2019

Regulations of the competition for research and development projects involving non-commercial clinical trials

COMPETITION NUMBER: ABM/2019/1

APPROVED BY:.....

/SIGNATURE/

Table of Contents:

1. Glossary

1) **ABM, Agency –** Medical Research Agency;
2) **Clinical Trial/Study** – means a trial conducted with the participation of human subjects in order to discover or confirm clinical and pharmacological, including pharmacodynamic, effects of one or many investigational medicinal products or in order to identify adverse effects of one or many investigational medicinal products or in order to monitor the absorption, distribution, metabolism and elimination of one or many investigational medicinal products, considering their safety and efficacy.
3) **Research study** – means a research study within the meaning of Article 4(2) of the Act of 20 July 2018 on Higher Education and Science (Journal of Laws 2018, item 1668, as amended) in the field of medical and health sciences or interdisciplinary research involving at least two fields at least one of which is medical science of health science;
4) **GCP –** Good Clinical Practice, an international medical, ethical and research standard for planning, conducting, documenting and publishing studies on humans. Compliance with the standard ensures that the rights and safety of study participants are protected and that the data obtained is reliable;
5) **Competition** – means a call for proposals for implementation and financing of projects, announced and conducted by the Agency;
6) **Non-commercial clinical trial (NCCT)** – a clinical trial where the owner of the data obtained during the trial is a sponsor being a university or a federation of higher education and science institutions within the meaning of the Act of 20 July 2018 on Higher Education and Science, or another entity authorized to grant at least the scientific degree of a doctor of philosophy pursuant to the above Act, a medical facility as referred to in Article 4(1) of the Medical Activiy Act of 15 April 2011 (Journal of Laws 2018, item 2190, 1629; 2019, item 492, 2219, 730, 959), an investigator, a patient organization, an investigator organization or another natural or legal person or organizational unit without legal personality whose objective is not to derive profit from conducting or organizing clinical trials or from manufacturing or trading in medicinal products. The data generated in a non-commercial clinical trial cannot be used to obtain marketing authorization for a medicinal product, to amend an existing authorization or for marketing purposes;
7) **President** – means the President of the Medical Research Agency;

8) **Project** – means an undertaking implemented as part of the Agency's tasks referred to in Article 15(2) of the Medical Research Agency Act with a specific financial value, carried our within pre-defined time limits under an agreement, or a research study, or development activities referred to in Article 15(1)(5) and (6) of the Medical Research Agency Act;
9) **Council** – Council of the Medical Research Agency;
10) **IT system** – system within the meaning of Article 3(3) of the Act of 17 February 2005 on the informatization of the operation of entities performing public tasks (Journal of Laws 2019, items 700, 730, 848, 60, 1590) used for submitting applications;
11) **URPL** – Office for Registration of Medicinal Products, Medical Devices and Biocidal Products;
12) **Medical Research Agency Act** – the Medical Research Agency Act of 21 February 2019 (Journal of Laws 2019, item 447);
13) **Application** – means an application for project implementation and financing submitted as part of the competition via an IT system.

2. Background information

Competition No ABM/2019/1 is published by the Medical Research Agency (ABM). The Agency is a state-owned legal person responsible for promoting advancement in the area of medical sciences and health sciences. ABM is en entity whose objective is to support the processes contributing to an increase in innovation in the healthcare system. The Agency's operations in the area of financing research projects will bring tangible benefits to patients, in particular by helping to evaluate which new medical technologies and therapeutic methods should be used to meet healthcare needs of our society and to improve treatment efficacy.

The main objectives set for the Medical Research Agency by the legislator include promoting the advancement of medical and health sciences and contributing to an increase in innovation in Polish medicine by financing non-commercial clinical trials. Providing consistent support for the advancement of medical and health sciences by financing research projects will contribute not only to better treatment efficacy but will also help to increase the contribution of Polish researchers to the advancement of medical science.

2.1 Legal basis

The competition regulations have been drafted under Article 16(4) of the Medical Research Agency Act. Pursuant to the Act, the competition regulations set out the terms and procedure for selecting projects recommended for financing. The competition regulations are an instruction document, aiming to provide potential project implementors with all information necessary to apply for financing of research and development projects involving non-commercial clinical trials. The document includes information on the time limits, place and forms of submitting applications, the application form and its attachments, a template agreement for project implementation and financing, detailed project selection criteria and their weight.

Entities implementing research projects involving non-commercial clinical trials are obliged to comply in particular with the following provisions:

Acts:

- Medical Research Agency Act of 21 February 2019 (Journal of Laws 2019, item 447);
- Pharmaceutical Law Act of 6 September 2001 (Journal of Laws 2019, item 499, as amended);
- Act of 5 December 1996 on the Medical and Dental Professions (Journal of Laws 2019, items 537, 577, 730, 1590).

Regulations:

- Regulation of the Minister of Health of ..... on state aid and de minimis aid granted via the Medical Research Agency (.....);
- Regulation of the Minister of Health of 2 May 2012 on Good Clinical Practice (Journal of Laws 2012, item 489);
- Regulation of the Minister of Finance of 30 April 2004 on obligatory civil liability insurance for the investigator and sponsor (Journal of Laws No. 101, item 1034 and Journal of Laws No. 101, item 845);
- Regulation of the Minister of Health of 26 April 2012 on inspections of clinical trials (Journal of Laws 2012, item 477);
- Regulation of the Minister of Health of 30 April 2004 on the method of conducting clinical trials on minors (Journal of Laws No. 104, item 1108),
- Regulation of the Minister of Health of 12 October 2018 on templates of documents submitted in connection with a clinical trial of a medicinal product and payment of fees for submitting a clinical trial application (Journal of Laws 2018, item 1994);

- Regulation of the Minister of Health of 30 April 2004 on reporting serious unexpected adverse event related to a medicinal product (Journal of Laws No. 104, item 1107),
- Regulation of the Minister of Health of 9 November 2015 on Good Manufacturing Practice requirements (Journal of Laws 2019, item 728);
- Regulation of the Minister of Health and Social Welfare of 11 May 1999 on specific rules for appointing, funding and operation of Ethics Committees (Journal of Laws No. 47, Item 480).

