

POLISH-NORWEGIAN RESEARCH PROGRAMME

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

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Further call information, forms and guidelines are available on the NCBR webpage:
www.ncbir.pl/en/norwaygrants.

1. INTRODUCTION

The *Polish-Norwegian Research Fund* in the period 2007 to 2011 had a budget of 25 million euro and funded 22 collaborative research projects in the areas of health and environment as well as 29 workshops and conferences. Project partners included researchers from universities, hospitals, research institutes from both Poland and Norway, and involved in some cases enterprises.¹

The feedback from the Polish-Norwegian research teams was unanimously positive. Research methods and data were shared and compared, ideas and perspectives exchanged. Over 20 young researchers carried out their PhD or postdoctoral work in stimulating, international environments. 270 publications have already appeared and more still are forthcoming. Most significantly, many of those involved are already planning the continuation of the cooperation, ensuring long lasting effects of the investment made.

The present financing period (2012-2017), during which *the Polish-Norwegian Research Programme* will be implemented, foresees much higher budget (almost 39 million euro) for the financing of bilateral research projects in 5 major thematic areas (including social sciences and gender issues) and 2,3 million euro for the Small Grant Scheme. This new period will allow, on one hand, for the continuation of research work commenced in the previous period, and on the other, for setting up new partnerships and developing project in new thematic areas. Hopefully, the collaborations established under the Programme will build solid grounds for future partnerships and projects executed under the EU framework programmes (i.e. *Horizon 2020*).

Analysis of challenges and needs in Poland with regard to the Programme areas is based on national strategic documents (i.e. *the National Development Strategy 2007-2015*² and *the National Research Programme*³) that refer to environmental protection, climate changes, health protection and social sciences, as well as analysis of trends concerning gender equality and the share and professional position of women in the sector of research.

The legal framework for implementing research programmes under the Norwegian Mechanism is in line the 7th Framework Programme of the EU. Based on the experiences of the previous financing period, application procedures and guidelines for the implementation of projects have been simplified. Thus, *the Polish-Norwegian Research Programme* will be more friendly to future beneficiaries that is Polish and Norwegian researchers.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

The overall objectives of the Norwegian Mechanism, according to the Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014, are to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and to strengthen bilateral relations between Norway and the beneficiary States through financial contributions in the priority sectors listed in the Regulation. One of these sectors is research.

The objective foreseen for the research sector, to be achieved through the research partnership programme (*the Polish-Norwegian Research Programme*), is enhanced research-based knowledge development in Poland through enhanced research cooperation between Poland

¹ <http://www.fbn.opi.org.pl/>.

² http://www.mrr.gov.pl/english/Regional_Development/Development_Policy/srk/Strony/srk.aspx

³ <http://www.ncbir.pl/programy-strategiczne/>

and Norway. The cooperation is to be based on equal partnerships between Norwegian and Polish research institutions, with the leading role of the latter (Annex 12 to the Regulation, art. 1). Mechanisms implemented to intensify this cooperation include the mobility component, allowing the Polish and Norwegian project partners to take advantage of research expertise of the other partner.

The primary outputs of *the Polish-Norwegian Research Programme* will be research results, including scientific publications, patent applications submitted, number of female researchers supported by the programme and number of researchers using the mobility component.

Moreover, the Programme shall strengthen capacity and build competence of the Programme Operator, project promoters, project partners as well as researchers. The Programme shall prepare the beneficiaries for further cooperation within the European Union's framework programmes for research, technological development and demonstration activities (Horizon 2020) as well as other European or international programmes.

The Polish-Norwegian Research Programme is targeted for research and experimental development in the following areas: environmental protection; climate change, including polar research; health; social sciences and bilateral relations, including the issues of migration, social cohesion, the role of minorities and the social dimension of sustainable development; gender equality and work-life balance. The Programme also foresees a Small Grant Scheme designed to facilitate career development of female researchers in technical sciences.

The National Centre for Research and Development, as Programme Operator, is responsible for the preparation and implementation of the Programme in accordance with the rules of good financial management, efficiency and effectiveness. Its task is to ensure that the projects selected on the basis of calls for proposals contribute to achievement of the general objectives of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014, as well as specific objectives of the Programme. The Research Council of Norway is a partner for the Programme, representing Norway.

3. MODALITIES OF THE PROGRAMME

The Programme comprises 2 modalities. The primary modality (called 'the Core') is joint research projects conducted by Polish and Norwegian researchers in 5 thematic areas. The second modality (the Small Grant Scheme) is small research projects conducted by Polish female researchers in technical sciences, directly related to their career advancement.

