



NATIONAL RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION OFFICE

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

under the

**FOREFRONT – RESEARCH EXCELLENCE
PROGRAMME**

announced by the Ministry for Innovation and
Technology

CODE: KKP_22

1 March 2022



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**SUMMARY TABLE**

	CALL FOR PROPOSALS UNDER THE FOREFRONT – RESEARCH EXCELLENCE PROGRAMME
CODE	KKP_22
Deadline for electronic submission of proposals	28 April 2022 16:00 CET
Postmark deadline for submission by regular mail	04 May 2022
Funding per project	HUF 150-350 million (average of HUF 30-70 million per year)
Eligible costs	Personnel costs + material costs + costs of fixed assets
Overhead costs	10% ¹
Open Access costs, acquisition of scientific information	10% ¹
Research type	Basic (fundamental) research
Maximum duration	5 years
Start date of implementation	between 1 August and 1 October 2022
Available budget (estimated number of funded projects)	HUF 3 billion (10 to 12)
Eligibility conditions	PhD/DLA degree + the conditions detailed in Point B.1.2. of the call for proposals
Project implementation	Projects have to be implemented at a Hungarian Host Institution.
Language	English
Repeated participation	A KKP-type grant may be awarded more than once, but the Principal Investigator may not participate in other KKP projects at the same time.
Maximum number of proposals submitted by the same Principal Investigator	One KKP proposal
	The Principal Investigator of a KKP_22 proposal may not be a Principal Investigator in another KKP, K_22, FK_22, PD_22 or ANN/SNN_22 project. Principal Investigators of funded KKP projects may not apply for funding under the Thematic Research Projects programme in the first 36 months of the funding period.
Further requirements for Principal Investigators	Must be able to prepare a research programme that can qualify for the second round of the evaluation process of an ERC call.
The selection process	A two-stage process, where the applicants of the best project proposals selected in the first stage will have the opportunity for a personal presentation in the second stage.
Reporting	Annual scientific and financial reports are required, with the second scientific report to be presented orally as well and approval of the third scientific report will be based on the proposal mandatorily submitted to the ERC.

¹ Of the direct costs excluding Open Access costs and overheads.



A. OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL

In accordance with Act LXXVI of 2014 on Scientific Research, Development and Innovation (hereinafter: RDI Act), the Ministry for Innovation and Technology (hereinafter: “Sponsor”), from the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund (hereinafter: “NRDI Fund”), through the National Research, Development and Innovation Office (hereinafter: “Managing Body” or “NRDI Office”), hereby announces an open call for proposals for the period 2022-2027 in connection with the funding programmes of the European Research Council (hereinafter: “ERC”) to support researchers at the forefront of the international scientific community to carry out their projects at Hungarian host institutions, thus helping Hungary to become a regional centre for research, development and innovation.

A.1. Aim of the Call²

The Forefront – Research Excellence Programme is a funding model for cutting-edge discovery research, providing significant funding of up to five years to excellent researchers at the most dynamic stage of their research career, at the forefront of international science, who wish to carry out their research at a Hungarian research institution.

The aim of this Call is to **facilitate successful participation in European Research Council (ERC) funding programmes** for researchers who have recently demonstrated their international standing at the forefront of the scientific community by achieving a significant international application success³.

In the domestic system of discovery research funding the NRDI Office has established a cascading system of calls ranging from the promotion of researchers just about to start their career to the support of existing independent research groups. Scientists starting their research career are supported under the post-doc programme, and later under the thematic research programme for young scientists. The Thematic Research Programme provides the research background for the implementation of specific research projects for researchers with a stable general research background. The Thematic Research Programme is complemented by the international collaborative research call and the Forefront – Research Excellence Programme.

The programme aims to **facilitate promising researcher-initiated basic research projects** that are expected to provide a better understanding of various natural and social phenomena and expand the general knowledge of humanity. In particular, scientific results that have a significant impact at international level, pave the way for the development of new methods and processes, and make a decisive contribution to shaping the future of R&D based on international excellence and competitiveness.

Outstanding, globally recognized research results that have a scientific, social or economic impact not only provide the basis for future development and innovation, but they also determine the

² The Call for Proposals and the Guidelines for Applicants together constitute the Call.

³ For detailed conditions, see Point B.1.2.



ranking of universities and research institutes. A university's ranking also depends on how much funding it received from national and international sources. Access to proper domestic funding for top researchers also increases their chance of winning international funds. This improves both the quality of education and the international ranking of universities, which in turn translates to actual social and economic benefits.

The KKP_22 Call is open exclusively to basic (fundamental) research topics with no thematic restrictions or priorities. Applicants are eligible if both their academic results and research plan meet the requirements set out in the Call. In addition to meeting the requirements set out in the call, applicants have the highest chance if they have achieved internationally outstanding scientific results in the past ten years and can be reasonably expected to continue this level of performance on the basis of their research plan.

