



Guide for Applicants

Call 2026



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IMPULZ – SLOVAK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES PROGRAMME

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

This guide provides practical information to potential applicants to assist in preparing and applying for Programme IMPULZ based in Slovak Republic. In addition, it provides a general overview of the scheme and the assessment process.

Why choose Slovakia?

Slovakia is a central European country bordered by Poland to the North, Ukraine to the East, Hungary in the south, and Austria in the South West, and the Czechia in the North West. The population is around five and half million people.

The capital is Bratislava, the largest city in the country. Slovakia has been a member of the European Union since 2003 and Eurozone since 2009. The country as it exists today was founded in 1993, when Czechoslovakia split up into Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Since then, the country has been growing in importance in Europe.

Slovakia also remains a country with deep heritage, where tradition, culture, music, conversation, time to relax, listen and make friends are all important.

For more information about Slovakia as a place to live and work including travel, food, shopping, accommodation, climate and practicalities see <https://slovakia.travel/en>

EU Member States, Associated Countries and Third Countries

The 27 EU Member States are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

The Associated Countries are Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

Third countries are neither EU Member States nor Countries associated with Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe.



Economy

Export revenues in Slovakia are increasing, mainly because of export to other EU countries. There is a sustained tendency toward growth in foreign direct investments and Slovakia offers many opportunities for domestic and foreign investors. The strongest position is currently held by the automobile industry and its subcontractors (Volkswagen, Peugeot-Citroën, Kia Motors, and Jaguar Land Rover). Export of motor vehicle, electronic equipment or petroleum oils is dominant.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The IMPULZ Programme aims to improve the excellence of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) and its research institutes by recruiting internationally recognized scientists and highly talented young researchers either from abroad or within Slovakia. The task for the excellent scientists will be to create and manage their own research groups which will work on new research directions in line with the current world trends. The Programme will provide excellent scientists with the incentives for their cutting-edge research and it will bring an improvement to the SAS research institutes in their research capacity and scientific outputs. The IMPULZ Programme should improve the excellence, internationalization, interdisciplinarity and competitiveness of SAS in the European Research Area, among other things, by increasing its chances to receive the prestigious European grants.

Slovak Academy of Sciences – the main scientific and research institution in Slovakia fostering basic and strategic basic research. SAS comprises 45 scientific organisations whose focus covers a wide range of scientific fields on nature, technology and society. The organisations are located in several regions of Slovakia, where most of these are located in the capital Bratislava and in the second largest city in Slovakia – Košice. The total number of staff amounts to more than 3 000 employees including about 1900 researchers and scholars.

This **Guide for applicant** provides practical information to potential applicants in preparing and applying for Programme IMPULZ.

The Programme IMPULZ is characterized by transparency and openness, granting candidates freedom to choose research project and host organisation.



SAS was granted the HR Excellence in research award (HRS4R). SAS follows the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.



SAS is a proud member of the Euraxess Slovakia Network, we will provide support and practical information on visa, entry condition, taxation, social security and daily life in Slovakia.

Programme IMPULZ is intended both for experienced scientists and postdoc researchers.

Organisation and people involved

Applicant refers to the researcher that applies for an IMPULZ project. Applicant may be also referred as “researcher” or “candidate” (in case of implementation of the project).

Host Organisation refers to the organisation where the applicant plans to carry out his/her research project. Host organisation must be chosen from SAS scientific organisations.

Authorized Representative refers to the statutory authority of the Host Organisations – director of the Host Organisation.

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Within the application, applicant needs to show his/her outstanding research track record and a competence to fully investigate the proposed research project. Research project can also contain inter-/multidisciplinary approaches.

Eligibility criteria are set for a) applicant, b) application, c) project, d) host organisation.

Eligibility criteria for applicants

- The Program is designated for scientists working abroad as well as in the Slovak Republic. Applicants may apply regardless their citizenship or residence or working activity.
- The applicant must hold a PhD at the time of application (or equivalent).
- The applicant must demonstrate sufficient research experience gained at a foreign research institute. Either s/he obtained a PhD degree or completed a long-term stay outside Slovakia, usually not shorter than 2 years.
- The applicant shall demonstrate an international level of scientific productivity and recognition in the relevant field of research, as evidenced, for example, by a sustained publication record in reputable peer-reviewed scientific journals,



invitations to present research results at prominent international conferences, and experience in managing research projects in the capacity of principal investigator.