The main criterion of evaluation for all areas of the Programme will be the scientific quality of the project, and additionally, for applied research projects, innovation-driven approach.

3.1. THE CORE CALL

In the Core Call both **applied research and basic research projects** will be eligible for financing in all programme areas. However, in the environment area projects should be focused more on applied rather than basic research.

3.1.1. Environment

The objective of this programme area is to devise innovative technologies, allowing for a maximum reduction of the negative impact of human activity on the natural environment.

The environmental protection programme area includes, for example:

- rational use of natural resources, including rational water management,
- recycling technologies,
- technologies of new and renewable energy sources, effective use of energy,
- technologies that impact limiting of greenhouse gases and aerosols,
- technologies of carbon capture and storage (CCS).

In the area of environmental protection, a challenge is posed by the growing threat to the natural environment, which is shown by e.g. industrial disasters, air, soil and water pollution, degradation of the natural environment, over-exploitation of the forest resources, decreasing water resources. In order to intensify environmental protection activities, according to *the National Development Strategy 2007-2015* and *the National Research Programme*, eco-innovations will be supported, including investment projects and organizational activities, as well as the modes of spatial development.

The activities implemented should lead, for example, to:

- major limitation in consumption of natural resources and changes in application of technological processes to non-renewable resources,
- reduction of air, water and soil pollution emissions,
- reduction of vibrations and noise levels,
- reduction of environmental degradation,
- increasing of biodiversity,
- creation of workplaces in environment friendly fields (e.g. ecological agriculture and the associated food processing, eco-tourism),
- development of technologies of carbon capture and storage (CCS).

Budget and project size

The indicative budget foreseen for this programme area is EUR 13 000 000. The minimum project financing amount is EUR 150 000 and the maximum EUR 1 000 000. A foreseen duration of projects is up to 3 years.

3.1.2. Climate change including polar research

The objective of this programme area is to assess the impact of climate changes on the environment and economy. The climate change programme area includes, for example:

- monitoring of climate changes,
- impact of climate changes on ecosystems and biodiversity,
- assessment of the risk of climate changes in the context of agriculture, food production, water management,
- polar research.

Research on **climate changes** is very important from the perspective of functioning of the economy. It has been indicated that climate changes in the next 50 years will exert a visible

impact on the main sectors, such as: water management, agriculture, forestry, fishing, infrastructure and transport, tourism, healthcare, power supply. Climate changes will also impact the ecosystems and biodiversity. Therefore, the Programme will provide substantial support for counteracting climate changes caused by environmental degradation. In this way, the Programme will contribute to sustainable economic development and environmental protection.

Polar research is today a central part of the global research in such fields as climate changes. The effects of research in the Arctic should be used in model studies for preparation of environmental change scenarios and for climate changes, as well as multidimensional human impact on the environment. Arctic research will allow the Polish scientists to participate in systemic observations and organized monitoring of climate changes at the global level.

Budget and project size

The indicative budget foreseen for this programme area is EUR 6 000 000. The minimum project financing amount is EUR 150 000 and the maximum EUR 1 000 000. A foreseen duration of projects is up to 3 years.

3.1.3. Health

This area includes research on intensification of health threats to the population of Poland, which, according to the National Research Programme, consist of lifestyle diseases. These include diseases of the circulatory system, hypertension, myocardial infarctions and strokes, malignant neoplasms, kidney diseases, diabetes, obesity, mental illnesses (mainly depression), dementias and addictions to alcohol, medications and drugs, allergies. Substantial advancement of knowledge allows for identification of causes of lifestyle diseases, high-risk groups, as well as the proper large scale interventions. The objective of research in the health area will be to promote the techniques of early detection of these diseases in order to implement prevention and treatment.

The scope of this area should also encompass drugs with defined molecular structures - nanopharmacology. The dynamics of works on drugs of this kind contributes to creation of new therapeutic conditions. The objective of the area will be to support research on stem cells, which provide new perspectives for regeneration and reconstruction of body organs. In the field of regenerative medicine, a significant issue is research on somatic characteristics of stem cells and umbilical cord blood stem cells. In particular, regeneration of organs and examination of the phenomenon of histocompatibility between the donor and the recipient is of significance, as well as development of the methods of growing of organs for transplantation purposes.

