

Instructions for preparing application and realization of stipend in the **START 2017** programme of the Foundation for Polish Science



Photo: Stipendees in FNP START programme (FNP archive)

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1. REGISTRATION AND FILING OF APPLICATION

HOW TO REGISTER

Registration of candidates seeking a START stipend is conducted online. Before beginning registration please review carefully the *Rules for Award of Stipends in the START Programme* and these Instructions.

BEFORE BEGINNING TO FILE YOUR APPLICATION

Before beginning completion of the online application form, candidates should:

- Prepare all attachments required by the competition rules in electronic form (pdf format). The names for the attachments should follow the naming scheme provided in the instructions under *Order of documents in application at p. 11*.
- Determine who in their case will act as the applicant (in the case of universities this should be the rector or prorector, and in the case of other institutions, the director or authorized representative). The online application should provide the name, position, and academic degree/title of the person acting as the applicant.

NOTE: After final closing of the application (after clicking “close application”) there is no possibility to change the data concerning the applicant.

STAGES OF FILING APPLICATION

1. Online registration of the candidate: filling in the online application available at <http://wnioski.fnp.org.pl/>
2. Attaching in electronic form the attachments listed in the *Rules for Award of Stipends in the START Programme* and these Instructions.
3. Completion of online registration: closing the completed online application (after confirming closing of the application, the application is automatically transmitted electronically to the Foundation, together with the attachments).
4. Printing out the form completed online and individually printing out the required attachments (except for the texts of publications).
5. Delivering the printed version by post (or by hand) to the Foundation’s office at: **ul. Krasickiego 20/22, 02-611 Warsaw, on or before 31 October 2016**. Receipt of the application will be decided by the date of the postmark. Texts of publications should not be enclosed with the printed version of the application delivered to the Foundation’s office. Texts of publications are enclosed only with the electronic application.

2. STAGES AND CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

STAGES OF EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

1. Stage I: formal evaluation of applications

The formal evaluation is made by the programme coordinator. Applications that do not meet the formal requirements—not signed by the applicants, submitted to the Foundation only in electronic form, without a printout, or sent after the deadline—will not be considered. The formal defects listed above cannot be made up during the formal evaluation. Otherwise, candidates whose applications require supplementation will be notified accordingly by the programme coordinator. Those applications can be supplemented during the formal evaluation within 14 days after receipt of the relevant notice.

If an electronic file attached to the online form is found to be damaged, or in the case of typographical errors, the programme coordinator may request supplementation at any stage in the competition.

2. Stage II: evaluation of applications by experts

Every application is evaluated by at least two experts. Experts receive applications from specific review groups (see also: [Selection of review group, p. 9](#)) representing the same field of science. The experts will assign each application to one of the three groups listed below (depending on the quality and originality of the candidates' scientific accomplishments and the importance of their achievements):

Group A – highest recommendation for the next stage of evaluation: the best applications, submitted by outstanding and distinguished candidates, with original and innovative scientific accomplishments of an international scope as well as significant research achievements.

Group B – conditional recommendation for the next stage of evaluation: applications of candidates with good scientific accomplishments and research achievements, but less significant than the best candidates.

Group C – no recommendation for the next stage of evaluation: applications of candidates whose scientific research is at a beginning level. These are candidates who cannot demonstrate significant scientific accomplishments; the results of their work are of local reach; their publications are predominantly brief post-conference reports or works of a popular science nature.

The results of evaluations by experts undergo discussion and consultation at panel meetings of experts in specific fields of science. Panel participants can compare the level of the assessed applications. The applications found by the panel of experts to be the best are qualified for the third stage of the competition. The rest of the applications do not participate in the subsequent stages of the competition.

3. Stage III: evaluation of applications by reviewers

Applications qualified for the third stage of the competition are evaluated within specific review groups. Each group is evaluated by at least three reviewers.

The evaluation by reviewers mainly includes:

- A point assessment (on a scale of 1–7)
- A ranking for each application, resulting from placing them in order from best to weakest.

The reviewers also provide opinions on Outgoing Stipends for candidates applying for them (see [Remarks concerning Outgoing Stipends as part of the START stipend, p. 13](#)).