2.2 Grounds for the competition

In Poland non-commercial clinical trials account for only 2 to 3% of all registered clinical trials. In Western Europe about 30% of all clinical trials are non-commercial, including academic research and development projects or investigator-initiated studies carried out by universities, scientific associations, research groups or research and development institutes. For example, in Austria non-commercial clinical trials make up over one-third of all conducted clinical trials, in Finland the figure exceeds 50%. Some of the main barriers to conducting non-commercial clinical trials in Poland include lack of an efficient financing mechanism.

The main objective of a clinical trial is to confirm the safety and efficacy of a medicinal product. A clinical trial has four main phases, and the positive results of phase 3 studies are necessary to initiate the drug registration procedure. A definition of a clinical trial is provided in the Pharmaceutical Law Act. Over the recent years the number of new registrations of clinical trials have remained at a level of 400 to 450 trials a year. Considering the duration of individual studies, it can be assumed that currently about 1500 clinical trials are being conducted in Poland.

Due to the lack of support for financing of non-commercial clinical trials so far, such studies account for a small part of all clinical trials in Poland. The number of registered non-commercial studies was as follows: 2011 – 3, 2012 – 8, 2013 – 2, 2014 – 8, 2015 – 15, 2016 – 14, 2017 – 24 and finally in 2018 – 11. The number of non-commercial clinical trials conducted in Poland in relation to commercial trials indicates an untapped potential of Polish research sites.

Usually, the objective of a non-commercial clinical trial is not to discover a new biologically active molecule and, as a result, place a new product on the market. Non-commercial clinical trials investigate

preparations and/or treatment methods that have already been registered and described. Most often, the objective of these trials is to compare already registered drugs or verify clinical efficacy of available therapies, which results in a choice of a more effective treatment method. Non-commercial trials are also carried out to investigate possible uses of medicinal products and drugs which are routinely used to treat adults in pediatric therapies. The purpose of a non-commercial clinical trial may also be to search for new potential treatments for rare diseases using preparations available on the market for new indications and not covered by a registration application. The results of non-commercial trials may lead to changes in existing treatment standards.

The main benefits of non-commercial clinical trials include:

- an opportunity to rationalize treatment costs;
- an opportunity to seek new therapeutic methods for diseases for which medicine does not offer any standard treatments;
- pursuit of research objectives that are socially vital (especially in pediatrics and rare diseases) that are of no direct interest to the pharmaceutical industry;
- an opportunity to optimize and introduce new applications of non-pharmacological treatments (radiotherapy, surgery) as well as treatment combining several therapeutic methods (e.g. radiochemotherapy, perioperative chemotherapy and others).

2.2.1 Principles of Good Clinical Practice

Clinical trials funded by the Medical Research Agency must be carried out in compliance with the principles of Good Clinical Practice (GCP), i.e.:

1. Clinical trials should be conducted on the basis of ethical principles which follow from the Declaration of Helsinki and which are compliant with GCP (Good Clinical Practice) requirements and applicable laws;
2. Before starting a clinical trial potential risks and discomforts for a participant and society in relation to expected benefits should be considered;
3. It should be borne in mind that the rights, safety and well-being of trial participants are an overriding value and are more important than the interests of science and society;

4. The results of non-clinical trials and data from previous clinical trials of the study product should sufficiently justify the proposed clinical trial;
5. Clinical trials should be justified from the scientific viewpoint and described in a detailed and clear protocol;
6. A clinical trial should be carried out as per the protocol accepted beforehand by an Ethics Committee;
7. Medical care should be provided and all medical decisions concerning clinical trial participants should be always taken by a qualified physician, or, where appropriate, dentist;
8. Each of the persons conducting a clinical trial should have relevant qualifications: educational background, training and experience matching the tasks to be performed by this person in the trial;
9. Informed and free consent to participation in a clinical trial should be obtained from each person participating in a clinical trial before joining the trial;
10. All information on a clinical trial should be registered, processed and stored in the manner that enables proper reporting, interpretation and verification;
11. Confidentiality of the data identifying trial participants should be ensured and protected as per applicable provisions on personal data protection;
12. The study product should be manufactured, transported and stored as per GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice) requirements. Product use should be consistent with the approved clinical trial protocol;
13. Systems and procedures which guarantee the quality of each aspect of a trial should be in place.

2.3 Purpose of the competition

The purpose of the competition is to finance research projects involving non-commercial clinical trials in the field of:

- paediatrics,
- neonatology,
- neurology,
- hematology,
- radiotherapy,
- oncology,

- cardiology.

The competition is in line with the **Clinical Research Development Program**, under which the operation of the Medical Research Agency is to help to increase the number of non-commercial clinical trials to the European average. The competition aims to ensure proper and smooth financing of non-commercial clinical trials in Poland and to stimulate innovation in Polish healthcare.

The objective of projects submitted in competition No. ABM/2019/1 is to carry out advanced research and development activities involving non-commercial clinical trials focusing on finding new therapeutic applications of authorized medicines (registered outside Poland or only in Poland) and used for indications other than described in the summary of product characteristics.

Financed under this competition may be both projects that have already been registered and projects which will be registered after obtaining a grant under this competition.

2.4 The amount of financing in the competition

The amount of the grant for the projects selected in the competition is **PLN 100,000,000.00.** Under Article 19(7) of the Medical Research Agency Act, the President of the Agency may increase the financing for the competition. If the allocation increases, information will be published on the website www.abm.gov.pl

The maximum allowed grant for a project is 100% of the costs of the trial.

It is recommended that the value of one project should be at least 15 million zloty.

