



NATIONAL RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION OFFICE

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

**FOR POSTDOCTORAL EXCELLENCE
PROGRAM PROPOSALS**

CODE: PD_16

MARCH 16, 2016



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A. PURPOSE OF SUPPORT

In accordance with Law LXXVI of 2014 on scientific research, development, and innovation, the National Research, Development and Innovation Office (Nemzeti Kutatási, Fejlesztési és Innovációs Hivatal – henceforth: NKFI Office) launches a call for proposals for excellent young researchers with scientific degree to support research projects in the best Hungarian host institutions during the period 2016–2019 from the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund (Nemzeti Kutatási, Fejlesztési és Innovációs Alap – henceforth: NKFI Fund).

A.1. Purpose of the call for proposals

The call intends to contribute to the development of talented young researchers and excellent scientists in Hungary by supporting their research projects, increasing the international recognition of researchers and research institutions in Hungary. The most important purpose of the call for proposals is to develop and maintain a reliable postdoctoral system in Hungary and to strengthen the creativity and excellence of researchers. It encourages researcher-initiated and promising basic research projects that generally provide a better understanding of different natural and social phenomena and increase the knowledge base of mankind. The young researchers (henceforth: postdoctoral researchers) supported within the proposal scheme will be the researcher base in Hungary with a potential to conduct excellent scientific research later and produce results that sustain and define the future of research and development based on excellence and competitiveness, elaborating new methods and procedures.

Regarding the development of the postdoctoral researchers, the research environment where they spend the early years of their research career and the person entrusted to assist them in coping with the initial difficulties after the doctoral training play a primary role. In some scientific fields, this process of mentoring is indispensable for successful independence later on; in other scientific fields, however, researchers conduct independent research at an early stage of their career. The present call for proposals intends to support integration to a research group providing advancement with regards to the research field of the postdoctoral researchers and their research careers as well as to support independent research.

Within the postdoctoral proposals, discovery research of any scientific discipline can be carried out with no thematic restriction if the postdoctoral researcher and the proposal meet the requirements of the call.

A.2. Available funding

The source of support is Chapter LXII of Law C of 2015 on the central budget of Hungary in 2016: NKFI Fund – article 1: Support of Hungarian innovation.

Pretense of support: Law LXXVI of 2014 on scientific research, development, and innovation (henceforth: KFI law) 28. § paragraph (1), point i).

In order to reach the goals of the call, the NKFI Office **intends to secure a total amount of HUF 1,8 billion for the period 2016–2019 from the NKFI Fund with reference to the program strategy of the NKFI Fund**; the amount available for the disbursements in 2016 is HUF 0,8 billion.



A.3. Expected number of supported proposals

The expected number of supported proposals is 118.

A.4. Language of proposals

Regardless of the discipline, the proposals have to be submitted in English. In certain proposal types, a proposal can be exempt from submission in English and submitted in Hungarian on the basis of a permission from the NKFI Office issued in response of a request from the applicant justifying why the research proposal can only be evaluated appropriately by Hungarian reviewers. The request and the justification have to be submitted electronically to the vice-president for research and development of the NKFI Office prior to the start of editing the proposal but not later than March 30, 2016. The chair of the respective scientific council can grant permission to submit the proposal in Hungarian. A proposal submitted in Hungarian without advance permission will not be evaluated.

B. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

B.1. Legal form, seat, and other conditions

Eligible host institutions **with a seat and legal personality in Hungary** include the following:

- institutions of higher education, research centers, research institutions, budgetary organizations, institutions of budgetary organizations with a legal personality if they qualify as research institutions according to the KFI law;
- non-profit organizations if their main activity is related to research and development.

Eligible host institutions **and postdoctoral researchers can jointly apply** if they fulfill the criteria below.

Upon the funding decision, during the period of the project, the legal relation between the host institution and the postdoctoral researcher has to meet the following criteria:

- during the period of the project, a postdoctoral researcher has to be employed full-time, as a public servant or in other employee status by the host institution.