Research on epigenetics of lifestyle diseases along with molecular research is the component that associates the specific environmental threats with incidence of multigene diseases, and it fits the agenda of strategic research, conducted by many institutes. Another area of interest is research on neurodegrading mental diseases and addictions. This area encompasses modern diagnostics, which is focused, among other things, on searching of molecular biomarkers associated with genomics, transcriptomics and proteomics, useful for early detection of diseases, forecasting of progress of therapy, monitoring of effectiveness of treatment or being the potential aims of new therapies.

The health area includes, for example:

- lifestyle diseases,
- drugs with defined molecular structures,

- nanopharmacology,
- analytical epidemiology,
- epigenetics of lifestyle diseases,
- neurodegrading mental illnesses and addictions,
- modern diagnostics,
- modern pharmacology and regenerative medicine.

Research in the field of **health** should promote research activities and, if relevant, combined with promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Research should be aimed at ensuring an improvement in the health condition of the society at a level, which will reduce the distance between Poland and the average health condition of the population of the European Union. *The Polish–Norwegian Research Programme* will contribute to diminishing of disparities between Poland and Norway in terms of the healthcare system. It is expected that preventive healthcare will be strengthened, as well as prevention of occupational and lifestyle diseases. Improvement of the health condition of the population will exert a positive impact on the competitiveness of the Polish economy, and thus on the relative decrease of the burden on the public finances.

Budget and project size

The indicative budget foreseen for this programme area is EUR 13 000 000. The minimum project financing amount is EUR 150 000 and the maximum EUR 1 000 000. A foreseen duration of projects is up to 3 years.

3.1.4. Social sciences and bilateral relations, including the issues of migration, social cohesion, the role of minorities and the social dimension of sustainable development

The aim of this programme area is to support research in social sciences and bilateral relations. The issues under this heading also cover migration, social cohesion, the role of minorities and the social dimension of sustainable development

The aim of the social sciences area is to support research on synergic use of resources (understood as the total of assets: people, companies, communities, regions and institutions, which, when appropriately used, may become a source of the future wellbeing of the country).

The area of social sciences includes, for example:

- synergic use of resources,
- new sources of progress and competitive advantage,
- demographic changes,
- research on improvement of effectiveness of public institutions
- migration.

In the short-term perspective, it is significant to search for new sources of development and competitive advantage in the context of changes taking place in the global environment. In this regard, there is a visible increase of the importance of intangible assets. Therefore, research focusing on identification of conditions for development of talent and of a knowledge-based economy through the analysis of barriers and possibilities of development of innovativeness,

creativity and entrepreneurship of the citizens, as well as science and education institutions, is necessary.

The area concerned also includes research on phenomena associated with the ageing of the society such as:

- conditions of professional and social activation of the elderly,
- shaping of the new structure of needs,
- access to digital services and goods for the generation of 50+,
- identification of consequences of the use of information and communication technologies,
- systems that simulate a change in the quality of life of the information society,
- rules that ensure the safe functioning of the society, the economy and the state,
- possibilities of shaping pro-active attitudes at all stages of life.

The topic of migration will encompass themes such as: migration flows and patterns between Poland and Norway; comparison of national and institutional rules and regulations, practices and approaches in the field of migration. The establishment of conditions for successful integration of migrants into their host society, specifically including acquisition of language skills, will also be of interest in this area. Moreover, the exploration of the interplay of national, institutional and personal benefits and incentives/disincentives in migration will be included in this area, as well as investigation of common and divergent migration policies, including migrant introduction programmes as a prerequisite for successful integration.

Budget and project size

The indicative budget foreseen for this programme area is EUR 3 000 000. The minimum project financing amount is EUR 150 000 and the maximum EUR 1 000 000. A foreseen duration of projects is up to 3 years.

3.1.5. Gender equality and work-life balance

The aim of the area is to support research which contributes to gender equality and work life balance

One of the topics of importance in this area is organizational approaches to increase participation and career advancement in fields where one gender is under-represented. Gender equality covers, for example :

- recruitment, evaluation, promotion and retention policies in public and private organisations, including universities;
- organisational approaches to increase participation and career advancement in fields where one gender is under-represented;
- examination and comparison of institutional best practices in gender equality;
- research structures and activities on gender issues in cities and rural areas, including but not limited to poverty, women's participation in decision-making and public life, equal economic independence for women and men.

