

**SUPPLEMENT TO COMPETITION DOCUMENTATION FOR THE
INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AGENDAS PROGRAMME
REGARDING COMPETITION FOR FUNDING THE PURCHASE OF
SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT**

Supplement to Competition Documentation, dated September 22nd, 2017

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European Union
European Regional
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I. Introduction

This document sets out the rules for submitting and evaluating applications for funding the purchase of specialist equipment in the **IRAP projects carried out as part of the International Research Agendas (IRAP) programme**, funded from the European Regional Development Fund under the Smart Growth Operational Programme (SG OP), being a grant project of Axis 4 of the SG OP programme: Increasing research potential, Measure 4.3.

This document supplements the Competition Documentation concerning the International Research Agendas programme by specifying the competition procedures relating to the purchase of specialist equipment (the “competition”). In the case of participation in the competition and inconsistency between any provisions of this document and the IRA Competition Documentation under which the programme is carried out, this supplement shall take priority.

The competition is aimed at enabling the IRAP Project Manager the purchase of specialist equipment to meet the needs of research groups in the IRAP units after the competition procedure has been conducted and the research group leader has been selected (this also applies to applicants in the IRAP competition who take up the position of a research group leader). The present documentation only concerns equipment necessary to carry out R&D projects falling within the scope of the research agenda funded by the Foundation for Polish Science (FNP).

II. General information

The competition based on the rules specified in this document is not a competitive procedure within the meaning of the Act of 11 July 2014 on the Principles of Implementation of Cohesion Policy Programmes Financed under the 2014-2020 Financial Perspective.

2.1. Subject of the competition

- 2.1.1. The purpose of the competition is to enable the winners of International Research Agendas programme to purchase, in the course of the project, of the specialist equipment understood as a set of testing, measurement or laboratory devices with a low degree of universality and high technical parameters (usually with measurement precision several orders of magnitude higher than typical equipment used for production or operational purposes) (the “equipment”).¹ The equipment does not include computer hardware and other devices which are not used directly to carry out R&D work.
- 2.1.2. Funding may be obtained in accordance with the competition at the request of the Project Manager after the need to purchase equipment has been identified. Generally, an application to purchase equipment is not filed to meet the needs of the research group of leaders

¹ Pursuant to the definition of research equipment of the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS) (source: Definitions of terms concerning science and technology statistics, GUS, Warsaw)

employed at an IRAP unit before the implementation of the IRAP project is started, unless they have been selected in a competition conducted with the participation of the International Science Committee (ISC).

- 2.1.3. Based on the rules specified in this document, it is possible to purchase equipment necessary for the significant development of the project and/or the development of the R&D human resources engaged in the project, provided that the IRAP unit does not have equipment that could be used as an alternative, and gaining access to such equipment at another unit is impossible or unjustified from an economic point of view.
- 2.1.4. The equipment which is the subject of an application submitted under this procedure is not covered by the budget percentage restriction adopted for the purchase of low-cost research equipment specified under "Other direct costs" in the *Cost Eligibility Guide for Measure 4.3 of the Smart Growth Operational Programme (SG OP)*, which in each instance constitutes an appendix to the competition documentation in the IRAP programme.
- 2.1.5. Within the competition, the funding obtained only concerns the IRAP Project carried out under the grant agreement in force on the date the application is filed.

2.2. Applicant

- 2.2.1. Under this procedure the applicant is the IRAP Project Manager together with the IRAP unit where the project is being carried out.

2.3. Deadlines for submitting applications

- 2.3.1. The competition for funding equipment will be conducted on a rolling basis, **from 2 October, 2017** until the funds allocated for this purpose are exhausted. Applicants may not submit applications for funding equipment **prior to the completion of the competition procedure, and only following the selection of the first research group leader and the signing of the grant agreement, and no later than 18 months before the deadline for the completion of the IRAP project**, as specified in the grant agreement.
- 2.3.2. The IRAP Project Manager may submit several applications as part of the competition.

2.4. Total requested amount

- 2.4.1. The requested amount of funding, understood as the purchase price of the equipment² should not exceed **PLN 3,500,000**. In justified cases, the Foundation may accept a funding application for an amount exceeding the suggested amount.
- 2.4.2. The amount of funding is at direct cost of the project, and the value of that funding shall increase the value of the IRAP project, along with appropriately calculated flat-rate.

² The purchase price may also include expenses relating to **transport, installation and start-up** of the purchased equipment together with **specialist instructions on its operation**, expenses related to **checking and testing** the research equipment purchased as part of the project, and **technical assistance** to be provided by the manufacturer during the initial operation period of the purchased equipment, etc. As a condition, these expenses must be included in the initial value of the equipment purchased or specified in the agreement for the supply of goods with the supplier.

- 2.4.3 The amount of funding granted for the purchase of equipment shall be included in the basis for calculating flat-rate costs. The amount of funding granted for the purchase of equipment is excluded from the calculation basis for the remaining categories limited in accordance with the *Cost Eligibility Guide for Measure 4.3. of the Smart Growth Operational Programme (SG OP)*.