- In case of a young researcher, the applicant must prove an autonomy from the thesis advisor by providing a list of publications which were not co-authored by the advisor. Moreover, the proposed topic of the project must be different from the topic of the applicant's thesis.
- The applicant shall demonstrate the ability to lead the research team established under the project and to secure competitive funding on a long-term basis. Within the first half of the project duration, the applicant shall submit a proposal to the European Research Council (ERC) or to another prestigious international grant scheme of comparable scope and funding volume. The expected financial benefit to the host organisation shall be comparable to that provided under the IMPULZ Programme, thereby supporting the continuity and long-term sustainability of the research team beyond the completion of the project.

Researchers who already hold permanent positions within the SAS organization, where the research project activities are to be carried out, may be recruited to implement the IMPULZ project and receive support.

Eligibility criteria for application

A complete application consists of:

Part A – Proposal and Applicant Information; Scan version of the PhD. diploma or equivalent; Recommendation letters (optional); CV (upload and follow template)

Part B – Host Organization (upload template);

Part C – Research Project (upload template);

Part D – Budget (upload template);

Part E – Ethical Issues (upload template);

Part F – Confirmation of data correctness/truthfulness



Eligibility criteria for project

The entire application must be written **in English** and **submitted through the online system before the deadline**. The **completeness** of the application is also an eligibility criterion; it must include all required components, annexes, and information as specified.

To ensure that the evaluation focuses solely on the proposed research and the applicant's capacity to carry it out, the research project proposal should be presented in a neutral manner. Personal details such as gender, age, or nationality should be omitted. First names in publication references may be abbreviated to a single initial (e.g., A. Fox) to avoid indicating gender.

There are **no restrictions on scientific fields**. The only potential limitation may arise from the scientific focus of the host organization. The research topic may be freely chosen by the researcher; however, it must align with current international research trends in the respective field. Only research topics that represent a significant innovation at the host organization of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS)—that is, topics that are either entirely new to the institution or have not been actively developed there for more than three years—are considered eligible. The project must clearly describe the current global state of the proposed topic and its objectives. The evaluation process will also consider the potential impact of the topic on the long-term development of the host organization and its sustainability after the project concludes.

Ethics issues: Certain research areas may be subject to ethical restrictions and therefore may not be eligible for funding. For further information, please refer to the “How to Apply” section.

Eligibility criteria for host organization

All **SAS scientific organisations** are eligible host organisations. They are divided into three scientific divisions according to their research orientation (please see the Annex 1 for websites of SAS organisations):

- I. Scientific Section: Physical, Space, Earth and Engineering Sciences
- II. Scientific Section: Life, Chemical, Medical and Environmental Sciences
- III. Scientific Section: Social Sciences, Humanities, Arts and Culture

The Programme IMPULZ partners are mostly located in the capital city Bratislava. Some host organizations are also located in different regions and cities of Slovak Republic that allows free decision of candidates where to realize their research. List of the Host Organisations is in the Annex I. and on the IMPULZ website.



3. HOW TO APPLY

- Applications for the program are submitted on the basis of a call announced by the Presidium of the SAS (P SAS).
- Application is prepared and submitted by the applicant, application is written in English (text must be comprehensible. In case of doubts consider proof-reading by a native speaker before submitting).
- Each applicant may submit one application per call.
- Application must be submitted via the online application system available on the Programme IMPULZ website. Applications submitted in other ways (by post, personally, etc.) will not be taken in consideration and will not be evaluated.
- All documents must be uploaded in PDF format using the templates available on the website, except for the Budget Template and the Addressing Ethical Issues Template, which must be submitted as Excel files. **All templates must be followed.** Instructions are included in each of the templates to assist you when writing your proposal to make sure you include all the necessary information required.

The application shall contain the parts necessary for assessment of the qualities of the applicant, the host organization and the proposed research topic, in particular:

- a. Structured professional curriculum vitae of the candidate, including the presentation of scientific activities and outputs. **The CV must contain a unique scientist identifier (ORCID, Researcher ID, Google Scholar, etc.).**
- b. Extended project abstract, which should be written according to underlying structure of the structured abstract and in a form that is shorter than the full text. Extended abstract conveys a brief summary of the proposed research, intended for non-experts, including its scientific objectives and expected contribution to the field.
- c. Project proposal for the entire period with a detailed work plan for the period of the first half of the project.
- d. Draft budget for the entire project period.
- e. Acknowledgement made by the organization that the successful candidate will be full-time employed in the organization and that the organization will provide the necessary resources and infrastructure.



