

FAQ - Program Mentoring SPARK Poland

1. Who can participate in the SPARK Poland program?

Program participants can be both individual scientists and research teams implementing a joint project. The application is submitted by the scientific unit that employs the project leader. Financing will be paid to the account of the entity employing the leader.

2. Can the project include clinical trials?

Yes, clinical trials can be planned in a project submitted to the SPARK Poland mentoring program, and their costs are eligible. More information on eligible costs can be found in [Annex No. 1 to the Agreement](#).

3. Is team members' remuneration eligible costs under the project?

Team member salaries are not eligible. More information on eligible costs can be found in [Annex No. 1 to the Agreement](#)

4. Does the project need to have a certain technology readiness level (TRL)?

SPARK Poland mentoring program is intended for projects at various stages of product/service development, also at the early stage based on the results of fundamental research. It is important that the project has a specified product/service concept, supported by at least preliminary experimental data.

5. Can the project include cooperation with foreign research units?

Yes, the team may consist of participants from various research units, including foreign ones. In such a case, the scientific unit submitting the application is responsible for establishing relations with other units. Importantly, the entity signing the agreement to participate in the SPARK program is obliged to effectively acquire intellectual property rights arising as a result of the implementation of the Project by the Participants (members of the Team designated to implement the Project). Financing will be paid to the account of the entity employing the leader.

6. Can you cooperate with companies as part of the project?

Cooperation with companies is possible, especially if the company is a potential recipient of the solution. Such cooperation must be consistent with the rules of the program, and all rights to the results of work carried out as a result of the project must be transferred to the scientific unit signing the agreement to participate in the program.

7. May the team consist of scientists employed in various scientific units?

The team submitting the application may consist of participants from various scientific units, but it is up to the scientific unit (to which the leader belongs) to establish

appropriate relations with other institutions, regarding the granted funding. Financing will be paid to the account of the scientific unit. Please remember that the scientific unit is also obliged to effectively acquire intellectual property rights arising from the implementation of the Project by the Participants (members of the Team designated to implement the Project).

8. Can the project include subcontracted services?

Yes, subcontracting is allowed if it concerns activities necessary to implement the project. Subcontracting costs are eligible, but all rights to the results of the work must be transferred to the scientific unit. More information on eligible costs can be found in [Annex No. 1 to the Agreement](#).

9. Can the costs of the clinical trial insurance be included in the cost estimate?

Yes, the costs of clinical trial insurance can be included in the project budget. More information on eligible costs can be found in [Annex No. 1 to the Agreement](#).

10. Can the purchase of laboratory equipment be included in the budget?

The purchase of scientific equipment is an ineligible cost, but the costs of paid use of research equipment are eligible. More information on eligible costs can be found in [Annex No. 1 to the Agreement](#).

11. Can the project include travel to conferences or networking events?

Costs related to travel to conferences or networking events are not eligible under the project. Networking event planned in the second year of the program will have a separate budget from the programme. More information on eligible costs can be found in [Annex No. 1 to the Agreement](#).

12. What are the criteria for selecting projects for the program?

Projects are assessed against three criteria:

- the product/service addresses an unmet medical need,
- the product/service is innovative on a global scale,
- the proposed project plan is feasible within 2 years.

More information about the substantive evaluation criteria can be found in [Annex No. 4 to the Regulations](#).

13. Can SPARK Poland be combined with other sources of financing?

Yes, funding under the SPARK Poland mentoring program can be combined with other sources of funding, provided that double funding is avoided.

14. Do I need to attach team members' CVs to my application?

No, there is no place in the application to attach a CV. Instead, summarize the team's qualifications under "Brief description of your team", indicating the experience of team members necessary to implement the presented research plan. Please provide examples of completed projects that used the indicated experience.

15. Is having a patent for a given solution a favorable circumstance for the assessment of the application, or are experimental and basic solutions rewarded?

Having a patent does not affect the assessment of the project, it only provides information at what stage the developed product/service is. More information about the substantive evaluation criteria can be found in [Annex No. 4 to the Regulations](#).

