



# **Call for Projects 2024**

**TEAM projects – Stage 1  
Concept Notes**

**3 October 2023**

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# Summary

Aim	<p>TEAM projects are medium-term projects that aim to explore, build, and deepen academic/scientific collaborations among diverse teams of academics and researchers focusing on a sustainable development challenge.</p> <p>With TEAM projects, VLIR-UOS aims to strengthen the research and educational capacities of higher education and science institutions in partner countries. In addition, TEAM projects are expected to create the conditions for uptake of new and relevant knowledge, applications and/or services by academic, civil society, private, and public actors.</p>
Key features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A TEAM project is expected to produce results within the <b>duration of maximum 5 years</b>.</li> <li>• The projects allow for medium-term capacity building, e.g. through PhD research, curriculum development, network building, etc.</li> <li>• TEAM projects are diverse but due to the runtime of 5 years they tend to have a strong focus on structural research/educational cooperation with local units in partner institutions, often involving the training of PhD scholars who take up a role as an agent of change within their home institution. However, TEAM projects can also pursue improved organisational systems, processes and structures at institutional level if this is deemed instrumental in tackling the sustainable development challenge the project focuses on.</li> <li>• Allows for <b>different aims</b> (exploration, innovation, valorisation, etc.) and <b>approaches</b> (education, research, policies, outreach, people, networks).</li> </ul>
Who can apply?	<p><u>Affiliation and statute of the promoters:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flemish promoter: professor/specialist employed at a Flemish university or a professor/lecturer at a Flemish university of applied sciences and arts.</li> <li>• Partner promoter: employed at a recognised higher education institution or a national public (not for profit) research institute, located in a VLIR-UOS project partner country.</li> </ul> <p>Details on the eligibility requirements can be found in this Call document (section '2.1 Eligibility of applicants: who can apply?').</p> <p><u>Additional criteria:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants (Flemish/partner) can submit a maximum of 2 TEAM projects in case they have no ongoing SI 2023 or TEAM 2022 project. Promoters of an SI 2023 or TEAM 2022 project can submit only 1 TEAM 2024 project.</li> <li>• At the level of the partner institutions, no further criteria apply. Former and present IUC partner institutions are fully eligible, without any restriction.</li> </ul>
Project partner countries	<p>Higher education and public (not for profit) research institutions located in 17 project partner countries:</p> <p>Benin, Bolivia, Burundi, Cuba, DR Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam</p>

Success rate and budgetary framework	<p>The overall budget for TEAM 2024 allows for a maximum of 44 selectable projects. A success rate of 60% will be guaranteed in the selection stage of Fully Fledged proposals.</p> <p>The project budget amounts to a maximum of 280,000 EUR for 5 years.</p> <p>One bonus of 20,000 EUR can be applied for by project proposals with the following set-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Multi-Institutional Partnership (MIP):</b> this concerns a structural collaboration between several higher education institutions at Flemish / Belgian (including ITM) and/or partner level within the framework of a project.</li> <li>• <b>Multi-Stakeholder Partnership (MSP):</b> this concerns a structural collaboration with at least 1 non-academic actor (= multi-stakeholder; civil society, private sector, governmental actors, etc.) in the framework of a project.</li> </ul> <p>The bonus is not assigned automatically but only if the added value of the MIP or MSP set-up is justified.</p>
Project duration	Maximum 5 years, starting on 1 September 2024 lasting until 31 August 2029
Two-stage procedure	<p>Concept Note (this call): focus on a narrative description of the sustainable developmental challenges, the project idea, and set-up.</p> <p>Fully Fledged proposal: fully elaborated Theory of Change, indicators and activity planning, risk and stakeholder analysis and budget.</p>
Launch date call for Concept Note proposals	3 October 2023
Deadline submission Concept Notes to VLIR-UOS	8 December 2023 (17h00 CET)
Timing procedure TEAM Fully Fledged proposals	<p>Call for Fully Fledged proposals:           Week of 12 February 2024</p> <p>Submission Fully Fledged proposals:   29 April 2024</p>
How to submit a proposal?	<p><b>Who?</b> An application involves a Flemish and a partner promoter in one of the project partner countries. However, it is the (main) Flemish promoter who submits to the ICOS (Institutional Coordinators for Development Cooperation) of the Flemish university (association) for quality control. The ICOS will support you in the formulation of your project, and will validate and submit your project to VLIR-UOS.</p> <p>Each Flemish institution has its own internal deadlines. Please reach out to the respective ICOS.</p> <p><b>How?</b> Project applications are submitted via the VLIR-UOS online submission tool.</p>
Assessment procedure	<p>All project proposals will be assessed and selected 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.</p> <p>Concept Note proposals are assessed by Regional Selection Commissions (Africa, Asia, Latin America) tentatively between 22-31 January 2024.</p>

	<p>The selection decision with regard to the Concept Note proposals will be communicated shortly after the selection commission meeting, tentatively in the 1<sup>st</sup> week of February 2024.</p> <p>Between mid-February and June 2024 the procedure of Fully Fledged proposals will take place.</p>
<p>Preparations for and start of the project</p>	<p>Selection of Fully Fledged proposals is predicted to take place in the week of 17 June 2024, after which notification of selection and contracting preparations will take place.</p> <p>Selected projects start as of 1 September 2024.</p>

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development

There is an increasing consensus on the importance of strong higher education and science institutions (HE&SIs) and systems in addressing sustainable development challenges. HE&SIs play a key role in achieving the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SD) and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the 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 calls upon all stakeholders to facilitate multidirectional collaboration in science and (transfer of) technology to achieve the SDGs. It considers academic and scientific capacity strengthening and partnerships as one of the four main levers to achieve the 2030 Agenda and implies a strengthened link between higher education institutions, governments, civil society organisations, and the private sector. Higher education institutions offer disciplinary and transdisciplinary teaching and research as they 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 by producing new knowledge and innovation to address global challenges, by transferring knowledge through training, by providing evidence for informed (public) policy and implementation, and by knowledge mobilisation. Through their teaching, universities and universities of applied sciences and arts empower generations of new leaders and skilled professionals to drive sustainable development. Today's students are the decision-makers and professionals of tomorrow, who think both critically and ethically, have learnt to cope with ethical dilemmas, and who can apply systems thinking approaches to serious and complex societal problems.

HE&SIs have also taken up a central role in providing global citizenship education to nurture a global understanding and a more profound intercultural awareness. 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.

## 1.2. FYP2 ambitions

VLIR-UOS outlined new ambitions for its Five-Year Programme 2022-2027 where the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development serves as the main reference point. VLIR-UOS is committed to purposefully mainstream the 3 SDG principles of 'Leave No One Behind (LNOB)', 'Interconnectedness' and 'Multi-stakeholder partnerships', throughout its ambitions, policies, programmes, portfolio, partnerships, and scholarships. The focus of Agenda 2030 on meaningful impact through multi-stakeholder partnerships resonates with the ambition of our FYP2, called "Connect4Change". It is our goal to focus on cooperation among and beyond academic actors, on collective learning and mutual inspiration (Connect, Learn, Inspire) and on societal impact (valorisation).

These policy ambitions have been translated into the project selection criteria and descriptors for all our programmes. VLIR-UOS wants new projects to **capitalise** on former and/or other relevant projects as a stepping stone, and to stimulate **interinstitutional cooperation** among and beyond academic actors as well as multi-stakeholder partnerships with at least 1 non-academic actor. It is an added value in the competitive selection of projects when collaborations are sought beyond the academic sector or when different Flemish or partner HE&SIs are involved in a project proposal, be it universities, universities of applied sciences and arts, or both.