In today's world both men and women take up professional careers and strive to develop them parallel to raising children. To keep a work-life balance is an important issue for contemporary couples. Institutional or regulatory support provided by the state/ institution (e.g. returning

schemes after career break) will be becoming more and more important in the future. The scientific community itself is an interesting object of research in this area. Work-life balance covers, for example:

- comparison of institutional policies supporting dual career couples;
- institutional issues relating to the creation of a work/life responsive working environment;
- cultural and organisational structures promoting work/life balance, including returning schemes after career breaks.

Budget and project size

The budget of EUR 3 529 412 is earmarked for this programme area. The minimum project financing amount is EUR 150 000 and the maximum EUR 1 000 000. The foreseen duration of projects is up to 3 years.

3.2. THE SMALL GRANT SCHEME

The scheme provides support for research projects implemented by women specializing in the area of technical sciences, which are the least feminized in comparison with other areas of science. It is aimed at strengthening the competences of female scientists allowing them for substantial advancement in their careers. The output gained through the projects should contribute to the completion of doctoral or post-doctoral studies or to being granted a professor title.

One of the challenges as far as the Polish scientific community is concerned is to increase the share of women, both in terms of the number of the employed in the field of R&D, and in terms of their role in the area of technical sciences, by taking advantage of their potential and supporting their scientific career development and promotion.

In Poland, the share of women among research and development employees in year 2008 was 38%. There is a significant trend, which has been observed for many years, of a decreasing share of women in individual groups, reflecting the higher positions and scientific degrees. In year 2009, there were 37.5 thousand doctoral students, including 52.4% women. In humanities, social and natural sciences, medicine and agriculture, women encompassed more than 50% of all doctoral students, while in technical sciences – 30.3%. In year 2009, the Ph.D. degree was obtained by 5 068 including 50.6% women. Like in the case of doctoral students, those with the newly acquired Ph.D. degree were mostly women, except for technical sciences, where they constituted only 27.5%. As for post-doctoral studies, in the group of 908 students, there were 36.3% women; men dominated all fields of science, and the highest share of women was observed in medical sciences (47.4%), while the lowest - in technical sciences – only 17.2%. In year 2009, the professor title was awarded to 697 academic employees, including 210 women. The share of women in the group of professors amounted to 30.1%, and it has been increasing systematically. In all fields of science, the title of professor was awarded more often to men, while the highest share of women was recorded in agricultural sciences (38.9%), and the lowest - in technical sciences – 15.4%⁴.

⁴ "Science and technology in Poland in 2009", Central Statistical Office, Statistical Office in Szczecin, Statistical Information and Elaborations, Warsaw 2011

The Small Grant Scheme will provide support for projects allowing women to complete doctoral or post-doctoral studies or to being granted a professor title in the areas falling into the scope of the following technical sciences: architecture and urban planning, automated technology and robotics, biocybernetics and biomedical engineering, biotechnology, construction and machine operation, construction, electronics, electrotechnology, energetics, geodesy and cartography, mining and engineering geology, computer science, chemical engineering, materials engineering, environmental engineering, mechanics, metallurgy, chemical technology, telecommunications, transportation, textile manufacture.

Budget and project size

The amount of EUR 2 352 941 will be dedicated for grants of **EUR 50 to 100 thousand**. The projects should be implemented within **12 to 24 months**.

4. PREPARATORY COSTS OF THE PROJECT PROPOSAL IN THE CORE CALL

The Programme foresees the possibility to apply for the reimbursement of the project proposal's preparatory costs both for the Project Promoter and as well as Norwegian and Polish partners. These are the costs related to the search for partners prior to or during the preparation of a project application, the development of such partnerships and preparation of an application for a partnership project proposal.

Project Promoters will apply for the reimbursement of such costs while applying for a project to be funded under the core call. The lump sum of EUR 5,000 will be reimbursed in the case of proposals recommended for funding. The lump sum of EUR 2,500 will be reimbursed for proposals that have not been selected for funding but have received a score above a certain threshold (number of points received in the evaluation procedure). This threshold is to be approved by the Programme Committee.

5. TIME SCHEDULE

The Core Call will have the following time schedule:

September 2012	announcement of the call
September 2012	start for submission of proposals
November 2012	deadline for submission of proposals
end of February 2012	funding decisions
March 2013	earliest start of projects

The Small Grant Scheme Call will have the following time schedule:

September 2012	announcement of the call
December 2012	start for submission of proposals
January 2013	deadline for submission of proposals
May 2013	funding decisions
June 2013	earliest start of projects

All proposals must be submitted no later than 16:00 (CET) before relevant deadline in electronic format to the on-line submission system <https://osf.opi.org.pl>.

