

Guide for evaluators – assessment of project ideas and full proposals

IdeaLab ‘Managing threats’

1. IdeaLab workshop

A residential interactive workshop over five days organised in a location isolated from everyday distractions - so that the participants could focus on the challenges of the call – is the main element of the IdeaLab call. The IdeaLab workshop is an intensive discussion forum where free thinking is encouraged to delve into the problems on the agenda to uncover innovative solutions. Outcomes are not pre-determined but are defined during the event. The workshop is led by the chair of the Panel of Experts (workshop director), who is supported by members of the Panel of Experts (mentors), facilitators and, if necessary, a group of stakeholders to encourage the workshop participants to think outside the box about the challenges formulated in the call.

The group, stripped of pre-conceptions, will explore and deconstruct the issue before refocusing on emerging solutions. The workshop activities are designed to take the participants out of the comfort zones enabling them to develop radical research ideas and solutions to a specific societal challenge. Presence of participants representing different expertise, backgrounds, research areas, interest groups or sectors as well as the director, mentors and stakeholders enables development of new insights, perspectives and understandings.

Who is involved in a Idealab?

Participants are selected by the director and mentors based on information provided in the participant’s application form. Participant selection process is covered in detail in “Guide for evaluators – participant selection”. Participants come from a range of disciplines and backgrounds, including social sciences, humanities, arts, physical sciences, engineering, life sciences. Creativity, communication skills, willingness to take risks and to work in teams are the needed personal attributes of the IdeaLab participants. It is the participants who are responsible for the development of project ideas and partnerships.

Mentors and director are responsible for developing the topic during the IdeaLab workshop. They facilitate discussions, challenge the participants and evaluate the project ideas. The director and mentors bring depth of rich knowledge about the topic to coach and challenge participants in an open-minded way and help great ideas to flourish.

Facilitators are responsible for the process at the IdeaLab workshop. They design the activities, guide the mentors and director and run the IdeaLab. The facilitators provide everyone else with the appropriate processes to reach the goals of the IdeaLab.

Stakeholders are people with real experience of the issue. They provide invaluable insight and a unique perspective. Stakeholders may include NGO representatives, government officials, charities, lobby groups or citizens' groups. Their input and knowledge help participants to explore the issue and shape potential ideas.

National Science Centre Scientific Coordinators are scientific officers selected by the National Science Centre Council who oversee the evaluation process. They are responsible for the impartiality of the peer review process.

What are the stages at the IdeaLab workshop?

During the first stage of the IdeaLab workshop, participants get to know each other, develop trust and learn from each other. They also connect to the topic, get insight into the expertise of other participants and agree on a common language and terminology. As the workshop progresses, the understanding of the challenges and topic deepens. Using creative and innovative thinking techniques helps in focusing on the problem. New possibilities are created, ideas are being explored and thinking about the topic is broadened. Project ideas are developed and project teams are created. One participant may be involved in many project ideas, as his/her qualifications or experience might be needed in many projects. The project teams may also change with the development of the project ideas. Eventually, the participants will have to make decisions about prioritisation of project ideas and partnerships they are involved in.

Once the project ideas become mature and the partnerships established, they are evaluated and further elaborated. Finally, the project ideas are written down using an application form and submitted. The submission deadline is on Thursday, 24 October 2019 at 21.00 CEST. Please read the project idea form (Annex 1) to acquaint yourself with the information the research teams will be providing during the workshop.

On Friday, 25 October 2019 the project ideas are presented by each research team led by the Principal Investigator. You will be asked to evaluate the project ideas first individually and then reach consensus with other members of the Panel of Experts.

2. What are the evaluation criteria in the IdeaLab call?

The content of a project idea must be relevant to the topic of the IdeaLab call and comply with the criterion of basic research. If a project idea is found not relevant, the proposal is rejected.

You are invited to review the quality of the submitted project ideas based on three evaluation criteria. Evaluation scores will be awarded for each of the three criteria according to the scoring scale below. Each criterion will be scored out of 5. Weights to be applied to each criterion are presented in the table below.

Criteria	Score	Weight
Criterion 1 - Scientific and/or technical excellence Subcriteria to be taken into account during evaluation: 1.1 Wow factor - Boldness in scientific and innovative thinking 1.2 Holistic perspective. Inter- and transdisciplinarity 1.3 Scientific feasibility of the proposed project	0-5	50%
Criterion 2 – The potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of the project results that will be	0-5	25%

relevant for managing threats for example in practical solutions, strategies, policy advice, or social innovations		
<p>Criterion 3 – Quality and efficiency of the implementation and management, including quality and implementation capacity of the partnership and contribution to capacity and competence building</p> <p>Subcriteria to be taken into account during evaluation:</p> <p>3.1 Team and team dynamics</p> <p>3.2 Expertise and experience relevant for the project</p> <p>3.3 Project organisation, assets and appropriateness of costs with regards to the scope of the research</p>	0-5	25%

Score values indicate the following assessments:

- 0 - The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.
- 1 - Poor. The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- 2 - Fair. While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses.
- 3 - Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary.
- 4 - Very Good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible.
- 5 - Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

3. What is the project idea evaluation procedure?

The process for evaluation of project ideas will be as follows:

- The members of the Panel of Experts will perform an individual evaluation of each project idea and its presentation.
- The members of the Panel of Experts will meet to discuss the individual evaluation and agree on consensus scores and justification.

