

Council of
the National Science Centre
KR.0003.33.2020

RESOLUTION NO 33/2020
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTRE

of 28 March 2020

**on the terms and regulations of awarding funding for the EXPRESS CALL TO FUND
RESEARCH ON COVID-19**

Pursuant to Article 18 (4) and Article 21, in conjunction with Article 20 (1) (2) of the Act on the National Science Centre of 30 April 2010 (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1384), hereinafter the "NCN Act", the Council of the National Science Centre hereby lays down the terms and regulations of awarding funding for the **EXPRESS CALL TO FUND RESEARCH ON COVID-19**.

I. Objective of the call

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, an increased joint effort by researchers is now needed to understand the mechanisms of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, improve diagnostic tests, find drugs and prevent the effects of the pandemic. In order to pursue the objectives laid down in the NCN Act, we are launching an express call for proposals to fund research on COVID-19. The call is addressed at researchers who can expand knowledge on COVID-19, diagnostic procedures, treatment, prevention and the psychological and social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The funds will be designated primarily for basic research related to:

1. pathophysiology of the disease, including research that can contribute to the development of future therapeutic strategies or diagnostic methods for COVID-19,
2. infection mechanisms, including ways of protecting healthcare workers, and
3. psychological and social effects of the pandemic and ways of reducing them (including health policy and organisation of medical care, ethics in research and patient care, social behaviour in the face of pandemics).

The call is addressed at researchers with a documented research track record in the areas in question, who have acted or act as principal investigator in at least one research project funded under the NCN calls for proposals (OPUS, SONATINA, SONATA, SONATA BIS, HARMONIA, MAESTRO, SYMFONIA, POLONEZ or international bilateral or multilateral calls for proposals) or who have been winners of other prestigious national or international calls for proposals. Other researchers with the required experience and research infrastructure may also participate in research projects requiring an interdisciplinary approach, within the scope of cooperation or contracted work.

The results must be made available to the public as soon as they are available.

II. Applicants

§ 1. A proposal for awarding funding for research (hereinafter “proposal”) may be submitted by entities referred to in Article 7 (1) (1), Article 7 (1) (2), Article (7) (1) (4)-(6), Article (7) (1) (6) (b) and Article (7) (1) (8) of the Act on Higher Education and Science of 20 July 2018 and in Article 27 (1) (4) of the NCN Act (hereinafter “applicants”) for whom funding will not constitute state aid.

§ 2. An applicant cannot be an entity that is under forced administration or in the course of winding up or bankruptcy proceedings.

III. Terms of entry

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

- 1) to carry out research that is not and has not been funded by the NCN or from any other sources,
- 2) which comprise basic research within the meaning of Article 2 (1) of the NCN Act,
- 3) which cover research planned for a period of up to 18 months;
- 4) under which a person who is to act as the principal investigator:
 - a) is at least a PhD holder;
 - b) is employed pursuant to an employment contract by the host institution acting as the applicant;
 - c) has acted or acts as principal investigator in at least one research project funded under the NCN calls for proposals (OPUS, SONATINA, SONATA, SONATA BIS, HARMONIA, MAESTRO, SYMFONIA, POLONEZ or international bilateral or multilateral calls for proposals) or is a winner of at least one other prestigious national or international call for proposals to fund research projects; and
 - d) is named in only one proposal submitted under the **EXPRESS CALL TO FUND RESEARCH ON COVID-19**.

§4. A person named as the principal investigator in the proposal must not be named as the authorised representative of the applicant.

§5. The principal investigator must reside in Poland for at least 50% of the project duration period. This period includes business trips necessary for the project.

§6. Proposals submitted under the call must include:

- 1) title (*in Polish and in English*);
- 2) project description (*1 page in English*);
- 3) research description (*up to 5 pages in English*), including the scientific goal of research, significance of research containing the objective of the call, concept and work plan, research methodology and project literature applicable to the subject-matter;
- 4) research plan (*in Polish and in English*) presenting research tasks;
- 5) 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 or accepted for publication, with 1-3 most important papers by the principal investigator related to the research in question attached as a PDF file;



- information on research project management or other funding awarded under NCN calls and on research project management under other NCN or international calls¹;
 - description of the most important research achievement related to the call;
 - research experience gained in Poland or abroad;
 - the most important national or international distinctions for research and/or other research activity;
- b) information on the required qualifications and scope of work planned by each co-investigator and on the salary and type of employment;
- 6) research budget (*in English*) drafted pursuant to the terms laid down in **Annex 1** hereto;
 - 7) information on the data management plan concerning data generated or used in the course of research, as required by the proposal (*in English*);
 - 8) information on the ethical aspects of research, including any consents, opinions, permits and/or approvals necessary to conduct research pursuant to generally applicable laws and best practices adopted for a specific academic discipline, as required by the proposal (*in English*);
 - 9) in the case of research which include clinical trials with a medicinal product or a medical device, a justification for the non-commercial nature of the trials (*in English*); and
 - 10) administrative declarations by the applicant, as required by the proposal.

