

Minigrants programme

Regulations for participation

1. Minigrants programme is offered within the project “3xW (Exchange, Cooperation, and Joint Research Tasks to strengthen the potential of young plant biology researchers)”, hereinafter referred to as the 3xW project, carried out under the Strategic Partnership Programme of the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA) by the Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IBB) in the collaboration with five partner institutions:
 - 1.1. Institut de Biologie Moléculaire des Plantes (IBMP), CNRS, France,
 - 1.2. Wageningen University & Research Centre (WUR), Netherlands,
 - 1.3. The Centre for Organismal Studies (COS), Heidelberg, Germany,
 - 1.4. Centre for Environmental Sciences (CMK), Hasselt University, Belgium,
 - 1.5. Bogazici University, Turkey.
2. A total of 24 minigrants shall be financed to foster collaboration between scientific groups from IBB and partner institutions.
3. Participants' Eligibility criteria:
 - 3.1. The minigrants programme comprises young researchers (max 15 years after PhD), PhD students from IBB and partner institutions.
 - 3.2. The programme is open to early-career researchers and doctoral students whose work is directly situated within plant biology, as well as those from related disciplines whose research focus includes methodologies, technologies, or tools with a clear relevance and potential application to plant science.
4. PhD student or employee status must be held both at the time of application and throughout participation in the 3xW project's minigrants programme.
5. Under the 3xW project, the same person may receive funding to implement more than one minigrant, provided that the previous minigrants are settled.
6. The recruitment Committee is assigned, consisting of Project Managers and appointed by the Project Managers' experts.

Access criteria

1. The minigrant is implemented as a joint research project.
2. A joint research project is defined as a project carried out by: a) A young scientist from IBB in cooperation with a laboratory from a partner institution, b) a young scientist from a partner institution in collaboration with a laboratory from IBB.
3. All minigrants shall be completed before the end of the 3xW project (30 of November 2027 r.).
4. Each minigrant should last no longer than 6 months and must include a minimum 14 maximum 30-day research internship (excluding time needed for travel) to IBB or a partner institution.
5. Shorter research trips (lasting at least 5 days each) can be funded under a single minigrant, but the total number of visiting days must be not less than 14 and not more than 30 days.
6. The 3xW project budget covers the travel expenses (transportation) for a maximum of one round trip per minigrant. Any additional travel costs must be obtained from other sources.

Recruitment

1. An internal minigrant competition will be announced. Applications may be submitted continuously after the competition is launched until funds are exhausted or until the final deadline of 01.08.2027, whichever comes first.
2. To apply, participants must complete the **preliminary application form (Appendix 1)** [\[Link\]](#), including a proposed budget and acceptance letter.
3. The application submitted by a PhD student must be countersigned by the PhD student supervisor.
4. The application must explicitly indicate the preferred collaborator and research group at the target partner institution, or state that the applicant requires assistance from the Consortium in finding a matching partner.
5. Applications are assessed independently by at least two experts from the Recruitment Committee on a go/no-go basis, based on the *Quality of the research proposal* criterion. Only projects that receive a "go" status will proceed to the next stage.
6. Approved proposals are forwarded directly to the Project Manager at the target Host Institution. In cases where no host institution is specified, the Consortium will facilitate the matchmaking process; however, it does not guarantee that a matching partner will be found.
7. The pairing and the initial scope of the minigrant must be jointly accepted and endorsed by the Project Managers of both participating institutions (the Home and the Host institution in the form of acceptance letter (template provided in Appendix no. 6).
8. The Recruitment Committee reserves the right to negotiate the budget and/or scope of the project. Noncompliance with the Recruitment Committee's recommendations will result in rejection of the application.
9. Applicants are required to submit the **final version of the application**, incorporating all required adjustments.
10. Based on the experts' evaluation, the bilateral institutional endorsement, and the finalised application package, the final financing decision is made jointly by the Recruitment Committee.
11. Candidates have the right to appeal a negative decision to the IBB Director of Science within 7 calendar days of receiving the recruitment results. The Director's decision is final.
12. Upon a positive decision, project participants are required to provide their personal data (Appendix no.2) and sign a funding Grant agreement (template provided in Appendix no. 3) prior to the project launch.
13. The Recruitment Committee meets as needed based on the flow of applications.
14. Information about the financing decision will be sent electronically to the address provided in the application within 5 days of the decision.
15. The complete evaluation, selection, and agreement negotiation lifecycle is guaranteed to be finalised within three weeks from submission,

Evaluation criteria

1. **Formal requirements (failure to comply results in rejection of the application)**
 - 1.1. Fulfilling all the access criteria (0/1)
2. **Scored criteria (for "Go" decision - min. 1 point in each category and a minimum of 8 points overall/max 15)**
 - 2.1. Description of the research problem. (0-3 pts. Scientific quality of the idea, publication potential.)

