SUPPLEMENT TO COMPETITION DOCUMENTATION FOR MEASURE 4.4 OF THE SMART GROWTH OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME INVOLVING PROJECT MODIFICATIONS

The Polish version of this document is considered as the official version whereas its English translation is meant to provide guidelines for non-Polish speakers.
I. Introduction

This document constitutes a supplement to the Competition Documentation of the Foundation for Polish Science (FNP) setting out the rules for conducting competitions and implementing projects under the Smart Growth Operational Programme 2014–2020 (SG OP), Axis IV: Increasing research potential, Measure 4.4: Increasing human potential in the R&D sector, i.e. the programmes TEAM, TEAM TECH including core-facility competitions, FIRST TEAM, HOMING and POWROTY/REINTEGRATION (the Supplement).

The aim of this Supplement is to enable the managers of projects implemented within these programmes to apply for modifications consisting of the introduction of a new research task related to the topic of the COVID-19 pandemic e.g. biological issues of the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, epidemic, diagnostic, crisis management issues etc. and are not limited to any field of science (i.e. research issues may fall into any scientific field or have interdisciplinary character). Under the rules set forth in this Supplement, applications may be filed only by project managers, within the Measure 4.4 during the project implementation period, excluding the beneficiaries of the projects carried out under a state aid scheme. In case of projects carried out by consortia the additional financing can be granted only to a research unit which will require an annex to the consortium agreement limiting it only to the original application and excluding benefits for the enterprise within the new task.

Beneficiaries applying the rules and procedures set forth in the Supplement are subject to the Competition Documentation under which they obtained funding for their projects. In the event of any inconsistency between this Supplement and the Competition Documentation, this Supplement shall take priority.

II. General information

2.1 Possibilities for modifications declared under this Supplement

2.1.1. An application for project modifications consisting of an introduction of a new research task related to the topic of the COVID-19 pandemic may involve:

a) Modifications in the substantive scope of the project, with extension of the project implementation period by a maximum of 12 months, where implementation of the modifications requires an increase in the project budget by no more than 25% of its existing value, in particular connected with changes in the composition of the team implementing the project. The proposed changes are expected to contribute to obtaining results directly related to their practical use, implementation or commercialisation.
b) Modifications connected with elaboration of the results of the project to date for verification of their possibilities for their practical use, implementation or commercialization (proof of concept). Such changes, if substantively justified, may be connected with extension of the project implementation period by a maximum of 12 months and appropriate increase in the funding for the project.

c) Modifications connected with an introduction of a new research task with extension of the project implementation period by a maximum of 12 months for HOMING, POWROTY/REINTEGRATION, FIRST TEAM and TEAM project managers who during the course of project implementation have filed an application in a competition conducted by the European Research Council (ERC) or other international competition of a similar nature (e.g. HFSP), and for TEAM TECH project managers who during the course of project implementation have filed an application in the Horizon 2020 framework programme or other international grant competition of a similar nature. Such modifications, if substantively justified, may be connected with an appropriate increase in funding for the project. The proposed changes are expected to contribute to obtaining results directly related to their practical use, implementation or commercialisation of a solution proposed within a new research task.

d) Modifications connected with an introduction of a new research task with extension of the project implementation period by a maximum of 24 months for FIRST TEAM and TEAM project managers who during the course of project implementation have filed an application in a competition conducted by the European Research Council (ERC) or other international competition of a similar nature (e.g. HFSP) and have won the competition or have been qualified to the second stage of evaluation, as well as for TEAM TECH project managers who during the course of project implementation have filed an application in the Horizon 2020 framework programme or other international grant competition of a similar nature and have won the competition or received the status of “Seal of Excellence” within the SME Instrument issued by the European Commission. Such modifications, if substantively justified, may be connected with an appropriate increase in funding for the project. The proposed changes are expected to contribute to obtaining results directly related to their practical use, implementation or commercialisation of a solution proposed within a new research task.

e) Modifications introducing an additional task implemented in cooperation with at least one other leader of a team funded under SG OP Measure 4.3 (International Research Agendas) or manager of a project funded under SG OP Measure 4.4 (Increasing human potential in the R&D sector). The cooperation between teams from different scientific fields will be preferred. Such modifications, if substantively justified, may be connected with extension of the project implementation period by a maximum of 24 months as well as an appropriate increase in funding. The proposed changes are expected to contribute to
obtaining results directly related to their practical use, implementation or commercialisation of a solution proposed within a new research task.