IV. Submission of proposals

§7. Proposals must be completed pursuant to the data required in the proposal form included in **Annex 2** hereto.

§8. Due to the special nature of this call and in order to evaluate the proposals and complete the call as soon as possible, the submission deadline for proposals laid down in Article 25 (2) of the NCN Act has been shortened to 16 days.

§9. Proposals must be submitted electronically via the Electronic Platform of Public Administration Service, hereinafter referred to as “ePUAP”.

§10. Proposals signed with a qualified electronic signature in the PAdES format by an authorised representative of the applicant must be submitted via ePUAP to the address of the electronic delivery box of the National Science Centre (/ncn/SkrytkaESP) by **14 April 2020** (inclusively).

§11. Only complete proposals that meet all the requirements set forth in the call announcement shall be eligible as call entries.

§12. Proposals submitted under this call will not count towards the limit applicable to the principal investigator, as laid down in §8 of the Regulations on awarding funding for research tasks funded by the National Science Centre as regards research projects, annexed to NCN Council Resolution No 28/2020 of 12 March 2020.

V. Selection of experts to evaluate proposals

§13. Pursuant to Article 18 (7) of the NCN Act, the Council shall select expert team members responsible for assessing proposals submitted in the call from among its own members.

¹ Acting as a principal investigator is also to be understood as managing/ coordinating the work of a research group in international research projects or programs.

§14. Experts are appointed by the Council on the basis of their experience and research achievements related to the subject and objective of the call, as well as experience in assessment of research projects proposals in Poland and abroad and experience in performance of research projects funded under calls in Poland and abroad.

§15. Experts are bound by the code of ethics for experts of the National Science Centre laid down in Order No 81/2019 by the NCN Director.

VI. Evaluation of proposals

§16. Proposals shall be subject to an eligibility check and merit-based evaluation.

§17. The eligibility check shall be performed by the scientific coordinators.

§18. The eligibility check of proposals shall comprise verification of the proposal for completeness and compliance with all eligibility criteria set forth in the call announcement.

§19. The merit-based evaluation shall be open only to proposals approved as eligible by the scientific coordinators.

§20. The merit-based evaluation of proposals shall be performed by the expert teams.

§21. The merit-based evaluation of proposals shall be performed in a single stage.

§22. In the merit-based evaluation of proposals, the following criteria shall be reviewed in particular:

- 1) compliance of the research with the objective of the call and feasibility of research. In the case of a negative answer to the foregoing, the other criteria shall not be subject to evaluation;
- 2) compliance with the basic research criterion laid down in Article 2 (1) of the NCN Act;
- 3) justification for the costs as regards the subject and scope of research;
- 4) merit-based evaluation of the research and compliance of the research with the objective of the call; and
- 5) evaluation of the academic and research track record of the principal investigator.

§23. The merit-based evaluation of proposals shall be performed pursuant to the following rules:

- 1) individual opinions shall be drafted by at least two members of the Expert Team acting independently pursuant to the criteria laid down in **Annex 3** hereto;
- 2) members of the Expert Team may appoint external experts to perform draft additional opinions on proposals;
- 3) the budget may be modified by the Expert Team;
- 4) each proposal shall be allotted a score which is of a supplementary nature and is a starting point to the discussion on the final score by the Expert Team;
- 5) decisions of the Expert Team on the final score of a given proposal is based on an analysis thereof and a discussion on the legitimacy of funding the proposal against other proposals reviewed in the call;
- 6) the final score of the proposal shall be reflected in its position on the ranking list established by the Expert Team;
- 7) proposals with a “no” decision agreed by the Expert Team in at least one reviewed criterion cannot be recommended for funding. It does not apply to the data management evaluation criteria or evaluation criteria of ethics issues in research.

§24. The expert team recommends for funding proposals in which the total amount of requested funding does not exceed the limit set for the call.

§25. The expert team may conditionally recommend one proposal for funding, which is partially within the limits of funding earmarked for the call. The decision on whether or not to fund the proposal shall be taken by the NCN Director.

VII. Funding decision

§ 26. The funding decision shall be taken within 1 month of the proposal submission deadline.

§ 27. The results of the call shall be announced by way of a decision of the NCN Director.

Prof. Dr hab. Małgorzata Kossowska
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.