

Order No 50/2018
of the Director of the National Science Centre (NCN)
on the detailed procedure for evaluating proposals by the NCN Expert Teams, submitted
to the SHENG 1 call for Polish-Chinese research projects
of 20 September 2018

Pursuant to Article 30 (3) of the Act on the National Science Centre of 30 April 2010 (Journal of Laws of 2018, item 947), it is hereby decided as follows:

§ 1.

The detailed procedure for evaluating proposals by the Expert Teams, submitted to the SHENG 1 call for Polish-Chinese research projects shall be laid down and annexed hereto.

§ 2.

The Order applies to the evaluation of proposals submitted to the SHENG 1 call for Polish-Chinese research projects, announced by the National Science Centre on 15 June 2018.

§ 3.

The order shall come into force on the date of its signature.

The English version of this Order 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.

Annex 1 to Order No 50/2018 of the Director of the National Science Centre on the detailed procedure for evaluating proposals by the NCN Expert Teams, submitted to the SHENG 1 call for Polish-Chinese research projects of 20 September 2018

§ 1.

The Order lays down the detailed procedure for evaluating proposals by the NCN Expert Teams, submitted to the SHENG 1 call for Polish-Chinese research projects.

§ 2.

Whenever this Order refers to:

- 1) Centre, it shall be understood as the National Science Centre (NCN);
- 2) Council, it shall be understood as the Council of the National Science Centre;
- 3) Director, it shall be understood as the Director of the National Science Centre,
- 4) NSFC, it shall be understood as the National Natural Science Foundation of China;
- 5) Coordinator, it shall be understood as the Centre's Coordinator in charge of a research domain;
- 6) Inter-Panel Team, it shall be understood as an Expert Team appointed under a given research domain, i.e. HS, ST or NZ;
- 7) Inter-Domain Team, it shall be understood as an Expert Team comprising experts representing different research domains, i.e. HS, ST and NZ;
- 8) proposal, it shall be understood as a proposal submitted to the SHENG 1 call announced by the NCN;
- 9) meeting, it shall be understood as an individual day in a Team's session;
- 10) session, it shall be understood as all meetings of a Team at a given stage of the merit-based evaluation process;
- 11) list of projects recommended for funding, it shall be understood as the list of projects recommended for funding by an NCN Expert Team; and
- 12) ranking list, it shall be understood as the final list of projects recommended for funding by an Expert Team once it has been agreed upon with the NSFC.

§ 3. General provisions

1. Expert Team members shall be selected by the Council pursuant to the Council Resolution No 26/2018 of 8 March 2018 "Expert Teams of the National Science Centre: formation and appointment," and appointed by the NCN Director.
2. The Teams shall evaluate proposals submitted to the SHENG 1 call in a panel group (Inter-Panel Teams or Inter-Domain Teams).
3. The number of Team members shall be decided upon by the Council, considering the number and subject of proposals under evaluation and the need to carry out the call in a timely and orderly manner. A Team shall consist of at least five members.
4. The work of an Expert Team shall be managed by a Chair, appointed by the Council.
5. During the meetings, a Team's Chair may appoint another member of the Team to manage the work of the Team in his/her stead. Should the Team's Chair be unable to appoint such

a person, the oldest member of the Team shall manage the work of the Team in his/her stead.

6. Experts shall be bound by the ethical principles laid down in the “Code of Ethics for Members of the Council and Experts of the National Science Centre,” annexed to the NCN Council Resolution No 22/2017 of 9 February 2017.
7. The Coordinator shall exclude an Expert from the proposal evaluation procedure in the event of a conflict of interest or justified suspicion of a bias in the Expert’s actions.

§ 4. Expert Teams

The duties of the Teams shall include:

- 1) evaluation of research proposals at the second stage of merit-based evaluation; and
- 2) compilation of a list of projects recommended for funding under the SHENG 1 call.

§ 5. Coordinator

1. The duties of the Coordinator shall include:
 - 1) running eligibility checks on proposals;
 - 2) indicating external reviewers for the evaluation of proposals at the first stage of merit-based evaluation, under the authority of the Director;
 - 3) organising Team meetings, including:
 - a) summoning meetings and participating in them and
 - b) verifying conformity of the minutes with the actual course of meetings and decisions of the Teams;
 - 4) assessing the accuracy and impartiality of opinions drafted by external reviewers; and
 - 5) drafting ranking lists and presenting them to the Director for approval.
2. The Coordinator shall organise the work of a Team and closely cooperate with the Team’s Chair.

§ 6. Chair of the Expert Team

1. The duties of the Chair of the Expert Team shall include:
 - 1) indicating two members of the Team to present all proposals and their evaluations at the session;
 - 2) chairing the Team meetings, taking into account the situation described in § 3 (5);
 - 3) ordering and conducting voting; and
 - 4) approving minutes from the Team meetings.
2. The Chair of the Expert Team shall closely cooperate with the Coordinator.

§ 7. Members of the Expert Team

1. The duties of a Team member shall include:
 - 1) participating in all meetings of the Team, as well as:
 - a) presenting the proposals they have been assigned and their evaluations at the sessions; and
 - b) drafting justifications for the final grades of the proposals they have been assigned during the Team meeting.

