

PROGRAMME REGULATIONS

POLISH RETURNS 2020

EDITION COVID-19

Warsaw, 15th July, 2020

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

1.1 The objective of the Programme

Acting with the aim to strengthen the potential of Polish science and higher education in response to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 epidemic, Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange announces the dedicated call for proposals under the Polish Returns Programme.

The call is dedicated to the institutions planning to employ scientists whose research can lead into knowledge expanding and solving significant problems related to the COVID-19 epidemic and its consequences, in particular representatives of broadly understood biomedical and health sciences.

The aim of the Polish Returns Programme is to enable outstanding Polish scientists to return to Poland and take up employment in Polish universities, scientific institutes or research institutes. The programme shall provide returning scientists with optimal conditions for conducting world-class scientific research and development activity in Poland. The funds obtained as part of Polish Returns programme include remuneration for the Returning Scientist and also enable creation of a Project Group (research team). National universities and scientific units will launch cooperation with specialists having international experience and knowledge in the field of the latest research trends within their scientific discipline.

The support under the Programme shall include:

- 1) remuneration for the Returning Scientist together with covering the employer's costs,
- 2) remuneration for members of the Project Group together with covering the employer's costs,
- 3) resettlement costs,
- 4) optionally - costs of adaptation and organization of the workplace and preparation of research facilities,
- 5) optionally - costs of scientific research in the field of basic research (Research component) financed by the National Science Centre.

NAWA shall provide financing for Projects implemented for a period of 36 to 48 months, in the maximum amount of PLN 2 270 000 for one Project if it does not include the Research component. If

the Project includes a Research component, the maximum funding shall be PLN 2 220 000 from NAWA and PLN 200 000 from the National Science Centre.

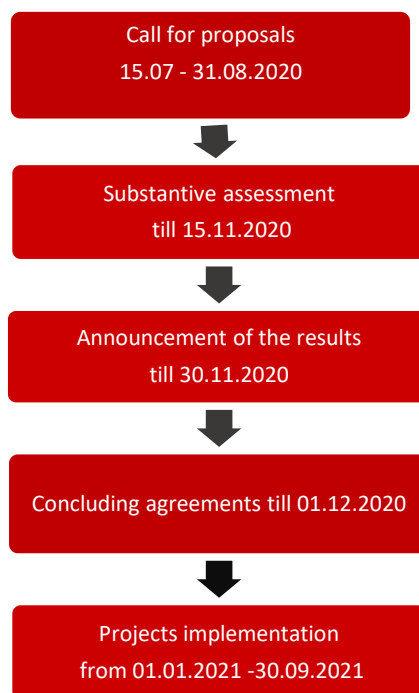
1.2 Basic terms and abbreviations used in the Polish Returns Programme

- 1) **Agency, NAWA** – the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange
- 2) **Beneficiary** - the entity mentioned in chapter 3.1 item 1, which has received funding under the Programme and concluded the financial agreement with NAWA
- 3) **Basic research** - research referred to in art. 4 item 2 point 1 of the HESL
- 4) **Director** –the Director of the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange
- 5) **NSC Director** – the Director of the National Science Centre
- 6) **External expert** - a person conducting, at the request of NAWA, substantive assessment of applications submitted as part of the call for proposals for participation in the Polish Returns programme. An external expert may conduct individual substantive assessment of applications as a reviewer or be a member of the Evaluation Team
- 7) **Project Group** - a group implementing the Project under the Polish Returns programme
- 8) **Research component** - scientific research financed from the NSC funds, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 3.5 of these regulations
- 9) **NSC** – the National Science Centre
- 10) **Returning Scientist** - a person returning to Poland under the Polish Returns programme
- 11) **Programme** – the Polish Returns programme edition COVID-19
- 12) **Project** - activities planned to be implemented under the Polish Returns programme, described in the application for participation in the Programme
- 13) **Reviewer** - an external expert conducting individual substantive assessment of applications submitted as part of the call for proposals for participation in the Programme
- 14) **Agency's ICT system** - the system in which submission and evaluation of applications as well as evaluation of reports submitted by Beneficiaries are carried out; the system facilitates communication and updating of the status of the application during the assessment
- 15) **NSC's ICT system** - the system in which submission and evaluation of applications for funding a Research component from the NSC funds, evaluation of applications and evaluation of reports

submitted by Beneficiaries are carried out; communication and updating the status of the application during the assessment is also carried out via the system

- 16) **Applicant** - an institution authorized to submit applications which has submitted or is intending to submit an application for participation in the Programme
- 17) **Evaluation team** - a team consisting of external experts, appointed by the Director to conduct substantive assessment of applications within the scope indicated in these regulations
- 18) **LHES** –the act of July 20th, 2018 – the Law on Higher Education and Science (Journal of Laws, item 1668, as amended)
- 19) **APAS** - the act of April 30th, 2010 on the Polish Academy of Sciences (Journal of Laws of 2010, item 1183, as amended)
- 20) **ARI** - the act of April 30th, 2010 on Research Institutes (Journal of Laws of 2010, item 1350, as amended)
- 21) **ARŚŁ** – the act of February 21st, 2019 on the Research Network Łukasiewicz (Journal of Laws, item 534, as amended)

1.3 Indicative Programme schedule



2. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE PROGRAMME

2.1. Returning Scientist

1. The Returning Scientist may be a person who:
 - 1) has Polish citizenship;
 - 2) obtained a doctoral degree before January 1st, 2017;
 - 3) in the period from January 1st, 2018 until the submission of the application, has not lived and worked in Poland¹;
 - 4) in the period from January 1st, 2015, has worked abroad for at least 2 years in total at: a university, research institute, scientific institute or research department of a foreign

¹ As work in Poland shall be regarded work performed on the territory of the Republic of Poland, including in particular:

- 1) employment under employment contract and similar contracts (provided that remuneration was paid under the contract);
- 2) conducting business activity registered on the territory of Poland;
- 3) employment based on civil law contracts, under which the Visiting scientist received remuneration which exceeded the amount of PLN 10,000 net during the year.

