Call for Projects 2023

International Training Programmes (ITP)

28 March 2022

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Summary

Aim	ITP are projects that focus on short- to medium-term, intensive, interactive and practice-oriented training courses for professionals. They are distinguished by topic, dealing with sustainable development, transversal skills for Higher Education (HE) management, transversal or priority themes (e.g. gender, sustainable development, human rights, digital 4 development, decent work, etc).
	ITP projects systematically integrate global perspectives to create a supportive, inclusive and networked learning environment in which professionals acquire transversal skills and state-of-the-art knowledge on sustainable development. This enables them to become experts and critical global citizens who are motivated to act as change agents in their network.
Target group of ITP projects	Professionals from civil society, private or public sector and/or academics, scientists, and researchers at HEIs with relevant professional experience in the subject of the organised training.
Key features	• Short- and medium-term results to be achieved within the project duration of maximum 3 years, including training modules for short-term periods of maximum 6 months.
	• Organised (i) at a Flemish HEI, (ii) in one of VLIR-UOS project partner countries, or (iii) both.
	• Online and blended training can also be integrated in an ITP.
	• The new ITP format allows flexibility in approaches, including preparatory and follow-up activities on top of the actual training.
	• Two types of programmes are targeted in this ITP 2022 Call:
	o Academic training programmes, dealing with topics related to sustainable development challenges/ Agenda 2030/ transversal or priority themes, directed towards professionals from civil society, private or public sector.
	o Transversal organisational capacity building training programmes, oriented towards professionals of HEI (digitisation in higher education, change management, scientific writing, QA, how to set up an international relations office, tech transfer, etc.).
	• A minimum of 8 scholarships per edition/training of the ITP project – no maximum
Who can apply?	<u>Affiliation of the promoters:</u>
	- Flemish promoter: employed as a professor/lecturer/specialist at a Flemish university or university of applied science & arts;

	- Optional: in case there is a partner promoter: employed at a recognised higher education institution or national public (not for profit) research institute located in one of the 17 VLIR-UOS project partner countries. Additional criteria: - For this call only 1 project proposal per applicant (Flemish/local) can be submitted
Project partner countries	In case the ITP includes a partnership with a partner institution, this higher education or science institution should be located in one of our project partner countries: Benin, Bolivia, Burundi, Cuba, DR Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam
Training countries	An ITP training can be organised in Belgium and/or in one of the 17 project partner countries with the option of it being held online or blended.
Scholarships	Scholarships for ITP participation can be given to professionals/academics in one of the 29 countries of the VLIR-UOS scholarship country list.
Budgetary Framework	The project budget amounts to a maximum of 150.000 EUR for a maximum duration of 3 years. This period can include multiple training modules and should include a minimum of 8 scholarships per edition. The budget for the ITP project 2023 call can facilitate approximately 11 projects, directly influencing your chances of success in submitting a proposal.
Project duration	Maximum 3 years
Launch date of call for proposals	28 March 2022
Information session	30 March 2022
Deadline for submission to VLIR-UOS	4 July 2022
Selection decision	End of September 2022
How to submit a proposal?	**Who?** An application involves a Flemish promoter. The Flemish promoter submits the application to the Institutional Coordinators for Development Cooperation (ICOS) of the Flemish university (association) for quality control. The ICOS will validate and submit to VLIR-UOS. **How?** Project applications are submitted online.
Assessment procedure	All project proposals will be assessed and selected by the VLIR-UOS Selection Commission for ICP Connect/ITP, based on four standard selection

	criteria: Relevance and coherence of the project; Quality of the project design; Implementation set-up of the project; Potential impact and sustainability.
Possible start of the project	Selected projects will be able to start as of 1 January 2023.

1. Background and context

1.1. FYP 2 ambitions, what's new?

This call for International Training Programmes (ITP) 2022 is one of the first calls within the new Five-Year Programme (FYP2), guided by the new FYP2 ambitions and lessons learned from COVID-19.

COVID-19 changed the world drastically, highlighting the role of science and international cooperation to tackle global and local problems. The boost data and digitalization have received, creates new opportunities for equal partnerships.

Like the previous FYP, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serve as the main reference point. VLIR-UOS is committed to meaningfully mainstream the 3 SDG principles of 'Leave no one behind' (LNOB), 'interconnectedness' and 'multi-stakeholder partnerships'. VLIR-UOS weaves these principles throughout its ambitions, policies, programmes, portfolio, partnerships, and scholarships. The focus of Agenda 2030, which lies on meaningful impact through multi-stakeholder partnerships, resonates with the FYP2 ambition "Connect4Change" to focus on cooperation among and beyond academic actors (CONNECT), societal impact (valorisation), and collective learning.

Furthermore, policy themes have become more important: the VLIR-UOS gender policy was translated into a guiding framework for mainstreaming gender throughout all new VLIR-UOS projects. A similar policy framework will be developed for environmental sustainability and climate change. The universal nature of Agenda 2030 provides entry points for Higher Education and Science Institutions (HE&SIs). This way, they can incorporate other priority themes like global citizenship education, decolonization, human rights, decent work, and have a broader understanding of sustainable development into their threefold mission: research, education, and service to society.

These policy ambitions have been translated in the project selection criteria and descriptors for all programmes. VLIR-UOS wants new projects to capitalise on former and/or other relevant projects in the same context or topic, and to stimulate inter-institutional cooperation among and beyond academic actors.

It will be an added value in the competitive selection of projects when different Flemish or partner HE&SIs are involved in a proposal, and when collaborations are sought beyond the academic actors.

Finally, a specific objective of FYP2 is to mobilise young/new academics to engage in our vision of *"sharing minds, changing lives"*.

1.2. Context

There is an increasing consensus on the role of strong higher education institutions and systems in addressing sustainable development challenges. Through their threefold mission, higher education institutes (HEIs) in Flanders and VLIR-UOS partner countries play a key role in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SD) and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These aim to end poverty, protect the planet, foster gender equality, defend and promote cultures and cultural understanding, and ensure prosperity for all.

In this respect, the Global Sustainable Development Report[1] calls upon all stakeholders to facilitate multidirectional collaboration in science and (transfer of) technology for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

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[1] UN (2019) - Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 The Future is Now - Science for Achieving Sustainable Development https://doi.org/10.18356/5d04ad97-en

It considers academic and scientific capacity strengthening and partnerships as one of the four main levers for achieving the 2030 Agenda. It also implies a strengthened link between higher education institutes, governments, civil society organisations and the private sector (the quadruple helix).

