

# INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AGENDAS PROGRAMME

Competition Documentation

FOR PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED OUTSIDE OF MAZOWIECKIE PROVINCE

COMPETITION NO. 12/2018



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Republic  
of Poland



Foundation for  
Polish Science

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## I. Introduction

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1. The purpose of the International Research Agendas Programme (IRAP) is to implement high-quality research and development work carried out by prominent scientists from Poland and abroad. The received funding should contribute to the creation of specialised research units with a leading global position which apply best international practices in the following areas:
  - a. identifying research programmes and subjects,
  - b. HR policy and R&D management,
  - c. commercialising R&D results.
2. This Competition Documentation applies to applicants who intend to implement an IRA project in a unit based in Poland, with the exception of Mazowieckie Province.
3. This document outlines the rules for submitting applications and implementing projects within the International Research Agendas Programme, which is a grant programme of the Foundation for Polish Science (FNP) financed from the European Regional Development Fund under the Smart Growth Operational Programme (SG OP), Axis IV: Increasing the research potential, Measure 4.3: International Research Agendas.
4. In the case of any updates of source documents (e.g. the National Smart Specialisations document or the Guidelines published by the Managing Authority) certain information may change, which will not affect the time limits or terms of the competition, but might cause changes in the grant agreement or in certain appendices hereto. The Foundation will keep the applicants up to date with any changes.
5. All the dates specified in the Competition Documentation (unless stated otherwise) referring to the obligations of applicants or grantees are the dates of receipt of the documents by the FNP rather than posting dates. With respect to deadlines expressed in days, a day is defined as a calendar day. If the deadline falls on a public holiday or on a Saturday, the business day immediately following will be deemed the deadline.
6. The application selection procedure within the International Research Agendas Programme is not a competition as defined in the Act of 11 July 2014 on the Principles of Implementing Cohesion Policy Programmes Financed under the 2014-2020 Financial Perspective.

## II. Definitions

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The terms used in this documentation have the following meanings:

1. **Project budget** – a financial plan of the project, including the categories of eligible costs broken down into reporting periods.
2. **PhD student** – a person with the status of a student of 3rd cycle studies or an equivalent programme who participates in the IRAP project under the supervision of a research group leader.
3. **Foundation** – the Foundation for Polish Science (FNP).
4. **Intermediate Body (IB)**– an entity to whom the fulfilment of tasks under a national or regional operational programme has been entrusted under a memorandum or agreement concluded with the Managing Authority. For Measure 4.3. of the SG OP: the National Centre for Research and Development.
5. **Managing Authority (MA)** – an institution or public entity responsible for the management of an operational programme. For the SG OP: minister responsible for regional development (pursuant to Article 9 section 1 of the Implementation Act).
6. **IRAP implementing unit (IRAP unit)** – a research unit in which the grant project funded within the IRAP is implemented and which meets the requirements set out herein. The implementing unit is required to comply with the definition of a research unit (below) and the definition of a research and knowledge-dissemination organisation specified in Article 2 (83) of Regulation 651/2014, provided that it is not an entity whose only goal is to widely disseminate the results of R&D activities by way of teaching, publication or knowledge transfer. The funding level for research units for the implementation of industrial research under a project (aid intensity) is up to 100% of eligible costs if the project is implemented under non-economic activities.
7. **Research units** – as defined in the Act on the Principles of Financing Science of 30 April 2010, conducting scientific research or development work on a continuous basis:
  - a) basic organisational units of higher education institutions within the meaning of the Statutes of such higher education institutions,
  - b) research units of the Polish Academy of Sciences, as defined in the Act on the Polish Academy of Sciences of 30 April 2010,
  - c) research institutes, as defined in the Act on Research Institutes of 30 April 2010,
  - d) international scientific institutes established pursuant to separate regulations, operating in the territory of the Republic of Poland,

- e) the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences,
- f) other organisational units not listed in points a-e which have their registered offices in the Republic of Poland and are research and knowledge-dissemination organisations as defined in Article 2(83) of Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty OJ L 187 of 26.6.2014, p. 1).
- 8. Project leader** – leader of the IRAP Implementing Unit – a prominent scientist from Poland or abroad who submitted an application for funding under the programme (selected in line with section 4.4.2.a) who is responsible for the substantive implementation of the Research Agenda in the IRAP Implementing Unit).
- 9. National Smart Specialisation (NSS)** – a document specifying the thematic scope to be financed within the competition, available on the website of the Foundation. The binding version is the one that is valid on the day of announcing the IRAP competition.
- 10. Research group leader** – a researcher acting as the Research Group Leader/manager at the IRAP Implementing Unit.
- 11. International Research Agendas Programme (IRAP)** – a research programme that determines a clearly defined scientific challenge (a research problem) or a challenge of a social and economic nature (within National Smart Specialisations) and the method of work and approach to dealing with the said challenge, forming a substantive basis for the existence of the IRAP implementing unit. In addition to the precisely defined research problem, the International Research Agenda should be characterised by an innovative and competitive approach to solving it, which should guarantee the IRAP implementing unit the position of a global leader<sup>1</sup> among units dealing with similar research problems. If the IRAP falls within the NSS, solving a problem specified in it may require the participation of scientists from various fields and interdisciplinary contributions from various research groups. Therefore, due to the all-round approach to the issue, the ISC may include, for instance, a project component involving scientists specialising in social studies or humanities.
- The first Research Agenda is created by the applicant in cooperation with partner institutions, in particular the partner unit from abroad.
- 12. International Scientific Committee (ISC)** – an international body of prominent members of the scientific community, world-renowned authorities on IRAP implementation and, where

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<sup>1</sup>the position of a global leader means, depending on the area of specialisation of a given research unit, e.g. marketing inventions created as a result of research, publishing studies which are among the 10% most often cited studies in a given field globally, or hiring beneficiaries of ERC grants.

justified, to support the project objective, entrepreneurs with experience in cooperation with scientists or entrepreneurs with extensive experience in the implementation of new technologies. Members of the scientific community must comprise at least half the membership of the ISC.

13. **Junior Postdoctoral Researcher** – a person who has had the academic title of doctor for no more than five years (starting from the year of title conferral and ending in the year of filing a competition application to complete postdoctoral training in a research group working at an IRAP unit), who participates in project implementation under the supervision of the Research Group Leader.
14. **Grant project implementation period** – the time limit indicated in an agreement needed to implement the tasks and secure the outcomes indicated in the Grant Application, compatible with the time limits specified in the Competition Documentation.
15. **Reporting period** – a period after which the IRAP Implementing Unit must submit a financial or progress report on the grant project implementation. In the International Research Agendas Programme, the maximum duration of a reporting period is three months for financial reports and one year for progress reports. A grant agreement will specify the beginning and end dates of the reporting periods and the time limits for filing interim reports.
16. **IRAP Project** – An undertaking aimed at implementing the International Research Agendas (described in the grant application) and at attaining a set objective defined by indicators, with a specified start and end of implementation, co-financed under the IRAP.
17. **Enterprise** – an entity engaged in business activities, irrespective of its legal status and the manner of financing such activities.<sup>2</sup>
18. **Cost Eligibility Guide** – Cost Eligibility Guide for Measure 4.3. of the Smart Growth Operational Programme, available on the FNP website.
19. **Strategic Partner Unit (located abroad)** – a foreign unit or international (public or private) organisation which conducts scientific research on an ongoing basis and is involved in the IRAP Project.
20. **Student** – a person with the status of a 1st - 2nd-cycle student (or equivalent) participating in the IRAP project.
21. **Durability of the project results** – as defined in Article 71 of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013.

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<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty.

22. **Grant Agreement (Agreement)** – an agreement entered into between the Foundation and the IRAP implementing unit regarding the implementation of the IRAP project.
23. **Grant Application (so-called Application)** – the application is composed of the application form, completed online, and all the required attachments (in electronic form), as specified in the Competition Documentation. The application form is available on the Programme's website.
24. **Applicant** – the main applicant shall be a renowned Polish or foreign scientist. Two scientists may also file a grant application. In such a case, the second applicant may serve within an IRAP unit as the Research Group Leader or Director of Scientific Affairs.

**The Second Applicant – – Research Group Leader** – a renowned Polish or foreign scientist who meets the requirements described in section 4.3 of the Documentation who may serve as the Research Group Leader without any additional competition, if he/she is recommended for this position by the Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts (3rd stage of the IRAP competition).