- f. Declaration of project compliance with ethical rules and legislation, consent to capture and process the personal data, a statement on the data veracity and other.

The host organization may only be a SAS scientific organization. The principal project investigator must have a full-time employment in the organization throughout the project implementation and is expected to build a research team. Therefore, the host organization may request the relocation of PI to Slovakia.

Part of the Application	How to prepare the application
Part A – proposal and applicant Information; scan version of the PhD or equivalent diploma; recommendation letters (optional); CV	Online application – Download CV template → complete it → convert to PDF → upload it
Part B – Host Organisation	Host organisation can be chosen from the list of SAS institutes provided in the Annex I. Download template for the LETTER OF COMMITMENT → complete it → convert to PDF → upload it
Part C – Research Project	Download template → complete it → upload it
Part D – Budget	Download template , upload in xlsx format
Part E – Ethics Issues	Download template , fill in and upload it
Part F – Confirmation of data correctness/truthfulness	Online form

The deadline for submission of applications, as specified on the IMPULZ Programme website, is binding and non-negotiable. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted. The online application system will close automatically upon expiration of the submission deadline.



Step by step
1. Check if you comply with eligibility criteria given for applicant.
2. Choose a host organization and contact them in order to receive your LETTER OF COMMITMENT .
3. Read CAREFULLY all documents necessary to prepare and submit your application.
4. Download all necessary templates. Templates must be followed.
5. Register yourself to the online system for application submission.
6. Double check your application to comply all requirements.
7. Once completed and double checked, make sure you submit your application by pressing submit button.

4. PROJECT BUDGET (PART D)

The amount of project funding shall be a minimum of EUR 60,000 and a maximum of EUR 160,000 per year. The eligible project costs are:

- a. Personnel costs (super gross salary of PI and team members)
- b. Travel costs (including per diems, conferences, workshops etc.)
- c. Material (consumables)
- d. Research infrastructure (equipment)
- e. Publishing costs including Open Access
- f. Services

The contribution to the Principal Investigator's salary costs funded under the project shall amount to 1.5 times the salary rate specified for Salary Tariff Grade 11, Salary Scale No. 14, of the Special Salary Scale for University Teachers and Research and Development Employees.

Note: Super gross salary is the employee's gross salary plus percentage of social and health insurance that are paid by employer.

The respective scientific organization of the SAS undertakes to ensure to pay the indirect project costs. Indirect costs do not need to be specified in the application table; however, if they are included, they must be approved by the SAS Host Institute. The funds will be transferred to the host organization on the basis of a grant agreement concluded



between it and the SAS. This contract shall also specify the conditions for drawing the allocated funds.

The funds allocated to the project must be utilized economically, efficiently, effectively and demonstrably in connection with the planned activities of the project.

Table: Usage of contribution, give breakdown by year and by category (personnel costs, equipment, consumables, publishing costs including Open Access, services, travel costs including conferences, workshops, etc., other).

Category	Year 2027	Year 2028	Year 2029	Year 2030	Year 2031	Year 2032	Total	Specification justification
Personnel costs – researcher***	20271,00	60812,00	60812,00	60812,00	60812,00	40541,00	304060,00	
Personnel costs – team***								Include the number of personnel divided by R1,R2, etc.
Equipment IT								
Equipment - other								
Consumables								
Publishing costs (Open Access)								
Travel costs								
Services								
Other								
Total								

***2 480,5 Eur *1,5 = 3 721 Eur gross salary x 36,2 % social welfare = 5 068 Eur total cost for employer per month, please apply the amount in the form of so-called super gross wage in the project for Personnel costs for team as well. For more information contact us impulz@savba.sk When planning personnel costs for the team, please consult the SAS Host Institute to confirm the current salaries of researchers and PhD students at the SAS Institute.