Furthermore, the 2019 UN Global Sustainable Development Report highlights the indispensable role of higher education and science institutions in the creation, exchange and transfer of knowledge to inform the achievement of six systemic transformations for sustainable development. These transformations are (1) human well-being and capabilities, (2) sustainable and just economies, (3) food systems and nutrition patterns, (4) energy decarbonization with universal access, (5) urban and peri-urban development and (6) global environmental commons. Each of the six transformations is synergistic with others and constitutes an entry point into the underlying systems needed for the achievement of the Agenda 2030. The framework underscores the need for complexity-oriented, cross-sectoral and holistic approaches that pay due attention to the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda and the interlinkages between the goals.

In Flanders and elsewhere, HE&SIs are increasingly acknowledging their pivotal role in contributing to the necessary changes for the global goal of sustainable development. Higher education offers disciplinary and transdisciplinary teaching and research. HE&Sis also generate and contribute to the development of new and innovative approaches to global, regional and local issues. Through research, HE&SIs play a unique role as drivers of change. They produce new knowledge and innovation to address global challenges, they transfer knowledge through training, they provide evidence for informed (public) policy and implementation, and they mobilise knowledge. Through teaching, universities develop generations of new leaders and skilled professionals who will drive sustainable development. HE&SIs provide lifelong learning, and train today's students, decision-makers and professionals to think both critically and ethically. This way, they learn to cope with ethical dilemmas and apply system-thinking approaches to serious and complex societal problems. HE&SIs have also taken up a central role in the provision of global citizenship education to nurture a global understanding, intercultural awareness and values that enable students to assume active roles in resolving global challenges. Through service delivery and community engagement, HE&SIs work with a rich variety of stakeholders – including governments, the private sector, and civil society – for local, national, regional and global impact. As such, higher education has a direct impact on the sustainable development of every country. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will not be achieved without partnerships with and contributions from HE&SIs.

Globally, however, Higher Education Institutes and their stakeholders (i.e. staff, students and alumni) still face challenges in terms of access, capacity, and uptake to unlock the full potential of higher education for sustainable development. Scholarship programmes and global partnerships in the field of higher education are considered essential in mitigating many of these challenges. They offer opportunities to improve the quality of teaching and research, strengthen the organisational capacities of higher education institutions, foster political and economic relationships through their scholars, mitigate financial and capacity constraints, and accommodate the growing demand for equitable access to higher education services.

2. Theory of change and objectives

2.1. General description

ITP are projects that focus on short- to medium-term, intensive, interactive and practice-oriented training courses for professionals. They are distinguished by topic, dealing with sustainable development, transversal skills for Higher Education (HE) management, transversal or priority themes (e.g. gender, sustainable development, human rights, digital 4 development, decent work, etc). ITP projects systematically integrate global perspectives to create a supportive, inclusive and networked learning environment in which professionals acquire transversal skills and state-of-the-art knowledge on sustainable development. This enables them to become experts and critical global citizens who are motivated to act as change agents in their network.

The VLIR-UOS ITP vision goes well beyond the organisation of trainings. Through ITP, VLIR-UOS wants to create change agents who can contribute to the development of their home country or other countries after having participated in an ITP. This impact is realised by the target group after the training, as they implement the acquired knowledge and skills in their professional lives. The individual skillset of the trainees has been improved and, because of this, they act as agents of change who create change in their professional domains: e.g. a more efficient private sector, better policy, leadership, entrepreneurship, social engagement, innovation, better higher education, better research, local technologies, etc.

Two types of programmes are targeted in this ITP 2022 Call:

- Academic training programmes, dealing with topics related to sustainable development challenges/ Agenda 2030/ transversal or priority themes, directed towards professionals from civil society, private or public sector
- Transversal organisational capacity building training programmes, oriented towards professionals of HEI (digitisation in higher education, research communication, change management, scientific writing, QA, how to set up an international relations office, tech transfer, etc.)

An ITP should address **development relevant themes and** challenges and thereby contribute to the general objectives as stated under section 2.2 of this call.

There is no a priori thematic restriction as to the scientific fields in which ITPs should be situated. Which **developmental challenges** the proposed ITP claims to address and how it intends to do this for the targeted group of VLIR-UOS scholarship awardees, **should be clearly motivated in the application**. Whether the arguments provided are sound and sufficient, however, is to be assessed by the selection commission.

Key Features:
- Short- and medium-term results are to be achieved within the project duration of maximum 3 years, including training modules for short term periods of maximum 6 months.
- Every training is preceded by a pre-training trajectory and followed by a post-training trajectory (maximising the effectiveness of the training and the actual application of skills and knowledge)
- ITP projects integrate Global Citizenship in raising awareness around the link between the specific content of the ITP and the global challenges of the SDG's; with those acquired transversal skills trainees will be equipped to become agents of change stimulating their professional organisations to become drivers of change
- Well defined strategies towards selection of trainees, including multi-stakeholder partnerships (rather than open selection procedures) and the 'Leave no one behind' (LNOB) principle

- ITP projects seek interinstitutional cooperation (between HEI in Flanders) or synergy and complementarity with other (Belgian) development actors whenever possible to increase the impact potential
- A minimum of 8 scholarships per training/edition – no maximum
- Organised (i) at a Flemish HEI, (ii) in one of VLIR-UOS project partner countries, or (iii) both.
- Online and blended training can also be integrated in an ITP
- Applying strategies to link the ITP with the local context of one or more partner countries by e.g. (partial) delocalisation of the programme to (one or more) partner institutions
- Foreseeing modalities to engage the participation of international trainees

Target groups, recruitment strategy and selection procedure

The precise target group(s) (and criteria) aimed at by the applying promoter needs to be specified in the application, together with preliminary information on the possible participants and a description of the recruitment strategies that will be used (incl. the partners/stakeholders that will be involved in this strategy). The selection criteria must match with the content of the training and must consider the professional and country context of the potential trainees (with a specific attention for the extent to which the newly acquired knowledge can be applied).

The ITP project is responsible for the organisation of the application and selection of the participants and of the scholarship candidates by defining a selection procedure. When elaborating the specific ITP project target groups, the recruitment strategy and the selection procedure, following important points of attention have to be considered:

- The target group of ITP are professionals from civil society, private or public sector and/or academics, scientists, researchers at HEI with relevant professional experience in the subject of the organised ITP. The ITP candidate should be employed at the time of selection and should be able to proof that he/she will remain to be employed after the training (for example by a commitment letter of the employer).
- A 40-60% balance between male and female candidates awarded ITP scholarships is targeted. VLIR-UOS strongly encourages female candidates to apply. Read more about our gender policy here. An ITP proposal needs to identify clear mechanisms to realize this balance.
- There are no age limitations for participants of the training programmes.
- A reasonable cross-section of trainees from different countries and regions is targeted, provided there are sufficient qualified candidates.
- In case of equally qualified candidates, preference should be given to candidates from vulnerable groups.
- Scholarship candidates must be:
- a national and resident of one of the VLIR-UOS **scholarship countries**
- OR an employee of a target organisation (HEI, NGO, SME, …) in one of the 17 VLIR-UOS **partner countries** (candidates can have a different nationality, needs to be an exception)
- Trainees who do not receive a scholarship but who are enrolled in an ITP can also receive limited financial support in the framework of the ITP project (e.g. operational costs such as transport costs, activity based costs, …).
- There is no formal limit on the number of VLIR-UOS scholarships one person can receive. However, based on the 'Leave no one behind' principle, we want to give as many new applicants (not having received earlier VLIR-UOS scholarships) as possible a chance to receive a scholarship.