- enterprise located outside Poland,² while within this period he/she could have work in various institutions. The period of foreign scientific work shall not include a stay financed or co-financed from Polish public funds;
- 5) can demonstrate a minimum of 3 achievements (dated not earlier than 2010) from among the following:
 - a) publications as an author giving significant contribution (the contribution shall be specified by the Returning Scientist) in journals included in one of the international databases: Scopus, Science Citation Index Expanded, Social Sciences Citation Index, Arts & Humanities Citation Index, or
 - b) reviewed scientific monographs in one of the following languages: Russian, Spanish, Italian, German, English, French, or
 - c) publications in reviewed materials from international conferences listed in The Computing Research and Education Association of Australasia (CORE), indexed in the international DBLP Computer Science Bibliography database, or
 - d) publications in reviewed materials from international conferences, indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection or Scopus databases,
 2. To conclude the financial agreement with NAWA the Returning Scientist shall be not take up employment in Poland from the moment of submitting the application until the receipt of the Director's decision.
 3. During the implementation of the Project, the Returning Scientist shall be employed by the Beneficiary under the employment relationship:
 - 1) in the first year of the Project implementation - part-time - a minimum of 0.5 of full-time employment,
 - 2) in subsequent years - part-time - a minimum of 0.75 of full-time employment.The employment of the Returning Scientist shall be based on art. 119 item 2 point 2 of the LHES, art. 91 item 6 point 2 of the APAS or art. 43 item 7 point 2 letter b of the ARI.
 4. Ultimately (after the first year of the Project implementation at the latest) Poland shall be the main place of residence of the Returning Scientist.

² The total documented period of 2 years of scientific work abroad does not have to be continuous. It may include some breaks, especially those related to raising children.

5. In the case of part-time employment and simultaneous employment abroad, it should be clearly indicated how much time the Returning Scientist will dedicate to the implementation of projects started before taking up the employment in Poland, in particular those whose implementation period largely coincides with the implementation period of the Project under the Polish Returns programme. In the first year of employment, the minimum time commitment for the implementation of the Project under the Polish Returns programme should be 50%, and the period of stay in Poland shall be at least 6 months a year (in the case of part-time employment amounting to 0.5 of full-time employment).

2.2 Project Group

1. Under the Project, the Applicant and the Returning Scientist shall plan to create a Project Group. Remuneration of members of the Project Group shall constitute an eligible cost of the Project in accordance with these regulations.
2. The Returning Scientist shall be the head of the Project Group.
3. The Project Group may be increased using the Beneficiary's own resources.
4. Members of the Project Group (except for the Returning Scientist) shall be employed under the employment relationship and have to be selected using a competition procedure³ designed for the position indicated by the Returning Scientist.
5. In the case of receiving a research grant in a national or international competition from an institution other than NAWA, the Returning Scientist may accept such additional funding in accordance with the regulations of the employing unit and the granting institution. It is permissible to receive additional remuneration under the grant (e.g. in the form of a special allowance, project allowance, project bonus) or under civil law contracts. If the Returning Scientist is full-time employee in the Beneficiary's unit, his/her employment under the employment contract may not be increased above the workload of one full-time employment. In the case of persons employed in the Beneficiary's unit part-time, it is possible to take up another part-time employment in that unit, so that they together equal to the workload of one full-time employment. The same rules shall be applied to other members of the Project Group.

³ The competition should be conducted taking into account the recommendations of the European Commission contained in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers: <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/pl/poland/naukowcy/karta-i-kodeksnaukowcy>

2.3 Applicant's obligations

In the case of granting funds for the Project, the Applicant shall be obliged to:

- 1) employ the Returning Scientist on the basis of employment contract for the entire duration of the Project, in the first year of the Project implementation - part-time - a minimum of 0.5 of full-time employment, and in subsequent years - part-time - a minimum of 0.75 of full-time employment. A scan of the employment contract concluded between the Beneficiary and the Returning Scientist shall be sent to NAWA no later than within 30 days after its conclusion;
- 2) create conditions for the Project Group to carry out research, including provision of office and laboratory space as well as scientific and research equipment together with access to infrastructure enabling research and teaching activities;
- 3) provide administrative and financial support for activities carried out by the Project Group, including matters related to the arrival of the Returning Scientist and the creation of the Project Group by him/her;
- 4) support the Project Group in applying for financial resources for the implementation of scientific research or development works, in obtaining the required approvals, opinions, permits, including applications submitted to relevant ethics committees;
- 5) participate in the evaluation of the Programme consisting in completing three evaluation surveys and participation in other evaluation activities conducted by NAWA, in accordance with these regulations;
- 6) if the Research component is planned under the Project - to submit the application to the NSC in order to obtain funding, and in the case of receiving it, to support the Project Group in implementation and to provide administrative and financial support related to the implementation of this part of the Project.

3. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

3.1 Eligible Applicants

1. Applications for funding under the Programme may be submitted by entities planning to employ Returning Scientists belonging to one of the following categories:
 - 1) universities, referred to in art. 7 item 1 point 1 of the LHES;
 - 2) scientific institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences, operating on the basis of the APAS;
 - 3) research institutes operating on the basis of the ARI;
 - 4) international scientific institutes established on the basis of separate legal acts operating on the territory of the Republic of Poland;
 - 5) Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences;
 - 6) institutes operating within the Research Network Łukasiewicz, referred to in art. 7 item 1 point 6b of the LHES;
 - 7) other entities conducting mainly scientific activity in an independent and continuous manner, holding a scientific category.
2. The call is dedicated to the institutions planning to employ scientists whose research can lead into knowledge expanding and solving significant problems related to the COVID-19 epidemic and its consequences, in particular representatives of broadly understood biomedical and health sciences.
3. Excluded from the call are applications, in which the Returning Scientist is a person indicated in the previous call of the Polish Returns Programme, and for which the substantive assessment has not been completed. In such a case, the application is considered as not meeting the formal requirements.