2.5 Eligible applicants

Pursuant to Article 17(1) of the Medical Research Agency Act, the following entities may participate in the competition:

- entities referred to in Article 7(1)(1)-(6) and (8) of the Act of 20 July 2018 on Higher Education and Science. i.e.
  - universities;

- federations of higher education and science entities, hereinafter referred to as "federations";
- Polish Academy of Sciences, operating under the Act of 30 April 2010 on the Polish Academy of Sciences (Journal of Laws 2019, item 1183), hereinafter referred to as "PAN";
- PAN science institutes, operating under the Act referred to in point 3, hereinafter referred to as "PAN institutes";
- research institutes, operating under the Research Institutes Act of 30 April 2010 (Journal of Laws 2019, item 1350);
- international research institutes set up under separate laws operating in the territory of the Republic of Poland, hereinafter referred to as "international institutes";
- other entities involved mainly in research activity on a continuous and independent basis

- Centre of Postgraduate Medical Education referred to in the Act of 13 September 2018 on the Centre of Postgraduate Medical Education (Journal of Laws 2018, item 2024);
- healthcare facilities set up by a public medical university, or a university involved in teaching and research in the field of medical sciences, or the Centre of Postgraduate Medical Education;
- economic operators having a status of a research and development centre within the meaning of Article 17(2) of the Act of 30 May 2008 on certain forms of supporting innovation (Journal of Laws 2019, item 1402);
- entities involved in research and development activities:
  a) organizational units having legal personality and registered office in the Republic of Poland,
  b) economic operators operating in another form of organization than specified in point 3

Entities applying for a grant are obliged to make a statement that they have not received or applied for public funding from other sources for the tasks covered by the application (e.g. from the National Centre for Research and Development, National Science Centre, National Health Fund).

2.5.1 Partnerships

Partnerships and/or science consortia may be set up by entities contributing to the project human, organizational, technical or financial resources to implement the project jointly, hereinafter referred to as "partnership project" or "consortium project" on the terms set out in an agreement or

partnership/consortium contract. The key difference between partnership and outsourcing of tasks or purchase of services is that in the case of partnership the project, including its management, is implemented jointly.

A partnership/consortium must be set up or initiated before submitting a grant application. This means that it must be set up or initiated before the beginning of project implementation and the applicant files a partnership project grant application. This does not mean, however, that an agreement or partnership contract between the applicant and the partners must be signed before submitting a grant application. However, all partners/consortium participants must be listed in an application for financing. A partner/consortium member may be changed or added during project implementation upon written consent of the Medical Research Agency. A change of a partner requires a modification of the project grant application.

A partnership/consortium may be set up both between the institutions listed in point 2.5 of the regulations and entities not listed there. A condition for setting up a partnership with an entity not listed in point 2.5 is that the role of the partnership leader is entrusted to an entity that meets the conditions for applying for a grant.

2.6 Application submission

Applications are submitted electronically in the ABM IT system available on the website www.abm.gov.pl

An application can be submitted in Polish or English. When filling in an application care should be taken to include the information relating directly to the evaluation criteria set out in Chapter 4. Only complete applications which meet all the formal requirements specified in the competition notice will be accepted.

If there are any technical problems with the functioning of the IT system, the President of ABM may allow applications to be submitted in a way other than via the IT system. Information on a change in the way of application submission will be published on the Agency's website.

2.7 Timelines

A grant application should be submitted between **23 September 2019 and 29 November 2019** at noon, in an electronic format only via the ABM IT system available on the Agency's website www.abm.gov.pl

The date of submission of the electronic version of the grant application is considered to be the application receipt date.

A project may start no earlier than on 1 January 2020. The maximum project duration should not exceed 6 years.

3. Terms of financing non-commercial trials by the Medical Research Agency

According to plans, 100% of eligible costs of a non-commercial clinical trial will be financed. The following cost categories will be financed:

- costs of all medical procedures and laboratory tests provided for in the clinical trial protocol;
- costs of purchase/manufacture of medicines to be investigated in a clinical trial, purchase of placebo, costs of medicine disposal;
- costs of remuneration for the study team engaged in a non-commercial clinical trial project (co-investigators, nurses, laboratory staff, hospital pharmacy staff, etc.);
- trial preparation expenses, including the cost of developing a trial protocol, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), the cost of compiling full trial documentation, the cost of registering the trial with the Office for Registration of Medicinal Products, Medical Devices and Biocidal Products, the cost of the fee for an ethics committee's opinion;
- costs of engaging a CRO;
- costs associated with clinical trial administration, including purchase and maintenance of electronic Case Report Forms (eCRF), biostatic programs, costs of engaging a biostatistician, remuneration for monitors, auditors, pharmacovigilance officers, study coordinators, costs of other software for trial administration;
- costs of chemical reagents necessary for development activities;

- costs of purchase of the necessary research infrastructure, including laboratory equipment (20% of project costs);
- trial insurance costs;
- participant recruitment costs;
- costs of expert services.

The above list of costs is an open list.

3.1. Personnel costs

In a non-commercial trial costs related to engaging personnel (co-investigators, nurses, laboratory staff, hospital pharmacy staff, clinical trial coordinators, principal investigator, administrative staff, clinical trial monitors etc.) are allowed.

Personnel remuneration costs may be eligible under a project as long as they are justified and are necessitated by the project's characteristics. The scope of the planned project determines how and for what tasks personnel will be engaged.

The project personnel are people engaged to perform project tasks or activities under an employment contract (full-time or part-time) or a civil-law contract. The project personnel also include people engaged for the project receiving a task-based benefit or bonus in addition to their salary as well as self-employed people ("contract staff").

The expenses related to personnel remuneration must be incurred in compliance with national laws, in particular the Labour Code of 26 June 1974 (Journal of Laws 2019, item 1040, 2245, 1043).