A specific objective of VLIR-UOS is to mobilise academics who have no prior experience with VLIR-UOS to engage in “sharing minds, changing lives”, with specific focus on young academics, female academics, and academics with expertise in disciplines that are underrepresented in VLIR-UOS projects (e.g. social sciences). This is why the number of project (proposals) per promoter has been limited for TEAM. In case of an ex aequo ranking in the selection of projects, preference will be given to academics without prior experience with VLIR-UOS, to projects coordinated by academics from the underrepresented sex in their sector, and/or to gender-specific projects.

### 1.3. Partnership principles

VLIR-UOS expects all parties involved in VLIR-UOS funded partnerships to uphold a number of principles and to apply them throughout the implementation of a project or scholarship.

This consists of:

- respect for human rights and integrity;
- pro-active strategies to ensure diversity, equality, and inclusivity, and that vulnerable groups are included in and benefit from higher education partnerships for sustainable development;
- decent work, research ethics, and research-based education;
- strategies and action to prevent and protect involved people and beneficiaries from risks related to violations in these areas, and adherence to overall fairness, respect, care, and honesty;
- overall, the development of equal and mutually beneficial partnerships.

#### Human Rights' framework:

Universities are the cornerstones of academic education, scientific research and social services. In recent years, these universities have grown to become some of the largest employers, where internationalisation is the rule rather than the exception. This internationalisation is becoming more and more important and is reflected, among other things, in staff and student exchanges, contributions to capacity building in the Global South, international networking, clustering of research capacity and cross-border research cooperation. Universities are also academic safe havens where students can develop into critical citizens and researchers can freely address fundamental issues, applied scientific research, and valorisation. Respect for human rights is inherent to universities' social role.

On the basis of the human rights' framework, developed at the level of VLIR, all Flemish universities have developed a human rights' policy that focuses on the positive impact that universities can have on their partners, partner countries, and society at large. The issues facing academics are not specific to any one university, nor even to academia in general. These are everyday issues that also confront other educational and research institutions, and companies. The university management boards of the Flemish universities hope that this human rights assessment will inspire other organisations and individuals.

In line herewith, all Flemish universities have an institution-specific operational framework to assess human rights' conditions in view of (potential) partnerships with partner institutions, at pre-contract level, when assessing whether or not to engage in a partnership, and/or at the level of project implementation. Given the cooperation model of VLIR-UOS, whereby a project agreement is signed by the implementing Flemish and partner HE&SIs that identifies the overall guiding principles, roles, and responsibilities of each participating institution and individual, the human rights' check is not only part of the VLIR-UOS selection system (risk analysis and implementation set-up of the project), but will also be performed by the respective human



rights' commission of the Flemish universities. Promoters are advised to reach out to the ICOS for more information.

## 1.4. SDG principles as a compass for VLIR-UOS projects

The SDG principles serve as a compass for VLIR-UOS' endeavour of sharing minds, changing lives. As visualised in the Theory of Change (ToC), they are transversally integrated, using a broad interpretation of the principles, to make the activities and change processes SDG-proof. Additionally, VLIR-UOS uses the SDG principles as a compass to integrate the principles of “synergy and complementarity” and the integration of transversal and priority themes of the Belgian Development Cooperation into its operations. Integration of these principles is an important element in the selection of projects.



**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 approaching the SDGs from a holistic and integrated viewpoint. 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 that are necessary 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. This also includes paying attention to the transversal themes gender equality and environmental sustainability.

With regard to **gender**, VLIR-UOS and its partners engage in *fixing the numbers, fixing the knowledge* and *fixing the organisation* in line with the theoretical three-fixes model of Londa Schiebinger (See [VLIR-UOS gender policy document](#)). Projects are expected to align with this threefold gender strategy in their proposal.

With regard to **environment**, project applicants are invited to consider the environment and environmental sustainability during the project identification and formulation phase, 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. Thereby, projects should be guided by the 'do no harm' principle to prevent, reduce, and control the risk of environmental harm. Besides integration of gender equality and environmental sustainability concerns within project management, the transversal themes can also feature in the projects' content.



**Coherence, interinstitutional collaboration and multi-stakeholder partnerships:** The complexity, scale, and interconnectedness of the current societal challenges that the SDG framework is seeking to address, requires a concerted effort or collaboration by a wide variety of actors. This need for concertation/collaboration is translated to 3 potential approaches. Proposals are invited to explore these.

- **Coherence:** The Agenda 2030 urges actions to be **coherent** with the actions and networks of other actors and/or other HES4SD initiatives. An analysis of complementary actions by academic and non-academic actors is essential for each partnership (to ensure coherence). VLIR-UOS wants to facilitate coherence and connections between different actors and projects present in each country and across

borders. With these objectives in mind, Country Reference Framework (CRF) documents <sup>1</sup> support teams of academics when identifying and formulating project proposals, 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 and of their ongoing projects and partners, as a starting point for context analyses.

- **Interinstitutional collaboration via a Multi-Institutional Partnership (MIP):** This concerns a structural collaboration between several higher education institutions at Flemish/Belgian (including ITM) and/or partner level within the framework of a project, with the aim of obtaining better results by pooling available expertise. The different institutions take up a meaningful and important role in the project. In fact, The Flemish higher education institutions have recently created a platform through their “associatieve projecten” that are dedicatedly fostering these types of cooperation.
- **Multi-Stakeholder Partnership (MSP):** this concerns a structural collaboration with at least 1 non-academic actor (= multi-stakeholder; civil society, private sector, governmental actors, etc.) within the framework of a project, in which this actor plays an active role in the project implementation. The actors in the MSP work towards a common goal, with a clear division of roles and responsibilities, which are formalised, e.g. in the project agreement. VLIR-UOS takes into account the MSP principle by promoting collaboration between different actors (beyond HEIs) 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 knowledge uptake, and the importance of strengthening it.



**Leave no one behind:** VLIR-UOS recognises the need for pro-active strategies to ensure that vulnerable and marginalised populations are included and benefit from higher education partnerships for sustainable development. The LNOB principle is taken into account by looking at partners with whom we work, at beneficiaries for whom we work, and what we focus on in projects. VLIR-UOS encourages projects to take gender and vulnerable groups into account, by putting forward partnerships with mid-range or small-scale institutions, by awarding scholarships to a diversified group of beneficiaries, and by promoting transformative or community-based types of research. More precisely, international top higher education institutions are only considered when they participate as supporting partners in projects, 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. As mentioned earlier, with regards to **gender**, VLIR-UOS and its partners engage in *fixing the numbers*, *fixing the knowledge*, and *fixing the organisation* for gender equality. This is also an important dimension of the Leave No One Behind principle.

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<sup>1</sup> Country reference frameworks were elaborated for the 17 countries + Belgium in the VLIR-UOS project partner country list. (see links at the end of this document)

## 2. Key features of TEAM projects

### 2.1. Aim

TEAM projects are medium-term projects that aim to explore, build and deepen academic/scientific collaborations among diverse teams of academics and researchers. TEAM projects focus on a specific sustainable development challenge. With TEAM projects, VLIR-UOS aims to strengthen the research and educational capacities of higher education and science institutions in partner countries. In addition, TEAM projects are expected to create the conditions for uptake of new and relevant knowledge, applications and/or services by academic, civil society, private and public actors.

