

The PostdokGrant Programme of the Slovak Academy of sciences (SAS)

THE GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS IN THE CALL 2024

1. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE POSTDOKGRANT PROGRAMME

The Programme is aimed for young researchers at the initial stage of their scientific career and who are employed in the SAS organizations. Its aim is to provide financial support for an independent research project in all areas of research being covered by the SAS organizations. The program does not provide support for activities of an economic nature. The Grants are intended for individual researchers, not for research teams.

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The basic precondition is obtaining a PhD. or an equivalent degree (considered according to the ERC policy on PhD. and equivalent doctoral degrees). If the diploma confirming this degree was issued in a language other than Slovak, Czech or English, the English translation of the diploma is required.

Not more than 5 years must have elapsed from the date of the defence to the start date of the project being published in the current call. For instance, if the project is due to start on the 1 July 2024, the defence could take place on the 1 July 2019 or later. The period of five years does not include time on maternity, paternity or parental leave. A request for an extension of the time limit must be justified and supported by appropriate documentation - a certificate issued, for example, by the human resources department of the particular workplace. If, for serious reasons, it is not possible to obtain the certificate, it may be replaced by an affidavit explaining the reasons why it is not possible to obtain the certificate.

When submitting a project, the applicant must be employed in established weekly full-time (i.e. 100% full-time) position in a single organisation of the SAS, i.e. he/she must not be employed full-time in several organisations of the SAS at the same time. It is assumed that he/she shall have such full-time employment throughout the duration of the project. He/she may carry out a project in another organisation for a maximum of 6 months (e.g. during research in archives, measurements on unique instruments, etc.) for the entire duration of the project. During such stays, it is expected that his/her full-time employment in the home organisation shall be maintained.

In order to avoid double funding, a researcher holding an R2/R3/R4 fellowship (the call code 09I03-03-V04) or a fellowship from the call to support researchers at risk of conflict in Ukraine (the call code 09I03-03-V01) is not an eligible applicant.

Work on the PostdokGrant does not conflict with participation in VEGA or APVV grants. If the principal researcher holding the R3/R4 grant pays a reward to a postdoctoral fellow who is a member of the research team in the R3/R4 project and at the same time this postdoctoral fellow wants to apply for support under this ESG call, this is not considered double funding.

3. HOW TO FILE THE APPLICATIONS

The applications shall be filed via the website <https://postdokgrant.sav.sk/>

The application shall be drawn up and sent by the applicant. The application may be written in Slovak or English. The annotation must be written in both Slovak and English. The annotation may be made public (usually the Slovak version) as part of the promotion of the SAS, therefore it must not contain confidential information about the project.

The call closure date, which is stated in the call, is fixed and shall be strictly adhered to. Applications must be filed on or before this deadline. The online system will be closed at the deadline and access to the system will no longer be possible after that point. A printed version, signed by the applicant and the statutory representative of the SAS organisation, shall be delivered to:

Úrad Slovenskej akadémie vied - Odbor vedy a výskumu

Štefánikova 49

814 38 Bratislava

The envelope shall be marked with the password: "PostdokGrant". The paper version must be sent or delivered in person within three working days after the closing date for applications. The postmark on the envelope or the date of filing to the Office of the SAS is decisive for the assessment of compliance with the deadline.

By the end of the calendar month following the month in which the project was completed, the applicant is required to submit a final report. If this deadline falls on a public holiday or a weekend, the deadline shall be postponed to the next working day.

The final report shall contain a brief evaluation of the project results, which have been achieved during its implementation, in relation to the objectives declared. If the planned objectives have not been met, a justification shall be given as to why. The report shall also include a list of outputs, such as conference presentations and articles in scientific journals. Copies of published outputs, including conference abstracts, are annexed to the final report. Publications are not a criterion for the success of a project, as in most cases one and a half year is a short time for a good quality publication output. Outputs that include data generated by the project should also include an acknowledgement of the project, identified by its project number. A summary of expenditures is also part of the report. It should specify what the money was spent on in each category. For consumables, categories are sufficient (e.g. disposable plastics), there is no need to list all goods. For conference expenditure, the name, time and place of the conference and the title and authors of the paper should be given. For other travel, the purpose, location and duration shall be stated.

The final report shall be submitted both electronically and in hard copy following the application submission instructions above.

4. PROJECT

There is no limit to the number of characters in each section of the application - the maximum length of the application shall be kept to 5 A4 pages and the structure shall be adhered to.