The eligible components of staff remuneration are in particular:

- gross remuneration;
- social insurance premiums paid by the employer;
- premiums for the Employment Fund, Guaranteed Employee Benefits Fund, contributions to the Company Social Benefits Fund and contributions to the Employee Pension Scheme pursuant to the Employee Pension Scheme Act of 20 April 2004 (Journal of Laws 2016, item 1449);
- benefits (up to 50% of the base monthly salary of a given employee in the month when remuneration is paid);

- bonuses, on condition that a given employee is engaged for a project at least on a half-time basis. The bonus should be paid in proportion to the level of a person's engagement in the project, i.e. if a person works on a project on a half-time basis, then 50% of the bonus is classified as eligible costs.

The project personnel include in particular: principal investigator, co-investigators, coordinators, monitors, nurses, specialists in statistics, auxiliary personnel etc.

3.2 Transfer of funds

The grant awarded is paid to beneficiaries as an advance payment or reimbursement in the amount specified in the payment schedule;

The funds are paid to a separate bank account given in the grant agreement. If the bank account number changes, the entity implementing the project is obliged to promptly inform the Agency of the change in writing.

As a rule, the first grant tranche is an advance payment towards the costs of the trial registration process, purchase of insurance policy and engaging administrative and research personnel. The total amount of the first tranche should not be higher than PLN 250,000.00. The subsequent tranches are paid out as per the agreed schedule.

As a rule, the subsequent tranches may be paid only after the submission of properly documented settlement of 60% of the previously paid tranches. In exceptional circumstances and in justified cases, the beneficiary may receive the next tranche after submitting a relevant application if no major irregularities have been previously found in project implementation.

For projects carried out jointly with a foreign institution funds for project implementation may be paid only to the partner registered in Poland. Project funds cannot be used to finance the participation of patients in a non-commercial clinical trial outside Poland.

The payment of subsequent tranches is conditional on the amount of funds available to ABM. It is

accepted that annual trial budgets may have to be modifief. Each change of the amount of annual expenses planned in the project must be accepted by ABM and the project grant application form must be changed accordingly.

3.3 Settlement

A beneficiary who has been awarded a grant for project implementation submits interim reports on the use of funds, with the following information:

- description of actions taken as part of the project;
- description of results obtained in a given reporting period.

The declared expenses are verified on the basis of the actual progress of the project and verification of the achievement of planned indicators and milestones.

The first report is submitted within 3 months of the date of signing the grant agreement. Subsequent reports are submitted every 6 months, i.e. twice a year. The report consists of the technical and financial part, including such data as the list of accounting records for goods and/or services being part of the project.

The reports are submitted to the Medical Research Agency via the IT system referred to in Article 21(1) of the Act unless the President of the ABM decides otherwise.
A beneficiary who has been notified by the Agency of errors or missing data in the submitted report must correct the errors and provide the missing data within 14 days of receiving the relevant request. The Agency may make editing or calculating additions/corrections in the report without the beneficiary's approval. The Agency informs the beneficiary what corrections and additions have been made. If the beneficiary fails to correct errors or provide the data missing from the report, the report may be rejected and the payment of financing may be withheld. If the report is not submitted within the required time limit the Beneficiary is obliged to revise the payment schedule within the time limit accepted by the President of the Agency. If the entity implementing the project makes the same errors in project implementation and settlement, the President of the Agency may terminate the grant

agreement or find some expenses, in particular those related to project administration, to be ineligible. If the payment schedule is not revised as required, the Beneficiary may lose the right to receive the part of the grant that has not been paid yet. The beneficiary and project partners are obliged to keep separate accounting records for the project so as to enable identification of individual accounting and banking operations.

Expenses incurred in project implementation must comply with the rules for fair competition, openness and transparency, must be made without conflict of interest, and with impartiality and objectivity in the performance of the agreement.

The received funds which have not been used in a given budget year may be used in the following budget years on condition that ABM has accepted that.

All original accounting records of incurred costs must be properly labelled so that it is clear how they relate to the project. When labelling an accounting record the following information must be included:

a) agreement number,
b) task number (as per the project implementation schedule) to which the cost is related,
c) amount related to a particular task,
d) cost category.

A proof of an expense is an issued invoice or another equivalent accounting record. The classification of costs in terms of dates is made on the basis of issue date/date of entry in the accounts. In the process of settling the project the Agency may request that all or some source documents be submitted to the Agency.
Under Article 22 of the Medical Research Agency Act, following an inspection or on the basis of the analysis of an interim report and after consulting with the Council, the President of the Agency may withhold, stop or terminate the financing of a trial.

The Agency has a right to inspect the trial documentation at any time and during any stage of project implementation and within 5 years after the date of project completion. **The condition for settlement is the publication of a final report on a clinical trial in the ABM IT system.** All incurred costs must be settled within 100 days after project implementation is completed.

The part of the financing that has not been used by the beneficiary is returned to the Agency's bank account after project implementation is completed.

3.4 Termination of a clinical trial

At the end of every clinical trial a clinical study report (CSR) should be drawn up. The report should follow the structure set out in relevant guidelines, such as ICH GCP (Good Clinical Practice E6), a document drafted by the International Conference on Harmonization of Good Clinical Practice together with updates (Addendum E6 (R1)) and relevant guidelines of the European Medicines Agency. The clinical study report must also be prepared taking into account the international code of ethics, i.e. the Declaration of Helsinki, drafted by the World Medical Association. The guidelines for drafting a clinical study report are also provided in the Regulation of the Minister of Health of 2 May 2012 on Good Clinical Practice. The clinical study report must be drafted not later than within a year of completion of the clinical trial.

Also, if a trial is terminated early or is suspended, the President of the URPL, the Ethics Committee and investigators/research institutions should be promptly notified. The reasons for early termination or suspension should be provided.