2.5. Manner of submitting applications

- 2.5.1. Applicants must register with the electronic system made available by the Foundation on the website <https://wnioski.fnp.org.pl>. The electronic form must be filled in **in English** and the attachments must be in the format and language specified below.
- 2.5.2. Applicants shall fill in an electronic form, completing it with, among other things, the basic information concerning the applicant and the budget necessary to finance the purchase of the equipment, and enclose the obligatory documents (see 2.5.3. (a)-(d)) along with the *Project manager's statement*, the template for which is available for download from the Foundation website. The electronic system allows the electronic form of the application to be modified and attachments to be replaced until editing of application data has been closed.

At the next stage, applicants shall upload to the electronic system a *Statement of the research unit* where the project is carried out. The statement form is to be downloaded from the Foundation's website, and then completed, printed out, signed in accordance with the representation rules applicable at the unit, scanned and uploaded to the electronic system. The *Statement of the research unit* cannot be uploaded before *completion of editing of the application data*.

NOTE:

Submission of the application using the electronic system is only possible after editing of the application data has been completed and the required *Statement of the research unit* where the project is carried out has been enclosed.

- 2.5.3. The following four attachments in **PDF format** are to be enclosed with the electronic application form:
- List of equipment which is the subject of the application for funding**, including the anticipated purchase price, the specifications of the equipment and the planned timetable for the purchase, including the dates of the tendering procedure and the dates of the execution of the agreement with the supplier for the supply of goods, and of the execution of the delivery-acceptance record (max. three A4 pages for a single piece of equipment, attachment to be in English),
 - Substantive information on the progress of the research conducted** as part of the project along with the reasons the proposed equipment needs to be purchased and a description of any changes to the project relating to the planned purchase of the equipment (max. six A4 pages, attachment to be in English),
 - Analysis of the availability in Poland** of the specialist equipment which is the subject of the competition and a **list of large research infrastructure** in the unit's possession, for the purchase of which the IRAP unit has obtained funding under the Innovative Economy

Operational Programme (POIG) or the Infrastructure and Environment Operational Programme (POIŚ) and which has been purchased to be used for the same purpose and in relation to the same themes as those of the research conducted under the IRAP project (max. three A4 pages, attachment to be in Polish),

NOTE:

The contact details of the person preparing the list, i.e. e-mail address and telephone number, should be provided in the document.

d) **The new values of the project indicators along with a justification** (attachment to be in English in accordance with the template available for download from the Foundation's website).

The attachments constitute an integral part of the application

III. Application evaluation system

The applications submitted will be evaluated in formal and substantive aspects. Decisions to grant funding will be taken on a rolling basis, and the Foundation will make every effort to ensure that correctly submitted applications are evaluated within three months of submission.

3.1. Formal evaluation

- 3.1.1. Applicants whose applications do not meet the formal criteria will be informed (by email or via the electronic system) that their applications have been rejected for formal reasons.
- 3.1.2. If the submitted attachments are prepared on the basis of other templates or exceed the number of pages specified in this document, such attachments will need to be corrected by the applicant within 14 days of notification to that effect.
- 3.1.3. Where an electronic file uploaded to the electronic system is found to be defective, or editing errors are identified, the programme officer may request, at any stage of the evaluation, that such issues be resolved within 14 days of information to this effect.
- 3.1.4. If the documents specified in items 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 are not submitted, applications not meeting the formal criteria will not be processed further on formal grounds.

3.2. Substantive evaluation

Applications which meet the formal requirements will be referred for substantive evaluation to be conducted by a panel of experts.

- 3.2.1. The panel of experts shall include at least three members who have considerable experience in research or in innovation implementation in the R&D sector and one member of the Executive Board of the Foundation (who will chair the meeting without the right of evaluation). The Foundation may appoint separate panels, relevant to particular disciplines represented by the applications submitted.
- 3.2.2. The IRAP project manager is to be invited for an interview with the panel of experts evaluating the application together with at least one and no more than two persons who can provide relevant and exhaustive information concerning the equipment available at the unit, e.g. the

leader of the research group to which the application refers or the research unit representative responsible for managing the research equipment at the unit.

- 3.2.3. At the recommendation of the panel of experts, the Foundation may refer the application for external review, or re-evaluation by the panel.
- 3.2.4. The meetings of the panel of experts will be held at the offices of the Foundation or another location specified by the Foundation. In exceptional cases, interviews by phone or using online tools (such as Skype) may be held; each such case will be examined individually.
- 3.2.5. A representative of the Intermediary Authority of the Smart Growth Operational Programme (the National Centre for Research and Development) will be invited to attend the meeting of the evaluation panel as an observer.
- 3.2.6. Experts are to compare the submitted applications and evaluate them taking into account:
 - the substantive compliance of the application with the IRAP project accepted for funding in terms of substance,
 - the legitimacy of the proposed expenses related to the equipment.
- 3.2.7. The Executive Board of the Foundation for Polish Science shall take a decision on granting funding for the purchase of equipment on the basis of the recommendation of the Expert Panel, provided however that the **purchase of specialist equipment may not be approved for a project carried out with the participation of a research unit which has received substantial funding for large research infrastructure (pursuant to Article 2 of Act of 30 April 2010 on the Rules for Financing Science) as part of the Innovative Economy Operational Programme or the Infrastructure and Environment Operational Programme within the same scope of research as that carried out under the IRAP project.** The Foundation for Polish Science will consult the Intermediary Authority for Axis 4 of the SG OP programme regarding applications for the purchase of specialist equipment by such units, in particular to confirm whether substantial funding has been obtained and to identify any overlaps between the themes addressed in the International Research Agendas project and the purposes for which equipment was purchased under the POIG or POIŚ programmes.
- 3.2.8. Written notice on the award or denial of funding will be sent (via e-mail) to all applicants.

