



Order No. 64/2022

**of the Director of the National Science Centre
amending the detailed procedure
for evaluating proposals submitted to POLONEZ BIS calls
dated 13.10.2022**

Pursuant to Article 30 (3) of the Act on the National Science Centre of 30 April 2010, (uniform text in Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1384), in conjunction with § 2 (3) of the Organisational Regulations of the National Science Centre's Office and the tasks of the Scientific Coordinators of the National Science Centre, the uniform text of which was set out in Order No. 75/2021 of the Director of the National Science Centre of 26 November 2021, it is hereby decided as follows:

§ 1.

The text of the detailed procedure for evaluating proposals submitted to POLONEZ BIS calls which constitutes Annex 1 to the Order No. 18/2022 of the Director of the National Science Centre of 14 March 2022 is substituted by the Annex No. 1 hereto.

§ 2.

The uniform text of the Detailed procedure for evaluating proposals submitted to POLONEZ BIS calls is given as Annex No. 1 hereto.

§ 3.

1. The provisions of the present Order shall apply to the evaluation of proposals submitted in the POLONEZ BIS calls announced by the National Science Centre on and after 15 September 2022.
2. The evaluation of proposals submitted in the POLONEZ BIS call announced before 15 September 2022, is subject to the previous regulations.

§ 4.

The Order comes into force on the date of its signature.

Director of the National Science Centre



§ 1.

Whenever this Order refers to:

- 1) NCN, it shall mean the National Science Centre;
- 2) Council, it shall mean the Council of the National Science Centre;
- 3) Director, it shall mean the Director of the National Science Centre;
- 4) Coordinator, it shall mean the scientific coordinator referred to in Article 2(5) of the Act on the National Science Centre of 30 June 2010 (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1384, hereinafter referred to as the “Act”);
- 5) Expert Team (hereinafter also referred to as the “Team”), it shall mean Experts and Ethical Experts appointed in a respective group of disciplines, i.e. HS, ST and NZ to evaluate proposals submitted to POLONEZ BIS;
- 6) Committee, it shall mean a group of Experts and Ethical Experts comprising the Expert Team, interviewing candidates at the second stage of merit-based evaluation; the Chair shall decide on the composition of the Committee;
- 7) Expert, it shall mean an Expert Team member or Committee member participating in the merit-based evaluation;
- 8) Ethical Expert, it shall mean an Expert Team member or Committee member participating in the evaluation of the ethics issues of Proposals at the second stage of merit-based evaluation;
- 9) Reviewer, it shall mean an external expert referred to in in Article 22 (2) of the Act, who is not an Expert Team member and drafts an individual review of Proposals at the second stage of merit-based evaluation;
- 10) Proposal, it shall mean a Proposal submitted in response to the POLONEZ BIS call launched by the National Science Centre;
- 11) Meeting, it shall mean a single day in an Expert Team’s or Committee’s Session;
- 12) Session, it shall mean all Meetings of the Expert Team or Committee at a given stage of the merit-based evaluation;
- 13) Edition, it shall mean calls launched by the National Science Centre with deadlines expiring on the same date;
- 14) List of projects recommended for the second stage of merit-based evaluation, it shall mean the Ranking List of Proposals evaluated at the first stage of merit-based evaluation, ranked





- according to the scores awarded, with an indication of proposals recommended for the second stage of merit-based evaluation, ranked according to the scores awarded;
- 15) Ranking List, it shall mean the Ranking List of Proposals evaluated at the second stage of merit-based evaluation, ranked according to the scores awarded, with an indication of Proposals recommended for funding and proposals from the Waiting List ranked according to the scores awarded;
 - 16) Waiting List, it shall mean the list of proposals awarded at least 70 percentage points, out of the maximum number of 100 points, which fall outside the limit of available funds allocated by the Council for research projects in a respective group of disciplines;
 - 17) Applicant, it shall mean an individual (natural person) submitting a POLONEZ BIS proposal and named therein as the Principal Investigator;
 - 18) Host Institution, it shall mean a participating entity, i.e. the institution specified in the Proposal as the location of the POLONEZ BIS project.