### 2.2. Key Features

- A TEAM project of maximum 5 years allows for medium-term capacity building, e.g. through PhD research, curriculum development, network building.
- TEAM projects are diverse, but due to the longer time framework they tend to have a strong focus on structural research/educational cooperation with local units in partner institutions, often involving the training of PhD scholars who take up a role as an agent of change within their home institution. However, TEAM projects can also pursue improved organisational systems, processes and structures if this is deemed instrumental in tackling the sustainable development challenge on which the project focuses.
- Allows for different aims (exploration, innovation, valorisation, etc) and approaches (education, research, policies, outreach, people, networks)
- The partnership can vary in terms of size and composition: one or more Flemish higher education institutions, one or more local HE&SIs and/or other actors; one or more disciplines; young/new and/or more experienced academics, etcetera.

### 2.3. The stages within the TEAM call

#### Call Concept Note

A TEAM Concept Notes focuses on a narrative description of the context, the project idea (strategy), and who will be involved in the project.

#### Call Fully Fledged

The selected Concept Notes will enter the second stage of the selection procedure which starts with a Call for Fully Fledged TEAM proposals.

The written external selection commission report per project will be made available to the applicants during the elaboration stage of the Fully Fledged proposals to take into account these assessments when finalising the Fully Fledged proposal.

A Fully Fledged proposal builds upon the (selected) Concept Note but will align further with the VLIR-UOS methodological approach and Theory of Change for VLIR-UOS TEAM projects.

This means also that the modular approach will be followed and that the project elaborates further on the context analysis and goes deeper into the project strategy and methodology, and the operational set-up. Apart from this the other project modules dealing with the stakeholder management and coherence, activity planning and detailed budgeting, risk management, monitoring, and learning and steering (including a track record on previous cooperation) will need to be added. More details will be available in the respective call document.

### What's new in this call?

- On the basis of lessons learned from the collective experiences of the VLIR-UOS community with the 2022-2023 VLIR-UOS project calls, some important simplifications were introduced at the level of the project call and project proposal format for both the TEAM Concept Notes and the TEAM Fully Fledged proposals, as to make a clearer distinction between the 2 stages, and strongly simplifying the Concept Note Stage.
- The call document structure and TEAM narrative format were simplified using less sector specific vocabulary and simplifying different sections. In terms of requirements, the ToC approach for TEAM Concept Note projects was left out at this stage, but comes back in the stage of Fully Fledged proposals. Consequently, VLIR-UOS will provide more methodological support during that second stage.
- In the TEAM 2022 call, it was already possible to apply for a bonus for Multi-institutional Partnerships (MIP). We have now also created a bonus for Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSP). With these bonuses, we want to stimulate and enable cooperation beyond the borders of a single higher education institution. The Flemish higher education institutions have recently created a platform through their “*associatieve projecten*” that are dedicatedly fostering these types of cooperation.
- The selection descriptors were distinguished between TEAM Concept Note and TEAM Fully Fledged proposals, and further optimised.
- The peer review that was in the previous call part of the procedure, is no longer included, which facilitates and shortens the selection procedure and avoids confusion between the peer review assessment of the Concept Note and the final selection commission assessment of the Fully Fledged proposal.

## **2.4. Next TEAM calls**

The TEAM call is launched every 2 years within FYP2. The next TEAM call after the current one is TEAM 2026, scheduled to take place by the end of 2025 for projects to start in September 2026.

## 3. Eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria define whether a proposal meets the minimum criteria to be accepted to enter the selection process. Each call for proposals defines its clear eligibility criteria, using the following sections where applicable. This practice is common within the academic community. In case of VLIR-UOS calls for proposals, the following eligibility criteria apply:

### 3.1. Eligibility of applicants: who can apply?

The project always includes promoters from at least one Flemish higher education institution and a recognised higher education institution or national public (not for profit) research institute, located in a VLIR-UOS project partner country. **These institutions are contracted by VLIR-UOS in case of selection (not any spin-offs, foundations or other types of organisation affiliated to the institution as main contractor).**

#### 3.1.1. Affiliation and statute of the promoters

##### Flemish institutions

When submitting a project proposal, a promoter must meet both the internal criteria and regulations as to project promotership of their institution and the minimum conditions set by VLIR-UOS.

The minimum conditions set by VLIR-UOS for a lead promoter **from a Flemish university** to submit a proposal are the following:

- one must be able to be an account holder within one's own institution;
- one must have a ZAP statute (Independent Academic Personnel) at the time of submission, with a minimum appointment level of 10%;
- postdocs can also submit, depending on the Flemish institution's internal criteria and on condition that a ZAP member with at least 50% appointment of the institution with whom the contract will be signed is included in the project team as co-promoter;
- ATP members (Administrative and Technical Personnel) can also submit, depending on the nature of the project and provided they can be account holders within their own institution, without a ZAP member with minimum 50% appointment as co-promoter being part of the project team.

The minimum conditions set by VLIR-UOS for a lead promoter from a **Flemish university of applied sciences and arts** to submit a proposal are the following:

- one must be professor or lecturer. In case the professor/lecturer does not have permission to be budget holder, another person (e.g. the director, research coordinator, unit manager, ...) can be assigned as budget holder for the project. ATP members (Administrative and Technical Personnel) can also submit, provided they can be account holders within their own institution.

The lead promoter will be invited to confirm, when submitting the proposal in the VLIR-UOS tool, to meet both the internal and VLIR-UOS eligibility criteria and regulations.

##### Partner institutions

A partner promoter is employed at a recognised higher education institution or national public (not for profit) research institute, located in a VLIR-UOS project partner country. For research institutes this implies the institution has a formal mandate from its government.

The main signatory of a project agreement is always a recognised higher education institution or national public (not for profit) research institute.

### 3.1.2. Additional criteria

- Applicants (Flemish/partner) can be a promoter of max. 2 ongoing TEAM/SI projects. For this call, this means that they can submit a maximum of 2 TEAM projects in case they have no ongoing SI 2023 or TEAM 2022 project, considering these projects will still be in implementation after 31/08/2023 when the TEAM 2024 projects start). Promoters of 1 SI 2023 or 1 TEAM 2022 project can submit only 1 new TEAM 2024 project. This applies to both Flemish and partner promoters.

At the level of the Flemish promoters, the rule of maximum 2 projects applies to the lead promoter and, in case a postdoc submits as lead promoter, also to the ZAP member who is co-promoter. Co-promoters are only counted from the 2023 calls on, as the rule did not yet exist for the 2022 calls.

Application of the rule:

Number of ongoing VLIR-UOS projects and implications for TEAM 2024 call <sup>2</sup>	TEAM 2022 projects	SI 2023 projects	Max. TEAM 2024 proposals
Scenario 1	0	0	2
Scenario 2	1	0	1
Scenario 3	0	1	1
Scenario 4	1	1	0
Scenario 5	2	0	0
Scenario 6	0	2	0

- At the level of the partner institutions, no further restrictions apply for present and former IUC (Institutional University Cooperation) and NETWORK partner institutions. These institutions are fully eligible, without any restriction. However, one IUC institution, UMI-Morocco, is currently in an IUC transition stage and awaiting the appointment of new institutional authorities (rector). Therefore it was decided by the Bureau OS (confirmed during the meeting of 15 September 2023) that the institution is not eligible in this call.
- At the Flemish level, the application is submitted via a (main) Flemish promoter and institution. Co-promoters can also be part of the project team. At the partner level, multiple partner institutions can be part of the application. If important budgets are to be managed by the partner institution(s) (or in case of personnel costs at the partner institute(s)), it is advised to indicate a partner promoter for contracting reasons.

