**THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AS
PROGRAMME OPERATOR OF THE PROGRAMME ‘APPLIED RESEARCH’
IMPLEMENTED UNDER THE NORWEGIAN FINANCIAL MECHANISM 2014-2021

ANNOUNCES
THE SMALL GRANT SCHEME CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

* 1. **Objective of the Programme**

The Programme ‘Applied Research’ has been established under the priority sector Innovation, Research, Education and Competitiveness. The objective of Programme ‘Applied Research’ is to enhance performance of Polish applied research in Poland. One of the challenges that the Polish scientific community faces is to increase the share of female researchers, both in terms of the number, and in terms of their professional role in technical sciences. Technical sciences are the least feminized in comparison to other areas of science. Therefore measures designed to tackle the challenge should take advantage of female researchers’ potential and support their career advancement.

The Small Grant Scheme (SGS) Call will support applied research projects led by female scientists in technical sciences. The projects will contribute to development of scientific research in Poland, as well as strengthen the scientific career prospects of female researchers involved. It is expected that involvement in SGS projects will allow the female researchers to progress in their scientific career, possibly completing important career steps like obtaining the PhD title, graduating from post-doctoral studies or being granted a title of professor.

The Small Grant Scheme, through its realization, will contribute to the following Outcomes and Outputs of the Programme:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Expected Programme Results | Indicator |
| “Enhanced research-based knowledge development” |  |
| Outcome 1: Enhanced performance of Polish applied research | Number of peer-reviewed scientific publications submitted (disaggregated by type of scientific publication) |
| Number of new products/technologies developed |
| Number of registered applications for Intellectual Property Protection |
| Output 1.1: Support to technology transfer for applied research to R&D based SMEs provided | Number of SMEs supported |
| Output 1.2: Support to researchers conducting applied research provided | Number of Polish researchers supported (disaggregated by gender) |
| Output 1.3: Support to women researchers provided | Number of female researchers supported in applied research projects |
| Output 1.4: Support to young researchers provided | Number of grant projects lead by young researchers |

* 1. **Fields of science eligible in the Call**

There are no thematic areas defined in the SGS Call. However, as the Call is dedicated to applied technical sciences, only the fields of science listed as “Engineering and technology” in the “Revised field of science and technology (FOS) classification in the Frascati manual” published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) are considered eligible.

In particular, the Call covers the following fields of science and technology published by the OECD:

1. Engineering and technology
	1. Civil engineering
	2. Electrical engineering, Electronic engineering, Information engineering
	3. Mechanical engineering
	4. Chemical engineering (plants, products); Chemical process engineering;
	5. Materials engineering
	6. Medical engineering
	7. Environmental engineering
	8. Environmental biotechnology
	9. Industrial biotechnology
	10. Nano-technology
	11. Other engineering and technologies
	12. **Types of entities eligible for funding**

- Research organization as defined in the Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, and as stipulated in Article 37 paragraph 1 of the Act on the National Centre for Research and Development, established as a legal person[[1]](#footnote-1) in Poland

- Enterprise as defined in the Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, established in Poland

There are no partnerships foreseen in the SGS Call.

* 1. **Project Promoter and Principal Investigator**

Projects have to be submitted by a **single Polish entity,** known as the **Project Promoter (PP)**.

For each proposal, the **Project Promoter (PP)** has the formal and administrative responsibility for the project, and has to submit the proposal.

The Project Promoter designates the **Principal Investigator (PI),** who is the researcher having the scientific lead of the project on a daily basis. Only a female researcher can be a PI in the SGS Call.

The Programme ‘Applied Research’ supports **early stage researchers**, who are planning their career in science on internationally significant level . With this aim in mind, the SGS Call features a separate ranking list for applications, in which the Principal Investigator fits the criteria of ‘young researcher’, as defined in Article 360 section 2 and Article 360 section 3 of the Act of 20 July 2018 on the Law of Higher Education and Science, (Journal of Laws item 85, 2020).

* 1. **Type of research**

The SGS Call for Proposals aims to support research projects including the following types of research and development:

* Fundamental/Basic research, as defined in Article 2(84) of Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014,
* Industrial research, as defined in Article 2(85) of Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014,
* Experimental development, as defined in Article 2(86) of Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014.

The costs of fundamental/basic research are eligible only if they are in direct relation to, and necessary for industrial or experimental research planned in the proposal. They may comprise a maximum of **10% of total eligible costs of the Project.**

* 1. **The amount of co-financing**

Grants in the SGS call may cover up to 100% of eligible costs for research organisations. In case of enterprises, funding quota will be decided on a case-by-case basis depending on the size of the company, type of research/development, under the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 19 August 2020 on granting state aid through the National Centre for Research and Development, published in Journal of Laws item 1456, 2020.