§ 8. External reviewer

1. The duties of the external reviewer shall include performing individual reviews of proposals at the first stage of the merit-based evaluation of proposals.
2. An external reviewer may not be a member of the Team reviewing a given proposal.

§ 9. Proposal evaluation stages

1. Polish-Chinese proposals submitted to the SHENG 1 call shall be subject to an eligibility check and merit-based evaluation carried out independently by the Centre and the NSFC.
2. The eligibility check and merit-based evaluation of the proposals submitted to the NSFC shall be performed in accordance with the rules applicable at the NSFC.
3. Eligibility checks on proposals at the NCN shall be performed by Coordinators.
4. Only proposals found eligible by both the NCN and the NSFC shall be approved for the merit-based evaluation.
5. Merit-based evaluation at the NCN shall be carried out by Inter-Panel Teams or Inter-Domain Teams. A proposal may also be rejected on formal grounds at a later stage of evaluation.
6. At the NCN, the merit-based evaluation of proposals submitted to the SHENG 1 call shall be carried out in two stages:
 - 1) stage one – preliminary evaluation is based on the data included in the joint Polish-Chinese proposal requesting funding for a research project and is performed by at least two external reviewers, who are not members of an Expert Team;
 - 2) stage two – the evaluation is performed at a meeting of an Expert Team, based on the data included in the joint Polish-Chinese proposal requesting funding for a research project, opinions received from the external reviewers at the first stage of evaluation and discussions on the proposal, as weighed against other proposals reviewed under the SHENG 1 call. A proposal's grade shall be its position on the list of projects recommended for funding, agreed upon by the Team, based on its score and the recommendation received:
 - A - project recommended for funding;
 - B - project recommended for funding as long as financial resources are available; or
 - C - project not recommended for funding.
7. The list of projects recommended for funding by an NCN Expert Team shall be a point of departure for drafting the final ranking list, based on a comparison of the results of the merit-based evaluation at the NCN and NSFC. Funding under the SHENG 1 call may be granted to projects which shall be recommended for funding by both the NCN and NSFC and which are covered within the budget contributed for the SHENG 1 call by the NCN Council.

§ 10. Organisation of Expert Team meetings

1. The number of Team meetings planned within a single session should be established with regard to the number of proposals to be reviewed and the volume of work necessary for their evaluation.
2. A Team meeting shall take place in the presence of a quorum of an absolute majority of the Team's members.
3. The Team meetings shall be chaired by its Chair or member of the Team appointed as his or her substitute.

4. A Coordinator shall be present at a Team meeting as well as designated NCN officers, who shall not take part in the voting.
5. Members of the Team who have a conflict of interest with the applicants (investigators) shall leave the room where the session is being held. Exclusion of a member of the Team due to a conflict of interest shall not affect the quorum during voting.
6. Minutes shall be taken of the Team meetings, whose conformity with the actual course of the meetings shall be verified by the Coordinator and approved by the Team's Chair.

§ 11. Principles of proposal evaluation at the Team meetings

1. All proposals approved for merit-based evaluation shall be the subject of analysis and discussions during the Team meetings.
2. Every proposal shall be given a score derived from the mean average of the individual reviews by external reviewers at the stage of preliminary evaluation.
3. The score shall not be binding upon the Team, and shall be treated merely as a point of departure for the discussions on the final grade by the Expert Team.
4. A proposal's final grade shall be its position on the ranking list.
5. The reviews by the external reviewers shall not be binding upon the Team, however, members of the Team must address them in their discussions. While settling the proposal's final grade, the Team may fully agree with the external reviewer's evaluation, partly agree with it, or disagree with it. Disagreement with the external reviewer's evaluation must be accounted for.
6. A proposal which has been given a score of zero by an agreed decision of the Expert Team in any criteria subject to evaluation or whose evaluation form contains a negative answer to any of the questions therein, shall not be recommended for funding.
7. If a common position cannot be found on the evaluation of the proposal, the Team shall make the decision by vote. The Team's decisions requiring voting shall be made by an absolute majority of votes.
8. Lists of proposals recommended for funding must be approved by an absolute majority vote.
9. The Team may conditionally recommend one proposal in the call that is partly within the limits of funding earmarked by the Council for individual disciplines or groups of disciplines provided in the SHENG 1 call.
10. The Team does not have to distribute the entire available financial resources. A Team may award an A recommendation to projects whose combined sum of requested funding does not exceed the budget contributed by the NCN Council for the SHENG 1 call, subject to clause 9.

§ 12. Ranking lists

1. The Coordinator shall draft ranking lists and present them to the NCN Director for approval, based on the comparison of the results of the merit-based evaluation at the NCN and NSFC.
2. A proposal shall be approved for funding provided that:
 - a) it has been recommended for funding by the NCN and NSFC; and
 - b) it is within the limits of funding earmarked by the NCN Council and NSFC for the SHENG 1 call, subject to point 3.
3. The decision on funding the project referred to in § 11 (9) shall be made by the NCN Director.