**The Second Applicant – Director of Scientific Affairs** – a scientist with extensive experience in scientific research and science management who shall be responsible at the IRAP Implementing Unit for coordinating the activities related to the achievement of the objectives specified in the Research Agenda.

25. **Project indicators** – indicators determined prior to the commencement of a project in order to monitor the project and evaluate its completion with respect to predetermined objectives, specified herein.
26. **Eligible expenditures** – costs or expenditures incurred in connection with the implementation of a project within the International Research Agendas Programme that are eligible for settlement or reimbursement pursuant to the Grant Agreement, as specified in the *Cost Eligibility Guide* – as at the date of announcing the competition on the programme's website.
27. **Guidelines** – a legal instrument that determines uniform conditions and procedures for the implementation of Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund, addressed to institutions participating in carrying out operational programmes and applied by these institutions pursuant to the relevant memoranda, territorial contracts or agreements and by beneficiaries (grantees) under the Grant Agreement or the grant project funding decision.



## III. IRAP project implementation procedure

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### 3.1. Project implementation period

- 3.1.1 The project may be launched not earlier than on 1 January 2019.
- 3.1.2 The Applicant shall specify the date of launching and completion of the project, taking into account that the project implementation period is equivalent to the period in which the incurred expenditures may be regarded as eligible.
- 3.1.3 The first part of the project is planned for 54 months, which is the period covered by the grant application. The project implementation period may be extended to 31 December 2023 at the request of the IRAP implementing unit if the project receives a positive recommendation in the second midterm review, i.e. after 36 months of the project implementation.
- 3.1.4 The leader of the IRAP Implementing Unit shall submit an application for extending the project implementation period within the time limit and in the form indicated by the Foundation in line with the provisions of the Grant Agreement.
- 3.1.5 The application for extending the project implementation period shall include in particular all information on the planned research agenda adopted by the ISC for all research groups that are to work in the IRAP implementing unit in the extended project financing period.

### 3.2. Amount of funding

- 3.2.1 The total requested amount of funding designated for the implementation of the IRAP grant project may not exceed **PLN 35 million**.

## IV. General conditions of the competition

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### 4.1. Thematic scope of the projects

The competition involves the funding of projects compliant with the subjects listed in the National Smart Specialisations list. The current valid NSS list is available on the [FNP website](#).

If the IRAP falls within the NSS, solving a problem specified in it may require the participation of scientists from various fields and interdisciplinary contributions from

various research groups. Therefore, due to the all-round approach to the issue, the ISC may also include, for instance, a project component involving scientists specialising in social studies or humanities. Such an approach is even more justified if it influences the final value and reliability of the IRAP project outputs and increases the possibility of applying them in business.

#### **4.2. Project implementation site**

Projects granted funding under the competition covered by this documentation may be implemented in any Polish region other than Mazowieckie Province.

#### **4.3. Amount of funds allocated to the implementation of projects**

The total amount of funds allocated to the competition is PLN 70,000,000.

#### **4.4. Applicant**

4.3.1 The application may be submitted by citizens of Poland or of another country, also from outside the European Union. The application shall be submitted by one applicant or, in justified cases, by two applicants, e.g. when the application concerns interdisciplinary research or when the main applicant will not be at the unit on a full-time basis<sup>3</sup>; however, it should be clearly indicated in the application form which of the researchers is the main applicant.

4.3.2 The applicant or main applicant (if the application is submitted by two applicants) is an outstanding scientist and an internationally recognised expert in their field.

4.3.3 When the application is submitted by two applicants, the main applicant will serve as the IRAP implementing unit manager (depending on the legal form selected for the new unit, e.g. president of a foundation or director) and the leader of one of the research groups. The second applicant:

a) shall be employed by the IRAP implementing unit as a Research Group Leader,

or

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<sup>3</sup> For instance due to the specific circumstances of the conducted research he/she stays in a research centre with a unique research infrastructure, e.g. at the CERN

b) shall be hired as the Director of Scientific Affairs and shall not work as a research group leader.

4.3.4 Each of the applicants shall be involved in implementing the IRAP project to the extent sufficient to implement the project. Full-time involvement is recommended, and in exceptional circumstances involvement at a level of less than full-time equivalent, but not less than 50% FTE, is permitted. The involvement required of each of the applicants is decided on a case-by-case basis by the Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts, taking into consideration that the leader's involvement may not be less than 50% FTE.

#### **4.5. IRAP implementing unit**

4.4.1 The IRAP unit carries out its research activities by implementing projects and research tasks in research groups and, where necessary, through the performance of research tasks by independent researchers in line with section 5.4 of the Documentation). The number of research groups and other persons performing R&D tasks corresponds to the research agenda adopted and submitted in the grant application, with any subsequent amendments introduced by the International Scientific Committee.

4.4.2 The IRAP unit must comply with the following conditions during the project implementation period and project durability period:

##### **a) Manager of the IRAP implementing unit**

1. The manager of the IRAP implementing unit is the applicant selected in the competition by the FNP. Throughout the entire period of project funding and at least in the period of its durability, the manager of the IRAP implementing unit may only be a person who fulfils the criteria of the Competition Documentation, including also performing the role of the research group leader. The research group leader recruitment rules are specified in section 5.1.

2. If the applicant is for any reason unable to perform the role of manager of the IRAP implementing unit until the end of the term, a new unit manager is selected from among the Research Group Leaders working at the IRAP implementing unit, according to the internal regulations adopted by the unit.

3. During the IRAP funding period, the IRAP implementing unit provides the FNP with information and documents on the potential new individual indicated as the unit manager, in accordance with the list of documents required from the applicant at the first stage of the application (see section 7.2.5 a). The Foundation evaluates and approves the new manager of the IRAP implementing unit.

4. Since the manager of the unit is also the IRAP project manager, the FNP's approval of the selection of any new manager in the course of the project is necessary for the IRAP project to continue.

**b) Partnership with a foreign strategic partner unit**

The strategic partner of the project is a foreign research centre (public or private) conducting scientific research at world-class level, with a vast experience in the area of applied research and meeting top work and organisational standards.

The partnership primarily involves joint implementation, in the IRAP implementing unit, of good practices regarding organisational culture, commercialisation of the results of research work and conducting research, and also delegating representatives of the partner unit or persons recommended by that unit to be members of the IRAP International Scientific Committee. Research cooperation is a complementary but not a sufficient contribution of a foreign partner.

**c) International Scientific Committee**

One of the bodies of the IRAP implementing unit is the International Scientific Committee, whose members are researchers with globally recognised achievements, working in the research field to be developed by the IRAP and, if justified by the need to facilitate the achievement of the project objectives, entrepreneurs with experience in cooperating with researchers on R&D work, or entrepreneurs with a substantial experience in implementing new technologies.

During the project implementation period, the IRAP implementing unit will enable the FNP and the IB representatives to participate in ISC meetings. The IRAP implementing unit shall notify the FNP of changes to the ISC membership upon the end of its term of office or in the course of it, as the case may be.

It is necessary to comply with the following conditions for the ISC's composition:



1. The International Scientific Committee is composed of at least 9 members.
2. At least half of the ISC members must be researchers and at least half of the ISC members must be employed by foreign units conducting scientific research.
3. Members of the International Scientific Committee are appointed for terms of office not longer than 5 years. Upon expiry of the ISC term of office, no more than one half of its members may be appointed for another term. Each ISC member may perform his/her function for no more than two terms.

Responsibilities of the International Scientific Committee include:

1. Regular verification of the Agenda and introducing changes as necessary, e.g. resulting from developments in global scientific research in a given domain at least every 2 years.
2. Evaluation of the work of all research group leaders and their teams at least every 3 years.
3. Issuing assessments on the hiring decisions of the IRAP implementing unit concerning independent researchers or winners of the European Research Council competition in line with sections 5.4 and 5.7 of the Documentation.
4. Announcing and holding the competition for research group leaders (subject to section 5.1) to work for the IRAP implementing unit, including as managers of IRAP implementing units (subject to section 4.3.3 a) through:
  - a) the approval of the competition regulations and criteria prepared by the unit,
  - b) the approval of the scope of criteria for the manager or leader,
  - c) evaluation of submissions and issuing recommendations for hiring the best candidate(s).
5. In the case of an existing unit transformed into an IRAP unit, the ISC's duties additionally include evaluating the employees of the unit referred to in section 4.4.3.