§ 2.

General Provisions

1. Members of the Expert Teams shall be selected by the Council pursuant to the document “Expert Teams of the National Science Centre: Formation and Appointment” and shall be appointed by the NCN Director. The number of Experts, Ethical Experts in the Teams and the Teams shall be decided upon by the Council considering (*inter alia*) the number and subject of evaluated Proposals and the need to carry out the call in an orderly manner.
2. For the purposes of each POLONEZ BIS call, Expert Teams shall be established to evaluate Proposals submitted to one of the three groups of disciplines, i.e. HS, ST and NZ;
3. A Team shall consist of at least five Experts, excluding Ethical Experts.
4. The work of an Expert Team shall be managed by a Chair selected by the Council from the Experts.
5. During the Meetings, a Team’s Chair may appoint another Expert to manage the work of the Team in his/her stead. Should the Team’s Chair be unable to appoint such an Expert, he/she shall be appointed by the Coordinator.
6. The Experts and Ethical Experts shall be bound by the ethical rules laid down in the “Code of Ethics for Experts of the National Science Centre”.
7. The Coordinator shall exclude an Expert or Ethical Expert from the Proposal evaluation procedure in the event of a conflict of interest or justified suspicion of a bias in the Expert’s or Ethical Expert’s actions.
8. Proposals submitted to POLONEZ BIS shall be evaluated in English.



§ 3.

Teams

1. The duties of the Teams shall include:

- 1) evaluation of Proposals and
- 2) compilation of the List of projects recommended for the second stage of merit-based evaluation, and Ranking List.

§ 4.

Coordinators

1. The duties of Coordinators shall include:

- 1) running eligibility checks of Proposals;
 - 2) providing the Chair with the list of Proposals in which at least one auxiliary NCN Review Panel has been identified in a group of disciplines other than the one to which the Proposal was submitted, i.e. HS, ST and NZ;
 - 3) naming Experts and Ethical Experts to draft individual reviews in the event of the Team's Chair experiencing a conflict of interest;
 - 4) appointing an Expert to draft an individual review of Proposals in which at least one auxiliary NCN Review Panel has been identified in a group of disciplines other than the one to which the Proposal was submitted, i.e. HS, ST and NZ in respect of which the Chair requested a second individual review; Experts required to draft second individual reviews shall be appointed from other Expert Teams established to evaluate Proposals in the same Edition of the NCN calls;
 - 5) organising Team Meetings or Committee Meetings, including:
 - a) summoning Meetings and participating in them;
 - b) verifying the conformity of the Meeting minutes drawn up by the recording clerk with the actual course of the Meetings and resolutions of the Committee or Team;
 - 6) appointing Reviewers from the candidacies put forward by the Experts;
 - 7) assessing the accuracy and impartiality of the reviews drafted by the Experts, Ethical Experts and Reviewers; and
 - 8) presenting the Director with the Ranking Lists established by the Teams for his approval.
2. Coordinators shall organise the Team's work and cooperate with the Team's Chair.

§ 5.

Team's Chair

1. The duties of the Team's Chair shall include:



- 1) appointing Experts to draft individual reviews at the first stage of the merit-based evaluation, with the exception of the situation described in § 4 (1) (3);
 - 2) selecting Ethical Experts to draft individual reviews of the ethics issues in Proposals at the second stage of merit-based evaluation, with an exception of situations described in §4 (1) (3);
 - 3) selecting Proposals from the list of Proposals in which at least one auxiliary NCN Review Panel has been identified in a group of disciplines other than the one to which the Proposal was submitted, i.e. HS, ST and NZ, for which (in well-justified cases) a second individual review shall be drafted by an Expert from another panel; the Chair may consult his/her decision in this respect with the Experts drafting individual reviews;
 - 4) chairing the Team Meetings, subject to the situation described in § 2(5);
 - 5) conducting voting and
 - 6) approving the minutes from the Team Meetings.
2. The Team's Chair shall cooperate with the Coordinators.