5. ETHICAL ISSUES (PART E)

In particular, you should explain the benefit and burden of the experiments and the effects these may have on the research subject. Applicants should take time to consider the benefit/burden balance of each part of the project; consider the impact of the research, not only in terms of scientific advancement, but also in terms of human dignity and social and cultural impact; consider elements such as the ethics and social impact of the research and whether there is a balance between the objectives and the means.

The following special issues should be taken into account:

- Human embryonic stem cells and human embryos
- Human biological samples and data
- Personal data (privacy and data protection)
- Research on animals



- Research in developing countries
- Environmental, health and safety
- Artificial Intelligence
- Other ethics issues

If relevant, identify the countries where research will be undertaken and which ethical committees and regulatory organisations will need to be approached during the life of the project.

Ethics Issues Table (upload template)

1. HUMAN EMBRYONIC STEM CELLS AND HUMAN EMBRYOS		
Does this activity involve Human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?	Yes	No
Does this activity involve the use of human embryos?	Yes	No
2. Humans		
Does this activity involve human participants?	Yes	No
Does this activity involve interventions (physical also including imaging technology, behavioural treatments, etc.) on the study participants?	Yes	No
Does this activity involve conducting a clinical study as defined by the Clinical Trial Regulation (EU 536/2014)? (using pharmaceuticals, biologicals, radiopharmaceuticals, or advanced therapy medicinal products)	Yes	No
3. HUMAN CELLS / TISSUES (not covered by section 1)		
Does this activity involve the use of human cells or tissues?	Yes	No
4. Personal Data		
Does this activity involve processing of personal data?	Yes	No
Does this activity involve further processing of previously collected personal data (including use of preexisting data sets or sources, merging existing data sets)?	Yes	No
Is it planned to export personal data from the EU to non-EU countries?	Yes	No
Is it planned to import personal data from non-EU countries into the EU or from a non-EU country to another non-EU country?	Yes	No
Does this activity involve the processing of personal data related to criminal convictions or offences?	Yes	No
5. Animals		
Does this activity involve animals?	Yes	No
6. Non-EU countries		
Will some of the activities be carried out in non-EU countries?	Yes	No
In case non-EU countries are involved, do the activities undertaken in these countries raise potential ethics issues?	Yes	No
Is it planned to use local resources (e.g. animal and/or human tissue samples, genetic material, live animals, human remains, materials of historical value, endangered fauna or flora samples, etc.)?	Yes	No
Is it planned to import any material from non-EU countries into the EU or from a non-EU country to another non-EU country? For data imports, see	Yes	No

section 4.		
Is it planned to export any material from the EU to non-EU countries?	Yes	No
Does this activity involves low and/or lower-middle income countries? (if yes, detail the benefitsharing actions planned in the self-assessment)	Yes	No
Could the situation in the country put the individuals taking part in the activity at risk?	Yes	No
7. Environment, Health and Safety		
Does this activity involve the use of substances or processes that may cause harm to the environment, to animals or plants (during the implementation of the activity or further to the use of the results, as a possible impact)?	Yes	No
Does this activity deal with endangered fauna and/or flora / protected areas?	Yes	No
Does this activity involve the use of substances or processes that may cause harm to humans, including those performing them (during the implementation of the activity or further to the use of the results, as a possible impact)?	Yes	No
8. Artificial Intelligence		
Does this activity involve the development, deployment and/or use of Artificial Intelligence? (if yes, detail in the self-assessment whether that could raise ethical concerns related to human rights and values and detail how this will be addressed).	Yes	No
9. Other ethics issues		
Are there any other ethics issues that should be taken into consideration? Please specify	Yes	No

You confirm that you have taken into account all ethics issues above and that, if any ethics issues apply, you will complete the ethics self-assessment as described in the guidelines [How to complete your ethics self assessment](#)

Confirmation of data correctness/truthfulness

1. You confirm that the information and details provided, and other information relating to your formal application for fellowship, are correct.
2. You understand that any false information or misrepresentation would result in your application being disqualified or, if appointed, could lead to your dismissal without notice.
3. You confirm whether generative AI was used and, if applicable, how it was used



6. EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Evaluation Process

The evaluation process is three-round. Applications that meet the necessary formal requirements shall be accepted for a peer review. Applicants who do not meet the formal requirements will be invited to complete their application within 5 working days of invitation receipt.

