

Rules for the grant year 2015

1 ELIGIBILITY RULES FOR PROPOSALS

The role of the Icelandic Research Fund (IRF) is to enhance scientific research and research education in Iceland. For this purpose the IRF awards funding to research students and defined research projects led by individuals, research teams, universities, research institutes, and companies (cf. Act 3/2003 with later amendments).

Principal Investigators (PIs) must have completed their graduate studies at an internationally accredited university and have experience in running research projects. If a proposal is based on a doctoral research project, the student's supervisor must be listed as the PI. If the doctoral student has been decided upon the student shall be listed as a co-proposer. No specific application forms are available for doctoral students but funding for doctoral students can be applied for on the forms for project grants and grants of excellence.

The same individual may apply for any number of grants as a PI. It is not possible to apply for more than one grant type (Postdoctoral fellowship, Project grant, Grant of excellence) for the same research project.

2 GRANT TYPES

2.1 GRANTS OF EXCELLENCE

Grants of excellence are awarded to large scale projects with the aim to carry Icelandic research to the international forefront. The PI and co-proposers shall have a recognized track record in their respective research fields and be experienced in running large scale research projects. Named doctoral students participating in the project should be listed as co-proposers.

The project shall have clear objectives, research plan and well-defined milestones. The project cost should be justified; the expenditure of the grant defined, and it should be stated who will carry out each part of the project. A detailed budget and cost justification is required, clearly explaining all parts of the project, their individual cost and

financing. The proposal shall clearly describe the proposed deliverables and impact of the project.

In addition to the above the following criteria have to be fulfilled and be clearly addressed in the proposal:

- The PI shall be a scientist with a recognized track record, leadership qualities and experience in running research projects.
- Grants of excellence are for research groups and thus, co-proposers are required in addition to the PI.
- A contribution of master's and doctoral students. If applying for salaries of named doctoral students, the student has to submit a letter of intent explaining his/her future plans and how the project fits therein.
- Co-operation with foreign research teams and scientists.

Grants of excellence are funded for up to 36 months. The maximum grant is ISK 105 million for a 36 months project, ISK 70 million for a 24 months project, and ISK 35 million for a 12 months project. A fairly even distribution is expected from one year to the next.

The grant from the IRF can fund up to 85% of the total project cost, 15% are financed from other sources. Proposers may request funding for financing overhead and facilities. This cost can be up to 20% and is added to the total amount of the grant excluding contracted services.

Grants of excellence can serve as matching contributions or additional financing for large projects supported by foreign competition funds.

Projections of maximum grants from the IRF depend on the appropriations to the fund in 2015. The IRF reserves the right to review the rules on funding levels should changes be made to these plans.

2.2 PROJECT GRANTS

Project grants are funded for up to 36 months. The maximum grant is ISK 30 million for a 36 months project, ISK 20 million for a 24 months project, and

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ISK 10 million for a 12 months project. A fairly even distribution is expected from one year to the next.

The grant from the IRF can fund up to 85% of the total project cost, 15% are financed from other sources. Proposers may request funding for financing overhead and facilities. This cost can be up to 20% and is added to the total amount of the grant excluding contracted services.

The project shall have clear objectives, research plan and well-defined milestones. The project cost should be justified; the expenditure of the grant defined, and it should be stated who will carry out each part of the project. A detailed budget and cost justification is required, clearly explaining all parts of the project, their individual cost and financing. The proposal shall clearly describe the proposed deliverables and impact of the project.

If applying for salaries of named doctoral students, the student has to submit a letter of intent explaining his/her future plans and how the project fits therein.

Projections of maximum grants from the IRF depend on the appropriations to the fund in 2015. The IRF reserves the right to review the rules on funding levels should changes be made to these plans.

2.3 POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

Postdoctoral fellowships are available for young scientists having received their Ph.D. degree within 5 years from the start of the project (signing of contract with IRF). The eligible proposer will have obtained an invitation from a host institution (preferably different from the institution awarding the Ph.D. degree). The fellowship is funded for up to 36 months. The maximum grant level is ISK 21 million for a 36 months project, ISK 14 million for a 24 months project, and ISK 7 million for a 12 months project. A fairly even distribution is expected from one year to the next. The grant provided by the IRF amounts to a total of 100% of the total project cost. Proposers may request funding for financing overhead and facilities. This cost can be up to 20% and is added to the total amount of the grant excluding contracted services.

The project shall have clear objectives, research plan and well-defined milestones. A detailed budget and cost justification is required. The proposal shall clearly describe the proposed deliverables, milestones and impact of the project. In addition the proposer shall explain how the fellowship fits with previous work, how it will enhance his/her career development and as well as inform about the proposer's future research plans.

Projections of maximum grants from the IRF depend on the appropriations to the fund in 2015. The IRF reserves the right to review the rules on funding levels should changes be made to these plans.