Only basic/industrial research and experimental development will be funded. Other type of activities (e.g. coordination, dissemination, management) may only be parts of research tasks.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Large Enterprises** | **Medium Enterprises** | **Small Enterprises** | **Research organizations** |
| **Fundamental/Basic Research** | Up to 100% | Up to 100% | Up to 100% | Up to 100% |
| **Industrial Research** | Up to 50+15 (max 65 %) | Up to50+10+15 (max 75 %) | Up to50+20+15 (max 80 %) | Up to100 % |
| **Experimental development** | Up to 25+15 (max 40 %) | Up to25+10+15 (max 50 %) | Up to25+20+15 (max 60 %) | Up to100 % |

* 1. **The budget of the SGS Call for Proposals**

The total allocation earmarked for the SGS Call for Proposals is **EUR 5 000 000**, which will devoted for the co-financing of projects.

The minimum project financing amount is **EUR 50 000** and the maximum is **EUR 200 000**.

A foreseen duration of projects is **up to 24 months.**

* 1. **Eligible expenditures**

a)    Direct cost:

* Staff
* Consumables and supplies
* Equipment
* Travel
* Other direct costs
* Subcontracting

b)    Indirect cost (overheads)

The description of the categories of costs listed above can be found in ‘Cost Eligibility Guide’.
The first and final dates of eligibility of each project will be stated in the project contract for that project.
Expenditures incurred after 30 April 2024 shall not be eligible.

* 1. **The currency used for the project proposal’s budget and the settlement of costs in the project implementation**

The currency used for completing the Project Budget, payments from the Programme Operator and settlements between the Project Promoter and Programme Operator will be the Polish Zloty (PLN). The European Central Bank’s exchange rate from the date of the call launch will be used for calculating all cost related to the project application. The project contract will contain the maximum amount of the project grant in Euro.

* 1. **The eligibility criteria of the call**

The following eligibility criteria apply to all proposals submitted under the call:

1. receipt of proposal by the Programme Operator before the deadline date and time established in the call and in compliance with the “Guide for Applicants SGS Call”, p. 2.5;
2. fulfilment of conditions related to:
	1. Project Promoter eligibility as defined in the “Guide for Applicants SGS Call”, p. 2.2,
	2. minimum and maximum amount of grant assistance as defined in the “Guide for Applicants SGS Call”, p. 2.4.1,
	3. maximum project duration and final cost eligibility date as defined in the “Guide for Applicants SGS Call”, p. 2.4.1,
	4. types of activities as defined in the “Guide for Applicants SGS Call”, p. 2.4.1,
	5. currency as defined in the “Guide for Applicants SGS Call”, p. 2.4.3,
	6. cost categories as defined in the “Guide for Applicants SGS Call”, p. 2.4.5,
	7. intensity of state aid as defined in the “Guide for Applicants SGS Call”, p. 2.4.6;
	8. featuring as Principal Investigator in no more than one proposal, as defined in the “Guide for Applicants SGS Call”, p. 2.3
3. confirmation that Project Promoter:
	1. complies with the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including accessibility for people with disabilities and the principle of equality between women and men,
	2. is not excluded from the possibility of receiving funding as defined in the “Guide for Applicants SGS Call”, p. 2.1;
4. completeness of the proposal as required in the ‘Proposal Manual’;
5. accordance with the scope of the call as stipulated in point 2.4.2 of the “Guide for Applicants SGS Call” - the content of the proposal must fall within the fields of science and technology selected for the call; a proposal will only be deemed ineligible on grounds of 'scope' in clear-cut cases.
	1. **Evaluation process and selection criteria**

Evaluation consists of formal (administrative) assessment and scientific peer-review. Only the proposals that meet the formal criteria will be subject to scientific peer-review.

The formal appraisal is carried out by the Programme Operator. The scientific-peer review is carried out by international experts and consists of 2 stages:

* Individual assessment by experts
* Consensus assessment by experts.

Following the eligibility check and depending on the number and topics of proposals received, the Programme Operator in consultation with the Programme Committee and Donor Program Partner, decides whether it is appropriate to include a panel review within the selection procedure.

The proposal can receive a total number of 25 points in the evaluation procedure. To be recommended for funding, the proposal must receive at least 15 points and pass all the thresholds according to the values presented in the table below.

| **Criteria** | **Thresholds** | **Weight** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Relevance in relation to the objective and priorities of the research programme | **YES** | **N/A** |
| 2. Scientific and/or technical excellence | **3/5** | **x3** |
| 3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation and management, including quality and implementation capacity of the applicants and contribution to capacity and competence building | **3/5** | **x1** |
| 4. The potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results | **3/5** | **x1** |

The preparation of final ranking lists and recommendation of the proposals for funding are the tasks of the Programme Committee. The Director of the Programme Operator issues funding decisions for the proposals recommended for financing by the Programme Committee.

