

SECTION E

Project Type: Attracting high-level personnel from abroad

Action 1.1.4: Attracting high-level personnel from abroad in order to enhance the RD capacity

Investment Priority P I 1a: Improving research and innovation infrastructures and capacities in order to develop excellence in RD&I and also promoting competence centres, particularly those of European interest

This type of project is addressed to research organizations and enterprises carrying out research and development activities, as potential beneficiaries within Action 1.1.4 – „Attracting high-level personnel from abroad in order to enhance the RD capacity”, in order to enhance the RD capacity within Priority Axis 1 of Operational Program Competitiveness”.

Competition Code: OPC-A1-A1.1.4-E-2015

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SPECIFIC CONDITIONS FOR THIS PROJECT TYPE

Action 1.1.4 *“Attracting high-level personnel from abroad in order to enhance the RD capacity”* has as specific objective "the increase of Romanian participation in research areas at European level".

There is a sole type of project for this Action, which aims at creating centres of high-level scientific and/or technological competence at European level within a RD institution, university or a host enterprise carrying out research activities by attracting high-level experts from abroad, no matter their nationality.

The projects shall be managed by the above mentioned expert from abroad, who shall be hired by the host institution as a scientific researcher for a period at least equal to the duration of the project. The Action aims at strengthening the RD&I capacity in order to be ready to participate in Horizon 2020 program or other Innovation & Research European programs.

The expert from abroad shall meet the following criteria:

- a) to have an experience of at least 5 years in the research area (PhD is a must);
- b) to have work experience abroad in research area of at least 3 years in the last 5 years (or to have studied abroad for PhD or post-doctoral studies).

The knowledge transfer between academic and business is supported and the project proposal scores extra points if the expert coming from an university or an institute worked abroad in an enterprise (for a significant period of at least 1 year) or if the expert coming from an enterprise worked abroad in an university/institute (for at least 1 year).

The results of the project may be transferred in economy and later on implemented in production through one of the eligible innovation project-types within Action 1.2.1 - *"Stimulating enterprises' demand for innovation through RD&I projects carried out by enterprises individually or in partnership with RD institutes and universities, in order to innovate processes and products in economic sectors with growth potential"*.

The amount of non-reimbursed financial assistance is of maximum RON 9,000,000. The amount of non-reimbursed financial assistance granted must not exceed the equivalent of EUR 2 million.

The duration of the projects is of maximum 48 months.

Area of application

The projects focus on the following priority thematic areas, as detailed in Annex 3 to the present guide:

- Smart Specialisation
 - Bio-economics
 - Information Technology and Communications, Space and Security
 - Energy, Environment and Climate Change

- Eco-nano-technologies and Advanced Materials
 - Health, priority area of national interest.

Within the present Action, financial assistance is not granted for:

- ✓ export-related activities to third countries or Member States, directly linked to the quantities exported, to the establishment and operation of a distribution network or to other current costs linked to the export activity;
- ✓ the prominent use of national products over the use of imported products;
- ✓ the processing and marketing of agricultural products, in the following cases:
 - when the granting of funds is fixed on the basis of the price or quantity of such products purchased from primary producers or put on the market by related undertakings;
 - when the granting of funds is conditional on being partly or entirely passed on to primary producers.

(If the applicant carries out primary or secondary activity in both this area and in areas which are excluded, the financial assistance shall be granted for the areas or activities which are not excluded, provided the activities are clearly separated or the costs are clearly separated, thus being ensured that the activities carried out in the excluded areas do not benefit from the financing assistance under the terms of the contract.)

- ✓ activities regarding the facilitation of closing coal mines which are not currently competitive, as stated in the Council Decision no. 2010/787.

2. Eligibility of applicants, projects, activities and expenditure

2.1 Eligibility of Applicants

Categories of eligible applicants

The project proposal is submitted by the host institution. For this Action the following categories of applicants may apply for financial assistance:

- a) Research Organizations** – refer to public or private institutions carrying out RD activities which are organized in compliance with Art. 7 or Art. 8 of Government Ordinance no. 57/2002 regarding scientific research and technological development, approved by Law no. 324/2003 with further changes and modifications. A research organization is an entity, such as university or research institute, irrespective of its legal status or its way of financing, whose main purpose is to independently conduct fundamental research, industrial research or experimental development or to disseminate widely the results of such activities by teaching, publishing or transferring knowledge. If the entity carries out economic activities as well, the financing, costs and revenues of economic activities concerned shall be recorded separately. Undertakings that can exert a decisive influence upon such an entity, for example, shareholders or associates, shall enjoy no preferential access to the results generated by it.

b) Enterprises with research and development activity in their status - An enterprise is any entity that conducts economic activities, irrespective of its legal status and its size (micro, small, medium, large).

2.1.1 Eligibility for enterprises as applicants

An enterprise is eligible for this call if it meets the conditions below, attested through specific supplementary documents which shall be submitted within the deadline mentioned in the call for proposals.

All supplementary documents attached to the application form are listed in paragraph 2.6 of section E of the present guide.

a) The applicant is an enterprise with legal status, established in compliance with the provisions of Law no. 31/1990 regarding undertakings, republished with further changes and modifications.

⇒ *The applicant shall submit as documentary evidence the confirmation of undertaking details, issued by the Register of Commerce, valid at the date of submission.*

b) **The RD activity is included in the primary/secondary object of activity of the enterprise.**

⇒ *The applicant shall submit as documentary evidence the confirmation of undertaking details, issued by the Register of Commerce, valid at the date of submission.*

c) **The applicant has fulfilled its payment obligations at due date towards public institutions and its obligations related to the payment of taxes, fees and other contributions to the state budget, special budgets and local budgets, in compliance with the legal provisions in force.**

d) The applicant is not a firm in difficulty within the meaning of the Regulation no. 651/2014 of the Commission (General Regulation of exceptions by categories of aids).