3 PUBLICATIONS AND USE OF THE PROJECT RESULTS

According to Act no. 3/2003 with later amendments about public funding of scientific research, the results of research funded by the public funds should be published in open access unless otherwise agreed upon.

RANNIS encourages grantees to publish their results in open access journals or in open repositories parallel to a publication in traditional closed subscription journals. Grantees can request exemption from this rule to RANNIS.

Grantees are to recognise that the project was funded by the IRF and refer to the Icelandic Research Fund (i. Rannsóknasjóður) and grant number in publications about the projects and the results.

4 ELIGIBLE COST

The IRF can, on the basis of the review process, decide to support only a part of the work packages described in a given proposal. Grants are provided for up to 36 months providing there is satisfactory progress in the projects, and subject to appropriations to the fund. The IRF enters its first grant agreement with the grantee within four months from the funding decision, and continuation is dependent on the progress of the project.

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4.1 SALARIES AND RELATED COSTS

The following table shows the maximum salaries (including related expenses) per month approved by the IRF for 2015:

Level	Max. per month (ISK)
Senior personnel 1 (e.g. full professor)	670.000
Senior personnel 2 (e.g. associate or assistant professor)	550.000
Postdoctoral researcher	480.000
Doctoral student	350.000
Researcher	350.000
Master's degree student	300.000

Each master's degree student is funded for a maximum period of 12 months irrespective of the duration of the project. All other participants may be funded up to 36 months.

IRF awards may not be used to augment the total salary of those who are simultaneously receiving full pay for other work (including pension).

4.2 OPERATIONAL EXPENSES

This item shall consist of the sum of all the necessary supplies for the project with the exception of items coming under overhead or facilities. Operational expenses and its relation to the proposed activities must be justified in detail on the electronic proposal form.

Expenses for instruments and equipment can be applied for. Expenses of up to ISK 1,000 thousand for Project grants and ISK 3,000 thousand for Grants of excellence may be entered for each 12 months. Proposals for more expensive instruments

and equipment shall be submitted to the Infrastructure Fund (note that the minimum amount for proposals for the Infrastructure Fund is ISK 2,000 thousand). Calls for Infrastructure Fund proposals are announced 6 weeks before the deadline. Initial expenses and its relation to the proposed activities must be justified in detail on the electronic proposal form and price quotes attached.

4.3 TRAVEL EXPENSES

This item consists of the sum total of travel and subsistence expenses necessary for the continuation of the project. All travel expenses must be justified and explained how they relate to the project.

4.4 CONTRACTED SERVICES

This item contains work which is not carried out by the participants in the project while being necessary for its progress. Contracted service and its relation to the proposed activities must be justified in detail on the electronic proposal form and price quotes attached. No overhead can be claimed for contracted services.

4.5 DISSEMINATION COST

Expenses of up to ISK 500 thousand for dissemination (e.g. printing cost) may be entered as operational expenses on the final project year. Dissemination cost and its relation to the proposed activities must be justified in detail on the electronic proposal form.

4.6 OVERHEAD AND FACILITIES

Proposers can request funding for financing overhead and facilities up to 20% of total cost (excluding Contracted services). All cost related to overhead and facilities must be justified in detail on the electronic proposal form.

4.7 OTHER FINANCING

Other or own financing can be any cost related to the project except overhead.

Note that all unexplained cost will be rejected.

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The IRF reserves the right to review the rules on eligible cost and to call for any additional explanation from proposers regarding cost justification before deciding on funding.

5 PEER REVIEW AND EVALUATION PROCESS

The Science Committee of the Science and Technology Policy Council (STPC) appoints expert panels, each consisting of seven individuals (two from outside of Iceland), with extensive research experience. The fields are as follows:

- Engineering, technical sciences and physical sciences
- Natural sciences and environmental sciences
- Health sciences and life sciences
- Social sciences and public health
- Humanities and arts

At least two experts outside of Iceland review each proposal. The expert panels then review all the proposals, establish a ranking list based on the expert evaluations, and finalise each proposal with a written report. When allocations of funds have been agreed upon proposers receive an evaluation and a ranking of the proposal.

The chairmen of the expert panels meet to discuss any matters of contention which may have arisen, before they finalise their reports to the board of the IRF.

In addition to the review submitted by the expert panels, the IRF board must take into consideration the funding policy approved by the Science and technology policy council in their deliberations.

Before the IRF board makes final decisions on any funding it will discuss the proposed funding decision in a meeting with the chairmen of the expert panels.

The IRF boards funding decision is final. Under Art. 4 of the Act No. 3/2003 the funding decisions of the IRF board are not subject to administrative complaints.

6 DISTRIBUTION OF PAYMENTS AND PROGRESS REPORTS

The first payment (25%) is made on March 1, provided the grant agreement has been signed, the second payment (25%) is made on June 1, the third payment (25%) is made on September 1, and the final payment (25%) on January 20 the following year provided the annual report has been approved. When the annual report has been approved, next year's grant agreement will be sent to the PIs.