### 3.1.3. Roles and responsibilities in the eligibility check

Concerning the eligibility check, it is to be noted that it is the responsibility of the Institutional Coordinator for Development Cooperation (ICOS) or GEO of the association (see 7.2.) (1) to do the final submission of the proposal (please follow internal deadlines), (2) to check whether the proposal is complete, and (3) to check

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<sup>2</sup> Projects for which one is identified as promoter are relevant here. This also includes Flemish ZAP co-promoters for SI 2023 projects for which a postdoc has been identified as promoter.

whether the Flemish promoter is allowed to act as a project promoter and as budget holder within their own institution. They do so by performing a check of the respective relevant internal regulations.

However, given the diversity in staff statutes at the different Flemish HEIs and given the time constraints to perform checks, the lead promoter will be invited to confirm to meet both the internal and VLIR-UOS eligibility criteria and regulations when submitting the proposal in the VLIR-UOS tool. In case of a postdoc submitting, they also have to confirm that the ZAP member taking up the role of co-promoter meets the criteria as well.

The importance of transparency of the respective roles and responsibilities of the main actors in the project is key. At the level of the Flemish institutions, the distinction is always made between a promoter (and 'main' Flemish institution via which a proposal is submitted) and co-promoters (linked to the same or multiple Flemish HEIs), whereas at the level of the partner institutions in the partner countries, the promoter role can be taken up by multiple people and institutions. Next to the role of promoters and co-promoters, a variety of experts can be part of a project team (with team members).

It is the responsibility of promoters or co-promoters who are not only affiliated to a Flemish university or university of applied sciences and arts, but also to an institution which is eligible for DGD funding (e.g. Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp) on a project or structural basis, to assess and confirm that the selection of the proposal by VLIR-UOS would not contain a conflict of interest or overlap with DGD funded projects and hence imply double funding by DGD.

It is up to the Flemish associations to decide whether only the ICOS or both the ICOS and GEO will be mandated to check and submit project proposals to VLIR-UOS. Please contact your ICOS for more information.

## 3.2. Eligibility of budget and implementation period

The budget and implementation period will be checked with the included boundaries in the call.

The normal maximum budget is 280,000 EUR and the maximum implementation period is 5 years.

Requesting extra budget: in line with our new FYP2 ambitions, based on the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, VLIR-UOS emphasises the interconnectedness by providing the possibility to apply for one bonus of 20,000 EUR in case project proposal will be implemented with the following set-up:

- **Multi-Institutional Partnership (MIP):** this concerns a structural collaboration between several higher education institutions at Flemish / Belgian (including ITM) and/or partner level within the framework of a project.
- **Multi-Stakeholder Partnership (MSP):** this concerns a structural collaboration with at least 1 non-academic actor (= multi-stakeholder; civil society, private sector, governmental actors, etc.) in the framework of a project.

The bonus is not assigned automatically but only if the added value of the MIP or MSP set-up is justified.

During the Concept Note stage, the intention to opt for this bonus is to be mentioned and explained shortly. However, this can still be changed and elaborated on during the stage of Fully Fledged proposals. Since there is no budget requested during the Concept Note stage, the reflection on the activities to be funded with the bonus will only be requested during the budgeting exercise in the elaboration of the Fully Fledged proposal.

### 3.3. Eligibility of countries

The following countries are eligible for TEAM projects:

Country
1. Benin
2. Bolivia
3. Burundi
4. Cuba
5. DR Congo
6. Ecuador
7. Ethiopia
8. Indonesia
9. Kenya
10. Morocco
11. Peru
12. Philippines
13. Rwanda
14. South Africa
15. Tanzania
16. Uganda
17. Vietnam

### 3.4. Eligibility of submission

The proposal must meet the submission requirements as described below:

- **What?** A project proposal is only eligible when submitted via the project submission tool (online platform), via which all requested sections are filled in, and mandatory annexes (see also sections on 'Application Modalities' and 'project formats') were uploaded as prescribed by the call. Without this, a proposal cannot be accepted.  
In order to facilitate the preparation of the information to be submitted directly in the tool, VLIR-UOS makes available Word/Excel formats (if applicable), but we reinforce that only proposals submitted via the online platform will be taken into account.
- **How?** Project applications must be submitted via the [new tool for the submission of project proposals](#).
- **Who?** An application involves a Flemish and one or more partner promoters, but it is the (main) Flemish promoter who submits to the ICOS of the Flemish university association for quality control and check of internal regulations related to Flemish promoter eligibility. The ICOS will validate the proposal in the online submission tool and submit it to VLIR-UOS.
- **Deadline?**
  - Proposals must be submitted to the ICOS of the Flemish university association. For specific internal deadlines at the level of the association, check with your ICOS.
  - The final deadline for submission to VLIR-UOS by the ICOS is **8 December 2023 at 17h00 CET (Central European Time)**.



## 4. Budgetary framework and implementation

### 4.1. Available budget / maximum number of selectable projects

The budget for this call allows for a maximum of 44 projects.

In order to provide an approximative 60% success rate during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage of Fully Fledged proposals, a maximum of 73 TEAM Concept Note proposals will be selected in Stage 1.

### 4.2. Implementation

After project selection, VLIR-UOS will inform the project promoters on the selection decision and perform a check of essential personal and budget data in view of the contracting procedure. During the contracting procedure, VLIR-UOS will draft an agreement between VLIR, the partner institution, and the Flemish institution with which the promoters of the selected project are affiliated, to establish rules governing the management and use of, and responsibility for the allocated resources.

Selected projects will start as of 1 September 2024 and run for 5 years: from 1 September 2024 until 31 August 2029. **No extension is possible.**

### 4.3. Financial guidelines for proposal writing

The [VLIR-UOS financial framework](#) indicates which expenses are allowed in the framework of a project, how budgets are to be determined, and how expenses have to be accounted for. If you would be interested to understand more about the type of costs that can be foreseen in the framework of a TEAM project, you can also check out the financial rules per programme section in this document (e.g. page 32-35) which may help/inspire you. However, please take note that no budget proposal is to be submitted during the Concept Note stage.

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 at the level of the Flemish institution (5% of the A-D total)
- E.2. Coordination cost at level of the partner institution(s) (5% of the A-D total)

VLIR-UOS channels all financial transactions via (the main) Flemish contracted higher education institution.

# 5. Theory of Change (ToC) and objectives

## 5.1. Theory of Change for TEAM projects

The TEAM projects' Theory of Change below reflects the general Theory of Change for the VLIR-UOS portfolio and how the objectives of TEAM fit into the theory. The VLIR-UOS Theory of Change explains how a given project, or set of projects, is expected to lead to long-term development change. The ToC draws on a causal analysis based on available evidence, clarifying the anticipated pathways to impact. It clarifies how VLIR-UOS wants to make a contribution to Agenda 2030, which changes TEAM projects can make, and how they can do so.