VLIR-UOS **scholarship country** list 2022-2027 (29)

- **Africa**: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroun, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe
- **Asia**: Cambodia, Indonesia, Palestine, Philippines, Vietnam
- **Latin America**: Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Haiti, Nicaragua, Peru

VLIR-USO **partner country** list 2022-2027 (17)

Africa: Benin, Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda

- Asia: Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam
- Latin-America: Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Peru

2.2. Theory of Change for ITP projects
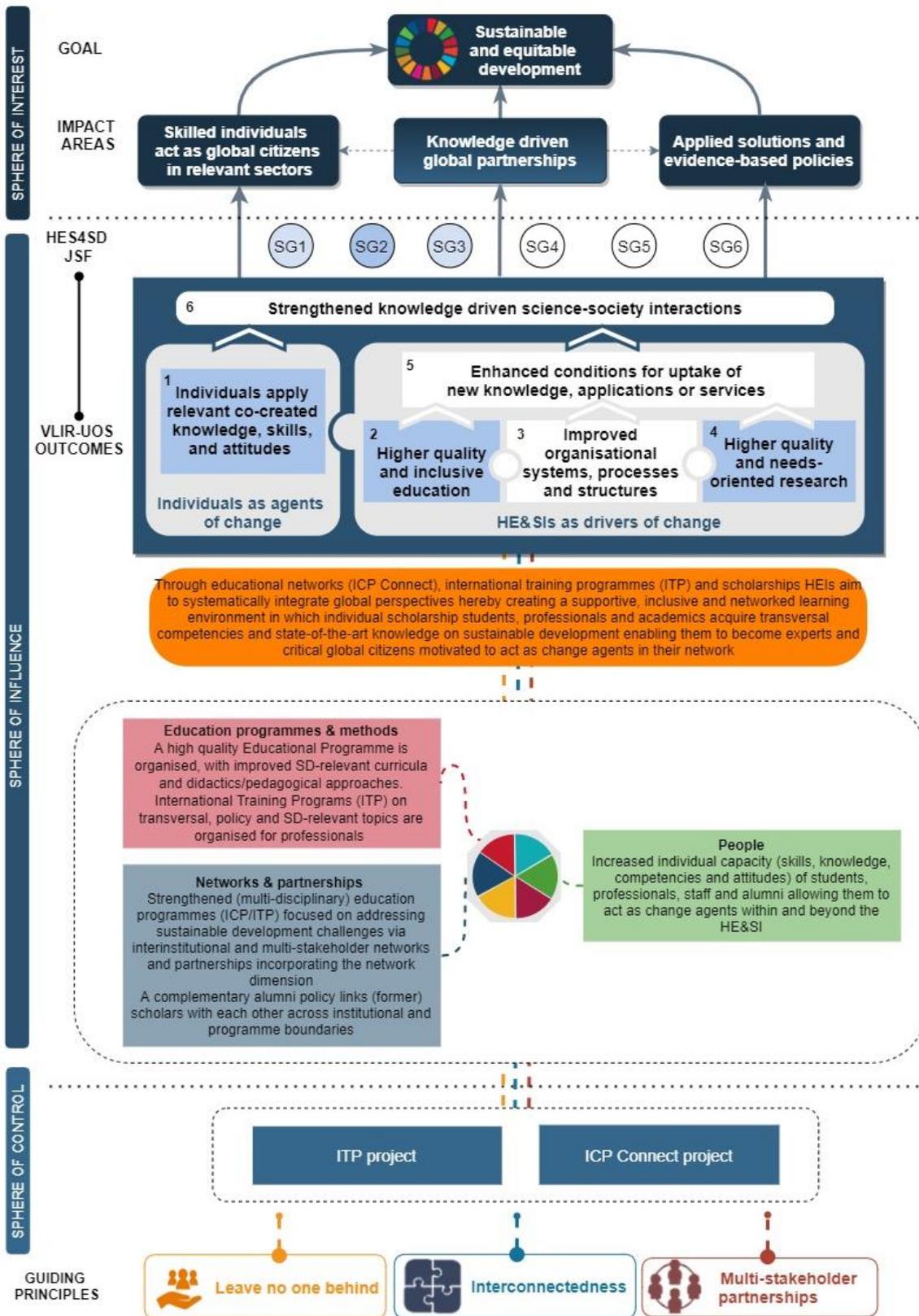
Figure 1 Schematic representation Theory of Change associated with ITP projects

The Theory of Change figure above reflects the generic Theory of Change for the VLIR-UOS portfolio and shows how the generic objectives of ITP projects fit within it.

VLIR-UOS considers global engagement for higher education as a goal (SDG 4: Quality Education) and a means for attaining other SDGs through knowledge co-creation, transfer and valorisation. In the long run, ITP projects are expected to contribute to more sustainable and equitable development by fostering:
- Application of solutions and evidence-based policies
- A global community of skilled individuals who act as global citizens in relevant sectors
- Knowledge-driven global partnerships

The first impact area relates to the role of higher education in contributing to innovation and the valorisation and application of new knowledge, insights and evidence for sustainable development. Effective partnerships are deemed conducive to ensure engagement of relevant stakeholders and creation of opportunities for uptake that can lead to a broader application of this new knowledge by end-users. This can include policymakers applying evidence from research in their policies, local communities adapting new practices that address their local needs, private companies adapting innovative approaches, etc. ITP projects are considered as an excellent approach to create the conditions for uptake as it allows a direct knowledge/skills transfer towards the intended knowledge users.