4. Stage IV: selection of competition winners

The final selection of winners is made by the Foundation Board on the basis of a detailed analysis of all evaluations of candidates and applications. The Board's decision is confirmed by the Foundation Council.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

START stipends are awarded in recognition of the scientific accomplishments to date of young researchers. The purpose of these stipends is to encourage the most outstanding scientists at the beginning of their research careers to pursue further growth in the field of science.

QUALITY AND ORIGINALITY OF SCIENTIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Under the rules for the START programme, the basic criterion for evaluation of applications is the scientific quality and originality of candidates' accomplishments. This is evaluated by reviewers in particular on the basis of:

- The list of up to five publications, patents or conference papers enclosed with the application
- Copies of three of the foregoing publications, patents or conference papers enclosed with the online application which the candidate regards as his or her most important research work to date
- The description of the originality of the candidate's most important research achievement(s).

The reviewers consider only substantive value—the originality and innovativeness of the scientific achievement. Even a single work, representing a serious contribution to research in the candidate's field, may be sufficient to receive a stipend. Thus when evaluating candidates' achievements, reviewers pay particular attention to whether the works they present are original and contribute new ideas, methods and the like to their scientific discipline.

In the case of post-conference works, the reviewers assess whether they are innovative works prepared at the request of the organizers, or rather brief items in the nature of summaries or reports.

In the case of evaluation of collective works, on the basis of information provided by the candidates the reviewers consider how the candidate's individual work contributed to the publication.

The reviewers strive to evaluate scientific achievements relative to the candidates' age, as the dynamic of scientific growth is of great importance.

CANDIDATE'S MOST IMPORTANT RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENT(S)

When filing an application in the competition, candidates present their most important research achievement(s), arising directly from their scientific accomplishments.

This description is fundamental for evaluation of the application, because the reviewers place particular weight on the **substantive** importance of the candidate's research achievement(s). Therefore candidates should pay particularly attention to a precise description reflecting the substantive and cognitive value of their research. In the description it is recommended to refer directly to the specific publications of the candidate.

NOTE 1: It is not a research achievement to, for example, receive a grant, award or stipend, or to receive an invitation and deliver a paper at an important scientific conference. However, the results of the candidate's own research, which might be the subject of a grant project or a paper at a conference, or might be published, are a research achievement. Similarly, obtaining a doctorate is not a research achievement; rather, the research achievement is the innovativeness and the substance of the discovery or results presented in the doctoral dissertation.

In the case of the humanities and social sciences, an achievement could be a creative work published in a significant scholarly journal, particularly a foreign one, or an important publication in book form.

However, the substantive value and originality of the work should be demonstrated in the description.

NOTE 2: Candidates who believe that the research they have conducted stands out for boldly crossing borders between different fields of science, opening up new research perspectives, and creating new values in science may address this issue in the description of their most important research achievement, also indicating which of the publications or parts thereof involve research of this nature.

In that case, the candidates should also:

- Expressly indicate what this interdisciplinary nature of the work consists of, what it derives from and what is the added value of this type of R&D work
- Specify which additional review groups should—in their opinion—review the application (see also [Selection of review group, p. 9](#)).

Whether the given application can accurately be regarded as crossing borders between different fields of science, opening up new research perspectives and creating new values in science will be decided by the panel of experts. The Foundation will make all efforts to ensure that all applications deemed by the panel of experts to be interdisciplinary in the foregoing sense and qualified for further stages of the competition are evaluated during subsequent stages by an appropriately selected group of reviewers representing different areas and fields of science specific to the given application, also as indicated by the candidate.

Applications regarded as interdisciplinary may be considered in the **competition for the Prof. Barbara Skarga Honorary Fellowship**, awarded each year to one of the winners of the START programme.

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

The candidate's research plans for the upcoming year presented in the stipend application will also be taken into consideration in the evaluation of applications. However, they are not the fundamental subject of evaluation of applications as they would be in the case of grant competitions. The START stipend is awarded for what the candidate has already achieved.

CRITERIA APPLIED IN AWARD OF OUTGOING STIPENDS

The main criterion for award of an Outgoing Stipend is the substantive justification for the selection and need for the visit to a foreign institution. The standing of the institution selected by the candidate, including the research potential of its staff and in particular the persons inviting the candidate, will also be considered. The evaluation of the appropriateness of the selection of the institution in terms of the topic of the candidate's research is also important (see also [Remarks concerning Outgoing Stipends as part of the START stipend, p. 13](#)).

