

Annex 1
to Order No 6/2023 of 9 January 2023
by the Director of the National Science Centre
on the detailed procedure for evaluating
proposals by the Expert Teams under SHENG 3

The Order lays down the detailed procedure for evaluating proposals by the Expert Teams under the SHENG 3 Polish-Chinese Funding Initiative

Article 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) NSFC, it shall mean the National Natural Science Foundation of China;
- 5) Coordinator, it shall mean the scientific coordinator for the purposes of Article 2 (5) of the Act on the National Science Centre of 30 June 2010 (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1384, hereinafter: the "Act");
- 6) Team, it shall mean the Expert Team defined in Article 18 (7) of the Act, responsible for the evaluation of proposals submitted to the Call. The NCN Director may establish:
 - a) Panel Teams which shall mean teams established for each panel specified in the respective Council Resolution, i.e. falling under the domains of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (HS) and Physical Sciences and Engineering (ST);
 - b) Inter-Panel Teams which shall mean teams established under a given research domain, i.e. HS or ST; and
 - c) Inter-Domain Teams which shall mean teams comprising Experts representing different research domains, i.e. HS and ST;
- 7) Chair, it shall mean a Team member appointed by the Council to manage the work of the Team;
- 8) Review, it shall mean a descriptive and justified proposal review drafted by an Expert or a Reviewer pursuant to the call documents;
- 9) Expert, it shall mean an expert team member;
- 10) Reviewer, it shall mean an external expert defined in Article 22 (2) of the Act, who drafts an individual review of the Proposal at stage II of merit-based evaluation and who is not a member of the expert team;
- 11) Proposal, it shall mean a proposal submitted to SHENG 3;
- 12) Interdisciplinary Proposal, it shall mean a proposal which contains at least one auxiliary NCN Review Panel other than the one to which the proposal was submitted and which has been identified by the chair as requiring an additional individual review;
- 13) Meeting, it shall mean an individual day in an Expert Team's session;
- 14) Session, it shall mean all meetings of the Expert Team at a given stage of the merit-based evaluation;
- 15) Edition, it shall mean calls of the National Science Centre with deadlines expiring on the same date;
- 16) Ranking Long List, it shall mean a ranking list of proposals evaluated at stage I of the merit-based evaluation with an indication of proposals recommended for stage II of the merit-based evaluation;
- 17) List of Projects Recommended for Funding, it shall mean a list of projects recommended for funding by the Expert Team;
- 18) Ranking List, it shall mean the final list of projects recommended for funding by the NCN and the NSFC, compiled pursuant to comparison of the results of merit-based evaluation performed by the NCN and the NSFC;

- 19) Grant, it shall mean a research project funded by the NCN Director pursuant to his decision issued under Article 33 (1) of the Act;
- 20) Applicant, it shall mean an entity submitting a proposal;
- 21) Participating Entity, it shall mean the entity identified in the proposal as a grant recipient for the purposes of Article 31 (5) of the Act; and
- 22) Partner, it shall mean a member of the group of entities for the purposes of Article 27 (1) (2) of the Act.

§ 2. General Provisions

1. Experts 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.
2. Teams shall evaluate Proposals submitted to certain panels (panel teams) or groups of panels (inter-panel teams or inter-domain teams).
3. The number of Experts and composition of the Team shall be decided upon by the Council, considering the number and subject of Proposals under evaluation and the need to carry out the call efficiently.
4. A Team shall consist of at least five Experts.
5. The work of an Expert Team shall be managed by a Chair appointed by the Council.
6. During the Meetings, the Chair may appoint another Expert to manage the work of the Team in his/her stead. Should the Chair be unable to appoint such an Expert, he/she shall be appointed by the Coordinator.
7. The Experts shall be bound by the ethical rules principles laid down in the "*Code of ethics for experts of the National Science Centre*".
8. 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.

§ 3. Teams

1. The duties of the Teams shall include:
 - 1) evaluation of Proposals, including the individual Reviews;
 - 2) compilation of a list of Proposals recommended for stage II of evaluation; and
 - 3) compilation of Ranking Lists and specifying Proposals recommended for funding.

§ 4. Coordinators

1. The duties of a Coordinator shall include:
 - 1) running eligibility checks on Proposals;
 - 2) providing the Chair with the list of Proposals in which at least one auxiliary NCN Review Panel has been specified from another panel or group of disciplines than the one to which the Proposal was submitted;
 - 3) naming Experts to draft individual Reviews in the event of the Chair experiencing a conflict of interest;
 - 4) naming additional Experts to evaluate Interdisciplinary Proposals; additional Experts shall be appointed from among other Teams established to evaluate Proposals in the same call Edition;
 - 5) organising Team 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 Team;
 - 6) indicating Reviewers, taking into account the candidacies put forward by the Experts;
 - 7) assessing the accuracy and impartiality of the opinions drafted by the Experts and Reviewers; and
 - 8) compiling the Ranking Lists by comparing the results of of merit-based evaluation

performed by the NCN and NSFC and presenting them to the Director for his approval.