More detailed information on evaluation procedure is presented in the document ‘Guide for Evaluators’.

* 1. **Payment system**

Payments towards the projects are executed in the form of advance payments. The first advance instalment of maximum 30% of the total grant amount will be transferred within 30 days from the signature of the project contract to the Project Promoter through Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego (BGK). The Programme Operator places a payment order. Further advance instalment(s) will be transferred to the project in accordance with an individual schedule of payments and upon approval of the payment request(s), as stipulated in the project contract. These further instalments may be paid when at least 70% of the previous advance instalment(s) has been reported as incurred and not later than 15 days after the Programme Operator’s approval of payment requests.

In case of justified doubts as to the proper performance of the project and in exceptional cases, e.g. unclear financial status, previous irregularities, warning signals /suspicion of financial abuse, a payment model in the form of reimbursement of incurred expenditure may apply to a project, after the analysis (the analysis concerns in particular the situation of the Project Promoter as well as scientific and financial progress of the project).

* 1. **Submission of proposals**

Applications from Project Promoters for financial support under the SGS Call are made in the form of project proposals submitted to the Programme Operator.

Proposals shall be submitted electronically in English through the Programme Operator’s Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS), available under the following address: <https://lsi.ncbr.gov.pl/>.

Each project proposal must feature one and not more than one Principal Investigator, who must be a female researcher.

The Project Promoter can edit and validate the proposal until the closing date of the call. Only proposals that have been completed fully and correctly may be submitted.

Proposals shall be submitted no later than 16:00 (CET) before the relevant submission deadline.

Only the duly authorised representative of the Project Promoter is authorised to submit a proposal.

Detailed description of the application form and the instruction on how to submit the proposal are presented in ‘Proposal Manual’. Please be informed that the disclosure of any consultant involved in the preparation of the project application is required.

* 1. **Duration of the SGS Call for Proposals**

The on-line submission system will be available for applicants as of **28 September 2020**.
The deadline for submission of proposals is **11 December 2020 16:00 CET**.

* 1. **Call documents**
* Guide for Applicants
* Cost eligibility guide
* Guide for Evaluators
* Proposal Manual
* Proposal Manual Annexes:
	+ Annex 1 – ‘Project proposal form – Relevance and Excellence’ template
	+ Annex 2 – ‘Project proposal form – Implementation and Management’ template
	+ Annex 3 – ‘Project proposal form – Impact’ template
	+ Annex 4 – ‘Project proposal form – Ethical and gender balance issues’ template
	+ Annex 5 – ‘Ethics Issues Table Checklist’
	+ Annex 6 – CV template
	+ Annex 7 – Classification (OECD , NABS, PKD, IEA, List of National smart specializations, Legal status list)
	+ Annex 8a – Evaluation survey template (research organisation)
	+ Annex 8b – Evaluation survey template (enterprise)
	+ Annex 9 - Financial standing template
	+ Annex 10 – Oświadczenie woli dotyczące składania dokumentów/oświadczeń za pośrednictwem systemu informatycznego / Declaration of submission of documents/statement through the online system
* List of necessary information, declarations and documents required at the stage of issuing funding decision and the stage of signing of the project contract.
* Project contract template.
	1. **Legal acts**
* Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021, hereinafter referred to as ‘Regulation’;
* Guideline for Research Programmes – rules for the establishment and implementation of programmes falling under the Programme Area “Research”, in frame of the ‘Regulation’;
* Programme Agreement between the Financial Mechanism Committee and Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development of the Republic of Poland for the financing of the Programme “Applied Research”;
* Act of 30 April 2010 on the National Centre for Research and Development (Journal of Laws item 1770, 2019);
* Act of 20 July 2018 on the Law of Higher Education and Science, (Journal of Laws item 85, 2020);
* Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 17 September 2010 on the detailed mode of performance of tasks of the National Centre for Research and Development (Journal of Laws No 178 item 1200);
* Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 19 August 2020 on granting state aidthrough the National Centre for Research and Development (Journal of Laws item 1456, 2020).
	1. **Question and queries to the Programme Operator**

	For additional information, please contact:
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The following e-mail address should be used when contacting the NCBR on the matters concerning the SGS Call for Proposals: norwaygrants-at-ncbr.gov.pl.

1. understood as a legal entity under the Polish law, i.e. an entity that is capable of having and amend legal rights and obligations within Polish legal system, such as to enter into contracts, sue, and be sued, excluding natural persons. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)