A.2. The coordinator and the managing body of the call

The announcer and professional coordinator of the Call for proposals is the Ministry for Innovation and Technology (ITM). The managing body of the programme is the National Research, Development and Innovation Office. The Call is published on the NRDI Office's website.

A.3. Available budget

The source of the funding is the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund pursuant to Government Decision 1185/2017 (IV. 10.) on the Forefront – Research Excellence Programme (hereinafter: “Government Decision”).

In order to achieve the objectives of the call, the Sponsor provides HUF 3 billion from the NRDI Fund for the period 2022-2027, of which HUF 600 million will be available for payments in 2022.

A.4. Form and legal title of the funding

The form of support: definitive allocation with no return obligation (hereinafter “non-refundable funding”) which does not constitute state support within the meaning of EU competition law.

Eligible activities and legal titles: Section 24 (1) a), e), f), g), h) and j) of the RDI Act.

A.5. Expected number of funded projects

The expected number of funded KKP_22 projects is 10 to 12.

A.6. Language of the proposals

The proposals must be submitted in **English** in all fields of science. However, certain parts (summaries, work plan, budget plan justification) must also be presented in Hungarian.



B. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

B.1. Legal form, registered office and other requirements

B.1.1. *Legal form and registered office*

Proposals are eligible if submitted by any of the following types of organisations **having a legal personality and a registered seat in Hungary**:

- higher education institution, research centre, research institution, budgetary organ or a budgetary organ institution with legal personality if it qualifies as a research facility under the RDI Act;
- non-profit organisation qualifying as research and development organisation according to its core activity

as the host institution ensuring the conditions for the research (hereinafter: “**Host Institution**”) and a Hungarian or foreign researcher with a **PhD/DLA** degree as the professional leader of the research (hereinafter: “**Principal Investigator**”) may apply jointly, provided that the Principal Investigator fulfils the conditions described in Point B.1.2.

Throughout the entire project implementation period the Principal Investigator must be a full-time or part time worker of the Host Institution under an employment contract, civil service contract or other contract aimed at performing work.

Projects cannot be implemented in consortium.

B.1.2. *Further requirements for Principal Investigators*

PhD/DLA degree should be evidenced by a copy of the diploma, submitted electronically together with the proposal⁴. The Principal Investigator shall also prove upon application that he/she meets one of the following criteria:

- a) has led as Principal Investigator an ERC-funded Starting Grant, Consolidator Grant, Advanced Grant, or Synergy Grant project which was successfully closed after 1 January 2018, or is currently leading one such project and it is scheduled to be closed before 1 October 2022;
- b) applied as a Principal Investigator for an ERC Starting Grant, Consolidator Grant, Advanced Grant, or Synergy Grant after 1 January 2018, qualified for the second round of evaluation but was not selected for funding;
- c) submitted an application as a Principal Investigator for an ERC Consolidator Grant or Advanced Grant after 1 January 2018, which received a B⁵ score in the first round of evaluation;
- d) has successfully completed an individual basic research project with a budget of at least HUF 100 million as a Principal Investigator at a major international research fund⁶ (e.g.

⁴ Instead of a copy of the PhD/DLA diploma, copy of the document proving the existence of the title of doctor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences/doctor of science can also be attached.

⁵ Text evaluation: “is of high quality but not sufficient to pass to step 2 of the evaluation”.

⁶ Leading a project in the form of a consortium and the award of funding under a call for proposals announced by a domestic sponsor do not constitute fulfilment of this condition.



Welcome Trust, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, National Institutes of Health - NIH, Australian Research Council, Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council - BBSRC, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft - DFG) after 1 January 2018.

In addition to the above basic requirements, the applicant shall also outline his/her professional achievements showing the international embeddedness in the past 10 years, as requested by the European Research Council for ERC calls.

- 1) a list of ten selected publications including at least five scientific publications published in the past five years;
- 2) conference presentations delivered as invited speaker (including conference details and presentation abstract);
- 3) conference organizing activities (including conference details and description of activity);
- 4) scientific awards and recognitions; list of (awarded) academic memberships;
- 5) list of registered patents;
- 6) list of research grants received;
- 7) list of PhD students who obtained their doctoral degrees under the Principal Investigator's supervision or co-supervision.

The proposal must be accompanied by a detailed research plan for the proposed project, a work plan for its implementation broken down by annual work phases, the expected results of the project, a publication plan, a budget plan and a description of the activities of the researchers involved. The participating researchers shall make a statement in the proposal about all their awarded and pending grants.

