

**NATIONAL RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND
INNOVATION PLAN, 2015-2020, PN III**



**SUBPROGRAMME 1.1 – HUMAN RESOURCES
RESEARCH PROJECTS FOR YOUNG INDEPENDENT TEAMS**

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RESEARCH PROJECTS FOR YOUNG INDEPENDENT TEAMS

Call number: PN-III-DCD-RU-TE-2016-1

Goal: Supporting young PhD researchers, in order to create or consolidate their own research team and an independent research programme.

General conditions of participation:

- ✓ the project proposal is developed by a researcher called Project leader with a national and/or international research team;
- ✓ the financing instrument is addressed to active young researchers from Romania, with achievements demonstrated through the quality and the international recognition of their scientific results;
- ✓ The instrument also refers to researchers from abroad. If the project proposal is accepted to be financed, the foreign researcher, Project leader, will interrupt work abroad and will operate (full-time) in Romania, in the host institution of the project;
- ✓ the Project leader holds the main responsibility for managing and implementing the project.

Eligibility criteria

- a) The Project leader has PhD degree, with the first PhD title obtained at least 4 years ago, but no more than 9 years to the moment of submission of the project proposal. The date of earning the PhD title is considered to be the date of the Ministerial Order for PhD titles granted by Ministerial Order; otherwise, it will be taken into consideration the date indicated on the certificate.
- b) The age of the Project leader and of the research team members, at the time of the submission of the project proposal, is less than or equal to 40 year old (are not yet 41 year old);
- c) The project is implemented in a Romanian institution or R&D unit (research organization), hereinafter referred as the host institution. The host institution cannot be an enterprise, in the sense of state aid legislation;
- d) The host institution is not declared, according to the law, in a state of payment default; Is does not have the accounts blocked following a court order; it has not made inaccurate

declarations concerning the information required by UEFISCDI for the selection of contractors; it has not broken the terms of another funding contract signed previously with a Contracting Authority;

e) The Project leader is employed in the host institution from Romania, on an indefinite or specified period, which covers at least the duration of the contract, or has the employment agreement, from the host institution, at least for the duration of the contract. In the case of funding award decision, the employment contract must be concluded by the Project leader with the host institution no later than the moment of signing the funding contract;

f) A person may submit, as a Project leader, only one project proposal type TE “Research projects for young independent teams” – Competition 2016. In case more than one project proposals are submitted by the same Project leader, all these project proposals will be declared ineligible;

g) It is forbidden to submit projects proposals which relate to already financed activities or under funding.

Duration

The project duration is minimum 12 months and maximum 24 months.

Budget

The maximum amount awarded for a project lasting a maximum of 24 months is 450.000 lei, except for the projects having as Project leader a person from abroad, for which the maximum funding awarded is 550.000 lei. The maximum amount awarded for a project lasting less than 24 months is calculated proportionally according to the project duration reported at 24 months.

It is considered that a Project leader comes from abroad and benefit from the above exception, if he/she satisfies the following cumulated conditions:

- a. He/she was an employee or a beneficiary of a scholarship of an entity from abroad, having an indefinite or a fixed-term contract, over a cumulated period of at least 2 years in the last 5 years, and
- b. The last employment or scholarship contract from abroad ended not more than 12 months before the deadline for submission of the funding application.

The fulfilment of these conditions must be sustained with justifying documents (e.g. employment contract/attestation, proof from the workplace).

The budget allocated to this competition for the entire duration of the projects is maximum 50.000.000 lei.