**NOTE:** in case of options indicated in points 2.1.1. (a), (b) and (e) the changes to be introduced should be directly related to knowledge transfer, practical use or future commercialisation of the developed results. The eligibility of the VAT tax is subject to the rules set out in the funding agreement.

2.1.2. The project manager may exercise one or more of the options indicated in points 2.1.1(a)–(e), but the total extension of the project implementation period pursuant to this Supplement cannot be greater than **12 months** for HOMING and POWROTY/REINTEGRATION projects or **24 months** for FIRST TEAM, TEAM and TEAM TECH projects.

2.1.3. A project manager may file an application pursuant to the rules set forth in this Supplement more than once.

2.1.4. Beneficiaries who receive approval for extension of the project implementation period under the rules set forth in this Supplement may also apply for modifications of the project implementation period, without the possibility of an increase in funding:

a) If the project manager during the implementation of the project gives birth or adopts a child, the project implementation period may be extended by a maximum of an additional **6 months** for each child born or adopted during the project implementation period.

b) If the project implementation period in the agreement is the maximum permissible project implementation period adopted in the Competition Documentation and this Supplement, an extension of the cost eligibility period is possible for a maximum of **3 months**, a so-called technical extension.

2.1.5. Project implementation indicators:

a) Introduction of modifications of projects under implementation pursuant to this Supplement requires updating of the indicators via the electronic form for filing applications.

b) The new values of the indicators must be appropriate to the proposed modifications in the project and reflect the adopted aims. Such indicators shall be the subject of evaluation by experts during the course of the merits evaluation of the application, during implementation, and after project completion, and may be subject to changes suggested by experts evaluating the application.

2.2. **Deadline for submitting applications**

2.2.1. Applications for modifications in projects will be accepted from 15 April 2020 until 12 May 2020, 4 pm (local time, GMT+1:00).
2.2.2. An application within the current call may be submitted no later than 3 months before the deadline for completion of the project.

2.3. **Requested amount**

2.3.1. As a result of a procedure covered by this Supplement, a new project budget shall be adopted reflecting the costs necessary to perform the tasks provided for in the application.

2.3.2. The increase in the budget shall be made under the rules and within the cost categories set forth in the *Cost Eligibility Guide for SG OP Measure 4.4 in force for the Competition Documentation* under which the project is funded.

2.3.2. When filing an application for project modifications, the project manager shall review the entire budget and estimate any potential savings, and may prepare a new project budget covering both the increase in funding and, if possible, the extension of project implementation.

2.3.3. In the event of an application for an increase in the project budget, the following values are suggested:

   a) In HOMING, POWROT/REINTEGRATION, and Core Facility PLUS projects, up to PLN 400,000 per 12 months,

   b) In FIRST TEAM projects, up to PLN 600,000 per 12 months,

   c) In the case of an application for the modifications referred to in points 2.1.1 (b) and (c), in TEAM and TEAM TECH projects (including winners of the TEAM TECH Core-facility competition), up to PLN 800,000 per 12 months,

   d) In the case of an application for the modifications referred to in points 2.1.1 (d) and (e), in TEAM and TEAM TECH projects (including winners of the TEAM TECH Core-facility competition), up to PLN 1,000,000 per 12 months,

   e) In the case of an application for the modifications referred to in point 2.1.1(e) involving an IRA team leader, the IRA project can apply for increase in funding under the rules set forth in the grant agreement under the IRA programme.

It is possible to apply for increase in funding higher than suggested above. In such cases the Foundation will take the decision based on experts’ opinion.

2.4. **Manner of submitting applications**

2.4.1. Applications for project modification shall be submitted via the electronic system made available by the Foundation at the website [www.wnioski.fnp.org.pl](http://www.wnioski.fnp.org.pl). A template of the Application for changes form is an attachment to this *Supplement*. The application is submitted as a scan of the original document or signed by a qualified electronic signature.
Appropriate attachments should be included in the application for project modifications as indicated in 2.4.3. The electronic form shall be completed in Polish or in English.

2.4.2 The electronic system for filing applications for project modifications allows for editing of data, including editing attachments and information about the project implementation indicators, until the moment of “closing of data editing.” After completion of editing of data, the required Statement of the unit where the project is being implemented must be attached to the electronic form. Failure to upload such statement in the electronic system will mean that the application has not been filed. The statement can be submitted as a scan of the original document or signed by a qualified electronic signature.