By submitting the proposal, and subject to selection for funding, the Principal Investigator undertakes to apply for an ERC Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant in the first 30 months of the project period, in conjunction with a Host Institution with legal personality and a registered seat in Hungary; with the obligation to reapply for such ERC funding in the project period if the first attempt fails. This obligation of the Principal Investigator shall be included in the funding agreement. If the applicant Principal Investigator fulfils the condition in B.1.2.(a) as Principal Investigator of an ERC Advanced Grant project that closed after 1 January 2018 or closes before 1 October 2022, the obligation to submit an ERC proposal may be replaced by an ERC Consolidator or Advanced proposal submitted by any participating researcher named in the proposal and active in the project from its start date, within the time limits specified above.

Leaders of projects **selected for funding in this Call may not apply for funding at the NRDI Office in the Thematic Research Projects programme in the first 36 months of the funding period.** The Principal Investigator of a KKP_22 proposal may not be the Principal Investigator of a previous funded KKP project or a funded K_22, FK_22, PD_22, ANN/SNN_22 project. This disqualification does not apply to previously funded K, FK, PD, NN, ANN, SNN projects, but the Principal Investigator may be the Principal Investigator of no more than one thematic basic research project (K, FK, PD, NN, ANN, SNN) funded from the NRDI Fund at the same time as leading the KKP_22 project. The full-time equivalent (FTE) of each researcher under all effective funding agreements may not exceed the maximum.

The Principal Investigator may participate in other projects (not funded from the NRDI Fund), but the FTE may not exceed 1.3 on aggregate in any period in the relevant projects. The Principal investigator of the KKP project shall dedicate at least 0.3 FTE to this project.



B.2. Grounds for exclusion and administrative requirements

B.2.1. *Entities excluded from participation*

An entity may not apply for or receive funding, if it

- a) does not comply with the requirements for orderly employment relations set out in Section 20 of Government Decree 115/2021 (III. 10.) on the activities of the employment supervisory authority;
- b) has not complied with the disclosure requirements of the Act on the more economical operation of public companies;
- c) does not qualify as a transparent organisation;
- d) is the subject of a final order for winding up, liquidation, bankruptcy or other legal proceedings for termination, as provided for by law;
- e) is subject to a conflict of interest pursuant to Section 48/B (1) of Act CXCV of 2011 on public finances (hereinafter: *Áht.*);
- f) has been found by the NRDI Office, its legal predecessor or an organisation authorised by law to monitor the use of the funding to have irregularly used any funding granted from the NRDI Fund, from the Research and Technological Innovation Fund or under Act CXXXVI of 1997 on National Scientific Research Fund Programmes, and has an outstanding debt due to the resulting repayment obligation at the time of submission of the proposal;
- g) has been convicted by a court of law in connection with any funding granted from the NRDI Fund, from the Research and Technological Innovation Fund or under Act CXXXVI of 1997 on National Scientific Research Fund Programmes, and such conviction has become final within three years prior to the submission of the proposal;
- h) its activity is restricted by final and absolute court order pursuant to Section 5(2)e) of Act CIV of 2001 on measures applicable to legal entities under criminal law, for the term of prohibition;
- i) is applying for funding from the NRDI Fund for research activities to be carried out exclusively outside Hungary. (The use of foreign infrastructure, experiments conducted abroad and fieldwork abroad as part of the research plan are not grounds for exclusion.)

B.2.2. *Grounds for exclusion occurring after the submission of the proposal*

If, after the submission of the proposal, there is a change in the applicant's data, circumstances affecting the grounds for exclusion, legal status (e.g. bankruptcy, liquidation, winding-up or other legal proceedings for the termination of the applicant's business), or any event that prevents the achievement of the objectives of the proposal, the applicant must notify the coordinator of the call immediately, but no later than 8 days after the event or change occurs.



C. CONTENT OF THE PROPOSAL

C.1. Eligible activities

Activities carried out on the basis of the research plan and work plan submitted as part of the Forefront – Research Excellence Programme proposal, and which are designed to achieve the core objectives set out in the research project plan annexed to the funding agreement, are eligible.

C.2. Research and budget plan

Applicants must submit a detailed research plan (maximum 6 pages including references, Times New Roman font, font size 11, 1.5 spacing, 2.5 cm margins), a work plan setting out the schedule for the work to be carried out, broken down by annual work phases, and a budget plan with justification. In the research plan and the budget plan, the applicant shall describe the research to be carried out with the funding requested from the NRDI Fund under this call, the time schedule and the costs of the research, the progress of the project, the stages of the work and the way and form in which the results of the project will be published. The steps and processes of the research and the use of the costs for the realisation of the project must be justified in detail, and the research plan must also describe the structure of the research team, its members and their role in the project. Finally, the professional background of the Host Institution and the infrastructure it can provide for the project should be presented.

The budget plan must be drawn up in accordance with Annex 5 of the Guidelines for Applicants.