3.4.1. Clinical study report (CSR)

A clinical study report is a document describing one clinical trial. While writing a report it should be demonstrated that all trial procedures and objectives set out in the trial protocol have been completed as planned. If there were any deviations, a detailed explanation must be provided. A clinical study report should include such information as the purpose and design of the trial, description of trial population, evaluation of the efficacy and safety profile of the drug as well as of the research methodology. Results and conclusions of the trial should be based on data from statistical analysis. In principle, an accepted document structure is based on the "information pyramid", which means that the report is structured into the following sections/modules: the title, summary, main body, tables, figures and case studies, attachments. For attachments and large format data sets a detailed reference should be provided to ensure efficient information retrieval.

4. Criteria for evaluating project grant applications

Every grant application submitted during the project submission period is subject to evaluation, unless it has been withdrawn by the applicant.

Project evaluation involves the verification if the project meets:

a) Formal criteria

b) Technical criteria:

- ✓ Statutory criteria;
- ✓ Specific criteria;
- ✓ Bonus criteria.

4.1 Formal criteria

Formal evaluation is based on *Formal evaluation sheet for project grant applications*, constituting Attachment No. 3 to the regulations. For certain formal deficiencies referred to below, the President of the Agency requests that they be corrected within 7 days or else the application will not be handled.

As a rule, formal evaluation is made within **14 days** of the receipt of a grant application.

The following criteria are verified during formal evaluation:

1) **Has the application been submitted in the required form and within the required time limit in the IT system? (YES/NO)**

   It is verified if the application for financing was submitted between 23 September 2019 and 29 November 2019 at noon, in an electronic format via the ABM IT system available on the Agency's website (www.abm.gov.pl). The date of submission of the electronic version of the grant application in the ABM application handling system is considered to be the application receipt date.

   Compulsory criterion (the criterion must be met for the grant to be awarded). If the criterion is not met, the formal evaluation of the application will be negative and the application will be rejected. No additions/corrections are possible for this criterion.

2) **Has the application been submitted by an eligible entity? (YES/NO)**

A list of entities eligible to submit a grant application is set out in Article 17(1) of the Act.

Compulsory criterion (the criterion must be met for the grant to be awarded). If the criterion is not met, the formal evaluation of the application will be negative and the application will be rejected. No additions/corrections are possible for this criterion.

3) **Has the applicant made a statement that they have not received or applied for public funding from other sources for the tasks covered by the application (e.g. from the National Centre for Research and Development, National Science Centre, National Health Fund)? (YES/NO)**

Entities applying for a grant are obliged to make a statement that they have not received or applied for public funding from other sources for the tasks covered by the application (e.g. from the National Centre for Research and Development, National Science Centre, National Health Fund). The applicant will be checked as per the provisions of the Public Finances Act (Journal of Laws 2013 item 885, as amened).

Compulsory criterion (the criterion must be met for the grant to be awarded). If the criterion is not met, the formal evaluation of the application will be negative and the application will be rejected. Additions/corrections are possible for this criterion.

4) **Has the application been completed in Polish or in English? (YES/NO)**

As per the competition regulations, an application can be submitted in Polish or in English.
Compulsory criterion (the criterion must be met for the grant to be awarded). If the criterion is not met, the formal evaluation of the application will be negative and the application will be rejected. No additions/corrections are possible for this criterion.

5) **Have all the boxes of the grant application form been filled in correctly? (YES/NO)**

All boxes of the application must be completed and all the required attachments must be included. The application should include the information relating directly to the evaluation criteria. Only complete applications which meet all the requirements specified in the competition notice will be accepted.

Compulsory criterion (the criterion must be met for the grant to be awarded). If the criterion is not met, the formal evaluation of the application will be negative and the application will be rejected. Additions/corrections are possible for this criterion.

6) **The project start date given in the application is after 1 January 2020. (YES/NO)**

The project start date is considered to be the date specified in the grant application. For "ongoing" trials the project start date means the date when the expenses become eligible. The reimbursement of expenses that have already been incurred is allowed.

Compulsory criterion (the criterion must be met for the grant to be awarded). If the criterion is not met, the formal evaluation of the application will be negative and the application will be rejected. Additions/corrections are possible for this criterion.

7) **The maximum project duration does not exceed 6 years. (YES/NO)**

The project implementation period covers both the trial itself and financial settlements. The start date of the project cannot be earlier than 1 January 2020 and the project completion date cannot be later than 31 December 2026. The final date of project implementation is understood as the final time limit for incurring project-related expenses.

Compulsory criterion (the criterion must be met for the grant to be awarded). If the criterion is not met, the formal evaluation of the application will be negative and the application will be rejected. Additions/corrections are possible for this criterion.

8) **Does the project involve non-commercial clinical trials in at least one the areas listed below:**

   - **paediatrics,**
   - **neonatology,**
   - **neurology,**
   - **hematology,**
   - **radiotherapy,**
   - **oncology,**
   - **cardiology?**

(YES/NO)

As per the rules for the competition, the competition is intended to finance projects in the above areas. The purpose of this criterion is to target support at the areas which are of key importance considering Poland's healthcare situation.

Compulsory criterion (the criterion must be met for the grant to be awarded). If the criterion is not met, the formal evaluation of the application will be negative and the application will be rejected. No additions/corrections are possible for this criterion.

9) **Has the applicant planned for the monitoring of indicators which are compulsory in this competition and is their value more than "zero", i.e. has the applicant planned for the monitoring of the following indicators:**

- Number of non-commercial clinical trials registered as a result of project implementation

- Number of trial subjects (size of the population covered by the intervention)

- Number of health facilities where the clinical trial will be conducted?

(YES/NO)

Compulsory criterion (the criterion must be met for the grant to be awarded). If the criterion is not met, the formal evaluation of the application will be negative and the application will be rejected. Additions/corrections are possible for this criterion.

4.2 Technical criteria

Each project is subject to technical evaluation unless it has been withdrawn by the applicant or has been left without handling because it has not met the formal criteria. Technical evaluation involves the verification if the project meets the following criteria:

a. Statutory criteria;
b. Specific criteria;
c. Bonus criteria.

Technical evaluation is based on *Technical evaluation sheet for project grant applications*, constituting Attachment No. 4 to the regulations.

