

Terms of the MAESTRO call for research projects launched by the National Science Centre

I. Addressees of the call

The call is addressed at well-established and outstanding researchers intending to carry out research projects aiming to conduct pioneering research, including interdisciplinary research, which is significant for the development of science, goes beyond the current state of the art and may result in scientific discoveries.

II. Eligible applicants

- §1. Proposals for funding of research projects, hereinafter “proposal”, may be submitted by entities defined in Article 27 (1) of the Act on the National Science Centre of 30 April 2010 (consolidated text in Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1384, hereinafter “NCN Act”), hereinafter “applicants”.
- §2. Proposals may also be submitted by applicants, for whom project funding constitutes state aid granted pursuant to the Regulation adopted by the Minister of Science and Higher Education pursuant to Article 37 (2) of the NCN Act.
- §3. Where the applicant is a group of entities defined in Article 27 (1) (2) of the NCN Act, the proposal shall be submitted by the leader. Principal investigator’s employer shall act as the leader of the group of entities.
- §4. Where the applicant is a natural person, the research project cannot be carried out by a group of entities or entity for whom project funding constitutes state aid.
- §5. 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

- §6. The principal investigator in the proposal submitted under the call must be at least a PhD holder who in the proposal submission year or over the period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year:
 - 1) has had at least five papers published in renowned Polish and/or international academic press/journals;
 - 2) acts or acted as the principal investigator¹ in at least two research projects funded in national and/or international calls for proposals;
 - 3) meets at least three of the criteria below:

¹ Acting as a principal investigator also means managing/ coordinating the work of a research group in international research projects or programmes.

- a) has been a member of a scientific committee of at least one renowned international conference;
- b) has published at least one monograph;
- c) has delivered lectures at renowned international conferences;
- d) has received an international award or prize;
- e) is or was a member of renowned associations, international scientific organisations or academia;
- f) has other significant scientific achievements;

for research in art, a person who is an author of works of art of international significance or works significant for the Polish culture and/or has actively participated in international exhibitions, festivals, artistic events in fine arts, music, theatre and film.

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

- 1) to carry out research that neither is nor was funded by the NCN nor from any other sources;
- 2) which comprise basic research for the purposes of 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 36, 48 or 60 months;
- 4) which meet the terms of the “Regulations on awarding funding for research tasks funded by the National Science Centre as regards research projects”, as adopted by the NCN Council, hereinafter “Regulations” and
- 5) where the tasks to be performed under the project include:
 - a) creation of a new full-time post-doc type post(s) for the total period of at least 36 months pursuant to the Regulations or
 - b) engagement of a PhD student(s)² for the total period of at least 36 months pursuant to the Regulations;
- 6) which include the documents and information specified in §8.

§8. Proposals must 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);

² Doctoral school students for the purposes of the Act on Higher Education of 27 July 2005 or PhD students at doctoral schools for the purposes of the Act on Higher Education and Science of 20 July 2018.

4) project descriptions:

- a) short (up to 5 pages in English);
- b) full (up to 15 pages in English).

Descriptions 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 (in Polish and in English) presenting research tasks;

6) information on the research team (in English), including:

a) information on the principal investigator, including:

- academic and research career;
- 5-10 most important papers published or accepted for publication (letter of acceptance required) in the proposal submission year or over the period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year³, including at least 5 pursuant to §6. 1-3 papers of them must be attached in pdf format;

for research in art, 2-10 most important artistic achievements of international significance or works significant for the Polish culture and up to 10 most important papers published or accepted for publication (letter of acceptance required) in the proposal submission year or over the period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year³. If more than one publication is mentioned, annex 1-3 of them in pdf format;

- information of research project management or other research funding awarded under NCN calls in the proposal submission year or within 10 years prior to the proposal submission year³ and of research project management in that period funded under other domestic and/or international calls¹;
- description of up to three most important research achievements;
- research experience gained in Poland or abroad;
- the most important national or international distinctions resulting from conducting scientific research and other scientific and artistic activity;
- keynote plenary lectures or presentations delivered at renowned international conferences and for research in art, active participation in international exhibitions, festivals, artistic events and projects in fine arts, music, theatre and film;
- membership and invited membership in renowned associations, Polish as well as international research and/or academic organizations;

³ This period may be extended by the time of long-term (in excess of 90 days) evidenced sickness benefits or physiotherapy benefits on account of unfitness for 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, whichever option is more advantageous. It does not apply to papers referred to in §6.

- membership in scientific committees of renowned international conferences, exhibitions, festivals, artistic events and projects in fine arts, music, theatre and film;

b) if the person to be employed as a senior researcher meets the terms of the Regulations, the following information:

- academic and research career;

- 1-10 most important papers published or accepted for publication (letter of acceptance required) in the proposal submission year or over the period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year³;

- for research in art, 1-10 most important papers published and/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 year³;

- research experience gained in Poland and/or abroad;

- other significant research achievements;

- justification for the need to employ a senior researcher;

c) information on the required qualifications and forecasted scope of work of each investigator in the research project;

- 7) research project budget drafted according to the Regulations (in English);
- 8) in the case of a research project to be carried out in cooperation with a partner from a foreign research institution, information on international cooperation as well as description of advantages of international 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 in compliance with 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 entities, an agreement on collaboration for the purposes of completion of the requested research project, as required by the proposal (in Polish);
- 15) administrative declarations by the principal investigator and the host institution, as required by the proposal and
- 16) in the case of entities for which project funding constitutes state aid, a specific cost breakdown 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

§9. Proposals are evaluated pursuant to the Regulations.

§10. In the evaluation of proposals, the following criteria are reviewed in particular:

- 1) whether or not the criterion of basic research has been met, as laid down in Article 2 (1) of the NCN Act;
- 2) whether or not the principal investigator fulfils the criterion of well-established and outstanding researcher laid down in §6 hereof;
- 3) quality of research and innovative nature of research or tasks to be carried out;
- 4) project's impact on the advancement of the scientific discipline;
- 5) evaluation of feasibility of research;
- 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 and funded by the NCN and/or from other sources;
- 8) relevance of the planned costs to the subject and scope of the research and
- 9) development of the proposal and fulfilment of other requirements of the call announcement.

V. Funding decision

§11. The call is concluded within 6 months of the proposal submission date.

§12. The call results are announced by way of a decision of the NCN Director.

Prof. dr hab. Jacek Kuźnicki
Chairman of the Council
of the National Science Centre