C.3. Duration of the project

The maximum duration of the project under this Call is 60 months. The implementation period laid down in the funding agreement may be extended by a single amendment to the funding agreement, provided that a professionally solid justification is given.

C.4. Start of the project

Projects shall start between 01 August and 01 October 2022. If the Principal Investigator is leading an ERC project that will close in 2022, the earliest start date for the Forefront project funded under this Call is the first day of the month following the closure of the ERC project. The earliest date for accounting costs is the project start date specified in the funding agreement.

C.5. Physical completion of the project, final date for the financial report and closure

C.5.1. *Physical completion of the project*

The project is considered physically completed when all the funded activities have been carried out in accordance with the terms of the funding agreement and the conditions set out in this Call.



Physical completion of the project is defined as the date of physical completion of the last funded project activity.

C.5.2. Final date for the financial report

The final deadline for the submission of the final financial report and the final scientific report for the project is the 60th day following the date of physical completion of the project, as specified in the funding agreement.

C.5.3. Project closure

The project is considered to be completed and closed when the funded activity has been carried out as defined in the funding agreement, the invoices generated during implementation have been settled, the assets created or acquired from the funding have been capitalised, the final scientific and financial reports of the beneficiaries have been approved by the NRDI Office, the funding has been paid in the amount corresponding to the certified use of the funding and the project closure letter has been issued.

D. FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

D.1. The amount and intensity of funding

Under this Call, an **annual average of up to HUF 70 million per project, i.e. a maximum of HUF 350 million over 5 years, can be requested.** Of these, 10% of direct costs can be planned for indirect costs (overheads), the use of which must be supported by separate accounting records. The Host Institution may use 10% of the direct costs of the research funding for the acquisition of scientific information (library, database, EISZ co-payment, Open Access costs).

When scheduling the annual costs, $\pm 10\%$ deviation is allowed from the average annual amount of funding (for a 5-year project, 20% of the total funding amount).

Funding intensity is 100%.

Applicants are requested to draft their budget plan in view of the research costs generally applicable to the given field of science. The evaluation panel will also examine whether the budget plan is realistic: both an underestimated and an overestimated budget can result in negative assessment.

D.2. Security

Pursuant to Ávr. Section 84 (1) b) and e), the Sponsor waives the requirement of a security for the following beneficiaries:

- budgetary organs;
- church legal entities; and



- state-recognised universities with financial management codes (GFO) 563 and 599, whose maintenance right is exercised by the Government or a legal entity established by the Hungarian State.

Beneficiaries who do not fall within the above-mentioned exemptions are required to provide a declaration of authorisation to lodge a direct debit mandate in favour of the NRDI Fund for all their payment accounts that can be debited by direct debit under the law in the event of a payment order that cannot be executed due to lack of financial coverage, including a provision to set aside the claim for a maximum of 35 days. The availability of the security must be ensured at the latest before the public funding is paid⁷. The security must be available until the obligations under the funding agreement cease.

D.3. Payment schedule, advance payment

Implementation plans shall be broken down by 12-month work phases. The funding amount for the first work phase will be paid in advance by the NRDI Office to the payment account of the Host Institution as specified in the funding agreement, within the deadline set in the agreement. The advance foreseen for subsequent work phases can only be paid after the completion of the previous work phase, the submission of the scientific and financial report (partial report) and its acceptance by the NRDI Office.

Payments are made exclusively in HUF.

In the event of non-compliance or defective compliance with the obligation to submit a partial report, the Managing Body may suspend the further payment of the funding until the Beneficiary has complied with such obligation. (Non-compliance or defective compliance with the reporting obligation may lead to additional legal consequences under the funding agreement.)

If the costs of the project exceed the amount stipulated in the funding agreement, the Beneficiary is obliged to cover the additional costs from its own resources.

E. PROPOSAL MANAGEMENT

E.1. Manner, deadline and place of submission

E.1.1. *Deadline and manner of submission*

Proposals must be prepared and submitted via the NRDI Office's Electronic Proposal Management System (EPR) (<https://www.otka-palyazat.hu/>). For technical details on how to apply, see the Guidelines for Applicants.

⁷ If the funding agreement was concluded under Government Decree No. 27/2021 (I. 29.), with reference to Section 2 of Government Decree No. 658/2020 (XII. 24.) on special rules for funding granted from the central budget in a state of danger, the availability of the security must be ensured within 30 days of the end of the state of danger at the latest. If the Beneficiary fails to provide the security in accordance with the public finance laws and the requirements of the Managing Body, the NRDI Office is entitled to order the withdrawal of the funding pursuant to Ávr. Section 96.



Proposals are assessed on the basis of the electronic proposal documents.

The electronic copy can be submitted in the procedure detailed on the NRDI Office's website, using the user name and password provided by the NRDI Office.

The final **deadline for electronic submissions** is **28 April 2022, 16:00 CET** (at which time the electronic system will close).