4.2.1 Statutory criteria

The below criteria have been set out in the Medical Research Agency Act. Pursuant to Article 16(3) of the Medical Research Agency Act during project selection the following criteria are evaluated:

1. **Criterion: scientific value of the project – 0 to 20 points**

The evaluation of this criterion involves the evaluation of the following: is the research purpose clearly set out, is the research problem clearly defined, how is the state-of-the-art presented on the basis of current data. It is also evaluated if research methods and tools have been properly selected, what the degree of comparability is (the placing of project results in a specific context), which means that the results must be comparable, preferably by defining a quality indicator; a multi-criterion evaluation is also allowed, if the former are not possible, the quality evaluation is allowed. The presented preliminary results justifying the implementation of the proposed project will also be evaluated.
Proper and precise identification of the research problem is also vital. The planned research activities must be necessary for accomplishing project objectives/solving a problem; it is also important that the planned research and development activities should be relevant. Project work must be divided into clearly defined and logically organized stages and parts related to research and development activities. The final outcome of each stage must be precisely defined as a milestone. The planned results of research activities must be achievable within the planned schedule and budget. A project should identify and precisely describe potential risks related to research activities, taking into account legal and administrative requirements.

Project outcomes should be such that their publication in one of the following should be likely:

- publishers/journals which the highest scientific value with a high impact factor,
- the most important publishers/journals in a given field,
- specialist publishers/journals of international importance,
- publishers/journals from the Master Journal List.

This criterion is intended to ensure that grants are only awarded to projects of the highest research quality.

The criterion is verified on the basis of the whole grant application, with a special focus on point 3.3.6 *Description of the scientific value of the project.*

Points are awarded on a scale from 0 to 20, and the number of points awarded means that with respect to a given criterion the project is evaluated as:

- 20 – excellent

- 15–19 – very good
- **10–14** – good
- 8–9 – average
- 5–8 – poor
- 0–4 – insufficient

The required threshold for positive evaluation of a project for this criterion is **10** points.

2. **<u>Criterion: Project impact on citizens' health improvement, including (maximum 40 points IN TOTAL):</u>**

    1) **life-saving and full recovery (0–10 points);**
    2) **life-saving and health improvement (0–10 points);**
    3) **prevention of premature death (0–10 points);**
    4) **improvement of quality of life (0–10 points).**

This criterion serves to evaluate the impact of the planned project on improving health of citizens as a result of the introduction of project results in clinical practice. Also evaluated will be the impact of the results on saving lives of patients and ensuring significant recovery.

Points are awarded on a scale from 0 to 40, and the number of points awarded means that with respect to a given criterion the project is evaluated as:

- 40 – excellent
- 35–39 – very good
- **20–34 – good**
- 18–19 – average
- 15–18 – poor
- 0–14 – insufficient

The required threshold for positive evaluation of a project for this criterion is **20** points.

The criterion is verified on the basis of the whole grant application, with a special focus on point 3.3.7 *Description of the project impact on citizens' health improvement (...)*

3. **Criterion: innovative character of the project (0 to 20 points);**

Points will be awarded for the significance/breakthrough nature of the proposed solution considering the current market situation in Poland and abroad (comparison to competing solutions).

For the purposes of the evaluation of this criterion innovative character is understood as an introduction of a new or significantly better solution with respect to a medicinal product or organization of treatment.

Points are awarded on a scale from 0 to 20, and the number of points awarded means that with respect to a given criterion the project is evaluated as:

- 20 – excellent
- 15–19 – very good
- **10–14** – good
- 8–9 – average
- 5–8 – poor
- 0–4 – insufficient

The required threshold for positive evaluation of a project for this criterion is **10** points.

The criterion is verified on the basis of the whole grant application, with a special focus on point 3.3.8 *Description of the innovative character of the project.*

4. **Criterion: Expected economic impact (0–20 points);**

In particular the following are evaluated:

- Demonstrating and justifying benefits derived from using project outcomes in treatment in comparison to current costs, including indirect costs for the healthcare and welfare systems,
- Correct identification of potential risks/threats/barriers to achieving positive economic effects.

Points are awarded on a scale from 0 to 20, and the number of points awarded means that with respect to a given criterion the project is evaluated as:

- 20 – excellent
- 15–19 – very good
- **10–14** – good
- 8–9 – average
- 5–8 – poor
- 0–4 – insufficient

The required threshold for positive evaluation of a project for this criterion is **10** points.

The criterion is verified on the basis of the whole grant application, with a special focus on point 3.3.3 *Economic analysis* and the project budget.

5. Criterion: Applicability of project outcomes in the health care system (0–20 points);

In particular the following are evaluated:

- Justification that there is a demand in the healthcare sector for project outcomes, including the indication of the target group (patients)
- Analysis if project outcomes can be applied in practice;
- Evaluation of the plan of transfer of know-how and new technologies resulting from the project to the healthcare system;

- Relevance of project stages with respect to the planned project schedule in the context of implementation

Points are awarded on a scale from 0 to 20, and the number of points awarded means that with respect to a given criterion the project is evaluated as:

- 20 – excellent
- 15–19 – very good
- **10–14** – good
- 8–9 – average
- 5–8 – poor
- 0–5 – insufficient

The required threshold for positive evaluation of a project for this criterion is **10** points.

The criterion is verified on the basis of the whole grant application, with a special focus on point 3.3.9 *Description of the applicability of project outcomes in the health care system.*

6. **Criterion: The entity referred to in Article 17(1) of the Medical Research Agency Act has the necessary tangible and human resources to implement the project (0–10 points).**

When evaluating this criterion a special focus will be placed on the make-up of the team with respect to the accomplishment of project objectives.
The applicant should include information on the principal investigator and other study team members. These persons should be selected on the basis of their competences needed for project implementation. It will also be evaluated if the applicant has suitable tangible resources to ensure proper organization of the project and access to research infrastructure necessary to conduct the trial,

including scientific and research infrastructure (rooms, scientific and research apparatuses and other equipment necessary to conduct the trial, including a pharmacy).
In particular the following are evaluated:

- research achievements of the project manager (current bibliometric indicators, including the number of citations, H-index, aggregate impact factor for the last 5 years before the submission of application);
- managing national and foreign research projects;
- awards and honours;
- special research accomplishments;
- participation in international projects;
- participation in a long-term (over 3 months) exchange program with an institution abroad.