2. Coordinators shall organise the Team's work and cooperate with its Chair.

§ 5. The Chair

1. The duties of the Chair shall include:

- 1) indicating Experts to draft individual reviews at stage I of the merit-based evaluation, with the exception of the situation described in § 4 (1) (3);
- 2) selecting Interdisciplinary Proposals from the list presented by the Coordinator, for which (in well-justified cases) an additional Review shall be drafted. The Chair may consult his/her decision in this respect with the Experts drafting individual Reviews;
- 3) chairing the Team Meetings, subject to the situation described in § 2 (6);
- 4) conducting voting; and
- 5) approving the minutes from the Team Meetings.

2. The Team's Chair shall cooperate with the Coordinator.

§ 6. Experts

1. The duties of the Experts shall include:

- 1) drafting individual Reviews on Proposals assigned by the Chair or Coordinator at stage I of the merit-based evaluation and presenting them during the first Session;
- 2) drafting a second review of the Interdisciplinary Proposal at the Coordinator's request;
- 3) participating in the Meetings, as well as:
 - a) drafting justifications for the final grades of the Proposals they have been assigned during the Meetings;
 - b) putting forward the candidacies of at least five Reviewers to provide their opinion on each Proposal they reviewed at the stage I of merit-based evaluation and which has been approved for the stage II of evaluation; and
 - c) presenting individual Reviews by Reviewers regarding the Proposals they have been assigned during the second Session.

§ 7. Evaluation of Proposals

1. An eligibility check and merit-based evaluation of Proposals submitted to SHENG 3 shall be performed in parallel by the NCN and NSFC.
2. Eligibility check of proposals submitted to the NCN shall be performed by the Coordinators.
3. Eligibility check of proposals submitted to NCN shall comprise:
 - a) verification of the Proposal for completeness,
 - b) verification whether the Proposal complies with all the requirements set out in the call text,
 - c) verification whether the costs of the Polish part of the project laid down in the NCN proposal and JPD comply with the terms of SHENG 3;
 - d) verification whether the information in the JPD comply with the information in the Proposal;
 - e) in addition, in the case of Applicants outside of the public finance sector or Applicants that do not receive any institutional core funding for research activity, the analysis of their legal and organisational and financial situation in order to assess whether they can provide a sufficient warranty for correct use of the Grant; the analysis may, in particular, cover the period in which the Applicant has carried out research on a continuous basis, examination of the Applicant's assets, including availability of the appropriate research, administrative and office infrastructure and examination of the statutory documents that constitute the basis for the Applicant's business. If an individual applies, the Participating Entity shall undergo the foregoing examination. If a Group of Entities applies, each Partner

- individually shall undergo such an examination.
4. Only Proposals approved as eligible (subject to Point 4 (e)) shall be recommended for merit-based evaluation.
 5. If the analysis referred to in Point 4 (e) gives rise to any doubts as to whether the Applicant, the Participating Entity or the Partner can provide a sufficient warranty for correct use of the Grant, the Proposal may be conditionally recommended for merit-based evaluation. In such an event, the Director shall require that the Applicant, the Participating Entity or the Partner provide additional explanations as to their legal and organisational and financial situation or submit documents to confirm the same within the prescribed period that cannot be less than 7 days.
 6. Proposals may also be rejected as ineligible at a later stage of evaluation, in particular if the deadline referred to in Point 6 is not adhered to or the analysis of the explanations or documents does not dispel the doubts as to whether the Applicant, the Participating Entity or the Partner can provide a sufficient warranty for correct use of the Grant.
 7. Only Proposals approved as eligible by both the NCN and the NSFC shall be recommended for merit-based evaluation performed by the NCN and the NSFC.
 8. At NCN, the merit-based of Proposals submitted to SHENG 3 shall be performed in two stages:
 - 1) Stage I:
 - individual Reviews are drafted by two members of the Team and presented at the first Session. In the case of a Proposal which is 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 Review from a member of another Team;
 - the Team decides on the evaluation of the Proposal based on individual Reviews;
 - a list of Proposals recommended for stage II of evaluation is agreed upon; and
 - justifications for the final decision on Proposals not recommended for Stage II of evaluation are drafted,
 - proposals not recommended for the stage II of merit-based evaluation shall be labelled as follows: C. Proposal not recommended for funding.
 - 2) Stage II:
 - individual Reviews are made by at least two Reviewers based on the data included in the Proposal and annexes thereto. In specific cases, derogations are allowed from the number of individual Reviews. The Coordinator must justify the reasons for the derogation to the Director;
 - the Reviews drafted by the Reviewers are presented by the Experts at the second Session;
 - the final decision on the Proposal is agreed upon by the Team based on the individual Reviews drafted by the Reviewers;
 - a ranking list of Proposals recommended for funding is compiled pursuant to the score and the following recommendations:
 - A. Proposal recommended for funding
 - B. Proposal recommended for funding as second choice.
 - C. Proposal not recommended for funding
 - justifications for the final decision on proposals not recommended for funding are drafted.
- The data included in the Proposal and annexes thereto are subject to an evaluation.
9. A list of Projects recommended for funding by the Team shall be the basis for the final Ranking List compiled pursuant to a comparison of the results of merit-based evaluation performed by the NCN and the NSFC. Funding in SHENG 3 may be awarded to projects recommended by both the NCN and the NSFC and falling within the budget allocated for SHENG 3 by the Council.
 10. The NCN Director may decide to award funding for research projects which are

partially within the limit of resources designated for the research tasks funded by the NCN as long as they are recommended by the NSFC.