In the first round, the application is assessed by the IMPULZ Programme Evaluation Committee, established by the decision of the Presidium of SAS. The number of members of the commission is usually 10, in the case of a larger number of submitted applications, the P SAS may increase the number of its members. The Evaluation Committee consists of independent foreign evaluators from the areas as follows:

- a. Earth and space sciences
- b. Mathematical, physical and computer sciences
- c. Technical science
- d. Medical science
- e. Biological and chemical sciences
- f. Agricultural and veterinary sciences
- g. History science
- h. Sciences of human and society
- i. Sciences of culture and art

Within the first round it evaluates the applicant's curriculum vitae and the extended abstract of the project. The evaluation committee assesses in particular the following parameters:

- a. **Quality of the Extended Project Abstract** – the scientific originality and innovativeness of the proposed research, quality of the project research intention as well as the timeliness and relevance of the research topic in an international context.
- b. **Scientific Excellence of the Applicant** – the quality, capabilities, and research experience of the applicant; their scientific achievements and international recognition; their ability to establish and lead a research team; and their capacity to secure and successfully implement research projects, including the potential to apply for ERC grants or other prestigious funding schemes. The evaluation shall also consider the applicant's national and international collaborations, the degree of scientific independence from their doctoral supervisor, as well as their leadership and organizational competencies.



Based on the evaluation results, the Evaluation Committee shall identify the applications that advance to the second round of the evaluation process. The anticipated number of applications progressing to the second stage shall be at least three times the planned number of projects to be funded under the Programme. Applicants whose applications do not advance to the second round shall receive a brief written evaluation of their application.

In the second round, the full project proposals submitted as part of the applications shall undergo a comprehensive evaluation. Each application shall be assessed by three independent international reviewers. Based on the reviewers' assessments, the Evaluation Committee shall conduct an overall evaluation of the project proposals.

The highest-ranked applications from the second round shall advance to the third round of the evaluation process. The anticipated number of applications progressing to the third stage shall be at least twice the planned number of projects to be funded. Applicants shall be invited to attend an interview with the Evaluation Committee, conducted either in person or via videoconference, with the participation of representatives of the host organization.

All applicants who advance to the second or third stage shall receive a written consensus evaluation of their application prepared by the Committee Rapporteur on the basis of the external reviewers' assessments. The individual reviews provided by external reviewers constitute internal working documents of the Evaluation Committee and shall therefore not be disclosed to either the applicant or the host organization.

The final decision on the projects to be funded shall be made by the Presidium of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) on the basis of the Evaluation Committee's recommendation.

Evaluation Criteria

The main evaluation criteria for the second round of evaluation are project excellence, applicant, project impact and project implementation.

1. Excellence

1.1 State of the art

Give a clear description of the state-of-the-art of the research area supported by the relevant literature. Provide motivation and broader context of the intended research, include preliminary work if applicable.

1.2 Objectives

a) Describe overall and specific project objectives, which should be clear, measurable, realistic and achievable within the duration of the project.



- b) Explain the scientific and technical contributions that the project is expected to make to advance the state-of-the-art within the research area covered by the project.
- c) Describe the novelty and inter- and multidisciplinary aspects of the proposed project.

1.3 Concept and Methodology

The methodology should be presented as clearly as possible. For each objective explain the methodological approach that will be employed in the project and justify it in relation to the project objectives. When any novel methods or techniques are proposed, explain their merits and limitations.

2. Applicant

Provide sufficient supporting evidence and arguments to demonstrate that your skills and experience are suitable to carry out successfully the proposed project. Discuss your main research achievements in relation to this proposal and alignment between your research expertise and the host organization's research infrastructure and priorities. Demonstrate your experience in supervision, mentoring, and leadership roles, highlighting your ability to lead a successful research group.

NOTE: Part A of the application – Curriculum Vitae will serve for better assessment of the quality of the applicant.

3. Impact

3.1 Transfer of knowledge and estimated impact

a) Describe the potential impact on society, the scientific community, the research area, and the application sector, considering significant advancements beyond the project's immediate scope, for example by

- opening new avenues of inquiry
- challenging the existing paradigms
- proposing innovative approaches that could lead to the development of new concepts, tools, frameworks, and techniques, that can be applied by other researchers in and outside the research field

b) Describe the potential impact of the project on advancing the scientific career of the researcher (fellow).

c) Describe the potential impact on the host organisation (new methods, improvement of scientific work, etc.).

d) Describe the transfer of the expected results in the short, medium or long term, benefits derived from the increase of knowledge and technology.

