



Foundation for Polish Science

The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

Internal gap analysis for the Foundation for Polish Science



2012

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1. METHODOLOGY

1.1. Internal analysis of FNP documentation and practices

The first step in the internal gap analysis was a meticulous comparison between the provisions of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (C&C) and the operations of the Foundation. The analysis was conducted internally on the basis of the following documents:

- the FNP Statute
- the Code of Ethics of the Foundation for Polish Science and the Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science
- rules for specific programmes
- procedures and criteria for assessment of applicants
- agreements with recipients (and institutions employing recipients)
- FNP operating practices
- interviews with programme coordinators
- interviews with staff of the Foundation's Public Relations Division.

The results of this analysis were discussed among the FNP Executive Board and programme directors. The analysis demonstrated that a clear majority of the principles set forth in C&C are observed by FNP. At the same time, a number of issues were raised where FNP's operations depart to a greater or lesser extent from C&C and which require reflection on the part of FNP and, potentially, a decision to make changes in how the Foundation operates.

1.2. Survey

The next step in the internal gap analysis was an anonymous survey among FNP winners. The survey was sent to winners of selected programmes, representing all research disciplines and all career stages. There were 154 responses, which were used to analyse the opinions and expectations of FNP's target groups.

1.3. Summary – establishment of action plan

To sum up the foregoing two measures, a discussion was held among the FNP Executive Board, the programme directors, and the PR Division, concerning the compliance of FNP's operations with the C&C principles. The discrepancies found were considered in detail, with an emphasis on seeking out potential solutions and on the costs that introduction of such solutions would entail.

2. INTERNAL GAP ANALYSIS

2.1. General Principles and Requirements applicable to Researchers:

2.1.1. Research freedom

C&C principle:

Researchers should focus their research for the good of mankind and for expanding the frontiers of scientific knowledge, while enjoying the freedom of thought and expression, and the freedom to identify methods by which problems are solved, according to recognised ethical principles and practices. Researchers should, however, recognise the limitations to this freedom that could arise as a result of particular research circumstances (including supervision/guidance/management) or operational constraints, e.g. for budgetary or infrastructural reasons or, especially in the industrial sector, for reasons of intellectual property protection. Such limitations should not, however, contravene recognised ethical principles and practices, to which researchers have to adhere.

Existing rules and practices:

The principle of research freedom is well-established at FNP. Funding is based on the bottom-up approach, with researchers applying for particular programmes with their own projects. Researchers are free to express their ideas, identify scientific questions, and propose methods to address those questions. The topic, methodology, and infrastructural and financial conditions of the proposed research are assessed by reviewers, panellists, and the Foundation's Executive Board. The scientific autonomy of the recipient is also protected by funding agreements with individual beneficiaries and research institutions.

The limitations mentioned in the second paragraph are observed in practice, as well as stated in funding agreements with individual beneficiaries and the ethical codes of FNP and its beneficiaries.

Actions required: none.

2.1.2. Ethical principles

C&C principle:

Researchers should adhere to the recognised ethical practices and fundamental ethical principles appropriate to their discipline(s) as well as to ethical standards as documented in the different national, sectoral or institutional Codes of Ethics.

Existing rules and practices:

The Foundation has taken steps to ensure that the recipients of its funding as well as employees comply with ethical principles. These principles are stated in the Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science and the Code of Ethics of the Foundation for Polish Science.

Actions required: none

2.1.3. Professional responsibility

C&C principle:

Researchers should make every effort to ensure that their **research is relevant to society** and **does not duplicate research previously carried out** elsewhere. They must avoid **plagiarism** of any kind and abide by the principle of **intellectual property** and **joint data ownership in the case of research carried out in collaboration with a supervisor(s) and/or other researchers**. The need to validate new observations by showing that experiments are reproducible should not be interpreted as plagiarism, provided that the data to be confirmed are explicitly quoted. Researchers should ensure, if any aspect of their work is delegated, that the person to whom it is delegated has the competence to carry it out.

Existing rules and practices:

The relevance of the funded research to society is clearly stated in the following sections of the Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science:

§ 1

Research carried out by competition winners and beneficiaries of the Foundation should always serve the public good, aim to extend the boundaries of scientific knowledge, and contribute to the advancement and development of Poland.

§ 5

The Foundation requires that its winners and beneficiaries follow and disseminate the highest ethical standards and the fundamental principles of good practice in science, apply standards of professionalism, and recognize the contribution of their rivals and predecessors to obtained research results.

§ 6

In particular, any symptoms of scientific misconduct consisting in fabrication or falsification of data when conducting research and presenting the results, or when applying for funding, are inadmissible.

§ 7

Winners and beneficiaries are obliged to meticulously follow the principles that apply to authorship of scientific publications. Plagiarism in any shape or form disqualifies the plagiarist. Winners and beneficiaries absolutely must comply with the principle of respect for intellectual property rights and shared ownership in the case of research conducted in cooperation with their students, other scientists, or supervisors. Co-authorship will not be accepted for actions such as procuring funds, supplying materials, training the authors in applied methods, gathering and collating data, or running the institution where the research is being conducted.

Originality and high standards of conducting research seem well defined in the Code and – more generally – in ethical norms of scientific community. Far more problematic is the issue of societal relevance of research. The Foundation supports all fields of science, including the humanities, as well as basic research. Tangible societal and economic impacts are not necessarily expected in any given timeframe. The Foundation operates under the assumption that by supporting the best research, it contributes to the development of new knowledge, which per se is valuable to society. This notion includes high standards of professional responsibility and in particular avoiding plagiarism and respecting other researchers and intellectual property.

Actions required: none

2.1.4. Professional attitude

C&C principle:

Researchers should be familiar with the strategic goals governing their research environment and funding mechanisms, and should seek all necessary approvals before starting their research or accessing the resources provided. They should inform their employers, funders or supervisor when their research project is delayed, redefined or completed, or give notice if it is to be terminated earlier or suspended for whatever reason.

Existing rules and practices:

As a funding agency, the Foundation requires its applicants to fulfil all the necessary conditions of responsible research conduct. This requirement is included in funding agreements with individual beneficiaries as well as in the following provisions of the Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science:

§ 3

Regardless of the stage of their career, winners and beneficiaries have to be familiar with the binding national, sector and institutional regulations on the conditions of their work, including regulations on intellectual property rights, conduct scientific research and spend the awarded funds in accordance with legal regulations binding in Poland, and meet the requirements and terms of the agreement signed with the Foundation.

§ 14

Moreover, the Foundation requires applicants to obtain in advance any permits necessary to conduct their research. In particular:

- *in the case of projects necessitating research involving animals – the consent of the relevant ethical commission, as required by the regulations on animal experiments,*
- *in the case of projects involving studies of protected species of plants, animals and fungi or studies in protected areas – consent or a permit as required by environmental protection regulations,*
- *in the case of projects involving research on genetically modified organisms or with the use of such organisms – consent as required by regulations on genetically modified organisms,*
- *in the case of projects involving clinical tests consent or a permit as required by the applicable Regulations.*

Under the funding agreements, any changes in the original schedule, such as delays, redefinitions, suspension or earlier termination must be communicated to the Foundation. There are instances when such a change in a project is conditioned upon approval of peer reviewers.

Actions required: none

2.1.5. Contractual and other legal obligations

C&C principle:

Researchers at all levels must be familiar with the national, sectoral or institutional regulations governing **training and/or working conditions**. This includes **Intellectual Property Rights regulations**, and the requirements and conditions of any sponsor or funders, independently of the nature of their contract. Researchers should adhere to such regulations by **delivering the required results** (e.g. thesis, publications, patents, reports, new products development, etc.) as set out in the terms and conditions of the contract or equivalent document.

Existing rules and practices:

The Foundation assumes that the responsibility to adhere to all necessary regulations governing working conditions lies with the research institution where the funded research is conducted or where the funded researchers are employed. All the same, it is concerned with the issue, as expressed in the following section of the Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science (see above: **2.1.4. Professional attitude**).

Funding contracts with individual beneficiaries are also signed by their employing institutions, and provide that research is to be conducted in accordance with adequate legislation. In case of the programmes financed from EU structural funds, the provision elongates to national and Community law, and Community policies, including regulations concerning competition, public procurement, environmental protection and gender equality.