Progress reports (annual reports and final reports) are reviewed by the staff at RANNIS and they make recommendations on continued support to the IRF Board. The IRF Board and the staff at RANNIS have the authority to request, if necessary, further information from the grantees upon the review of the annual reports. The expert panels will review annual reports if the RANNIS staff or the IRF Board considers this necessary.

6.1 ANNUAL REPORTS

By January 10 each year, an annual report shall be submitted describing the progress of the project during the previous year. It shall give an account of all important changes in the project and confirm that the research plan has been complied with. Furthermore, a cost estimate for the following grant year shall be submitted.

6.2 FINAL REPORTS

Upon the conclusion of a project the PIs shall submit a final report explaining the work undertaken in the project, its final results and conclusions. The final payment shall be made when the report has been approved. The review of the final report will be taken into consideration if the PI applies for a grant from the IRF for new projects.

7 PROPOSALS - INSTRUCTIONS

All proposals and supporting documents should be in English without exemptions. All proposals must be submitted through the RANNIS electronic proposal system (see further guidelines on the RANNIS website).

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Proposals must be submitted into the electronic proposal system of RANNIS by 17:00 on June 2, 2014.

All incomplete proposals will be rejected.

All proposals should be submitted with the following appendices:

- Project description (specific form available at the RANNIS website).

When the project description form is completed, the bibliography is cut from the project description and the two documents are uploaded separately into the electronic proposal form as pdf files where a page count is performed on the project description. If page limits are exceeded the system rejects the document.

Project description for Project grant shall not exceed 17 pages, including title page and guidelines (1.5 line spacing, 12 pt Times/Times New Roman). Proposals disregarding these rules will be rejected.

Project description for Grant of excellence shall not exceed 22 pages, including title page and guidelines (1.5 line spacing, 12 pt Times/Times New Roman). Proposals disregarding these rules will be rejected.

Project description for Postdoctoral fellowship shall not exceed 14 pages, including title page and guidelines (1.5 line spacing, 12 pt Times/Times New Roman). Proposals disregarding these rules will be rejected.

The project description shall explain the following and be divided into the following sections:

- Objectives of the project and originality*
- State of the art and proficiency*
- Methodology, work plan and timescale*
- Milestones and deliverables*
- Co-operation (domestic/foreign)*
- Contribution of doctoral and master's degree students to the project (if appl.)*
- Impact*
- Proposed publication of results*

- Career development plan (specific for Postdoctoral Fellowship proposals)*

Sections e, f, h, and i are not required if the project is solely based on a doctoral project.

- CV of principal investigator and other proposers including doctoral students (form available on RANNIS website). The CV is divided into predefined chapters and proposers are asked to fill in relevant information only.
- Price quotes (if applying for equipment purchase).
- Other appendices (if relevant):
 - Doctoral student's letter of intent.
 - Confirmation of "other participants".
 - Invitation letter from host institution to post-doctoral candidate.

No other appendices should accompany the proposal.

The proposers make the obvious demand that all those reviewing the proposal are experts in the field of science under which the proposal falls. In return, one of the prime premises for a high-quality review is that the project has been described in detail so that the review can be made on the basis of the information provided in the proposal. A high-quality project description will facilitate the professional review of the proposal. The following points should be kept in mind:

It is imperative that the project has well-defined objectives and has been divided into well-defined work packages. Each work package of the project should be described individually, their respective connection explained, as applicable, and the time necessary for each to be estimated.

The main milestones in the project planning and schedule that mark the boundary between the stages in the project shall be described. In the event of a two or a three-year project, such milestones shall be defined and described for the end of the first, second and third grant year.

Research methods shall be described in detail and the reasons for choosing the specific methods

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stated. The methodology used for data collection and interpretation must be justified.

Any co-operation within the project should be explained, both between the different scientists and researchers, and whether there is active co-operation between universities, institutions and companies. International co-operation in the project should be especially explained.

Information on which parts of the project comprise doctoral or master's degree projects, if applicable, and at which school (or department) the students are studying, and what the students' contribution in the project entails.

Explanations and arguments should be given for the expected benefit and utilization of the results of the project. The benefit could be knowledge-related, environmental, economic, social, etc. The deliverables of the projects would be measurable "units" resulting from the project. Examples of deliverables are: published scientific articles, university diplomas, software, databases, prototypes, production methods, new products, patents, models, research methods, and confirmed scientific theories.

Furthermore, it should be explained how the results would be promoted, as well as their publications in professional journals, reports, conferences, etc., and whether, and then how, the proprietary rights to the results would be protected.

The IRF would like to advise the proposers to acquire the necessary permits from the Data Protection Authority, the National Bioethics Committee and/or the Animal Testing Committee, as applicable.