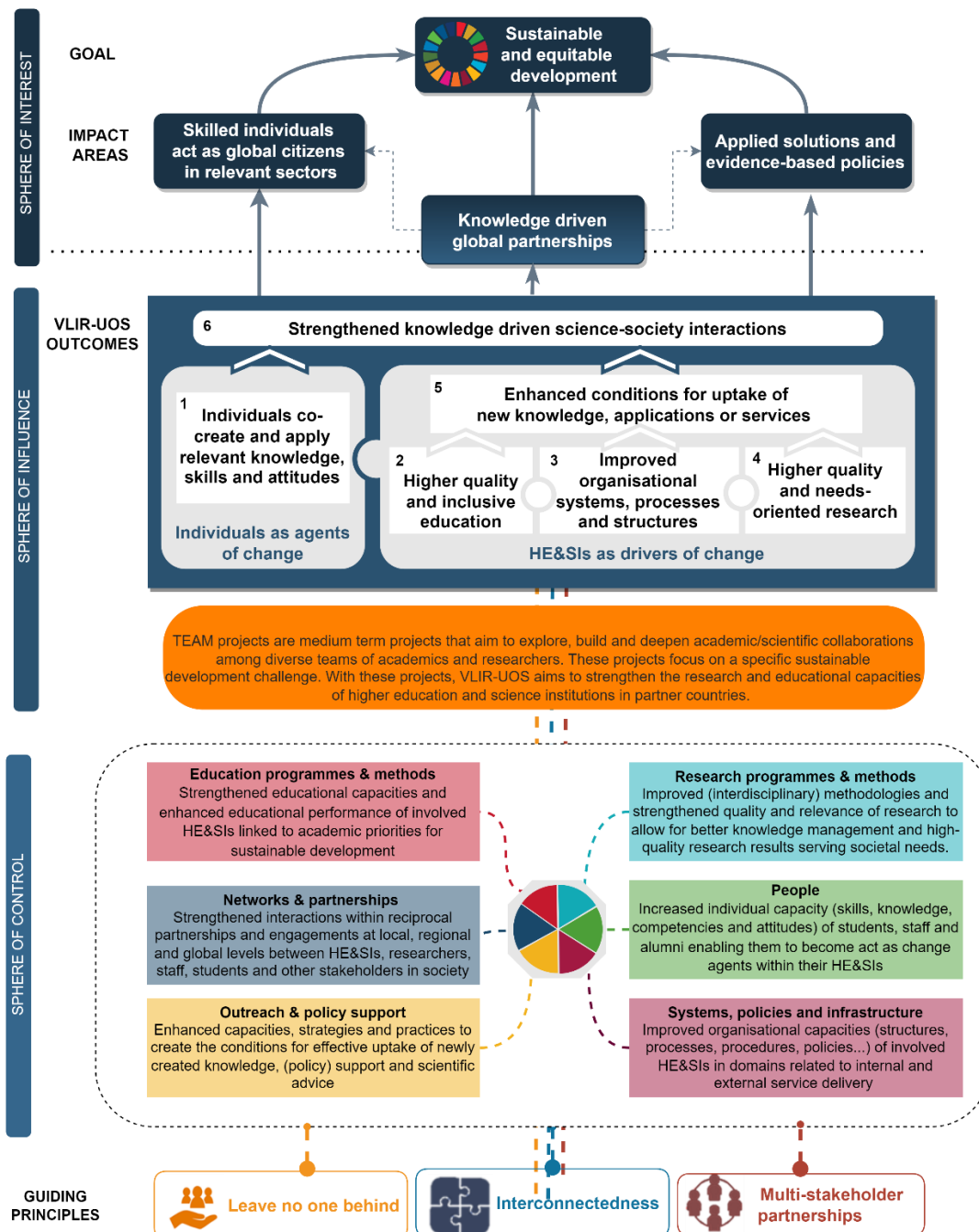


Figure 1 Schematic representation Theory of Change associated with TEAM projects

### 5.1.1. Long-term impact

VLIR-UOS considers global engagement for higher education as a goal (SDG 4: Quality Education) and a means for attaining other SDGs. In the long run, TEAM-projects are expected to contribute to more sustainable and equitable development by fostering:

- **Application of solutions and evidence-based policies:** In short, this refers to the role of higher education in applying new knowledge, insights, and evidence for sustainable development. Effective partnerships are conducive to ensure the relevant stakeholders are engaged and opportunities for uptake are created. This leads to a broader application of new knowledge by end-users and can include policymakers applying evidence from research in their policies, local communities adapting new practices that address their local needs, and private companies adapting innovative approaches.
- **A global community of skilled individuals who act as global citizens in relevant sectors:** In short, this refers to the potential of HE&SIs to develop generations of new leaders and skilled professionals. These skilled individuals are expected to drive social and economic development with their contributions to 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 and to communicate and work/study effectively outside one's local environment, (ii) because of their consideration of interdependence and social concern for others, and (iii) because of their civic engagement in the form of pro-environmental and pro-social behaviour.
- **Knowledge-driven global partnerships:** In short, this refers to the idea that reciprocal partnerships are essential to safeguard knowledge co-creation, exchange, and uptake within and beyond the scope of the supported projects. In line with SDG 17, VLIR-UOS aims for sustainable, effective, and efficient partnerships at various levels, including the individual, institutional, country, and regional levels, both within the HE sector, and with other sectors.

### 5.1.2. TEAM strategic axes and outcomes

To effectively contribute to these generic objectives, VLIR-UOS focuses on **two strategic axes**:

- Enabling HE&SIs to strengthen and take up their role as *Drivers of Change*
- Enabling individuals to act as *Agents of Change*.

Both strategic axes can reinforce one another. For instance, the extent to which HE&SIs take up their role as development actor is likely to affect the embedded scholarship students' development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable them to effectively act as agents of change within and beyond the setting of the HE&SI.

Along these strategic axes, VLIR-UOS identifies **six outcomes**. **Outcomes refer to the change(s) a project want to realise by the end of the implementation period. Every TEAM is expected to clearly align to at least 2 of these outcomes**, namely:

- (1) **Individuals apply relevant co-created 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 organisation. The skills and knowledge also include critical thinking, global citizenship skills and attitudes, leadership skills, etcetera.

- (2) **HE&SIs provide higher quality and more inclusive education.** This outcome concerns the improved quality and inclusiveness of education as a result of strengthened educational capacities available at HE&SIs.
- (3) **HE&SIs make use of improved organisational systems, processes, and structures.** This outcome was formulated to highlight the importance of the organisational capacity of HE&SIs to enable changes in terms of research and education capacities. It encompasses improved organisational processes (e.g. ICT/digitalisation), support systems (e.g. quality assurance), and structures as well as human capacities that contribute to HE&SIs' enhanced institutional performance.
- (4) **HE&SIs conduct higher quality and needs-oriented research.** This outcome reflects the VLIR-UOS ambition 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.
- (5) **HE&SIs create enhanced conditions for the uptake of new knowledge, applications, or services.** VLIR-UOS identifies this outcome as the production of new knowledge, applications, and services, and the creation of conditions for uptake by relevant external stakeholders. It can involve strategic, uptake-oriented stakeholder management, targeted dissemination, and capacity strengthening of end-users (or intermediaries).
- (6) **HE&SIs and their stakeholders engage in knowledge-driven science-society interactions.** This outcome responds to the growing awareness of the importance of the science-society interface which has been identified as a weakness in recent VLIR-UOS evaluations. It reflects the VLIR-UOS ambition to support networks, partnerships, or platforms that can constitute an eco-system where academic (HE&SI's staff, students and alumni) and non-academic stakeholders (policymakers, ANGCs, donor organisations, private sector, embassies etc.) interact to facilitate the valorisation and uptake of knowledge.

### 5.1.3. How do projects deliver on their outcomes: domains of intermediate change/outputs

In general, TEAM projects are expected to bring about results in potentially **six (project) domains**: *Research programmes and methods, Education programmes and methods, Outreach and policy support, People, Systems, policies and infrastructure, Networks and partnerships.*

The table below presents a non-exhaustive and indicative list of deliverables and activities that individual projects can undertake within the six domains through partnerships between HE&SIs and other local, national, or global stakeholders. The deliverables, processes, and changes in these domains are interlinked and not mutually exclusive. Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that expectations in relation to these domains should vary for TEAM projects in view of their distinct scope (in terms of time and budget).