3.3. Appeals procedure

- 3.3.1. The appeals procedure in place at the Foundation does not constitute an appeals procedure within the meaning of the Act of 29 August 2014 on the Principles of Implementation of the Cohesion Policy Programmes Financed under the 2014 - 2020 Financial Perspective.
- 3.3.2. The applicant may appeal in writing to the Executive Board of the Foundation against non-compliance with the procedures at any stage of application evaluation, within 7 days of the receipt of an official notification. The appeal will be examined within 21 days of its receipt by the Foundation.
- 3.3.3. The date of receipt by the Foundation, rather than the postmark, will be binding, provided however that an appeal may also be lodged with the Foundation by e-mail, at the address odwolania@fnp.org.pl.
- 3.3.4. The Appeals Committee shall review exclusively procedural matters relevant to each of the stages of application evaluation and selection.

- 3.3.5. The final opinion will be adopted by a vote. Upon examination of the committee's opinion, the Executive Board of the Foundation will decide whether the application should be re-evaluated (by the expert panel or a reviewer) or dismissed. The appellant will be informed in writing of the decision. The decision of the Executive Board is final.

IV. Funding for the purchase of specialist equipment

- 4.1. Funds allocated for the purchase of equipment under this competition are granted on the basis of an annex to the grant agreement under the IRAP programme, which will specify the rules for disbursing, accounting for and, where necessary, returning the funds, and the reporting rules concerning expenditure of the funds.
- 4.2. The starting and completion dates of the purchase of equipment are to be specified by the applicant, bearing in mind that the purchase of equipment must be completed **no later than 6 months** before the completion date of the IRAP project specified in the grant agreement.
- 4.3. Completion of the purchase of equipment shall include:
- delivery of the equipment to the unit,
 - submission of a copy of proof of payment,
 - registration of the equipment as a fixed asset of the unit (in accordance with the unit's accounting policy),
 - submission of copies of the acceptance/installation/start-up records with the annotation "accepted without reservations".
- 4.4. The unit is obliged to provide the Foundation with a copy of the signed agreement for the supply of specialist equipment concluded with the supplier, certified as a true copy of the original, on the date specified in the grant agreement.
- 4.5. The unit is obliged to submit a written statement confirming completion of the purchase, in accordance with the template provided by the Foundation, within the time limit specified in the grant agreement.
- 4.6. Before signing an annex to the grant agreement, the Foundation reserves the right to enter into negotiations with any of the entities seeking funding for the purchase of equipment.
- 4.7. The template for the annex to the grant agreement constitutes **Appendix 1** to this document.
- 4.8. If as a result of correctly conducted proceedings for the purchase of equipment, the final purchase amount proves higher than the amount requested, the applicant may request the Foundation in writing to change the granted amount. Such a request will be examined individually, without a hearing, on the basis of the enclosed statement of reasons, and if it is accepted, the relevant annex to the agreement will be concluded.
- 4.9. The purchase of equipment must be made respecting the rules of fair competition and equal treatment of tenderers in tendering procedures in compliance with the Public Procurement Law, if applicable, or the principle of competitiveness, as defined in the Guidelines on Eligibility of Expenditures under the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, and the Cohesion Fund for 2014-2020 and in the Cost Eligibility Guide for Measure 4.3 for the Smart Growth Operational Programme for units other than state aid beneficiaries. When incurring eligible expenditures, the principles of efficiency, openness and transparency shall

apply, and the obligation to use best endeavours to avoid any conflict of interest, understood as a lack of impartiality and objectivity.

- 4.10.** The purchase of used equipment may be funded if all of the following requirements are met:
- a) The seller of the equipment has issued a declaration specifying the origin of the equipment,
 - b) The seller of the equipment has confirmed in the declaration that the given item has not been funded using EU aid funds or as part of co-financing from national public funds over the previous 7 years,
 - c) The purchase price of the used equipment does not exceed its market value and is lower than the cost of similar new equipment.

V. Contact details

Programme Officer for the International Research Agendas Programme:

Dr. Katarzyna Wybrańska

Tel 22 845 95 47

e-mail: wybranska@fnp.org.pl

VI. Appendices:

Appendix 1: *Template of annex to grant agreement under the IRAP programme*