16. Can more than one application be submitted from the University as a scientific unit?

One scientific unit may submit many applications, but each application must be accompanied by a signed declaration. The application is submitted by the leader of the scientific team, who provides the description of the project and his/her team.

17. Can the form be submitted in the name of the scientist by an administrative employee of the Unit, or should it be done by the Scientist from his/her own account?

The application may be submitted by an administrative employee of the Unit, but the e-mail address of the Team Leader must be provided in the application.

18. Is VAT in the project an eligible cost?

Expenditures incurred for tax on goods and services (VAT) are considered eligible expenses, unless the scientific unit has the legal possibility to recover it (paragraph 6 point 4 of the [Agreement for participation in the program](#)).

19. What are the rules for financing the project - advance payment, refund, credit and refund?

Project financing is provided in the form of an advance payments.

20. Can the SPARK project finance fees for filing patent applications/maintaining patents and the costs of patent attorneys' services related to obtaining/maintaining patent protection??

No, official fees associated with filing applications/maintaining patents and the costs of patent attorneys' services connected to that are ineligible under the project implemented under the SPARK Poland mentoring program.

Questions added 17 Mar 2025

1. In the case of universities, should the employer's consent be expressed by the rector or the head of the unit?

The declaration (compliant with Annex No. 2 to Terms and Conditions) is signed by a person authorized to represent the scientific unit employing the project leader, e.g. the Rector/Director or another authorized person with appropriate powers. Please remember that if a person is not authorized to represent your scientific institution in accordance with the statute, you must attach an appropriate power of attorney to the application.

If a declaration with a qualified signature is attached to the application, there is no need to provide the original. If you send a scan or photo of a signed document, you must provide the original.

2. Is it possible to include the equipment calibration service within the planned project budget?

Yes. All materials and services necessary to develop the product/service under the SPARK Poland program are eligible costs.

3. Can I get funding for the purchase of research equipment?

No, the cost of purchasing equipment is not an eligible cost. More information on eligible costs can be found in [Annex No. 1 to the Agreement](#).

4. Can an application be submitted by a student?

Yes, a student can submit an application. The SPARK Poland program is addressed to teams at various stages of scientific career, but it should be remembered that experience in the team is one of the elements that is being assessed in the project feasibility criterion. The criteria for selecting Teams are as follows:

- i) the product/service addresses an unmet medical need,
- ii) the product/service is innovative on a global scale,
- iii) the research plan proposed by the Team for the next 2 years is feasible.

More information about the substantive evaluation criteria can be found in [Annex No. 4 to the Regulations](#).

5. Can the project complement the funding obtained under Horizon Europe?

Financing in the SPARK Poland Program may complement other financing, but remember to avoid double financing.

6. Is the cost of using the unit's core facilities (internal service) included in the catalog of eligible costs?

Yes, the cost of using the unit's core facilities (internal service) is included in the catalog of eligible costs under point 2.2 of the Catalog of Eligible Expenditures: "costs of paid use of scientific and research equipment and other devices for research purposes".

7. How much time is allocated for pitch presentation? Is the pitch presented by the team leader? Is there a Q&A after the pitch?

The pitch presentation lasts 5 minutes, it is followed by a 10-minute Q&A session. Pitch is presented by the leader.

8. Can I submit a project developing a new application of an existing product (available on the market) or only the development of completely new products?

Yes, it is allowed to submit a project developing a new use of an existing product (available on the market) if it meets the criteria:

- i) the product/service addresses an unmet medical need,
- ii) the product/service is innovative on a global scale,
- iii) the research plan proposed by the Team for the next 2 years is feasible.

9. Should we attach to the application a power of attorney of the person signing the statement in accordance with Annex 2 to Terms and Conditions?

If the statement is signed by a person other than the person authorized to represent the entity, then yes, the signed declaration must be accompanied by an appropriate power of attorney. The application form includes a space to attach a power of attorney.

10. Is there a limit for individual eligible costs or cost categories?

There is no limit for individual eligible costs or cost categories, but the budget must be consistent with the proposed research plan