Actions required: none

2.1.6. Accountability

C&C principle:

Researchers need to be aware that they **are accountable towards their employers, funders or other related public or private bodies** as well as, **on more ethical grounds, towards society as a whole**. In particular, researchers funded by public funds are also **accountable for the efficient use of taxpayers' money**. Consequently, they should adhere to the principles of sound, transparent and efficient financial management and cooperate with any authorised audits of their research, whether undertaken by their employers/funders or by ethics committees. Methods of collection and analysis, the outputs and, where applicable, details of the data should be open to internal and external scrutiny, whenever necessary and as requested by the appropriate authorities.

Existing rules and practices:

The issue of accountability is addressed in all contracts with beneficiaries, where the specific details are stated as appropriate to the requirements of each particular programme. Recipients are obliged to deliver scientific and financial reports and to secure relevant documents. If these obligations are not fulfilled on a timely basis, the beneficiaries risk losing their funding.

Furthermore, recipients and their research institutions are subject to inspection during the project's implementation, by the Foundation or other institutions authorised to conduct an inspection on the basis of separate regulations, and when requested by such institutions are required to produce any and all documentation related to the project.

The importance of accountability is also highlighted in the following provisions of the Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science:

§ 4

Winners and beneficiaries are obliged to follow the principles of diligent, transparent and effective fund management, and to cooperate in any auditing measures initiated by the Foundation or by other bodies authorized to monitor the course of their research work.

§ 8

The Foundation requires that primary research results be secured and carefully stored; these results should be based on verifiable evidence and come in a form appropriate for the methodology of the given scientific discipline. When proceedings are started with regard to an accusation of scientific misconduct, the lack of such data will be treated as an incriminating circumstance.

Actions required: none

2.1.7. Good practice

C&C principle:

Researchers should at all times adopt **safe working practices**, in line with national legislation, including taking the necessary **precautions for health and safety and for recovery from information technology disasters**, e.g. by preparing proper back-up strategies. They should also be familiar with the **current national legal requirements regarding data protection and confidentiality protection requirements**, and undertake the necessary steps to fulfil them at all times.

Existing rules and practices:

The responsibility to secure safe and adequate working conditions lies with the research institution or employer. In addition, as provided in the Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science, researchers are required to comply with all applicable laws.

Actions required: none

2.1.8. Dissemination and exploitation of results**C&C principle:**

All researchers should ensure, in compliance with their contractual arrangements, **that the results of their research are disseminated and exploited, e.g. communicated, transferred into other research settings or, if appropriate, commercialised. Senior researchers, in particular, are expected to take a lead in ensuring that research is fruitful and that results are either exploited commercially or made accessible to the public (or both) whenever the opportunity arises.**

Existing rules and practices:

The Foundation does not directly oblige its recipients to disseminate or exploit their scientific results, although it expects them to do so. The plans for dissemination of the results are one of the criteria for assessing applications in the VENTURES programme. In all the programmes recipients have to report their outputs (publications, patents, conferences). In the programmes financed from EU structural funds the list of outputs is formally specified by the Foundation. The list of expected outputs and indices of dissemination and exploitation not only helps to aggregate results, but also provides a strong incentive for the laureates.

Being funded by public money, recipients under programmes financed from EU structural funds are subject to further conditions regarding dissemination of scientific results – the results of the project cannot be implemented directly by the Recipient and the Unit and must be provided to all persons interested in commercial use of the results, under equal market principles or free of charge.

The contracts for programmes financed from EU structural funds also specify that the Foundation can publicly present information about the recipient's research activity for informational and promotional purposes. Recipients may be obligated to publicly present the results of the Project in a form, venue and time specified by the Foundation.

The Foundation is trying to encourage researchers to publish in the Open Access system, in appreciation of this initiative's role in facilitating scientific communication and dissemination of results. The Foundation is convinced that Open Access system can very significantly influence research as well as the standards of transparency (in spending public funds) and good practices in scientific community. In some of its programmes, the Foundation offers its laureates special funds for publications in OA system.

The issue of dissemination is also addressed in the Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science.

Actions required: none

2.1.9. Public engagement**C&C principle:**

Researchers should ensure that their research activities are made known to society at large in such a way that they can be understood by non-specialists, thereby improving the public's understanding of science. Direct engagement with the public will help researchers to better understand public interest in priorities for science and technology and also the public's concerns.

Existing rules and practices:

The Foundation is not directly involved in the public outreach of its recipients, nor does it oblige them to perform any activities of this kind. It does, however, appreciate the significance of public engagement. It tries to support researchers in their communication with the public, and encourages them to undertake such activities. In one of the programmes (MISTRZ) the laureates are obliged – by their funding contracts -to engagement with the public. One of the Foundation's programmes (SKILLS) is dedicated to developing the skills necessary for successful communication of science and public engagement.

Actions required:

- inclusion of a description of the relevant activities in the application form as well as the final report;
- obligating beneficiaries to perform public outreach in their financial agreements;
- further support for scientists in their efforts to communicate science to non-specialists;
- active promotion of scientists' public outreach.

2.1.10. Relation with supervisors**C&C principle:**

Researchers in their training phase should establish a structured and regular relationship with their supervisor(s) and faculty/departmental representative(s) so as to take full advantage of their relationship with them. This includes keeping records of all work progress and research findings, obtaining feedback by means of reports and seminars, applying such feedback and working in accordance with agreed schedules, milestones, deliverables and/or research outputs.

Existing rules and practices:

The Foundation does not directly interfere in relations between young researchers and their supervisors, except for incidents of obvious misconduct. However it expects its recipients to adhere to sound research and supervision practices. The practices are promoted by The Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science. Furthermore, the relations between young researchers and their supervisors are monitored by the Foundation by means of surveys, interviews and other meetings with beneficiaries.

Actions required:

ongoing promotion of good practices regarding relations between young researchers and their supervisors.

2.1.11. Supervision and managerial duties**C&C principle:**

Senior researchers should devote particular attention to their multi-faceted role as supervisors, mentors, career advisors, leaders, project coordinators, managers or science communicators. They should perform these tasks to the highest professional standards. With regard to their role as supervisors or mentors of researchers, senior researchers should build up a constructive and positive relationship with the early-stage researchers, in order to set the conditions for efficient transfer of knowledge and for the further successful development of the researchers' careers.

Existing rules and practices:

As stated above, FNP is not directly involved in the relations between young researchers and their supervisors. It advocates high standards for supervising young researchers, as underlined in the Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science and takes interest in relations between younger researchers and their supervisors. One of the Foundation's programmes (MISTRZ) is aimed at supporting distinguished scholars who are able to effectively combine research with training of younger staff. The careers of their trainees are one of the assessment criteria in that programme. Candidates' experience in supervision and team management are seriously taken into account

in all the programmes addressed to senior researchers. The Foundation has also created a special programme dedicated to – among others – developing those skills (SKILLS).

Actions required: none

2.1.12. Continuing professional development

C&C principle:

Researchers at all career stages should seek to continually improve themselves by regularly updating and expanding their skills and competencies. This may be achieved by a variety of means including, but not restricted to, formal training, workshops, conferences and e-learning.

Existing rules and practices:

In the sense of the individual researcher's responsibility, continual development is definitely supported by the Foundation with funding offered at different stages of their careers, on a competitive basis. Competition to obtain the funding as well as the following support and promotion given to laureates clearly advocate the idea of continuing professional development. Furthermore, the Foundation supports its beneficiaries with training and mentoring initiatives (SKILLS programme).

Actions required: none

2.2. General Principles and Requirements applicable to Employers and Funders:

2.2.1. Recognition of the profession

C&C principle:

All researchers engaged in a research career should be recognized as professionals and be treated accordingly. This should commence at the beginning of their careers, namely at postgraduate level, and should include all levels, regardless of their classification at national level (e.g. employee, postgraduate student, doctoral candidate, postdoctoral fellow, civil servants).

Existing rules and practices:

The Foundation supports researchers at different stages of their career, including doctoral students and young PhDs. Advancement of young researchers is a particular aim of FNP. All applicants, regardless of the stage of their career, are recognised as professionals and subject to transparent competition procedures. The quality of the procedures is of constant concern to FNP and is closely monitored.