Domain	General description (VLIR-UOS ToC)	Deliverables/Activities (examples)
Research programmes and methods	Improved (interdisciplinary) methodologies and strengthened quality and relevance of research to allow better knowledge management and high-quality research results serving societal needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New knowledge and technologies are developed about sustainable development relevant topics, responding to local needs (prioritising vulnerable groups 🙋)</li> <li>• High-quality research publications and training manuals for academic use are produced, contributing to increased research output and university reputation</li> <li>• Gender balanced participation is promoted in research programmes</li> <li>• Research takes into account the impact on gender issues (how the results positively/negatively impact men/women) and environment 🏡</li> <li>• Integration of new research methods, training lab techniques in optimised research practices</li> <li>• Improved data collection methods and analysis techniques</li> <li>• Practice-based research leading to an improvement/innovation in the professional practice/work field (e.g. university colleges projects)</li> <li>• Etcetera</li> </ul>
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 employability after graduation and the ability to tackle global challenges from a holistic, interdisciplinary perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated Master programmes are implemented</li> <li>• New courses are included in the curricula</li> <li>• New trainings are developed for (non-)academic stakeholders 🧑🏫</li> <li>• New didactical, pedagogic, and teaching methodologies are introduced, adapted, and implemented by staff</li> <li>• Research-based educational programmes are developed and implemented, connecting MSc students to research</li> <li>• Courses and training content are created with improved integration of equity and equality, e.g. gender concepts, intersectionality, inclusion, (implicit) bias. 🙋</li> <li>• Etcetera</li> </ul>
Outreach and policy support	Enhanced interaction with relevant public, private, and academic stakeholders to share knowledge, create conditions for uptake, and provide policy advice/support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities to facilitate and contribute to the use of research evidence by policymakers, private sector, civil society, and other development actors</li> <li>• Guidelines are developed and made available for uptake by stakeholders; Policy briefs are published for policy advice</li> <li>• Collaboration in spin-offs, commercialisation of new knowledge products, registration of IP, pilot initiatives</li> <li>• Involvement of end-users in research processes</li> <li>• Stakeholder engagement strategies are developed/implemented</li> <li>• Platform for regular exchanges/demonstration workshops with stakeholders (incl. women/vulnerable groups)</li> <li>• Improved scientific communication methods and strategies to share results with broader audience</li> <li>• Seminars with industry, government agencies, and development partners are organised on a regular basis 🧑🏫</li> <li>• Etcetera</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of efficient structures, processes and procedures (e.g. introduction of lab procedures) and integration in the daily workflows (e.g. well-functioning lab)</li> <li>• Establishment of adequate “institutions”, policies, rules and regulations (e.g. development of a new research/ accreditation/ HR</li> </ul>

	and offices for education and research	<p>policy, gender policy, environmental policy, technology transfer, Extension office, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate policies to support access for students from vulnerable groups and ensure gender-balance among students and staff</li> <li>• Upgrade of research and education facilities</li> <li>• Improved software technologies for data collection and analysis</li> <li>• Measures are taken to reduce environmental impact (CO2 compensation, less paper-based, limited travel, recycling, etcetera) 🏠</li> <li>• Etcetera</li> </ul>
People	Students, alumni, staff, researchers are trained/sensitised in a supportive learning environment to strengthen knowledge, skills & attitudes in diverse domains (e.g. leadership, global citizenship).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of adequate skills, knowledge, competencies, and attitudes (e.g. PhD scholarships)</li> <li>• Application of skills, knowledge, and competencies on the workplace (e.g. PhD holder applies new knowledge and skills)</li> <li>• Reduction of staff turnover, facilitation of skills, and knowledge transfer within institutions (e.g. PhD remains staff member)</li> <li>• Transversal competencies (skills, knowledge, attitudes) to become critical global citizens and change agents are strengthened, awareness about gender and environmental issues, human rights, and global sustainability challenges. (transversal integration of global citizenship in VLIR-UOS portfolio) 🏠</li> <li>• Etcetera</li> </ul>
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, other civil society organisations (CSOs), communities, etcetera) for sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional and international HE cooperation on a specific topic is facilitated</li> <li>• Multi-disciplinary and interconnectivity is implemented by collaborating with different teams/units/departments in the HE&amp;SI (e.g. different projects along the value chain of an agricultural product, strong complementarity &amp; synergy with other projects) 🏠</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• A stakeholder platform concept (e.g. stakeholder advisory board) and associated stakeholder workshops are developed to build a network with private sector, policy-makers, and civil society (e.g. women groups, communities, marginalised groups) 🏠</li> <li>• Etcetera</li> </ul>

## 6. Timeline TEAM Concept Note

STEP IN PROCESS	RESPONSIBLE	DATE
Launch call	VLIR-UOS Team	3 October 2023
Information & inspirational session (live in Brussels, with hybrid participation facilities)	VLIR-UOS Team	13 October 2023 (starting 13h30 CET)
Deadline for submission to ICOS of the University Association	Flemish promoters	Please contact the ICOS or GEO of the Flemish institution (university association level, see contact details)
Deadline for submission by the ICOS to VLIR-UOS	ICOS	8 December 2023 ( <b>17h00 CET</b> )
Eligibility check and decision, and notification in case of non-eligibility	VLIR-UOS Team and Bureau UOS	15 December 2023
Multiple (regional) Selection Commission meetings	VLIR-UOS Team	Between 22-31 January 2024
Ratification of selection	Bureau UOS	Ultimately 1 <sup>st</sup> week of February 2024
Notification of selection	VLIR-UOS Team	Ultimately 2 <sup>nd</sup> week of February 2024
Call for Fully Fledged projects	VLIR-UOS Team and promoters/ICOS	Week of 12 February 2024

## 7. Application modalities and support

The formulation of a VLIR-UOS project 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.

### 7.1. Application support

The Institutional Coordinators for Development Cooperation (ICOS) are the contacts of VLIR-UOS at the Flemish universities. The Global Engagement Officers (GEO) are our main contacts at the Flemish universities of applied sciences and arts (UASA). ICOS and GEO inform academics, specialists and lecturers about opportunities for cooperation. They help with formulating project proposals and provide support for the execution of the projects.

Specifically in the framework of project calls it is to be noted that the main responsibilities related to Application Support (submission, eligibility check internal regulations (see 3.1.3.)) rely on the ICOS of the Flemish university association. The ICOS of the university association functions as liaison between the VLIR-UOS Team and the individual Flemish institutions and academics/lecturers. The ICOS are the first line of contact to assist the promoters with the elaboration of their project proposal (eligibility check, explanation of the financial framework, assistance in filling out the project modules, etc).

#### “Associatieve projecten”:

VLIR-UOS provides funding for each Flemish university to set-up a minimum policy framework, organisational structure and operation of HES4SD at institutional level.

Additionally, through the “associatieve projecten”, each Flemish university commits to offer, in principle and as far as possible, the same or comparable services in the context of HES4SD to the lecturers of the UASA that are associated with the university, as is offered to the academics of the university, e.g. support when looking for project partners, when submitting project proposals etc. In addition, the “associatieve projecten” aim at intensifying cooperation among the university and the UASA. The scope of the “associatieve projecten” is primarily focusing on the UASA of the university’s association, but should ideally go beyond and also focus on all Flemish UASA, regardless of the association they are affiliated to.