**d) Legal form enabling a unit to meet the requirements stated in the Documentation**

Requirements set for the IRAP implementing unit can be met by e.g. a foundation established under the Act on Foundations whose statutory objective is to conduct scientific research. The foundation's statutes shall set forth its activities and the responsibilities of its governing bodies, and the method of cooperating with foreign partner units, as well as ensure the durability of the adopted objectives and competence.

Example foundation statutes complying with the terms of the competition can be downloaded from the FNP website.

An IRAP implementing unit adopting a legal form other than a foundation is also required to meet all the criteria of this Competition Documentation. In addition, if it has legal personality, prior to signing the grant agreement it must conclude an agreement with a foreign strategic partner unit that specifies the method of cooperation on the IRAP implementation. If the IRAP implementing unit is to be a unit operating under an international agreement (e.g. a joint unit of a Polish and foreign higher education institution), both institutions defined by the law, the Polish and the foreign, must conclude an international agreement stipulating the manner in which the unit is to be established and its operation in accordance with the terms of the Competition Documentation.

The applicant may use the expert assessment on the various legal forms of units made available by the FNP on the programme website. Where the assumptions of the expert assessment differ from the assumptions of the competition as stated in this Competition Documentation, the rules stipulated in the Competition Documentation take precedence.

**e) Cooperation with a partner research institution from Poland (optional)**

The IRAP implementing unit may establish cooperation with a Polish research partner. The partnership may involve e.g. providing laboratory infrastructure, taking joint actions relating to PhD projects or other research cooperation activities.

**f) Commercialisation Council (optional)**

The IRAP implementing unit may establish cooperation with an advisory body composed of representatives of business entities. The role of that advisory body is to issue assessments on the IRAP unit's R&D activities from the perspective of the business applications of the project results.

**g) Access to infrastructure**

The applicants should obtain access to research infrastructure, such as rooms and the necessary equipment, for the IRAP implementation. Where necessary, the cost of room rental and use of equipment may be covered by the IRAP grant project funding in accordance with *the Cost Eligibility Guide* for Measure 4.3 of SGOP.

**h) Regular evaluation of all Research Group Leaders and their teams**



At least every 3 years Research Group Leaders must undergo an evaluation carried out by the International Scientific Committee. Upon the completion of the evaluation, the Scientific Committee shall provide a recommendation on their future employment – renewal, non-renewal or termination of employment at the IRAP unit.

**i) Cooperation with entrepreneurs**

During the first 3 years from the launch of the project at least 2 of the research groups operating at the unit shall establish cooperation with entrepreneurs. The ultimate goal to be achieved before the end of project implementation is for at least half of the research groups operating at the IRAP implementing unit to cooperate with entrepreneurs. The cooperation may involve e.g. joint implementation of research tasks in the project, consultations on commercial applications of the research results, or joint education for young R&D sector staff.

The partnership must be based on an agreement or memorandum of understanding signed between the entrepreneur and the IRAP implementing unit, to specify the terms of cooperation and rules for its funding, contributions of the respective partners and division, if any, of intellectual property rights (if the entrepreneur makes a contribution to the project which can be estimated). Agreements with the enterprises will be monitored by the FNP.

**The IRAP implementing unit may not provide state aid to entrepreneurs** The principles of cooperation with entrepreneurs without granting state aid are described in section 4.5.

4.4.3 Where the IRAP project is to be implemented at a unit which exists and employs staff carrying out R&D works prior to the commencement of the IRAP project implementation, such a unit must meet all the requirements binding upon the IRAP implementing units described in the Competition Documentation along with the requirements related to its legal form, and additionally must conduct the verification procedure described in this section.

a) An IRAP unit which conducted R&D works prior to the commencement of the project is obliged to:

1. within 12 months of the IRAP project launch date all research groups should be evaluated by the ISC and its recommendations should be followed,

2. within 12 months following the IRAP project launch date, all R&D staff other than technical staff should be evaluated by the ISC, and based on the evaluation results either positive or negative decisions should be made as to the continuation of their employment at the IRAP unit.
- b) The employment of any staff at the IRAP implementing unit who fail to pass the evaluation should be terminated at the end of the 2nd year of project implementation at the latest.
  - c) Research group leaders who pass the evaluation process may continue leading their teams at the IRAP implementing unit together with their teams (along with students and PhD students).
  - d) The remaining R&D staff employed at the unit prior to its transformation into an IRAP unit who have received a positive assessment may remain at the unit, provided that they join a research team that has passed the evaluation process or has been newly set up following a competition.
  - e) Three years after the IRAP project launch date, the number of research groups set up through competitions following the project launch date must not be smaller than the number of groups set up prior to the project launch date.
  - f) Compliance with the requirements specified in letters a-e (above) will be verified by the FNP's experts during the first or second mid-term review, respectively.
  - g) Any persons employed at the unit prior to its transformation into an IRAP implementing unit who fail to pass the ISC's evaluation may only reapply for employment at that unit after a three-year break. If that person was formerly employed as a Research Group Leader, a break in employment at the IRAP implementing unit of at least five years is required.

Students and PhD students are not subject to ISC evaluation and may apply for a position in any of the research groups at the unit.

- h) The employee evaluation process regarding the IRAP unit existing before the IRAP project launch must comply with the following conditions:



- i. The evaluation is conducted by the International Scientific Committee according to the criteria established and adopted by it. The ISC may decide to appoint external experts/reviewers to assess the achievements and work of a research group or individual employees.
- ii. A report on the entire evaluation process along with the ISC's recommendations as regards further employment of research groups or individual employees shall be provided by the IRAP implementing unit to the Foundation prior to the deadline for submitting the first interim report. The materials obtained in the evaluation process should be made available to the FNP's experts during the mid-term review.
- iii. The FNP may accept the evaluation report without reservations or advise that further opinions be sought, and recommend other decisions concerning further employment of individual members of the unit's staff.
- iv. The IRAP unit will allow the FNP's and IB's representatives and experts to participate in the evaluation of the IRAP unit's research groups and staff.
- v. The IRAP unit will provide the FNP with the evaluation schedule and a list of employees to be subject to evaluation at least 6 months prior to launching the evaluation process.
- vi. The evaluation must end within a period of time allowing the unit to fulfil the requirements stipulated in section 5.2.2, in particular a-f, and to observe the time limits provided for in separate regulations concerning any potential changes in the employment relationship with the unit's staff.

#### **4.6.Partnership in the project without granting state aid**

4.5.1 The IRAP does not provide for the granting of state aid to business entities.

4.5.2 Cooperation between the IRAP implementing unit and entrepreneurs must meet one of the conditions below:

- a) the enterprises bear all their respective costs of the cooperation project, or



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- b) results of the cooperation which do not give rise to intellectual property rights are disseminated and any intellectual property rights resulting from the funded project are fully owned by the IRAP implementing unit, or
- c) any intellectual property rights resulting from the project, as well as related access rights, are allocated to the different cooperating partners in a manner which duly reflects their work packages, contributions and respective interests, or
- d) the IRAP implementing unit receives compensation equivalent to the market value of the intellectual property rights generated by their activities which are granted to the participating enterprises or access rights granted to the participating enterprises. The absolute amount of the value of any contribution, financial or non-financial, by the participating enterprises to the costs of the IRAP unit's activities that gave rise to the intellectual property rights concerned may be deducted from that compensation; the compensation received is equivalent to the market price if it enables the IRAP implementing unit concerned to enjoy the full economic benefits of those rights if one of the following conditions is fulfilled:
1. the amount of compensation is established in an open, transparent and non-discriminatory competitive sale procedure, or
  2. an independent expert's appraisal confirms that the amount of compensation is at least equal to the market value, or
  3. the IRAP implementing unit, as the seller, may demonstrate that it has effectively negotiated the compensation under fully competitive conditions in order to obtain the maximum economic benefit when the agreement is concluded, while considering its statutory objectives, or
  4. in cases where based on the cooperation agreement the cooperating enterprise has the right of pre-emption as regards intellectual property rights generated by the cooperating IRAP unit with a right to solicit more economically advantageous offers from third parties, so that the cooperating enterprise would have to adapt its range accordingly.