3. COMMENTS CONCERNING PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

COMMENTS CONCERNING CANDIDATES

STATUS OF CANDIDATES

A START stipend may be applied for by PhD students at Polish scientific institutions and persons (including PhDs) conducting R&D work (scientific research or development work) in Poland at scientific institutions which have the conduct of scientific research and/or development work as one of their statutory purposes.

R&D WORK (research and development) is systematically conducted creative work undertaken with the aim of increasing the resources of knowledge, including knowledge of mankind, culture and society, as well as with the aim of finding new applications for such knowledge.

R&D covers three types of work:

- Basic research – theoretical and experimental work generally not aimed at obtaining specific applications
- Applied research – research work undertaken with the aim of obtaining new knowledge with specific applications
- Experimental development – work consisting of applying existing knowledge to development of new products, services and processes, or significant improvement of existing ones.

NOTE: The Foundation does not require that the candidate hold an employment contract for an unlimited period – other forms of employment under which the candidate conducts scientific research are also acceptable: a contract for a specific work (*umowa o dzieło*), a contract of mandate (*umowa zlecenia*), participation in a research project, part-time employment, etc. The basis for paying out the stipend is a trilateral agreement among the Foundation, the stipendee, and the Polish educational institution or institution in which the stipendee conducts scientific research or development work.

CANDIDATES' SCIENTIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Only persons with scientific accomplishments documented by publications, patents or conference papers may take part in the competition for a START stipend.

The lists of winners of the START programme (2011–2016 editions) published on the Foundation's website contain lists of publications by the winners of the competitions, which can help candidates assess their own scientific accomplishments. The Foundation encourages candidates to review the lists of publications by previous winners in their field to compare their own scientific accomplishments with those of previous winners in the programme and determine what chance they may have in the competition.

NOTE: In the case of collective works, candidates are required to specify their own contribution to creation of the work, describing (in 1–2 sentences) what their contribution involved. If the candidate is the corresponding author, this information should be included in the list of publications.

CHANGE IN LOCATION OF RESEARCH OR DOCTORATE DURING THE COURSE OF THE COMPETITION

If during the course of the competition the candidate changes the location where he or she is conducting R&D work or the location where he or she is pursuing a doctorate, the stipend agreement—if the candidate wins a stipend—may be signed with another Polish scientific institution where the candidate will continue research work or doctoral studies.

AGE OF CANDIDATES

The calendar year is used to determine candidates' age. The date of the candidate's birthday within the given calendar year is irrelevant. The age limit of 30 means that candidates born in 1986 or later qualify for the 2017 competition.

The age limit of 30 may be extended:

- By a maximum of 2 years for interruptions in research work, if the interruptions last a total of no less than 12 months if seeking an extension of one year, or no less than 24 months if seeking an extension of two years. The extended age limit of 32 means that candidates born in 1984 or later can participate in the competition.

NOTE: Documented interruptions in research work include for example unpaid leave, if the candidate did not conduct research work during that period, leave connected with parenting, leave caused by sickness, work in the R&D sector without participation in scientific research, work in other sectors of the economy, etc.

- For giving birth to a child (for female candidates) or for adoption of a child (for all candidates regardless of sex), by one year for each child, regardless of the date of birth or adoption of the child.

NOTE: The grounds for extension set forth above cannot be combined. An age extension can be obtained only on the basis of one of them i.e. for a interruptions in research work or for birth/adoption of a child.

Documents confirming that the candidate is entitled to an age extension should not be enclosed with the application, but the Foundation may request submission of such documents at any stage of the competition.

NOTES CONCERNING THE APPLICATION

BEGINNING COMPLETION OF THE ONLINE APPLICATION

The online form may be filled in after activation of the “Edit” button.

NOTE: You should not use ALL CAPS. First names, last names and proper nouns should be capitalized. Be sure not to enter your first name in the field for last names. Use abbreviations for academic titles and degrees such as Dr (Polish examples: mgr, mgr inż., dr, dr inż., lek., dr n. med. etc).

