

# **Funding research: lessons learnt from the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021**

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## NCN – BASIC FACTS

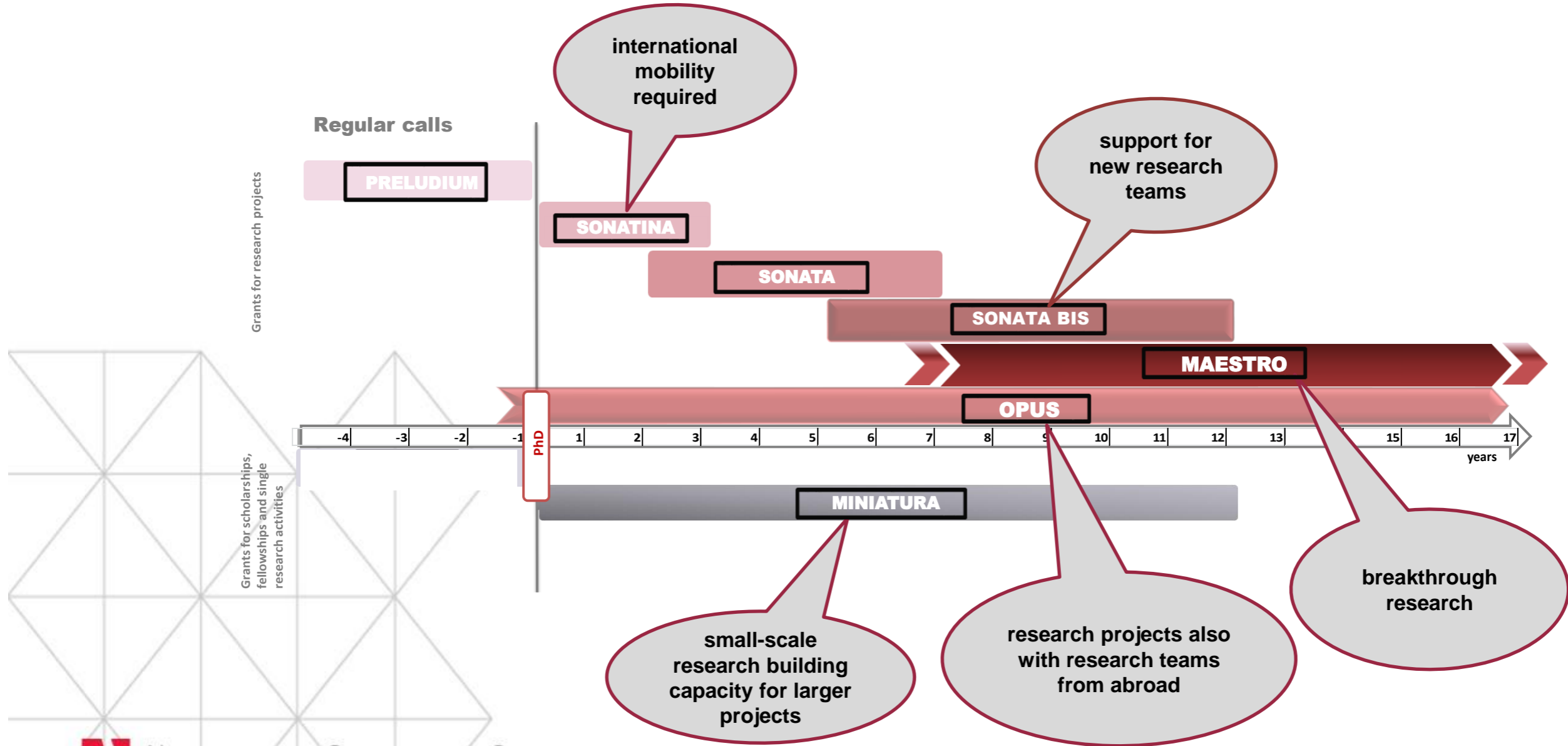
- > NCN is a government agency funding **basic research** in Poland
- > NCN supports the best projects, irrespective of discipline, based in Polish research institutions
- > NCN supports researchers at different stages of their career