“A firm in difficulty” is an enterprise which falls in at least one of the circumstances provided below:

(i) in the case of a limited liability firm where more than half of its registered capital has disappeared due to accumulated loss. This situation occurs when deducting accumulated loss from reserves (and from all the other elements considered overall as part of the own funds of the firm) leads to a negative result which exceeds half of its registered capital;

(ii) in the case of a firm where at least some associates have unlimited liability for the debt of the firm, where more than half of its own capital as shown in the company accounts has disappeared due to accumulated loss.

(iii) in the case of a firm subject to collective insolvency proceedings or in the case where it fulfils the criteria under its domestic law for being the subject of collective insolvency proceedings at the request of its creditors.

(iv) in the case of a firm that has been granted aid to be saved and has not yet repaid the loan or the guarantee has not yet ended or has been granted aid for restructuring and it is still subject to a restructuring plan;

(v) in the case of a firm that is not a SME where in the last two years:

1. the ratio firm debt/capital is higher than 7.5 and
2. the capacity of covering the interests calculated on EBITDA is below the 1.0.

e) The applicant does not show in a state of bankruptcy or winding-up proceedings; its business is not managed by a syndic judge or its business operations are neither suspended nor subject to an arrangement with creditors or it is not in a similar situation to previous ones, regulated by the law.

f) The applicant has not been subject to a recovery order implemented after a previous decisions of the European Commission by which an aid is declared illegal and incompatible with the internal market.

g) The legal representative of the firm was not condemned in the past 3 years by final judgement of a court, for a deed which brought to professional ethics or for committing a mistake in professional matters.

h) The legal representative of the firm has not been convicted by final judgement of a court for fraud, corruption, involvement in criminal organizations or for committing other criminal offenses against the financial interests of the European Union.

⇒ *The applicant shall submit a Statement of Eligibility (see Annex 2.1.3) as evidence for sections (c) to (h).*

i) Data relating to the applicant shall be recorded and kept up-to-date in the Register of Potential Contractors (RPC), namely:

- ✓ The Enterprise's Association / Extracted from the Register of Commerce with information on shareholders, share capital / Certificate of Registration from the Register of Commerce;
- ✓ Financial statements of the applicant for the last two years;
 - ⇒ *These documents shall be checked in RPC in correlation with the data mentioned in the letter for the submission attached to the application form.*

j) The applicant is a small, medium or large enterprise.

⇒ *For small or medium enterprises, the applicant shall submit a Statement for the Type of Enterprise (see Annex 2.6).*

2.1.2 Eligibility for research organizations as applicants

A research organisation is eligible for this call if it meets the conditions below, attested through specific supplementary documents which shall be submitted within the deadline mentioned in the call for proposals. All supplementary documents attached to the application form are listed in paragraph 2.6 of section E of the present guide.

a) The applicant carries out RD activities in Romania.

⇒ *The applicant shall submit the Statute /ROF, registered in the RPC.*

b)The applicant is a research organization, in compliance with the provisions set out under paragraph 2.1, letter a).

⇒ *The applicant shall submit:*

- statute or/and the establishing legal document/ROF registered in RPC;
- eligibility statement regarding the compliance with the definition related to the “research organization” (See Annex 2.8).

c) The information about the applicant shall be registered and updated in the RPC, as follows:

- ✓ Statute and/or extracted from the Register of Commerce with information on shareholders, share capital / Certificate of Registration from the Register of Commerce;
- ✓ Financial statements of the applicant for the last year/two years;

⇒ *These documents shall be checked in RPC in correlation with the data mentioned in the letter for the submission attached to the application form.*

2.2 Eligibility of projects

Description of projects

Although the project proposals are submitted by the host institutions where the projects shall be implemented, it is expected that the projects should be conceived and elaborated mainly by high-level international experts, possibly in collaboration with the research groups from the host institutions.

The project manager shall be the expert from abroad (high-level international expert).

Besides the project manager (the expert from abroad), the project team may include researchers/experts experienced in RD, from the host institution, but their number is up to maximum 7 people. Besides them, technicians and assistants from the host institution may be involved in the project, if needed. The project might allocate vacancies for PhD students and post-docs, whose number is not restricted, but which could be occupied only by people who are not and were not previously employed in the host institution.

The management team of the project may include maximum 5 full-time equivalent positions. People may be hired full-time or part-time for each of these 5 positions. Each team member's responsibilities shall be mentioned in the application form, according to the implementation methodology of the program.

The scope and objectives of the proposal shall comply with the specific objectives of the Priority Axis and of the Action, as described in the call for proposals.

The projects shall address only to the Smart Specialization areas and Health (see Annex 3).

The duration of the projects is of maximum 48 months.

The implementation period

Conditions imposed to specialists from abroad (of high-level international level)

Requirements for the experts from abroad (high-level international experts)

The project eligibility is conditioned by the existence of a leading high-level international expert acting as the Project Manager, who shall be employed during the project implementation, according to legal provisions, full-time or part-time within the institution submitting the project proposal. The part-time work shall represent at least 50% of the number of hours allocated to the project. In this case, the presence of the Project Manager is mandatory inside the host institution (the Employer) at least 50% of the entire time for which he has been employed.

