
recommended  
for funding**

**Announcement  
of results**

Projects  
not recommended  
for funding

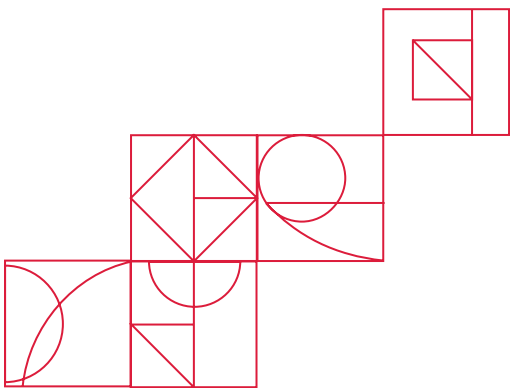
Refusals

STAGE II

**SPECIALIST EVALUATION**

# 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 have done so within the last 7 years. The PRELUDIUM, PRELUDIUM BIS, SONATINA, SONATA and ETIUDA calls, under which they do not need to compete against more experienced researchers, are specifically designed for this group. In 2011-2020 a total of 55 calls addressed to young researchers was announced.



In the NCN calls concluded in 2020:

**31%\***

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

**57%\***

of all proposals were proposals submitted under calls addressed to early-stage scientists and other domestic NCN calls where principal investigators met the definition of an early-stage researcher,

**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, calls launched jointly with NAWA, as well as the EXPRESS CALL TO FUND RESEARCH ON COVID-19.

# NCN Award 2020

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 funders' representatives in three research areas: Arts, Humanities and Social sciences; Life Sciences; and Physical Sciences and Engineering.

In 2020, the NCN Awards were granted for the eight time, however due to the pandemic situation the award ceremony was postponed until 2021.



Arts, Humanities  
and Social Sciences



Physical  
Sciences and  
Engineering



Life Sciences

## Funders of the 2020 NCN Award



# NCN Award 2020 Laureates



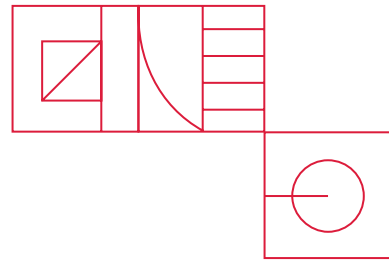
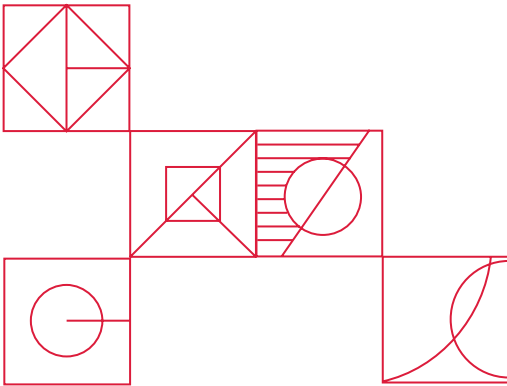
ARTS, HUMANITIES AND  
SOCIAL SCIENCES



Prof. Dr hab.  
Jakub Growiec

The Collegium of Economic Analysis  
of Warsaw School of Economics

**Achievement:** significant contribution  
to research on technological change  
and human capital as key determi-  
nants of economic growth





## PHYSICAL SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING



### Dr hab. Michał Tomza

Faculty of Physics at the University of Warsaw

**Achievement:** theoretical description of interactions and collisions between ultracold atoms, ions, and molecules



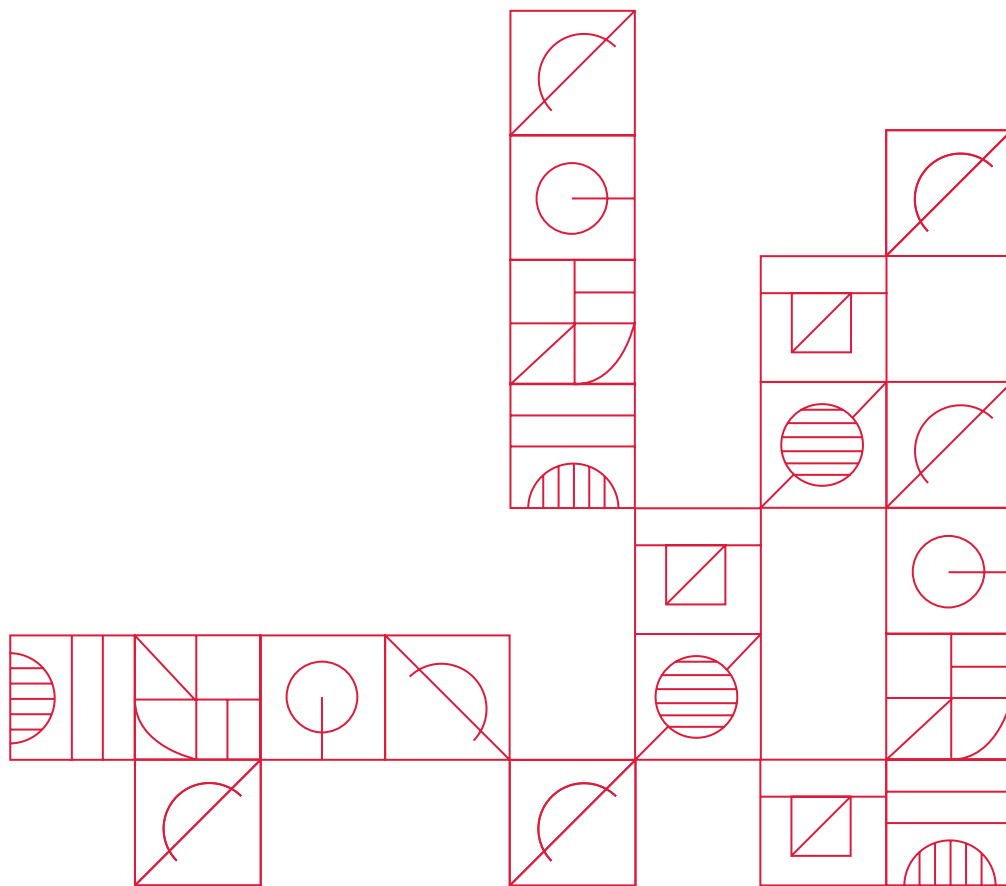
## LIFE SCIENCES



### Prof. Dr hab. n. med. Wojciech Fendler

The Department of Biostatistics and Translational Medicine, Medical University of Lodz

**Achievement:** significant findings in research into microRNAs as biomarkers of accidental exposure to ionising radiation and the side effects of radiotherapy



[WWW.NCN.GOV.PL](http://WWW.NCN.GOV.PL)

**PERFORMING FOR POLISH RESEARCH**

**2021**