4.5.3 If none of the conditions specified in section 4.5.2 are fulfilled, the full value of the contribution to the project by the IRAP implementing unit will be considered a benefit for the cooperating enterprises to which state aid rules apply, and it shall constitute a non-eligible expenditure within the project.

## 4.7. Project implementation indicators

4.6.1 The applicant is required to indicate in the form the planned project implementation indicators, i.e. the expected project outputs and results. Indicators from the list below apply to the IRAP:

- a. Number of R&D work units completed
- b. Number of research units which received support in the course of R&D work
- c. Number of cooperating foreign research units
- d. Number of persons conducting R&D work within the project
- e. Number of new researchers at the units receiving support
- f. Number of foreign researchers in the projects supported
- g. Number of international research publications included in the JCR (Journal Citation Reports), Thomson Reuters list,
- h. Number of patent applications filed.

4.6.2 The indicators must adequately reflect a given project type and the assumed project objectives. They will be evaluated by a panel of experts during the substantive evaluation of the application, during project implementation and after its completion, and may be subject to changes suggested by the Foundation's experts.

## 4.8. Reporting

4.7.1 During the project implementation period, the IRAP implementing unit submits reports to the FNP as stipulated in the grant agreement.

4.7.2 During the project implementation period, the IRAP implementing unit shall submit itself to a mid-term review, performed by the FNP at least twice.

- a. The first mid-term review shall be conducted after the first year following the project launch date and shall focus primarily on:
  1. the method of implementing the organisational structure proposed in the application;
  2. the implementation of good practices, e.g. with regard to the recruitment of research staff;
  3. cooperation with the partner institution from abroad;

4. the analysis of an evaluation of employees hired before the project commencement (if applicable).
- b. The second mid-term review shall be conducted after the third year following the project launch date and shall focus primarily on:
1. evaluation of the research excellence of team leaders, team members and other staff members, including the number of new teams at the IRAP implementing unit,
  2. leaders' active involvement in applying for ERC or equally prestigious grants (e.g. those awarded by Wellcome Trust),
  3. establishing cooperation with entrepreneurs,
  4. the level of internationality and development of R&D personnel for the needs of an innovative economy.
- 4.7.3 During the second mid-term review, the FNP will provide the conditions for applying for additional funding, including that exceeding the limit specified in section 3.2, or extending the project cost eligibility period. A precondition for the positive assessment of the application shall be the availability of funds within the given measure and a positive mid-term review result and recommendation by the committee conducting the assessment.

#### **4.9.Changes to the project**

- 4.8.1 During the grant project implementation, the Project Leader may apply to the FNP with a request to consent to introducing changes to the project.
- 4.8.2 However, changes resulting in the project's ceasing to meet the project selection criteria based on which it was assessed are not permitted.
- 4.8.3 During the project implementation, the manager of the IRAP implementing unit may, regardless of the method of project extension resulting from the mid-term review, apply for an increase in the funding pool (project budget) or project extension. The project implementation period may be extended to 31 December 2023 at the latest.
- 4.8.4 The application for an increase in the project funding level may be submitted in particular in relation to:
- a) the initiation of another stage of research work to produce the results of the project, so as to potentially increase the feasibility of its implementation,

- b) the need to increase the number of students or PhD students, or their remuneration, as compared to the original application,
- c) establishing a new partnership within the project.

**A positive assessment of applications will depend on experts' evaluation and availability of funding for that purpose in the programme.**

## V. Project staff

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### 5.1. Research group leaders

Funding under the IRAP project may only be granted to Research Group Leaders selected in an international competition conducted by the ISC, compliant with the requirements specified in the Competition Documentation.

#### 5.1.1 Selection of leaders hired following the commencement of the IRAP project implementation

1. The applicant(s) become(s) research group leaders following the IRAP competition organised by the FNP, based on the recommendation of the Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts (see section 8.2.3 h).
2. Further research group leaders will be selected in an open international competition by the ISC, according to the rules of employing researchers provided in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (downloadable from the Foundation's website) and according to the rules provided for in this Competition Documentation.
3. The competition procedure must be open to all interested parties, use transparent criteria and follow the principles of equal treatment.
4. The following rules apply to the competition for Research Group Leaders:
  - a) the competition is announced publicly (at least on the EURAXESS website) so that it is available to all interested parties that meet the criteria;
  - b) the information on the competition includes, in particular, a description of the position, requirements to be met by candidates, financial conditions (including the

- amount of the leader’s remuneration and the term of employment), information about the rules and financing possibilities for the research group members and the funds allocated to running the team or guaranteed to establish a team (“start-up package”)),
- c) the ISC conducts the recruitment process on the basis of its own criteria; however, at least one of the criteria should be the candidate’s scientific research achievements to date as well as his/her competence level equivalent to the level represented by ERC winners.
5. In addition, in the course of the IRAP project implementation:
    - a) the IRAP implementing unit shall provide the FNP with sufficient notice, including details about the planned method of announcing and conducting the competition and the anticipated dates of interviews with the candidates,
    - b) the IRAP implementing unit shall enable the FNP’s representatives to participate in the recruitment process in the role of observers,
    - c) the IRAP implementing unit shall document the recruitment process in the form of a report which shall contain at least information on competition entries, selection criteria and competition dates, the list of candidates, names of the units from which they originate, scores received by the candidates during the recruitment with justifications,
    - d) upon the completion of the recruitment process, the IRAP implementing unit shall upload a copy of the recruitment report to the Foundation's electronic system, retaining the original at the unit,
    - e) upon the Foundation’s approval , the IRAP implementing unit shall hire the Research Group Leader selected in the competition.
  6. The IRAP implementing unit shall enter the details of the new Research Group Leader whose team will be funded as part of the project in the electronic system provided by the FNP, along with an indication of the funds allocated in the budget to his/her research group.
  7. All the Research Group Leaders hired at the IRAP unit must be selected in competitions as described above, except for the winners of European Research Council competitions; however, their hiring requires an assessment from the ISC (see section 5.7) and the research group leaders positively verified by the ISC (see section 4.4.3. a).

### 5.1.2 All Research Group Leaders



1. All research group leaders at the IRAP implementing unit, regardless of the source of funding and of whether they were hired before or after the IRAP project launch date, must fulfil the following conditions:
  - a. The IRAP implementing unit must be indicated as the primary employer for each person employed as the Research Group Leader within the meaning of regulations that may affect the receipt of funding for statutory activities.
  - b. Research group leaders must be employed by the IRAP implementing unit on a full time basis (subject to section 4.3.4). Remuneration of the Research Group Leader may be fully or partially funded from other source, e.g. other grant project. However, all research outcomes, publications, patent applications and patents obtained from the IRAP project implementation must be allocated to (affiliated with) the IRAP implementing unit.
  - c. If the leader and his/her team receive remuneration from other grant project or from a source other than the IRAP, then the subjects of research tasks implemented by that leader and his/her team must be within the scope of the Research Agenda stated in the grant application for the IRAP project, with subsequent modifications made by the ISC. The part of the remuneration, which is associated with the implementation of a different project may not be covered with the IRAP funds.
  - d. Research Group Leaders may carry out teaching activities as part of their work for the IRAP unit; however, the teaching load may not exceed 60 hours per semester.

## 5.2. Research group members

- 5.2.1 The research group leader shall recruit students and PhD students, junior postdoctoral researchers and other staff members for his/her team.

No later than 12 months from the hiring of the Research Group Leader, his/her team must consist of at least 3 persons conducting R&D work.
- 5.2.2 Members of the research team: students and PhD students or junior postdoctoral researchers shall be selected by the leader in an open competition based on transparent criteria, in accordance with the following rules:
  - a) the competition shall be announced publicly (at least on the EURAXESS website – this does not apply to students) and should indicate the method of submitting entries and requirements to be fulfilled by the candidates, as well as the expected amount of the scholarship or remuneration,

- b) the Research Group Leader shall appoint a committee composed of at least two members to be responsible for the recruitment process,
- c) the committee shall prepare and conduct the recruitment process on the basis of its own criteria; however, at least one of the criteria should refer to the candidate's scientific research achievements to date,
- d) the committee shall document the recruitment process in a report (the report shall contain, at a minimum, the list of candidates, names of units from which they originate, scores received by the candidates during the recruitment, and details about competition notices, selection criteria and competition dates),
- e) upon the completion of the recruitment process, the Research Group Leader shall upload a copy of the recruitment report to the Foundation's electronic system, retaining the original at the unit,
- f) a precondition for funding the scholarship or an employment contract for the person selected in the competition under the IRAP project is the approval of the recruitment report by the Foundation. In the case of scholarship agreements, the Foundation must also be provided with a certificate confirming the status of a student (or PhD student) or a copy of his/her student visa for stay in Poland.