# MISSION

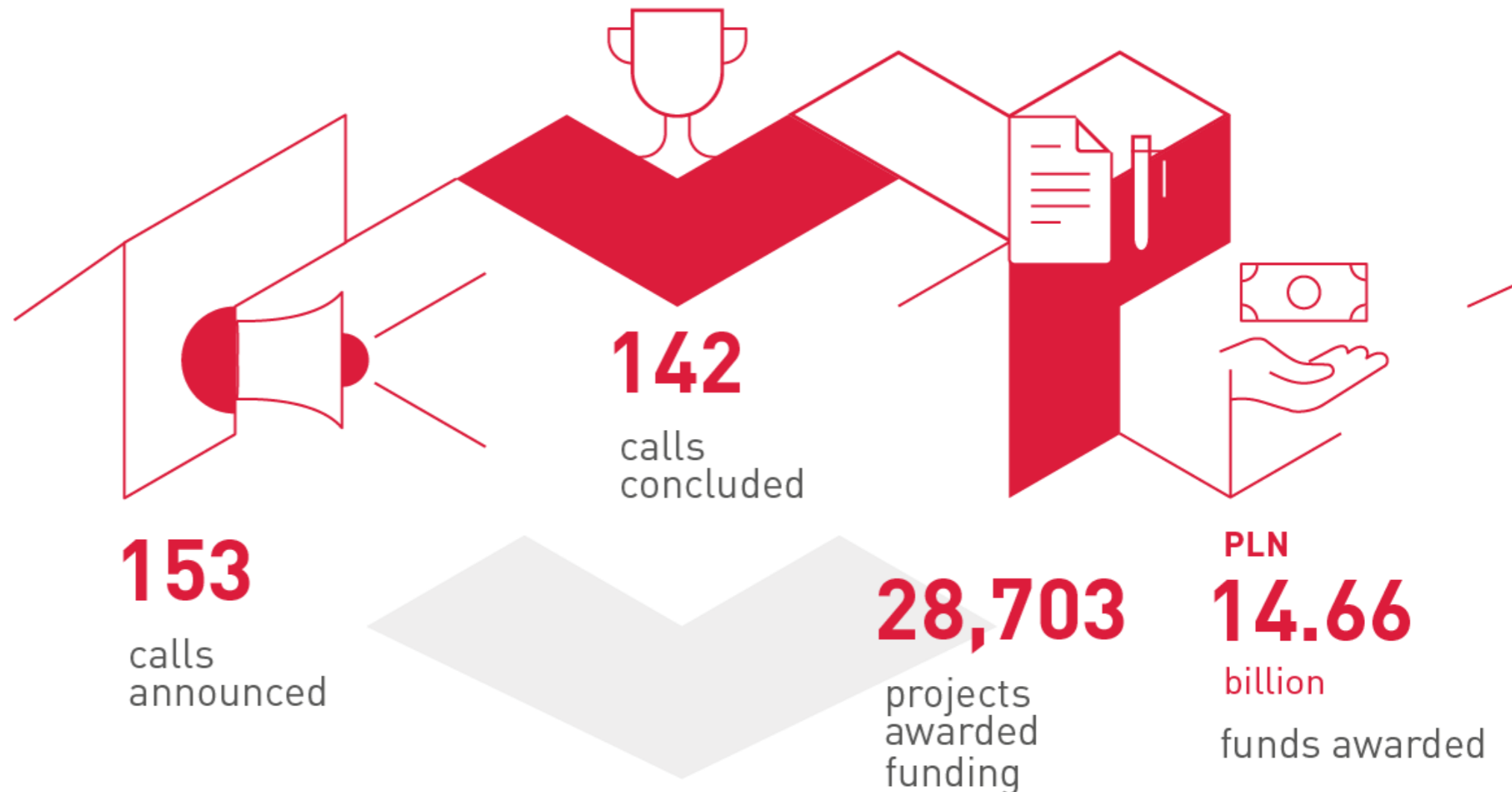
Improving the **quality** of research in Poland by means of a **competition-based** system of funding opportunities, furthering the **advancement** of Polish research on the **international** arena.