3.2 Time and form of submission of applications

1. The call for proposals under the Programme will be conducted from **15th July to 31st August, 2020** until **3:00 PM** of Central European Time (in accordance with the official time in Poland) only in electronic form in the Agency's ICT system. It will not be possible to submit an application after this date.
2. Submission of applications is possible after registration in the system available at: <https://programs.nawa.gov.pl>
3. The scope of data required in the application is specified in these regulations and the application form available at: www.nawa.gov.pl

4. The application should be submitted by a person authorized to represent the Applicant. In the case that the application is submitted by a person other than indicated in the Applicant's registration documents, the Applicant shall be obliged to attach a scan of the power of attorney for that person. At the time of submitting the application that person must be an employee of the Applicant and may not be on unpaid, educational, parental, health, maternity or sick leave.
5. The application with attachments shall be prepared **in English**. The exceptions from this rule shall be:
 - 1) abstract of the Project constituting part of the application (in Polish);
 - 2) statements and powers of attorney of the Applicant and of the Returning Scientist constituting annexes to the application (in Polish);
 - 3) documents confirming obtaining of the academic degree/title constituting annexes to the application (in Polish, Latin or English).
6. It is possible to submit only one application regarding the same Returning Scientist. There is no limit for the number of applications submitted by one Applicant.
7. Sending the completed application together with all required attachments in the system will change the status of the application to "submitted", and the Applicant will receive an e-mail confirming the submission of the application. It is the Applicant's responsibility to check whether the operation of sending the application has been completed correctly.
8. By submitting the application, the Applicant accepts the Programme regulations.

3.3 Project implementation period

1. The project may be implemented for a period of not less than **36 months** and not more than **48 months**. The project shall start and end on dates set by the Applicant.
2. Implementation of the Project may begin no earlier than on 1st January 2021 and no later than on 30th September 2021.
3. Change of the project implementation period:
 - 1) in justified cases, the date of commencement of the Project indicated in the application may be postponed by no more than 6 months. Requests for a change of the date of commencement of the Project shall be considered individually by the Director, who may request for the opinion of the Evaluation Team on this matter;

- 2) in justified cases, the project implementation period may be extended by no more than 12 months. Requests for extension shall be considered individually by the Director, who may request for the opinion of the Evaluation Team on this matter;
- 3) in the case of a break at work of the Returning Scientist related to maternity leave, leave granted on the same terms as maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave or post-parental leave, granted in accordance with the provisions of the Polish Labour Code or receiving by him/her sickness benefit or rehabilitation benefit in connection with the inability to work, including due to a disease requiring medical rehabilitation, the project implementation period may be further extended, after the Director's approval of relevant request, for a period corresponding to the time of the abovementioned break;
- 4) in the event of occurrence of circumstances referred to in points 1-3, the total amount of funding granted by NAWA shall not be increased. This reservation shall not apply to any co-financing by the Beneficiary who has the possibility of supporting financially the Project at any stages of its implementation.

3.4 List of required annexes to the application

1. Scans of three selected publications from the list indicated in the application. If a publication is in a language other than English, an abstract in English should be attached. In the case of monographs, please attach a file containing the title page, editorial page, table of contents and a selection of fragments containing the most important theses of the author - a total of no more than 20 pages.
2. Scan of a document confirming the Returning Scientist's academic degree/title.
3. Commitment signed by the person authorized to represent the Applicant regarding the employment of the members of the Project Group (a template of the document is attached as Annex 2 to these Regulations).
4. Statement of the Returning Scientist (a template of the document is attached as Annex 3 to these Regulations).
5. Scan of documents confirming unequivocally that the Returning Scientist in the period starting from 1st January 2015 has been working scientifically abroad for at least 2 years in: a university, research institute, scientific institute or research department of a foreign enterprise located

outside Poland⁴ (certificate from the HR department or a certificate issued by a person representing the employing unit, including the name of the position and the period of employment).

6. Scan of a document confirming the Applicant's representative's authorization to act on his/her behalf (including the authorization to incur liabilities to the amount not lower than the amount applied for).
7. Scan of documents confirming the authorization of the person submitting the application to represent the Applicant (a template of the document is attached as Annex 5 to these Regulations).
8. Declaration on the absence of public aid (a template of the document is attached as Annex 4 to these Regulations).

PLEASE NOTE:

Annexes shall be uploaded in the system as PDF files not larger than 2 MB.

Attaching a scan of a document should hide the photograph, and attaching a document with a photograph shall mean consent to personal data processing in this regard.

3.5 Research component

As part of the Project, the Applicant may plan a Research component up to the maximum amount of PLN 200 000 to be used by the Project Group within the first 18 months of the Project implementation. The research component shall be financed by the National Science Centre and is intended solely to support basic research.

The application submitted to NAWA shall present the research plan and substantiation of the research costs.

The catalogue of eligible costs under the Research component constitutes Annex 6 to these Regulations. Whether the research planned as part of the Research component belongs to the basic research shall be subject to substantive assessment. If the Evaluation Team decides that this condition is not met, financing of the Project will be still possible after excluding the costs of the Research component.

⁴ The total documented period of 2 years of scientific work abroad does not have to be continuous. It may include some breaks, especially those related to raising children.

The Research component in the application submitted to NAWA is optional, and if it is planned in the application, the Applicant may not simultaneously apply for financing the costs of adaptation and organization of the workplace and preparation of the research facilities.

Beneficiaries selected under the Polish Returns programme, who planned the Research component in their application, will be required to submit a separate application to the National Science Centre in the call for proposals addressed exclusively to them. Applications shall be subject only to formal assessment by the NSC.

The application submitted in the NSC's ICT system shall contain the administrative part including the Beneficiary's data, data of the Returning Scientist, cost estimate of the Research component and the application submitted to NAWA in PDF format. In the case of formally correct applications, the decision of the Director of the NSC on granting support for the Research component shall be issued and the agreement between the Beneficiary and NSC shall be concluded.

4. PROCEDURE OF EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications for participation in the Programme shall be subject to formal and substantive assessment.

4.1 Formal assessment

1. Formal assessment of applications shall be carried out by NAWA.
2. Formal assessment shall include verification of the application in terms of meeting the formal criteria set out in these regulations, assessment of the budget in terms of compliance with the regulations and checking the completeness of the application. Only complete applications that meet all formal requirements shall be eligible for substantive assessment.
3. If the Applicant submits several applications for the same Returning Scientist, only the last application submitted shall be considered.
4. If an incomplete application is submitted, NAWA shall call the Applicant to fill in the deficiencies within 14 days from the date of receipt of the request, with the instruction that the lack of supplementation shall result in leaving the application without consideration. It is possible to correct the application only once. NAWA may also ask the Applicant to provide additional documents or explanations. Information about the need to complete the application or to provide

additional explanations shall be sent by electronic means as a notification from the Agency's ICT system to the Applicant's e-mail address provided in the Agency's ICT system.