MODIFICATION OF DATA ONLINE

The application may be modified or supplemented (including after logging off and logging back into the system again) up until the point of final closing of the online application by the candidate.

WHO SIGNS AND STAMPS THE APPLICATION

The hard copy of the stipend application must be signed by:

1. The candidate
2. The candidate’s scientific supervisor (i.e., in the case of PhD students, the academic adviser (*promotor*), or in the case of PhDs, the director of the research team or immediate supervisor)
3. The applicant (i.e. the rector or prorector of the university, or in the case of another entity its director or authorized representative).

The application should bear two stamps:

- The individual named stamp of the person representing the applicant – the rector (or prorector) in the case of a university, or in the case of another scientific institution, the director of person authorized to represent the institution externally
- The stamp of the institution where the candidate is a PhD student or conducts scientific research.

NOTE: Applications from candidates without the aforementioned signatures and stamps will not be accepted. Applications do not need to be initialled on every page.

CANDIDATE’S CONTACT DETAILS

In the designated place in the application form, the candidate should provide all possible contact telephone numbers (home, work, mobile). Addresses should be current, accurate, and contain the

postal code, and in the case of the addresses of institutions, their full names. In filling in the correspondence address, the candidate should choose between a work address and a home address. If the candidate uses a work address, the full name of the institution and unit (university and department) should be repeated in order to receive correspondence. A work address that does not provide the name of the unit is incomplete.

NAME OF CANDIDATE'S INSTITUTION

The candidate should select the name of the **institution** and **unit** using the menu included in the application form. If the candidate's institution/unit is not included in the menu, it should be entered in the text fields below the menu. **Please do not select the field "other unit"**, but in the field below the list of institutions enter the specific name of the unit.

NOTE: In the case of institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN), please first choose the appropriate PAN division from the menu, and then use the menu to select the appropriate PAN institute.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE FIELD OF THE CANDIDATE'S RESEARCH

The keywords describing the candidate refer to the field of research/scientific discipline which the candidate is involved in. The classification of the candidate's field of research and the corresponding review group is made by the candidate. In selecting the field, use the detailed list of fields set forth in the application.

SELECTION OF REVIEW GROUP

Applications in the START competition are evaluated within review groups. The reviewers receive a package of applications related by field (i.e. assigned to the same review group), evaluate each of them, and then compare the applications. The candidate's own choice of the review group is intended to enable the best possible choice of the review group for the candidate's application. Some fields are assigned to more than one review group. In that case, the candidate selects one group—the one that in his or her view best corresponds to the specifics of the research (in making a choice, the other fields included in the same group should be considered). With the candidate's knowledge, the Foundation may change the review group for the candidate's application, if it determines that the change would be advantageous to the candidate.

DECLARATIONS FOR APPLICATION

The printed version of the application form for the START programme also includes declarations by the Candidate and the Applicant. The complete patterns for the content of the declarations for the Candidate and the Applicant are found in the *Documents for download* section of the online form.

In the case of the **Candidate** the declarations concern among other things:

- Declaration on fulfilment of the formal conditions for candidates in the competition
- Declaration on review of the rules for the competition and compliance with the rules
- Consent to processing of personal data by the Foundation for Polish Science
- Consent to provide access to the application to experts and reviewers conducting evaluations in the competition
- Consent to providing information for the purposes of evaluations conducted by the Foundation for Polish Science or other authorized entities, regardless of the result of the competition

- In the case of candidates exceeding age 30 in the year of filing of the application, a declaration confirming interruptions in scientific work or a declaration concerning birth or adoption of a child
- Consequences of filing false data or declarations.

In the case of the **Applicant** the declarations concern among other things:

- Declaration on review of the rules for the competition and compliance with the rules
- Consent to processing of personal data by the Foundation for Polish Science
- Consent to provide access to the application to experts and reviewers conducting evaluations in the competition
- Consent to providing information for the purposes of evaluations conducted by the Foundation for Polish Science or other authorized entities, regardless of the result of the competition
- Applicant's declaration that if a Stipend is received the entity will seek all approvals from the ethics commission or other permits required by law necessary for conducting the research in question and that research will not begin until the relevant approvals and permits are obtained
- Consequences of filing false data or declarations.

