



Annex to NCN Council Resolution No 106/2025 of 6 November 2025 amending the terms and conditions of the SONATINA call for proposals

## **Terms and conditions of the SONATINA call for research projects launched by the National Science Centre**

### **I. Addressees of the call**

The call is addressed to researchers with a PhD degree awarded in the proposal submission year or within 3 years prior to the proposal submission year. The call aims to support the career development of early-stage researchers by creating opportunities for employment and research in Poland and enabling them to gain knowledge and experience during fellowships in first-rate foreign research institutions.

### **II. Eligible applicants**

- §1. Funding proposals (hereinafter “proposals”) may be submitted by individuals (natural persons) or entities specified in Article 27 (1) of the Act on the National Science Centre of 30 April 2010 (consolidated text in Journal of Laws of 2023, item 153, as amended), where at least one discipline has been assigned a scientific evaluation category<sup>1</sup> for the purposes of Article 269 (1) of the Act on Higher Education and Science of 20 July 2018 (consolidated text in Journal of Laws 2024, item 1571, as amended), for which project funding will not constitute state aid (hereinafter: the “applicants”)<sup>2</sup>.
- §2. Where the applicant is a group of entities, the proposal must be submitted by its leader meeting the requirements set forth in §1 hereof. The principal investigator’s employer shall act as the leader of the group of entities.
- §3. If an individual (natural person) applies, the research project must not be carried out by a group of entities. A research project must be carried out by an entity meeting the requirements set forth in §1 hereof.
- §4. An entity that is under receivership, in liquidation or subject to bankruptcy proceedings must not apply or act as the host institution for the project.

### **III. Terms of entry**

- §5. The call is open to proposals:
  - 1) for research that neither is, nor was funded by the NCN nor from any other sources;
  - 2) which comprise basic research<sup>3</sup> for the purposes of Article 4 (2) of the Act on Higher Education and Science of 20 July 2018 in any of the academic disciplines defined in the NCN panels adopted by the NCN Council;

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<sup>1</sup> This term must be met on the proposal submission date.

<sup>2</sup> Applicants outside the public finance sector or unable to provide a sufficient warranty of proper project performance, who have been in operation for less than 5 years, will be subject to an additional analysis of their legal, organisational and financial situation. If individuals apply, the participating entity will be analysed, and if a group of entities applies, each group member will be analysed.

<sup>3</sup> Research means any activity comprising (a) basic research understood as experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts, without any particular application or use in view; b) applied research understood as an investigation undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge and skills, directed primarily towards developing new products, processes or services or introducing significant improvements thereto.

- 3) 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: the “Regulations”);
- 4) which cover research projects planned for a period of either 24 or 36 months;
- 5) which, pursuant to the Regulations, include the full-time employment of the principal investigator for the duration of the project at an institution where at least one discipline has been assigned a scientific evaluation category for the purposes of Article 269 (1) of the Act on Higher Education and Science of 20 July 2018 and from which the principal investigator has not earned a PhD degree;
- 6) in which the principal investigator has been awarded a PhD degree in the proposal submission year or within 3 years<sup>4</sup> prior to the proposal submission year<sup>5</sup>, or will be awarded a PhD degree by 15 May of the calendar year in which the call for proposals ends<sup>6</sup>;
- 7) in which a foreign fellowship will be planned for a period of 3 to 6 months in a foreign research institution from which the principal investigator is required to seek funding in the NAWA programme pursuant to the Cooperation Agreement between the NAWA and the NCN of 12 September 2019;
- 8) which does not include the purchase or manufacturing of research equipment, devices and/or software; and
- 9) which includes the information and documents specified in §6.