5.2.3 The unit and the Research Group Leader will allow the Foundation's representatives to participate as observers in the work of the competition committee.

5.2.4 Students selected in the competition receive personal scholarships. PhD students may become team members on the basis of either a scholarship or an employment contract. The amounts of scholarships are proposed by the Project Manager in consultation with the team leader. Junior postdoctoral researchers recruited to work in the research team may collect remuneration under the employment contract for the amount proposed by the Project Manager in consultation with the team leader.

5.2.5 PhD students conducting R&D work supervised by the research group leader should have another research supervisor – if possible, from the foreign partner unit.

5.2.6 Scholarships will be treated as financial support for project participants and paid by the Foundation only, directly to the individual bank accounts of scholarship holders on the basis of separate agreements concluded with them. Scholarship holders may not receive remuneration from the project funds while receiving the scholarship.

5.2.7 Scholarships are exempt from personal income tax under Article 21(1)(137) of the Personal Income Tax Act of 26 July 1991 (Journal of Laws of 2012, item 361, as amended).



### 5.3. Director of Scientific Affairs

The Director of Scientific Affairs must be a scientist with extensive experience in scientific research and science management who shall be responsible at the IRAP Implementing Unit for coordinating the activities related to the achievement of the research objectives and R&D work specified in the Research Agenda. The Director of Scientific Affairs may be the second applicant or be hired for the project during its course as a result of a competition procedure analogous to that for a research team member. All administrative tasks falling beyond the scope of R&D activities must be remunerated from indirect costs proportionately to individual involvement.

### 5.4. Independent Researchers (Visiting Researchers)

- 5.4.1 The IRAP implementing unit may hire independent researchers implementing short research projects supporting the work of IRAP teams omitting the competition procedure for Research Group Leaders for a maximum period of 6 months.
- 5.4.2 The hiring of an independent researcher is subject to ISC approval requested by the manager of the IRAP implementing unit.
- 5.4.3 A given scientist may only be employed as an independent researcher once.
- 5.4.4 Scientists employed in this way are not Research Group Leaders. Their employment may be related to e.g. the implementation of a specific research task or expert cooperation with one or several research groups operating at the IRAP unit.
- 5.4.5 The IRAP implementing unit shall enter information about the hired independent researcher in the FNP's electronic system.
- 5.4.6 Remuneration of independent researchers and other costs related to their research tasks may be funded from the IRAP project funds according to the Cost Eligibility Guide. To that end, the unit shall enter the details of the allocated funds in the appropriate budget form available in the FNP's electronic system.

### 5.5. Technical staff

Technical staff members are employed by the manager of the IRAP implementing unit and their remuneration is paid from the funds allocated to the joint part of the IRAP unit's budget.



## 5.6. Senior postdoctoral researchers with long-standing R&D experience

Senior postdoctoral researchers with long-standing R&D experience may be hired by the IRAP implementing unit at the request of the manager of the IRAP implementing unit. Employment in this category must be related to the unit's need to acquire the essential R&D competence, e.g. to operate advanced research equipment or a specific technology. The hiring of a senior postdoctoral researcher with long-standing R&D experience at the unit requires the FNP's approval. Remuneration of those employees is paid from the funds allocated to the joint part of the IRAP implementing the unit's budget.

## 5.7. Winners of European Research Council grants

Winners of ERC grants may be hired as Research Group Leaders at the IRAP implementing unit by the manager of the unit without the application of the competition procedure referred to in section 5.1 for the implementation period of the grant project funded under the ERC programme. In this case the manager of the unit seeks the opinion of the ISC.

NOTE: The Manager of the Unit or other research staff member receiving remuneration for Project work who launches another project (funded from any national or foreign source) that requires professional time to be dedicated is required to notify the FNP of this fact within 30 days of launching the new project.

## VI. Financial terms

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- 6.1 A full list of eligible expenditures and rules of documenting eligible expenditures in the International Research Agendas Programme is included in the Cost Eligibility Guide, appended to the Competition Documentation.
- 6.2 Tasks covered by the Project may not be funded from other public sources, save for expenditures that cannot be classified as eligible as part of the grant project funding awarded under the IRAP (according to the Cost Eligibility Guide) and expenditures exceeding the amount of grant project funding awarded.
- 6.3 The total professional involvement of each person receiving remuneration or a scholarship under the project in the implementation of all projects financed from



structural funds and the Cohesion Fund and in any activities funded from other sources, including the unit's or other entities' own funds, may not exceed 276 hours per month. Where an employee's total workload of 276 hours per month is exceeded, his/her remuneration paid from the Project funds shall represent ineligible expenditure for each month in which the level of 276 hours is exceeded.

**6.4** The following cost categories shall be covered by the International Research Agendas Programme:

**W – Remuneration** – This category covers the cost of remuneration, including non-salary employment costs such as social and health insurance contributions of persons employed for research (research staff, technical staff and other auxiliary staff) or technology brokers in the part that such remuneration is directly related to the implementation of the project covered by the grant.

**NOTE:** Where a staff member is working on the Project on a part-time basis at the IRAP implementing unit, the remuneration received for the Project depends on the amount of time calculated as a share of full-time equivalent dedicated to the performance of tasks related to implementation of the Project at the Unit and may not be higher than the same percentage share of the suggested remuneration as specified below.

- a) Remuneration of the project research group leader under the employment contract (remuneration and non-salary employment costs including social and health insurance contributions) of a proposed amount of up to PLN 27,000 per month when working full-time for the project.
- b) Remuneration of other personnel involved in R&D works within the project, to the extent that it is directly related to the implementation of the project.
- c) Remuneration for PhD students and junior postdoctoral researchers, if they are to be remunerated under an employment contract (remuneration and non-salary employment costs including social and health insurance contribution), should not exceed the proposed amount of PLN 8,000 per month for PhD students and PLN 15,000 per month for junior postdoctoral researchers.

**E – Subcontracting costs** – subcontracting substantive project work to a third party, where such work is not conducted on the premises and under direct supervision of the beneficiary, and the cost of resources provided by third parties (i.e. cost of all-encompassing laboratory rental, along with research equipment) (auxiliary activities which are required to implement project tasks, such as legal or accounting services, are not considered subcontracting) and all contracts of mandate.

Subcontracting costs may not exceed 20% of all eligible project costs.

The application should describe which activities are planned to be subcontracted and briefly justify their rationale. This condition applies to subcontracting regardless of the form of the contract concluded for that purpose.

**C – Research staff development costs (cross-financing)**– this category includes the following eligible costs related to the development of research staff:

a) Scholarships

Proposed scholarship rates should not exceed:

- for 1st cycle or 2nd cycle students or equivalent uniform studies – PLN 1,500–2,500 per month
- for PhD students – PLN 3,500–4,500 per month

b) Placements (by scholarship holders or research team members within the scope related to the research work conducted as part of the project, the commercialisation of research results and state-of-the-art technology achievements or project management).

c) Training (for scholarship holders or research team members within the scope related to the research work conducted as part of the project, the commercialisation of research results and state-of-the-art technology achievements or project management, including the cost of summer schools for PhD students).

The costs in this category (C) may not exceed 30% of all eligible project costs.

**Op – Other direct costs**

1. Costs of research and scientific equipment and intangible assets



Including:

- a) expenditure on the purchase of low-cost research and scientific equipment – funds

allocated to expenditures from this category may not exceed 5% of all eligible costs of the project.

2. Costs of land and buildings
3. Other operating costs

Including:

- a) Project promotion costs (up to 1% of all eligible expenditures in the project)
- b) Rental of laboratory space

**O – Costs settled using a simplified method (“Indirect costs”) – flat rate calculated according to the method described in the *Cost Eligibility Guide* constituting a specific percentage of costs settled within the indicated categories.**

**NOTE:**

1. If the IRAP implementing unit is asked to refund the expenditures classified as direct costs, then the unit will be required to refund the corresponding part of funds settled using the flat rate.
  2. In the case of cost proposals exceeding the values proposed above, or inclusion in the application of costs related to purchasing property, plant and equipment, the applicant will be required to provide the relevant justification during interviews with the interdisciplinary panel at the FNP’s main office or at the project implementation site.
- 6.4.1 Expenditures eligible for financing are expenditures which meet the conditions included in the Competition Documentation, including those specified in its appendices, in particular in the agreement and the *Cost Eligibility Guide*.
- 6.4.2 The budget allocated to the IRAP implementing unit will be divided into a joint part (e.g. the purchase of equipment, rental, technical staff’s remuneration) and budgets for projects of individual research groups or independent researchers.

