

Terms and conditions 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 conduct pioneering research, including interdisciplinary research, which is significant for the development of science, goes beyond the current state of knowledge and may result in scientific discoveries.

II. Eligible Applicants

- §1. Funding proposals, hereinafter: “proposals” may be submitted by 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 2026, item 101; hereinafter: the “NCN Act”), hereinafter: the “applicants”¹.
- §2. Proposals may also be submitted by applicants, for which project funding will constitute state aid granted pursuant to the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education adopted under 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 an individual applies, the project must not be conducted 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 must not act as an applicant or host institution for a research project.

III. Terms of Entry

- §6. The call is open to proposals under which principal investigators are at least PhD holders who, in the proposal submission year or over the period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year:
 - 1) have had at least five publications published in prestigious Polish or international academic press/ journals,
 - 2) (have) acted as principal investigators² in at least two research projects funded in national or international calls for proposals,
 - 3) fulfil at least three of the following conditions:
 - a) have been members of a scientific committee of at least one prestigious international conference;
 - b) have published at least one monograph;
 - c) have presented papers at prestigious international conferences;
 - d) have received an international award or prize;
 - e) have been members of prestigious associations, international scientific organisations or academia;

¹ In the case of applicants outside of the public finance sector or unable to establish a relevant security for due completion of the project, who have operated for less than 5 years, their legal and organisational as well as financial situation shall be analysed. In the case of applicants who are natural persons, the analysis referred to in the preceding sentence shall be performed with respect to the host institution, while in the case of applicants that form a group of entities, with respect to each partner individually.

² Acting as a principal investigator also means managing/ coordinating the work of a research group in international research projects or programs.

- f) have other significant scientific achievements;
For research in art, authors of works of art of international significance or works significant for the Polish culture who have actively participated in international exhibitions, festivals, artistic events in fine arts, music, theatre and film.
- §7. Principal investigators who have managed a research project funded under MAESTRO may submit a funding proposal for another research project under MAESTRO in so far as they meet at least one of the following conditions:
- a) they are ERC grant winners,
 - b) they have submitted a grant proposal to the ERC over the past 5 years³ which has been evaluated at least in stage I of the call.
- §8. The following proposals may be submitted under the call:
- 1) to carry out research that neither is nor was funded by the NCN or from any other sources,
 - 2) which comprise basic research specified 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 the period of 36 months, 48 months or 60 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: the “Regulations”,
 - 5) where PhD student/students⁴ or post-doc/post-docs are involved in the project tasks for the total period of at least 72 months pursuant to the Regulations,
 - 6) which include the documents and information specified in §9.
- §9. Proposals shall include information specified in the proposal form in the OSF submission system, the template of which is provided in 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 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*),
 (Project descriptions shall include the scientific goal of the project, significance of the project, general concept and work plan, research methodology, composition and qualifications of the research team, including (if applicable) achievements of the co-investigators in the project specified in the proposal and project literature applicable to the subject of the project. 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;
 - 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 year⁵, including at least 5 pursuant to §6. 1-3 most important papers referred to above must be annexed in PDF format; for research in art, 2-10 most important artistic achievements of

³ The 5-year period is calculated from the year preceding the year in which the next MAESTRO proposal was submitted. 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 and in the case of women, by 18 months for every child born or adopted, whichever manner of accounting for career breaks is preferable.

⁴ Participants of doctoral programmes defined in the Act on Higher Education of 27 July 2005 or PhD students at doctoral schools defined in the Act on Higher Education and Science of 20 July 2018.

⁵ 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 and in the case of women, by 18 months for every child born or adopted, whichever manner of accounting for career breaks is preferable. Does not apply to publications referred to in §6.

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 year⁵; if one or more publications are specified, annex 1-3 of them in PDF format;

- a list of papers retracted in the proposal submission year (as of the proposal submission date) and throughout the period covering papers published or accepted for publication (including career breaks referred to in footnote 5), which must not be less than 10 years prior to the proposal submission year, and the reasons for retraction (if applicable);
 - information of research project management or other research funding awarded under NCN calls in the proposal submission year or over the period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year⁵;
 - information of research project management funded under other national or international calls² in the proposal submission year or over the period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year⁵ (*up to 5 projects*);
 - description of up to three most important research achievements;
 - research experience gained in Poland or abroad;
 - the most important national or international distinctions for research and/or other scientific and artistic activity;
 - keynote speeches and presentations delivered at prestigious international conferences; For research in arts, active participation in international exhibitions, festivals, artistic events and projects in fine arts, music, theatre and film;
 - membership and invited membership in prestigious associations as well as Polish and international research or academic organisations;
 - membership in scientific committees of prestigious international conferences, exhibitions, festivals, artistic events and projects in fine arts, music, theatre and film;
 - in the case of principal investigators referred to in §7, information on the grant proposals submitted to the ERC in the proposal submission year or over the period of 5 years prior to the proposal submission year³, and annexing a document confirming completion of stage I of evaluation or recommendation of the proposal to stage II; the subject-matter of proposals submitted to the ERC does not have to be the same as the subject-matter of proposals submitted under MAESTRO;
- b) if a researcher complying with the Regulations is employed as the senior researcher, information including:
- their academic and research track record;
 - 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 year⁵; 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 year⁵;
 - a list of papers retracted in the proposal submission year (as of the proposal submission date) and throughout the period covering papers published or accepted for publication (including career breaks referred to in footnote 5), which must not be less than 10 years prior to the proposal submission year, and the reasons for retraction (if applicable);
 - research experience gained in Poland or abroad;
 - other significant research achievements;
 - justification of their employment as a senior researcher;

- c) information on the required qualifications and 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 carried out in cooperation with partners from foreign research institutions, information on international cooperation as well as description of related advantages (*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 carried out by a group of entities, a research project cooperation agreement, as required by the proposal (*in English*);
- 14) administrative declarations by the principal investigator and the host institution, as required by the proposal;
- 15) in the case of entities for which project funding constitutes state aid, specific costs as well as other documents and declarations related to the application for state aid via the NCN, as required by the proposal (*in Polish*).

IV. Evaluation of proposals

- §10. Proposals shall be evaluated pursuant to the Regulations.
- §11. The evaluation of proposals shall focus in particular on the following aspects:
- 1) compliance with the basic research criterion laid down in Article 2 (1) of the NCN Act,
 - 2) principal investigator's compliance with the criterion of a well-established and outstanding researcher specified in §6 hereof,
 - 3) quality of research and innovative nature of research or tasks to be performed,
 - 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 prestigious academic press/ journals,
 - 7) evaluation of other projects carried out by the principal investigator and funded by the NCN or from other sources,
 - 8) relevance of the costs to the subject and scope of the research, and
 - 9) development of the proposal and compliance with other requirements of the call text.

V. Funding decision

- §12. The call shall be concluded within 6 months of the proposal submission date.
- §13. The call results shall be delivered in the form of a decision of the NCN Director.

Prof. Dr hab. Tomasz Dietl
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.