Other requirements for the postdoctoral researcher:

At the time of submitting the proposal, the postdoctoral researcher has to have a PhD degree (with nostrification in case of non-EU countries) and to be affiliated with a host institution in Hungary. Transborder Hungarian researchers are eligible to submit a postdoctoral proposal if they are registered with a host institution in Hungary. **Support can be granted to postdoctoral researchers only if the date on their doctoral (PhD/DLA) diploma is later than January 1, 2008.** If the postdoctoral researcher does not yet possess a doctoral diploma at the time of submitting the proposal but the positive decision of the doctoral council of the university has already been made, this has to be documented officially. **Only those researchers are eligible to**



submit a proposal who will not reach 40 years of age until October 1, 2016. The age limit can be raised with the length of time spent on maternity leave or full-time child rearing (maximum 5 years). The postdoctoral researchers have to devote 70% of their time (researcher full-time equivalent: FTE=0,7) to the completion of the duties defined in the proposal. At the same time, the FTE indicated is identical with 100% of the postdoctoral researcher's time to be devoted to the research project.

One postdoctoral researcher can submit only one proposal in the present call. At the time of submitting the proposal and in case of a granted project, during the PD₁₆ support period, the postdoctoral researcher can be

- a principal investigator or participant researcher in a thematic research project (previous OTKA-K/NK/NF/NN/ANN/SNN projects and proposal K₁₆) if the thematic research proposal and the postdoctoral proposal overlap in terms of their subject; and
- a principal investigator of a postdoctoral research project providing support exclusively for research (previous OTKA PD-1 type) if the PD-1 project and the PD₁₆ project overlap in terms of their subject.

In case the grantee of a postdoctoral proposal is a principal investigator or participant researcher in a thematic research project at the same time or a principal investigator of a postdoctoral research project providing support exclusively for research, FTE is only considered according to the FTE indicated in the present postdoctoral proposal.

The research program in an annual breakdown, the budget, the outline of the expected results, and the description of the activity of the postdoctoral researcher to date have to be attached to the proposal. In their proposal, applying postdoctoral researchers have to declare all their current funding and other ongoing grants. From this year on, the call for proposals for postdoctoral projects provides funding only for the salary of the supported postdoctoral researcher; therefore, in this year, postdoctoral researchers can apply for and receive independent research support only in the K₁₆ call for thematic research proposals and the NN₁₆ call for basic research proposals in international cooperation, to be launched later.

B.2. Grounds for exclusion and administrative conditions

B.2.1. Legal subjects excluded from the call

The following legal subjects cannot submit a proposal and cannot receive support:

- a) without appropriate employment status according to 82. § of Gov. decree 368/2011. (XII. 31.) on the execution of the law on the central budget of Hungary;
- b) without fulfilling the obligations to disclosure according to the law on the economic activity of companies of public property;
- c) not qualifying as a transparent organization;
- d) with an ongoing legal process ordered by a legally binding warrant of liquidation, insolvency, or any other process of dissolution;
- e) with a conflict of interest according to 48/B. § (1) paragraph of Law CXCV of 2011 on the central budget of Hungary (henceforth: Áht.);
- f) with a dismissing court judgment, legally binding within three years of submitting the proposal, regarding the use of support from the NKFI Fund;
- g) with a proposal to carry out a research project outside Hungary.



B.2.2. *Further information on grounds for exclusion*

If changes take place regarding the data, the circumstances concerning grounds for exclusion, and the legal status of the applicant after the submission of the proposal (e.g., liquidation, insolvency, dissolution, or other legal process take place) and if any event inhibits the completion of the project, the administrator of the call has to be notified immediately.

B.3. Territorial limits of the project

The research tasks of the project have to be carried out in a host institution with a seat in Hungary.

C. CONTENT OF THE PROPOSAL

C.1. Scope of supported activities

Full completion of the activities included in the research and work plan of the postdoctoral proposal submitted to the NKFI Office.

C.2. Scope of expenses to be accounted

Apart from the salary to be paid to the postdoctoral researcher, no expenses can be accounted.