3.2. Measures to maximise impact

Dissemination and exploitation of results:



- Provide a draft plan for the dissemination and exploitation of the project's results
- Communication and popularization activities
- Targeted outreach, collaborations with industry partners, and utilization of digital platforms

4. Implementation

4.1 Work plan – work packages, deliverables and procedures

a) Provide overall objectives of the proposed project and a work plan structured in 12-month periods. The work plan must provide realistic objectives – work packages (management, communication activities, deliverables – overall structure of the project, coherent and effective work plan, description of the work packages and tasks, list of deliverables).

b) Outline quantifiable outcomes of the project such as expected conference/workshop presentations, courses, seminars, secondment, training in specific new areas, and other professional training.

c) Please include a Gantt chart (include schedule for work packages, deliverables, milestones, planned secondment, dissemination and communication/popularization activities).

d) Plan must include a commitment to submit a project of the European Scientific Council, the ERC, or another Horizon Europe project, or another prestigious foreign grant scheme within the first half of the project implementation.

e) Please provide a contingency plan.

f) Provide justification for scientific personnel (PhD. Students, postdocs) expected to be hired on the project (describe their roles and objectives).

4.2 Host organisation

a) Describe the scientific quality of the host organisation (achieved results and outputs, most important publications, patents, etc.).

b) Write a short description how the proposed project is relevant to the international scientific collaboration of the host organisation and to its short, medium- or long-term scientific objectives and priorities.

c) What are the most important projects carried out in the host institution, especially in the selected department (titles, funding resources, duration of the projects, etc.).

d) Describe how the applicant will be supported and which resources will be available to the project. Describe the quality of the infrastructure and personal resources.

To consider the capacity of the researcher, the following items will be taken into the consideration: (1) previous achievements of the researcher, in terms of publication activity, and leadership; (2) the match between the researcher background and the scope of the proposed research.

Since the Participating Organizations are comprised from several potential host organizations which are freely chosen by the applicants it is necessary to assess the match between the proposed project and host organization and the adequacy of institutional environment in order to assess feasibility of the project at given host organization.

For the criterion of EXCELLENCE, the evaluator assigns a score as follows:

5	Excellent. The research project is of world-class quality with respect to the above criteria: it addresses a problem of very high importance and interest, demonstrates exceptional novel approaches, and is a solid foundation for a potentially successful ERC grant application. The project exhibits no discernable weaknesses
4	Very good. The research project is of high quality: it addresses a problem of high importance and interest and no significant elements have to be improved. Any shortcomings are minor
3	Good. The research project is of good quality: it addresses the criteria well. However, several shortcomings are present, and some elements could be improved to enhance its overall effectiveness
2	Moderate. The research project is of moderate quality, addressing a problem of moderate importance or containing significant elements that could be improved
1	Modest. The research project is of low quality, addressing a problem of low importance or inadequately and demonstrating serious weaknesses that require substantial modification.
0	Poor. The research project is of very low quality, addressing a problem of low or no importance and containing structural flaws, or it cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information

For the criterion of APPLICANT, the evaluator assigns a score as follows:

5	Excellent. The applicant possesses an excellent scientific and publication track record and research achievements that are internationally recognized and highly esteemed for their quality and contribution to science and other research activities. The applicant is regarded as a leading researcher in the research area(s).
4	Very good. The applicant has a very good scientific and publication track record and research achievements that are internationally recognized and valued for their quality and contribution to science and other research activities. The applicant is acknowledged as an internationally recognized researcher in the research field(s).

3	Good. The applicant exhibits a good scientific and publication track record and research achievements, though with limited international recognition regarding their quality and contribution to science and other research activities. The applicant has achieved modest international recognition in the research field(s)
2	Moderate. The applicant's scientific and publication track record and research achievements are average, with limited recognition within the research field(s) in terms of quality and contribution to science and other research activities. The applicant has limited recognition in the research field(s).
1	Modest. The applicant's scientific and publication track record and research achievements are below average and lack significant recognition within the research field(s) regarding their quality and contribution to science and other research activities. The applicant lacks recognition in the research field(s).
0	Poor. The applicant has either poor or no scientific and publication track record and research achievements. The presented track record is unreliable.