When a funding programme allows recipients to recruit other researchers, the Foundation takes care to ensure the professional status of young researchers. It actively promotes its young laureates and their achievements. Apart from its own funding activity, the Foundation has rather limited impact on the treatment of young scientists. It does, however, promote good practices regarding recognition of researchers at early stages of their careers. As stated in the Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science, Foundation expects its laureates and beneficiaries to:

'ensure proper recognition for the research achievements and scientific independence of other scientists, especially young researchers, regardless of their job position, academic titles or legal circumstances' (§ 10).

Actions required: none

2.2.2. Non-discrimination

C&C principle:

Employers and/or funders of researchers will not discriminate against researchers in any way on the basis of gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic condition.

Existing rules and practices:

Most importantly, the Foundation adheres to the principle of non-discrimination in its own funding procedures. This principle is underlined in the Foundation's Code of Ethics, which applies to its employees and reviewers involved in the peer-review process. The same attitude is expected from the Foundation's beneficiaries, as underlined in the Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science:

§ 11

The Foundation requires that during recruitment of collaborators for research posts, winners and beneficiaries apply transparent procedures based on the principle of equal access to information, transparency, lack of discrimination, and clear competition criteria. Any recruitment should be based on an open competition enabling scientists from all over Poland and from other countries to take part.

§ 12

Discrimination against collaborators on grounds of gender, age, race, religion, sexual orientation, language, disability, political views or social status is inadmissible. It is also inadmissible to commit mobbing, for instance involving professional relations, wrongful perception of competition, the age or social situation of other scientists.

In Polish environment, the understanding of discrimination is confined mostly to gender. FNP has taken steps to provide equal opportunities for female researchers who have taken career breaks due to maternity (and for male researchers taking paternity leave). Those steps include flexible eligibility conditions and special funding scheme (BRIDGE programme) Age discrimination has been a bit more of a challenge. During the last few years the Foundation has phased out the use of the criterion of age, replacing it with career stage, expressed for example in the number of years following the doctorate or creation of the researcher's (own) first team. The age criterion still appears in two programmes: START and MISTRZ. In the former programme, maintaining age as a condition for joining the programme (maximum 30 or 32 years of age) results from the fact that the programme is designed for persons at a specific, relatively early stage in life, when they are selecting their professional path and achieving their first successes. In this case the traditional distinction into persons before or after the doctorate is not relevant. The programme is designed to encourage young people to work in science. Eliminating the age criterion would threaten to obliterate the concept of the programme.

In the case of the MISTRZ programme, the reason for retaining the age criterion (a candidate may not be over age 60) was the social context of the programme. In Poland the research community is significantly more hierarchical than in most Western countries, and the average age of professors here is clearly higher. Because the programme is based on the principle that candidates are nominated by the research community, there is a concern that without this type of formal restriction the nominations would chiefly be for persons at retirement age. The purpose of the programme is to recognise and provide financial support for persons who still perform very dynamic research.

There is no evidence of any discrimination against researchers on any other basis.

Actions required:

elimination of age as an eligibility criterion in the MISTRZ programme.

2.2.3. Research environment

C&C principle:

Employers and/or funders of researchers should ensure that the most stimulating research or research training environment is created which offers appropriate equipment, facilities and opportunities, including for remote collaboration over research networks, and that the national or sectoral regulations concerning health and safety in research are observed. Funders should ensure that adequate resources are provided in support of the agreed work programme.

Existing rules and practices:

As a funding agency providing mostly stipends and fellowships, FNP has limited power to create an appropriate research environment. When the funding covers specific research activities, the amount is carefully verified during the assessment procedure and negotiated with the recipient to secure adequate means. Moreover, the Foundation expects research institutions employing its recipients to provide them with the right working conditions. This obligation is included in funding contracts. In some programmes, the commitment by the employer is regarded as a criterion for evaluation of the application.

Issues of health and safety in research are governed by national law, and the obligation to comply with those requirements lies with the employer. As stated in the Code, the Foundation expects recipients to be familiar with applicable national, sectoral and institutional regulations on the conditions of their work.

Actions required: none

2.2.4. Working conditions

Existing rules and practices:

Employers and/or funders should ensure that the working conditions for researchers, including for **disabled researchers, provide where appropriate the flexibility deemed essential for successful research performance in accordance with existing national legislation and with national or sectoral collective-bargaining agreements.** They should aim to provide working conditions which allow **both women and men researchers to combine family and work, children and career.** Particular attention should be paid, *inter alia*, **to flexible working hours, part-time working, tele-working and sabbatical leave**, as well as to the necessary financial and administrative provisions governing such arrangements.

Existing rules and practices:

As explained above, the Foundation expects research institutions employing recipients to provide the right working conditions. This obligation is included in funding contracts.

Foundation does not interfere with recipients' obligations to their employers (e.g. teaching). Working conditions, including flexibility, are based on the terms of employment. The Foundation's direct involvement in securing part-time working hours is currently limited to the PARENT-BRIDGE programme, aimed at facilitating research work of pregnant women and top researchers who are raising young children. Another exception is the WELCOME programme, where, to apply for funding the research institution (the recipient's employer) must release the project manager from administrative and teaching duties at the unit exceeding 60 hours of teaching per year. The Foundation is working on a funding scheme for sabbatical leaves for senior researchers.

Actions required: none

2.2.5. Stability and permanence of employment

C&C principle:

Employers and/or funders should ensure that the performance of researchers is not undermined by instability of employment contracts, and should therefore commit themselves as far as possible to improving the stability of employment conditions for researchers, thus implementing and abiding by the principles and terms laid down in the *EU Directive on Fixed-Term Work*.

Existing rules and practices:

The Foundation offers mostly stipends and fellowships, and its funding is granted for limited periods. In most of its programmes, applicants have to be employed by a research institution or be promised employment for the duration of the funding. The Foundation does not interfere with the terms of employment of its recipients, with one exception: when funding research teams, FNP requires the research institutions where the funded project is carried out to provide full-time employment to postdoctoral fellows for the duration of the project.

Actions required: none

2.2.6. Funding and salaries

C&C principle:

Employers and/or funders of researchers should ensure that researchers enjoy fair and attractive conditions of funding and/or salaries with **adequate and equitable social security** provisions (including sickness and parental benefits, pension rights and unemployment benefits) in accordance with existing national legislation and with national or sectoral collective bargaining agreements. This must include researchers at all career stages including early-stage researchers, commensurate with their legal status, performance and level of qualifications and/or responsibilities.

Existing rules and practices:

The Foundation aims to provide the best scientists with adequate funding to carry out research projects, attractive working conditions and salaries, as well as social security. It provides several different types of stipends or salaries:

- stipends given in addition to regular salary, without any specific obligations, in which case social security provisions do not apply;
- outgoing stipends, enabling recipients to spend some time at a foreign research centre – social and health insurance is provided along with the stipend;
- stipends for graduate students, PhD students, and postdoctoral fellows (in the case of PhD students social insurance is covered);
- salaries for persons directly involved in the project (plus non-salary employment costs, including mandatory social and health insurance).

Actions required: none

2.2.7. Gender balance

C&C principle:

Employers and/or funders should aim for a representative gender balance **at all levels of staff, including at supervisory and managerial level**. This should be achieved on the basis **of an equal opportunity policy at recruitment and at the subsequent career stages without, however, taking precedence over quality and competence criteria**. **To ensure equal treatment, selection and evaluation committees should have an adequate gender balance.**

Existing rules and practices:

Funding decisions are based on competition and merit criteria. The choice of reviewers and panellists responsible for assessing applications is based on their expertise, experience and non-partiality. Gender balance is not a priority. The Foundation supports the proposed aim for a representative gender balance, but without that taking precedence over criteria of quality, competence or conflict of interest. Having secured these basic conditions of assessment, the Foundation tries to ensure representative gender balance in its panels. It is a challenge, because the R&D sector in Poland suffers from considerable gender imbalance at senior level, especially in certain fields. For these reasons, the issue of gender balance is not mentioned in either the FNP Code of Ethics or the Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science. However both codes include the principle of non-discrimination,

Actions required: none

2.2.8. Career development

C&C principle:

Employers and/or funders of researchers should draw up, preferably within the framework of **their human resources management**, a specific career development strategy for researchers at all stages of their career, regardless of their contractual situation, including for researchers on fixed-term contracts. It should include the availability of mentors involved in providing support and guidance for the personal and professional development of researchers, thus motivating them and contributing to reducing any insecurity in their professional future. All researchers should be made familiar with such provisions and arrangements.