Promoters are advised to reach out to the ICOS for more information.

As a general principle, support will be provided in a multi-stage process, in which applicants first contact the ICOS at the level of their institution/university association. Where needed, the ICOS will cluster and forward the questions they cannot answer to VLIR-UOS. VLIR-UOS will provide a “Questions and Answers” section relating to the TEAM call on its website.

Questions related to the VLIR-UOS project tool can be sent or forwarded to [info@vliruos.be](mailto:info@vliruos.be).

All relevant information needed to elaborate a Concept Note proposal included in this call document, and will also be available on the VLIR-UOS website.

Finally, please note that VLIR-UOS is organising an Information Session in Brussels focussing on the TEAM 2024 Concept Note call on **13 October 2023**. **The session will commence as a dynamic hybrid event covering all relevant call information from 13h30 to 14h30 CET. Following this, we’ll have an on-site inspirational exchange session** between participants in Brussels. You can register via this [link](#) and find more information on our [website](#).



## 7.2. Contact addresses of the ICOS

University Association	Name	Address	Phone	Email
KU Leuven Association	Tupac Calfat	International Office, VLIR-UOS projects, Naamsestraat 63 - bus 5001, 3000 Leuven	+32 16 37 94 40	<a href="mailto:Tupac.Calfat@kuleuven.be">Tupac.Calfat@kuleuven.be</a>
Associatie Universiteit & Hogescholen Antwerpen	Team internationale projecten	International Relations Office Gratiekapelstraat 10, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium	+32 3 265 44 07	<a href="mailto:icos@uantwerpen.be">icos@uantwerpen.be</a>
Ghent University Association	Barbara Lobert	Dienst Onderzoeks-aangelegenheden - Afdeling Onderzoekscoördinatie Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 25, 9000 Gent	+32 9 264 82 23	<a href="mailto:Nancy.terryn@ugent.be">Nancy.terryn@ugent.be</a> and as of 6 November 2023 <a href="mailto:Barbara.Lobert@ugent.be">Barbara.Lobert@ugent.be</a>
Associatie Universiteit-Hogescholen Limburg	Leen Lambrechts	Dienst Internationalisering en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (DIOS), Campus Hasselt, Martelarenlaan 42, 3500 Hasselt'	+32 11 26 9043	<a href="mailto:leen.lambrechts@uhasselt.be">leen.lambrechts@uhasselt.be</a>
Universitaire Associatie Brussel	Christophe Goossens	Vrije Universiteit Brussel International Relations and Mobility Office Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussel	+32 2 614 80 66	<a href="mailto:christophe.goossens@vub.be">christophe.goossens@vub.be</a> / <a href="mailto:icos@vub.be">icos@vub.be</a>

Note: if needed, the contact details of the respective GEO per university of applied sciences and arts can be obtained via our [website](#).

## 7.3. Contact at VLIR-UOS

Topic	Name and function	Phone	Email
General info TEAM/SI Calls Country-specific info for <b>Cuba, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Vietnam and Ethiopia</b>	Peter De Lannoy <i>Global Partnerships Coordinator</i>	+32 2 550 19 64	<a href="mailto:Peter.Delannoy@vliruos.be">Peter.Delannoy@vliruos.be</a>
Country-specific info for <b>Benin, Burundi, DR Congo, Morocco, Uganda</b>	Kathleen Wuytack, <i>Global Partnerships Manager</i>	+32 2 289 05 55	<a href="mailto:Kathleen.Wuytack@vliruos.be">Kathleen.Wuytack@vliruos.be</a>
Country-specific info for <b>Tanzania and Kenya</b>	Geraldine Mabbe <i>Global Partnerships Manager</i>	+32 2 550 19 62	<a href="mailto:Geraldine.Mabbe@vliruos.be">Geraldine.Mabbe@vliruos.be</a>
Country-specific info for <b>Rwanda, South-Africa, Indonesia and the Philippines</b>	Laura Uwase <i>Global Partnerships manager</i>	+32 2 289 05 59	<a href="mailto:Laura.Uwase@vliruos.be">Laura.Uwase@vliruos.be</a>

## 8. Selection

### 8.1. 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.<sup>3</sup>

Next to the criteria mentioned in the table below, their underlying values are also important in the VLIR-UOS selection system: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, expected impact, sustainability, partnership strategy, synergies and learning.

A differentiation at level of the Selection Criteria has been made between the Concept Note stage and the Fully Fledged proposals as to clarify the different expectation levels.

#### Descriptors TEAM Concept Note proposals

Criteria	Definition	Descriptors
Relevance and coherence of the project	<i>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).</i>	1.1 The proposal aligns with the Agenda 2030, national and local policies, as well as with the programme ToC. 1.2 The proposal is based on a genuine and evidence-based context analysis with attention to gender, vulnerable people and the environment (LNOB and interconnectedness). 1.3 The proposal demonstrates local ownership and is in line with the local partners' priorities.
Quality of the project design	<i>The extent to which a proposal presents a convincing project strategy.</i>	2.1 The proposal is in line with the VLIR-UOS Theory of Change, the Concept Note proposal foresees in a compelling, convincing, project idea and approach. 2.2 The proposal is original, creative, innovative (scientific, academic or pedagogical excellence). 2.3 The proposal provides a clearly elaborated explanation what it wants to achieve and on the 'how' (e.g. a first insight on appropriate and feasible scientific, academic or pedagogical methodology or approach)

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<sup>3</sup> Based on the ERC (European Research Council) and OECD-DAC (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee) definitions.

		that recognises/addresses the interconnectedness of the sustainable development challenges, such as multidisciplinary or systems approaches).
Implementation set-up of the project	<i>The extent to which the proposal presents a strong plan and partnership for the execution of the project.</i>	<p>3.1 The proposal involves an appropriate mix of partners (people and their organisations) with the required profile, experience, and expertise to successfully deliver all aspects of the project (quality of the partnership).</p> <p>3.2 It is an added value if different (Flemish or partner) HE&amp;SIs are involved in the proposal, either universities, universities of applied sciences and arts, or both (Multi-Institutional Partnership), or if a structural collaboration is foreseen with non academic actors (Multi-Stakeholder Partnership).</p>
Potential impact and sustainability	<i>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).</i>	<p>4.1 The proposal includes clear ideas on how it will work on creating the conditions for uptake and has the potential to generate significant long-term effects.</p> <p>4.2 The proposal envisages organisational capacity strengthening and is likely to lead to institutional embeddedness (within the partner organisation; with relevant local, national, international networks and stakeholders) which will allow the benefits to continue after the funding (institutional and financial sustainability).</p> <p>4.3. The proposal pays close attention to interlinkages and potential trade-offs between environmental and socio-economic factors (incl. LNOB, gender equality, etcetera).</p>