For the criterion of IMPACT, the evaluator assigns a score as follows:

2	High. The research project will substantially impact the research field and enhance the host organization's research performance. The project results are likely to be published by academic publishers or journals of the highest academic rank
1	Moderate. The project will have some impact on the advancement of the research field(s) or discipline(s) and the research performance of the host organization. The project results are likely to be published by academic publishers or journals that are widely recognized.
0	Low. The project will have no impact on the advancement of the research field(s) or discipline(s) and the research performance of the host organization. The project results are unlikely to be published by academic publishers or journals that are widely recognized.

For the criterion of IMPLEMENTATION, the evaluator assigns a score as follows:

2	High. The implementation of the research project is very well planned: the proposed timescale and methodology are relevant and suitable to achieve the goals of the project; the Gantt chart and contingency plan are clearly described; the available research facilities and equipment are sufficient for the proposed research.
1	Moderate. The implementation of the project is reasonably planned, but it contains some gaps or shortcomings or it leaves room for improvement with respect to: the proposed timescale and methodology, Gantt chart and contingency plan, the allocation of research tasks, or the available research facilities and equipment.
0	Low. The implementation of the project is not feasible or it cannot be evaluated due to missing or incomplete information



Score is assigned only to main criteria, not to sub-criteria. They serve to evaluators for a better estimation of the main criteria; they also can help applicants in preparing the application, if necessary.

For this part of evaluation, an overall threshold of 70% will be applied to the total score, which determines the minimum of the score that the application must achieve so that it may pass forward into further part of evaluation. On basis of evaluators' opinions, the applicants who have not reached the specified threshold are rejected.

Besides the score assigning the evaluators also comment in writing on each criterion. The score and evaluations are background for consensual opinion elaborated by the application Rapporteur.

The third round of the evaluation process involves interviews with applicants whose proposals received the highest rankings in the preceding evaluation stage. The purpose of the interview is to evaluate if the candidate is able to lead a scientific team and increase a research capacity of the relevant SAS institute. The interview is not meant to clarify the excellence of the proposals (this is done in the external evaluation phase) but impact, implementation and presentation skills (i.e. the ability to clearly communicate to non-specialists – other scientists, policymakers and public). The interview is also a good practice for future ERC applications of the candidates which they are expected to submit before the IMPULZ project mid-term evaluation. The ratio of 75:25 will be used for the assignment of final score for external reviews and interviews of the selected candidates. The candidates will be awarded additional points for the interview.

Based on the final evaluation and interviews, the Evaluation Committee categorizes the applications into the following categories:

A	Applications recommended for funding. Applications are placed within the allowed budget. Applicants whose applications were placed in this category will be invited to the negotiation.
B	Applications on the reserve list. Funding is available in such case if the applications of A category are withdrawn by applicants or the agreement shall not be reached during negotiation. Applicants will be kept informed.
C	Applications of sufficient quality. Applications reached a specified threshold, but their funding is impossible due to limited budget.
D	Applications of insufficient quality. Applications have not reached the given threshold.
E	Not rated/evaluated applications. These applications were not assessed during the second round of evaluation.

Proposal to class the applications into individual categories is approved by the SAS Presidium according to the Evaluation Committee proposal. Success ratio, i.e. the ratio of funded applications to submitted applications total number cannot be higher than 50%. Applicants may monitor the status of their application and access the final evaluation



results through their account in the online application system. In addition, the results will be published on the IMPULZ Programme website.

SAS Presidium may, on a proposal from the Evaluation Committee, require that the applicant shall submit the necessary permits and other needed documents issued by the Slovak authorities regarding project ethical issues.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR THE SELECTED PROJECTS:

If your project is selected for funding, you must be able to start to implement the project within 6 months following the decision by the SAS Presidium. If you do not comply with this requirement, the SAS Presidium may still decide to not fund your project.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR THE REJECTED PROJECTS:

It is possible to appeal against decision about classifying applications into individual categories. There must be proper grounds for making an appeal. If you wish to use an appeal procedure, any such request must be received by 3 working days since results' receipt day to the following email address: impulz@savba.sk Reply will be sent out via email within 30 days.