FINAL CLOSING OF ONLINE APPLICATION

Final closing of the application means confirmation that the process of filling in the application by the candidate has ended and the saved version may be transmitted to the Foundation. Closing of the application is done by clicking on the "close application" button available under the tab "verification of form". The application can be closed only when it is complete. Only then will the "close application" button be active. This can be checked using the tab "verification of form".

It should also be borne in mind that after the candidate closes the application, the data included in the application will be accessible as read-only, without the possibility of making further changes.

If the account is blocked, you should contact the programme coordinator.

TIME AND PLACE FOR FILING HARD COPY OF APPLICATION

Applications for the START programme competition (2017 edition) should be submitted in hard copy by post or in person at the Foundation's offices: **ul. Krasickiego 20/22, 02-611 Warsaw, on or before 31 October 2016**. The date of filing of the application will be determined by the postmark.

CONFIRMATION OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATION BY FNP

Due to the large number of applications in the competition, the Foundation will not send candidates confirmation of receipt of the hard copy of the application. To obtain such confirmation, the application should be submitted by registered mail, return receipt requested.

REMARKS CONCERNING ATTACHMENTS TO APPLICATION

TECHNICAL GUIDELINES

Applications should not be bound. Nor should attachments be glued together, or specific pages of the application (or attachments) placed in separate document holders. Preferred font for document text: Times New Roman, 12 points, line spacing 1.

FILE FORMAT

All attachments to the application should be prepared in PDF format. Polish characters should not be used in the names of files enclosed with the electronic application.

ORDER OF DOCUMENTS IN APPLICATION

Documents in the hard copy of the application delivered to the Foundation's office should be arranged in the following order:

1. Curriculum Vitae

File name format: **Surname.CV**

The CV should not exceed 3 pages. The CV should contain in order:

- Personal details and address/contact details
- Course of education
- Professional experience (locations where the candidate has conducted scientific research)
- Most important foreign internships (place, dates, duration)
- Candidate's most important research projects (title, name of programme, awarding institution)
- Up to 5 most important scientific conferences with information on the manner in which the candidate appeared at the conference
- Most important awards and distinctions received by the candidate.

2. List – scientific accomplishments

File name format: **Surname.list**

The list should contain a maximum of up to five original publications of international or nationwide reach which the candidate regards as the most important of his or her scientific accomplishments. The texts of a maximum of three of these publications, patents or conference papers, in whole or in part (depending on size), should be enclosed with the electronic version of the application. If the most important original publications of the candidate include collective works, i.e. those with more than one author, in each instance the candidate's contribution to the work should be indicated in the form of a description (1–2 sentences) of what the candidate's contribution consisted of. If the candidate is the corresponding author, this should be indicated in the list of publications.

NOTE: The list of publications must be signed by the candidate and the candidate's scientific supervisor.

Works accepted for publication may be included in the list of scientific accomplishments only if a document from the publisher is enclosed confirming acceptance of the work for publication. Confirmations of acceptance of a work for publication **may be signed in any form** and transmitted to the candidate by traditional post or email (it must be clear from the statement that the work has been accepted and will be published). If the publication is already available in an electronic version and has a DOI number, it may be regarded as published, but then it is also good to enclose a document confirming acceptance of the publication. Confirmations of acceptance for publication should be scanned into one or two files. File name format: **Surname.acceptance_for_publication**

IMPACT FACTOR

It is not required for candidates to provide an Impact Factor, because **it is not a criterion for evaluation of the candidates' scientific accomplishments**.

3. Texts of publications (enclosed only with online application)

File name format: **Surname.publication1, Surname.publication2**, etc.

The texts of a maximum of 3 works chosen by the candidate as his or her most important achievements should be enclosed with the electronic version of the application. They may include works in the process of publication, if confirmation of acceptance for publication is attached. The maximum size of files is 20 MB. In the case of lengthy publications, or books, please submit only the table of contents, introduction and conclusion, or those passages on the basis of which the reviewers can evaluate the importance of the publication. **NOTE:** After attaching the attachments to the form, it should be checked whether the files with publications open correctly and are not encrypted or corrupted.