The second impact area aligns with the evidence provided in the UN Global Sustainability report 2019, which highlights the potential of HE&SIs to develop through their teaching generations of new leaders and skilled professionals. These skilled individuals are expected to drive social and economic development through their contributions in the relevant sectors. As critical global citizens, they are likely to have a multiplier development effect because of (i) their capacity to understand and question global power structures, because they communicate and work/study effectively outside one's environment, because of (ii) their consideration of interdependence and social concern for others, and because of (iii) their civic engagement in the form of pro-environmental and pro-social behaviour. Moreover, the realisation of this impact area can equally benefit from the strengthened partnerships (see impact area 3) that facilitate the creation of networks between tomorrow's change agents and leaders, and the in-flow of strengthened human capital in the labour market. This second impact area also fits well within the ITP concept as ITPs integrate global perspectives and they focus on skilled individuals who can drive social and economic development in sectors relevant for development.

The third impact area draws upon the idea that reciprocal partnerships are essential in safeguarding the co-creation, exchange and uptake of knowledge within and beyond the scope of the supported projects. In line with SDG 17, VLIR-UOS aims for sustainable, effective, and efficient partnerships on various levels, including the individual, institutional, country, and regional levels. Additionally, the partnerships may involve academic actors (e.g. Higher Education Institutes), as well as other societal players (e.g. private companies, policy makers, civil society organisations). VLIR-UOS further believes that HE&SIs might have a multiplier effect on other HE&SIs in the country or region. As such, the strengthened partnerships are instrumental to achieve the other impact areas. They can also directly contribute to the goal of sustainable and equitable development. This final impact area also matches the ITP concept, as ITP projects enable the development/strengthening of networks of professionals in various sectors, academia, etc. thereby unleashing the full potential of partnerships.

2.3. Generic VLIR-UOS Outcomes & ITP

To effectively contribute to these generic objectives, VLIR-UOS focuses on **two interconnected strategic axes:**
- Enabling HE&SIs to strengthen and take up their role as *Drivers of Change*
- Enabling individuals to act as *Agents of Change*

To achieve the envisaged impact of FYP2, VLIR-UOS has identified 6 main outcomes along these strategic axes. These outcomes are contributing to the attainment of the main VLIR-UOS impact areas. These are the medium-term effects of an intervention on the level of the direct (incl. staff at HE&SIs, and professionals) or in some cases indirect beneficiaries. For ITP projects the outcomes (1), (2) and (4) are the main ones.:

(1) 'Individuals co-create and apply relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes': This outcome indicates the co-creation and transfer of state-of-the-art knowledge and skills to individuals who then apply these in their own professional context. The skills and knowledge also include critical thinking, global citizenship skills and attitudes, leadership skills, etc.

(2) 'Higher quality and more inclusive education': This outcome concerns the improved quality and inclusiveness of education resulting from strengthened educational capacities available at HE&SI.s

(4) 'Higher quality and needs-oriented research': This outcome reflects the VLIR-UOS strive to strengthen research capacities in order to enable HE&SIs to develop higher quality and needs-oriented research processes and results. This outcome signifies HE&SIs becoming (more) research active and innovative and being enabled to produce solutions to local and global challenges. It also refers to research that is gender sensitive, and equity focused as a means for achieving excellence in research.

> ITP projects will primarily focus on outcome (1), though may also include outcome (2) and (4) but this will be depending on the priorities and main objectives of each ITP, meaning that some might focus more on (1) and (2) while others focus more on (1) and (4) for example, depending on priorities and needs of the stakeholders. Yet, projects are required to document their choices to ensure alignment with their own strategy. This strategy needs to resonate with the VLIR-UOS vision towards change (= the generic Theory of Change as set out in this document). Because in the long term, all ITP projects combined, should contribute to development changes (cfr. Sustainable and equitable development via the SDGs and Agenda 2030), resonating with the impact areas of the general theory of change of VLIR-UOS.

2.4 Activities and deliverables within the generic domains of intermediate change

An ITP project can focus on different **project domains** (=domains of intermediate change) that contribute to the different outcomes, with 'Education programme and methods', 'People' and 'Networks and partnerships' being the main ones. It is possible that ITP projects focus on one or more of the other project domains (outreach and policy support; research programmes and methods; systems, policies and infrastructure) and if this is the case, promoters are invited to clarify their focus on one of these additional domains. The most important changes, resulting from ITP projects and examples of deliverables for these three domains, are outlined in the table below. It presents a non-exhaustive and indicative list of **deliverables and activities** that individual projects can undertake. The deliverables, processes and changes in these domains are interlinked and not mutually exclusive.

Domain	General description (VLIR-UOS ToC)	Activities (examples)
People	Students, alumni, staff, researchers are trained/sensitised in a supportive learning environment to strengthen their knowledge, skills & attitudes in diverse domains (e.g. leadership, global citizenship).	• An inclusive recruitment strategy is developed and applied. • Scholarships are also granted to individuals (from communities) who are typically overlooked, or who are unprepared to participate in traditional educational and scholarship selection processes. • Students are supported to become change agents through a variety of practices (like case studies, field work, internships, etc.). • Development of adequate skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes (e.g. scholarships) • Application of skills, knowledge, competencies to the workplace • Transversal competencies (skills, knowledge, attitudes) for becoming critical global citizens and change agents are strengthened, awareness about gender and environmental issues, human rights, global sustainability challenges. (transversal integration of global citizenship in VLIR-UOS portfolio)
Education programmes and methods	Improved, innovative and inclusive teaching methods, didactics, and digital approaches. Improved curriculum content to support knowledge co-creation and equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge ensuring their career development after the training and ability to tackle global challenges from a holistic and interdisciplinary perspective.	• Educational components are developed and implemented to contribute to developmental change in the region, especially for vulnerable groups in society. • New didactical, pedagogic, and teaching methodologies are introduced, adapted, and implemented by staff. • Course and training content created with improved integration of equity and equality, e.g. gender concepts, intersectionality, inclusion, (implicit) bias,… . • Innovative curricula and teaching methods are developed, often in co-creation with partner institutions. • A supportive, dynamic, interactive and multifaceted e-learning environment is developed. • Curriculum components that shift away from a 'classical classroom' constellation and introduce students to fieldwork, groupwork, collaboration with non-academic actors etc., are developed, often in collaboration with partner institutions and alumni. • Virtual collaborations expand perspectives in classroom discussions and sensitise students to other forms of knowledge production and modes of conducting scientific research.
Networks and partnerships	Strengthened interactions within reciprocal partnerships and engagements at local, regional and global levels between HE&SIs, researchers, staff, students and other stakeholders in society (public actors, private actors,	• New research partnerships with private and public actors or civil society are developed to have more societal impact and attract new funding to ensure sustainability. • Alumni network events are organised to keep alumni connected to HE&SIs