Existing rules and practices:

The Foundation is not a research institution, does not employ researchers, and does not provide human resources management for them. It does, however, take a great interest in their career development. Some elements of career tracking are included in the evaluation of FNP programmes, and based on this, is tailored the support for researchers. The Foundation offers support for researchers at all stages of their scientific career, with special consideration for the most difficult steps (like gaining independence by young scientists and setting up their own first teams). The Foundation has also introduced a programme aimed at supporting research career development through training, networking and mentoring (SKILLS).

Actions required: none

2.2.9. Value of mobility

C&C principle:

Employers and/or funders must recognize the value of geographical, intersectorial, inter- and trans-disciplinary and virtual mobility as well as mobility between the public and private sector as an important means of enhancing scientific knowledge and professional development at any stage of a researcher's career. Consequently, they **should build such options into the specific career development strategy and fully value and acknowledge any mobility experience within their career progression/appraisal system. This also requires that the necessary administrative instruments be put in place to allow the portability of both grants and social security provisions, in accordance with national legislation.**

Existing rules and practices:

The Foundation has for many years supported mobility of researchers with outgoing stipends. During last couple of years it has developed programmes encouraging researchers from abroad to conduct their research in Poland, as well engaging outstanding researches from abroad in creating research teams in Poland. The other mean of supporting mobility by the Foundation relates to its assessment criteria. In some programmes, when candidates are equally ranked, preferences are given to the ones who move to a new place. Moreover, the candidates are not judged by formal position (habilitation) which would hinder those working abroad.

The Foundation backs its laureates when they change their employer and research institution after receiving the funds. Whenever it is possible it is making effort to adapt flexible funding rules.

Actions required: none

2.2.10. Access to research training and continuous development

C&C principle:

Employers and/or funders should ensure that all researchers at any stage of their career, regardless of their contractual situation, are given the opportunity for professional development and for improving their employability through access to measures for the continuing development of skills and competencies. Such measures should be regularly assessed for their accessibility, take up and effectiveness in improving competencies, skills and employability.

Existing rules and practices:

The Foundation serves this goal by offering its funding to researchers at all stages of academic career as well as by its training and mentoring initiatives (SKILLS programme). Likewise all the Foundation's programmes, this support is offered on competitive basis and is not mass-scaled. The Foundation is pursuing necessary means to provide its beneficiaries with best possible training and professional development support.

Actions required:

on-going pursuit of opportunities for enhancing researchers' careers.

2.2.11. Access to career advice

C&C principle:

Employers and/or funders should ensure that career advice and job placement assistance, either in the institutions concerned, or through collaboration with other structures, is offered to researchers at all stages of their careers, regardless of their contractual situation.

Existing rules and practices:

Career advice should be a part of the employer's human resources strategy. Providing it to every recipient would far exceed FNP's means. The Foundation makes an effort to support researchers with such advice by creating a network of recipients and mentoring schemes (see above: 22. Access to research training and continuous development).

Actions required: none

2.2.12. Intellectual property rights**C&C principle:**

Employers and/or funders should ensure that researchers at all career stages reap the benefits of the exploitation (if any) of their R&D results through legal protection and, in particular, through appropriate protection of Intellectual Property Rights, including copyrights. Policies and practices should specify what rights belong to researchers and/or, where applicable, to their employers or other parties, including external commercial or industrial organisations, as possibly provided for under specific collaboration agreements or other types of agreement.

Existing rules and practices:

FNP does not claim the benefits of the exploitation of the funded research. It is concerned, though, with appropriate protection of intellectual property rights. The issue of property rights is most crucial in the case of technology transfer projects. In such cases, property rights are discussed by the panel during the selection process. The issue is also clarified with the recipients in the funding contracts, when applicable. FNP expects its recipients and beneficiaries to scrupulously respect intellectual property rights, which has been underlined in The Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science. The issue of intellectual property rights has also been included in training offered to Foundation's beneficiaries.

Actions required: none

2.2.13. Co-authorship**C&C principle:**

Co-authorship should be viewed positively by institutions when evaluating staff, as evidence of a constructive approach to the conduct of research. Employers and/or funders should therefore develop strategies, practices and procedures to provide researchers, including those at the beginning of their research careers, with the necessary framework conditions so that they can enjoy the right to be recognised and listed and/or quoted, in the context of their actual contributions, as co-authors of papers, patents, etc, or to publish their own research results independently from their supervisor(s).

Existing rules and practices:

The Foundation welcomes research collaboration and co-authorship. At the same time, It is very much concerned with appropriate recognition of contributions. The recipients are expected to strictly observe the ethical principles regarding co-authorship. This principle is included in the Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science:

§ 7

Winners and beneficiaries are obliged to meticulously follow the principles that apply to authorship of scientific publications. Plagiarism in any shape or form disqualifies the plagiarist. Winners and beneficiaries absolutely must comply with the principle of respect for intellectual property rights and shared ownership in the case of research conducted in cooperation with their students, other scientists, or supervisors. Coauthorship will no be accepted for actions such as procuring funds, supplying materials, training the authors in applied methods, gathering and collating data, or running the institution where the research is being conducted.

§ 10

Winners and beneficiaries are obliged to ensure proper recognition for the research achievements and scientific independence of other scientists, especially young researchers, regardless of their job position, academic titles or legal circumstances.

Actions required: none

2.2.14. Supervision

C&C principle:

Employers and/or funders should ensure that a person is clearly identified to whom early-stage researchers can refer for the performance of their professional duties, and should inform the researchers accordingly. Such arrangements should clearly define that the proposed supervisors are sufficiently expert in supervising research, have the time, knowledge, experience, expertise and commitment to be able to offer the research trainee appropriate support and provide for the necessary progress and review procedures, as well as the necessary feedback mechanisms.

Existing rules and practices:

The Foundation is very much aware of the importance of appropriate supervision for the development of early-stage researchers. Experiences related to supervision and supporting young researchers make one of the assessment criteria for senior researchers. Expectations regarding supervision are expressed in Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science:

§ 9

Winners and beneficiaries who act as scientific supervisors, mentors, leaders or managers should fulfil their role in accordance with the highest professional standards, and show commitment to building partnerlikerelations with beginner researchers to support the successful development of their career. Winners and beneficiaries should ensure that the young researchers in their care have the proper conditions for building an independent scientific position for themselves.

Actions required:

further promotion of good practices of research supervision.

2.2.15. Teaching

C&C principle:

Teaching is an essential means for the structuring and dissemination of knowledge and should therefore be considered a valuable option within the researchers' career paths. However, teaching responsibilities should not be excessive and should not prevent researchers, particularly at the beginning of their careers, from carrying out their research activities. Employers and/or funders should ensure that teaching duties are adequately remunerated and taken into account in the evaluation/appraisal systems, and that time devoted by senior members of staff to the training of early stage researchers should be counted as part of their teaching commitment. Suitable training should be provided for teaching and coaching activities as part of the professional development of researchers.

Existing rules and practices:

FNP does not perform research or teaching activities, nor does it employ researchers. As a funding agency, it does not impose any teaching obligations on its recipients and does not impose any expectations on the amount of time recipients devote to teaching. The only exception is provided for the recipients in the WELCOME programme see above: **2.2.4. Working conditions**).

Actions required: none

2.2.16. Evaluation/appraisal systems

C&C principle:

Employers and/or funders should introduce for all researchers, including senior researchers, **evaluation/appraisal systems for assessing their professional performance on a regular basis** and in a transparent manner by an **independent (and, in the case of senior researchers, preferably international) committee**. Such evaluation and appraisal procedures should take due account of their overall research creativity and research results, e.g. publications, patents, management of research, teaching/lecturing, supervision, mentoring, national or international collaboration, administrative duties, public awareness activities and mobility, and should be taken into consideration in the context of career progression.

Existing rules and practices:

FNP's funding is based on competition. The applications, scientific records of applicants, and their projects are subject to careful assessment by external reviewers/panellists, chosen from among the best scientists. This standard is highlighted in FNP's Code of Ethics and is applied to candidates at all stages of their careers. The Foundation has also established Ethical Rules for Reviewers, according to which applications are to be assessed. The assessment and selection procedures are closely monitored.

