

FNP Board-issued recommendations for IRAP unit directors

In order to implement the projects aimed at the creation of world class research units in Poland in line with the Competition Documentations for IRAP calls, FNP prepared additional recommendations for all IRAP units. The views of the FNP are based on the objectives of the IRAP and on best practice, the implementation of which is the goal of the programme.

All IRAP units have to take into consideration these recommendations and find the best way to address them in management and the coordination of their projects. During mid-term evaluations the FNP and its experts will evaluate the implementation of the recommendations.

1. International Scientific Committee

As IRAP units develop, members of International Scientific Committees should actively be discouraged from collaboration with scientists working in the units, which the ISC oversees and evaluates. New ISC members should not have any active projects, and ideally little or no past collaboration with IRAP unit PIs in order to avoid a conflict of interest.

The FNP Board believes that such actions are essential to the creation of truly autonomous International Scientific Committees that can oversee the achievement of the highest scientific and science management standards.

2. New research group leaders

One of the ultimate goals for the International Research Agendas Programme is to create world-class research units, therefore excellence-based recruitment is key to the success of all units and the program itself. Consequently, in order to continually strive for scientific innovation, the projects directors must continue to aim for all newly created groups be better than those already established at the units. Moreover, in order to guarantee the highest standards of carrying out the research described in the International Research Agenda, all newly recruited research group leaders are requested to write up their own research plan, which will outline how their research contributes to the Research Agenda.

3. Commercialization

In line with the requirements of the Competition Documentation three years into the project at least 2 research groups have to have collaboration agreements signed with business organizations. The FNP is dedicated to supporting all beneficiaries in their efforts to commercialize their results and make them more widely available to the economy and society in general. FNP employees will be tasked with providing any additional assistance that may be required. However, each IRAP unit should also have dedicated staff who, while prioritizing the security of the IRAP unit's legal rights to

research results, incl. intellectual property rights, will work horizontally across all research teams and be kept up to date on any developments, which may have a potential meaningful economic and/or societal impact.

The Board also perceives gradually introducing changes to VAT status as a critical issue. Should VAT costs still be covered 100% from project funds during the second mid-term evaluation, this will be considered as evidence for the lack of appropriately advanced R&D activities. As the project develops, and if the potential for pursuing economic activity is adequately fostered, the Board believes VAT costs should increasingly be covered through refunds from the Tax Office.

4. Core facilities

The creation of core facilities is intrinsically embedded into the vision of International Research Agendas Programme. Each IRAP unit (where feasible) should strive to create a core facility financed through their project funds.

The core facility is typically led by a leader who is not directly involved with the implementation of the research agenda. Should the equipment-related experience of a prospective candidate make them a valuable core facility leader their research program need to be closely related to the IRAP project. However, in this case their group is not included in the total of the minimum 5 research groups that need to be created at the IRAP unit. Nevertheless, the core facility leader should also have a research group and a research program as well as research budget of their own.

5. Remuneration Bylaws

The Competition Documentation for the International Research Agendas sets uniform remuneration rates across all IRAP units in Poland. As the beneficiary of the European Regional Development Fund under the Smart Growth Operational Programme (SG OP) the Foundation decides on the rates, however eligibility guidelines also pertain to qualification of remuneration costs in IRAP projects. The Board therefore considers it of utmost importance that all IRAP units have unit-specific remuneration bylaws, which introduce uniform remuneration conditions for all persons with the same job title/ position. All positions should have the required qualifications enumerated to enable direct comparisons.

Costs pertaining to IRAP unit staff remunerations will be qualified if, and only if, their value is equivalent to the rates applied throughout the unit, irrespective of the funding source, and are the same for analogous positions and for positions requiring analogous qualifications. The same requirements pertain also to other parts of the salary, such as bonuses.

The Board suggests that these bylaws can introduce a gradation in the remuneration and job titles of team leaders, whereby should the team leader that is recruited be judged as junior in terms of qualifications their ultimate final salary, following negotiations, can be lower (please refer to First TEAM or TEAM regulations at FNP).

This is essential also in light of the fact that all IRAP team leaders are encouraged to apply for funding to the European Research Council, and should they be successful their salaries will be based on the unit's bylaws.

The bylaws will be evaluated during the annual reviews, however in the meantime IRAP units are welcome to consult their drafts and/or ready documents with FNP.

6. Public tenders

The FNP Board acknowledges that in order to enable world-class research, IRAP units must be able to effectively and efficiently purchase all required materials, consumables and equipment (as detailed in the budget approved by FNP). The Board also acknowledges that all purchases must be completed with strict adherence to the law and internal regulations.

Therefore, in light of the complexity of public tender and purchase procedures in a multiyear project such as IRAP, and in order to improve purchase and tender effectiveness thereby facilitating the attainment of optimum research conditions for IRAP unit staff the Board recommends that the universities/institutes at which IRAP units are based secure the following:

- The tender and purchase office at the host institution should be consulted at every stage, importantly also when designing the purchase plan and estimating procurement values. In order to facilitate these contacts and ensure an effective working relationship universities/ institutes should have a full-time member of staff employed at the public tenders office who would exclusively manage IRAP unit purchases.
- As IRAP units grow and the number of researchers increases there should be a proportional increase in administration staffing in order to provide efficient support.

7. Research data management

In line with international, as well as national efforts to preserve research data and improve its accessibility the FNP Board recommends that all units initiate preparations for completing unit-specific Data Management Plans (DMPs).

The Board's request is motivated by the provisions of IRAP contracts and the belief that data management is simply good research practice and therefore, many units will have already had some form of formal or informal data management in place. The requirement for a formal DMP has been instituted as a means of ensuring (and/or showing) that all IRAP units have considered how to create, store, backup, share and preserve data, including selecting appropriate software.

DMPs will need to be submitted by all IRAP units as part of their second mid-term report.

The following categories, which are already used in international projects by National Science Centre, will apply:

1.	Data description and collection or re-use of existing data
1.1	How will new data be collected or produced and/or how will existing data be re-used?
1.2	What data (for example the kinds, formats, and volumes) will be collected or produced?
2	Documentation and data quality
2.1	What metadata and documentation (for example methodology or data collection and way of organising data) will accompany data?
2.2	What data quality control measures will be used?
3	Storage and backup during the research process
3.1	How will data and metadata be stored and backed up during the research process?
3.2	How will data security and protection of sensitive data be taken care of during the research?
4.	Legal requirements, codes of conduct
4.1	If personal data are processed, how will compliance with legislation on personal data and on data security be ensured?
4.2	How will other legal issues, such as intellectual property rights and ownership, be managed? What legislation is applicable?
5.	Data sharing and long-term preservation
5.1	How and when will data be shared ? Are there possible restrictions to data sharing or embargo reasons?
5.2	How will data for preservation be selected, and where will data be preserved long-term (for example a data repository or archive)?
5.3	What methods or software tools will be needed to access and use the data?
5.4	How will the application of a unique and persistent identifier (such as a Digital Object Identifier (DOI)) to each data set be ensured?

6.	Data management responsibilities and resources
6.1	Who (for example role, position, and institution) will be responsible for data management (i.e the data steward)?
6.2	What resources (for example financial and time) will be dedicated to data management and ensuring the data will be FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Re- usable)?