C.2.1. *Costs to be accounted as operation costs of the project*

a) Personnel costs

Direct (salary, contract salary – henceforth: salary) and **indirect personnel costs** of the postdoctoral researcher can be accounted. **The monthly gross salary is HUF 330 000 plus indirect personnel costs.** In the PD_16 proposal, only and exactly the above sum can be planned. **Within the present call, only full-time postdoctoral employment can be fulfilled; the grantee cannot receive any other regular personal allowance apart from the support provided by the PD_16 project (except for the Bolyai postdoctoral fellowship, danger money paid by the employee, cafeteria, and transport allowance).**

C.3. Scope of expenses not to be accounted

In the project, only the costs defined in point C.2.1. can be accounted, with the following restrictions.

C.3.1. *Expenses not to be accounted in the project include*

- a. irregular salary and its indirect costs (13th month salary, premium, maternity benefits, leave redemption),
- b. other personnel costs (especially insurance, dress allowance, transport allowance),
- c. taxes paid on allowances that are not covered from the support,
- d. allowance for professional training.



C.4. Duration of the project

In the present call for proposals, the duration of the project is maximum 36 months.

C.5. Start of the project

Projects have to start between October 1, 2016, and December 31, 2016.

C.6. Actual conclusion of the project, final deadline and closing of the financial report

C.6.1. Actual conclusion of the project

The project can be considered concluded if the supported activity is completed according to the terms of the support contract. Actual conclusion of the project has to take place at the end of the 36th month from its start. It is possible to postpone the actual conclusion of the project with 12 months through a revision of the contract (in case of childbirth and permanent illness).

C.6.2. Final deadline of the financial report

The final deadline of submitting the financial report on the project (closing disbursement request) and the final scientific report is the 30th day from the day of project conclusion specified in the contract.

C.6.3. Conclusion of the project

The project can be considered concluded if its actual conclusion takes place, the scientific and financial reports submitted by the beneficiary are approved by the NKFI Office, disbursement of the support takes place in proportion to the documented use of the support, and if the beneficiary has no further outstanding liability for the period after the conclusion.

C.7. Research plan and budget

The postdoctoral researcher has to submit a brief (maximum 3 pages) research plan, a work plan defining the stages of the research. The research plan has to present the type of research to be conducted in the duration of the present project, the timing, and the extent how far the project proceeds in the research. It has to present briefly the background of the research, the hypothesis to be tested, and the goals of the proposed research. Please justify the steps and processes of the research.

The research plan has to elaborate on the leader of the host research group, if applicable, playing a decisive role in advising the postdoctoral researcher, the relationship with the project carried out by the research group, and the professional background of the host institution. As the support does not include material and consumable costs, it is essential to present the infrastructure provided by the institution to the project and the research funding opportunities available for the research group – these guarantee the financial, infrastructural, and professional background of the proposed research.



D. FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

D.1. Form of support

The form of support: definite allowance with no return obligation (henceforth: support not to be returned).

D.2. Amount and extent of support

In the present call for proposals, **a maximum of HUF 15 265 800 can be requested for a maximum of 36 months per project. The maximal intensity of the support is 100%, that is, completion of the projects does not require own sources.**

D.3. Scope of securities

The beneficiary does not have to provide securities within the project submitted in this call.

D.4. Timing of support, advance payment

Completion of the project can be planned in periods of 12 months (work stages). **The support amounts planned for work stages are processed as advance payments in 100%.**

The NKFI Office transfers the support amount planned for the first work stage as advance payment to the bank account specified in the support contract after the issue of the contract and before the deadline defined in the contract. The amount of the advance payments planned for the following work stages can only be transferred after the conclusion of the preceding work stage, the submission of its scientific and financial report (interim report), and its approval by the NKFI Office.

Transfer of the support takes place in HUF exclusively.

E. HANDLING OF PROPOSALS

E.1. Method, place, and deadline of proposal submission

E.1.1. *Method of proposal submission*

Proposals have to be submitted through the Electronic Proposal Review (EPR) System of the NKFI Office. Its description constitutes an appendix to the call for proposals. Submitted proposals also have to be sent in printed hard copy with signatures and seal to the NKFI Office.

Proposal review takes place on the basis of the electronic proposal documents.

The electronic version can be submitted in line with the procedure published on the homepage of the NKFI Office, with user name and password received from the NKFI Office. The final deadline of the electronic submission, valid only after approval by the host institution, is **April 18, 2016**. Deadline is set at 17:00 (Central European time) on the given day when the electronic system



stops receiving proposals.

