

Council
of the National Science Centre
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RESOLUTION NO 115/2024

of 14 November 2024

BY THE COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTRE

on the terms of and regulations on awarding funding for research tasks carried out by the Polish research teams and funded by the NCN under the SHENG 4 Polish-Chinese Funding Initiative

Pursuant to Article 18 (4) of the Act on the National Science Centre of 30 April 2010 (consolidated text in Journal of Laws of 2023, item 153, as amended, hereinafter: the “NCN Act”) and pursuant to the Cooperation Agreement between the National Science Centre (the “NCN”) and National Natural Science Foundation of China (the “NSFC”) entered into on 28 March 2018, the Council of the National Science Centre hereby lays down **the terms of and regulations on awarding funding for research tasks carried out by the Polish research teams¹ and funded by the NCN under the SHENG 4 Polish-Chinese Funding Initiative.**

1. General provisions

- 1.1 Under SHENG 4, funding shall be awarded to research projects carried out jointly by Polish and Chinese research teams for which international cooperation is essential.
- 1.2 The terms of awarding funding for research tasks carried out by the Chinese research teams and funded by the NSFC under SHENG 4 shall be set forth by the NSFC.

2. Addresses of the call

The call is addressed at Polish research teams that apply for funding of a research project jointly with the Chinese research teams. The Polish part of the research project shall be managed by the principal investigator (hereinafter the “principal investigator”) in the Polish research team, while the Chinese part of the project shall be managed by the principal investigator in the Chinese research team.

3. Eligible applicants

- 3.1 Proposals for funding of the Polish part of the research project under SHENG 4 may be submitted by the entities specified in Article 27 (1) of the NCN Act, hereinafter the “applicants”.
- 3.2 Proposals may also be submitted by applicants for which project funding shall constitute state aid granted pursuant to the Regulation passed by the Minister of Science and Higher Education pursuant to Article 37 (2) of the NCN Act.
- 3.3 Where the applicant is a group of Polish entities specified in Article 27 (1) (2) of the NCN Act, a proposal shall be submitted by the leader. The principal investigator’s employer shall act as the leader of the group of entities.

¹ A research team means the principal investigator alongside members of research team, if applicable in the proposal.



- 3.4 Where the applicant is a natural person, the research project must not be carried out by a group of entities or entity for which project funding will constitute state aid.
- 3.5 An entity that is under receivership, in liquidation or subject to bankruptcy proceedings must not be an applicant or host institution for a research project.
- 3.6 Where a research project is carried out by at least two Polish entities, they must form a group of entities referred to in Point 3 (3) and only in that legal form may they apply for NCN funding. Each entity in the group of entities shall have its own budget, however, the budget for salaries and scholarships referred to in Point 2 (1) of **Annex 2** hereto must be the same for all entities in the group. Proposals submitted by a group of Polish entities shall only have one principal investigator. If such entities cannot form a group of entities pursuant to Article 27 (1) (2) of the NCN Act, they shall not be eligible to apply for NCN funding of a joint research project.

4. Terms of entry

The following proposals may be submitted to the call:

- 1) to carry out research tasks that have not been funded by the NCN or from any other sources,
- 2) that constitute basic research as defined in Article 2 (1) of the NCN Act,
- 3) that only cover Life Sciences and selected fields of Natural Sciences, Physical Sciences and Engineering, and Social Sciences, as specified in **Annex 1** hereto,
- 4) that cover research based on sustainable and complementary contribution of the Polish and Chinese research teams,
- 5) that cover research projects planned for 36 months,
- 6) in which a principal investigator is at least a PhD holder,
- 7) in which the budget of the Polish part of the project in the joint project description (JPD) is calculated based on the exchange rate published by the National Bank of Poland on the date hereof (1 EUR = 4.3365 PLN), and
- 8) which cover all elements specified in Point 6 (5) hereof.

5. Restrictions on proposal submission

- 5.1 A person named as the principal investigator in a proposal under SHENG 4 must not be the authorised representative of the host institution for the project.
- 5.2 In a single call edition², one can be identified as the principal investigator in one proposal only. If the same person is identified as the principal investigator in more than one proposal submitted to a call edition, the proposal submitted to the OSF submission system at an earlier date will be accepted.
- 5.3 The principal investigator in a proposal must not be a person who, on the proposal submission date:
 - a) manages three³ or more research projects funded under NCN calls,
 - b) manages two research projects funded under NCN calls and is identified as the principal investigator in another proposal pending evaluation or recommended for funding,
 - c) manages a research project funded under NCN calls and is identified as the principal investigator in two other proposals pending evaluation or recommended for funding,
 - d) is identified as the principal investigator in three other proposals pending evaluation or recommended for funding under NCN calls,
- 5.4 The restrictions referred to in Points 5 (4) (a) – Points 5 (4) (d) above do not include projects funded under PRELUDIUM BIS and DIOSCURI or proposals submitted thereto.
- 5.5 A person carrying to carry out a research activity in a proposal which has been submitted to the MINIATURA call and for which the funding decision has not become final must not be named as the principal investigator in a proposal submitted to SHENG 4.