5. Applications submitted after the deadline specified in the call for applications or not meeting the formal requirements set out below shall not be considered.
6. The form of communication with the Applicant shall be the Agency's ICT system and in working mode e-mail correspondence. The Applicant is obliged to regularly check his/her e-mail inbox.
7. The application may be rejected for formal reasons at a subsequent stage of assessment, after completing the formal assessment.

4.2 Substantive assessment

1. Substantive assessment shall be carried out by the Evaluation Team and two Reviewers based on substantive assessment criteria:

	Criterion	Maximum score		
		Reviewers	Assessment by Evaluation Team	TOTAL
1.	Scientific achievements and research/ implementation or didactic experience of the Returning Scientist, with the consideration of the stage and field of his/her scientific career.	10	20	30
2.	Organizational potential and experience of the Applicant (institution) in the field of projects implementation, including international cooperation also how the Applicant is prepared to receive the Returning Scientist and to implement the proposed Project.	5	5	10
3.	The practical importance of employing the Returning Scientist and creating by him/her the Project Group for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strengthening the potential of the Applicant, including in the field of international scientific or academic cooperation, • development of science in Poland, including the expected impact on the field/discipline of science represented by the Returning Scientist, 	10	15	25

	taking into account the challenges related to the COVID-19 epidemic			
4.	<p>Scientific value of the proposed scientific activities planned within the duration of the Project (scientific research and development works, implementations, grant applications to Polish and foreign institutions funding research, teaching/mentoring and disseminating activities), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planned results, • research tools and methods used, • originality of the subject handled, • correctness of research assumptions 	10	15	25
5.	Project's feasibility; together with the use of resources, including large research infrastructure (if applicable), owned by the Applicant,	5	5	10
6.	Does the research planned under the	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO

	Research component (if applicable) constitute a part of the basic research?			
7.	Assessment of the budget of the Research component financed by the National Science Centre in terms of compliance with the catalogue of eligible costs included in Annex 6 to the Regulations and the adequacy of the indicated cost items for the planned research as well as the amount of the budget for the Research component (if applicable)	CORRECT/ INCORRECT MODIFICATION	CORRECT/ INCORRECT MODIFICATION	CORRECT/ INCORRECT MODIFICATION
	Maximum score:	40	60	100

2. The substantive assessment shall consist of two stages:
 - 1) First stage: evaluation of applications carried out by two Reviewers. The reviewers shall evaluate the applications according to all the substantive evaluation criteria, indicating the score and substantiating the awarded score. In summary, the reviewers shall present the strengths and weaknesses of the application.
 - 2) Second stage: assessment by the Evaluation Team taking into account the opinions of two Reviewers.
The Evaluation Team shall prepare a ranking list of applications, indicating the applications recommended and non-recommended for financing in relation to all applications assessed under the Programme.
3. During the substantive assessment of the application, the Evaluation Team shall assess and decide whether the Returning Scientist is an experienced scientist, and thus whether his/her

remuneration has been calculated taking into account the appropriate rate provided for in the regulations.

The assessment shall be based on the following requirements, according to which as an experienced scientist may be considered a person who in the period starting from 2010:

- 1) has published at least five publications in reputable scientific journals;
- 2) has managed the implementation of research projects selected in national or international competitions;
- 3) meets at least three of the following criteria:
 - a) was member of the scientific committee of at least one recognized international conference;
 - b) has published at least one monograph;
 - c) gave presentations at recognized international conferences;
 - d) won an international prize or distinction;
 - e) is or has been a member of recognized associations, international scientific organizations or academies;
 - f) has obtained other significant achievements in science, and in the case of representatives of art studies - a person who is the author of artistic works of international significance or important for Polish culture and has actively participated in international exhibitions, festivals, or artistic, musical, theatre and film events.
4. In justified cases, the Evaluation Team may recommend reducing the amount of funding requested, in particular as a result of the assessment of compliance with the criteria for an experienced researcher or the inadequacy of the costs proposed.
5. If a breach of ethical principles by the Applicant is detected or he/she proves to be unreliable in preparation of the application, the Evaluation Team shall grant the application the 0 (zero) score. In this case, the application may not be qualified for financing.
6. In the case of an application qualified for financing, to which the Evaluation Team awarded the grade "NO" or "INCORRECT" score regarding the Research component, it will not be possible to submit the application to finance the Research component to the NSC. In the case of an application qualified for funding in which the Evaluation Team recommended a modification of the Research

component's budget, the application submitted to the NSC has to take this recommendation into account.

7. Data of external experts conducting substantive assessment shall not be made available. NAWA shall annually publish the alphabetical list of external experts participating in the assessment of applications in a given calendar year, jointly for all Programmes.

4.3 Final decision and information about the results

1. The Evaluation Team shall set the ranking list and the minimal threshold for applications recommended for funding, which cannot be lower than 60 points.
2. The Evaluation Team shall submit the ranking list to the Director for approval:
The ranking list shall include:
 - 1) applications recommended for funding,
 - 2) applications not recommended for funding.The Team may decide to prepare a reserve list for applications which have reached at least the abovementioned threshold, but have not received funding due to the exhaustion of funds allocated to the call. Applications on the reserve list may receive funding if no agreement is signed with an Applicant whose application has been recommended for funding.
3. Based on the ranking list, the Director shall make the final decision on granting or refusing to grant funds for applications submitted in the call. The Director may decide to refuse granting funds to applications recommended for funding. The reasons for such refusal may be in particular:
 - 1) organizational and legal changes of the Applicant's organization threatening the correct implementation of the Project;
 - 2) the Applicant is in default with meeting its obligations towards NAWA;
 - 3) receiving by NAWA information affecting the process of granting the funds for implementation of the Project;
 - 4) lack of financial resources.
4. The decision to grant or refuse granting support under the Programme shall be sent to the Applicant in the Agency's ICT system.

4.4 Method of publishing information about the results of selection

The Director shall issue a decision on granting or refusing to grant funds under the Polish Returns programme. The list of entities which have been granted funding, including their names, shall be posted on website of the Polish Public Information Bulletin (BIP) dedicated to NAWA.

