

1. In the case of projects submitted by two people, which of the applicants presents the project during the interview with the Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts (IPE)?

The application evaluation procedure is a procedure connected with selection of the first director of the unit implementing the International Research Agenda (IRA). Therefore, the future director's presentation before the panel will be treated as the most important element of the evaluation.

During the meeting with the Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts (IPE), the principal applicant will present the project as the future director of the unit implementing the IRA and the person taking binding decisions on project implementation.

The principal applicant, as the author of the application and in the future the person responsible for implementation of the research agenda and heading one of the research groups at the unit implementing the IRA, also has full competency to respond to the review.

The principal applicant must meet all of the competition conditions for the director of the project, in terms of scientific excellence, experience in managing R&D work, and implementations, and is responsible for presenting the vision for development of the unit during the discussion with the IPE.

2. What is the role of the second applicant during the 3rd phase of evaluation?

On the basis of the review, the Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts (IPE) will decide whether the second applicant may be employed as the leader of a research group at the unit implementing the IRA. Apart from the reviewers' evaluations, the panel will also consider the rationale for designating the given researcher as the leader of a research team, after taking into account the tasks envisioned for the director of the IRA.

A positive decision by the panel is necessary for the second applicant to be employed as the leader of a research team at the unit implementing the IRA without a competition conducted by the International Research Committee of the given unit.

The second applicant does not take part in discussions with the IPE.

3. What are the main stages of the interview with the Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts (IPE)?

The interview will begin with a 15-minute presentation, which must address the 5 criteria constituting the basis for the evaluation by the panel. In the interview, the applicant will address criteria 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6, leaving aside the numerical indicators, which will be the subject of a separate discussion. The presentation should be helpful for the panel in evaluating the criteria for the third stage. The applicant will discuss the issues necessary for assessment of the application according to the criteria applied at this phase of the evaluation.

Following the presentation, a discussion will be held during which the applicant will answer questions from the panel concerning the presentation. The applicant will have an opportunity to refer to the reviews and discuss them with the panel. The panel will address the remarks and questions presented by the reviewers. The applicant may also raise the desire to introduce any changes to the documents submitted in phase I, II or III of the application process.

During the discussion with the IPE, an interview of about 15 minutes with the person representing the foreign partner institution is also planned. The representative of the partner institution must be a person authorized to make binding declarations for the institution.

4. What aspects are considered in evaluating the possibility of realizing the project at the unit indicated in the application (criterion 1)?

The unit implementing the IRA must possess or have access to research infrastructure at a strictly defined location. The unit implementing the IRA must not rely on a dispersed structure, although clearly it is permissible to use specialized research apparatus elsewhere if it would be unjustified to purchase the apparatus or move it to the location where the IRA is being realized.

The possibility of performing the project is therefore affected by assurance of infrastructure support, the undertaking by the project director to lead the unit, the dedicated foreign and local partnership, and creation of conditions for recruitment in an open competition of distinguished leaders of research teams, as well as an area for close cooperation between these research teams (critical mass), which will enable fulfilment of the goals of the programme in line with the Smart Growth Operational Programme, and in particular distinguishing this programme from Virtual Institutes or financing of research consortia.

The possibility of realization of the project at the unit means the achievability of the goal of the programme, consisting of creation in Poland of specialized, internally integrated (i.e. composed of research teams in contact with one another, cooperating and mutually complementing one another), world-class research units.

During the interview with the Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts, the project director must declare that he or she will be employed in realization of the project at the unit implementing the IRA for a measure of hours enabling proper implementation of the project, and that administrative personnel meeting the needs of the IRA unit will be hired.

If the project director does not intend to work full-time on heading the IRA unit and the IRA team, the panel will require a justification for such decision. The possibility of achieving the goal of the programme (realization of the project) will also be affected by the evaluation of the commitment of the director of the unit to other ventures posing a conflict of interest or a potential threat to building a strong IRA unit and ensuring its durability.

5. Does the representative of the foreign partner unit take part in the interview with the Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts (IPE)?

Yes, a portion of the meeting with the IPE will be devoted to an interview with a person representing the foreign partner institution who can make binding declarations on behalf of the institution.

The foreign partner institution is necessary for implementation of the project, and its involvement is evaluated in accordance with criterion 1.

A clear presentation of the benefits for both sides arising out of the partner cooperation, the motivation of the partner organization to enter into the cooperation, and its desire to build up the renown of the unit implementing the IRA, as expressed in the declarations made in writing in the form of letters of intent and information presented during the interview with the panel, are of crucial importance.