The joint part of the IRAP unit's costs is paid in tranches in accordance with the plan provided in an appendix to the grant agreement. The first tranche of the research group project or independent researcher project costs is paid after hiring a suitable Research Group Leader or independent researcher.

## **6.5 Additional competition for research equipment funding**

6.5.1 During the project implementation, and no earlier than after the completion of the research group leader competition procedure at the IRAP implementing unit, the unit may apply to the FNP for funds to purchase specialist equipment. The competition will be held as follows:

- a) the amount indicated in the application may not exceed PLN 5 million,
- b) applications will be filed upon request within the deadlines set by the FNP,
- c) applications will be evaluated by experts appointed specifically for that purpose,
- d) the evaluation will take into account such criteria as the analysis of the equipment of a particular type available in the country with the use of the available equipment lists and databases,
- e) a representative of the IB will be invited to take part in the meeting of experts evaluating the applications for the funding of research equipment as an observer.

## **VII. Deadlines and the application process**

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### **7.1. Deadlines for filing applications**

The process of filing applications under the IRAP is divided into three stages, and applications shall be filed so that parts 1 and 2 are filed simultaneously, while part 3 shall be submitted at a different date.

The first and the second part of the application should be filed no later than on:

**14 September 2018 at 4 p.m. (UTC +2)**



The third part of the application should be filed by applicants invited to submit it no later than on:

**16 November 2018 at 4 p.m. (UTC +1)**

The application assessment period lasts for approx. 6 months from the receipt of the first part of the application for project funding until the selection of grantees.

## **7.2.Application submission method**

Applicants submit all parts of their applications in an **electronic** format only, via the electronic system.

- 7.2.1 Applicants register themselves in the electronic system provided by the FNP at the following address: <https://wnioski.fnp.org.pl>. The electronic form should be completed in English according to the application form instructions provided in the system and on the [programme's website](#), and attachments should be filled out in the indicated language (see section 7.2.5.). The electronic system allows modifications in the online form and replacement of attachments before the final approval of the submitted part of the application (which takes place by closing the form).
- 7.2.2 Certain attachments must be filled out on the forms prepared for this purpose, which can be downloaded from [the IRAP website](#) and from the electronic system for the submission of applications. The submission of attachments incompliant with these forms, e.g. changing the title page of the form, deleting text or entering data or graphic elements other than the required information, may result in the rejection of the application at the formal evaluation stage.
- 7.2.3 An Applicant submitting false statements shall be denied the possibility of applying for any form of financing from the FNP for 5 years from the date of submission of such statements.
- 7.2.4 The following attachments which should meet the specified requirements should be enclosed with the application form in an electronic format:



- *pdf* format,
- font size of at least 11 pts,
- line spacing of at least 1.15,
- margins of at least 2 cm,
- when a list of achievements or publications is attached, these must correspond to the period specified in 7.2.5 a) 2. (publications failing to meet this requirement will be removed at the formal evaluation stage),
- retention of the number of pages specified in the description of the attachment – pages beyond the set limit will be removed at the formal evaluation stage.

**7.2.5 Part 1 of the application (evaluated by the international research and economic panel) – submitted electronically includes the following elements:**

a) Documents on the applicant (in English)

(If the application is submitted by two applicants, the documents on each of the applicants should be submitted separately and the main applicant, who takes on the role and responsibilities of the manager of the IRAP implementing unit as specified in this Competition Documentation, should be indicated in the electronic system, as well as the role to be performed by the second applicant, i.e. a Research Group Leader or Director of Scientific Affairs.)

1. brief CV (**up to 3 pages**),
2. no more than 10 key research and/or implementation achievements of the applicant from the last 10 years (a single achievement is e.g. the full text of one publication, the text of a patent with an indication of the area which the patent covers and its title in English, the description of a completed implementation, etc.).

**NOTE: the 10-year period covers achievements in the years 2008-2018.**

3. a list of major achievements attached to the application, in line with the definition provided in section 2 above (**using the provided form**)
4. a description of the unique features of the applicant's achievements referred to in point (2) above in the years 2008-2018 and their influence on the development of a given scientific field or market (**up to 3 pages**),
5. a list of key projects for which the applicant was granted funding in the years 2008-2018, indicating the institution providing the funding and its amount – (**up to 2 pages**), (**using the provided form**)



6. a list of key lectures or conference speeches delivered by the applicant in the years 2008-2018 at the invitation of hosts, indicating the names of the hosts (**up to 2 pages**), (**using the provided form**)
  7. a description of research management experience (e.g. the administration of research units, sitting on research councils, the management of international research organisations or international research consortia) (**up to 2 pages**),
  8. a description of experience in cooperation between science and industry and of successful implementations (**up to 2 pages**).
  9. Applies only to the second applicant if he/she applies for the position of **the Director of Scientific Affairs** and only in this case: **a cover letter** describing the role to be played by the applicant at the IRAP unit and his/her vision of the unit (**up to 2 pages**)
- b) An overview of the international research agenda (cf. section II, 11) – **description of the research challenge (subject, problem)** forming the basis for designing the International Research Agenda and a description of a unique approach to that challenge as proposed by the applicant, including a brief justification of the need to implement the agenda at an IRAP implementing unit (**up to 5 pages**) (English) (**using the provided form**),
  - c) A description of the economic and socio-economic impact and the likely applications of the results of the IRAP project implementation. The description should contain at least an indication of how the results of the project will translate into economic growth (e.g. implementations, spin-off companies, etc.) (**up to 2 pages**) (English).
  - d) Letter of intent from a strategic partner unit – foreign strategic partner for the project (English).

The letter of intent should contain at least:

1. the exact name of the partner unit,
2. a declaration that the partner unit will perform the role of a foreign strategic partner unit in the IRAP project at least throughout the project funding period,
3. a declaration that the partner unit understands and accepts the terms of the competition and requirements for the IRAP project implementation, in particular the requirements to be met by the IRAP project implementation unit and the foreign strategic partner,
4. a description of the method of involvement and substantive contribution of the partner unit in the establishment and management of the IRAP project implementation unit,

5. a description of the partner unit's contribution to the acquisition of the most appropriate and experienced candidates to work for the IRAP,
6. a description of the partner unit's contribution to the evaluation of the research and the achievement of the project's objectives,
7. details of two persons that the partner unit proposes as future members of the International Scientific Committee for its first term of office.

The letter should be signed by a person authorised to represent the foreign partner unit, and a scan of the letter should be attached in .pdf format. The letter should be accompanied by an authorisation for the person to take binding decisions on behalf of the institution if the letter is signed by someone other than the manager of the unit, i.e. director/vice-chancellor. The Foundation reserves the right to verify the authorisation of the individual signing the letter by directly contacting the foreign unit at the formal evaluation stage. The submission of letters signed by unauthorised persons will result in the rejection of the application at the formal evaluation stage.

**NOTE:** The Applicant may submit no more than **two** letters of intent from foreign partner units as only strategic partnership in the project is subject to evaluation. The IRAP implementing unit may also be involved in research cooperation with any number of entities that it deems fit, which is, however, beyond the scope of the competition.

- e) A brief description of the IRAP implementing unit structure – the description should contain at least an indication of its legal form and principles for managing the IRAP implementing unit (**up to 2 pages**) (in English),
- f) Description of the place of IRAP implementation (information about the laboratory space acquired, equipment rental, if any, etc.) (in English) (**using the provided form**),
- g) Letter of intent from a scientific partner institution from Poland, if the applicant anticipates such cooperation – **optional** (in English); (**no more than 2**).
- h) A letter of intent from an economic partner from Poland or abroad interested in cooperation with the IRAP unit or in using the planned results of the IRAP project – **optional** (in English); (**no more than 2**).