Eligible expenses:

- ✓ *personnel expenses* – (young researchers, postdocs, PhD students and master students employed throughout the implementation of the research project according to the law); these expenses include legal contributions related to salaries and incomes assimilated to these;
- ✓ *logistics expenses* necessary for the project, including equipment, laboratory supplies, material expenses, expenses for dissemination, information and documentation, access to third parties research infrastructure etc.;
- ✓ *travel expenses* corresponding to national or international travels of the research team members for documentation or research stages, participations in prestigious scientific events in the field related the project; travel expenses for national or international collaborators/experts as well as for participants to scientific events organized within the project may also be financed, with respect of the legal regulations;
- ✓ *indirect expenses (overhead)* are calculated as a percentage (max.15%) of direct expenses (personnel, logistics and travel expenses) excluding the procurement costs for tangible assets.

It is recommended that at the host institution level the overhead to be used also for the payment of auxiliary staff (technicians, students, etc.) involved in project implementation.

The structure of the research team

The research team structure is determined by the Project leader. When submitting the project proposal there has to be presented the team structure, specifying the number of full-time equivalent positions and their type. It is mandatory the nomination of at least one member from the project research (key person).

The research team has maximum 5 (including the Project leader) full-time equivalent positions.

- ✓ one full-time equivalent position may be occupied by more than one persons;
- ✓ all the positions from the project team structure must be budgeted explicitly in the funding application. If the allocated budget with this destination is not entirely used, the unused difference is considered economy and cannot be used for another destination;
- ✓ the open positions will be announced publicly, including those addressed to the host institution research staff (<http://www.euraxess.gov.ro/> , <http://jobs.ancs.ro/>).

The procedure for submission, evaluation and selection of the projects proposals

Submission of project proposals can be done in a single phase, using the online submission platform, www.uefiscdi-direct.ro.

The project proposal submission is compulsory to be done from an account created by the Project leader (the identification data, to create an account on the platform, have to be those pertaining to the Project leader). The funding application is written in English according to Appendix 1- The funding application.

Eligibility verification

The projects proposals received are verified by UEFISCDI personnel to ensure that all eligibility criteria are met for the host institution, the Project leader and the for the research team members.

The list of eligible projects proposals will be published on the UEFISCDI website - www.uefiscdi.gov.ro.

Appeals concerning the fulfilment of the eligibility criteria can be sent by e-mail at proiecteTE@uefiscdi.ro, by fax to + 40- (0) 21-311.5992, or directly to the UEFISCDI headquarter, within 5 working days from the date of publication of the results.

If during or after appeals of the evaluation phase, a non-compliance with any of eligibility criteria is found, the project proposal will be declared ineligible and will be excluded from the competition.

The evaluation process

Projects are evaluated by experts of international recognition and who satisfy the selection criteria set out in Appendix 2 - Selection criteria for the expert evaluators.

Each evaluator shall declare in writing the impartiality and the competence in the field related to the project proposal submitted to the evaluation as well as the confidentiality.

The evaluator oblige him/herself that, at any time during the evaluation process, if he/she finds that one of these conditions is not satisfied, or that is in conflict of interest, to notify in writing UEFISCDI. If UEFISCDI finds or is being noticed of a conflict of interest or misconduct, it will take the necessary replacement for the evaluator in question.

✓ There is the possibility that a Project leader indicate at most two experts to avoid for the evaluation of the submitted project proposal (institutional or personal conflicts, scientific competition).

✓ The evaluations are anonymous, ensuring the confidentiality and impartiality of the expert evaluators.

The individual evaluation

The evaluation of the project proposals will be done in a single phase.

The eligible project proposals are evaluated independently, online, by three expert evaluators.

The evaluators individually grant scores for each criterion, according to the evaluation sheet set out in Appendix 4 - Evaluation sheet. The scores granted for each criterion are justified with final comments, sustained by scientific arguments.

After finalization of all individual evaluations for a project, the evaluators will have access to the scores and comments of the other evaluators. If necessary, the evaluators can adjust their scores and comments initially granted.

For each project proposal, it will be appointed a Rapporteur, selected randomly from those three expert evaluators. Its role is to elaborate the initial evaluation report, based on individual evaluations and discussions with the two other evaluators, through a "forum" type interface, available on the evaluation platform.