The high-level international expert is a specialist/researcher who cumulatively fulfils the following requirements:

- ✓ the expert has at least 5 years' professional experience in the research and development activity before the date of submitting the proposal,
- ✓ the expert has worked abroad in research (or has worked as PhD student or post-doc) for at least 3 years during the last 5 years before the date of submitting the proposal,
- ✓ PhD diploma

The expert shall submit the following documents:

- ✓ the CV attached to the application form,
- ✓ copies of the labour contracts / equivalent documents covering the last 5 years before the date of submitting the proposal,
- ✓ the individual labour contract / equivalent document or the collaboration agreement concluded with the host institution;
- ✓ letters of recommendation from at least one of his previous employers in the last 5 years,
- ✓ copy of the PhD diploma.

The application form is submitted together with the expert's labour contract concluded with the host institution, or a collaboration agreement between parties that states that the expert is hired in the host institution, if the non-reimbursable assistance is granted. The duration of such contract shall cover at least the duration of the project.

Eligibility criteria for projects

- a) **Compliance of the scope and objectives of the proposal with the specific objectives of the Priority Axis**, as well as with the objectives of the Action, as described in the call for proposals.
- b) **The project is carried out in Romania.**
- c) **The duration of the project shall range within the limits mentioned in the call for proposals** (see point 1, Section E of the present guide).
- d) **The research area of the project is one of the priority areas** (see point 1. in Section E and Annex 3 to the present guide).
- e) **The project has a high-level international expert as Project Manager and the expert meets the requirements mentioned at point 2.2, Section E of the present guide.**
- f) **The project proposals shall demonstrate the existence of the incentive effect of the grant** by submitting a written statement on own responsibility stipulating that the project's activities have not started before the submission of the proposal (except for the preparatory documentations attesting the feasibility of the project)
- g) **The value of the requested non-reimbursable assistance shall range within the limits mentioned in the call for proposals** (see point 2.5 Section E of the present guide).

- h) The project shall include at least one activity in the field of industrial research/experimental development.
- i) The project activities were not and are not financed from other public sources.

2.3. Eligibility of Activities

The following types of activities are eligible for these projects:

- ✓ activities of fundamental research
- ✓ activities of industrial research
- ✓ activities of experimental development
- ✓ activities for writing feasibility studies to prepare RD activities
- ✓ activities for obtaining and validating industrial property rights (only for research organizations and SMEs)
- ✓ activities of information and publicity for the project (only for research organizations)
- ✓ activities of project management (only for research organizations).

Fundamental research means experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of observable phenomena and facts, without any direct practical application or use in view.

Industrial Research means the planned research or critical investigation aimed at the acquisition of new knowledge and skills for developing new products, processes or services or for bringing about a significant improvement in existing products, processes or services. It comprises the creation of components of complex systems and may include building prototypes in labs or in an environment with simulated interfaces of the existing systems, as well as pilot lines, when it is necessary for the industrial research, notably for generic technology validation.

Experimental development means the acquiring, combining, shaping and using existing relevant scientific technological business knowledge and skills in order to develop new or improved products, processes or services. This may also include, for example, other activities aiming at the conceptual definition, planning and documentation of new products, processes or services. The experimental development may include the creation of prototypes, demonstrations, the creation of pilot-projects, testing and validation of new or improved products, processes or services in representative environments for real functioning if the main objective is to come with new technical improvements for products, processes or services which are not definitely finished. Commercially usable prototypes and pilot projects are also included where the prototype is necessarily the final commercial product and where it is too expensive to produce it to be used only for demonstration and validation purposes. Experimental development does not include the routine or periodic changes made to products, production lines, manufacturing processes, existing services and other operations in progress, even if such changes may represent improvements.

The applicant shall prove the necessity of the activities proposed to be financed for achieving the objectives of the project.

The incentive effect of funding and its impact

The incentive effect is demonstrated only if the activities carried out within the project have not started before the submission of the application form by the applicant.

For RD&I projects / activities, the date the works start means either the date the RDI activities started or the date of the first agreement between the applicant and his contractors, depending on whichever comes first. Preparatory work, such as obtaining permits and writing feasibility studies are not considered works. For preparatory work such as feasibility studies for research activities, state aid cannot be requested for funding where these studies were conducted before the application form was submitted to the IB Research.

For research organizations, the project proposals shall prove the impact of the funding on the institutional development of the applicants in terms of research activities. For research organizations the international expert shall stay within the host institution and lead the research group formed by means of the financial assistance for a period at least equal with the duration of the project.

2.4 Eligibility of Expenditure

The following types of expenditure are eligible:

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| <p>A. Expenditure for fundamental/industrial research/experimental development activities</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personnel costs (researchers, technicians and assistants involved in the research project) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Salary costs - Travel costs necessary for the project implementation* 2. Procurement of tangible assets, to the extent and for the period used for the research project (if such instruments and equipment are not used for their full life for the research project, only the depreciation costs corresponding to the life of the research project, as calculated on the basis of good accounting practice, shall be considered eligible) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication and IT equipment - Research equipment and instruments 3. Procurement of intangible assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical knowledge - Patents - Use rights 4. Procurement of services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research services - Consultancy services and equivalent services exclusively used for fundamental/industrial research/experimental development activities 5. Depreciation costs for buildings and spaces, to the extent and for the duration these buildings and spaces are used for the fundamental/industrial research/experimental development activities 6. Costs for the renting of land to the extent this land is necessary for the fundamental/industrial research/experimental development activities 7. Procurement of substances, materials, plants, laboratory animals, consumables and other similar products necessary for the carrying out of fundamental/industrial research/experimental development activities |
| <p>B. Costs for writing feasibility studies as</p> | |