**NOTE:** The Applicant may submit no more than **two** letters of intent from key scientific partners and no more than **two** letters of intent from economic partners. The unit may also

be involved in cooperation with any number of scientific or economic entities from Poland and from abroad that it deems fit, which is, however, beyond the scope of the competition. Any letters beyond the permitted two will be removed from the application.

**NOTE:** If cooperation is provided for with partner research or economic institutions (mentioned in subsections g) and h)), then the letter should indicate the planned scope of the cooperation between the IRAP implementing unit and the partner, and clearly define the intent of that partner unit, e.g.:

1. involvement in establishing the IRAP implementing unit,
2. nomination of ISC members,
3. involvement of students or PhD students in the IRAP implementation,
4. ensuring research visits for students or PhD students,
5. admission of candidates for PhD courses in a competition carried out by leaders of IRAP research groups,
6. providing access to laboratory space,
7. and/or other forms of cooperation in project implementation.

The letters referred to in subsections g) and h) should be signed by persons authorised to represent the partner unit.

#### **7.2.6 Part 2 of the application (evaluated by foreign independent reviewers) – submitted electronically:**

- a) Full International Research Agenda (cf. section II, 11) (**up to 15 pages**) (in English) (**using the form provided**)

The agenda should stipulate the work of the first 5-7 research groups during 4.5 years from the start of project implementation, headed by research group leaders selected in international competitions, and indicate which groups at which stage will cooperate with entrepreneurs (see section 4.2.2. i).

- b) Description of the competences of the foreign partner unit(s) (**up to 15 pages**); the description should provide at least the following details:
1. research and implementation achievements,
  2. institutional culture,

3. good practices of organising and conducting scientific research and evaluation of research groups' work.

If more than one foreign partner unit is indicated in the application, the document “Description of the competences of the foreign partner unit(s)” should be enclosed separately for each such unit (**up to 15 pages each**).

Details about a foreign strategic partner unit for which the overview of competence document was not enclosed will be removed from the application along with the corresponding letter of intent during the formal evaluation of the second part of the application.

Substantive evaluation at this stage will also cover the following documents submitted together with the first part of the application:

1. documents on the applicant(s) at the first application submission stage (submitted according to section 7.2.5a),
2. letter of intent from the foreign strategic partner unit,
3. the outline of the International Research Agenda (the complete International Research Agenda is a continuation and extension of this appendix).

**7.2.7 Part 3 of the application (submitted before the meeting of the International Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts) – submitted electronically:**

- a) Documents establishing the framework for the work of the IRAP implementing unit according to the selected legal form (all are required in two language versions – Polish and English):
  1. the statute of the IRAP implementing unit and the statute of the Polish institution establishing the IRAP implementing unit if that statute impact the method of operation of the IRAP implementing unit;
  2. the text of the international agreement (for each of the foreign strategic partner units):
    - a. that the IRAP implementing unit intends to conclude with the foreign partner unit (if the IRAP implementing unit has legal personality, i.e. is a foundation or a partnership/company).

or

- b. pursuant to which the IRAP implementing unit is established. This type of agreement will be required e.g. if the IRAP implementing unit takes the form of a joint unit of a Polish and foreign higher education institution, and in similar cases.

The international agreement should guarantee the fulfilment of the foreign partner unit's obligations included in the Competition Documentation and the letter of intent issued by it, submitted in the first part of the application.

The statute of the unit and the international agreement must ensure that the project will be implemented in compliance with this Competition Documentation and Polish law. The statute and the international agreement will be evaluated, and their respective provisions may be subject to the necessary modifications before the grant agreement is signed.

The Applicant may use the sample statute of a foundation – IRAP implementing unit, available on the FNP's website.

- b) A description of operating methods adopted for the IRAP implementing unit, covering primarily (**up to 20 pages**) (in English):
  1. project risk assessment (SWOT analysis),
  2. strategy for the acquisition of researchers, including development plans for young researchers and PhD students,
  3. policy on the commercialisation and management of intellectual property,
  4. information and promotion policy for the unit, including for actions to promote awareness of the role of science in Poland's socio-economic development,
  5. the development plan of the unit and the plan for fundraising from non-IRAP sources during the IRAP project funding period,
  6. a list of members of the International Scientific Committee (a minimum of 9 persons, at least half of whom must have their primary place of employment outside of Poland), who agreed to serve the role (in English) (**using the provided form**).

- c) Budget – the required research costs, administration costs and other operating costs of IRAP should be indicated in the format provided in the electronic application form (spending must comply with the *Cost Eligibility Guide*, forming an appendix to this Competition Documentation). (in English)
- d) Project implementation schedule for the project cost eligibility period during the first 4.5 years of project implementation (**using the provided form**) (in English) with details of:
1. organisation and administration activities,
  2. announcing and conducting research personnel recruitment,
  3. information and promotion actions for the IRAP project implementation,
  4. research-related activities (the launch of subsequent R&D works),
  5. evaluation of Research Group Leaders,
  6. fundraising for statutory activities.
- e) Development plan for the IRAP implementing unit after the funding period for the IRAP project (**up to 4 pages**) (in English), covering a long-term vision, primarily with respect to:
1. development of the research agenda,
  2. cooperation with the economic sector,
  3. cooperation with the foreign unit,
  4. fundraising from non-IRAP sources.
- f) Indicators – including justification (**using the provided form**) (in English)
- g) Description of the project's impact on sustainable growth, in particular environmental protection (**up to 2 pages**). (in English).

The description should include details about the planned R&D work with respect to environmental protection or nature conservation, the number of patents, publications, and media releases concerning environmental innovation.

## VIII. IRAP project selection system

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Projects submitted for the competition are evaluated in terms of formal and substantive aspects.

The evaluation criteria and their descriptions form an appendix to this Competition Documentation.



## 8.1. Formal evaluation of the application

- 8.1.1 Applicants whose applications do not meet the formal criteria at any of the three application stages are notified (by email or via an electronic system) that the application will not be considered in the competition due to its formal deficiencies.
- 8.1.2 It shall not be possible to re-submit applications with formal deficiencies except for removing obvious errors.
- 8.1.3 If it is found that an electronic file forming an attachment to the application is damaged, the FNP may request the applicant to re-submit it at any stage of the competition.

## 8.2. Substantive evaluation of the application

Applications which have been formally approved are subsequently submitted for substantive evaluation. The substantive evaluation consists of three stages: evaluation by a scientific and economic panel, a written review process and interviews with an interdisciplinary panel of experts. The Foundation intends to engage only foreign experts for the evaluation of applications. In the event that experts of Polish descent from Poland and from abroad are engaged, they should not constitute more than 50%.

### 8.2.1 Stage I. Scientific and Economic Panel

- a) The Scientific and Economic Panel includes at least 3 members with an appropriate research background or experience of implementing innovative solutions in the R&D sector. The Foundation may appoint several panels in the competition for particular disciplines represented by the applications submitted.
- b) The panel evaluates e.g. the criterion “The Applicant guarantees the achievement of the programme's objectives” (graded substantive criterion No. 4). If the application is submitted by two applicants, the panel examines the information submitted by both applicants to evaluate the criterion.
- c) As a result of the Scientific and Economic Panel's evaluation at least 50% of the applications that meet the substantive criteria of the first stage qualify for the second stage of substantive evaluation.
- d) The notification that the application has qualified for the second stage of the evaluation is sent by email. Applicants whose applications qualify for the second stage of the evaluation are invited to submit the second part of the application before the deadline stipulated in this Documentation.
- e) Applicants that are not invited to the second stage are notified of their scores and recommendations, including a brief justification.

### 8.2.2 Stage II. Written reviews

- a) Each application is evaluated by three external reviewers. The reviewers must not be members of the Scientific and Economic Panel or of the Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts (the third stage of the substantive evaluation).
- b) The reviewers evaluate i.a. the criterion “Evaluation of the applicant’s competence” (graded substantive criterion No. 2). If the application includes two applicants and the second applicant declares that he or she wishes to work as the Research Group Leader at the IRAP Unit, the reviewers evaluate each of the applicants separately. The assessment of the first applicant constitutes part of the evaluation score of the application at this stage, and is used to verify whether the application should go into the third evaluation stage, and the evaluation of the second applicant is to help the IPE decide whether the other applicant may be hired as a Research Group Leader without an additional competition being held by the ISC. If the application includes two applicants and the second applicant is to work as the Director of Scientific Operations at the IRAP unit, the reviewers evaluate only the documents concerning the main applicant.
- c) Apart from the substantive criteria, the reviewers may also suggest subjects to be explained with the applicant during the third stage of the substantive evaluation, and indicate which applications need special attention due to their high risk, exceptional economic potential, or a potential solution to an important social problem.
- d) The notification that the application has qualified for the third stage of the evaluation is sent by email. Applicants invited to the third stage of the competition receive anonymised reviews of their applications and are requested to submit the third part of the application before the deadline indicated in the letter with information that the application has qualified for the third evaluation stage. Reviews of all the candidates are available in an electronic system, ensuring the anonymity of experts.