Subsequently, the other evaluators will be requested through the platform to express their opinion on the initial evaluation report (vote "agree" or "disagree").

Rebuttal

After completing the individual evaluation, UEFISCDI staff will make the initial evaluation report available to applicants, on the accounts from the online submission platform. If the initial assessment report has at least one vote "disagree", the Project leader receives the evaluation sheet (concatenated) with the three individual evaluations. On this basis, the Project leader can formulate a point of view with regard to evaluation.

The rebuttals, respectively the point of view, are limited to 4.000 characters (including spaces), will be completed using a form available in the online submission platform, within 5 working days from the date of the initial response request. The point of view of the applicant will be written in English, and will consist strictly in a response to the critical remarks of the evaluators, as they appear in the initial evaluation report. The rebuttal is not mandatory and its absence does not affect the project evaluation in the panel.

The three evaluators will automatically receive notification about of the existence on the online platform of the rebuttal submitted by the Project leader. Through the „forum” type interface, the evaluators will discuss the rebuttal and they can change the initial evaluation report. The amending of the initial evaluation report activity is the responsibility of the Rapporteur.

Following these discussions, the Rapporteur may modify based on arguments or keep the initial evaluation report. Subsequently, the other evaluators will be required through the

online platform to express their opinion (vote "agree" or "disagree") on the intermediary evaluation report.

Main panel evaluation

For this competition, it will be established 11 panels, each panel covering a main research field, including several thematic areas, according to the Appendix 3 - Scientific fields, as follows:

- (1) Mathematics and Informatics
- (2) Chemistry
- (3) Physics
- (4) Engineering Sciences
- (5) Materials Sciences
- (6) Earth Sciences
- (7) Biology and Ecology
- (8) Health
- (9) Applied Life Sciences and Biotechnologies
- (10) Social Sciences and Economics
- (11) Humanities.

In the panel sessions, each project proposal is submitted by the Rapporteur and analyzed by the other members of the panel.

Each member of the panel will have access through the online platform, to all the project proposals assigned for the panel, to initial/intermediary evaluation reports associated to the panel and to the rebuttals (if any).

The final evaluation report is made by the Rapporteur and will integrate the recommendations resulting from meetings of the panel discussions.

The ranking of the project proposals is determined by consensus within the 11 panels.

Publication of the evaluation results

The project proposals list, one for each of the 11 main fields, and the final scores obtained by each of them, will be published on UEFISCDI website. The lists will be sorted descending by value score.

Information

The Project leaders will receive notification, via email, to the address specified in the project proposal, regarding the existence on the online platform of the Final Evaluation Report.

Appeals

The Project leaders of the project proposals may submit appeals during 5 working days following the date of publication of the evaluation results. Appeals can refer only to faults of procedure that the candidate considers as nonconforming to the specifications from the information package. Appeals cannot refer to the scores and the comments associated to the evaluation criteria. Appeals may be sent by email to proiecteTE@uefiscdi.ro, by fax to +40-(0)21-311.5992, or directly to UEFISCDI headquarter.

The publication of the final results will be made after solving all the appeals.

Results of the competition

The project proposals are accepted for funding in decreasing order of the obtained scores in each main field, within the allocated budget, with an equal success rate for each panel.

The projects that have obtained a final score less than 80 points will not be financed.

After completion of the competition, UEFISCDI will publish on the website www.uefiscdi.gov.ro the list of experts used in the evaluation process.

Budget negotiation and signing the contracts

The Project leaders of the financed projects will negotiate with UEFISCDI the requested budget amount and structure. They must justify their budget, as basis for discussion will be the comments from the final evaluation report, on the degree of correlation between the set goals and the required budget. The negotiated budget cannot exceed the budget amount originally requested in the Funding application. The funding contract is signed after negotiation.

Call launch: 2nd of November, 2016

Funding application submission: 10th of January, 2017, 4 pm