Individual rating of each project idea

- 1) You will have been given access to project ideas submitted within the deadline.
- 2) You will also have been given and will have read the guide for evaluators – this document.
- 3) You will have been given a spreadsheet which will detail the project ideas in terms of the project title and name of the Principal Investigator. The applications will be ordered alphabetically by surname of the Principal Investigator. You will populate the spreadsheet during the presentations of each project idea with your scores and comments. You will be also given approximately 10 minutes after each presentation to further elaborate your comments.

- 4) The content of the project idea must be relevant to the topic of the IdeaLab call and comply with the criterion of basic research. Please write '5' if the project idea is relevant in relation to the objective and priorities of the IdeaLab call under the Basic Research Programme. If the proposal fails to address the relevance criterion, please write '0' and provide a justification.
- 5) Provide your score from 0-5 for each of the three evaluation criteria and short comments. Please make sure you use the entire range of scores detailed above. The individual scoring and your comments provided in the justification will be further discussed during the Panel of Experts meeting.
- 6) There are three subcriteria provided under criterion 1 and criterion 3. Please, take the subcriteria into consideration. They have been included to draw your attention to important aspects that should be analysed by experts. The chair of the Panel of Experts (the IdeaLab director) may decide that experts score the subcriteria during the presentations using the following scale:
A: very good
B: good
C: fair
The purpose of these auxiliary, indicative scores is only to help during the Panel of Experts meeting.
- 7) **We ask that you complete your scores on the spreadsheet and rename it with your name in the title e.g. 'NAME.xls' and hand it to the NCN Scientific Coordinators on a pendrive.** This will enable them to populate the consensus report spreadsheet with all scores before the Panel of Experts meeting starts.

At the Panel of Experts meeting

The Panel of Experts will assess each project idea in the following way:

- 1) The NCN Scientific Coordinator will have included the individual evaluations of the relevance criterion on the consensus report spreadsheet. The Panel of Experts will reach consensus concerning this criterion based on the individual assessments. If a project idea is found not relevant, the proposal is rejected and the Panel of Experts must provide a justification. The decision of the Panel is recorded onto the spreadsheet by the chair of the Panel of Experts who is the rapporteur during the Panel meeting.
- 2) The NCN Scientific Coordinator will have included the individual scores for each of the three evaluation criteria on the consensus report spreadsheet. The Panel of Experts will reach consensus concerning the score for each criterion based on the individual assessments and, if such decision has been taken by the chair, on the auxiliary, indicative scores given to the subcriteria. The Consensus Score is recorded onto the spreadsheet by the chair of the Panel of Experts. Justification for each of the evaluation criteria is provided and strengths and weaknesses of the project idea are described. The Panel of Experts may include recommendations which have to be taken into account at the full proposal stage.
- 3) The final score for each criterion is calculated using the weighting in the following way:
Criterion 1 – Excellence - consensus score * 50%
Criterion 2 – Impact - consensus score * 25%
Criterion 3 – Quality of the implementation - consensus score * 25%

- 4) The final score for each project is calculated as a sum of the final scores for each criterion. All final scores will be given to two decimal places.
- 5) The final scores for all projects are discussed by the Panel of Experts. When the panel agrees on the assessment, the consensus report spreadsheets for all projects are printed and signed by all Panel of Experts members and the Panel of Experts meeting is complete.

Presentation of the results of the evaluation to the workshop participants

The NCN Scientific Coordinators will prepare a list of the project ideas with their final assessments which will detail the project title, name of the Principal Investigator, final weighted consensus score for each evaluation criterion and the final score. The chair of the Panel of Experts will present the scores and inform the teams about the main strengths and weaknesses of their ideas.

All partnerships created during the IdeaLab workshop who submitted and presented the project idea for evaluation by the Panel of Experts are eligible to submit a full project proposal, as long as their application was not rejected based on the relevance criterion. The project idea developed during the workshop is an attachment to the full proposal. The project idea cannot be changed.

4. Evaluation of full proposals

Eligibility check

Full proposals will be subject to an eligibility check carried out at the NCN by the NCN Scientific Coordinators. In order to be retained, the full proposals must fulfil all of the following administrative eligibility criteria:

- Full proposals must be submitted by an eligible applicant (Project promoter) – a research organisation specified in article 27, section 1, point 1, 3-6 of the Act on the National Science Centre established as a legal person in Poland;
- Project partners (any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial as well as non-governmental organisations) have to be established as a legal person in Poland, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway.
- Full proposals must be submitted via electronic proposal submission system ZSUN/OSF before the submission deadline 16 December 2019, 24.00 CET;
- Full proposals must meet the criterion concerning the number of participants – at least one Polish research organisation and one entity from Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway;
- The Principal Investigator who is or will be affiliated with the Project promoter must have a PhD;
- Recipients of NCN scholarships and persons newly employed as post-docs must be selected in an open call. Proposals will be rejected if the name of the person(s) shall be indicated in the application.
- The project idea attached to the full proposal must be identical to the project idea submitted during the IdeaLab workshop. All fields of the project idea form must be filled in and written in English.
- All fields of the full proposal form must be filled.