4.5 Appeal procedure

1. In case of formal violations in the process of awarding the funds, the Applicant may request the NAWA Director to reconsider the case.
2. The request for reconsideration of the case may include reservations only as to the formal issues in the process of granting the funds, and not to the merits of substantive assessment. Submission of the request for reconsideration of the case for another reason may result in issuing the ruling stating that the request for reconsideration of the case is inadmissible.
3. The request for reconsideration of the case shall be submitted in writing within 14 days from the date of receipt of the decision to the NAWA Director, to the following address: Narodowa Agencja Wymiany Akademickiej, ul. Polna 40, 00-635 Warszawa, or electronically to NAWA's incoming e-mail address in the form of an electronic document bearing a qualified electronic signature (trusted signature, personal signature, or signature authenticated in a way that ensures the possibility of confirming the origin and integrity of verified data in electronic form).
4. Persons who have at any stage performed activities related to given Application, including those involved in its assessment, may not participate in considering the request for reconsideration of the case. NAWA Director may employ external experts to decide on such requests.
5. The Applicant may submit the complaint to the Provincial Administrative Court in Warsaw at: ul. Jasna 2/4, 00-013 Warszawa, against the ruling stating the inadmissibility of submitting the request for reconsideration of the case, or against the decision of the NAWA Director. The complaint shall be lodged through the Director of the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange at: ul. Polna 40, 00-635 Warszawa, within 30 days from the date of delivery of the abovementioned decision or ruling.

5. AGREEMENT WITH APPLICANT

1. The agreement with the Applicant shall be signed based on the final decision of the Director on granting funds under the Programme.
2. In the decision granting the funds, the Director shall specify the activities and the date by which the Beneficiary should perform them under the pain of resignation from signing agreement for Project's financing.
3. Project implementation agreement, a template of which is attached as Annex 1 to the regulations, shall be bilateral and shall be signed between the Director and the Beneficiary.

6. FINANCING

6.1 Project budget and eligible costs within NAWA financing

1. As part of the Project, the following costs shall be eligible:
 - 1) Remuneration of the Returning Scientist
 - a) **PLN 250 000 - PLN 350 000** annually when employing an experienced scientist full-time;
 - b) **PLN 180 000 - PLN 240 000** annually when employing a researcher who does not meet the requirements to be regarded as experienced scientist full-time.

The amounts of the remuneration of the Returning Scientist shall be the amounts including the employer's costs (i.e. the so-called gross amount). In the case of part-time employment, the remuneration rate shall be calculated proportionally. If the Returning Scientist is employed for part of the year, the annual rate shall also be calculated proportionally.
 - 2) Remuneration of members of the Project Group shall amount maximally to **the total of PLN 200 000** per year. If the Project Group will be working for a part of the year, the maximum rate shall be calculated proportionally. The maximum amount of remuneration for one member of the Project Group may be **PLN 150 000 per year** when employed full-time. In the case of part-time employment, the maximum pay rate shall be calculated proportionally. Decisions on the amounts of remuneration for members of the Project Group shall be made by the Returning Scientist.

The amounts related to the remuneration of the Project Group shall include the employer's costs.

- 3) Resettlement of the Returning Scientist and persons remaining in the same household with him/her shall be financed in the form of the one-off mobility allowance (lump sum) paid by the Beneficiary to the account of the Returning Scientist in the amount of:
 - **PLN 12 000** - if he/she comes alone,
 - **PLN 20 000** - if he/she comes with his/her household members, regardless of the number of the members.
- 4) Adaptation and organization of the workplace and preparation of the research facilities for the Returning Scientist and members of the Project Group shall be financed up to **the maximum amount of PLN 50 000 gross**. If the Research component financed from the NSC funds is planned in the application, it shall not be possible to apply for financing of this cost category.

Eligible costs in this cost category may be, among others, minor renovations, repairs, purchases (e.g. cost of a laptop or printer) costs of preparing applications to agencies funding research (costs of networking, necessary reagents, petty research materials, etc.), trips of members of the Project Group to conferences, specified-task allowance for the Applicant's employees involved in Project implementation (max. 50% of this cost category). These costs shall be settled on the basis of actually incurred expenses. They shall be incurred not later than within 12 months from the date of commencement of the Project implementation, with the exception of specified-task allowances referred to in the previous sentence, which may also be incurred at a later stage of the Project implementation. The Beneficiary shall keep accounting evidence of incurring costs. Equipment purchased under this cost category shall constitute equipment dedicated to the Project Group and shall be the Beneficiary's property.
2. Costs shall be considered eligible only if they cumulatively fulfil the following conditions:
 - 1) they shall be actually incurred during the period of costs' eligibility specified in the Project implementation agreement,
 - 2) they shall comply with the provisions of national law,
 - 3) they shall be included in the Project budget,
 - 4) they shall be supported by accounting evidence and presented in the financial documentation and accounting records of the Beneficiary,
 - 5) they shall be necessary for the realization of the Project and its implementation,

- 6) they shall be reasonably calculated on the basis of market prices and in accordance with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation,
 - 7) they shall be proportional to planned activities,
 - 8) they shall be used solely for the implementation of the Project and its expected results in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness,
 - 9) they shall include VAT only in cases where it is not possible to deduct or recover it under national VAT regulations.
3. The maximum amount of funding for the Project shall be calculated on the basis of the duration of the Project and taking into account the composition of the Project Group and may not be higher than PLN 2 270 000, if the Project does not include the Research component.
 4. In the case of Projects containing the Research component, the maximum amount of Project financing shall be calculated on the basis of the duration of the Project and taking into account the composition of the Project Group and may not be higher than PLN 2 220 000 from NAWA and PLN 200 000 from NSC.
 5. The Applicant's own contribution is not obligatory, however, the Project budget may be increased by the Applicant's own funds.
 6. The amounts of remuneration in the Project shall be amounts including the employer's costs. The amounts shall include labour costs other than remuneration, including social security and health insurance contributions as well as other elements of remuneration financed by the employer. These funds shall also cover all elements of remuneration provided for in the remuneration rules or other internal regulations of the Beneficiary.
 7. It is unacceptable to finance the same expenses from two different sources (double financing). If double financing is detected (at any stage of the Project implementation), NAWA shall consider such expenses as ineligible. Double financing may be considered a major breach of the agreement.

