

EXPLORATORY RESEARCH PROJECTS

Code: PN-II-ID-PCE-2007-2

PRESENTATION

Goal:

The Exploratory Research Projects have as main goal the development of the knowledge/ knowledge broadening in all the research domains, including the socio-human sciences, both by fundamental research and by advanced research in order to solve complex issues, of frontier, by obtaining new knowledge regarding processes and phenomena, by formulating and validating original suppositions, concept models and theories.

Derived objectives:

1. promotion of original research and increase of research capacity, with favourable implications on the international competitiveness of the Romanian research.
2. increase of full-time researchers financed through research projects, as well as funding of PhD positions, encouraging/promoting researchers' formation in an environment of high scientific quality.
3. increase of the Romanian research visibility on international level, especially European, by increasing the quality and the better knowledge transfer.

Eligibility criteria:

1. project director is doctor of science
2. project director has a full time labour contract, during the whole project, in a high education or research institution, without age limit;
3. costs of the applicative research activities (if existing) do not exceed 10 % from the total budget of the project proposal
4. the host institution of the project is registered and validated in the Register of Potential Contractors and is framed in the research definition, pursuant to the Community Framework for State Aid (C323/2006)
5. a project director can, at some point, be granted funding for only one project of this kind.

Duration: 36 months

Budget:

The financial support granted for a project of this type, during its all period, is of 1.000.000 lei maximum.

Eligible costs:

- staff expenses, in accordance with the present law, at the paying dates (including employer expenses) – a maximum of 60 % from the project budget
- indirect expenses (overheads)

If the project proposal is selected for funding, the chapter “indirect expenses” for the budget cannot be modified in plus, in the initial phase or during the project. The non-compliance with this stipulation can lead to funding stop.

- logistics expenses, necessary for the project development (equipment, laboratory materials, material expenses, dissemination, informing-documentation access to the research infrastructure)
- expenses for mobilities (documentation and research stages – within the country and abroad, participations in national and international scientific events)

The scheme for the project expenses, shared on activities, destinations and categories must comply with provisions of the G.D.1579/2002.

Structure of the research team:

The project research team may include a number of maximum 6 people (including the project director), being formed of:

- a project coordinator (“principal investigator”), doctor of science, with a international scientific activity;
- experimented researchers, post – PhD, if possible;
- early stage researchers, PhD young students, if possible.

When the project proposal is submitted, the whole research team can be named or the positions for the early stage researchers can be free, but their role within the research team is emphasized.

Other recommendations:

During the project evaluation, important factors will be: the coordinator's proved scientific performance, as well as the one belonging to the experimented researchers, members of the research team.

The scientific quality and the novelty degree of the project proposal will be appreciated, new approaches being encouraged, even with big scientific risk, but with a potential of producing special results. The following will also be taken into account: the research environment, the existing research infrastructure, as well as the access to the research facilities, critical for the project's success. The projects which approach new research themes with international collaboration are stimulated. This project does not encourage investments in infrastructure; what is encouraged is the way the projects refer to the use of the existing infrastructure and/or other funding sources for its consolidation.

Evaluation and selection procedures of the project proposals

The submitted of the project proposals is made in a single stage, and they are written according to the funding form (application form in Romanian and in English).

The steps of the evaluation process:

1. **Eligibility check**: The received project proposals are checked by the UEFISCSU staff, in order to make sure that all criteria for the administrative eligibility are met
2. **Peer-view evaluation**: Each project proposal which is considered eligible is evaluated from the scientific quality taking into account the scientific quality, by 3 independent experts, validated by CNCSIS, who will give grades, according to the evaluation form. The grades are justified by summative commentaries, emphasizing the weak and the strong points. If the 3 evaluations give grades with more than 10 points difference, the panel evaluation is made, with all 3 evaluators. These re-evaluate together the initial evaluations establishing the scores for each evaluation criterion and the final score. If the initial panel does not reach a consensus, the project proposal is evaluated by another panel of evaluators. If the difference is not bigger than 10 points, the final grade is established as an average between the 3 given grades.
3. **Feedback**: The directors of the projects are announced about the results of the evaluations, each applicant receiving, by email, the final evaluation report or

the evaluation form together with the grades and the commentaries belonging to those 3 evaluators, if there was not a difference bigger than 10 points between the three evaluations.