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| preparatory work for RD activities | |
| C. Cost for obtaining, validating and protecting industrial property rights (eligible only for research organizations and SMEs) | These costs are eligible by applying a flat rate of 25% of total eligible direct costs excluding direct eligible costs for the purchase of services . For enterprises, the flat rate shall be calculated at the amount of the grant, according to the aid intensities for each eligible activity. |
| D. General administrative costs (overheads) | |
| E. Other eligible expenditure only for research organizations | 8. Costs for information and publicity for the project 9. Project management costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personnel costs for the project management team (salary and mobility costs) - Goods transportation - Office items |

* Travel costs necessary for the project implementation include also team members' travels to scientific events (conferences, symposia etc.) to present only the results obtained in research - development activities of the project. Accommodation and subsistence costs are eligible within this category of expenditure. Documents shall be attached for all these costs, especially the works presented and published within the scientific events, proving they include information exclusively related to the results of the activities undertaken within the project. The non-deductible VAT, by law, related to eligible costs within the project is eligible. For budgeting the project, the applicant shall sign a Statement for VAT Eligibility / Non-deductibility of Eligible Expenditure (see Annex 2.4 of the present guide).

In addition to these eligible costs, the project may require a number of other non-eligible expenditure, but which is necessary for the proper implementation of the project. These costs shall be made by the applicant, without being added to the granted financial assistance.

General criteria for the eligibility of expenditure

All expenditure incurred must simultaneously comply with the following **general criteria for eligibility**:

- a) to be made and paid by the applicant between 1st of January, 2014 and 31st of December, 2023;
- b) to be supported by invoices or other accounting documents of equivalent probative value, so that the expenditure could be audited and identified, in compliance with the provisions of the national legislation;
- c) to be in compliance with the provisions of the financing contract concluded by the Management Authority or the Intermediate Body, for and on its behalf, for the approval of the project;
- d) to be in compliance with the provisions laid down in the Community and national legislation.

In addition, the expenditure

- e) must be directly related to the activities in the project proposal and necessary for the implementation of the project;
- f) must comply with the principles of a proper financial management, by using efficiently the funds and having a good cost-result ratio;
- g) must not have been previously funded from public financing, in compliance with the provisions of the national legislation;
- h) must be made after the date of submitting the application form and the supplementary documents.

Specific criteria for the eligibility of expenditure

- a) In order to be eligible for financing, all costs shall fall under the categories of eligible expenditure mentioned at point 2.4, Section E of the present guide and to be in compliance with the objectives of the Priority Axis 1 -"RD&I to support economic competitiveness and to develop business"; also, they shall comply with the objectives and results of the projects proposed for funding.
- b) The project salary costs shall not exceed the ceilings stipulated in Annex 3 of the Government Decision no. 475/2007 regarding the approval of the National Plan for Research, Development and Innovation II for the period 2007-2013. The salary costs are reimbursed according to the labour contract and/or proportionally to the percentage in the job description/the attendance sheet related to the specific duties assigned for the project implementation. Cumulative working time per employee on all individual labour contracts must comply with legal provisions (Law 53/2003 with further changes and modifications) regarding working time and rest time.
- c) The general administration costs (overheads) are eligible up to **25%** of the eligible direct costs of the project, except eligible direct costs for procurement of services.
- d) The project management costs are eligible up to **10%** of the eligible direct costs of the project.

For the procurement of intangible assets used during the project, the applicant shall submit:

- contract for property rights (for technical knowledge or patents)
- assignment or license contract for property rights

All costs incurred for an item of property recognized as an asset shall be registered in the accounts in compliance with OMFP no. 1802/2014 regarding annual/individual accounting regulations and consolidated annual financial reports or OMFP no. 1917/2005 regarding the approval of metodologic norms on organization and management of accounts in public institutions, the Accounts Plan for public institutions and its guidelines and **shall represent the overall asset value. The same rule is applicable for the intangible assets.**

2.5. Financing the Project

The value of the non-reimbursable financial assistance is of maximum RON 9,000,000. The value of the non-reimbursable financial assistance cannot exceed the equivalent in RON of EUR 2 million.

The activities within the projects carried out by the **research organizations** are financed 100% of the eligible costs.

The funding of projects submitted by **enterprises** constitutes RD&I state aid and it is applied in compliance with the state aid scheme “Funding research, development and innovation (RD&I) activities and RD&I investment through Operational Program Competitiveness”, elaborated in conformity with Regulation 651/2014 of the Commission of Stating Certain Categories of Aid Compatible with the Common Market, in order to apply art. 107 and art. 108 of the Treaty (General Regulation of Exceptions by categories).

For enterprises, the funding rates are calculated as a percentage of the project eligible costs, by categories of activities and depending on the size of the enterprise (large, medium, small).

The public funding for research and development activities, as a percentage of the eligible costs, are the following:

- ✓ **100% for fundamental research;**
- ✓ **50% for industrial research;**
- ✓ **25% for experimental development;**
- ✓ **50% for preparatory feasibility studies for the RD activities.**

For industrial research and experimental development, as well as for the preparatory feasibility studies for the RD activities, a bonus of 10% for medium enterprises and 20% for small enterprises shall be added to the basic intensities. For obtaining and validating industrial property rights for SMEs, the aid intensity shall not exceed 50% of related eligible costs.