### 8.2.3 Stage III. Interview with the Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts (IPE)

- a) The applications that advance to the third stage of the evaluation are those that received the highest scores, best recommendations, or those whose evaluations differ the most.
- b) At the third stage, the FNP reserves the right to request the applicant to provide any additional explanations and documents concerning the organisational form of the IRAP implementing unit. The option to obtain additional explanations is intended to allow the



thorough preparation of the Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts or to visit the IPE-evaluated project implementation site. The submission of additional explanations and documents by the applicant is supplementary, and may not lead to any changes in the previously submitted application, and only concerns the competition criteria at that stage.

- c) The Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts will compare the applications and prepare their ranking list, as well as evaluate them on the basis of the criteria adopted (see Appendix 1). The Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts consists of at least three experts representing various research disciplines and one member of the FNP's Board (who will chair the meeting but will not have the right to evaluate the application).
- d) The IPE will compare the candidates on the basis of the written reviews obtained at the previous stage and of a direct interview with the applicants, who can also present their opinions about the reviews.
- e) The interview with the Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts at the FNP's headquarters (in particular the discussion of the project, written reviews and reviewers' comments) is supplemented with the verification of the details submitted in the application (including the area designated for the project implementation) and provided by the applicant in the course of the interview with the IPE held at the project implementation site. Verification during the visit to the project implementation site may also cover the content of agreements with major local partners, in particular on the provision of laboratory space. Experts other than those present at the interview at the FNP's headquarters may also take part in the visit.
- f) The foreign partner unit will ensure the participation of its representative at the interview with the Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts (in person, by phone or via a teleconference). The representative of the partner unit participating in the interview with the panel of experts will present the binding position of the partner unit.
- g) The evaluation by the IPE (in particular at the project implementation site) may also cover other research or economic project partners that are to be involved in the project implementation.
- h) When the application is filed by two applicants and the second applicant is to be hired at the IRAP implementing unit as a Research Group Leader, the IPE, on the basis of the documents provided, the review from the second evaluation stage and interviews with the applicants, decides on the justifiability of hiring both applicants as Research Group Leaders. If one of the applicants receives a poor score at the substantive evaluation stage

(2 points or less), the IPE may recommend that he/she is not hired as a research group leader without a competition held by the ISC.

- i) When the application is filed by two applicants and the second applicant is to be hired at the IRAP implementing unit as a Director of Scientific Affairs, the IPE, on the basis of the documents provided and interviews with the applicants, decides on the justifiability of hiring him/her in the said role.

8.2.4 The Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts may recommend to the applicants changes to the project that are required to ensure the proper IRAP project implementation. The changes may apply in particular to project feasibility conditions in terms of the rules of operation of the IRAP implementing unit.

8.2.5 The IPE may request the Foundation to negotiate and supervise the introduction of the recommended changes.

8.2.6 The Foundation states that any negotiations between the applicant and the Foundation, concerning in particular the project indicators or project budget, may continue even after the completion of the third evaluation stage and before the grant agreement is signed in order to ensure compliance with the Documentation.

8.2.7 The Board of the Foundation shall make a decision to allocate funding to particular projects by adopting a resolution on the basis of the ranking list prepared by the panel and considering the funds available for a particular competition.

8.2.8 The list of beneficiaries (grantees) is published on the Foundation's website.

### 8.3. The appeal procedure

8.3.1 The Applicant is entitled to appeal in writing to the Board of the Foundation against decisions taken with regard to its application within 7 days of being notified of funding not being granted, or of the rejection of the application before the next evaluation stage. The date of receipt of the appeal by the Foundation, rather than the postmark date will be taken into consideration; the appeal may also be lodged with the Foundation by fax (+48 22 845 95 05) or email to the following address: [odwolania@fnp.org.pl](mailto:odwolania@fnp.org.pl). The appeal will be examined within 21 days of its receipt by the Foundation.

8.3.2 Appeals concerning procedural matters at the stage of formal evaluation are examined by the Appeals Committee consisting of a lawyer and two of the FNP's employees who were not involved in the evaluation of the application.



8.3.3 Appeals concerning procedural matters at the substantive evaluation stage are examined by a committee consisting of two external experts cooperating with the FNP on a regular basis, who were not involved in the evaluation of applications, and an employee of the FNP who was not involved in the evaluation of the application.

8.3.4 The Appeals Committee deals exclusively with evaluating procedural matters relevant for each stage of the application evaluation and selection. The final opinion is adopted by a vote. After examining the committee's opinion, the Board of the Foundation shall decide whether the application should be re-examined (by the expert panel or a reviewer) or rejected. The applicant will be informed in writing of the decision. The decision of the Board is final.

## IX. Grant agreement

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### 9.1. General provisions

9.1.1 The grant agreement along with the application is the basis for the Project Manager's and IRAP unit's undertaking to implement the project.

### 9.2. Signing the Agreement

9.2.1 Before concluding the grant agreement, the Foundation reserves the right to launch negotiations with a grant applicant in order to make the necessary changes to the project resulting from the provisions of this Competition Documentation. The changes may cover primarily the adaptation of the content of the statutes, the international agreement and other documents organising the unit's work to Polish and EU law and the Competition Documentation.

9.2.2 Prior to signing a grant agreement, the IRAP implementing unit may be requested by the Foundation to submit:

- a survey for the applicant to be filled out for the purposes of verifying VAT eligibility in SGOP projects;
- a declaration that no state aid is awarded.

9.2.3 The grant agreement is concluded between the FNP and the IRAP implementing unit. In the event when the IRAP implementing unit does not have a legal personality, the grant

agreement is concluded between the FNP, the Project Leader and the entity whose organisational structure incorporated the IRAP implementing unit. The model agreement has been appended to the Competition Documentation and is available on the FNP's website dedicated to the IRAP.

Leaders of IRAP implementing units shall receive the agreement by email and need to send two identical signed copies of the agreement, along with all the required documents (appendices), to the Foundation by mail by a deadline set by the Foundation. The Foundation shall send back one signed copy of the agreement to the unit's address.

**Appendices to the Agreement:**

- 1) Project budget;
- 2) Project implementation schedule;
- 3) tranche payment schedule;
- 4) statutes of the Unit;
- 5) international agreement;
- 6) declaration regarding VAT eligibility;
- 7) a list of indicators along with the methodology of calculating product and direct output indicators;
- 8) declaration of the satisfaction of the conditions and the implementation of the recommendations of the Interdisciplinary Panel of Experts;
- 9) power of attorney (this appendix is required if the Agreement is executed by (an) individual(s) without statutory authorisations to represent the Unit).

During project implementation, the IRAP implementing unit may be requested by the Foundation to submit:

- 1) a declaration of no arrears in the payment of state budget liabilities or social and health insurance contributions,
- 2) a document to confirm proper security for the agreement.

9.2.4 The failure to submit all the required appendices before the relevant deadlines may result in the Foundation's refusal to sign the agreement.

9.2.5 During project implementation, the IRAP implementing unit is required to use the Foundation's electronic system, e.g. for submitting reports, documenting research achievements or applying for changes to project budgets.

## X. Contact

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Additional information about the programme can be obtained by calling the following numbers:

tel. +48 22 845 95 46  
+48 22 311 84 39  
+48 22 845 95 47

or by email:

[slominska@fnp.org.pl](mailto:slominska@fnp.org.pl)

[pawlowska@fnp.org.pl](mailto:pawlowska@fnp.org.pl)

[wybranska@fnp.org.pl](mailto:wybranska@fnp.org.pl)

## XI. Appendices to the Competition Documentation

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1. Application evaluation criteria and overview of the project selection criteria in the International Research Agendas Programme.
2. Model Grant Agreement.