

**SUPPLEMENT TO COMPETITION  
DOCUMENTATION FOR THE FIRST TEAM  
PROGRAMME  
REGARDING COMPETITION FOR FUNDING  
THE PURCHASE OF SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT**

# I. Introduction

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This document sets out the rules for submitting and evaluating applications for funding the purchase of specialist equipment at **research units<sup>1</sup> where projects are carried out as part of the FIRST TEAM programme**, financed from the funds of the European Regional Development Fund as part of the Smart Growth Operational Programme 2014–2020, under the name HOMING/POWROTY, Priority Axis IV: Increasing scientific research potential, Measure 4.4.

This document supplements the Competition Documentation concerning the FIRST TEAM 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 FIRST TEAM Competition Documentation under which the programme is carried out, this supplement shall take priority.

## II. General information

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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 project managers of FIRST TEAM projects carried out at research units to purchase, in the course of the project, 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)<sup>2</sup> (the “equipment”). The equipment does not include computer hardware and other devices which are not used directly to carry out R&D work.

2.1.2 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 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Within the meaning of the Act on the Rules for Financing Science of 30 April 2010 (Journal of Laws No. 96 item 615, on the basis of Journal of Laws 2014 item 1620, and 2015 item 249), conducting research or development work on a continuous basis.

<sup>2</sup> 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).

2.1.3 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 4.4 of the Smart Growth Operational Programme*, which in each instance constitutes an appendix to the competition documentation in the FIRST TEAM programme.

2.1.4 Within the competition, the funding obtained only concerns the FIRST TEAM 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 project manager of the project funded as part of the FIRST TEAM programme, together with the research unit where the project is carried out, in an area where the research unit does not conduct business activity (i.e. without state aid being granted). This also refers to projects carried out as part of scientific-industrial consortia, as long as the project manager is employed at the research unit.

## 2.3 Deadlines for submitting applications

2.3.1 The competition for funding specialist equipment will be conducted on a rolling basis from **27 June 2018 until the funds allocated for this purpose are exhausted**. An application may be submitted no earlier than the date of signing of the grant agreement and **no later than 18 months before the deadline for completion of the FIRST TEAM project** specified in the grant agreement.

**NOTE:** project managers of the 1 edition (1/2016) of the First Team programme can submit applications for funding specialist equipment **no later than 9 months before the deadline for completion of the FIRST TEAM project** specified in the grant agreement.

2.3.2 The applicant may obtain funding for the purpose of purchasing equipment only once on the basis of the rules specified in this document.

## 2.4 Total requested amount

2.4.1 The requested amount of funding, understood as the purchase price of the equipment,<sup>3</sup> should not exceed **PLN 750,000**. In justified cases, the Foundation may accept a funding application for an amount exceeding the abovementioned amount.

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

2.4.2 The purchase price of the equipment being subject of the application submitted under this procedure are eligible in accordance with the current Cost Eligibility Guide for Measure 4.4 of the Smart Growth Operational Programme, available on the FNP website.

2.4.3. The amount of funding is a direct cost of the project, and the value of that funding shall increase the value of the FIRST TEAM project, along with appropriately calculated flat-rate costs.

2.4.4 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 4.4. of the Smart Growth Operational Programme*.

## 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 the 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 the *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:

- a) **List of the pieces of equipment which are 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)

- b) **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)
- c) **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 unit has obtained funding under the Innovative Economy Operational Programme or the Infrastructure and Environment Operational Programme 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 FIRST TEAM project* (max. three A4 pages, attachment to be in English)

**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

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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 In case of obvious formal mistakes and errors and if the submitted attachments are prepared on the basis of other templates or exceed the number of pages specified in this document, the application or such attachments will need to be corrected by the applicant within 14 days of notification to that effect.

3.1.2 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 notification to that effect.

3.1.3 If the documents specified in items 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 are not submitted, applications not meeting the formal criteria will not be processed further on formal grounds.

3.1.4 Applicants whose applications do not meet the formal criteria will be informed (by e-mail or via the electronic system) that their applications have been rejected for formal reasons.

## 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 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 FIRST TEAM 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 are representatives of the research unit 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 other 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 Body 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 FIRST TEAM project accepted for funding,
- 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 FIRST TEAM project. The Foundation for Polish Science will consult the Intermediary Authority for Axis 4 of the Smart Growth Operational 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 FIRST TEAM project and the purposes for which equipment was purchased under the Innovative Economy Operational Programme or the Infrastructure and Environment Operational Programme.

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 [odwołania@fnp.org.pl](mailto:odwołania@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

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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 FIRST TEAM 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 FIRST TEAM project specified in the grant agreement.

**NOTE:** in case of project managers of the 1 edition (1/2016) of the First Team programme the purchase of equipment must be completed **no later than 3 months** before the completion date of the FIRST TEAM project specified in the grant agreement.

4.3 Completion of the purchase of equipment shall include:

- a) delivery of the equipment to the unit,
- b) submission of a copy of proof of payment,

- c) registration of the equipment as a fixed asset of the unit (in accordance with the unit's accounting policy),
- d) 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 4.4 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 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

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## VI. Appendices

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