The table below shows a synthesis of the maximum funding intensities, divided into categories of activities and beneficiaries, which is applicable to all eligible expenditure of the project incurred from public funds.

| Activity | Enterprise | | | Research organization |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| | Large | Medium | Small | |
| Fundamental research | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Industrial research | 50% | 60% | 70% | 100% |
| Experimental development | 25% | 35% | 45% | 100% |
| Writing preparatory feasibility studies for RD activities | 50% | 60% | 70% | 100% |
| Obtaining and validating industrial property rights (resulted from industrial research) | - | 50% | 50% | 100% |
| Information and publicity for the project | - | - | - | 100% |
| Project management | - | - | - | 100% |

The project budget consists of both the value of eligible and non-eligible expenditure, necessary for the implementation of the project. If the applicant submitted the Statement for the VAT Non-deductibility, then the maximum funding intensities for the state aid are applicable for eligible expenditure calculated with VAT. The amount of financial assistance shall result after applying the rates of financing mentioned in the provisions of state aid rules for the eligible activities and costs granted.

2.6. List of supplementary documents

| Documents | Model in Annex | Requirements |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. FOR ENTERPRISES | | |
| Statement for the Eligibility of the Enterprise | Annex 2.1.3 | signed by the legal representative of the institution* - 2 originals |
| Statement for Avoiding Double-Financing from Public Funds | Annex 2.2 | 2 originals |
| Statement for Certifying the Application | Annex 2.3 | 2 originals |
| Statement for VAT Eligibility / Non-Deductibility of Eligible Expenditure in the project budget proposed for financing from structural funds (where appropriate) | Annex 2.4 | signed by the legal representative of the institution - 2 originals |
| Statement regarding the classification of the enterprise as SME (where appropriate) | Annex 2.6 | signed by the legal representative of the institution - 2 originals |
| Statement for Certifying the Incentive Effect | Annex 2.7 | 2 originals |
| Note justifying the amounts written in the budgets in the application form (together with a CD with the market study/impact study and the offers) | Annex 4 | signed by the legal representative of the institution - 2 originals and 3 CDs |
| Market study/Impact study (Romanian and English versions) | Annex 5.2/5.3 | 3 CDs with Romanian and English versions |
| Resolution of the General Shareholders Assembly / Administration Council for approving the submission of project proposal to the call of proposals, as well as regarding the financial contribution of the applicant for the project | | signed by the legal representative of the institution - 2 originals |
| Documents related to the high-level international expert**. | | 2 copies of each document |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - copies of the labour contracts/equivalent documents covering the last 5 years before the date for submission of the application and their certified translation; - individual labour contract/equivalent document/ collaboration agreement concluded with the host institution; - letters of recommendation from at least one of previous employers in the last 5 years; - copy of the PhD diploma | | <p>2 copies of the contract / 1 original and 1 copy^{***} of the collaboration agreement</p> <p>1 original and 1 copy</p> <p>2 copies</p> |
| Registration Certificate /Excerpt issued by the Register of Commerce with information on shareholders, share capital | | RPC, 2 copies valid at the moment of submission |
| Statute and legal document attesting the establishment of the institution/ Registration Certificate issued by the Register of Commerce | | RPC |
| Official balance for the last year/ 2 years | | RPC |
| B. FOR RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS | | |
| Statement for Avoiding Double-Financing from Public Funds | Annex 2.2 | 2 originals |
| Statement for Certifying the Application | Annex 2.3 | 2 originals |
| Statement for VAT Eligibility / Non-Deductibility of Eligible Expenditure in the project budget proposed for financing from structural funds (where appropriate) | Annex 2.4 | signed by the legal representative of the institution* - 2 originals |
| Statement for Certifying the Incentive Effect | Annex 2.7 | 2 originals |
| Statement on the Compliance with the Definition of the Research Organization | Annex 2.8 | signed by the legal representative of the institution - 2 originals |
| Note justifying the amounts written in the budgets in the application form (together with a CD with the market study/impact study and the offers) | Annex 4 | signed by the legal representative of the institution - 2 originals and 3 CDs |
| Market study/Impact study (Romanian and English versions) | Annex 5.2/5.3 | 3 CDs with Romanian and English versions |
| <p>Documents related to the high-level international expert^{**}:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - copies of the labour contracts/equivalent documents covering the last 5 years before the date for submission of the application and their certified translation; - individual labour contract/equivalent document/ collaboration agreement concluded with the host institution; | | <p>2 copies of each document</p> <p>2 copies of the contract / 1 original and 1 copy^{***} of the collaboration agreement</p> |

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| - letters of recommendation from at least one of previous employers in the last 5 years; - copy of the PhD diploma | | 1 original and 1 copy 2 copies |
| Registration Certificate /Excerpt issued by the Register of Commerce with information on shareholders, share capital | | RPC, 2 copies valid at the moment of submission |
| Statute and legal document attesting the establishment of the institution/ Registration Certificate issued by the Register of Commerce | | RPC |
| Official balance for the last year/ 2 years | | RPC |

*) The required documents may be also signed by an authorized legal representative of the institution, but in this case, the applicant shall also submit the legal document of delegation for the signature.

***) The copy shall be inscribed with "in compliance with the original", signed and stamped by the legal representative of the institution.

****) Regarding the documents related to the high-level international expert, the applicant shall not submit certified copies. Certified copies for these documents are required only when contracting the project.

IMPORTANT:

- Upon the signing of the financing contract, it is mandatory for the international expert to have concluded an individual labour contract with the host institution or another equivalent document submitted under the form of a certified copy to IB Research. Also, the expert shall submit certified copies of the labour contracts/equivalent documents covering the last 5 years prior to the date of submission of the application form, as well as one certified copy of the PhD diploma.