Point "H" of this Call lists the documents required to be submitted to the NRDI Office **by regular mail or electronically provided with electronic signatures** as follows.

In case of submission by regular mail: the documents to be sent by regular mail must be submitted by 4 May 2022 at the latest, in one copy, with original signatures and stamp, in a sealed package, separately from all other proposal documents and other materials, by registered mail or by time-guaranteed postal services within the meaning of Act CLIX of 2012 on postal services (i.e. by express postal service or courier service), so that the NRDI Office can clearly ascertain, on the basis of the information on the package, that the applicant has delivered the package to the delivery service within the time limit specified in this Call.

In the case of regular mail, the submission is successful if the proposal was finalised electronically by the Principal Investigator and approved by the head of the Host Institution by the deadline for electronic submission, and if the documents required in Point "H" of the Call to be submitted by regular mail were sent to the Customer Service of the NRDI Office postmarked no later than 4 May 2022.

In the case of electronic submission of e-signed documents: Pursuant to Act CCXXII of 2015 on the general rules of electronic administration and trust services, the NRDI Office makes it possible for applicants to **submit their proposals exclusively electronically**. In this case, the documents required in Point "H" of the call to be submitted by regular mail/with electronic signature must be signed electronically as specified in Point "H" and attached to the proposal in the EPR system by the deadline for electronic submission, that is, by 28 April 2022 at 16:00 (CET).

In the case of electronic submission, the submission is successful if the proposal was finalised electronically by the Principal Investigator and approved by the head of the Host Institution by the deadline for electronic submission, and if the electronically signed versions of the documents required in Point "H" of the call to be submitted by regular mail/with electronic signature were submitted through the EPR system.

Please note that all documents required to be submitted by regular mail/with electronic signature must be submitted in the same way; that is, all documents must be submitted to the NRDI Office either only by regular mail or only electronically provided with electronic signature.

Please note that proposals that are in "*edited*" or "*finalised*" status at the deadline will not be considered as submitted without institutional approval and will be automatically rejected.

E.1.2. Place of submission

If the specified documents are submitted by regular mail, they must be sent to the postal address of the NRDI Office's Customer Service:

**National Research, Development and Innovation Office
1077 Budapest, Kéthly Anna tér 1. 2nd floor, Hungary**

1077 Budapest, Kéthly Anna tér 1. / Mailing address: 1438 Budapest, Pf. 438

Email: nkfialap@nkfih.gov.hu / www.nkfih.gov.hu / Phone: +36 1 795 9500



Please note that proposals cannot be submitted in person.

On the package to be submitted please clearly indicate the code of the Call (KKP_22) and the 6-digit proposal identifier given by the EPR system:

KKP_22 - <proposal identifier>

E.2. Contact details of the NRDI Office's Customer Service

For the terms and conditions of participation and other information, please visit the official website of the NRDI Office (<http://nkfih.gov.hu/>), or contact the NRDI Office's Customer Service in email or by phone:

E-mail: nkfialap@nkfih.gov.hu

Phone: +36 (1) 795 9500

Opening hours: Mon–Thu 09:00-16:00; Fri 09:00–12:00

E.3. Project selection

Project selection includes all proposal management steps from the receipt of the proposal to the notification of the final decision.

E.3.1. Assessment against the admission criteria, admission, deficiency procedure

The Managing Body will issue a statement of admission of the proposal within 7 days of the date of receipt of the proposal by post, or reject it without substantive examination. The notification of a rejection without substantive examination will include the reason for the rejection and the possibility and method of lodging an objection.

If an applicant submits an incorrect or incomplete proposal and this Call allows for a deficiency procedure, the NRDI Office will call on the applicant on one occasion to remedy deficiencies, with a deadline of 8 days. If the response to such notice of deficiency is also deficient or incomplete, or the applicant fails to remedy the deficiencies within the set deadline, the proposal will be assessed in such deficient, incomplete state. Please note that if the information necessary to assess the eligibility of the project is not fully available after completion of the deficiency procedure, the evaluator may recommend the project for rejection.

The deficiency procedure is not available, so the proposal will be rejected without substantive examination, in the following cases (non-compliance with the admission criteria):

- the proposal was not submitted in the NRDI Office's EPR system by the deadline specified in the Call;
- the requested amount of public funding exceeds the maximum indicated in the Call, either in total or for any work phase;
- the applicant is not an eligible applicant as defined in the Call.