- 2.2. Description of the research task(s). (0-3 pts. Selection of methodology and feasibility within the timeframe.)
- 2.3. Complementarity to research (0-3 points)
 - 2.3.1. For IBB applicants: Complementarity to research conducted at IBB (the project must not overlap with other publicly funded projects carried out at IBB).
 - 2.3.2. For Partner institution applicants: Complementarity to research conducted at IBB (how the applicant's project aligns with, utilizes, or expands the ongoing research lines and expertise at IBB).
- 2.4. Partners' contribution to the collaboration. (0-3 pts. Are the competencies/contributions of both laboratories necessary and sufficient for the successful implementation of the project?)
- 2.5. **How will the implementation of the grant impact the research potential at IBB (0-3 pts) - minimum threshold 2 points** The short justification may be supported by any of the following options:
 - 2.5.1. For IBB applicants: The short justification may be supported by any of the following options:
 - 2.5.1.1. Generating data to be included in a planned publication, where at least one of the authors will be a young researcher from IBB;
 - 2.5.1.2. Generating preliminary data that can be used to develop a grant proposal at IBB for NCN or another funding agency;
 - 2.5.1.3. Implementing a methodology/technique at IBB that was previously not used or not widely established;
 - 2.5.1.4. Increasing the level of competence of young researchers at IBB.
 - 2.5.2. For Partner institution applicants: The short justification may be supported by any of the following options focusing on bilateral synergy:
 - 2.5.2.1. Generating joint data to be included in a planned publication with co-authorship from both the Partner institution and IBB;
 - 2.5.2.2. Generating preliminary data to develop a joint international grant proposal (e.g., Horizon Europe, bilateral calls) involving both institutions as consortium members;
 - 2.5.2.3. Facilitating a two-way transfer of knowledge, such as introducing a partner-specific methodology at IBB or gaining advanced technical expertise from IBB to be deployed at the Home institution;
 - 2.5.2.4. Increasing the research competence of the partner's early-career researcher through unique training on IBB's specialized research infrastructure.

Settlement

1. The participant is obliged to submit a complete report (template provided in **Appendix no. 5**) within 14 days of the minigrant's completion, but no later than 15.12.2027.
2. The report shall be countersigned by the participant's supervisor and the host laboratory representative.
3. Reports are reviewed by the expert assigned by host and home Project Managers within 14 days of receipt and accepted by the Scientific Council.
4. The condition for settling a minigrant is the Scientific Council's acceptance of the report. The Council may request a supplement to the report.
5. Participant shall complete the online evaluation survey within 14 days of receiving the

link from the 3xW project secretariat.

6. Failure to submit the final report, or its rejection by the Scientific Council, results in the obligation to return the travel funding received.

Funding

1. The funding for the minigrants covers a lump sum for travel costs for one research trip and a lump sum for living and accommodation costs, in accordance with Appendix no. 4.
2. Funding for materials, reagents, and services is available and will be allocated according to the individual needs of each project. The requested budget must be duly justified and will be assessed by the Recruitment Committee.
3. The Recruitment Committee may allocate funds for publicising the project results in Open Access publications.
4. The lump-sum allowance is calculated by multiplying the applicable rate by the number of days. The number of funded days includes the effective time of stay plus a maximum of two days allocated for travel.
5. Participants are responsible for arranging their own travel and accommodation.
6. The purchase of reagents and services must be processed through IBB.
7. IBB covers the expenses of reagents and services agreed in the budget.
8. All participants undertaking mobility are required to have valid insurance.
9. An advance payment of 80% of the travel unit costs will be transferred to the bank account indicated by the participant in the data form (Appendix no. 3), no earlier than upon the final signature on the Grant Agreement.
10. The remaining 20% of the funding will be paid after the research trip is settled and the final report is formally accepted.
11. All payments shall be made exclusively in PLN.
12. If the duration of the research trip is shorter than planned, the participant is obliged to return the amount equal to the difference between the lump-sum amount paid and the amount actually due, within 7 days of receiving a payment request from the 3xW project secretariat at IBB.
13. Any costs exceeding the allocated grant amount shall be the sole responsibility of the Participant.

Communication requirements

1. Publications, conference presentations and other scientific materials prepared within or in connection with the 3xW project shall be marked with the NAWA logo, as well as shall include information in the text about funding obtained from the Agency's funds (e.g. "The article is financed by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange under the Strategic Partnership Programme"/e.g. "The article/project has been supported by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange under the Strategic Partnership Programme").

Other

1. If a participant loses their PhD student or employee status before or during the implementation of the minigrant, the participant must immediately return all travel-related funding.
2. Participants are obliged to promptly inform the 3xW project secretariat at IBB about any circumstances that may affect the implementation of the minigrant.
3. The e-mail address dedicated to all correspondence within the 3xW project is:

3xw@ibb.waw.pl

4. In the event of noncompliance with these Regulations, IBB reserves the right to demand the return of the allocated funds.
5. In the event of the participant's withdrawal, the minigrant project shall be terminated, and all travel-related funding must be returned.
6. IBB reserves the right to amend these Regulations.
7. In disputed matters and those not regulated herein, decisions are made by the Project Manager (in cooperation with the Scientific Council).
8. All documents must be completed in English unless specified otherwise and submitted either in paper form with original signatures or in electronic form. Electronic documents must be signed with a qualified electronic signature or a legally recognized electronic signature (e.g., via DocuSign, Adobe Sign, or the Polish Trusted Profile/ePUAP) and sent to the 3xW project secretariat at IBB via e-mail: 3xw@ibb.waw.pl, or attached to the application form (letter of acceptance).

List of appendices:

- Appendix no. 1 Application form
- Appendix no. 2 Data form
- Appendix no. 3 Grant Agreement
- Appendix no. 4 Lump sums by groups of countries
- Appendix no. 5 Report and the certificate from the host institution
- Appendix no. 6 Letter of acceptance