Interim and Final Project Evaluation

Continuous project funding is conditional upon compliance with the reporting obligations throughout the entire project implementation period. The successful applicant - the Principal Investigator, is required to submit interim reports and a final report in accordance with the schedule specified in the Grant Agreement.

An interim report shall be submitted at the midpoint of the project implementation period. It serves as the basis for the mandatory interim evaluation, the outcome of which determines whether project funding will continue. The interim report must demonstrate progress towards the scientific milestones and objectives defined in the project proposal, provide evidence of the scientific outputs achieved (including publications, conference contributions, and other research outputs), and document activities aimed at securing additional external funding beyond that provided by the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS). Such activities shall include, in particular, the submission of applications



for an ERC grant or other prestigious international grant schemes with a comparable level of funding.

The interim report will be evaluated by the Evaluation Committee and shall include an in-person presentation by the Principal Investigator, attended by representatives of the host organization. Based on the recommendation of the Evaluation Committee, the Presidium of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) shall decide whether to continue funding the project, provided that the interim evaluation is positive and all stipulated conditions have been met. In the event of a negative evaluation or failure to fulfil the prescribed conditions, the Presidium of the SAS may decide to terminate the project funding prematurely.

A final report shall be submitted within 30 days following the completion of the project. The final evaluation shall include an in-person presentation by the Principal Investigator, attended by representatives of the host organization. Based on the Committee's assessment, the Presidium of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) shall issue a decision on whether the project objectives have been achieved.

For the purposes of the interim and final evaluations, only those publications that acknowledge the IMPULZ Programme project and any prestigious grant projects awarded during the implementation period shall be considered project outputs.

The Slovak Academy of Sciences reserves the right to conduct additional project evaluations at any stage of implementation if deemed necessary.



ANNEX I. LIST OF SAS HOST ORGANIZATIONS DIVIDED BY SCIENTIFIC SECTIONS

1) Physical, Space, Earth, and Engineering Sciences

Earth and Space Sciences

- [Astronomical Institute](#)
- [Earth Science Institute of the SAS](#)
- [Institute of Geography](#)
- [Institute of Hydrology](#)

Mathematical and Physical Sciences

- [Centre for Advanced Materials Application SAS](#)
- [Institute of Experimental Physics](#)
- [Institute of Physics](#)
- [Mathematical Institute](#)

Engineering Sciences

- [Institute of Construction and Architecture](#)
- [Institute of Electrical Engineering SAS](#)
- [Institute of Geotechnics SAS](#)
- [Institute of Informatics](#)
- [Institute of Materials and Machine Mechanics](#)
- [Institute of Materials Research](#)
- [Institute of Measurement Science](#)
- [Centre of operations – Computing center of the SAS](#)



2) Life, Chemical, Medical, and Environmental Sciences

Medical Sciences

- [Biomedical Research Center SAS](#)
- [Centre of Experimental Medicine SAS](#)
- [Institute of Neuroimmunology](#)

Biological and Chemical Sciences

- [Centre of Biosciences SAS](#)
- [Institute of Chemistry](#)
- [Institute of Inorganic Chemistry](#)
- [Institute of Molecular Biology](#)
- [Institute of Zoology SAS](#)
- [Polymer Institute](#)

Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences

- [Institute of Forest Ecology](#)
- [Institute of Landscape Ecology](#)
- [Institute of Parasitology](#)
- [Plant Science and Biodiversity Center SAS](#)



3) Social Sciences, Humanities, Arts, and Culture

Historical Sciences

- [Institute of Archaeology](#)
- [Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology](#)
- [Institute of History](#)

Humanities and Social Sciences

- [Centre of Social and Psychological Sciences SAS](#)
- [Institute for Research in Social Communication SAS](#)
- [Institute for Sociology](#)
- [Institute of Economic Research](#)
- [Institute of Philosophy SAS](#)
- [Institute of Political Sciences SAS](#)
- [Institute of State and Law](#)

Arts and Culture

- [Art Research Centre of SAS](#)
- [Institute of Musicology](#)
- [Institute of Oriental Studies](#)
- [Institute of Slovak Literature](#)
- [Institute of World Literature SAS](#)
- [Jan Stanislav Institute of Slavistics SAS](#)
- [Ludovit Stur Institute of Linguistics](#)