The Foundation expects its recipients as well to ensure proper recognition of other scientists, as provided by the Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science.

Actions required: none

2.2.17. Complaints/appeals

C&C principle:

Employers and/or funders of researchers should establish, in compliance with national rules and regulations, appropriate procedures, possibly in the form of an impartial (ombudsman-type) person to deal with complaints/appeals of researchers, including those concerning conflicts between supervisor(s) and early-stage researchers. Such procedures should provide all research staff with confidential and informal assistance in resolving work-related conflicts, disputes and grievances, with the aim of promoting fair and equitable treatment within the institution and improving the overall quality of the working environment.

Existing rules and practices:

As a funding agency, FNP is confronted with the issue of appeals from funding decisions. The Foundation recognises the value of an appropriate complaints and appeals procedures. Some of its programmes provide appeal procedures: applicants have the right to submit an appeal in writing to the Foundation's Executive Board against decisions on their applications. Appeals related to the formal evaluation are reviewed by an internal committee, while appeals related to the merits evaluation are submitted to a committee of external experts. The reason for not having such procedures in all programmes is purely financial and administrative: the cost of programme operations must be kept in proportion to the support offered, and so in the case of programmes with a relatively large number of applications and small stipend value, an appeal procedure seems too costly and time-consuming.

The Foundation does not interfere in the relations between its recipients and their collaborators, except for the instances of when it is informed of violations of ethical norms and when it becomes involved in solving the problem.

Generally, the Foundation follows the principle of supportive and sympathetic relations with researchers and all their complaints and difficulties are carefully considered.

Actions required:

introduction of appeal procedure in other programmes if and when possible.

2.2.18. Participation in decision-making bodies

C&C principle:

Employers and/or funders of researchers should recognize it as wholly legitimate, and indeed desirable, that researchers be represented in the relevant information, consultation and decision-making bodies of the institutions for which they work, so as to protect and promote their individual and collective interests as professionals and to actively contribute to the workings of the institution.

Existing rules and practices:

In accordance with its Statute, the Council of the Foundation consists of senior researchers representing a wide spectrum of scientific fields. Researchers are present also in its Executive Board. All the funding is based on peer review, which involves a large number of researchers in assessment and decision-making processes.

Actions required: none

2.2.19. Recruitment

C&C principle:

Employers and/or funders should ensure that the entry and admission standards for researchers, particularly at the beginning of their careers, are clearly specified and should also **facilitate access for disadvantaged groups or for researchers returning to a research career, including teachers (of any level) returning to a research career.** Employers and/or funders of researchers should adhere to the principles set out in the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers when appointing or recruiting researchers.

Existing rules and practices:

With very limited domestic mobility, recruitment practices are a major problem in the Polish research system. The Foundation has addressed this issue according to its means. It has formulated a recruitment policy for the funding programmes involving recruitment of a team. The principles are stated in the programme documentation. Moreover, the recruitment procedures are presented by applicants in their applications and assessed by reviewers and panellists. Further on, representatives of the Foundation are directly involved in the recruitment as observers.

In the case of other programmes, where funding is provided only for individual researchers (stipends and fellowships), the Foundation has very limited influence on appointment processes at the employing institutions. It expects its beneficiaries to adopt fair recruitment procedures, as stated in the Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science:

§ 11

The Foundation requires that during recruitment of collaborators for research posts, winners and beneficiaries apply transparent procedures based on the principle of equal access to information, transparency, lack of discrimination, and clear competition criteria. Any recruitment should be based on an open competition enabling scientists from all over Poland and from other countries to take part.

The Charter also mentions facilitating access for disadvantaged groups or for researchers returning to a research career, including teachers (at any level) returning to a research career. FNP's funding programmes call for selection of the most effective scientists – competition is based on assessment of the project, qualifications and scientific record of candidates. A certain exception is allowed for researchers who have had career breaks due to childcare. For this group, the Foundations offers special funds to help them return to research. Extended eligibility periods are another form of support for this group.

Actions required: none

2.3. The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

2.3.1. Recruitment (Code)

C&C principle:

Employers and/or funders should establish recruitment procedures which are open, efficient, transparent, supportive and internationally comparable, as well as tailored to the type of positions advertised. Advertisements should give a broad description of knowledge and competencies required, and should not be so specialised as to discourage suitable applicants. Employers should include a description of the working conditions and entitlements, including career development prospects. Moreover, the time allowed between the advertisement of the vacancy or the call for applications and the deadline for reply should be realistic.

Existing rules and practices:

As described above (**2.2.19. Recruitment**) – apart from the ethical codes – FNP has codified the recruitment procedures in the programmes, which allow recipients recruitment of a team. It specifies e.g. ways of advertising the positions, description of the requirements, selecting procedures as well as selection criteria and transparency standards.

Actions required: none

2.3.2. Selection (Code)

C&C principle:

Selection committees should bring together diverse expertise and competences and should have an adequate gender balance and, where appropriate and feasible, include members from different sectors (public and private) and disciplines, including from other countries and with relevant experience to assess the candidate. Whenever possible, a wide range of selection practices should be used, such as external expert assessment and face-to-face interviews. Members of selection panels should be adequately trained should be realistic.

Existing rules and practices:

Foundation's selection procedures are applied to funding programmes. Applications are assessed by independent reviewers in a two-step procedure – it usually takes form of written reviews as well as panel discussion. In both stages of competition, applications are assessed by researchers with appropriate experience. Each application is assessed by at least three reviewers. Applications with the highest ranks are discussed by a panel. Reviewers and panellists are chosen from a pool of distinguished and to a large degree foreign scientists. The choice is based on their qualifications, experience and objectivity. The specific guidelines for the choice of panellists and reviewers is further influenced by programme characteristics. E.g in programmes involving knowledge transfer, panels consists of people with relevant expertise. The issue of gender balanced has already been presented (see above: **2.2.7. Gender balance**). Reviewers and panellists are informed in detail about their role and assessment criteria.

Actions required: none

2.3.3. Transparency (Code)

C&C principle:

Candidates should be informed, prior to the selection, about the recruitment process and the selection criteria, the number of available positions and the career development prospects. They should also be informed after the selection process about the strengths and weaknesses of their applications.

Existing rules and practices:

The first part of this statement is well reflected in the Foundation's policy. Information about the application procedure, as well as the assessment process and criteria, is available on FNP's website. The information is very detailed in the case of some of the programmes which, because they are financed from EU structural funds, impose many specific responsibilities on the Foundation as well as the recipients. The policy is also expressed in both of the Foundation's ethical codes. The second part of the C&C statement, regarding feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of candidates who do not receive funding, is more problematic. Funding decisions are based on opinions expressed by reviewers. In most of the programmes, candidates are informed of the reviews content, which enables them to understand the assessment of their applications as to prepare for the discussion with the panellists. In some cases though (e.g. START), informing all of the numerous applicants of the strengths and weaknesses of their applications and entering into a discussion of these would paralyse the Foundation's activity. Moreover in this case the reviewers rate applications grouped in packages – the assessment of each application is thus relevant to many other applications in similar field.

Actions required:

introduction of a standard – whenever it is possible – of informing candidates about the content of their applications' reviews.

2.3.4. Judging merit (Code)

C&C principle:

The selection process should take into consideration the **whole range of experience** of the candidates. While focusing on their **overall potential as researchers, their creativity and level of independence should also be considered**. This means that **merit should be judged qualitatively as well as quantitatively, focusing on outstanding results within a diversified career path and not only on the number of publications**. Consequently, the importance of **bibliometric indices should be properly balanced within a wider range of evaluation criteria, such as teaching, supervision, teamwork, knowledge transfer, management of research and innovation and public awareness activities**. For candidates from an industrial background, particular attention should be paid to any contributions to patents, development or inventions.

Existing rules and practices:

The assessment process at FNP is strongly based on qualitative criteria. All applications are subject to a peer-review procedure, and then those most highly ranked are reviewed by a panel of experts. Bibliometric indices are never used as the sole criterion, even if they are taken into consideration by reviewers and panellists. Selection criteria generally focus on candidate's project and record, but they vary depending on the aims of the specific programmes. For instance, programmes addressed to young researchers are focused on choosing independent and creative people. When assessing team leaders, management skills are also included in the criteria. The research output is always the core criterion, although in the case of candidates from an industry background this output is regarded in the context of technology transfer.