6. BUDGET

The budget earmarked for the Core Call is EUR **38 713 823**. On top of that an amount of EUR **2 352 941** will be allocated to the Small Grant Scheme. The table below shows the budget allocations for the programme areas/modalities. The allocations for the programme area *Gender equality and work-life balance* and for the Small Grant Scheme are set out in the Programme Agreement.

The allocations for the remaining areas are indicative and may be readjusted by the Programme Committee depending on the quality and number of proposals from each thematic area, recommended for funding.

The minimum project financing amount in the Core Call is EUR 150 000 and the maximum EUR 1 000 000.

In the Small Grant Scheme the minimum project financing amount is EUR 50 000 and the maximum EUR 100 000.

Indicative budgets

Programme area/ modality	Budget allocation [EUR]	Project duration
ENVIRONMENT	~13 000 000	up to 3 years
CLIMATE CHANGE inc. polar research	~6 000 000	up to 3 years
HEALTH	~13 000 000	up to 3 years
SOCIAL SCIENCES AND BILATERAL RELATIONS, INCLUDING THE ISSUES OF MIGRATION, SOCIAL COHESION, THE ROLE OF MINORITIES AND THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	~3 000 000	up to 3 years

Budget allocations

Programme area/ modality	Budget allocation [EUR]	Project duration
GENDER EQUALITY and WORK-LIFE BALANCE	3 529 412	up to 3 years
SMALL GRANT SCHEME	2 352 941	12 to 24 months

7. THE ROLE OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

The Programme Operator established the Programme Committee, consisting of five members, representing Norway and Poland – members of the research community and main research users. In particular, the Programme Committee is to support the Programme Operator and to monitor the implementation of the programme. The tasks of the Programme Committee include:

- approving the selection criteria and the texts of the calls for proposals,
- recommending to the NCBR which proposals to select for funding and final awarding of grants,
- reviewing progress made towards achieving the objectives of the programme,
- monitoring of the implementation of the programme by the NCBR,
- reviewing annual programme reports,
- proposing revisions of the programme likely to facilitate the achievement of the programme's objectives
- adopting a Guide for Applicants and guidelines for evaluators.

The Programme Committee sessions are called by the Chair of the Committee. Representatives of the FMO, the National Focal Point and relevant ministries of the Donor and Beneficiary State are invited to participate as observers.

8. GENERAL RULES FOR THE CORE 2012 CALL

Eligibility of project partners/ project promoters

The proposal under the Core 2012 Call must include at least one Polish and one Norwegian partner eligible according to the Programme:

- **Eligible applicants/project partners: research organisations as defined in Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2006/C 323/01).**

For each proposal, project partners designate the 'Project Promoter' (PP) - an entity formally responsible for submitting the proposal on their behalf. In proposals submitted under the Polish-Norwegian Research Programme project promoters are Polish institutions.

The application procedure consists of one mandatory stage: **Proposals must be submitted by the PP no later than 16:00 (CET) before the relevant submission deadline in electronic format to the online submission system** <https://osf.opi.org.pl>.

Applications have to be submitted in English.

Detailed explanation about the application process is described in a separate document called '**Guide for Applicants – Core 2012 Call**'. Explanations about the Peer Review process and the selection criteria are described in a separate document called '**Peer Review Guidelines – Core 2012 Call**'.

All call information and guidelines may be downloaded from the NCBR webpage: www.ncbir.pl/en/norwaygrants.

9. GENERAL RULES FOR THE SMALL GRANT SCHEME 2012 CALL

The proposals under the Small Grant Scheme call are submitted by Polish female researchers in technical sciences. The application may only be submitted by a female scientist conducting project in an institution being a research organisation as defined in Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2006/C 323/01). The application must be signed by a person having a legal representative powers of the institution.

The application procedure consists of one mandatory stage: **proposals must be submitted no later than 16:00 (CET) before the relevant submission deadline in electronic format to the online submission system** <https://osf.opi.org.pl>.

Applications have to be submitted in English.

Detailed explanation about the application process is described in a separate document called '**Guide for Applicants – Small Grant Scheme 2012 Call**'. Explanations about the evaluation process and the selection criteria are described in a separate document called '**Evaluation Guidelines – Small Grant Scheme 2012 Call**'.

All call information and guidelines may be downloaded from the NCBR webpage: www.ncbir.pl/en/norwaygrants.