E.3.2. Assessment against the formal criteria

The NRDI Office formally checks the proposals received. **The proposal will be rejected without professional evaluation on formal grounds for the following reasons (in these cases, the deficiency procedure is not available):**

- the applicant has submitted more than one proposals in the Forefront – Research Excellence Programme in the given round as Principal Investigator;
- the Principal Investigator does not meet the requirements listed in Point B.1.2;
- the proposal is not in English;
- no detailed research plan or work plan has been uploaded to the EPR system;
- the proposal contains false information substantially affecting the assessment;
- the e-signed statement (in the case of electronic submission) or the signed paper statement (in the case of submission by regular mail) of the Host Institution is missing;
- in the case of submission by regular mail, the documents listed in Point “H” and submitted by regular mail do not match the e-documents submitted over the EPR;
- the applicant is excluded on any of the grounds specified by law or in the Call at the time the proposal is submitted.

The detailed research plan and work plan uploaded to the EPR system cannot be changed; the proposal will be assessed on the basis of the originally submitted documents.

E.3.3. Substantive evaluation

Only proposals that are admitted and formally accepted are subject to a substantive evaluation, which is carried out by a review panel appointed by the NRDI Office in accordance with the RDI Act. The panel appointed by the NRDI Office will assess and rank the project proposals against the selection criteria set out in the Call, and will select the most promising proposals for presentation in a personal interview. Following the presentations, the review panel ranks the proposals based on their review scores and makes a recommendation to the minister responsible for science policy coordination on the funding of each proposal. The funding decision is taken by the minister responsible for science policy coordination.

Proposals will be assessed on the basis of the following main criteria:

- the scientific relevance of the proposal, the justification, novelty and expected results of the project, and the scientific and social utility of the results;
- the Principal Investigator’s professional qualities, scientific and research achievements as measured by the number and quality of scientific publications and their international impact; 5 publications in the last 5 years, and 5 additional publications in the last 10 years linked to the proposal;
- the infrastructural and methodological conditions provided by the Host Institution for the implementation of high-quality research work;
- the credibility and consistency of the submitted research plan, work plan, budget plan, expected results and time commitment.



E.3.4. The decision

The funding decision is expected to be taken by the minister responsible for science policy coordination by 30 June 2022. The outcome of the decision can be:

- funding is awarded with unchanged content and conditions;
- funding is awarded with a reduced amount of support;
- funding is rejected due to lack of funds;
- funding is rejected for professional reasons.

If the funding is awarded, the NRDI Office will publish on its website the name of the beneficiary Host Institution, the name of the Principal Investigator, the project identifier, the project subject, the amount of the funding awarded, the place of implementation, the date of the decision and the short project description contained in the proposal form.

The NRDI Office will inform the applicant of the decision in writing within a maximum of 10 days. Such information will include the deadline for the conclusion of the funding agreement in the case of a successful project proposal; the reasons for the decision in the case of a proposal awarded with a reduced amount and for a rejected proposal, as well as the possibility and method of lodging an objection.

Applicants can view the expert reviews in the EPR system from the date indicated in the notification of the decision, while respecting the anonymity of the experts. The anonymous expert reviews are subject to the applicants' right of access only and may not be disclosed to third parties.

E.4. Complaints handling

The applicant or, in the case of a supported project, the Beneficiary may lodge an objection with the NRDI Office pursuant to Section 102/D (1) of the Ávr., if the proposal management procedure or the procedure to prepare the funding decision, the conclusion of the funding agreement, the payment or recovery of the public funding is in violation of the law or the call for proposals or the funding agreement. **On the basis of the above, the NRDI Office will not examine the merits of any objection to the scientific evaluation of the proposal.**

The objection may be submitted in writing within 10 days of the receipt of the decision of the NRDI Office, taking into account the formal and substantive requirements of Section 102/D (4) of the Ávt. No excuse shall be allowed for missing the deadline for objections.

How to lodge an objection:

The objection may be submitted **by regular mail** to

**National Research, Development and Innovation Office
1077 Budapest, Kéthly Anna tér 1. 2nd floor, Customer Service**

or **in person**, in a sealed envelope, quoting the proposal identifier and the word “objection,” at the 2nd floor Customer Service Desk of the NRDI Office at the above address, **during office hours only**.



The objection can also be submitted via the [e-paper](https://epapir.gov.hu/) service (<https://epapir.gov.hu/>).

No objection may be lodged after 30 days from the objected action or omission.

Objections must include the following:

- a) name, seat/residence of the objector; name of the representative if the objector is not a private individual;
- b) identification data of the proposal or funding agreement affected by the objection;
- c) description of the objected action or omission;
- d) facts supporting the objection, and exact reference to the legislative provision breached by the objected action or omission; and
- e) in the case of non-electronic communication, the signature of the objector.

The NRDI Office, if it agrees with the objection, will take the necessary measures to remedy the situation complained of in the objection or forward the objection to the Ministry for Innovation and Technology.