6.2 Costs eligibility period within NAWA financing

1. The costs and expenses eligibility period shall be specified in the financial agreement depending on the schedule presented in the application, whereas:
 - 1) the initial eligibility date shall be 31 days from the receipt of the Director's decision on granting funds under the Polish Returns programme;

- 2) the final eligibility date shall be the day indicated in the Project implementation agreement, not later than 30 days from the end of Project's implementation.
2. It is possible to incur expenses before the start of the Project implementation, during the costs and expenses eligibility period, which shall apply to:
 - 1) expenses related to the resettlement of the Returning Scientist and persons remaining in the same household with him/her;
 - 2) expenses related to the adaptation and organization of the workplace and preparation of research facilities.
3. Expenses related to the costs of adaptation and organization of the workplace should be incurred not later than within 12 months from the date of commencement of the Project implementation, with the exception of specified-task allowances, which may also be incurred at subsequent stages of the Project implementation.
4. It is possible to incur expenses within 30 days from the date of completion of Project implementation, provided they relate to the costs of the Project implementation period (e.g. payment of remuneration for the last month of the Project implementation, payment of social security contributions, income tax advances, etc.).
5. Expenses related to the remuneration of the Returning Scientist and members of the Project Group may be incurred not later than within 30 days from the date of completion of the Project, as long as they relate to the costs of the Project implementation period (e.g. payment of remuneration for the last month of the Project implementation, payment of social security contributions, income tax advances, etc.).
6. If the financial agreement is not concluded with the Beneficiary for reasons attributable to the Beneficiary, no reimbursement of costs incurred prior to conclusion of the financial agreement may be claimed.

6.3 Ineligible costs within NAWA financing

1. Purchase of research equipment, understood as a set/sets of research, measuring or laboratory devices with a low degree of universality and high technical parameters (usually higher by several levels of measurement accuracy in relation to typical equipment used for production or operational purposes), which, according to the principles (accounting policy) in force in the entity implementing the project, shall be included in fixed assets. Only the purchase of petty equipment

- referred to in chapter 6.1 item. 1 point 4 may be allowed in a situation where the Project does not include the Research component financed from NSC resources;
2. other costs not mentioned in chapter 6.1;
 3. the same costs financed from two different sources (double financing);
 4. undocumented costs;
 5. value added tax and other taxes and charges which are deductible or refundable under national law;
 6. losses resulting from exchange rate differences, commissions related to currency exchange, costs of interest on overdraft on financial transactions;
 7. costs reduced in the Project budget during the substantive evaluation and indicated in the decision on financing issued by the Director;
 8. costs of opening and operating a bank account.

6.4 Payment rules within NAWA financing

1. Under the Project, payments shall be made by NAWA in the form of advances, based on the payment schedule constituting part of the application.
2. The payment schedule shall be prepared by the Applicant on the basis of the expected demand for financial resources during the implementation of the Project, with the reservation that the **first payment shall constitute 20% of the requested financing**. The payment schedule shall require approval by NAWA. In the event of any discrepancies between the planned payments and the activities planned in the application, NAWA may request the Applicant to amend the schedule.
3. The applicant shall open a separate bank account dedicated to projects financed from NAWA funds.
4. Interest accrued on the bank account shall be fully reimbursed to the bank account indicated by NAWA at the latest by 15th December , each year according to the rate as of 30th November, unless separate provisions stipulate otherwise. In the event of termination of using of the bank account dedicated to projects financed from NAWA fund, the reimbursement shall be made after the last of the projects being completed. As the date of interest reimbursement shall be regarded the moment of crediting the funds to the NAWA's bank account.
5. The first payment shall be made within 30 days from the date of conclusion of the Agreement.

6. Payments in subsequent years shall be made on the basis of the payment schedule and after approval of the interim report.
7. The part of received funds which has not been used shall be returned to NAWA after the end of Project implementation.
8. If NAWA receives information about gross irregularities in the course of the Project implementation, the financing may be suspended until the matter is resolved.
9. NAWA reserves the right to change the date of advance payments. This change shall depend on the availability of funds allocated to financing of the Programme.

6.5 Documentation of expenditure and financial-accounting records

1. The Beneficiary is obliged to keep separate financial and accounting records of funds received for the implementation of the Project in accordance with the Accounting Act, in a manner enabling identification of individual accounting operations.
2. All expenses incurred under the Project have to be documented in accordance with accounting regulations. The documents confirming the expenses have to be described at least with the number of the agreement with NAWA, the amount of eligible expenses incurred on the basis of the document, the purpose of the expenditure, the item number in the Project budget and the date of payment.
3. As the expenditure actually incurred shall be regarded expenditure incurred according to cash-based accounting, i.e. expenditure of money from the Beneficiary's cash desk or bank account. The date of incurring the expenditure shall be:
 - 1) in the case of payments made by bank transfer: the date of debiting the account;
 - 2) in the case of payments made in cash: the date of actual expenditure;
 - 3) in the case of payments made by credit card: the date of the transaction resulting in debiting the credit card account.
4. Expenses under the Project (public funds) in accordance with generally applicable regulations must be incurred in a competitive manner. The Beneficiary is obliged to ensure competitiveness in spending funds under the Project (e.g. application of internal procurement regulations, public procurement law or other procedures ensuring competitiveness).

5. The Beneficiary (if requested to do so in the course of the checks or audits referred to in chapter 8 Project Checks) has to provide the relevant supporting documents that contain information on the costs declared, e.g. contracts, invoices and accounting books.
6. In addition, the Beneficiary's usual accounting practices and internal control procedures have to ensure that the amounts declared may be reconciled directly with the amounts presented in the Beneficiary's accounting reports and with the amounts indicated in the supporting documents.
7. Project documents and accounting documents related to the implementation of the Project have to be kept at the Beneficiary's seat for a period of 5 years from the date of completion of the Project. All evidence confirming incurring costs under the Project implemented by the Beneficiary have to be made available to NAWA or institutions acting on its behalf for the purposes of checks or audits.