4. Description of originality of research achievement(s)

File name format: **Surname.achievement**

The description of the originality of the research achievement(s) should be prepared with respect to the list of most important publications of the candidate. The entire description should not exceed 2 pages.

5. Opinion of scientific supervisor

File name format: **Surname.opinion**

Opinion of the candidate's scientific supervisor or director of the research team in which the candidate conducts research. The opinion in the hard copy and electronic copy (scan) must contain the scientific supervisor's signature. The scientific supervisor must be the candidate's immediate supervisor or the director of the candidate's research team (in the case of PhDs), or in the case of PhD students, the academic adviser (*promotor*).

6. Description of scientific plans for upcoming year

File name format: **Surname.plans**

The description of scientific plans may include information about plans arising out of realization of a research grant obtained from an institution funding scientific research other than the Foundation (such as the National Science Centre or the National Centre for Research and Development). The description should not exceed 2 pages.

7. Documents connected with seeking an Outgoing Stipend

Format for file names: **Surname.outgoing_program, Surname.outgoing_institution, Surname.outgoing_invitation**

(See also **Remarks concerning Outgoing Stipends as part of the START stipend, p. 13**).

8. Declaration on change of name

File name format: **Surname.change**

A specimen of this declaration is included in the files for downloading. It should be filled out, signed, and attached as a scan (applies only to persons who have changed their name and have scientific accomplishments under their previous name).

OTHER ATTACHMENTS

Other attachments not listed above, such as multiple opinions, letters of recommendation, testimonials etc., should not be attached to the application.

REMARKS CONCERNING OUTGOING STIPENDS AS PART OF THE START STIPEND

SEEKING AN OUTGOING STIPEND

It is not mandatory to seek an Outgoing Stipend, but we encourage candidates to apply for one. The application for an Outgoing Stipend must be completed and filed together with the application for the START Stipend. An Outgoing Stipend can be received only by winners of the START competition. However, it is independent of the START stipend amount and is paid out additionally. The amount is determined individually, depending on the location and duration of the visit. The amount awarded is paid out by the Foundation to the stipendee's account provided in the stipend agreement.

For the application for an Outgoing Stipend to be considered, the necessary information must be provided in the registration form for the START stipend, and the relevant documents must be attached under the "Attachments" tab. If these documents are lacking, the application for an Outgoing Stipend will not be considered. The list of documents required for consideration of the application is set forth below.

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHOICE OF INSTITUTION

The attachment containing a justification for the choice of institution together with brief information about the nature of the programme for the planned visit should not exceed 2 pages.

HOST SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION/PERSON

Information about the foreign institution the candidate plans to visit should contain the full name of the institution and its exact address, as well as the address of its website. The name, place of employment, position and scientific accomplishment of the person inviting the candidate (based on the person's scientific CV) should be included. The attachments should not exceed 2 pages.

LETTER OF INVITATION

The letter inviting the candidate to visit should include an invitation or confirmation of acceptance of the candidate for a scientific visit at the foreign institution. Letters of invitation may be prepared in any form and transmitted to the candidate in a hard copy or electronic form. We do not specify the formal version of the letter of invitation.

CRITERIA FOR AWARD OF OUTGOING STIPENDS

The main criterion for award of an Outgoing Stipend is the substantive justification for the planned visit. The scientific standing of the institution and the scientific potential of its personnel are also important, and particularly the originality of the scientific accomplishments of the person inviting the stipendee.

REPORT ON OUTGOING STIPENDS

Within two months after realization of the Outgoing Stipend, the stipendee is required to submit a report to the Foundation (according to the specimen provided), together with a confirmation of the visit from the foreign institution. Financial settlements are not required.

4. ANNOUNCEMENT OF COMPETITION RESULTS

A list of the winners is published on the Foundation's website. Information about the results is also sent to all candidates—first to the winners and their applicants, and then (within three months after announcement of the results of the competition) to the other candidates. The results of the START 2017 competition are expected to be announced in late April or early May 2017.

5. ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

If after reviewing these instructions and the rules for the START programme any questions arise which are **not answered** in the instructions or the rules for the START programme, please contact the START programme coordinator, Krystyna Frak, tel. +48 22 845 95 11, krystyna.frak@fnp.org.pl

Good luck in the competition!