Additionally, where appropriate: the following will have to be verified in the case of projects to be implemented by many entities (partner projects):

- complementarity of competences and resources of project partners;
- proper selection of partners for research and development activities ensuring optimum use of resources of each partnering entity;
- proper selection of the project leader

The applicant (or project leader for projects implemented by a consortium) must have all the key human resources at the time of submitting a grant application. The applicant must have conditional agreements with the members of the research staff key for project implementation (if research staff members are not employed by the applicant).

Under Article 20 of the Regulation of the Minister of Health of 2 May 2012 on Good Clinical Practice, the Sponsor, under an agreement executed in writing, may transfer any or all of its obligations or responsibilities defined under that regulation to a person or an organizational unit which conducts clinical research under contract, hereinafter referred to as "CRO". The execution of such an agreement does not release the Sponsor from liability connected with the conduct of a clinical trial.

Points are awarded on a scale from 0 to 10, and the number of points awarded means that with respect to a given criterion the project is evaluated as:

- 10 – excellent
- 8–9 – very good
- **5–7 – good**
- 4 – average
- 3 – poor
- 0–3 – insufficient

The required threshold for positive evaluation of a project for this criterion is **5** points.

The criterion is verified on the basis of the whole grant application, with a special focus on:
– point 2.1.16 *Research potential (...)*
– point 2.1.17 *Potential of the entity responsible for project implementation - in relation to its technical, financial and administrative capacity.*
– point 3.2.11 *Principal Investigator (full name, description of professional experience)*
– Attachment No. 2 *Principal Investigator's CV*

The statutory criteria are evaluative in nature. The evaluating expert's task will be to award to a project a specified number of points and justify it.

For the purposes of this competition a project may be granted a maximum of 130 statutory points; for positive evaluation a project must be awarded at least 50% of the total number of points and at least 50% for each of the above criteria.

4.2.2 Specific criteria

Specific criteria are those criteria that have to be met by each submitted application. If any of the specific access criteria is not met, a project receives negative evaluation. These criteria are not evaluative. They are verified in a 0-1 system (MEETS/DOES NOT MEET).

1. **The applicant is a healthcare facility or has been granted authorization by a healthcare facility to conduct a non-commercial clinical trial with participation of that facility's patients and confirms that the healthcare facility has documented experience in treating patients with the condition listed in the grant application.**

   Categories of entities classified as healthcare facilities in relevant legislation are listed in Article 4(1) of the Medical Activity Act. Pursuant to that provision healthcare facilities are:

   1) economic operators within the meaning of the Freedom of Business Act of 2 July 2004, in the wording of the Act "in all forms provided for engaging in business activity unless the Act provides otherwise" (Article 4(1)(1));

   2) independent public healthcare establishments (Article 4(1)(2));

   3) budget units, including state budget units set up and supervised by the Minister of National Defence, minister competent for internal affairs, Minister of Justice or the Head of the Internal Security Agency the structure of which includes an outpatient clinic, an outpatient clinic with an infirmary or a position of primary care physician, primary care nurse or primary care midwife within the meaning of the Act of 27 October 2017 on Primary Healthcare (Article 4(1)(3));

   4) research institutes referred to in Article 3 of the Research Institutes Act of 30 April 2010 (Article 4(1)(4));

   5) foundations and associations whose mission is to carry out healthcare tasks and whose statute allows them to engage in medical activity (Article 4(1)(5));

   6) organizational units of associations having legal personality (Article 4(1)(5a));

   7) legal persons and organizational units operating under laws on relations between the State and the Catholic Church in the Republic of Poland, on relations between the State and other churches and religious associations and on guarantees of freedom of conscience and religion (Article 4(1)(6));

   8) military units (Article 4(1)(7)).

The criterion is verified on the basis of the whole grant application, with a special focus on point 2.1.16 *Research potential.*

2. **The applicant has conducted at least 3 commercial or non-commercial clinical trials between 2016 and 2019 in a similar therapeutic area or on a similar patient population.**

The criterion is intended to evaluate the applicant's potential. Trials conducted at the sites were the project trial is to be conducted will also be credited towards the applicant's experience.

The criterion is verified on the basis of the whole grant application, with a special focus on point 2.1.16 *Research potential.*

3. **The research project involves off-label use of a medicine/medicines, such as for example:**
    a) **using a medicinal product in the manner or using the route of administration not listed in the summary of product characteristics;**
    b) **using a medicine for a registered indication in patient groups for which dosage has not been determined;**
    c) **using a medicine for an indication not listed in the summary of product characteristics but for which there is reliable data confirming safety and efficacy;**
    d) **using a medicine for a new indication for which there is no evidence yet, but there is some research data suggesting that it will be effective and safe.**

The objective of this criterion is to select non-commercial clinical trial projects focusing on the verification of research hypotheses concerning off-label administration, populations other than listed in registered indications or another indication.

The criterion is verified on the basis of the whole grant application, with a special focus on point 3.2 *Contents.*

4. **The person listed as the principal investigator has a documented publication record in the therapeutic area listed in the application and holds at least a degree of a habilitated doctor of medical sciences.**

    With this criterion the research potential of the principal investigator will be evaluated. The investigator should have the required competences to ensure that the project will be implemented properly and as per the schedule. Actions and decisions taken by the principal investigator are of

key importance for the optimum use of clinical trial results. The principal investigator should ensure smooth, effective and timely conduct of the trial focused on producing the planned results. The publication record of the principal investigator should be known in Poland and abroad, with a high citation count and H-index. The project manager should be an active researcher with experience in leading and managing a research team. This criterion serves to evaluate the project manager's research career, including participation in national and international research consortia, leading research projects and special research accomplishments. Additionally, the evaluation will also cover the principal investigator's experience in conducting clinical trials both in Poland and abroad.