6.6 Goods and services tax (VAT)

1. Expenses under the Project may include the cost of the goods and services tax (VAT). These expenses will be considered eligible if the Applicant has no legal possibility to recover them.
2. VAT paid shall be considered eligible only if the Applicant, in accordance with applicable law, is not entitled to claim a VAT refund or reduce the amount of the output tax due by the amount of input tax. If the Applicant has the aforementioned right, the expenditure may not be considered eligible.

6.7 Public aid

The National Academic Exchange Agency does not provide public or de minimis aid. The Applicant is obliged to submit a declaration on the absence of public aid, template of which is attached to the regulations.

7. SETTLEMENT OF THE PROJECT

1. The submission of annual interim reports and a final report is obligatory in the Polish Returns programme.
2. The interim report shall be submitted by 31st January, of each year for the preceding year.

3. In order to settle the second interim report, it shall be required to submit at least one grant application (excluding grants from the Beneficiary Institution and the application for the Research component submitted to the NSC, if applicable).
4. The final report shall be submitted up to 60 days from the Project completion date indicated in the agreement.
5. The reports shall be assessed within 45 days from submitting the correct report by the Evaluation team appointed by the NAWA Director in terms of compliance of the Project implementation with the Agreement and the Application, with particular consideration of the achieved results.
6. The assessment of the interim report shall be also aimed at determining whether continuation of the Project implementation leads to the achievement of the project's expected results and objectives. Negative assessment of the interim report may constitute the basis for requesting the Beneficiary to return the funds received or to terminate the agreement.
7. The Returning Scientist is also required to send to NAWA the list of publications directly and indirectly related to the subject matter of the implemented Project within 12 and 24 months from the date of completion of the Project.
8. If the required report is not submitted or an incomplete report is submitted, the Beneficiary is obliged to correct or supplement the report within 14 days from receiving relevant information. Failure to submit the report, to complete or correct it, may constitute ground for withholding funds, requesting the Beneficiary to return received funds or to terminating the agreement.
9. If the amount of funds transferred to the Beneficiary exceeds the amount due based on the final report, the Beneficiary shall be obliged to reimburse the amount constituting the difference between the amount paid and due.
10. The templates of the interim report and the final report constitute part of the agreement concluded with the Beneficiary.

8. PROJECT CONTROL

Each of the NAWA programmes Beneficiaries may be subject to checks and audits aimed at verifying management of the grant received by the Beneficiary in terms of correctness and compliance with the provisions of the agreement. The checks may have both substantive and financial dimension.

In addition, NAWA may carry out a periodic or final assessment of the results of the Project to determine to what extent the implementation of specific activities has contributed to the achievement of the project's objective and whether the Beneficiary fulfils its obligations towards the Returning Scientist and the Project Group.

Each of the Projects may be subject to the documents check - "desk check" or the check in the Beneficiary's premises – "on-the-spot check", if the agreement has been included in the statistical sample used for the checks required by the Agency or if NAWA has selected it for the purposeful documents control in connection with its risk assessment policy.

For purposes of controlling the report in the form of the desk-check, the Beneficiary has to provide the Agency with copies of documents confirming spending the received funds (for cost categories settled on the basis of real costs), unless NAWA requests the original documents to be provided. After analysing the original documents, NAWA shall return them to the Beneficiary. If the Beneficiary is not entitled under the provisions of law to send original documents for control purposes, it will be obliged to send copies of supporting documents.

The Beneficiary has to take into account that for each check, NAWA may additionally request providing supporting documents or evidence that are intended for another type of check.

Individual types of checks shall include the following elements:

1) Report check

Report check (substantive and financial) is conducted for each Project after submission of the report to the Agency via the Agency's ICT system.

The check is also aimed at determining the final amount of funding to which the Beneficiary will be entitled.

2) Documents check - "desk check"

Documents check - "desk check" is an in-depth check of additional supporting documents carried out at NAWA's office.

At NAWA's request, the Beneficiary has to provide additional supporting documents related to the budget categories concerned.

3) Checks in the Beneficiary's premises

NAWA conducts such checks in the Beneficiary's premises or in another place related to the implementation of the Project. During the check, the Beneficiary has to provide for

NAWA's verification the original supporting documents designated for the report check and the desk check.

There are two types of checks in the Beneficiary's premises:

- 1) check in the Beneficiary's premises during the implementation of the Project
Such check is carried out during the implementation of the Project so that NAWA can directly verify the reality and eligibility of all activities and participants of the Project.
- 2) check in the Beneficiary's premises after the completion of the Project
Such check is carried out after the completion of the Project and usually after the final report has been checked.

In addition to presenting all supporting documents, the Beneficiary has to provide NAWA with access to the records of Project costs incurred in the course of Project implementation, which are included in the Beneficiary's accounting books.

NAWA also reserves the right to carry out a special check in each of the abovementioned forms. Special check shall be understood as an ad hoc check in the event of serious objections to Project management or in the event of NAWA being informed of irregularities occurring during the implementation of the Project.

The Beneficiary may also be subject to checks and audits by authorised administrative bodies.

9. EVALUATION

1. Beneficiaries and Returning Scientists are required to participate in NAWA's evaluation of the Programme. Participation in the evaluation includes sending to NAWA three evaluation questionnaires (together with the first interim report, along with the final report and 12 months after the end of the Project). In addition, participation in the evaluation also includes the participation of the Beneficiary, Returning Scientist and members of the Project Group in separate evaluation studies commissioned by NAWA. It is assumed that the Beneficiary and members of the Project Group may be invited to participate in the study once during the duration of the Project and once within 3 years from the end of the Project.
2. NAWA guarantees full confidentiality of opinions and information provided as part of the Programme evaluation and guarantees that data obtained as part of the evaluation from the

Beneficiary, Returning Scientist or members of the Project Group shall not have any impact on the terms of payment of the allocated funds.

3. The Beneficiary and Returning Scientists shall also be obliged to participate in evaluation studies conducted by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education on the principles set out by that Ministry.

10. INFORMATION AND PROMOTION

1. The Beneficiary is obliged to place on all publications resulting from the implementation of the Project information that it was financed by NAWA under the Polish Returns programme (full name in Polish or English) and, in the case of Projects with a Research component financed by the NSC, also information about financing by NSC (full name in Polish or English). Publications and other results of the Project implementation, which have not indicated the Agency (and NSC in the case of projects with a Research component) as the institution financing the Project, shall not be regarded as the results of the Project implementation and shall not be taken into account during the Project's settlement. NAWA recommends publishing at least the author's version of publications resulting from the Projects financed by the Agency with ensuring open access to such publications.
2. Publications of Project Group members made during the implementation of the Project shall have an affiliation of the Beneficiary.