§ 8. Team Meetings

1. The duration of Team Meetings should be established with regard to the number of Proposals to be reviewed and the volume of work necessary for their evaluation.
2. On having completed all Reviews assigned to them, Experts shall be given access, by electronic means, to all 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.
4. Team Meetings shall be held by the Chair or Expert appointed in his/her stead.
5. A Coordinator and Recording Clerk shall participate in every Team Meeting but shall not vote.
6. In the case of a conflict of interest, the Expert shall have to leave the Meeting room. Exclusion of the Expert on the grounds of a conflict of interest shall not affect the quorum when voting.
7. The minutes shall be kept by the Recording Clerk and approved by the Coordinator and Chair.

§ 9. Evaluation of Proposals at the Team Meetings

1. All Proposals approved for the merit-based evaluation shall be analysed and discussed at Team Meetings.
2. A merit-based evaluation of Proposals shall be based on the analysis of individual criteria and discussions on the Proposal as compared to other Proposals reviewed in the call. The other applicable documents shall be specified in the evaluation criteria.
3. The budget of the Polish part of the project shall be accepted or rejected by the Team. The Team cannot amend the Proposal in this regard.
4. Proposals shall be allotted an auxiliary score based on Experts' and Reviewers' individual Reviews and, if applicable, auxiliary Reviews for the Interdisciplinary Proposals. Furthermore, the Team shall pass recommendations for Proposals as follows: A. Proposal recommended for funding; B. Proposal recommended for funding as second choice; C. Proposal not recommended for funding
5. Individual Reviews shall not be binding upon the Team and shall be treated merely as a point of departure for the discussions on the grade of the Proposal. The Team may establish an auxiliary score.
6. A List of Projects Recommended for Funding by the Team shall be the basis for the final Ranking List compiled pursuant to comparison of the results of merit-based evaluation performed by the NCN and the NSFC. Funding in SHENG 3 may be awarded to projects recommended by both the NCN and the NSFC and falling within the budget allocated for SHENG 3 by the Council.
7. A Proposal which has been given a "zero" score or "no" answer by the Expert Team in any reviewed criterion, except for the justification of the costs as regards the subject and scope of research by the Chinese research teams, must not be recommended for funding.
8. If the Team cannot find a common position on the evaluation of a Proposal, the Team shall make the decision by way of a vote.
9. Decisions by the Team that should require a vote shall be taken by a simple majority.
10. Ranking Long Lists and Lists of Projects Recommended for Funding must be approved by an absolute majority vote.
11. The Team shall not be required to distribute the whole funding available. The Team may award recommendations "A" to Proposals whose total funding is up to the value of funds allocated for SHENG 3 by the Council (subject to Point 12) and recommendations "B" to any number of Proposals.
12. The Director may decide to fund a research Project which is partially within the limit of

available funds allocated for research tasks funded by the NCN provide that it is also recommended by the NSFC.

13. A List of Projects Recommended for Funding by the Expert Team shall be the basis for the final Ranking List compiled pursuant to comparison of the results of merit-based evaluation performed by the NCN and the NSFC. Funding in SHENG 3 may be awarded to Projects recommended by both the NCN and the NSFC.

§ 10. Ranking Lists

1. In specific cases, the Coordinator may, having consulted the Team, modify the order of research Projects on the List of Projects Recommended for Funding. 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 time fixed for their response;
 - 2) after the lapse of time fixed for the response, 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.
2. In the event referred to in Point 1, the Coordinator shall provide the Director with the modified List of Projects Recommended for Funding (together with a written justification) for his approval.
3. The Coordinator shall compile the Ranking Lists compiled pursuant to comparison of the results of merit-based evaluation performed by the NCN and the NSFC and deliver them to the Director for his approval.
4. A Proposal shall only be funded if:
 - 1) it has been recommended by both the NCN and the NSFC and
 - 2) falls within the budget allocated for SHENG 3 by the Council and the NSFC, subject to §9 (12).
5. In well-justified cases, the Director may, regardless of any doubts arising from the analysis referred to in §7 (4) (e), approve the Ranking List and impose an obligation on the Applicant, the Participating Entity or the leader of the Group of Entities defined in Article 27 (1) (2) of the Act, by way of his decision referred to in Article 33 (1) of the Act, to establish a relevant security for correct use of the Grant (e.g. promissory note, bank guarantee) within the prescribed period.

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.