

## **The terms of the National Science Centre's OPUS call for research projects**

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

- §1. The call is addressed at researchers at any stage of their research career who intend to carry out research projects.
- §2. Research projects may be carried out in cooperation with foreign research teams under the Weave programme pursuant to the Lead Agency Procedure<sup>1</sup>, hereinafter referred to as the "LAP Cooperation", with the NCN acting as the lead agency, if provided for in the call text.
- §3. Research projects may be carried out with the use of large-scale international research equipment by the Polish research teams or in cooperation with partners from foreign research institutions that do not apply for project funding within the framework of LAP Cooperation.

### **II. Eligible applicants**

- §4. Funding proposals for research projects may be submitted by entities referred to in Article 27 (1) of the Act on the National Science Centre of 30 April 2010 (consolidated text in Journal of Laws 2023, item 153, hereinafter: the "NCN Act"), hereinafter referred to as the "applicants"<sup>2</sup>.
- §5. The call is also open to applicants, for which project funding will constitute state aid granted pursuant to the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education passed under Article 37 (2) of the NCN Act.
- §6. If the applicant is a group of Polish entities defined in Article 27 (1) (2) of the NCN Act, the proposal is submitted by the leader. The principal investigator's employer acts as the leader of the group of entities.
- §7. If a natural person applies, the research project must not be carried out by a group of entities or entity for which project funding constitutes state aid.
- §8. Entities under receivership, in liquidation or subject to bankruptcy proceedings are not eligible to apply or act as a host institution for the project.

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

- §9. The call is open to funding proposals for research projects, hereinafter referred to as the "OPUS proposals" or funding proposals for research projects within the framework of LAP Cooperation, hereinafter referred to as the "OPUS LAP proposals", subject to §2.

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<sup>1</sup> LAP Cooperation means cooperation between research funding agencies where funding proposals for research projects may be submitted under national calls launched thereby, carried out jointly with foreign research teams that apply for parallel project funding to the agencies involved in the LAP Cooperation, i.e. partner agencies. Agencies that perform a merit-based evaluation of proposals under their national calls act as the lead agency.

<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, are subject to an additional analysis of their legal, organisational and financial situation. If natural persons apply, the participating entity is analysed, and if a group of entities applies, each group member is analysed.

- §10. The following OPUS proposals may be submitted to the call:
- 1) to carry out research that has not been funded by the NCN or from other sources,
  - 2) which comprise basic research for the purposes of Article 2 (1) of the NCN Act in any of the academic disciplines specified in the NCN panels adopted by the NCN Council,
  - 3) which cover a research project performed over a period of 12, 24, 36 or 48 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 referred to as the “Regulations” and
  - 5) which includes the documents and information specified in § 11.
- §11. OPUS proposals must include information specified in the proposal form available in the OSF submission system, the template of which is included in the call text:
- 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*),

Descriptions must 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 specified in the proposal, as well as 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;
      - 1-10 most important papers published or accepted for publication (letter of acceptance required) in the proposal submission year or over a period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year<sup>3</sup>, with 1-3 of them attached as PDF files;
      - 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 a period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year<sup>3</sup>. If more than one paper is listed, 1-3 of them should be attached as PDF files;
      - information on research project management or other funding awarded under NCN calls in the proposal submission year or over a period of 10 years prior to proposal submission year<sup>3</sup>;
      - information on research project management funded under other national or international calls <sup>4</sup> in the proposal submission year or over a period of 10 years prior to proposal submission year<sup>3</sup> (*up to 5 projects*);
      - description of the most important research achievement;
      - research experience gained in Poland or abroad;

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<sup>3</sup> This period may 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 child, whichever manner of accounting for career breaks is preferable.

<sup>4</sup> Acting as a principal investigator also means managing/ coordinating the work of a research group in international research projects or programs.

- the most important national or international distinctions for research and/or other activity in research in art;
- b) if a person complying with the Regulations is employed as a 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 a period of
    - years prior to the proposal submission year<sup>2</sup>;
    - 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 a period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year<sup>3</sup>;
  - 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 (*in English*) drafted pursuant to the Regulations;
  - 8) in the case of research projects performed with the use of large-scale international research equipment by the Polish research teams or in cooperation with partners from foreign research institutions that do not apply for funding for that purpose within the framework of LAP Cooperation, information on international cooperation as well as description of benefits that may result from such cooperation (*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 perform the project pursuant to 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 Polish entities, an agreement on collaboration for the purposes of completion of the requested research project, as required by the proposal (*in Polish*);
  - 14) administrative declarations by the principal investigator and the host institution for the project, as required by the proposal; and
  - 15) in the case of entities for which project funding constitutes constitute state aid, a detailed budget as well as other documents and declarations related to the application for state aid via the NCN, as required by the proposal (*in Polish*).
- §12. The following OPUS LAP proposals may be submitted to the call, subject to §2 and subject to the terms and conditions of the NCN Council and partner institutions laid down in the call text:
- 1) to carry out research that has not been funded by the NCN or from other sources;
  - 2) that involve basic research for the purposes of Article 2 (1) of the NCN Act in any of the disciplines covered by the NCN panels adopted by the NCN Council;