6. Can the panel meet at the project implementation site?

Evaluation of the criteria from the third stage will be made during the applicant's interview with the Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts (IPE) at the offices of the Foundation. The information and

declarations submitted to the panel by the applicant and the partner institution will also be verified at the project implementation location.

More specifically, implementation of recommendations from the panel concerning organizational aspects of the project (or documents) may be verified at the project implementation site.

Experts appointed to provide an opinion on specific aspects indicated by the panel may also participate in on-site evaluation. The panel will be informed of the results of the on-site verification of projects.

A positive result from the verification of the project at the project implementation location is necessary to maintain the position of the application in the ranking created by the IPE and the decision taken by the IPE.

7. How should the requirement presented in criterion 3 involving outreach to young researchers and the society be understood?

The highest-rated projects should ensure the participation of undergraduates, doctoral students and postdocs in realization of the project. Information about the project should be disseminated in the public forum to enable young researchers from all over Poland and abroad to participate in implementation of the project. The applicant must demonstrate that the conception for functioning of the IRA will ensure that it is a place attracting and involving distinguished young researchers, and that on this issue it will be capable of competing with the world's finest centres.

Criterion 3 also refers to building the knowledge-based economy, which means that an exemplary model for pursuing science, and an ethically irreproachable organizational model, will be implemented in the project, and the research conducted will comply with the highest standards. The unit should contribute to building the prestige of science and achieving measurable socioeconomic benefits in science.

8. How will the IRA's contribution to economic development declared by the applicant in criterion 3 be evaluated?

A fundamental obligation of the IRA unit is to conduct highly competitive research whose long-term results should strengthen the national economy through implementation first and foremost of "disruptive innovations."

Implementation of a unique research programme capable of effectively competing with comparable institutions around the world will be regarded as playing a key role in the economic development of Poland. The competitive advantage should be based on an innovative method for solving the research issue or civilizational or social problem taken on by the IRA.

During interviews with the IPE, evaluation of this criterion will be connected with the competitive value of the research agenda on a global scale. Only such projects can ensure the competitiveness of the Polish economy and enable achievement of the goal of the IRA programme, that is, on one hand to build a strong, world-recognized research institution, thus raising the standing of Poland as a location for conducting excellent scientific research, and on the other hand introducing into the economy Polish inventions and ideas enabling achievement of advantages on world markets.

9. What will evaluation of the standards for commercialization of results (criterion 4) involve?

Assessment of the standards of commercialization of results will consist on one hand of evaluation of the commercialization potential of the anticipated results and the potential market, and on the other hand an assessment of the strategy for commercialization of the results and obtaining specialized personnel with the necessary knowledge and skill in this area. During the evaluation, the experts will rely not only on the applicant's declarations, but primarily on their own knowledge and experience, enabling them to assess the feasibility, effectiveness and uniqueness of the proposed solutions.

10. What will be the basis for evaluating science management standards (criterion 4)?

A condition for a high score on this criterion (as well as a condition for funding of every research team in the IRA) is to ensure the appropriate competencies for the International Research Committee (IRC) which will be responsible among other things for conducting the competitions for positions as leaders of research teams.

The documents organizing the functioning of the unit implementing the IRA must ensure the IRC the possibility of taking binding decisions on recruitment and on periodic evaluation of staff.

The unit may propose its own standard for evaluation of staff, so long as it seeks to select and retain the best research team leaders at the unit, avoid conflicts of interest, involve the highest quality evaluators, and achieve the goals of the programme.

11. How will the durability of the IRA be evaluated under criterion 6, i.e. ensuring the unit's continued existence after the end of the IRA funding period?

To meet the durability criterion, it is necessary to comply with the other criteria to the highest degree: i.e. ensuring the feasibility of the project, the appropriate infrastructure, the competitiveness of the International Research Agenda, creation of a critical mass and institutional environment, conducting the highest-quality research, applying the highest standards of management and commercialization, contribution to economic development, and a stable partnership. Only such a unit promises a chance of survival beyond the period of funding from the IRA programme.

The plan for obtaining funds from sources other than the IRA programme must therefore be based on the competitive and groundbreaking strengths of the IRA recognized by institutions funding research around the world.

During the presentation on this criterion, the applicant should convince the panel that it has a plan for development of the unit during the period following the end of funding from the IRA programme.