§ 6.

Experts

1. The duties of the Experts shall include:

- 1) drafting individual reviews of Proposals assigned by the Team's Chair or Coordinator at the first stage of the merit-based evaluation and presenting them during the first Session;
- 2) drafting a second individual review of the assigned Proposal from another group of disciplines;
- 3) participating in the Team Meetings, as well as:
 - a) drafting justifications for the final grades of the Proposals that are not recommended for the second stage of merit-based evaluation or Proposals that are not recommended for funding that have been assigned during the Team Meetings;
 - b) putting forward the candidacies of at least five Reviewers to review each Proposal reviewed at the first stage of merit-based evaluation and recommended for the second stage of evaluation;
 - c) presenting the individual reviews of the Reviewers on the assigned Proposals during the second Session and
 - d) participating in the work of the Committee.

§ 7.

Ethical Experts

1. The duties of the Ethical Experts shall include:



- 1) drafting individual reviews of the ethics issues in the Proposals assigned by the Team's Chair or Coordinator at the second stage of merit-based evaluation;
- 2) participating in the Expert Team Meetings at the second Session,
- 3) participating in the work of the Committee and
- 4) drafting the final review on the ethics issues in the Proposals at the second stage of merit-based evaluation assigned at the Team Meeting during the second Session.

§8.

Proposal Evaluation Stages

1. Proposals shall be subject to an eligibility check and merit-based evaluation.
2. The eligibility check of Proposals shall be performed by the Coordinators.
3. The eligibility check shall comprise:
 - 1) verification of the Proposal for completeness,
 - 2) verification of whether the Proposal complies with all the requirements set out in the call text,
 - 3) verification of whether the expenditures outlined in the Proposal comply with the terms specified by the Council in the call text,
 - 4) in the case of host institutions outside of the public finance sector or institutions that do not receive any institutional core funding for research, the analysis of their legal and organisational and financial situation in order to assess whether they can provide a sufficient warranty for the correct completion of the project; the analysis may, in particular, cover the period in which the Host Institution has carried out research on a continuous basis, examination of the Host Institution's assets, including availability of the appropriate research, administrative and office infrastructure and examination of the statutory documents that constitute the basis for the Host Institution's business.
4. In the event of any doubt as to the analysis referred to in Point 3 (4), the Coordinator may request that the NCN Director seek a second review from an external expert.
5. If the analysis referred to in Point 3 (4) gives rise to any doubts as to whether the Host Institution provides a sufficient warranty for correct performance of the Project, the Proposal may be conditionally subject to merit-based evaluation. If such is the case, the Director shall request that the Host Institution provide additional explanations concerning its legal and organisational and financial situation or submit documents to confirm the same, within the prescribed period of time.
6. Only proposals that are found eligible in the course of the eligibility check shall be recommended for merit-based evaluation, subject to Point 5.





7. The merit-based evaluation of Proposals shall be carried out by the Expert Teams with the support of the Reviewers.
8. A proposal may be rejected as not eligible at a later stage of evaluation, in particular, if the deadline referred to in Point 5 is not adhered to or if the analysis of the explanations or documents does not dispel the doubts as to whether the Host Institution provides a sufficient warranty for the correct performance of a POLONEZ BIS Project.
9. The merit-based evaluation of Proposals shall be performed in two stages:
 - 1) at the first stage, Proposals shall undergo a qualification check, based on the data included in the Proposal and annexes thereto, with the exception of the full project description. The preliminary evaluation shall consist in:
 - a) individual opinions drafted by two Experts working independently;
 - b) second individual review of the Proposal in which at least one auxiliary NCN Review Panel has been identified in a group of disciplines other than the one to which the Proposal was submitted, i.e. HS, ST and NZ in respect of which the Chair requested a second individual review to be drafted by an Expert from another Team;
 - c) Team's verdict delivered at the first Session consisting in discussing the individual reviews and establishing a List of projects recommended for the second stage of merit-based evaluation;
 - 2) at the second stage, the Proposals shall undergo a specialist evaluation, based on the data included in the Proposal and annexes thereto, with the exception of the short project description. The specialist evaluation shall consist in:
 - a) individual reviews drafted by at least two Reviewers acting independently. Exceptions to the above requirements regarding the number of reviews are acceptable in well-justified cases. The reason for the exception shall be reported to the Director by the Coordinator;
 - b) review of the ethics issues drafted by two Ethical Experts acting independently; it shall apply to Proposals in which the Applicants answered "YES" to at least one question in the ethics issues section or "no" decision was agreed by the Team at the first stage of merit-based evaluation in reply to the question on the ethics issues;
 - c) evaluation of an interview with the Principal Investigator held by the Experts:
 - the Principal Investigator shall be notified of the interview by the Coordinator within 14 days in advance;
 - the Coordinator shall provide the Principal Investigator with the Experts', Reviewers' and Ethical Experts' reviews of the Proposal within 14 days before the interview;