- 3) that involve research based on equal and complementary contribution by research teams, carried out in bilateral or trilateral cooperation between Polish research teams and research teams applying for funding to their respective partner institutions within the framework of LAP Cooperation;
  - 4) under which, as agreed by the research teams involved in the project, the Polish research team acts as the coordinating applicant submitting the OPUS LAP proposal;
  - 5) under which each research team applying for funding within the framework of LAP Cooperation, is managed by a principal investigator, with the principal investigator of the Polish research team managing the Polish part of the project;
  - 6) which cover a research project performed over a period of 24, 36 or 48 months;
  - 7) which comply with the Regulations; and
  - 8) which include the documents and information laid down in §13.
- §13. OPUS-LAP proposals must include information laid down in the proposal form available in the OSF submission system, the template of which is included in the call text (including all research tasks performed by the Polish research team with foreign research teams applying for funding to their respective partner institutions within the framework of the LAP Cooperation), such as:
- 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 descriptions:
    - a) short description (*up to 5 pages in English*) and
    - b) full description (*up to 15 pages in English*);

The descriptions must 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 specified in the proposal, as well as project literature applicable to the subject of the project.

Project literature does not count towards the page limit.
  - 5) work plan presenting research tasks performed by the Polish research team (*in Polish and in English*) and by each foreign research team applying for funding to their respective partner institutions within the framework of LAP Cooperation (*in English*);
  - 6) information on the research teams applying for funding within the framework of LAP Cooperation (*in English*), including:
    - a) information on the principal investigators, including:
      - academic and research career;
      - 1-10 most important papers published or accepted for publication (letter of acceptance required) in the proposal submission year and over a period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year<sup>3</sup>, with 1-3 of them attached as PDF files;
 

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 a period of 10 years prior to the proposal submission year<sup>3</sup>. If more than one paper is listed, 1-3 of them should be attached as PDF files;
      - information on research project management or other research funding awarded under NCN calls in the proposal submission year or over a period of 10 years prior to proposal submission year<sup>3</sup>;

- information on research project management funded under other national or international calls<sup>4</sup> in the proposal submission year or over a period of 10 years prior to proposal submission year<sup>3</sup> (*up to 5 projects*);
  - description of the most important research achievement;
  - research experience gained in Poland or abroad;
  - the most important national or international distinctions for research and/or other activity in research in art;
- b) information on the required qualifications and scope of work of each investigator in the research project;
- 7) research project budget of the Polish research team drafted pursuant to the Regulations and research project budget of the foreign research team drafted pursuant to the rules of the respective partner institution (*in English*);
  - 8) in the case of research projects performed within the framework of LAP Cooperation or with the use of large-scale international research equipment by the Polish research teams or in cooperation with partners from foreign research institutions, information on international cooperation as well as description of benefits that may result from such cooperation (*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 perform the project pursuant to 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 including 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 performed by a group of Polish entities, an agreement on collaboration for the purposes of completion of the requested research project, as required by the proposal (*in Polish*);
  - 14) administrative declarations by the principal investigator and the Polish host institution for the project, as required by the proposal; and
  - 15) in the case of entities for which project funding constitutes state aid, a detailed budget as well as other documents and declarations related to the proposal for state aid via the NCN, as required by the proposal (*in Polish*).

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

§14. Proposals are to be evaluated pursuant to the Regulations.

§15. In the evaluation of OPUS proposals, the following criteria are reviewed in particular:

- 1) compliance with the criterion of basic research laid down in Article 2 (1) of the NCN Act,
- 2) quality of research and innovative nature of research or tasks,
- 3) project's impact on the advancement of the scientific discipline,
- 4) evaluation of feasibility of research,
- 5) research achievements of the principal investigator, including publications in renowned academic press/ journals,

- 6) evaluation of other projects carried out by the principal investigator and funded by the NCN or from other sources,
  - 7) relevance of the costs as regards the subject and scope of research and
  - 8) development of the proposal and compliance with other requirements of the call text.
- §16. In the evaluation of OPUS LAP proposals, the following criteria are reviewed in particular:
- 1) compliance with the criterion of basic research laid down in Article 2 (1) of the NCN Act,
  - 2) quality of research and innovative nature of research or tasks,
  - 3) project's impact on the advancement of the scientific discipline,
  - 4) evaluation of feasibility of research,
  - 5) equal and complementary contribution to the research project by all research teams applying for funding within the framework of LAP Cooperation;
  - 6) research achievements of the principal investigators, including publications in renowned academic press/ journals;
  - 7) evaluation of other projects carried out by the principal investigator for the Polish part of the research project and funded by the NCN or from other sources, and evaluation of other projects carried out by the principal investigators;
  - 8) relevance of the costs as regards the subject and scope of research; and
  - 9) development of the proposal and compliance with other requirements of the call text.

#### **v. Funding decision**

- §17. In the case of OPUS proposals, the call is concluded within 6 months of the proposal submission date.
- §18. In the case of OPUS LAP proposals, the funding decision is taken within 11 months of the proposal submission date, depending on the date the respective partner institutions of the foreign research teams approve the results of NCN's merit-based evaluation.
- §19. The results of the call are communicated to the applicant by way of a decision by the NCN Director.

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