² Understood as NCN calls for proposals closed on the same day.



- 5.6 The principal investigator must be a person employed by the host institution for the research project under an employment contract at least on a half-time basis for the entire project duration period. The foregoing shall not apply to social security system pension recipients.
- 5.7 The principal investigator must reside in Poland for at least 50% of the project duration period and be available to the host institution for the project. The foregoing obligation does not apply to evidenced project-related business trips or holiday, time off work and other excused absence from work governed by the applicable laws.
- 5.8 An NCN Council member must not be named as the principal investigator or research team member or mentor in a proposal submitted during their term of office as the NCN Council member.
- 5.9 A researcher who no longer sits on the NCN Council can be named as the principal investigator in a proposal at least 4 months³ after the date of their ceasing to act as the Council member.
- 5.10 Proposals comprising overlapping research tasks must not be submitted in the same edition of the call.
- 5.11 Proposals comprising research tasks overlapping other research tasks covered by a proposal that has been already submitted to an NCN call or with respect to which an appeal has been initiated, can only be submitted after the NCN Director's decision to refuse funding has become final.

6. Submission of proposals (procedure and dates)

- 6.1 The call is open to proposals accompanied by Joint Project Descriptions (JPD, as specified in Point 6 (5) (4)) drafted by the Polish and Chinese research teams as well as CVs with publication lists of the principal investigators for the research teams and members of the Polish and Chinese research teams (as specified in Point 6 (5) (4)).
- 6.2 Proposals must be completed with information provided in the proposal form available in the OSF submission system, the template of which is provided in the call text.
- 6.3 NCN proposals must be submitted to the NCN electronically via the OSF electronic submission system available at www.osf.opi.org.pl by **17 March 2025, 4 p.m. CET**.
- 6.4 Chinese applicants must submit a set of documents to the NSFC, as required thereby, via the electronic submission system available at <http://isisn.nsf.gov.cn/egrantweb/> by **17 March 2025, 4 p.m. CST**.
- 6.5 Proposals must include:
 - 1) title of the research project (*in Polish and in English*);
 - 2) research project description (*in English*);
 - 3) research project's abstract for the general public (*1 standard page in Polish and 1 standard page in English*);
 - 4) JPD in PDF format, drafted in accordance with the template included in the call text (*in English*);
 - 5) CVs with publication lists of the principal investigators and members of the Polish and Chinese research teams performing the research project pursuant to the template provided in the call text; in the case of papers by members of the Polish research teams that have been accepted for publication, letters of acceptance from publishers should be attached confirming that the papers have been accepted for publication or DOI should be quoted. The publication list must not include more than 10 of the most important papers published or accepted for publication (in the case of papers by members of the Polish research teams, with letters of acceptance from publishers) in the proposal submission year or over the period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year⁴;

³ This condition must be met on the end date of the call for proposals.

⁴ In the case of the Polish principal investigator and members of the Polish research team, this period may be extended by the long-term (in excess of 90 days) documented sick leaves or physiotherapy leaves granted on account of being unfit to work. In addition, the period may be extended by the number of months of a child care leave granted pursuant to the Polish Labour Code