- the Principal Investigator shall be obliged to participate in an interview via the telecommunications tools that are proposed to him/her;
 - failure to take part in the interview shall be deemed as withdrawal from applying for funding of the Proposal under the call;
- d) Team's verdict delivered at the second Session consisting in discussing the individual reviews, results of the interview and establishing a Ranking List and a Waiting List.

§9.

Team Meetings

1. The duration of Team Meetings should depend on the number of Proposals to be evaluated and the volume of work necessary for their evaluation.
2. On having completed all individual reviews assigned to them, the Experts or Ethical Experts shall be given electronic access to all the other individual reviews drafted within the Team to which they were appointed.
3. Team Meetings shall be held in the presence of a quorum of more than a half of the Team's members; the Ethical Experts are not included in the quorum.
4. Team Meetings shall be held by the Team's Chair or Expert appointed in his/her stead.
5. A Coordinator and a recording clerk shall participate in every Team Meeting, but shall not take part in the voting.
6. In the case of a conflict of interest, the Expert or Ethical Expert shall have to leave the meeting room. Exclusion of the Expert or Ethical Expert on the grounds of a conflict of interest shall not affect the quorum when voting.
7. The minutes shall be taken by the recording clerk and approved by the Coordinator and Team's Chair.

§10.

Committee Meetings

1. Committees composed of Experts and Ethical Experts shall be formed to interview the candidates.
2. The number of Committees shall depend on the number of Proposals recommended for the second stage of merit-based evaluation and the number of Experts.
3. A Committee shall comprise at least five Experts. At least two Ethical Experts shall participate in the interviews with candidates whose Proposals are subject to individual reviews of the ethics issues.



4. A Committee Meeting shall be held in the presence of a quorum of more than half of the Committee members; the Ethical Experts shall not be included in the quorum.
5. A Coordinator and a recording clerk shall participate in every Committee Meeting.
6. In the case of a conflict of interest, the Expert or Ethical Expert shall have to leave the meeting room. Exclusion of the Expert or Ethical Expert on the grounds of a conflict of interest shall not affect the quorum during voting.
7. The recording clerk shall take the minutes of the Committee Meetings, which shall be annexed to the minutes of the Team Meetings.

§11.

Evaluation of Proposals at the Team Meetings

1. Proposals recommended for merit-based evaluation shall be the subject of analysis and discussion at the Team Meeting.
2. The budget shall not be subject to any changes.
3. Proposals shall be allotted a score based on Experts' and Reviewers' individual reviews thereof and, if applicable, auxiliary individual reviews and individual reviews of the ethics issues.
4. Individual reviews shall not be binding upon the Team and shall be treated merely as a point of departure in the discussion on the final score. The Team may agree upon the score during its Meeting.
5. Decisions of the Expert Team on the final score shall be based on the analysis of the Proposal and discussions on the legitimacy of funding the Proposal against other Proposals reviewed in the call.
6. Reviewers' opinions shall not be binding upon the Team but must be addressed by the Experts.
7. While settling the Proposal's final score, the Team may fully agree with the Reviewers' review, partly agree with it, or disagree with it.
8. Additional information received during the interview referred to in §8 (9) (2) (c) may impact the final score assigned by the Experts to particular evaluation criteria that account for the Proposal's full score.
9. Proposals with a zero score or "no" decision agreed by the Expert Team in any reviewed criterion, subject to the second sentence, must not be recommended for funding. The sanction laid down in the preceding sentence does not apply to the "no" answer or zero score in the data management evaluation criterion or question on the interdisciplinary approach of the Proposal.