	other CSOs, communities, etc.) for sustainable development	• Exploration of partnership potential/formulation missions (matchmaking sessions, seminars, exchange meetings) • Equity, diversity, and inclusion in teaching and learning are promoted to professionals. • Blended learning opportunities are initiated, collaboratively planned by partners using their specific expertise when relevant. • A network providing access to facilities, resources (including funding) and ideas is in place. • Innovative practices are developed, tested, exchanged, and implemented in the framework of a network of institutions, students and alumni. • Alliances to tackle skill gaps and foster innovation in and through higher education together with e.g. the private sector are in place.
Outreach and policy support	Enhanced interaction with relevant public, private and academic stakeholders to share knowledge, create the conditions for uptake, and provide policy advice/support.	• Demonstration workshops for stakeholders are organised (participation of women is promoted) • Improved scientific communication methods and strategies to share results with broader audience • Seminars with industry, government agencies, and development partners are organised on a regular basis
Research programmes and methods	Improved (interdisciplinary) methodologies and strengthened quality and relevance of research to allow for better knowledge management and high-quality research results serving societal needs.	• Workshops on participatory/ transdisciplinary research methods for researchers • Feed-in from research-based learning methods into research practices of partner HE&Sis
Systems, policies, and infrastructure	Better management, information systems, educational and research policies to improve functioning of HE&SIs, including policies on gender and diversity, research integrity, and uptake. Improved equipment, laboratories and offices for education and research.	Organisational and institutional capacity is strengthened at level of partner HE&SIs Examples: • Establishment of adequate policies, rules and regulations at level of partner HE&SI (e.g. revision/development of educational policies accreditation systems/ HR policy, gender policy, environmental policy, etc.) • Adequate policies are in place to support/improve access for students from vulnerable groups and ensure gender-balance among students and staff • Measures are taken to reduce environmental impact (CO_2 compensation, less paper-based, limited travel, recycling, etc.) Upgrade of supporting research and education facilities at level of partner HE&SI's

2.5 SDG principles

The SDG principles serve as a compass in VLIR-UOS endeavour of 'sharing minds, changing lives'. As visualised in the ToC, they are transversally integrated to render the activities and change processes SDG-proof.

Interconnectedness: VLIR-UOS recognises that given the complexity, scale, and interconnectedness of current societal challenges, meaningful social, economic and ecological transformations can only be realised by starting from a holistic and integrated approach to the SDGs. More precisely, VLIR-UOS strives for holistic transformations by encouraging projects to reflect on their position in the interplay of global challenges and national needs, and to bring together the different types of expertise needed to successfully implement the project. As an essential first step in considering the complexity of societal change, all VLIR-UOS supported projects develop a holistic context analysis that moves beyond sectoral and disciplinary borders and should analyse the positive as well as negative interlinkages between the SDG goals.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSP): The complexity, scale, and interconnectedness of the current societal challenges that the SDG framework is seeking to address, requires a concerted effort of a wide variety of different stakeholders. As such, the principle of multistakeholder partnership – which promotes cooperation and partnerships at different stages and spanning the boundaries of civil society, private sector, government, and academia – is ubiquitous across the 2030 Agenda. An analysis of academic as well as non-academic stakeholders (private sector, government, NGO/Civil Society, international donors…) is essential for each partnership. VLIR-UOS considers the MSP principle by promoting collaboration between different partners and stakeholders to co-create, share and mobilise knowledge and expertise across disciplines, sectors, interest groups, and borders. More precisely, VLIR-UOS explicitly puts forward the science-society interface and the importance of strengthening this. ITP-projects, in particular, are expected to seek for synergy and complementarity with various academic and non-academic stakeholders (state actors, community organisations, private sector, NGOs, ..) when generating knowledge and when facilitating the uptake of acquired knowledge. This implies that ITP projects need to reflect on the involvement of stakeholders to maximise the impact of the ITP project. This may include setting up interinstitutional partnerships (with Flemish partners or in partner countries) to organise the ITP project or developing partnerships instrumental to the selection of participants (trainees) in ITP projects (e.g. with the employers of the target group).

Leave no one behind: VLIR-UOS recognises the need for proactive strategies to ensure that vulnerable and marginalised populations are included in and benefit from higher education partnerships for sustainable development. The LNOB principle is considered by looking at partners with whom we work, at beneficiaries for whom we work, and on what we focus on in projects. VLIR-UOS encourages ITP projects to take gender and vulnerable groups into account, by putting forward partnerships with mid-range or weaker organisations/institutions, by awarding scholarships to a diversity of beneficiaries, and by promoting transformative or community-based types of research. Scholarship attribution is not only based on academic excellence in terms of scientific output, and mainstreaming approaches are put in place to consider inclusion and (gender) equality in each project.

2.6   Transversal and priority themes

ITP projects are expected to take gender and the protection of the environment and natural resources into account as transversal themes that are put forward by the Belgian regulatory framework for development cooperation.

With regards to **gender**, VLIR-UOS has developed a gender policy that reflects on how to contribute to gender equality by mainstreaming gender in higher education for sustainable development. VLIR-UOS and its partners engage in fixing the numbers, fixing the knowledge, and fixing the organisation for gender in line with the theoretical three-fixes model of Londa Schiebinger. To operationalise this threefold strategy, guidance and tools are being offered (e.g. checklist for scholarship selection, information sheet for gender mainstreaming, training on gender analysis in research, training for selection commission members).

With regards to **environment**, VLIR-UOS adheres to the strong and active sustainability model (also known as the Doughnut model of social and planetary boundaries) that aims to ensure meeting the needs of all people within the means of the planet. This implies that VLIR-UOS urges applicants to consider environment and environmental sustainability during project identification & formulation, as well as to monitor and reflect upon the project's effects on the environment and the risks posed by the environment on their project. Moreover, ITP projects should be guided by the 'do no harm' principle to prevent, reduce and control the risk of environmental harm. Lastly, VLIR-UOS retains the possibility to develop measures related to environment, in line with its environmental policy which will be updated during the next FYP 2022-2027.

Global citizenship education (GCE) is a priority theme for FYP2, including ITP. VLIR-UOS seeks to contribute to a global community of critical, global citizens that stand in solidarity, and feel capacitated and motivated to act in view of sustainable development. The educational activities of ITP projects, supported by research and knowledge-driven partnerships, are an obvious pathway for promoting global citizenship among trainees. Through research and service delivery to society, global citizenship can be promoted towards the trainees and towards their professional contexts. The ITP projects should articulate how they plan to integrate global citizenship, in line with their own priorities, ambitions, expertise and networks. This also includes addressing concerns about GCE as a Northern-driven discourse and set of practices, due to the ongoing conversations within the Flemish higher education sector, and beyond, about decolonisation.