- CVs together with publication lists must be provided for those Polish research team members who are not selected in an open call procedure and hold at least a PhD degree. Names of persons to be selected in an open call procedure, including persons to be employed as post-docs and remunerated from the NCN budget, must not be provided in either the proposal or joint project description. CVs together with publication lists must be drafted according to the template provided in the call text (*in English*);
- 6) research plan (*in Polish and in English*) presenting the research tasks to be carried out by the Polish research team;
 - 7) information on the required qualifications and scope of work planned by each Polish co-investigator in the research project (*in English*);
 - 8) budget of the Polish part of the research project (*in English*) drafted in compliance with **Annex 2** hereto;
 - 9) information on international cooperation covered by the research project, including cooperating foreign research institutions as well as benefits that may result from such cooperation (*in English*);
 - 10) information on the data management plan concerning data generated or used in the course of the Polish part of the research project, as required by the proposal (*in English*);
 - 11) information on the ethical aspects of the project concerning research task to be performed by Polish research teams, including 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*);
 - 12) 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*);
 - 13) in the case of research projects covering research performed or completed by the principal investigator of the Polish research teams, or with respect to which the principal investigator of the Polish research teams 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*);
 - 14) in the case of research projects to be carried out in a host institution that does not receive any institutional core funding for research activity, information on research carried out in the last 2 years with a publication list and information on research equipment and other instruments crucial to research (*in English*);
 - 15) in the case of research projects carried out by a group of Polish entities, a research project cooperation agreement, as required by the proposal (*in Polish*);
 - 16) in the case of entities, for which project funding constitutes state aid, a detailed specification of costs and other documents and declarations related to applying for state aid via the NCN, as required by the proposal (*in Polish*); and
 - 17) administrative declarations of the principal investigator and Polish host institution for the project, as required by the proposal.
- 6.6 Information in the proposal must be consistent with information in the JPD and CV with a publication list.
- 6.7 Under SHENG 4, a JPD may be attached to one proposal only.
- 6.8 The NCN accepts only complete proposals that meet all the requirements set forth in the call text.

7. Evaluation of proposals (procedure and criteria)

7.1 Proposals are subject to an eligibility check followed by a merit-based evaluation.

and in the case of women, by 18 months for every child born or adopted, whichever manner of accounting for career breaks is preferable.



- 7.2 Eligibility check and merit-based evaluation of proposals submitted to SHENG 4 is carried out by the NCN and the NSFC in parallel.
- 7.3 Eligibility check and merit-based evaluation of proposals submitted to the NSFC is carried out according to the NSFC rules.
- 7.4 Eligibility check and merit-based evaluation of proposals submitted to the NCN is carried out according to the NCN rules.
- 7.5 Eligibility check of proposals at the NCN is carried out by the coordinators.
- 7.6 NCN Eligibility check of proposals shall comprise:
- 1) verification of proposal's completeness;
 - 2) verification whether the proposal meets the eligibility criteria set forth in the call text;
 - 3) verification whether the expenditures outlined in the proposal and JPD as regards the Polish part of the research project comply with **Annex 2** hereto on the Costs in research projects funded by the NCN under SHENG 4;
 - 4) verification whether the data in the JPD complies with information in the proposal.
- 7.7 Proposals may also be rejected as ineligible in the course of merit-based evaluation.
- 7.8 Only proposals approved as eligible by both the NCN and the NSFC are accepted for a merit-based evaluation at the NCN and the NSFC.
- 7.9 Proposals submitted to the OSF submission system are subject to a merit-based evaluation.
- 7.10 A merit-based evaluation is performed by the Expert Team pursuant to the terms of the call and evaluation criteria applicable to SHENG 4 and laid down in **Annex 3** hereto.
- 7.11 Under SHENG 4, a merit-based evaluation at the NCN is performed in two stages:
- 1) Stage I
 - individual reviews are drafted by two members of the Expert Team. In the case of a proposal which are assigned an auxiliary NCN Review Panel specifying disciplines covered by NCN review panels other than the one to which the proposal was submitted, the Chair of the Expert Team may decide to seek another opinion from a member of another Expert Team;
 - the Expert Team decides on the evaluation of the proposal based on the individual reviews;
 - the list of proposals recommended for the second stage of evaluation is agreed upon and
 - justifications for the final score of proposals not recommended for the second stage of evaluation, are drafted.
 - 2) Stage II:
 - individual reviews are made by the external reviewers based on the information in the proposal and annexes thereto,
 - the final evaluation of the proposal is agreed upon by the Expert Team based on the individual reviews by external reviewers,
 - ranking lists of proposals recommended for funding are compiled and
 - justifications for the final score of proposals not recommended for funding are drafted.

The information in the proposal and annexes thereto are subject to evaluation.