10. Proposals with a “no” decision agreed in the ethics issues evaluation criterion at the first stage of merit-based evaluation shall not be disqualified from the evaluation procedure. The ethics issues of such Proposals shall be evaluated at the second stage of merit-based evaluation by two Ethical Experts.
11. Proposals deemed non-compliant with any criteria of the call text by the Expert Team shall not be recommended for funding.
12. If, at the first or second stage of evaluation, the Team finds that the Proposal is missing any information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts or theories in a panel or group of disciplines to which it was submitted, i.e. HS, ST or NZ, it may be rejected on the grounds that it is missing information necessary for its evaluation.
13. If the Team cannot find a common position on the evaluation of a Proposal, it shall make the decision by way of a vote; the Ethical Experts shall vote on the ethics issues only.
14. Decisions by the Team that should require a vote shall be taken by a simple majority.
15. Lists of projects recommended for the second stage of merit-based evaluation, Ranking Lists and Waiting Lists must be approved by an absolute majority vote; the Ethical Experts shall not vote and shall not be included in a quorum.
16. The Expert Team may recommend for funding Proposals that have been awarded at least 70 points out of the maximum number of 100 points, subject to Point 17.
17. If a Ranking ~~Long~~-List includes Proposals with the same score, their final ranking order will depend on the degree to which they take an interdisciplinary approach to the research, with more interdisciplinary proposals being given priority. The degree to which proposals are interdisciplinary shall be evaluated by the Expert Team.
18. Proposals that meet the criteria laid down in Point 16, but fall outside of the limit of available funds allocated by the Council for research projects in a respective group of disciplines shall be included on the Waiting List.
19. The Team may conditionally recommend one Proposal for funding, which is partially within the limit of available funds agreed upon by the Council.
20. The funding decision with regard to Proposals referred to in Point 19 shall be taken by the NCN Director, after considering the percent ratio of oversubscription of the POLONEZ BIS budget allocated to individual groups of disciplines; if the NCN Director decides to reject the Proposals, they shall be placed at the top of the Waiting List.
21. The Team shall not be required to distribute the whole funding available and cannot recommend for funding Proposals that exceed the available funding, subject to Point 19.





§ 12.

Ranking Lists

1. The Coordinator shall present the Director with the Ranking Lists compiled by the Teams.
2. In exceptional cases, the Coordinator may, having consulted the Team, modify the scores of the Proposals, i.e. the order of research projects on the Ranking List. The modification procedure shall be as follows:
 - 1) the consultation may have the form of circulating a query to all Experts with a justification of suggested modification and the deadline by which they should respond;
 - 2) after the lapse of time in which to reply, the Coordinator shall decide on the modification, taking into account the opinions received from the Experts and
 - 3) Expert's failure to respond on time shall be deemed as his/ her disagreement with the suggested modification.
3. In the event referred to in Point 2, the Coordinator shall provide the Director with the modified Ranking List (together with a written justification) for his approval.
4. In well-justified cases, the Director may, regardless of any doubts arising from the analysis referred to in §8 (3) (4), approve the Ranking List and impose an obligation on the Applicant to establish a relevant security for correct performance of the POLONEZ BIS project (e.g. promissory note, bank guarantee) within the prescribed period.
5. The NCN Director may recommend for funding proposals referred to in §11 (18) if the Principal Investigators decide not to sign the funding agreement for research projects referred to in §11 (16) and §11 (19).

Disclaimer:

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.