# REGULAR NCN PROGRAMMES



# NCN IN NUMBERS (March 2011 – December 2023)

## DOMESTIC CALLS



# ERC AS A MODEL FOR NCN

- Strong role of the **NCN Research Council**
- Division of the research field into **3 groups of disciplines** (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Physical and Engineering Sciences, Life Sciences) / **26 panels** within which projects compete with each other
- **Evaluation proces:** 2-stage procedure, expert teams and remote reviewers, internationalisation of the process
- **Key evaluation criteria:** scientific excellence, innovative character of the project, track record of the principal investigator
- **Bottom-up** character of submitted projects
- Calls differentiated primarily by the Principal Investigator's **stage of research career**
- **Openness to international applicants** (non-Polish speakers and non-Polish nationals)

# EVALUATION PROCESS

## Number of external reviewers and number of reviews they provided in 2023 r.\*



- Foreign reviewers
- Other external reviewers



- Reviews by foreign experts
- Reviews by other experts

\* Data does not include MINIATURA due to different evaluation procedure.

# INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

There are several advantages of multilateral calls:

- increased cross-border cooperation with partners,
- support for broader networks,
- possibility to address more complex research topics,
- increased access to knowledge and technology available in other countries,
- increased competition and better quality of proposals.

# INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

OPUS 22: submitted 1866, funded 364, success rate 19,5%

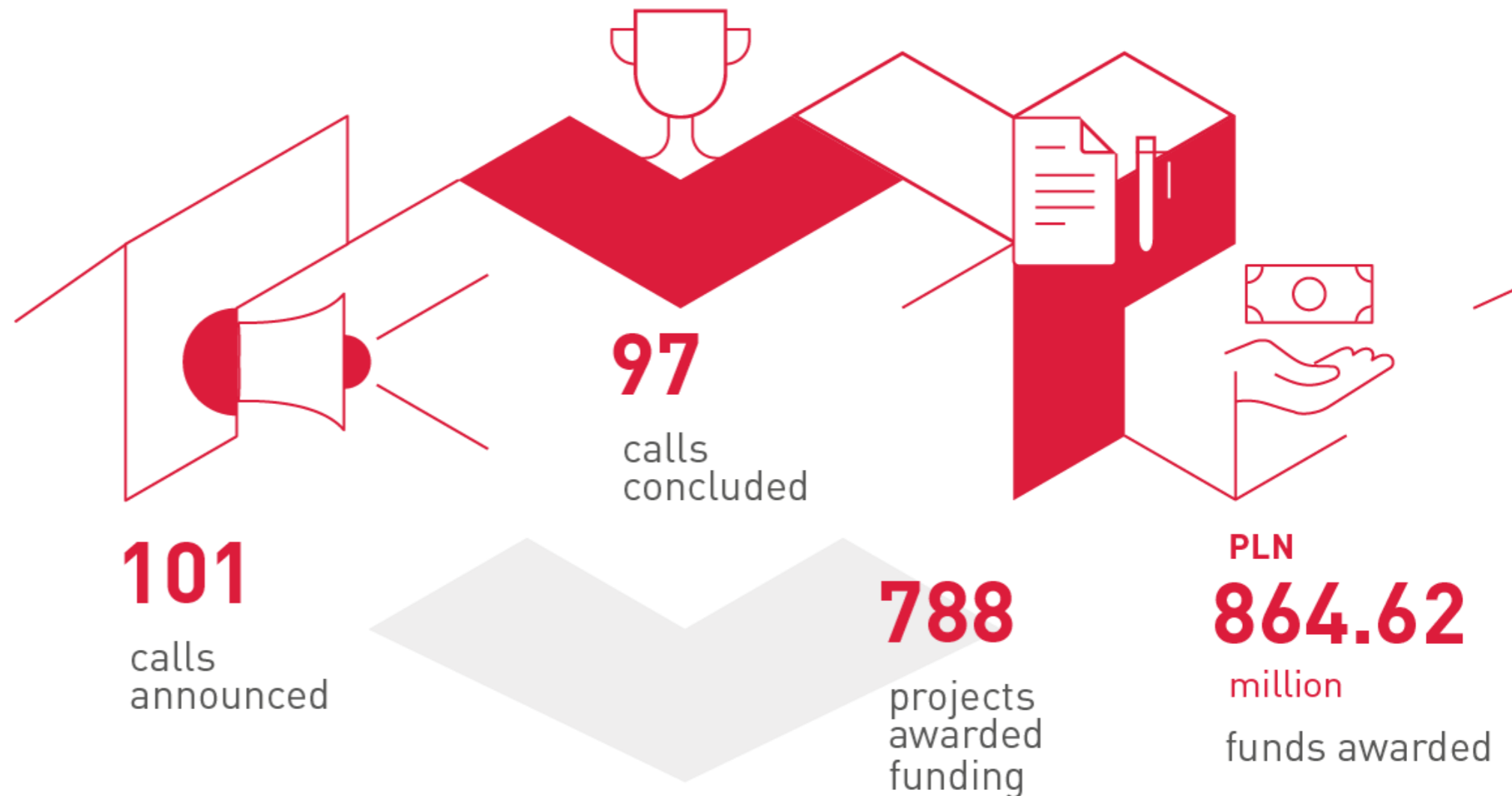
OPUS 22 Lead Agency Procedure: submitted 171, funded 51,  
success rate 29,8%