3. Appraisal and Selection

The appraisal and selection process consists of the following stages:

- Formal Check and Eligibility Check
- Project Appraisal
- Selection.

The first two stages are carried out by the IB Research personnel from the regional offices, who are in charge of project implementation. The project appraisal and selection is organized by the implementation unit at the central level.

Evaluation Groups shall be organized, depending on the areas of proposals. Each Group shall consist of 2 specialists with expertise in research and 1 financial specialist. An IB Research representative shall ensure the Evaluation Group Secretarial Office without having the right to score. The results of the two stages shall be communicated to the applicant in writing.

3.1. Formal and Eligibility Check

The following conditions should be met as regards the **formal check** of the project proposal:

- the application form was electronically registered after the call for proposals was published and within the deadline mentioned in the call for proposals;
- Important:** if the application form was not electronically registered, the proposal shall be neither received nor registered by the IB Research personnel at the moment of submission the supplementary documents.
- the applicants are registered in RPC and their documents and data are updated;
 - the supplementary documents were received and registered at the IB Regional Office.

Rules for formal check:

- The formal check of project proposals is organized by the IB Regional Offices.
- The check of proposals is carried out in the order of their receipt and it starts from the date of registering the project proposal.
- The formal check entails the filling in of the Formal Check-list (see the Annex to the Application Form). The answers to the questions related to the formal check may be "Yes" or "No".
- If the proposal is incomplete, namely if some supplementary documents are missing or one or several of these documents were not signed and stamped according to requirements, the applicant shall receive a letter/fax of notification from IB Research to complete its proposal. If within 5 days since receiving the letter/fax, the applicant does not comply with the requirements, the proposal is rejected.
- In order to be admitted, the proposal should obtain a positive answer to all the questions in the Formal Check-list.

Eligibility check for the applicant and the proposal

Only the project proposals admitted following the formal check shall be checked from the eligibility point of view.

Rules for eligibility check:

- The eligibility check is organized by the IB Regional Offices.
- The eligibility check entails checking the eligibility of both the applicant and the proposal, according to the Eligibility Check-list (see the Annex to the Application Form).
- The answers to the questions related to the eligibility check may be “Yes” or “No”.
- In order to be admitted, the proposal should obtain a positive answer to all the questions in the Eligibility Check-list. Otherwise, the proposal is not eligible and shall not be appraised.

After the formal and eligibility check is over, an acceptance/ rejection letter is sent to each applicant.

3.2. Appraisal of Project Proposals

Only the project proposals admitted following the formal check and eligibility check are evaluated. The appraisal of project proposals is made in two stages:

- Individual evaluation stage

Each evaluator gives a score for each evaluation criterion and makes a comment justifying the score.

- Panel evaluation stage

The panel evaluators fill in the Panel Evaluation Fiche with scores, comments and recommendations related to the proposal. The Panel Evaluation Fiche is written by one of the evaluators and signed by all members of the panel.

In case no consensus may be reached regarding the score, the proposal is submitted for evaluation to another panel and if, within that panel either, no consensus is reached regarding the score, the arithmetical average of the scores proposed by each members of the evaluation panels is considered as final score.

For the appraisal, the content of the application form is analysed as well as, where applicable, the impact study/market study and points are given for each criterion, as follows:

0 points– Poor or very poor proposal: the proposal meets the criterion vaguely and completely unsatisfactory; there are substantial gaps considering the relevant criterion.

1 point – Satisfactory: the proposal meets the criterion in general; there are gaps that should be filled in.

2 points – Very good: the proposal fully addresses all the relevant aspects of the criterion.

Each point given must be justified with relevant comments. No decimals are to be used when scoring. Weight factor is added to each criterion.

| Eliminatory criterion | YES | NO | Obs. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|------|
| The project proposal is included in one of areas and sub-areas defined in Annex 3 of the present guide. | | | |

The project proposal must address to an eligible area/sub-area and this fact is evaluated based on the rationale provided in the application form by the applicant – this is an eliminatory criterion. **If the answer to this criterion is NO, the project proposal is rejected and it is not evaluated.**

Criterion: Relevance

| | Maximum Unweighted Score | Weight Factor | Unweighted Score | Final Score |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1. Scientific relevance and impact of project | 10 | 4 | | |
| 1.1 Novelty level of the result/scientific solution proposed | 2 | | | |
| 1.2 The extent the project will contribute to the (direct) result applicable on the market | 2 | | | |
| 1.3 Contribution of the project to the development of scientific competitiveness of the institution and to the increase of international cooperation | 2 | | | |
| 1.4 The extent the project will lead to create new jobs in research | 2 | | | |
| 1.5 The increase of research capacity of the applicant, as a result of the project | 2 | | | |

For this criterion, the information in the the Impact Study (chapter 2 and 4) / Market Study (chapter 2 and 3) together with the information provided in the application form are evaluated, particularly the following chapters:

- 3 - Information about public funding in the last 3 years
- 4 - Project Description
- 4.5.2 - Relation with other programs/strategies/projects/other relevant documents
- 5 - Indicators
- 8.2 - Project Funding Package

1.1 The scientific relevance and novelty level of the scientific solution of the project proposal will be evaluated. The evaluators will compare at least at European level the proposed scientific solution with the results obtained in the area, will evaluate whether the project contributes to open up new research areas in the applicant institution and will evaluate the extent the results of research

activities contribute at the development of the RD in the proposed area. It is also taken into consideration the correlation with the project output indicators.