- The minimum grant amount is €500,000 and the maximum amount is €1,500,000. The exchange rate of the Polish National Bank of the day of the call announcement must be used to calculate if the project budget in PLN is within the eligible limits.
- Full proposals must comply with the language requirements set out in the full proposal form: all fields must be filled in English unless specifically indicated in the application form.
- All administrative forms specified in the full proposal form must be present and duly signed by the person(s) authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation. The Principal Investigator's declaration must be present and signed.
- A statement that the project complies with the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including accessibility for people with disabilities and the principle of equality between women and men must be signed.
- A statement that the applicant and partners are not excluded from the possibility of receiving funding must be signed. (For more information, please consult section 3.3.4. of the [Guide for Applicants](#))
- The content of the proposal must relate to the scope of the call.

Assessment of the consistency of the full proposal with the project idea

Only complete proposals that meet all call requirements will be accepted for evaluation of the consistency of the full proposal with the project idea developed during the workshop and any recommendations. Each full proposal will be evaluated by three experts, the chair or members of the Panel of Experts.

You will be given access to the full proposal as well as the project idea and consensus report from the Idealab workshop through the NCN electronic proposal submission system ZSUN/OSF. Please pay special attention to any changes introduced in the full proposal.

Changing the organisation planned as the place of implementation of research tasks, due to circumstances unforeseeable by the participant at the application for participation stage, is possible during the application procedure until the submission of the full proposal. If such change occurs after the IdeaLab workshop, a justification will be provided in the full proposal. The new entity needs to have comparable resources to the one that was described in the project idea form and evaluated during the IdeaLab workshop.

In the event a partner organisation cannot take part in the project, the other partners may submit the full proposal. Please assess the consistency of the adjusted work plan described and justified in the full proposal with the project idea developed during the workshop.

The total cost requested in the project idea form must not change at the full proposal stage. The breakdown of costs is expected not to change significantly at the full proposal stage but should be further detailed and justified. Please assess the consistency of the cost breakdown and any justified changes detailed in the full proposal with the project idea developed during the workshop.

You will have to choose either YES – the proposal is consistent with the project idea developed during the workshop or NO – the proposal is not consistent with the project idea developed during the workshop, and justify your choice. You will then send your evaluation through the electronic system back to the NCN Scientific Coordinator.

The full proposal will meet the call requirements if two of the three experts consider it consistent with the project idea developed during the IdeaLab workshop.

Following the assessment, a preliminary ranking list will be prepared using final scores of the projects agreed by the Panel of Experts at the end of the IdeaLab workshop (note that each full proposal is evaluated at this stage by the Panel of Experts just for its consistency with the project idea developed during the workshop).

5. Finalisation of evaluation and award of project grants

The NCN Scientific Coordinator submits the preliminary ranking list to the Programme Committee. The Programme Committee will review the ranked list of projects and may modify the ranking of the projects in justified cases. The justification for modifications will be detailed in the minutes of the meeting of the Programme Committee. The Chair of the Programme Committee will submit the minutes and the list of recommended projects, together with a reserve list and the list of rejected project applications and the reason for their rejection to the Programme Operator.

The project grants are awarded by the Director of the Programme Operator, who issues decisions concerning project financing. The decision of the Director may be appealed against to the Appeal Committee of the Council of the National Science Centre.

Annex 1 Project idea form

IdeaLab 2019 'Managing threats' – project idea form
Project title:
Describe briefly (one or two sentences) what the project is all about:
WHAT? Where is the novelty/adventure in this project? Why should this project be funded - what is the wow factor? How is your project related to other projects and ongoing research in this area? How is this project inter- or transdisciplinary? What are the risks and how will you deal with it?
WHY? What are the challenges addressed? How will the challenges be addressed? What do you propose to achieve (objectives)?
HOW? Who is in the team? How is each team member contributing? How do you propose to achieve the objectives (methodology)? Duration, total cost requested (including a breakdown), other resources or support needed.

Organisation	General information about the planned costs	Cost in PLN ¹
Personnel costs and scholarships		
Applicant		
Partner 1		
Partner ...		
Research equipment		
Applicant		
Partner 1		
Partner ...		
Other costs		
Applicant		
Partner 1		
Partner ...		
Total direct costs		
Indirect costs		

¹ The minimum grant amount is €500,000 and the maximum amount is €1,500,000. Please, use the exchange rate of the Polish National Bank of the day of the call announcement to calculate if the project budget in PLN is within the eligible limits.

Applicant		
Partner 1		
Partner ...		
	Total indirect costs	
	Total project costs	