The printed hard copy with original signatures, separately from any other material, has to be sent as registered mail with a stamp of no later than **April 25, 2016**. Submission in person is not possible!

Proposals that are submitted electronically without finalization by the researcher or approval by the host institution, mailed after the deadline, or formally ineligible are not evaluated. A proposal without a printed version received cannot be evaluated.

A proposal can be considered submitted if:

- the electronic proposal is finalized by the researcher and approved by the person in charge of the host institution;
- the printed proposal is received by the NKFI Office.

E.1.2. *Place of proposal submission*

Proposals have to reach the customer service of the NKFI Office:

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

The mailed material has to bear the code of the proposal found on the front page of the call (PD_16) and the six-digit number assigned by the EPR system.

<PD_16 >-<proposal number>

E.1.3. *Deadline of proposal submission*

Electronic submission of the proposals is possible until April 18, 2016, the latest.

E.2. NKFI customer service and contact information

Information on the calls of the NKFI Fund, proposal submission, support contracts and their revision is available through the proposal customer service of the NKFI Office.

E-mail address of the customer service of the NKFI Office: nkfialap@nkfi.gov.hu

Phone number of the NKFI customer service:

+36 (1) 795 9500

Office hours of the personal and phone customer service:

M-Th 09:00–16:00

F 09:00–13:00

Any official communication with the NKFI Fund, submission on documentation regarding proposals, contracts, revision of contracts, financial reports (requests for disbursement, scientific reports) is possible at the address of correspondence of the NKFI Office.

Address of correspondence of the NKFI Office:

**National Research, Development and Innovation Office
1077 Budapest, Kéthly Anna tér 1.**



By requesting service from the customer service of the NKFI Office, customers accept the rules of administration of the customer service, available at the homepage of the NKFI Office: <http://nkfi.gov.hu/>

E.3. Process of selection of projects

The process of selection of projects includes the steps of handling the proposals from their submission to notification on the final decision.

E.3.1. Check of eligibility criteria, submission, completion of documents

The funder provides an acknowledgment of the proposal submission to the applicant before the 7th day after the electronic submission of the proposal or rejects the proposal with no substantive evaluation. Notification on rejection with no substantive evaluation contains the reason for rejection and the options of filing a complaint.

If the applicant submits an inaccurate or defective proposal, the present call for proposals provides the opportunity to one round of completion of documents in 8 days within the notice of the NKFI Office. If the applicant provides an inaccurate or defective completion of documents or the defects are not improved before the deadline defined in the notice, the inaccurate or defective proposal is evaluated.

Please be advised that, if the necessary information to comprehensively evaluate the feasibility of the proposal is not available after the completion of documents, the expert can suggest the rejection of the proposal.

Completion of documents is not possible and the proposal is automatically rejected in the following cases:

- the proposal is not submitted by the deadline defined in the call for proposals,
- the amount of the requested budget support exceeds the maximum amount defined in the call for proposals,
- the applicant is outside the scope of the potential beneficiaries defined in the call for proposals.

E.3.2. Eligibility check

The NKFI Office conducts a formal eligibility check on the submitted proposals. **The proposal is rejected on formal grounds without further scientific evaluation in the following cases** (with no possibility of completion of documents):

1. The postdoctoral researcher submits more than one PD_16 proposals in the given call.
2. Finalization by the researcher and approval by the host institution are not performed by the submission deadline.
3. The language of the proposal is not English and the applicant has no permission to submit the proposal in Hungarian.
4. The proposal contains false information that substantially influences the evaluation.



E.3.3. *Process of substantive evaluation*

Only submitted and formally checked proposals are evaluated substantively; evaluation is carried out by the scientific councils appointed by the NKFI Office (henceforth: Councils). Based on the recommendations by the Councils, the review panels appointed by the NKFI Office evaluate each proposal against the selection criteria of the call. Based on the evaluation results and the rankings by the review panels, the Councils recommend proposals to be funded to the president of the NKFI Office. Funding decision is made by the president of the NKFI Office.