- 7.12 In the course of evaluation of proposals at the NCN, the following criteria are reviewed:
- 1) compliance with the basic research criteria laid down in Article 2 (1) of the NCN Act,
 - 2) scientific level and novelty of research or tasks to be performed,
 - 3) impact of the research project on the advancement of the academic discipline,
 - 4) evaluation of feasibility of research to be performed,
 - 5) scientific achievements of the principal investigators and members of the Polish and Chinese research teams, including publications in renowned academic press/ journals,
 - 6) evaluation of other projects carried out by the principal investigators and members of the Polish and Chinese research teams and funded by the NCN and/or from other sources,
 - 7) justification of the costs as regards the subject and scope of research,



- 8) complementary nature and legitimacy of international cooperation for the research project,
 - 9) ethical aspects of the project (if any) and data management plan and
 - 10) proposal's structure and compliance with other requirements of the call text.
- 7.13 The following principles shall apply to the evaluation of proposals performed by the Expert Teams:
- 1) proposals with a zero score or "no" decision agreed by the Expert Team in any reviewed criterion must not be recommended for funding. The foregoing does not apply to the justification of the costs as regards the subject of research applicable to the Chinese research teams and
 - 2) proposal shall be evaluated against other proposals reviewed in the call.
- 7.14 Proposals whose aggregated costs do not exceed the financial resources agreed by the Council for SHENG 4 in specific disciplines or groups of disciplines shall be recommended for funding.
- 7.15 If, following the merit-based evaluation of proposals by the Expert Team, the NCN continues to have doubts about the ethics issues of the Polish and Chinese parts of the research to be carried out, the NCN shall, acting pursuant to Article 30 of the NCN Act, perform an additional merit-based evaluation in this respect of NCN proposals recommended for funding; if an unsuccessful merit-based evaluation of the ethical aspects is agreed upon, Point 7 (13) shall apply.
- 7.16 In well-justified cases, a coordinator may, having consulted the Expert Team, change the order of proposals on the list of funding proposals on the ranking list. The coordinator shall provide the NCN Director, for the latter's approval, with the modified ranking list with a written justification.
- 7.17 The list of proposals recommended for funding by the NCN Expert Team is the basis for the final ranking list based on the comparison of the results of merit-based evaluation performed by the NCN and the NSFC. Funding under SHENG 4 shall be awarded to proposals recommended by both the NCN and the NSFC.
- 7.18 The NCN Director may decide to award funding for research projects which are partially within the limit of resources designated for research tasks financed by the NCN, in so far as they are also recommended by the NSFC.

8. Selection of experts (criteria and procedure)

- 8.1 Pursuant to Article 18 (7) of the NCN Act, the NCN Council shall appoint members of the NCN Expert Team to evaluate proposals for funding of the Polish-Chinese research projects under SHENG 4. In its selection, the Council shall follow the following principles:
- 1) candidates shall be selected from among eminent Polish and foreign researchers who are at least PhD holders, including former winners of NCN calls, based on their research achievements and experience in the evaluation of research projects in Poland and abroad and experience in performance of research projects funded under calls for proposals in Poland and abroad,
 - 2) an important element of evaluation shall cover information available from bibliometric sources for tracking researchers' achievements, subject to the specific nature of respective research domains and information from available lists of recipients of funds granted in the calls for research projects conducted abroad.
- 8.2 The Council has set forth the criteria and procedure for selecting Expert Teams in the document: "Expert Teams of the National Science Centre – establishing and appointing".

9. Funding decision

- 9.1 A funding decision shall be taken and results of the call shall be announced by the end of November 2025.
- 9.2 The results of the call shall be communicated by way of a decision by the NCN Director.



- 9.3 In the event of a breach of the call procedure or other formal infringements related to actions performed by the NCN, Polish applicants may lodge an appeal against the decision of the NCN Director with the Committee of Appeals of the NCN Council within 14 days of the date the decision is served. Chinese applicants may appeal against any actions performed by the NSFC according to the NSFC rules.
- 9.4 The Committee of Appeals of the NCN Council shall decide on the appeal within 3 months of the date the appeal is lodged.
- 9.5 If the appeal is deemed legitimate by the Committee of Appeals of the NCN Council, the funding decision concerning the research project carried out by the Polish research team shall be issued in so far as the NSFC also awards funds for the research project carried out by the Chinese research team.
- 9.6 The funding decision referred to in Point 9 (5) shall have no legal or financial consequences to the other applicants whose proposals have been recommended for funding under the call, even if the amount of available funds has already been used.
- 9.7 Under SHENG 4, the Polish research teams shall be awarded funds pursuant to a decision of the NCN Director for research projects where the NSFC shall award parallel funding for the Chinese research teams.

10. Call budget

The NCN Council has decided to award **PLN 46,000,000** for research tasks carried out by the Polish research teams under the Polish-Chinese research projects under SHENG 4.

Prof. Dr hab. Anetta Undas
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 the event of any doubts as to the interpretation of its provisions, the Polish version shall prevail.