OPUS 24: submitted 1921, funded 224, success rate 11,6%

OPUS 24 Lead Agency Procedure: submitted 176, funded 48,  
success rate 27,2%

# NCN IN NUMBERS (March 2011 – December 2023)

## INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Iceland  
Liechtenstein  
Norway grants  
Norway grants

# MULTILATERAL COOPERATION - networks



## LIFE SCIENCES

**JPI AMR** (JPI Antimicrobial Resistance)

**JPND** (Neurodegenerative Diseases Research)



## PHYSICAL SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

**CHIST-ERA** (Information and Communication Science and Technologies)

**QuantERA** (Quantum Technologies) – coordinated by the NCN

**M-ERA.NET** (Material Research and Engineering)



## ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**CHANSE** (Collaboration in Humanities and Social Sciences in Europe) – coordinated by the NCN

**HERA** (Humanities)

**NORFACE** (Social Sciences)



## INTERDISCIPLINARY

**BIODIVERSA** (Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services)

**JPI UE** (JPI Urban Europe)

**ForestValue** (Innovative Bio-based Economy)

**MSCA COFUND – programmes** addressed to **incoming researchers**, offering **fellowships** in host institutions **in Poland**:

**POLONEZ – 2015-2020**

**109 fellows** have conducted 12- and 24-months research projects

**POLONEZ BIS – 2021-2026**

**130 experienced scientists** (with min. 4 years of research experience or PhD) from all fields of research were recruited for **24-months fellowships** total budget **€ 33.6 mln** (including over **€ 8,8 mln** of EU contribution)

**International programmes coordinated by the NCN**

**Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions Cofund**

Iceland  
Liechtenstein  
Norway grants  
Norway grants



## **BIODIVERSA+ Rescuing Biodiversity to Safeguard Life on Earth**

74 organisations from 37 countries

Programme duration: 2021 – 2026

Launch 6 calls for international research projects in the area of biodiversity protection

- Programme budget – € 10 M

## **EOSC - European Open Science Cloud**



The aim of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) is to provide European researchers and citizens with an open multi-disciplinary environment where they can publish, find and reuse data, tools and services for research, innovation and educational purposes.

NCN is the national representative on the EOSC Steering Board and the EOSC Association Mandated Organisation.

NCN cooperates within Polish Ministry of Science advisory board which is in charge of developing a national Open Science Policy.

NCN promotes Open Science best practices among researchers.

**European Partnerships under Horizon Europe Programme**

# WEAVE MULTILATERAL COOPERATION BASED ON LEAD AGENCY PROCEDURE

Call for bi- or trilateral projects in **all disciplines**

Lead Agency Procedure:

- projects submitted to and evaluated in **regular calls** offered by each agency,
- in **competition** with other projects (as projects with no international partners).
- merit-based **evaluation in only one agency**
- **recommendation respected** by all partners.