11. CHANGES TO THE REGULATIONS

1. NAWA reserves the right to amend these regulations also over the course of the call for applications, except for changes resulting in unequal treatment of Applicants, unless the necessity to introduce such changes results from the generally applicable provisions of law. The changes introduced shall be effective from the time of their publication, made in the same way as the announced of the call for proposals. Applications submitted before the publication of changes to the regulations shall be re-submitted by the Applicant if their content does not comply with the introduced changes. NAWA shall notify all applicants which submitted applications

before the publication of such changes by sending information from the Agency's ICT system. At the same time, NAWA reserves the right to introduce amendments to the regulations of an orderly or clarifying character, as well as to correct obvious mistakes, without separate notification of the changes introduced, subject to the publication of the uniform version of the regulations, which includes the changes made. The moment of such publication shall also be the moment from which the changes shall be applicable.

2. NAWA reserves the right to cancel the call for proposals, in particular in the event of significant changes in the law affecting the recruitment conditions, occurrence of force majeure or in other justified cases.
3. NAWA shall publish all information necessary for proper conducting of the call for proposals at: www.nawa.gov.pl. It is recommended that entities interested in applying for funds under this call for proposals regularly read the information published on the abovementioned page.

12. PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

1. The personal data controller of persons representing Applicants, Beneficiaries, Returning Scientists, members of the Project group, contact persons and External experts shall be NAWA (NAWA Director in the case of the data processed in the Agency's ICT system).

The data shall be used to:

- 1) conduct the procedure of selection and evaluation of applications under the Programme,
 - 2) select the Applications which will receive funding and conclude the Projects' financing agreements,
 - 3) implement the concluded Project implementation Agreements,
 - 4) as well as for cooperation between NAWA and the Project participants, including cooperation aimed at promotion of the Programme.
2. The data shall not be used for making decisions based solely on the automated processing of personal data, including profiling within the meaning of art. 22 of the GDPR.
 3. The transfer of personal data to centres located outside the European Economic Area (European Union Member States, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein) shall be based on standard data protection clauses adopted or approved by the European Commission.

4. In connection with the implementation of the above purposes, personal data of the indicated persons may be transferred to NAWA employees, External experts or representatives of the Applicants and Beneficiaries as well as to other persons, if it is necessary to verify the data indicated in the Application, primarily for the purpose of employing the Visiting scientist. In the case of Projects including the Research component, the data shall also be transferred to NCN based on a separate agreement.
5. The legal basis for personal data processing constitutes Art. 6 item 1 letter b and letter e of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Data transfer shall be voluntary, but necessary for participation in the Programme. Refusal to provide the data shall result in leaving the Application without consideration or the inability of a specific person to participate in the Programme.
6. Personal data shall be used at the stage of the Applications' selection, throughout the Projects' implementation period and for 5 years from their end date for settlement purposes.
7. Personal data of persons whose Applications have not been approved shall be stored for archiving purposes for the period of 5 years from the day on which the decision of the NAWA Director becomes final and binding.
8. The data subject shall have the right to:
 - 1) submit to the Agency the request for access to his/her personal data,
 - 2) submit the request to rectify, delete or limit the use of his/her personal data,
 - 3) object to the use of his/her personal data when the basis for processing constitutes a task carried out in the public interest (Article 6 item 1 letter e of the GDPR),
 - 4) submit the request regarding the transfer of his/her personal data,
 - 5) lodge the complaint to the supervisory body (the President of the Personal Data Protection Authority at: ul. Stawki 2, 00-193 Warszawa)- on the terms set out in the GDPR.

Contact details of the data protection officer: Adam Klimowski, odo@nawa.gov.pl

13. APPLICANT'S FINANCIAL CAPACITY EXAMINATION

1. The Agency reserves the right to examine the applicant's financial capacity. Financial capacity means that the Applicant has stable and sufficient sources of financing to maintain operations during the period of the Project implementation or in the year for which the funds were granted,

and to participate in the financing of the Project. The result of the examination shall determine whether to conclude the financial agreement or not.

2. The verification of financial capacity shall apply to non-public entities which in a given accounting year apply for NAWA funding in an amount higher than EUR 100 000.
3. On the basis of a decision of the NAWA Director, the Agency may refrain from conducting the examination of the Applicant's financial capacity.
4. In the case of applications the value of which does not exceed EUR 100 000, Applicants have to submit the statement confirming that they have the financial capacity to implement given Project. The statement shall constitute a part of the application form.
5. Applicants applying for financing exceeding EUR 100 000 are obliged, upon NAWA's request, to submit a full version of report on the financial results of their operations, in particular their balance sheet and profit and loss account for the period covering the last financial year for which accounts have been closed.
6. Entities which are not able to provide the above-mentioned documents because they are newly established entities, may instead provide the statement regarding their financial capacity or the statement confirming possession of an insurance policy covering the risks taken by the Applicant as part of its business.
7. If, after analysing the abovementioned documents, the Agency considers that the financial capacity has not been confirmed or is insufficient, it may carry out the following activities:
 - 1) request further information;
 - 2) propose the conclusion of the financial agreement or issue the decision on granting co-financing with advance payments secured by financial collateral;
 - 3) propose the conclusion of the financial agreement or issue the decision on granting co-financing without pre-financing or with limited pre-financing;
 - 4) propose the conclusion of the financial agreement or issue the decision on granting co-financing with advance payments paid in several instalments;
 - 5) reject the application.

14. CONTACT WITH NAWA

The contact person for the Programme is:

Dr Joanna Rutkowska

Tel. 22 390 35 83

joanna.rutkowska@nawa.gov.pl

15. LIST OF ANNEXES

1. Template Project implementation agreement
2. Template commitment regarding employment of the members of the Project Group
3. Template statement of the Returning Scientist
4. Template declaration on the absence of public aid
5. Template document confirming the authorization of the person submitting the application to represent the Applicant
6. Catalogue of eligible costs for the Research component