§6. Proposals shall be completed with information specified in the proposal form available in the OSF proposal submission system, the template of which is annexed to the call text, including:

- 1) research project title (*in Polish and in English*);
- 2) project's abstract (*in English*);
- 3) project's abstract for the general public (*1 standard page in Polish and 1 standard page in English*);
- 4) descriptions of the research project:
  - a) short description (*up to 5 standard pages in English*),
  - b) long description (*up to 15 standard pages in English*).The descriptions must include the scientific goal, significance of the project, general concept and work plan, research methodology, composition and qualifications of the research team, including (if applicable) achievements of co-investigators identified in the proposal applicable to the research tasks covered by the proposal, reasons behind the choice of the participating entity, based on its reputation, research infrastructure, specific scientific achievements and their relevance to the research covered by the project, naming the specific research groups or researchers with whom the applicant intends to collaborate and including project literature;  
Project literature does not count towards the page limit;
- 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;
    - 1-10 most important papers published and/or accepted for publication (letter of acceptance required) in the proposal submission year<sup>5</sup> or over the period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year<sup>4</sup>. 1 to 3 most important papers presented above must be attached in PDF format;

<sup>4</sup> This period may be extended by the time of long-term (over 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 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.

<sup>5</sup> The end date of the call for proposals shall be deemed the proposal submission date.

<sup>6</sup> A PhD diploma must be provided to the National Science Centre by 20 May of the calendar year in which the proposal submission ends.

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<sup>5</sup> or over the period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year<sup>4</sup>. Annex 1-3 most important publications (if any) in PDF format;

- information on research project management or other research funding awarded under NCN calls in the proposal submission year<sup>5</sup> or within 10 years prior to the proposal submission year<sup>4</sup>;
  - information on management of research projects funded under other domestic calls or international calls<sup>7</sup> in the proposal submission year<sup>5</sup> or within 10 years prior to proposal submission year<sup>4</sup> (*no more than 5 projects*);
  - description of the most important research achievement;
  - research experience gained in Poland or abroad; and
  - information on the most important national or international distinctions for research and other research activity and activity in research in art;
- b) information on the required qualifications and scope of work planned by each investigator in the research project;
- 7) document confirming that the principal investigator has earned a PhD degree and if the principal investigator is yet to earn a PhD degree, a declaration by the PhD supervisor or certificate of the forecasted date of PhD award from a competent institution;
  - 8) information on the foreign research institution hosting the foreign fellowship as well as justification for the choice of the institution in terms of reputation, equipment or specific scientific achievements, description of research conducted, compliance of research with research performed under the project, research/tasks to be conducted during the fellowship, and potential use of knowledge and skills acquired during the fellowship in the principal investigator's future career as a scientist (*up to 2 standard pages in English*);
  - 9) document confirming approval by the research institution to host the foreign fellowship of the principal investigator, as required by the proposal (*in English*);
  - 10) research project budget (*in English*) drafted according to the Regulations;
  - 11) 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 benefits that may result from such international cooperation (*in English*);
  - 12) 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*);
  - 13) 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*);
  - 14) 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*);
  - 15) 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, a description of similar research tasks with reasons justifying the need to have them funded under the project (*in English*);
  - 16) in the case of research projects to be carried out by a group of entities, a research project cooperation agreement, as required by the proposal (*in Polish*); and
  - 17) administrative declarations by the principal investigator and the host institution for the project, as required by the proposal.

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<sup>7</sup> Acting as a principal investigator also means managing/coordinating the work of a research group in international research projects or programmes.



#### **IV. Evaluation of proposals**

§7. Proposals shall be examined pursuant to the Regulations.

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

- 1) compliance with the research criteria described in §5 (2) hereof;
- 2) scientific quality and novelty of research or tasks to be performed;
- 3) the project's impact on the advancement of the scientific discipline;
- 4) feasibility of the research project;
- 5) scientific achievements of the principal investigator, including papers published in renowned academic press/ journals;
- 6) evaluation of other projects completed by the principal investigator and funded by the NCN and/or from other sources;
- 7) justification of the costs as regards the subject and scope of research;
- 8) justification of the choice of the participating entity for the project;
- 9) justification of the choice of the host institution for the foreign fellowship, including academic rank of the foreign research institution, accuracy of the choice of the research institution and impact on the development of the principal investigator's scientific career; and
- 10) development of the proposal and compliance with other requirements laid down in the call text.

#### **V. Funding decision**

The call shall be concluded within 6 months of the proposal submission date.

Prof. Dr hab. Tomasz Dietl  
President of the Council of the  
National Science Centre

This is not a certified translation and has been prepared for your convenience only. In the case of any discrepancies between the language versions, the Polish version shall prevail.