4. **Notices:** The project directors can make complaints regarding the procedure errors.
5. **Funding:** For each specialized domain (mathematics, IT, physics, medicine etc.) depending on the scores, a top of the domain is made. The list of the proposals selected for funding is settled taking into account the received scores, the allocated budget and the funding rate.

The evaluations are anonymous, confidentiality and impartiality being assured

If the project director applied more than one project proposal, within this funding instrument, for the same competition, and the proposals reach the settled/established score for funding/are eligible for funding, the project director has to/must choose a single project proposal to be funded.

The main obligations of the parties/the parties' main obligations:

➤ **Host institution:**

1. announces the funding agency about any modification regarding the project director according to the specifications from the eligibility criteria;
2. supports the project director with the project implementation.

➤ **Project director:**

1. sends the funding agency the requested reports, at the right time and layout;
2. annually, he writes a self-evaluation report which will be presented in public within a framework established by the funding agency;
3. fulfils the expected minimum performance criterion (for a project “exploratory research” type, the minimum performance criterion is represented by the number of the articles accepted to be published in ISI journals /international data bases; the number of articles must be the same with the number of experimented researchers from the project team);
4. presents transparently the way in which the research positions have been funded;
5. advertises the activities and announces the vacant positions within the research project (including on the site: www.mct.ro/jobs);

6. brings to date the resumes belonging to the team members in the portal: www.cercetatori-romani.ro;
 7. during the funding contract, the project director is registered in the National Register of Evaluators, having as main duty to bring to date the CV as evaluator and to participate in the evaluation process, when the funding agency requires, during the project development, in agreement, respecting the conflict of interests;
 8. designs and brings the project web page to date, in Romanian and English.
- **Funding Agency:**
1. assures a continuous funding, depending on the fulfilling of the performance criteria;
 2. decides if the project will be continued/will continue if the status of the project director is changed/modified;
 3. puts at disposal the portal: www.cercetatori-romani.ro;
 4. assures the access to the specific support instruments for mobility, in order to present the accepted papers in international conferences abroad.

The institution the project director is part of, with the signatures of the authorised persons (rector/director, economic director/chief accountant) and with the signature belonging to the project director, certifies, on its own responsibility, the legality and correctness of the information within the funding application, the acceptance of project development within institutional frame. The resources mentioned in the funding application, the commitment to support the project development in good orders.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Basic research – activity having as main goal to gain new knowledge regarding processes and phenomena, as well as hypothesis enunciation and check, conceptual methods and theories.

Applied research – activity having as main goal to use the scientific knowledge for the improvement and design of new products, technologies and services.

Inter-disciplinary research – involves different disciplines in a way that stimulates the tendency to exceed the disciplinary bounds in order to create new knowledge within the process of solving specific issues. These disciplines have different research paradigms as basis, and yet they work together in order to create new knowledge. The new theories and

knowledge are the result of a joint research effort, and they will not represent a monopoly within a certain discipline, but integrated results.

Trans-disciplinary research – involves projects in with contributions from scientific researchers, as well as other participants, like managers and even public representatives. These have a mutual research goal and contribute to the creation of new theories and knowledge. This kind of research combines inter - disciplinary with participative approach. Unlike inter- disciplinary, which gathers different *scientific* expertises, trans-disciplinary research gathers within the research activity also participants outside the academic field.

Frontier research – has as goal to create and develop new knowledge and instruments. Frontier research does not take into account the disciplinary bounds. It may involve multi-, inter-, or trans-disciplinary research, which reunites researchers with complementary disciplinary skills using techniques, methodologies and instruments which are different from the conceptual point of view.

Experienced researcher – researcher who is doctor of science in his field, in post PhD stage, or immediately after its ending.

Early stage researcher – person who has a formal background which enables him to be part of a PhD programme or if he is PhD student.