Finally, VLIR-UOS identifies Digital for Development (D4D), respect for decent work and human rights as important policy areas for the entire VLIR-UOS portfolio and projects, calling for action to prevent and protect involved people and beneficiaries from risks related to violations in these areas. Specifically for Digital for development (D4D), a D4D flash card was developed during FYP1 to support project promoters in formulating project proposals.

2.7   Coherence

FYP2 has one overarching Theory of Change which ensures that each of the outcomes, including ITP, is aligned with the overall strategic orientation, i.e. contributing to sustainable and equitable development. This way, the complementarity between the various programmes in the VLIR-UOS portfolio is safeguarded. The approach facilitates long-term partnerships drawing on personal interaction and was found to enhance research uptake & impact.

By embedding ITP within the broader conceptual framework of FYP2, VLIR-UOS strengthens the internal coherence of ITP by providing a clearer framework for results' orientation. Crucial in that regard, and unlike the preceding 5-year programme, is that there is no longer a North/South distinction within the VLIR-UOS portfolio, thus ensuring coherence between ITP and the broader portfolio of programmes.

2.8   Synergy and complementarity (S&C)

The focus of Agenda 2030 on meaningful impact through multi-stakeholder partnerships resonates with the FYP2 ambition "Connect4Change". This ambition focuses on cooperation among and beyond academic actors (CONNECT), societal impact (valorisation), and collective learning. VLIR-UOS wants new projects to capitalise on former and/or other relevant projects in the same context or topic, and to stimulate interinstitutional cooperation among and beyond academic actors, to have more impact but also as a goal in itself.

Synergy and complementarity (S&C) can improve the impact of development cooperation interventions and is a top priority of the Belgian minister of Development Cooperation and encouraged by the reform of non-governmental cooperation in 2016.

VLIR-UOS revised its country approach towards an 'Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development' centred approach. Moreover, VLIR-UOS wants to facilitate connections between different actors and projects present in a given country, and cross-borders within the broader framework of the thematic Joint Strategic Framework on Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development (tJSF HES4SD). This means cooperation between academic actors and all other types of actors (NGOs, public and private organisations, private sector, …), starting from a research question, working on the same theme or in the same country, ...

With these objectives in mind, Country Reference Framework (CRF) was developed for each of the 17 VLIR-UOS project partner countries to support teams of academics when identifying and formulating project proposals. This is made possible by providing a context analysis per country focused on Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the higher education sector, and by providing an overview of Belgian development actors active in the country (Enabel, ANGC), their ongoing projects and partners, in view of exploration of opportunities for synergy and complementarity. For the ITP projects, this could be relevant in case of specific activities in partner countries, or in link with themes related to the thematic JSF which are also listed.

3 Eligibility criteria

Each call for proposals defines clear eligibility criteria, using the following sections where appropriate. This practice is common within the academic community. In case of VLIR-UOS calls for proposals, the following eligibility criteria apply:

In case of VLIR-UOS calls for proposals, the following eligibility criteria apply:

Eligibility of applicants (= Who can apply?)	Eligibility of Flemish and local (co)promoters and eligibility of Flemish and local (co)partner institutions.
Eligibility of budget and implementation period	Maximum budget is not exceeded. Maximum implementation period is not exceeded
Eligibility of countries	List of eligible countries and scholars.
Eligibility of submission modalities	Timely and complete submission, and respect for formats and other possible formality guidelines (max. number of pages, font, …).

The proposal must meet the application and submission requirements as described in section 6 of this call "Application modalities'. Non-compliance with the mandatory format could lead to non-acceptance of the proposal.

3.1   Who can Apply?

Affiliation of the promoters:

- Flemish promoter: employed as a professor/lecturer/specialist at a Flemish university or university of applied sciences and arts;
- Partner promoter: employed at a recognised higher education institution or national public (not for profit) research institute located in a VLIR-UOS project partner country" (if applicable).

Additional criteria:

For this call only 1 project proposal per applicant (Flemish/local) can be submitted.

At the level of the partner institutions, no further criteria apply. Former and present IUC partner institutions are fully eligible, without any restriction.

It is the responsibility of the Institutional Coordinator for Development Cooperation (ICOS) of the association (see 6.4.1) to check whether the Flemish project promoter is allowed to act as a project holder within his/her own institution, and to check if the project promoter will be affiliated with the institution for the duration of the project[2]. It is also up to the institution to check who will be the budget holder for the

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[2] Emeriti professors cannot submit a project proposal. When a professor turn emeritus during the duration of the project, the promotership needs to be transferred, except if the institution provides an explicit mandate to continue as a promoter/project holder until the end of the project duration. An emeritus professor can also continue to act as a co-promoter.

project (more in particular of relevance for projects submitted by universities of applied sciences and arts).

In terms of the eligibility of the partner institution applicants, the additional criteria cannot be fully checked by the ICOS, as such this is understood as a first check.

It is the responsibility of promoters or co-promoters who are not only affiliated to a Flemish university or university of applied science & arts, but also to an institution within which DGD funding is or can be provided on a project or structural basis, and in case no rules for inter-institutional cooperation are provided,

- to assess that selection of the proposal by VLIR-UOS would not entail a conflict of interests or overlap with DGD funded projects and hence imply double funding by DGD, and;
- to obtain approval of the other institution's management in case the latter would require this, as VLIR-UOS is unable to assess this in the framework of this call.

In case the project promoter is different from the person who is responsible for the execution of the project, this should be clearly specified in the project proposal (see project module Organisation).

3.2   Eligibility of budget and implementation period

The budget and implementation period will be checked with the included boundaries in the call. The maximum budget is 150.000 EUR and the maximum implementation period is 3 years.

3.3   Eligibility of countries

The ITP is organised in Belgium, at one or more Flemish HE&SI(s), in one of VLIR-UOS project partner countries or in both.

Activities can be organised in collaboration with / in the 17 VLIR-UOS partner countries only: Benin, Bolivia, Burundi, Cuba, DR Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Philippines, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, Peru, Rwanda, South-Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam.

Small expenses for activities in non-VLIR-UOS partner countries (e.g. a field trip) can be allowed if these remain limited and fit the finality of the ITP project.

3.4   Eligibility of submission modalities

The proposal must meet the application and submission requirements as described in section 6. All compulsory annexes are to be enclosed. Non-compliance with the obligatory formats will lead to non-acceptance of the proposal.

4 Budgetary framework and implementation

4.1. Available budget

The budget for this call is 1.650.000 EUR (indicative 11 projects). The number of training programmes that can be organised, depends on the amount of fundable and selected proposals, the duration of those

proposals, and the number of scholars. Selection of ITPs with a shorter duration could imply the possibility to fund more ITPs.

