

BULGARIA

Bulgaria National Science Fund (BNSF)

The following call topics of the single joint call are supported by BNSF:

1. Call topic: Nanotechnologies
2. Call topic: Environment/Climate Change
3. Call topic: Health
4. Call topic: Social Sciences and Humanities
5. Call topic: Robotics

Who can apply?

Eligible applicants under the present call are Bulgarian entities, which are either:

- accredited universities under Art. 85 Para. 1 item 7 of the Law on Higher Education.
- science organizations under Art . 47 Para. 1 of the Law on Higher Education.

Applicants under items 1 and 2 must comply with the definition for “research and knowledge distribution organization” under item 15 “b” of the Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation.

Applicants under the present procedure must be directly responsible for the implementation of the activities of the project proposal, and not act as intermediaries; they must perform the proposed project activities on their own behalf and at their own expense.

What types of costs are eligible for funding?

Financial resources under the project of Bulgarian participants are managed in compliance with the Rules of the Bulgarian Science Fund, within the general rules of the call announced under the respective international programmes (in that number ERA-NET programmes), and as per the Instructions adopted by the Executive Board.

Funding under the present procedure shall be awarded only for “eligible costs”, specified in the general rules of the call announced under the respective international programme (in that number ERA-NET programmes). The project budget (as per the financial plan) is a preliminary assessment of expected costs and should correspond to the value indicated in the project.

When project proposals are evaluated, circumstances might be found that make it necessary to change the budget. They may also mandate that the temporary expert research committee requires additional clarification and information from the applicant, as well as that the proposed project budget is reduced. The possible budget amendments **cannot** lead to increasing the amount applied for under the present procedure.

General conditions for eligibility of costs

Costs under the present call for proposals procedure are considered eligible if they satisfy the following conditions:

- they are made by an approved beneficiary (lead organization of the project);
- they comply to the project purpose and cover activities under the project;
- they are financially justified and in conformity with national legislation;
- they are necessary for the implementation of the project and comply to the principles of good governance of public finance – publicity, transparency and feasibility of forecast costs in combination with economy, effectiveness and efficiency;
- they are made in between the grant contract signature and the closure of the project;
- they are duly reported in the accounting and tax documents of the beneficiary;
- they can be ascertained and verified by type and amount and tracked by the kept accounts;
- they are supported by an original receipted invoices or an accounting document of equivalent probative value according to national legislation;
- they are not funded by any other source, including another project, programme or any financial scheme funded by public resources, including resources of the European Union.

Specific eligible costs

The specific eligible costs are indicated in the general rules of the call, announced by the respective international programme.

The following costs under the present call for proposals procedure shall be considered **ineligible**:

- costs for activities carried out before the date of entry into force of the grant contract under the current procedure;
- costs that have already been funded or are fundable by other, confirmed sources;
- costs made for the purchase of assets and / or performance of activities not directly related to the project proposal and the fundamental research planned in it;
- tax costs, including refundable VAT;
- fine, sanction and penalty payments for events occurring within the contract duration;
- costs for consulting services during the project proposal preparation stage;
- costs depending on the use of local rather than imported goods;
- all costs falling outside the scope of eligible costs of the procedure in the respective state.

Additional national eligibility criteria for the proposal beyond the general criteria in the Terms of Reference of the single joint call

a) Applicant eligibility criteria

Applicants under the present procedure must be directly responsible for the implementation of the activities of the project proposal, and not act as intermediaries; they must perform the proposed project activities on their own behalf and at their own expense.

Call applicants must be persons:

1. performing research;
and
2. whose activities are fully not-for-profit or
3. whose activities are both for-profit and not-for-profit, but they are clearly separated and are organized in a way to allow tracking of expenses and revenues related to their performance, including through analytical accounting. When the applicant performs both for-profit and not-for-profit activities, the financing, expenses and revenues about each type of activity are considered separately on the basis of consistently applied accounting principles for costs that can be objectively justified.

The assets acquired as a result of funding under the present call shall be used only in not-for-profit activities and the funding awarded shall not be used for any type of business activities, including the following:

- research under contracts with enterprises /industries;
- consulting or other services provided to enterprises / industries;
- renting assets (infrastructure /equipment).

IMPORTANT: Bulgarian applicants present at the Bulgarian National Science Fund on a paper all required according to the National Rules verifications under items 1,2 and 3.

They will be part of the nationally eligibility check. Each circumstance under items 1,2 and 3 is subject to verification and in case illicit funding is received, it should be reimbursed, including its due interest. The applicants approved for funding must declare and prove the circumstances listed above. The Bulgarian Science Fund performs monitoring of the declared circumstances during the project lifetime and after its termination until the depreciation period of the assets purchased under the project expires. The mechanism of performing periodic monitoring of the declared circumstances is described in detail in the internal rules drawn out by the respective permanent expert research committee. Both the submitted accounting documents and the applicant on site are subject to monitoring.

b) Applicable State aid rules

The activities funded under the current call fall outside the scope of Art. 107 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, as laid down in Art. 2.1.1. “Public funding of non-economic activities” of the Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation.

c) Requirements for project team members

The following requirements for the project team members are applied:

- 1) The team leader should be a scientist holding a PhD or DSc degree and having the scientific competence necessary for the successful implementation of the project, which they should certify through their professional CV, research publications, and patents (if applicable) in the respective scientific field. Additional requirements to the project leader may be set forth in the general rules of the call announced by the respective international programme.
- 2) The other participants are as follows:
 - scientists and experts with specific achievements in the thematic field of the project proposal, ascertained with a professional CV and a thematically relevant publications list;
 - doctoral / post-doctoral researchers and young scientists for whom a professional CV and a thematically relevant publications list (if applicable) is attached;
 - students;
 - technical staff.
- 3) The project leader and project team members holding a PhD or DSc degree should be included in the database of the Bulgarian Science Fund or provide data that will be included in the database.
4. Persons, who, while having been project leaders under previous calls of the Bulgarian Science Fund after 2011 have not met the deadline for submitting the project reports without a good reason, or have been leaders of projects in the last three years that have been evaluated as unsatisfactory, cannot participate in projects under the current call.

d) Ineligible under the present call for proposals procedure shall be proposals:

1. including activities already funded by other sources;
2. not including research under a joint project;
3. including activities whose performance has started before the grant contract under the current procedure has been signed.

The National Requirements and Eligibility Criteria adopted by the BNSF are fully applicable for this call.

Upper funding limits for eligible costs?

Up to **50,000** euro per project (Bulgarian partner) in Call Topic

Any other information relevant to the single joint call

The estimated budget that will be awarded by the Bulgarian Science Fund to approved Bulgarian candidates, the minimum (if applicable) and the maximum amount of funding, as well as the funding stages are laid out in the general rules of the call announced by the respective international programme.

Public funding should not exceed 100 % of the total eligible costs of the project.

Project funding is bound with the project activities' implementation and the extent to which the planned project results are achieved.

The costs not recognized at the financial audit are reimbursed to the Bulgarian Science Fund.

IMPORTANT: When the scientific evaluation of the final project report **is not satisfactory**, the Executive Board of the Bulgarian Science Fund can decide on full or partial reimbursement of the awarded funding, including project personnel costs.

The financial relations between the Bulgarian Science Fund and the lead organization (contract holder) are drawn out in the contract concluded between them and in the decisions of the Fund's Executive Board based on a proposal by the permanent expert research committee.

In case of a lack of financial resources, the Fund can delay the provision of funding for the individual stages, for which it shall notify the beneficiary in writing. In such a case, the project implementation shall be prolonged by a period of the same length as that of the delay.

National Contact Point

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