The Ministry for Innovation and Technology will adopt a decision on the merits of the objection within 30 days of receipt. The time limit for the examination may be extended once by a maximum of 30 days, subject to prior information of the objector. The NRDI Office notifies the objector in writing of the decision made in the matter of the objection. If the objection is well-founded, the Ministry for Innovation and Technology shall take action to remedy the objected situation; otherwise it shall reject the objection. In either case, it shall notify the objector about the decision in writing, and shall provide reasons for rejection (if the objection was rejected).

No further objections may be filed or other legal remedies be sought against the decision made in the matter of the objection.

For any queries, please contact the NRDI Office's Customer Service at the contact details described in Point E.2.

E.5. Funding agreements

E.5.1. *Conditions for the conclusion of the funding agreement*

Following the notification of the decision, an **agreement offer** will be sent in the case of a successful proposal.

The NRDI Office will set a deadline for the conclusion of the agreement in the notification of the decision. If the Beneficiary misses this deadline, the NRDI Office will proceed in accordance with Article 73 (2) of the Ávr.

If the research activity carried out during the project is subject to an official authorisation by law, it is the joint responsibility of the Principal Investigator and the Host Institution to obtain all necessary authorisations before the start of the research phase requiring authorisation. The Principal Investigator and the Host Institution shall declare in the funding request (proposal) that, if the implementation of the funded activity is subject to an official authorisation, the necessary official authorisations will be sent to the NRDI Office at the latest at the same time as the report on the relevant work phase. The existence of the necessary authorisations is checked by the Managing Body within the context of the report on the implementation of the funded activity.



E.5.2. Amendment of the funding agreement

The Beneficiary or the NRDI Office may initiate a written amendment to the funding agreement, the rules for which are set out in the funding agreement.

The funding agreement may be amended only if the funded activity remains eligible with the amended conditions. The amendment must not aim to change the original purpose of the funded activity.

F. MONITORING

The monitoring and evaluation of the funded project will be carried out on the basis of the submitted report by an evaluation panel appointed by the NRDI Office.

F.1. Rules of scientific and financial reporting

The Beneficiary shall submit a detailed scientific and financial report (hereinafter collectively: report) after each work section to the NRDI Office about the progress of the project. The Managing Body may also request the beneficiary to present a partial report or the closing report in the framework of a conference. **As a requirement for the acceptance of the second scientific annual report, the achieved project results must also be presented in person. The approval of the third scientific report is based on the mandatory ERC proposal.**

The report should describe in detail the implementation of the R&D activities undertaken in the research and budget plan of the project and the results achieved.

Reports will be assessed according to the criteria set out in Annex 2 of Government Decree 433/2016 (XII. 15.) on the detailed rules of evaluation of the research, development and innovation programs and projects funded by the National Research, Development and Innovation Office from the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund.

F.2. Financial reporting and financing process

The Beneficiary must keep separate accounting records of the project costs, in accordance with the applicable legislation (e.g. the Accounting Act). The expenditure of the project must be accounted for in accordance with the budget plan annexed to the funding agreement.

Only the costs specified in the Call, the funding agreement and its annexes are eligible. The financial reports must be consistent with the performance described in the scientific report.

Missing the reporting deadline specified in the funding agreement, or in the case of inadequate reporting, the NRDI Office will suspend payment of the funding until the beneficiary has complied with its obligations, unless other legal consequences apply under the relevant legislation or the funding agreement.

Any disbursement for the next work section(s) shall be subject to the NRDI Office's prior acceptance and approval of the scientific and financial report.



F.3. On-site inspection

The implementation of the project, the legitimacy of the funding request and the use of the public funding may be inspected by the bodies authorized by law and the funding agreement from the date of submission of the proposal until 5 years after the date of approval of the final report by the NRDI Office. The professional feasibility of the project as set out in the proposal, the implementation of the professional tasks of the funded project, as well as the professional progress of the project may also be inspected on site.

The findings of on-site inspections shall be recorded in an on-site audit report. Such reports shall be signed by the auditors involved and the authorised representatives of the beneficiary. The applicant/beneficiary shall provide the auditors and other participants involved in the on-site inspection with all information and assistance required for the audit.

The Beneficiary shall keep and use the funding paid by the Managing Body separately in its financial and accounting records, and shall keep separate records of the proposal documents. **The Beneficiary is obliged to keep the documents and records related to the funding for 10 years from the date of approval of the final report of the project by the NRDI Office.**

F.4. Sanctions for breach of the funding agreement

Breach of the funding agreement may be sanctioned by:

- a) suspension of the payment of the funding;
- b) partial repayment of the funding, proportionate to the violation of law, breach of agreement or improper use of funds;
- c) withdrawal from the funding agreement;
- d) termination of the funding agreement.

The cases and rules for suspension of the funding, partial repayment of the funding, withdrawal from the funding agreement and termination of the funding agreement (including interest on the amount to be repaid and the method of calculating it) are set out in the funding agreement, the Áht. and the Ávr.