Evaluation of the submitted proposals is carried out against the following major criteria:

- scientific significance of the proposed project, justification, novelty, expected results of the project, scientific and social impact of the results;
- scientific quality of the postdoctoral researcher, scientific and research achievements to date;
- infrastructural and methodological conditions provided by the host institution, including the research group to host the postdoctoral researcher, for the completion of the research project;
- scientific achievements of the leader of the hosting research group (if applicable);
- feasibility and harmony of the research plan, work plan, expected results, and FTE.

E.3.4. *Decision*

Based on the recommendations of the Councils, the funding decision is made by the president of the NKFI Office by August 31, 2016, the latest.

In case of a funding decision, the administrator of the call publishes the name of the beneficiary host institution, the name of the postdoctoral researcher, the number and the subject of the project, the amount of support, the date of the decision, and the summary of the project in the proposal form on the homepage of the NKFI Office.

The NKFI Office notifies the applicant and the person in charge of the host institution about the funding decision in writing within a maximum of 10 days. Notification about the decision contains the deadline established for issuing the support contract (maximum 30 days), the reasons for budget cut or rejection, as well as the ways of filing a complaint.

The applicants have access to the evaluation of the anonymous external reviewers in the EPR system.

E.4. Handling of complaints

The applicant and, in the case of a supported project, the beneficiary can file a complaint with the NKFI Office according to 102/D. § of Gov. decree 368/2011. (XII. 31.) on the execution of the law on the central budget of Hungary (henceforth: Ávr.) if the procedures regarding the proposal submission, the decision-making process, the issue of the contract, and the transfer or refund of the budget support appear to contradict the law, the call for proposals, or the support contract. Given the above, complaints regarding scientific matters are not dealt with, the NKFI Office does not treat these substantively.



A complaint can be submitted in writing to the address of correspondence of the NKFI Office within the deadline indicated in the notification; if no such deadline is given, within 10 days of becoming aware of the objected measure or omission. Beyond 30 days of the objected measure or omission, submission of a complaint is not possible.

A complaint has to include the following:

- a) the name, seat or address of the complainant, the name of the representative of a non-natural person;
- b) the data necessary to identify the proposal or support contract concerned in the complaint;
- c) description of the objected measure or omission;
- d) exact specification of the facts providing the basis of the complaint and the legal provisions violated by the objected measure and omission;
- e) in case of non-electronic communication, the signature of the complainant.

The NKFI Office considers substantively the submitted complaint within 30 days of receipt or, in the cases defined in 102/D. § (5) of the Ávr., rejects the complaint without substantive consideration. The deadline of the consideration can be extended once for a maximum of 30 days with advance notification sent to the complainant. The NKFI Office notifies in writing the complainant about the decision made regarding the subject of the complaint.

Proposing a remedy or further legal redress against the decision made regarding the subject of the complaint is not possible.

E.5. Support contract

E.5.1. *Conditions of the support contract*

In case of a supported proposal, notification about the decision is accompanied by a **contract offer**.

The NKFI Office establishes a deadline of maximum 30 days within the notification about the decision to issue the contract. If the beneficiary misses the deadline, the NKFI Office acts according to 73. § (2) of the Ávr.

If the research activity to be carried out during the project is bound to permission, the permission has to be attached to the contract. If a permission can be obtained after the completion of a given stage of the supported activity, the beneficiary only has to declare the availability of permissions necessary to start the supported activity; the funder controls the availability of further permissions within the context of the report on the completion of the supported activity.

E.5.2. *Revision of the support contract*

The beneficiary or the NKFI Office can initiate a revision of the support contract in writing; the support contract contains the relevant regulations.

Please be advised that the support contract can only be revised if the supported activity would be eligible to be funded in the revised conditions. Revision of the contract cannot aim at diverting the original purpose of the supported activity.



The beneficiary has to submit a request to revise the contract with appropriate justification to the address of correspondence of the NKFI Office.

F. MONITORING

Monitoring and evaluation of the supported project take place on the basis of the submitted report, with the contribution of the Councils and the review panels.

F.1. Scientific report

The beneficiary has to submit a detailed scientific and financial report at the end of every work stage on the completion of the project through the EPR system to the NKFI Office. The principal investigator and the host institution are jointly responsible for submitting the scientific and financial reports on the project on time and according to protocol. A report is complete if the scientific report designed according to protocol and provided with the appropriate supplementary documents and appendices as well as the financial report forms and their additional documents are completed, submitted, and approved by the NKFI Office according to the regulations defined in the support contract.