1.2 If the project proves that it is possible to obtain results applicable on the market, as well as the innovative level of such results at local/regional/national/European/international level, it will be scored above 0 points. The information in chapter 2 from the Market Study or chapter 2 from the Impact Study will be used.

1.3 It will be evaluated whether the project has a long-term impact on the research activity within the host institution, including new opportunities for an international scientific cooperation. The information in the Impact Study will be also used.

1.4 It will be evaluated how real the project proposal is, according to the increased number of hired researchers.

1.5 The growth potential of the research capacity of the applicant reflected by output indicators in relation to the current level (through participation in EU research framework programs, scientific publications in ISI journals etc.) is evaluated.

Criterion: Quality and Maturity

| | Maximum Unweighted Score | Weight Factor | Unweighted Score | Final Score |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------|
| 2. Quality and maturity of the project | 10 | 3 | | |
| 2.1 Correlation between activities - required resources and results of the project | 2 | | | |
| 2.2 Coherence and maturity of the project | 2 | | | |
| 2.3 Implementation methodology of the project | 2 | | | |
| 2.4 High-level international expert: managerial experience and skills | 2 | | | |
| 2.5 Project team's capacity to implement the project | 2 | | | |

For this criterion, the information provided in the application form are evaluated, particularly the following chapters:

- 3 - Information about public funding in the last 3 years
 - 4 - Project Description
 - 4.8 – Project Management
 - 4.7.1 – List of Activities and Sub-activities
 - 8.2 - Project Funding Package
- CVs of the high-level international expert and of the members of the project implementation team.

2.1 It will be evaluated the extent to which the applicant correctly identified the activities, depending on the project type proposed and its purpose. The activities should be carried out in a logical sequence and lead to the results proposed, and the human and financial resources should be estimated and distributed appropriately per activities.

The following will be also evaluated here: clear description of the objectives; if the activities and their planning are realistic and ensure the achievement of the project objectives; if the project has measurable and quantifiable indicators that may be checked objectively; (for projects whose results will be a product or service) project viability on the market based on the studies attached to the application form.

2.2 It will be evaluated the eligibility of the expenditure and funding intensities and whether the budget is correlated with the activities. Regarding the budget structure, it will be evaluated the size of the budget and the balance between its components, according to the objectives of the project; also, if the costs correspond to the prices on the market.

The maturity level of the project will be scored if the present project proposal continues a previous project, with the same final objective and/or if the preparatory documents for public procurement procedures have started before the submission of the present application form.

2.3 The implementation methodology of the project will be evaluated: the evaluators will analyse the way each activity will be carried out, the people in charge, the foreseen results and the duration of all these (according to the information provided in the calendar of activities in the application form). It will be evaluated whether the activities are clearly identified, detailed and correlated in the achievement plan with the team members' responsibilities and the public procurement plan.

2.4 It will be evaluated the scientific competence and the experience of the high-level international expert in correlation with the chosen research area, as well as his/her ability of leading the project and forming a competitive research team in the host institution.

2.5 It will be evaluated: the CVs of the implementation team and project management team, their tasks and responsibilities correlated to the planned activities; the experience and quality of the implementation team; the applicant's proposal concerning the organization of these teams taking into account the correlation of activities with the tasks of the project team members and their qualifications and skills; the applicant's ability to initiate project activities without risks after signing the contract.

Criterion: Sustainability

| | Maximum Unweighted Score | Weight Factor | Unweighted Score | Final Score |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------|
| 3. Sustainability | 10 | 3 | | |
| 3.1 The capacity of supporting financially the research team formed under the leadership of the high-level international specialist, after the end of the project | 2 | | | |
| 3.2 The capacity of supporting financially the research activity of the research organization/enterprise after the end of the project | 2 | | | |
| 3.3 Ensuring technical and administrative support | 2 | | | |
| 3.4 The market analysis supports the demand for the products/technologies/services derived from research within the project | 2 | | | |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| 3.5 Contribution to promoting sustainable development and equal opportunities | 2 | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|--|--|--|

For this criterion, the information in the the Impact Study (chapter 1) / Market Study (chapter 3) together with the information provided in the application form are evaluated, particularly the following chapters:

- 4 - Project Description
- 4.8 – Project Management
- 5 – Indicators
- 6 – Project Sustainability
- 7 – Relation with EU policies and national legislation
- 8 - Project Funding Package

3.1 It will be evaluated: the capacity of the research team formed under the leadership of the high-level international specialist to get the grant for new projects; the applicant's capacity to financially support the activity of this team and to employ the expert even after the projects ends.

3.2 It will be evaluated the applicant's capacity for implementing the results of the project or to identify other financing sources in order to support the research activities.

3.3 It will be evaluated the quality of the technical and administrative support of the applicant.

3.4 It will be evaluated: whether the Market Study is correlated with the demand for research results; the competitors are correctly identified and analysed; there is a presentation of the competitive advantage of products/services/technologies as a result of the project.

3.5 It will be evaluated: the extent the project complies with the horizontal policies of EU and the national legislation; whether the research aims at producing technologies for environment and/or leads to lower consumption of raw materials, materials, energy and fuel; the way the project encourages participation of young people and women in research and development activities.

Criterion: Incentives

The final score is added to the bonus / incentive, provided the condition in question is met.

As regards the following criterion, **4 points** shall be given in case of a positive answer (YES) and **0 points** for a negative answer (NO).