Actions required: none

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2.3.5. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)

C&C principle:

Career breaks or variations in the chronological order of CVs should not be penalised, but regarded as an **evolution of a career**, and consequently, as a **potentially valuable contribution to the professional development of researchers towards a multidimensional career track**. Candidates should therefore be allowed to submit **evidence-based CVs, reflecting a representative array of achievements and qualifications appropriate to the post for which application is being made**.

Existing rules and practices:

In its selection procedures, the Foundation takes into consideration career breaks due to childcare. It also allows for diversified career models, with non-academic experiences. When relevant to the programme's objectives, industry experience is taken into consideration.

On the other hand, assessment of such applications remains a challenge at the peer review stage.

Actions required:

- further clarification in instructions for the reviewers;
- replacement of the existing requirement of the three best publications of the last 3–5 years as a basis for the candidate's assessment with the requirement of the three best publications chosen by the candidate, regardless of the publication date.

2.3.6. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)

C&C principle:

Any mobility experience, e.g. a **stay in another country/region** or in **another research setting (public or private)** or a **change from one discipline or sector to another**, whether as part of the initial research training or at a later stage of the research career, or virtual mobility experience, should be considered as a valuable contribution to the professional development of a researcher.

Existing rules and practices:

Mobility is very highly valued by the Foundation and is definitely considered an important contribution to the professional development of researchers. Apart from separate funding programmes aimed at outward and inward mobility, the Foundation promotes mobility through its evaluation procedures. In some programmes, when applicants are equally ranked, those with mobility experience are given priority. Moreover, the evaluation process is not restricted by the typical Polish career path in which the postdoctoral degree ('habilitation') serves as a marker for scientific independence (see above: **2.2.9. Value of mobility**)

Actions required: none

2.3.7. Recognition of qualifications (Code)

C&C principle:

Employers and/or funders should provide for appropriate assessment and evaluation of the academic and professional qualifications, **including non-formal qualifications, of all researchers, in particular within the context of international and professional mobility**. They should inform themselves and gain a full understanding of rules, procedures and standards governing the recognition of such qualifications and, consequently, explore existing national law, conventions and specific rules on the recognition of these qualifications through all available channels.

Existing rules and practices:

The assessment of applicants is based on their research experience and qualifications. Depending on the programme's objectives and the recipient's tasks, the assessment criteria include other qualifications, like managerial skills or technology transfer experience (see above: **2.3.4. Judging merit**; **2.3.5. Variations in the chronological order of CVs**; **2.3.6. Recognition of mobility experience**).

Actions required: none

2.3.8. Seniority (Code)**C&C principle:**

The levels of qualifications required should be in line with the needs of the position and not be set as a barrier to entry. Recognition and evaluation of qualifications **should focus on judging the achievements of the person rather than his/her circumstances or the reputation of the institution where the qualifications were gained. As professional qualifications may be gained at an early stage of a long career, the pattern of lifelong professional development should also be recognised.**

Existing rules and practices:

FNP provides support for researchers at almost every stage of their career. Each group of applicants is evaluated and ranked in accordance with the phase of their professional development. The selection process is focused on individual achievements, and the formal position is related only to the terms of employment and the employer's obligations. As provided in the Code of Ethics for Competition Winners and Beneficiaries of the Foundation for Polish Science, the Foundation expects its recipients to adhere to the same principles with regard to other researchers, especially young and dependent ones.

Actions required: none

2.3.9. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)**C&C principle:**

Clear rules and explicit guidelines for the recruitment and appointment of postdoctoral researchers, including the maximum duration and the objectives of such appointments, should be established by the institutions appointing postdoctoral researchers. Such guidelines should take into account time spent in prior postdoctoral appointments at other institutions and take into consideration that the postdoctoral status should be transitional, with the primary purpose of providing additional professional development opportunities for a research career in the context of long-term career prospects.

Existing rules and practices:

When applicable, detailed guidelines for recruitment are included in the programme documentation. When funding research teams (TEAM and WELCOME programmes), FNP requires research institutions to provide full-time employment to postdoctoral fellows for the duration of the project.

Actions required: none

Summary

As a funding institution, the Foundation has limited influence over the conditions under which researchers work and conduct their research. As a rule, the Foundation finances individual researchers, not research institutions. Moreover, the funding provided by the Foundation is generally in the form of stipends, salary and prizes (and to a small extent grants). This means that the Foundation's requirements are limited to individual researchers and generally cannot be imposed on the institutions employing the researchers. The individual researchers apply to the Foundation and are funded by it. No purpose would be served by conditioning support for young researchers on the operations of the institution employing them.

The Foundation's influence over the operations of research institutions is therefore strongly limited, depending on the type of programme and the scale of the funding. In the case of stipends for young researchers, e.g. PhD students or postdocs, such influence is not great. In some of FNP's programmes, where larger amounts are awarded, the quality and commitment of the research institution are among the criteria for evaluation of the applications. This primarily concerns the conditions under which the recipient is employed and the equipment of the recipient's work station.

The programmes enabling the Foundation's recipients to establish and fund their own research teams are a special case. Then the Foundation insists on compliance with appropriate open procedures for recruitment and hiring, in the case of persons holding a doctorate. The recruitment procedures are a criterion for evaluation of the application, and FNP personnel are directly involved in the recruitment of persons to the teams financed by the Foundation.

The issues referred to in the C&C related to employment conditions and work safety are governed by national law, such as the Labour Code, and the responsibility for compliance with the law rests with the employing institution. When awarding funding to individual researchers or consortia, the Foundation signs a tripartite agreement, including the employing institution, and in this way requires the institutions to provide recipients the appropriate conditions for working and conducting their research.

A clear majority of the principles set forth in C&C are observed in FNP's operations. Some of them, particularly those concerning the terms of employment and work of researchers, have little relevance to FNP's operations as an agency providing funding to researchers. Certain areas were identified, however, which had not previously been treated as a priority by the Foundation or where it could undertake additional measures to implement C&C more fully. These include:

- public engagement;
- relation with supervisors;
- Non-discrimination;
- access to research training and continuous development;
- supervision;
- transparency;
- complaints/appeals;
- variations in the chronological order of CVs.



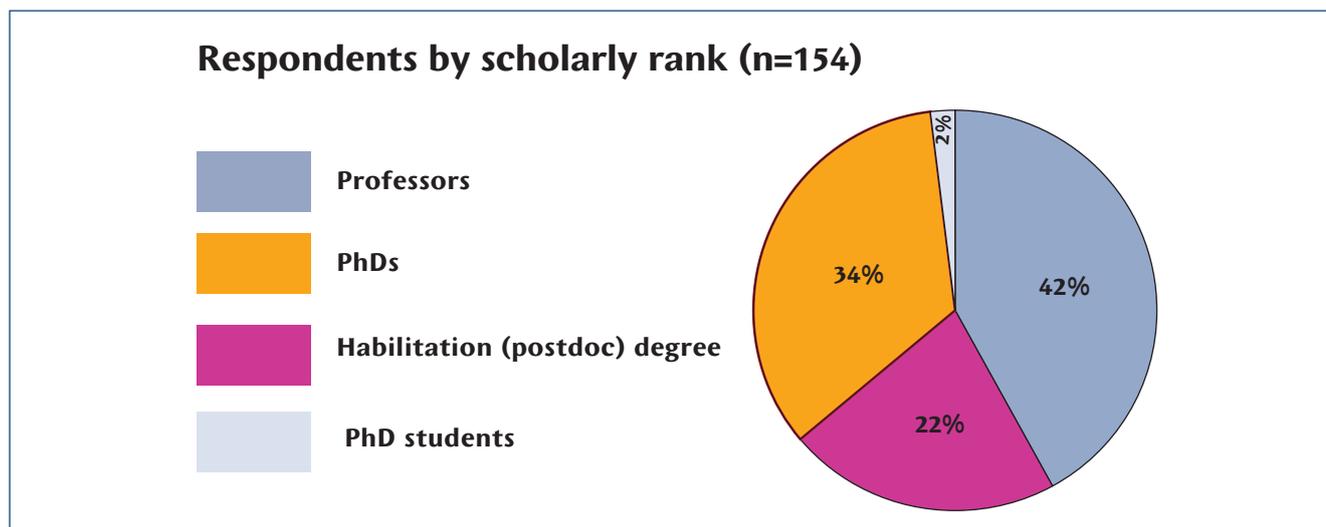
3. SURVEY FINDINGS

The purpose of the survey was to include the Foundation's winners in the process of analysing the compliance of FNP's operations with C&C. The survey was anonymous. In order not to burden the respondents with the need to answer numerous questions, several issues were selected which had raised the greatest concerns during the internal gap analysis. These questions thus involved:

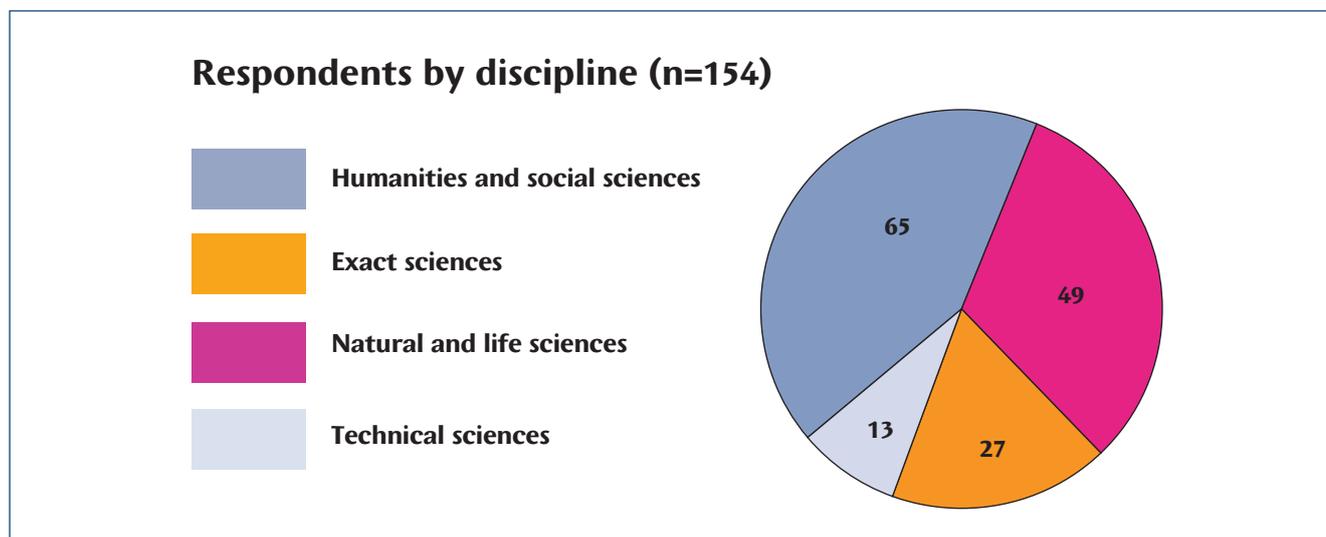
- measures the Foundation should consider in order to provide its beneficiaries better conditions for conducting their research work;
- needs and methods for the Foundation to support the involvement of its beneficiaries in promoting science;
- assessment of the transparency and quality of FNP's competition procedures;
- assessment of cooperation with the Foundation;
- other comments or suggestions concerning how FNP operates.

Because we sought to gather as wide an array of opinions as possible, the questions were mostly open-ended. In the case of closed-ended questions as well, alongside a quantitative approach we also provided qualitative questions to encourage the respondents to comment on their evaluations, and we carefully analysed these comments.

We received 154 completed surveys. Significantly, the respondents represented all stages in their research careers. The group represented in the greatest numbers was professors (42%), but young researchers holding PhDs constituted about a third of the sample.

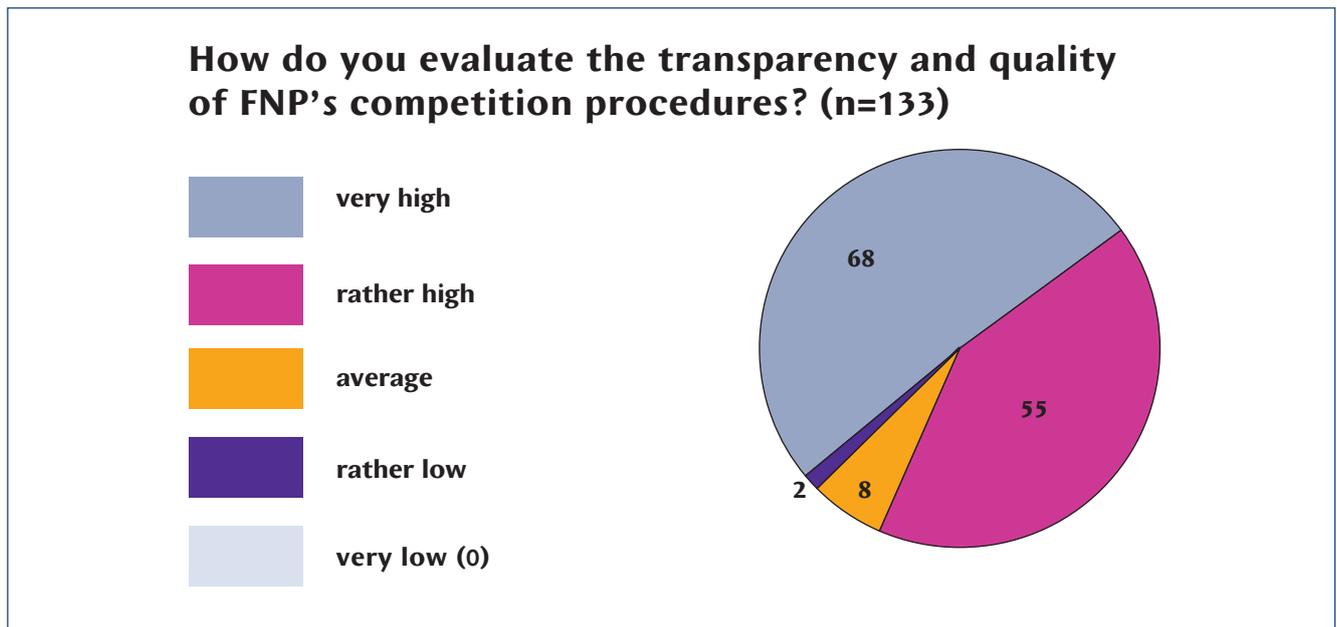


The respondents also represented all research disciplines, with biggest representation of humanities and social sciences.



Assessment of procedures

The respondents generally expressed very favourable opinions of FNP's competition procedures, pointing out that the quality of the procedures was far above the standards for the country. It should be noted, however, that respondents in this case are the winners of Foundation's competitions (although not of every one they applied to).



The critical comments concerned problems in selection of reviewers and panellists, primarily the difficulty in precise selection of their research specialties to suit the topic of the applications. Another objection concerned the procedure for avoiding conflicts of interest. Currently the Foundation applies the rule of excluding reviewers connected to a candidate through joint publications or employment by the same institution. Reviewers and panellists are also required to sign a declaration that they have no conflict of interest. It is easier to avoid conflicts of interest in the case of written reviews, because the Foundation often assigns them to foreign experts. In the case of the evaluation panels, which are primarily made up of Polish researchers, it is more difficult to avoid ties between the candidates and the panellists completely. If a conflict of interest arises at the panel stage, the panellist who has a conflict of interest abstains from assessment. As correctly pointed out in the comments on this question, this system does not rule out abuses. At the same time, the Foundation does not appear to be in a position to apply any other methods apart from excluding clear conflicts of interest and appealing to the sense of responsibility on the part of the reviewers and panellists. Both groups receive precise instructions on this matter. The Foundation has also developed general rules for evaluation of applications by reviewers and panellists.