F.5. Disclosure, control and publicity of data

The NRDI Office shall transfer to the monitoring system of the Hungarian State Treasury the data related to the proposal and funding agreement pursuant to Section 56/C (1) of the Áht. for publication on the website established for this purpose.

In accordance with Section 52 of Government Decree No. 380/2014 (XII. 31.) on the rules for the operation and use of the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund and the Cooperation Agreement between the NRDI Office and the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, the NRDI Office shall provide the Hungarian Central Statistical Office with data on the organisations to which payments from the NRDI Fund have been made in the given year.

The NRDI Office shall process personal data stated in the proposals and learned during the assessment process and in relation to funded projects in compliance with the provisions of the relevant regulations, including in particular Act CXII of 2011 on informational self-determination and the freedom of information, and Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and



of the Council on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (hereinafter: General Data Protection Regulation or GDPR). All relevant information can be found on the NRDI Office's website and attached to the "Statements" annex to be submitted with the proposal. The rules of processing the documents and data submitted by the application or the beneficiary during the application and contracting procedure or generated by the NRDI Office in this respect, in compliance with the freedom of information and the principle of due process, are set out in Instruction No. 11/2019 of the President of the NRDI Office (<http://nkfih.gov.hu>).

G. MATTERS NOT COVERED IN THE CALL

Other matters not covered in this Call are governed in particular by the following laws:

- a) Act LXXVI of 2014 on scientific research, development and innovation;
- b) Act CXCV of 2011 on public finances;
- c) Act C of 2000 on accounting;
- d) Act CXLIII of 2015 on public procurement;
- e) Government Decree 380/2014 (XII. 31.) on the rules of operation and use of the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund;
- f) Government Decree 433/2016 (XII. 15.) on the detailed rules for the evaluation of research, development and innovation programmes and projects financed by the National Research, Development and Innovation Office from the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund;
- g) Government Decree 368/2011 (XII. 31.) on the implementation of the Public Finance Act;
- h) Government Decree 344/2019 (XII. 23.) on the National Research, Development and Innovation Office and on the designation of the managing body of the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund.



H. LIST OF DOCUMENTS TO BE ATTACHED TO THE ELECTRONIC PROPOSAL IN PDF FORM OR TO BE SUBMITTED BY REGULAR MAIL/WITH ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE

Description of the document to be attached to the electronic proposal	Document to be submitted by regular mail/with electronic signature	Method of electronic signature
Proof that one of the conditions in paragraphs a), b), c) and d) of Point B.1.2. is met (EPR: "Proposal details / Attachments")	No	
Summary of the most important results of the project closed/planned to be closed, for proving conditions in paragraphs a) or d) of Point B.1.2. (EPR: "Proposal details / Attachments")	No	
Summary and official assessment of the ERC proposal for proving the condition in paragraphs b) or c) of Point B.1.2. (EPR: "Proposal details / Attachments")	No	
Summary of professional achievements 1-7) in the past ten years listed in Point B.1.2. of this call, in a single PDF document (EPR: "Proposal details / Attachments")	No	
Detailed research plan (EPR: "Proposal details / Research plan")	No	
The applicant researcher's list of publications and citations (unless provided from the MTMT database) (EPR: "Proposal details / Upload publ. list")	No	
Other scientific achievements of the researcher (EPR: "Proposal details / Other achievements")	No	
Declaration on International Cooperation (where relevant) (EPR: "Proposal details / International cooperation")	No	
CV and list of publications of important non-senior members of the research team, if any (EPR: "Proposal details / Attachments")	No	
Copy of PhD/DLA diploma or certificate of Doctor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences/Doctor of Sciences title of the Principal Investigator (EPR: "Personal details / Curriculum vitae / Degree")	No	



Statements by the applicant Host Institution and the Principal Investigator (EPR: "Proposal details / Attachments")	Yes	For the Host Institution: qualified electronic signature ⁸ and time stamp; For the Principal Investigator: at least an advanced security e-signature and time stamp
Transparency statement by the applicant Host Institution, except for organisations deemed to be transparent by operation of law (EPR: "Proposal details / Attachments")	Yes	Qualified electronic signature ⁸ and time stamp
Data management plan, if research data are expected to be generated during the implementation of the project (EPR: "Proposal details / Attachments")	No	

I. ANNEXES TO THE CALL

The call documents, including annexes, are available at <http://nkfi.gov.hu> .

- I. Guidelines for Applicants to the Forefront – Research Excellence Programme (part of the call documents)
- II. Data sheet on the applicant's professional achievements demonstrating international embeddedness
- III. Declarations (from the applicant Host Institution and the Principal Investigator)
- IV. Transparency statement (and completion instructions)
- V. Template for data management plan

⁸ Or advanced security e-signature based on qualified certificate.