Based on this criterion, the exchange of personnel and implicitly of experience between the university/academic and business research shall be additionally scored.

| 4. Exchange of experience between the university/academic and business research | Score |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does the high-level international expert come from a research environment different from the one specific to the host institution, respectively:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>(if the applicant is an enterprise) did the expert work for at least 1 year in a university or research institute abroad? or</i> - <i>(if the applicant is a research organization) did the expert work for at least 1 year in an enterprise abroad?</i> | |

The Intermediate Body sends the applicants a letter notifying them of the evaluation results together with the evaluation fiches and information about the way of submitting possible complaints/appeals. The evaluation results are published on POC site – Action 1.1.4.

3.3 Submitting and Settling Appeals

The appeals shall be submitted or sent to IB Reserch within 5 days since the date the evaluation results were notified. **The appeals shall refer only to possible procedure vices that the applicant considers incongruous with the provisions in the “Call for proposals” and the “Guide for Applicants” regarding the methodology of project appraisal and selection. The appeals shall be signed by the project manager and the legal representative of the host institution.**

3.4 Specific Rules of Selection

After completing the process of appraisal and selection of projects, only those project proposals that meet the following conditions are admitted to funding:

- ✓ have a total score ≥ 60 points **AND**
- ✓ have a score ≥ 5 points (calculated without weighting factor) to any of the criteria of the grid.

The project proposals with the same final score shall be selected based on the score obtained at **"Relevance" criterion.**

The project proposals "admitted to funding" shall be ranked in the descending order of the total scores.

The project proposals shall be selected for funding in the descending order of the total scores within the limit of the competition budget announced in the Call for proposals. There may be some other conditions added in the Call for proposals.

The project proposals admitted to funding shall be published on www.poc.research.ro (the site for Call for proposals).

4. Specific Instructions for filling in the Application Form for this type of project

The Application Form shall be separately written and registered, both in Romanian and English.

1. Information about the applicant

The applicant fills in the information required at 1.8 and 1.8.1, as follows:

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.8 Code CAEN | The code CAEN the project is addressed to, no matter of it is the main or the secondary code |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.8.1 Economic Sector | The economic sector(s) the results of project address to |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|

3.1 Information about other public funding granted

Regarding the projects which were previously funded, international projects and / or projects funded by national public funds shall highlighted.

In both cases, it is desirable to describe projects in the area/sector proposed for funding in order to prove the experience and results achieved in the sector in question.

4.1 General Information

The applicant fills in the information required in the last row of the table, as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Area and sub-area of the project | One or more sub-areas (name) is filled in here (see Annex 3) |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|

4.2 Location(s) of the project

It is recommended for the applicant to indicate the address/addresses where the activities of the project will take place (headquarters or working site).

4.5 Rationale and Context of the project

The applicant shall present here: national and international context in the area of the project; including and justifying the sub-area of the project in one of the priority areas; the novelty in national context versus international one; new/improved (research) services provided due to the implementation of the project; the need of the activities proposed for funding in order to achieve the project purpose (the way they are necessary to develop the RDI capacity: by expanding existing activities, by addressing new themes in the priority area, by helping to increase the competitiveness of the Romanian economy etc.); whether the present project submitted is a component of another more complex project or if it continues a previous project. The section shall have maximum 3 pages.

4.5.1 Rationale for implementing the results due to the project

The applicant shall justify the way the project and its results are included in one of the smart specialization or health sub-areas mentioned in Annex 3 at the present Guide. In addition, to prove the results are applicable, the applicant shall identify the economic sector these results address to shall explain the choice.

4.7.1 List of activities and sub-activities

The eligible activities and sub-activities are written in the table, in compliance with their description in chapter 2.3 of Section E of the present Guide.

5 Indicators

The indicators of the project are divided into 2 categories:

- Outputs related to the activities which are financed;
- Results representing the direct results/advantages of the beneficiaries.

From the indicators mentioned in the application form, the applicant selects the indicators related to his project and fills in their values at the end of the project.

The marked indicators (written in bold) are program indicators and it is mandatory for the applicant to choose some of them.

Outputs

- **number of new researchers in the institution benefitting of support (equivalent to full-time jobs)***
- **value in RON of private contribution in the project (eligible and non-eligible)**
- number of patent requests derived from the project – published in BOPI (or published in equivalent journals from other countries)

Results

- scientific publications derived from the project (no. of articles)
- **scientific public-private co-publications (no. of articles)**
- no. of project proposals submitted at Horizon 2020
- **value in EUR of contracted projects within Horizon 2020**

*new jobs created for research and development activities. The jobs must be a consequence of the implementation or completion of the project. The people for these positions must be employed in the applicant institution and the goal is to increase the total number of research jobs in the research organization/enterprise.

Throughout the project implementation period, the beneficiary shall send trimestral technical progress reports to IB Research.

It is mandatory for the applicant to achieve all indicators and this is monitored throughout the project implementation period.

The financing contract provides that, in relation with the obligation assumed by the beneficiary, in case the project does not fully achieve all indicators assumed by contract, the grant shall be reduced proportionally, unless duly justified.

8.1 Cost details for each expenditure category

The applicant shall fill in the table at point 8.1 with direct eligible costs, in compliance with the information provided at point 2.4 in Section E of the present Guide (A1-A7, B, C, E8, E9).

The applicant shall include the D category of expenditure “The general administration costs (overheads)” in indirect eligible costs.

The costs for the final audit of the project are included in the non-eligible costs, no matter the type of the applicant.

For enterprises, non-eligible costs also include:

- costs for information and publicity for the project
- costs for project management.