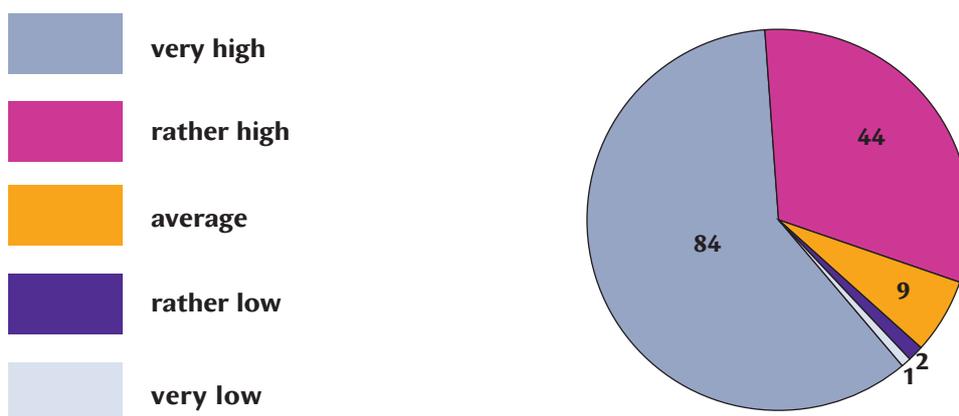
Another objection concerned the lack of an appeal procedure. In fact, such a procedure does exist currently in several programmes, but not in all programmes. This issue was also noted in the internal gap analysis. The appeal procedure requires a major commitment of time and effort on the part of FNP, but it is planned to extend it – so far as possible – to all FNP programmes.

The comments also expressed the belief that the inadequacies in FNP's competition procedures are a reflection of universal problems in evaluating researchers.

Assessment of cooperation with the Foundation

The assessment of cooperation with FNP was also highly favourable to the Foundation. As in the case of assessment of the competition procedures, the evaluations and comments were overwhelmingly positive. As with the previous question, there was also notable ambivalence toward the programmes financed out of EU structural funds: on one hand they enable recipients to obtain greater funding, but on the other hand they are saddled with bureaucracy and with time-consuming procedures which the recipients regard as unnecessary. Another problem is the very limited ability to modify the funded projects. By implementing programmes financed from EU structural funds, the Foundation is in a position to provide much greater funding to Polish researchers, but at the cost of much more rigid procedures.

How do you assess cooperation with the Foundation? (n=140)



Measures FNP should consider in order to provide its beneficiaries better conditions for research work

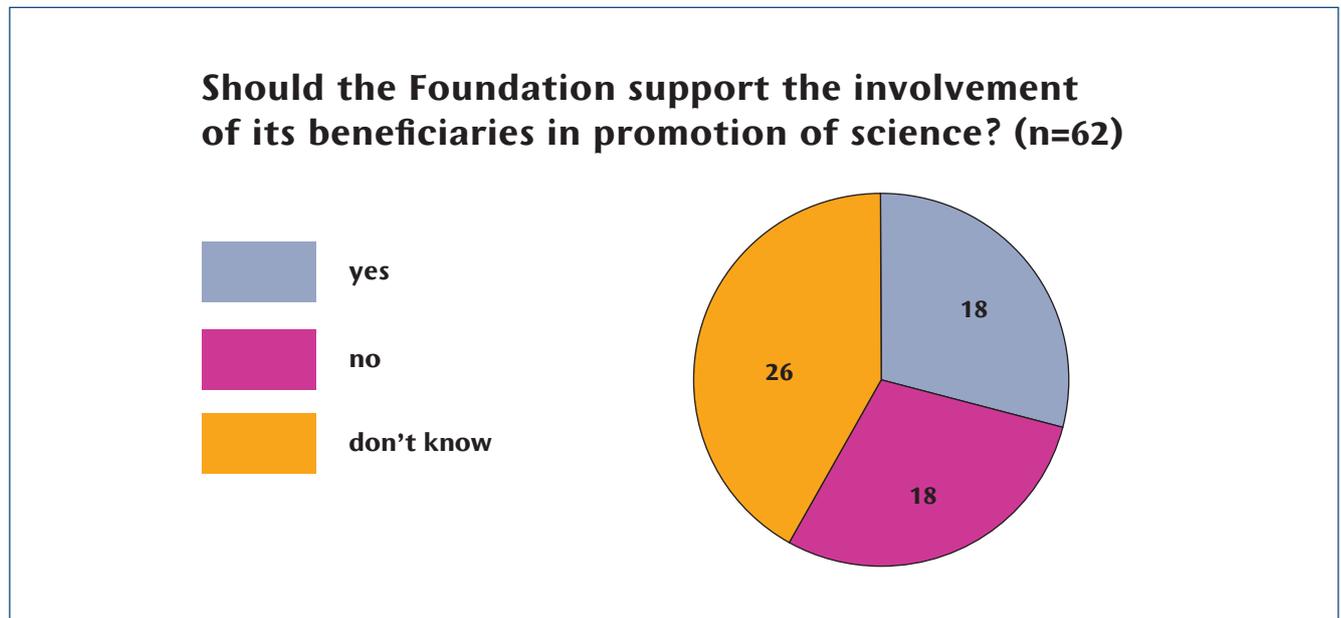
Among the measures the Foundation should consider in order to provide its beneficiaries with better conditions for research work, the respondents mentioned quite frequently the simplification of procedures – which very much depends on the source of funds distributed by the Foundation.

Proposed changes also concerned:

- assuring appropriate funding opportunities and an appropriate system for evaluation of researchers from disciplines in the humanities and social sciences;
- encouraging foreign mobility for researchers at all stages of their careers;
- addressing financial support to researchers at all stages of their careers, without age limits or preferences for young people;
- exerting pressure on research institutions employing winners to provide them with appropriate working conditions.

Needs and proposed methods for the Foundation to support the involvement of its beneficiaries in promoting science

Fewer than 30% of respondents took the view that FNP should support the involvement of its beneficiaries in promoting science. The same percentage responded negatively to the question. Most of the respondents said they 'don't know'.



Many respondents rather expect the Foundation to take upon itself the promotion of their research accomplishments. The most frequently proposed forms are financing of translations and publications, organising conferences and training, financing initiatives for popularisation of science, assistance in contacts with the media, and support for concrete undertakings, e.g. organising lectures for schoolchildren. There were also comments indicating a need to include an element of popularisation of science among the criteria for evaluation of researchers.

Generally speaking, the responses do not demonstrate a huge interest among respondents in promotion of science. One view that cropped up repeatedly was that this is basically not the job of researchers; it requires a certain personality that not all researchers have, and researchers are already overburdened with non-scientific matters, such as fundraising and bureaucracy. They do not expect very much from the Foundation in this respect, either. According to many respondents, the Foundation should focus first and foremost on funding research – in line with its statutory purpose. These responses say a lot about the perception of the importance of public engagement on the part of researchers. At the same time, they bring an awareness of the challenge in this respect facing institutions funding research.

4. ACTION PLAN

On the basis of the analysis and internal discussion, the Foundation has decided to take the following actions in order to further the ideals presented in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Area	Actions	Timeline
Public engagement	Including in application forms questions concerning the candidate's plans for social communication of the research (although this will not be a criterion for evaluation of applications); including requests for information on these types of activities in the forms for reporting on realisation of projects	by the end of 2014
	Requiring the Foundation's beneficiaries, in the agreements signed with them, to conduct activities encouraging public understanding of the role of research	by the end of 2014
	Supporting researchers in their efforts of communicating science	ongoing
	Active promotion of scientists' public engagement	ongoing
Relation with supervisors	Promotion of good practices related to relations between young researchers and their supervisors	ongoing
Non-discrimination	Elimination of the age limit in the MISTRZ programme	by the end of 2012
Access to research training and continuous development	Search for further opportunities of supporting researchers in their professional development	ongoing
Supervision	Promotion of good practices related to supervision	ongoing
Complaints/appeals	Providing – so far as is possible – an appeal procedure as a standard in FNP's programmes	by the end of 2013
Transparency	Providing – so far as possible – candidates with the content of their reviews as a standard in FNP's programmes	by the end of 2013
Variations in the chronological order of CVs	Elaborating instructions for reviewers and panellists, so they better understand the need to assess applicants' achievements in a manner appropriate to the course of their careers	ongoing
	Replacing the request for publications from the last 3–5 years (as a basis for evaluation of researchers) with a request for three best publications selected by the candidates (regardless of the time of their appearance)	by the end of 2013