2.4.3. A project manager filing an application for modifications referred to in point 2.1.1(a) shall file the following attachments with the application:

a) Report on the work undertaken to date and a description of the results obtained and their implementation potential (max. 2 pages),

b) Description of the modifications in the substantive scope of the project with the substantive basis therefor and an indication of any changes in the composition of the team implementing the project; a justification for the increase in the project expenditures must indicate how the proposed changes will contribute to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, to the practical use of the project results or to the increase of the potential for market use of the R&D results of the project (max. 3 pages),

c) Project budget including the proposed changes

2.4.4. A project manager filing an application for modifications referred to in point 2.1.1(b) shall file the following attachments with the application:

a) Report on the work undertaken to date and a description of the results obtained and their potential for implementation (max. 2 pages),

b) Description of the new research task in the nature of “proof of concept,” as well as a justification for the increase in the project expenditures or project extension along with the information on how the proposed changes will contribute to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, to the practical use of the project results or to the increase of the potential for market use of the R&D results of the project (max. 3 pages),

c) Project budget including the proposed changes.

2.4.5. A project manager filing an application for modifications referred to in point 2.1.1(c) shall file the following attachments with the application:
a) Report on the work undertaken to date and a description of the results obtained and their potential for implementation (max. 2 pages),

b) Description of the new research task in the project, its connection with fighting the COVID-19 pandemic as well as a justification for the increase in the project expenditures or project extension (max. 3 pages),

c) An attachment confirming that the project manager meets the conditions referred to in point 2.1.1(c),

d) Description of the project (in terms of planned R&D works) submitted within the competition referred to in point 2.1.1(c),

e) Project budget including the proposed changes.

2.4.6. A project manager filing an application for modifications referred to in point 2.1.1(d) shall file the following attachments with the application:

a) Report on the work undertaken to date and a description of the results obtained and their potential for implementation (max. 2 pages),

b) Description of the new research task in the project, its connection with fighting the COVID-19 pandemic as well as a justification for the increase in the project expenditures or project extension (max. 3 pages),

c) An attachment confirming that the project manager meets the conditions referred to in point 2.1.1(d),

d) Description of the project (in terms of planned R&D works) submitted within the competition referred to in point 2.1.1(d),

e) Reviews and/or opinions of the reviewing panels that the abovementioned application has received.

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1 Does not apply in case of ERC Grants applicants.

2 For ERC Grants applicants: electronically signed application with a time stamp consisting of parts A, B1 and B2 of the application, generated by the Participant Portal system.

3 Not required from ERC Grants applicants - it is part of the attachment above.

4 Does not apply in case of ERC Grants applicants.

5 For ERC Grants applicants: electronically signed application with a time stamp consisting of parts A, B1 and B2 of the application, generated by the Participant Portal system.

6 Not required from ERC Grants applicants - it is part of the attachment above.

7 For ERC Grants applicants: Step 1 Evaluation Report and/or Step 2 Evaluation Report.
f) Project budget including the proposed changes.

2.4.7. An application for modifications referred to in point 2.1.1(e) shall be filed by each of the beneficiaries intending to cooperate with one another, also indicating in the electronic system the project manager/project managers with whom the cooperation is to be carried out. Each of the project managers shall file the following attachments:

a) Report on the work undertaken to date and a description of the results obtained and their potential for implementation (max. 2 pages),

b) Description of the reasons for undertaking the cooperation and the aim sought to be achieved, together with an indication of the added value arising out of the cooperation, in particular in terms of practical applications or market use of the project results as well as a justification for the increase in the project expenditures or project extension (max. 3 pages),

c) Description of the new research task planned to be carried out within the cooperation, with particular attention to the new works carried out by the beneficiary and the connection of the new task with fighting the COVID-19 pandemic (max. 3 pages),

d) Project budget including the proposed changes,

e) In addition, one joint attachment shall be enclosed with each application, with the identical content for all beneficiaries planning to take up cooperation, describing the rules for the cooperation and the rules for division of rights to the jointly developed intellectual property (this attachment shall be signed by all the project managers to be involved in the cooperation).

2.5. System of evaluation of applications for project modifications

The applications submitted will be verified in terms of their compliance with formal conditions and evaluated in terms of substantive aspects. The applications will be evaluated within a period of not more than three months.