4.2. Implementation

After project selection, VLIR-UOS will draft an agreement between VLIR, the Flemish institution, and the local partner institution (if applicable) with which the promoters of the selected project are affiliated, to establish rules governing the management and use of, and responsibility for, the resources allocated.

Selected projects will be able to start as of 1 January 2023 at the earliest and run for maximum 3 years (January 2023 - December 2024). Several editions of a training within an ITP project can be implemented during this period benefiting each time at least 8 participants.

In case the ITP is organised in Belgium, the maximum stay (travel days included) of a (scholarship) participant in Belgium cannot exceed 90 days (minimum being 7 days), which is the maximum amount of days for a visa type C.

4.3. Financial guidelines for proposal writing

The VLIR-UOS financial guidelines for ITP projects indicate what expenses are allowed in the framework of a project, how budgets are to be made, and how expenses must be accounted for. The full guidelines are not yet available, but a basic set of guidelines needed for filling out the budget proposal will be made available. (see background document 2).

The applicable budget lines are:

A. Investment costs (durable goods with a long life that can be depreciated in the accounts over several years)
B. Operational costs ("project-related" costs incurred for the purchase and/or operational use of goods that are not depreciated in the accounts and costs directly related to a specific project activity)
C. Personnel costs
D. Scholarship costs
E.1. Coordination cost in Belgium[3] (10% lump sum from A to D). The distribution of the coordination costs within subcategory '*E.1. Flemish HEI*' in case there are multiple partners is left to the parties involved

The ITP funding format changed from a lump sum to a project logic funding, combining the training and scholars' cost, making it possible to set up one or more editions, both in Belgium or in a partner country. While the basic costs for the development of the training are made for the first edition, additional costs can still be made when finetuning and updating the training to differentiate in view of a wider group of students/professionals from/in different regions, when appropriate. Allowing more than one edition within a timeframe of 3 years, increases the cost-effectiveness. Several mechanisms are in place to ensure optimal and transparent use of the resources, e.g. loss of scholarship entitlement in case of lack of study progress or falsification of information during application, delay or suspension of scholar-ship for health-related reasons.

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[3] Contact the Flemish partner university/university college for more information about the application of E.1.

4.4 Scholarships

Positive assessment implies an intake of minimum 8 scholarships per edition/training within the ITP. The corresponding scholarship amounts are transferred by VLIR-UOS as part of the project. The Flemish university is responsible for the payments to the scholarship holders, for their reception, housing, organising of insurance and their general guidance.

At the moment of this call, scholarship guidelines are not yet available due to the ongoing negotiations with DGD. These guidelines are formulated in agreement with DGD and have a mandatory nature. They aim at harmonising the different types of grants supported by DGD in function of the duration and finality of the scholar's stay, irrespective of the training he/she conducts and irrespective of the body governing the DGD funds. Scholarship costs may change in line with government funding decisions. Detailed figures are not yet available.

For now, the short-term scholarship allowances guidelines are incorporated in the budget file. As mentioned above, these amounts can still change, but can be used for budgeting purposes. If local/hybrid/online scholarship allowances are used, this must also be included in the proposal (cf. in the budget file). Local/regional scholarships for trainings organised in partner countries need to make use of amounts adapted to the local/regional context. The maximum amount for the scholarship allowance is the amount foreseen for a training held in Belgium.

5 Selection

5.1. Selection criteria

Each call for proposals will apply the same set of four selection criteria. These four criteria are further defined, and translated into a non-exhaustive list of descriptors, that are illustrative but provide an objective interpretation of the criteria, both for the applicant as well as for the selection commissions.[4] Per project, the descriptors for each selection criterion were adjusted in line with its conceptual framework and specificity. The descriptors (see background annex 3) have been adapted to suit the specific characteristics of the ITP project.

Criteria	Definition
Relevance and coherence of the project	*The extent to which the proposal responds to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies (relevance) and fits with the programme Theory of Change (ToC) and within the institution/context (coherence)*
Quality of the project design	*The extent to which a proposal presents a convincing project strategy*
Implementation set-up of the project	*The extent to which the proposal presents a strong plan and partnership for the execution of the project*
Potential impact and sustainability	*The extent to which the project is likely to produce positive long-term effects (impact) and benefits which will be continued after the project duration (sustainability)*

Other qualitative criteria and their underlying principles are integrated in the VLIR-UOS selection system: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, expected impact, sustainability, partnership strategy, synergies and learning.

5.2. Scoring of the criteria

All proposals are assessed by all commission members, guaranteeing equal treatment and triangulation.

The **scoring** of each of the criteria is done using a qualitative interval scale:

> A: Very good (no revisions are needed)
> B: Good (minor revisions might be needed)
> C: Weak (major revisions are needed, hence the proposal cannot be selected. Proposal can be remediated towards a next submission)
> D: Very weak

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[4] Based on the ERC (European Research Council) and OECD-DAC (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee) definitions.

In order to be 'fundable', a proposal should obtain an A or B score on each criterion. The more As the better, and the following selection criteria are applicable in declining order of priority:

1.   Relevance and coherence
2.   Quality of the project
3.   Potential impact and sustainability
4.   Implementation set-up

More details on the selection criteria, track record and scoring and decision making are to be found in the Selection System (policy & guidelines) document[5] of VLIR-UOS (see background documents).

5.3. Selection commission

5.3.1. Composition

In 2019, the ICP&ITP Selection Commission was recomposed to assess the proposals for ICP and ITP projects selection rounds.

5.3.2. Follow-up of selection commission meeting

The selection meeting will take place in September 2022. During the meeting of the Selection Committee the promoter is not expected to orally defend his/her proposal. The Bureau UOS will ratify this selection.

Once the Bureau UOS will have taken the final decision on the selection of project proposals, all promoters will be informed of the outcome of the selection process and the reasons for approval or rejection of their proposal(s).

6 Application modalities

6.1. Methodological approach and formulation guidelines

All projects need to be identified and formulated following the general Theory of Change of VLIR-UOS' FYP2 and the Managing for Development Results paradigm.

The formulation of a project is much more than writing a document. It is a participative process in which partners co-create a project based on a shared vision of change, and a shared understanding of the current situation.

The project formulation guide **(background annex 1)** specific for ITP projects provides practical and operational support and information on the different modules that need to be developed to arrive at a qualitative project proposal. The development of these interrelated modules is explained in a step-wise process. The modules form the basis for the online project development tool.

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[5] An updated Selection System policy document is available on the VLIR-UOS website.