The scientific report has to give a detailed description on the progress and the achieved results of the research and development activity proposed in the research plan and budget of the project.

F.2. Process of financial reporting and financing

Only the costs defined in the present call for proposals can be charged to the support.

The beneficiary has to keep a record of public accountancy separately from the project costs according to the relevant regulations (e.g., law on public accountancy). The method of financial reporting is defined in the support contract. The table of the report has to be signed by the postdoctoral researcher and the person in charge of the finances of the institution, and subsequently mailed to the NKFI Office.

In case of failure to submit the report by the deadline defined in the contract or improper submission of the report, the NKFI Office suspends the transfer of the support until the beneficiary fulfills this obligation.

F.3. Site audits

The completion of the project, the legitimacy of the request of support, and the use of the support provided from the budget can be controlled by the authorities defined in the law and the support contract from the submission of the proposal until 5 years after the approval of the closing report by the NKFI Office. During a site audit, site audit minutes are kept. Site audit minutes are signed by the site auditors and the official representative of the beneficiary or by a proxy.

The beneficiary has to keep the documents on the use of the support separately. **The beneficiary has to keep the records and documents regarding the support until 10 years after the approval of the closing report by the NKFI Office.**



F.4. Sanctions of violation of contract

Violation of the support contract can be sanctioned with the following:

- a) suspension of the support transfer;
- b) partial refund of the support in proportion to the use of the support against the rules or in violation of the contract;
- c) termination of the support contract;
- d) abrogation of the support contract.

The cases and rules of the suspension of the support, the partial refund of the support (including the interests of the amount to be refunded and their method of calculation), the termination of the support contract, and the abrogation of the support contract are defined in the support contract, the Áht., and the Ávr.

F.5. Supplying of data, publicity

The NKFI Office forwards the data related to the proposal and the support contract to the monitoring system of the Hungarian State Treasury in order to be published on the appropriate homepage according to 56/C. § (1) paragraph of the Áht.

Order 2/2016. of the president of the NKFI Office (<http://nkfi.gov.hu/magyar/kozjogi/jogszabalyok>) contains the rules of handling the documents submitted by the applicant or the beneficiary during the application and contracting process and the documents produced at the NKFI Office in terms of the freedom of information and fair procedure.

G. MATTERS NOT REGULATED IN THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Other matters not regulated in the call for proposals are covered by the following measures:

- a) Law LXXVI of 2014 on scientific research, development, and innovation;
- b) Law CXCIV of 2011 on the central budget of Hungary;
- c) Law C of 2000 on public accountancy;
- d) Gov. decree 380/2014. (XII. 31.) on the rules of operation and use of the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund;
- e) Gov. decree 368/2011. (XII. 31.) on the execution of the law on the central budget of Hungary.



H. LIST OF DOCUMENTS TO BE ATTACHED IN PDF FORMAT BY THE APPLICANT TO THE ELECTRONIC PROPOSAL

Name of document to be attached
Detailed research plan („EPR: <i>Open proposal details / research plan</i> ”)
Publication and citation list of the postdoctoral researcher (if not presented from database [MTMI]) („EPR: <i>Open proposal details / upload publ. list</i> ”)
Other scientific achievements of the postdoctoral researcher („EPR: <i>Open proposal details / other achievements</i> ”)
Declaration of the postdoctoral researcher on other allowances („to EPR: <i>budget line 1.1</i> ”)
Copy of PhD diploma or the documents on the PhD degree („EPR: <i>Open proposal details / attachments</i> ”)
Declarations („EPR: <i>Open proposal details / attachments</i> ”)
Declaration on transparency („EPR: <i>Open proposal details / attachments</i> ”)
Official permissions necessary for (starting) the research (if relevant) („EPR: <i>Open proposal details / licenses, permissions</i> ”)

I. APPENDICES TO THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The documents and the attachments to the call for proposals are available at the homepage:
<http://nkfi.gov.hu>

- I. Declarations (declarations of the host institution and the postdoctoral researcher)
- II. Declaration on transparency (and guide)
- III. Guide to Postdoctoral Excellence Program Proposals