The criterion is verified on the basis of the whole grant application, with a special focus on point 3.2.11 *Principal investigator*.

4.2.3 Bonus criteria

Bonus criteria are not compulsory. A project that does not meet bonus criteria will not be rejected. Points for bonus criteria will be awarded to a project only if the evaluation of the statutory criteria was positive and a project meets all the specific criteria. If a project meets a bonus criterion, points are awarded as specified below.

1. **The applicant or a healthcare facility whose patients will participate in the trial has a specialized unit for conducting research trials – 5 points;**

   The criterion will be verified on the basis of a statement on having specialized research units, including specialist laboratories conducting documented research.

   The criterion is verified on the basis of the whole grant application, with a special focus on point 2.1.17.3 *Administrative capacity (...)*

2. **A foreign partner with experience in clinical trials participates in the project – 15 points,**

   The criterion is verified on the basis of the whole grant application, with a special focus on point 2.2 *Partners*.

3. **The applicant or a healthcare facility whose patients will participate in the trial has conducted (i.e. successfully enrolled patients in a trial) a non-commercial clinical trial in 2014–2019 – 5 points for each non-commercial clinical trial, but not more than 20 points in total;**

   The criterion is verified on the basis of the whole grant application, with a special focus on point 2.1.16 *Research potential (...)*

4. **The applicant or a healthcare facility whose patients will participate in the trial has sponsored at least one non-commercial clinical trial in 2014–2019 – 10 points;**

   The criterion is verified on the basis of the whole grant application, with a special focus on point 2.1.16 *Research potential.*

5. **It is planned in the project that the medicinal product investigated in the non-commercial clinical trial will be manufactured in Poland – 20 points.**

   The criterion is verified on the basis of the whole grant application, with a special focus on point 3.2 *Contents.*

Pursuant to Article 2(42) of the Pharmaceutical Law Act of 6 September 2001 (Journal of Laws 2019, item 499, as amended), manufacturing of medicinal products means any activity which results in the making of a medicinal product, including the purchase and receipt at the place of manufacture of the necessary materials, production, validation for each subsequent manufacturing stage, including packing or repacking, storage and distribution of the manufactured medicinal products covered by a manufacturing authorization application, and any control activities relating to the above activities.

The criterion is intended to promote the manufacturers, i.e. economic operators within the meaning of the Economic Operators Law of 6 March 2018 who are involved in at least one of the activities listed in Article 2(42) of the Pharmaceutical Law Act of 6 September 2001 in the territory of Poland under an authorization granted by a competent authority.

The criterion will be verified on the basis of part 2.1.17.3 *Administrative capacity (...)*

5. Application evaluation procedure

Formal evaluation is carried out by the ABM staff. Information on projects which passed the formal evaluation stage and will undergo technical evaluation will be published on the Agency's website. Formal evaluation is done using a formal evaluation sheet.

Before a project grant application is sent to experts, all or some applications may be sent for:

a) legal analysis, in particular in terms of State aid in the project;
b) scientific analysis, in particular in terms of the research value of the submitted project;
c) financial analysis, in particular in terms of reasonableness of the draft budget.

The above analyses are not obligatory. The decision to send a project for some or all types of analyses is taken by the head of the application evaluation team.

The analyses are ancillary in nature and do not bind experts, their role is to help in the evaluation process.

Technical evaluation is based on a project review prepared using the *Technical evaluation sheet for project grant applications*. Technical evaluation involves checking if a project meets the technical criteria described in point 4.2, i.e.:

- statutory criteria
- specific criteria
- bonus criteria.

A project may be awarded a maximum of **200** points allocated as follows:
– **130** for the statutory criteria;
– Specific criteria are evaluated on a ***meets / does not meet*** basis;
– **70** for the bonus criteria.

The statutory criteria are evaluated by awarding whole points from the number of points allocated for a given criterion (fractions of points are not awarded). For bonus criteria all points allocated to a given criterion are awarded if a project meets a given criterion. Bonus criteria are evaluated as follows: if a project does not meet a given criterion, 0 points are awarded; if a project meets a given criterion, a pre-defined number of points, equal to their weight, is awarded.

The evaluation of a project is considered **positive** if:
- both evaluators awarded at least 50% of points for meeting all the statutory criteria and 50% of points for each statutory criterion
- both evaluators found that the project meets the specific criteria.

If there are discrepancies in the evaluations (e.g. one evaluator granted less than 50% of the total number of points or 50% of points for any of the statutory criteria), a meeting of experts may be held to seek consensus.

If no consensus is reached by evaluators, such a project undergoes third evaluation. In that case the two evaluations with the same result are considered to be the final evaluation.

As a rule, an application is evaluated by two evaluators. An evaluator records in the *Technical evaluation sheet* if a project meets or does not meet bonus criteria.

A ranking is prepared on the basis of scores from technical evaluation sheets. The place of a project in the ranking is decided on the basis of arithmetic mean of the total number of points awarded by 2 experts.

All decisions concerning discrepancies in evaluations are taken by the head of the application evaluation team.

Each of the evaluators may submit comments on their evaluation of a given criterion. In that case the comments should be included in the technical evaluation sheet including the scope of negotiations as long as the project meets the conditions for being sent for negotiations. The comments should be divided as follows:

- priority issues (comments that must be taken into account if a project is to be accepted for a grant)
- additional issues (comments that aim to improve project quality but do not have to be taken into account for proper project implementation).

Attachments:

1. Template project grant application
2. Template project grant agreement
3. Template formal evaluation sheet
4. Template technical evaluation sheet