The grant application is structured as follows:

- a) basic data about the investigator
- b) a brief summary of the project (annotation)
- c) a description of the scientific objectives of the project

- d) the current status of the issue with references to relevant literature
- e) project methodology
- f) the financial costs of the project and their justification

The maximum scope applies to parts (b) to (e). The application must be written in English or Slovak at the applicant's choice. The annotation must be in both languages. As this may be made public, it shall not contain sensitive information about the project.

After filing your application, the system will warn you if you have exceeded the allowed range and allow you to edit the text.

5. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Successful applicants shall receive funds according to their project's approved budget. Disbursement is possible in accordance with the approved budget breakdown under the items Goods (materials), Services, Travel (for conferences and for work on the project itself) and Other (publishing). Travel expenses for conferences may represent a maximum of 20 % of the total project budget. If the travel expenses also include travel related to the project, e.g. research in archives, field collection of materials, measurements on a special instrument only available at another (usually abroad) site (e.g. CERN, DESY, etc.), the travel item may be amounting to up to 70% of the project budget. In such case, the travel costs for conferences are included in this 70 % and may not exceed 20 % of the total budget, i.e. the travel costs up to a maximum of 70 % of the total budget are composed of the travel costs for the project plus the travel costs for conferences (e.g. 50 % + 20 %; 60 % + 10 %; etc.).

Instruments and equipment costing more than €1,700 and software or valuation rights costing more than €2,400 may not be purchased as the Goods item. These items are assumed to be purchased at the beginning in order to be used efficiently to address the project.

Material not consumed during the project remains the property of the organisation in which the researcher was employed.

Transfers between items against the approved budget are possible up to a maximum of €1000. A higher transfer must be approved by the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee from the relevant section and the Chairperson of the Committee. The transfer request should be sent to postdokgrant@savba.sk. The money can only be spent according to the revised budget after the change has been approved.

The budget does not include overheads - indirect costs of the researcher's organisation or salaries. Expenditures related to activities occurring outside the funding period are not eligible.

The allocated budget will be disbursed in two instalments, one at the start of the project solution in summer 2024, the second in early 2025. In the application, the total amount of the grant should be divided into these two instalments according to the needs of the project. In the application, they will be listed as a total amount not divided into items. In the final project statement, the project must be broken down into items and adhere to the planned budget according to the conditions set out above. Carrying forward unspent money from 2024 to 2025 is not possible, any unspent funds will have to be returned to the central budget.

Project expenditure cannot be subject to double funding. This means that the same beneficiary cannot finance the same project expenditure simultaneously with several forms of support from public sources, European Union sources or other instruments of financial assistance granted by the SR.

6. EVALUATION AND SELECTION

In the first round, the applicant's eligibility criteria are assessed by the authorised staff of the SAS Office. Applications not fulfilling the eligibility criteria will be rejected. In the case of minor formal deficiencies, applicants will be invited to correct or complete their application. The results of the first-round evaluation will be sent by e-mail to the e-mail addresses provided by the applicants.

The evaluation of applications in the second round is carried out by the PostdocGrants Evaluation Committee.

The structure of the Committee is as follows:

- a) the Chairperson of the Committee
- b) the Vice Chairperson of the Committee – section Physical, Space, Earth, and Engineering Sciences
 - i. Member for Earth and Space sciences
 - ii. Member for Mathematical-Physical sciences
 - iii. Member for Technical sciences
- c) Vice Chairperson of the Committee – section for Life and Chemical sciences
 - i. Member for Medical sciences
 - ii. Member for Biological and Chemical sciences
 - iii. Member for Agricultural and Veterinary sciences
- d) Vice Chairperson of the Committee – section for Social and cultural sciences
 - i. Member for History sciences
 - ii. Member for Humanities and Social sciences
 - iii. Member for Culture and Art sciences

Each project will be evaluated by two expert evaluators. In addition to assigning points, the evaluators will also comment on each criterion in writing. Based on the expert evaluators' judgements, the committee will rank the projects within the individual scientific sections of the SAS and divide the applications into three categories:

- A. Applications recommended for full funding.
- B. Applications recommended for reduced funding.
- C. Applications not recommended for funding.

When making its decision, the Committee considers the proportional representation of applications from the individual scientific sections of the SAS in A category.

The proposal to rank applications in individual categories shall be approved by the Presidium of the SAS according to the proposal made by the Evaluation Committee. No appeal is

possible against the Presidium of SAS decision on applications ranked into the individual categories.