2.5.1. Verification of formal conditions:

a) Where an electronic file attached to the online form is found to be defective or where any obvious errors are identified, or in case the required attachments have been prepared on inappropriate templates or they exceed the number of pages specified in this document, such application or the attachments will need to be corrected by the beneficiary within 14 days of notification to that effect.

b) Where an electronic file uploaded to the online form is defective, or editing errors are identified, the programme officer may request that they be corrected, at any stage of the evaluation, within 14 days of notification to that effect.
c) If the corrections referred to in points (a) and (b) are not submitted, an application not meeting the formal conditions will not be processed further.

d) Applications meeting the formal conditions will be referred to substantive evaluation.

e) Beneficiaries whose applications have not been corrected as indicated in points (a) and (b) or after the corrections still do not meet the formal conditions will be informed (by e-mail or via the electronic system) that their applications will not be considered due to formal defects.

2.5.2. Merit-based evaluation:

Independent external experts, within the meaning of Art. 68a of the so called “Implementation Act” (Act of 11 July 2014 on the principles of implementation of the cohesion policy programmes, financed under the 2014-2020 financial perspective), selected from the List of expert candidates maintained by the Foundation. Experts are appointed in compliance with the principles described in the Instruction for recruitment and selection of experts for the purpose of selecting projects for financing and carrying out tasks arising from agreements of projects implementation under the SG OP Measure 4.4 at the Foundation.

Before starting the assessment, each expert must submit a declaration of impartiality, confidentiality and no conflict of interest, as adopted by the Implementing Authority.

a) Applications shall be evaluated by a panel of experts, including at least three experts with recognized scientific accomplishments or experience implementing innovative solutions within the thematic scope of the application and one member of the FNP Executive Board (who will chair the panel without the right to evaluate the application). In case of multidisciplinary applications the Foundation may appoint additional experts relevant to particular disciplines represented by the applications submitted.

b) The beneficiary may be invited for an interview with the experts, to be held at the offices of the Foundation. It is possible to have the interview by phone or using online tools (such as Skype).

c) The discussion between the applicant and the panel of experts will be audio recorded.

d) Experts prepare an assessment of a project in terms of all the criteria, recalling the arguments of all panel members given during the panel meeting and referring to the clarifications / explanations provided by the applicant during the interview. Arrangements are agreed on by email (correspondence is also addressed to an indicated employee of the Foundation) or via a protected directory dedicated to each panel, located on the server of the Implementing Authority coordinated by the indicated employee of the Foundation. The manner of agreeing on the justification is reflected in the Evaluation form.
2.5.3. Experts evaluating applications shall take into consideration:

a) The manner of implementation of the project to date,

b) The substantive consistency of the application with the project accepted for funding,

c) The value added by the modification proposed in the application with respect to the original project,

d) Meeting the goal foreseen in this call, i.e. the possibility of using the results in practice, of implementation or commercialization of the solution proposed within the new research task to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.5.4. Experts evaluating applications may request that the beneficiaries make corrections to the proposed project modifications necessary to ensure that their implementation is correct (e.g. concerning the project budget, planned expenditures, or indicators). They may also recommend that the Foundation conducts such negotiations at a later date, in particular prior to signing of the annex to the funding agreement.

a) The Executive Board of the Foundation based on the evaluation of the panel of experts shall take the final decision on awarding of the increased funding and project extension.

b) The Foundation will consider the legitimacy of increasing the amount of funding, taking into account the reasons why the project has been selected for funding, the manner of its implementation so far (both in terms of content and finances), the impact of the proposed change on the expected results of the project.

c) The Foundation shall send a written notice of the result of the evaluation to the beneficiary (via e-mail).

2.5.5. The call for applications for project modifications pursuant to this Supplement does not constitute a procedure for selecting projects for funding under the competition procedure specified in art. 38 sec. 1 point 1 of the “Implementation Act”.

2.5.6. The Foundation does not provide for any appeal procedure.

III. Annex to the funding agreement

3.1 Funding is awarded on the basis of an annex to the current funding agreement and its template constitutes an attachment to this Supplement.

3.2 Before concluding the annex to the funding agreement, the Foundation reserves the right to negotiate with the beneficiary with the aim of introducing necessary adjustments to the
application, including those involving project indicators or the project budget, particularly in terms of the correctness of the adopted financial assumptions.

3.3 The rules for disbursing, accounting for, and, where necessary, returning the funds, and the reporting rules connected with expenditure of the funds, shall remain the same as set forth in the funding agreement.

IV. Attachments

4.1 Template of the application for changes
4.2 Template of the Annex to the funding agreement without state aid

V. Contact

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