The guide consists of 8 Modules[6] as demonstrated below:

1: Context analysis

2: ToC and strategy

3: Organisation

4: Stakeholders and coherence

5: Planning & budgeting

(6: Risk management)

7: Monitoring & evaluation

8: Learning and steering

The added value is that the modules are linked to each other. For example, based on the context analysis in Module 1 the narrative of change is formulated, alignment is sought with the generic VLIR-UOS Theory of Change for ITP projects, and the standard project domains (of intermediate change) are selected. Finally, the modules will make it possible in a future online environment to be used as a tool not only for planning, but also for reporting. Switching between modules will be possible in a swift manner. These guidelines provide a clear and succinct overview of what is expected from the formulation process and provides ample examples. Use of these guidelines is strongly advised.

See section 7 for the project formats.

6.2.1.Who?

An application can involve a Flemish and local promoter, but it is the Flemish promoter who submits to the ICOS of the Flemish university (association) for quality control. The ICOS will validate and submit to VLIR-UOS. Modalities are to be explained within the framework of the new tool referred to below under 6.2.2.

6.2.2. How?

Project applications are submitted online via the new tool for the submission of project proposals.

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[6] The modules are inspired on the PRINCE2 methodology and themes for project management.

6.3. Deadline

This concerns the deadline that applicants should respect when submitting to the ICOS.

Proposals must be submitted to the ICOS of the Flemish university association via the online tool (specific arrangements on how to proceed might be made at the level of the association, check with your ICOS/GEO how your institution deals with this internal procedure).

The deadline of submissions is at the latest on **4 July 2022 at 16h00 CET (Central European Time)**.

6.4. Application support

The ICOS function as liaison between VLIR-UOS and the individual Flemish institutions and academics/lecturers. The ICOS are the first line contact persons to assist the promoters with the elaboration of their project proposal (eligibility check, explanation of the financial guidelines, assistance in filling out the project modules, etc).

As a general principle, support will be provided in a multi-stage process, in which applicants first contact the ICOS on the level of their institution. Where needed, the ICOS will cluster and forward those questions they cannot answer to VLIR-UOS. Questions related to the VLIR-UOS project tool can be sent or forwarded to data@vliruos.be.

In the case of this call, one general online information session will be organised on **30 March 2022 from 13 to 15 hours** (invitation link will be placed on the website), focusing on the call info, formats, and guidelines. More detail will be provided on the Call website. Possibly, specific training session(s) on renewed guidelines and formats will also be organised, at the level of the universities and VLHORA. Please check our website or the ICOS for updates.

6.4.1. Contact addresses of the ICOS

University Association	Name	Address	Phone	Email
KU Leuven Association	Anse Heeren	International Office, VLIR-UOS ondersteunde programma's Naamsestraat 63 - bus 5001, 3000 Leuven	+32 16 37 94 40	Anse.Heeren@kuleuven.be
Associatie Universiteit & Hogescholen Antwerpen	Lieve Sysmans Truyken Ossenblok	International Relations Office Gratiekapelstraat 10, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium	+32 3 265 44 07	Lieve.sysmans@uantwerpen.be Truyken.Ossenblok@uantwerpen.be
Ghent University Association	Liesbeth Vandepitte Tom Broeks	Dienst Onderzoeksaangelegenheden - Afdeling Onderzoekscoördinatie	+32 (0) 9 264 82 23	Liesbeth.vandepitte@ugent.be Tom.broeks@ugent.be

		Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 25, 9000 Gent		
Associatie Universiteit-Hogescholen Limburg	Eva Rodiers	Dienst Internationalisering en Ontwikkelingssamenw erking (DIOS), Campus Hasselt, Martelarenlaan 42, 3500 Hasselt'	+32 (0) 11 26 80 15	eva.rodiers@uhasselt.be
Universitaire Associatie Brussel	Annabel Van Damme	Vrije Universiteit Brussel International Relations and Mobility Office Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussel	+32 (0)2 614 80 66	Annabel.Lieselot.van.Damme @vub.be / icos@vub.be

6.4.2. Contact at VLIR-UOS

Topic	Name and function	Phone	Email
General policy ITP	Nathalie Maelfait, programme manager	+32 2 550 19 68	Nathalie.maelfait@vliruos.be

7 Project formats and background documents

7.1. Project formats

Formats that are enclosed and have to be submitted:

Format for the narrative project proposal	*This format is to be followed when drafting the project proposal and includes the guiding questions for the narrative sections per module.*
Annex 1: Format Project proposal	*This Excel format is used for the input of essential project data and certain project modules.*
Annex 2: Format Budget proposal	*A project proposal is only complete if a duly completed and detailed budget is added. This document gives you the format of a budget table.*
CVs of the promoters	*Please add the CVs of the promoters in the project tool*

7.2. Background documents

Following background documents can be downloaded from the VLIR-UOS website when formulating a project proposal:

Background document 1: 1.1. Introductory powerpoint formats and guidelines for ITP project proposal writing 1.2. Formulation Guidelines for ITP projects	*This document provides you with explanation on the M&E concepts that are to be applied when elaborating a project proposal. More information on the transversal and priority themes can also be found in the document*
Background document 2: Financial and scholarship guidelines for project proposal writing for ITP projects	*This presentation provides an overview of the main VLIR-UOS financial guidelines that indicate what expenses are allowed in the framework ITP projects, which budget lines are foreseen in the budget plan, and the main calculation rates for scholarships and provide a link to the current Hotel and per diem allowances from the 6th of July 2018 on the VLIR-UOS website.*
Background document 3: VLIR-UOS Selection System – Policy and Guidelines – partim ITP	*The selection system document describes the selection modalities for ITP proposals,*

Background document 4: Country reference framework documents	*Links to Country Reference Framework documents (with information on the country's SDGs, higher education and Belgian ACNGs) for each project partner country.*

Benin
Bolivia
Burundi
Cuba
DR Congo
Ecuador
Ethiopia
Indonesia
Kenya
Morocco
Peru
Philippines
Rwanda
South-Africa
Tanzania
Uganda
Vietnam

Abbreviations

ANGC	Belgian Actor of the Non-Governmental Cooperation
DGD	Directorate General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid
FYP	Five Year Programme
HEI	Higher Education Institution
GCE	Global citizenship education
HE&SI	Higher Education and Science Institution
HES4SD	Thematic Joint Strategic Framework on Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development
ICOS	Institutional Coordinator for Development Cooperation
ICP	International Course Programme
ITP	International Training Programmes
IUC	Institutional University Cooperation
JSF	Joint Strategic Framework
ToC	Theory of Change
tJSF	Thematic Joint Strategic Framework
UOS	Universitaire Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (University Cooperation for Development)
VLIR	Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad (Flemish Interuniversity Council)
VLIR-UOS	VLIR-Universitaire Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (VLIR-University Cooperation for Development)