	NCN: <b>OPUS</b>
	ARIS: <b>National Research Projects</b>
	GAČR: <b>Lead Agency Grants</b>
	FWF: <b>Stand - Alone Projects, Programme Clinical Research (KLIF)</b>
	SNSF: <b>Project Funding</b>
	DFG: <b>Individual Research Grants Programme</b>
	FWO: <b>Junior and Senior Research projects</b>
	FNR: <b>CORE Programme</b>



# EEA & NORWAY GRANTS 2014-2021

**G R I E G**

Call for **Polish-Norwegian research projects** in all academic disciplines – 35 projects funded out of 302 submitted, € 46,34 millions

**I d e a L a b**

Interdisciplinary call operated according to the ‘sandpit’ method by research teams from Poland, Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein for **ground-breaking research projects addressing important scientific, geopolitical, social and economic challenges** – 3 projects funded, € 4,43 millions

**P O L S**

Small grants, targeting **foreign researchers** wishing to carry out research in Poland – 35 projects funded, € 7 millions



# APPLICATION STAGE

## MOST COMMON MISTAKES – APPLICATION STAGE admissibility/eligibility requirements

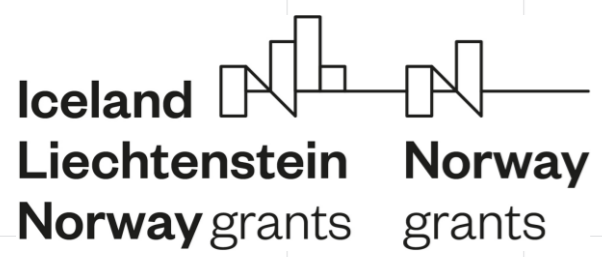
- 1) Reading call announcements from previous calls or different calls than the one the application is submitted to.
- 2) Not reading the call documentation at all.
- 3) Relying on information from colleagues.
- 4) Preparation of the application in the last moment.
- 5) Including in the PI's track record information on planned or submitted publications.
- 6) Including ineligible costs in the budget.
- 7) Submitting draft versions.

## MOST COMMON MISTAKES – APPLICATION STAGE evaluation criteria – excellence and impact

- 1) Lack of **clarity** on the project's objectives, the extent to which the work goes beyond the state-of-the art, and the soundness of the methodology:
  - lack of clarity in the proposal structure, descriptions, and explanations,
  - use of abbreviations, lack of consequence in the terms used,
  - mentioning information not provided in the proposal.
- 2) Lack of **credibility** of the expected outcome:
  - setting poorly justified indicators,
  - „overpromising” which can lead to a danger of „underdelivering” in the eyes of reviewers.

## MOST COMMON MISTAKES – APPLICATION STAGE evaluation criteria – quality of implementation

- 1) A schematic work plan with time frame that is not credible.
- 2) Overoptimistic or vague description of the capacity of participants – quote facts that describe the expertise of the participants and the whole consortium.
- 3) Unconvincing assessment of the required personal effort and resources.



# IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

## MOST COMMON MISTAKES – IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

- 1) Not reading programme requirements, guidelines, and project contract.
- 2) In case of multi-partner projects, not starting collaboration from the beginning.
- 3) Underspending which will lead to paying back the unused funds – especially delays in employing new staff and commissioning equipment.
- 4) Lack of coordination skills and understanding of the role of the coordinator.
- 5) Underestimating the need of professional administrative support.
- 6) Lack of knowledge on Open Access requirements.

Iceland  
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# HOW TO DEVELOP PROJECT MANAGEMENT SKILLS

# HOW TO DEVELOP PROJECT MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- 1) Having the role of the PI in a project.
- 2) Leading the project partner's team.
- 3) Coordination of a work package or acting as a task leader.
- 4) Taking part in a project, especially a large multi-partner project – conducting research activities, administrative activities, coordinating field work, taking responsibility for laboratory work.
- 5) Research stays in a different institution, especially abroad.

## ADVICES TO YOUNG RESEARCHERS

- 1) Assist the project coordinator.
- 2) Offer to become a task or sub-task leader.
- 3) Take part in the dissemination of the research in the form of publications and conference presentations, which is a vital skill to your career trajectory.
- 4) Propose presentation of project results to end users outside of traditional scientific avenues in the forms of the project website and training webinars.
- 5) Benefit from the human and scientific resources of project leader's networks.
- 6) Receive mentoring, career advice, feedback from senior colleagues.

A modern, curved glass and metal building with a large white text overlay. The building features multiple floors of large glass windows and a curved facade. The text "Thank you for attention!" is centered over the building. The background shows a clear blue sky, some trees, and a street with a few cars and a parking sign.

**Thank you for attention!**

**More information available at:**

**[www.ncn.gov.pl](http://www.ncn.gov.pl)**