**Descriptors TEAM Fully Fledged proposals (only relevant for Selected Concept Note proposals)**

Criteria	Definition	Descriptors
Relevance and coherence of the project	<i>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).</i>	<p>1.1 The proposal aligns with the Agenda 2030, national and local policies, as well as with the programme ToC.</p> <p>1.2 The proposal is based on a genuine and evidence-based context and stakeholder analysis with attention to gender, vulnerable people and the environment (LNOB and interconnectedness).</p> <p>1.3 The proposal is compatible/links up with or capitalizes on other related (including preceding) initiatives in the same context or topic (a.o. by taking into account the VLIR-UOS country frameworks).</p> <p>1.4 The proposal demonstrates local ownership and is in line with the local partners' priorities.</p>
Quality of the project design	<i>The extent to which a proposal presents a convincing project strategy.</i>	<p>2.1 Linked to the project strategy / Theory of Change , the proposal articulates a realistic, convincing project logic, with a clear and realistic flow between a long-term sustainable development objective/impact level, the outcomes expected from the project, and the envisaged intermediate changes (=results) by formulating activities/identifying deliverables linked to one or more of the six standard VLIR-UOS project domains, with due attention for the Agenda 2030 principles.</p> <p>2.2 The proposal is original, creative, innovative (scientific, academic or pedagogical excellence).</p> <p>2.3 The proposal provides a clearly elaborated explanation what it wants to achieve and elaborates an appropriate and feasible (scientific, academic or pedagogical) methodology or approach that recognises/addresses the interconnectedness of the sustainable development challenges (e.g. multidisciplinary or systems approaches) (INT).</p>
Implementation set-up of the project	<i>The extent to which the proposal presents a strong plan and partnership for the execution of the project.</i>	<p>3.1 The project ToC is translated into a clear planning which will facilitate effective project execution, follow-up and monitoring, with due attention for the Agenda 2030 principles.</p> <p>3.2 The proposal is cost-effective, the budget is reasonable and justified.</p> <p>3.3 The proposal involves an appropriate mix of partners (people and their organisations) (with the required profile, experience, and expertise) to successfully deliver all aspects of the project (quality of the partnership) and to clarify an adequate and equitable distribution of the roles and tasks for all partners involved, demonstrating the commitment and active contribution of all participating organisations (incl. coordination and communication between the involved partners).</p> <p>3.4 It is an added value if different (Flemish or partner) HE&amp;SIs are involved in the proposal, either universities, universities of applied sciences and arts, or both (Multi-Institutional Partnership), or if a structural collaboration is foreseen with non academic actors (Multi-Stakeholder Partnership).</p>

<p>Potential impact and sustainability</p>	<p><i>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).</i></p>	<p>4.1 The proposal has potential to contribute to applications/policies/services and respond to the needs of direct and indirect beneficiaries, while paying attention to gender, vulnerable people (LNOB), and the environmental impact.</p> <p>4.2 The proposal presents a convincing stakeholder management plan to facilitate stakeholder engagement, while paying attention to gender and vulnerable people (LNOB).</p> <p>4.3 The proposal has a clear uptake strategy while paying attention to gender and vulnerable people (LNOB), with the aim to significantly increase knowledge uptake and innovation. Eventually, this will lead to inclusive and enduring transformations with potential positive socio-political, environmental, and economic effects at the level of the ultimate beneficiaries within and beyond the HE&amp;SIs (e.g. local communities, policy makers, local industry, etc.).</p> <p>4.4 The proposal envisages organisational capacity strengthening and is likely to realise institutional embeddedness (within the partner organisation; with relevant local, national, international networks and stakeholders) which will allow the benefits to continue after the funding (institutional and financial sustainability).</p> <p>4.5. The proposal pays close attention to interlinkages and potential trade-offs between environmental and socio-economic factors (incl. LNOB, gender equality, etcetera). The proposal's sustainability strategy ensures a reasonable balance of social, economic, and environmental sustainability (INT).</p>
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## 8.2. Scoring of the criteria

All proposals are assessed by the 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

During a selection commission meeting, the selection commission will – on the basis of individual scoring – formulate an agreed-upon score for each criterion. In order to be 'fundable', a proposal should obtain an A or B score on each criterion. In case a proposal is awarded with a C or D score for 1 criterion, the proposal is not discussed any further. For fundable projects, 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 about the VLIR-UOS selection system can be found on the VLIR-UOS website.

## 8.3. Selection commission

### 8.3.1. Composition

Considering the expected high amount of proposals for TEAM calls, with a strong focus on thematic sustainable development challenges in relation with country level contextualisation and in order to guarantee balanced distribution of projects over continents, the selection of TEAMS will be organised via Regional Selection Commissions:

- Regional selection commission Africa 1 for the selection of TEAM proposals in Benin, Burundi, DR Congo, Morocco, Rwanda, Uganda
- Regional selection commission Africa 2 for the selection of TEAM proposals in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania
- Regional selection commission Asia for the selection of TEAM proposals in Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam
- Regional selection commission Latin America for the selection of TEAM proposals in Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Peru

### 8.3.2. Follow-up of selection commission meeting

The selection meetings for the TEAM Concept Notes will take place end of January 2024. During the meeting of the different Regional Selection Commission meetings the promoters are not expected to orally defend their proposal. All promoters will be informed of the outcome of the selection process and the reasons for approval or rejection of their proposal(s), including an indication of criteria that – if relevant - did not reach a sufficient (A or B) score.

## 9. Project formats and background information

### 9.1. Project formats

Formats that are available on our website and have to be submitted:

Format for a project proposal (offline working document)	<i>This format is to be followed when drafting the project proposal and includes the guiding questions for the narrative sections per module. All information in this working document will need to be included directly in the online project submission tool.</i>
Annex 1 TEAM CN 2024 – general project data spreadsheet	<i>This Excel format is used for the input of limited general project info and project team information, and is to be uploaded in the online project submission tool.</i>

Mandatory references/upload :

Annex 2: CVs of the promoters	<p><i>Please add the CVs of the promoters</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Flemish promoter (max. 1 Flemish promoter per project proposal): ORCID unique identifier link;</i></li><li>- <i>Partner promoter (max. 1 partner promoter per partner institution): link to an accessible online platform (if no ORCID identifier available) and only if not available then upload a pdf version of the short CV.</i></li><li>- <i>CV links of the co-promoters (Flemish/partner level) are not mandatory except if the project is submitted by a Flemish postdoc and supported by a Flemish co-promoter with min. 10% ZAP status (see eligibility section).</i></li></ul>
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## 9.2. Background information

The following documents are available on the VLIR-UOS website:

<p><a href="#">VLIR-UOS financial framework (incl. programme specific rules for TEAM projects)</a></p>	<p><i>This document provides an overview of the budget lines that are applicable and indicate what expenses are allowed within the framework of VLIR-UOS projects and has a specific section with rules for TEAM projects. The document also refers to the <a href="#">scholarship framework</a> and the current list of <a href="#">Hotel and international per diem allowances (version 15 Feb 2023)</a> available on the VLIR-UOS website.</i></p>
<p>On the Country pages on the VLIR-UOS website, you can find informative <b>Country Reference Framework</b> documents. These documents provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) an overview of VLIR-UOS projects within the current Five Year Programme (updated on a Yearly basis)</li> <li>(ii) summary info on a partner country's approach towards Agenda 2030 and the SDGs;</li> <li>(iii) general info on the higher education sector and on proposed activities of Belgian cooperation actors, with a focus on the non-governmental cooperation.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Benin</a>; <a href="#">Bolivia</a>; <a href="#">Burundi</a>; <a href="#">Cuba</a>; <a href="#">DR Congo</a>; <a href="#">Ecuador</a>; <a href="#">Ethiopia</a>; <a href="#">Indonesia</a>; <a href="#">Kenya</a>; <a href="#">Morocco</a>; <a href="#">Peru</a>; <a href="#">Philippines</a>; <a href="#">Rwanda</a>; <a href="#">South Africa</a>; <a href="#">Tanzania</a>; <a href="#">Uganda</a>; <a href="#">Vietnam</a>.</p>

Looking for more inspiration: check out the [Community talks](#), the publication [20 years of Impact - Sharing Minds, changing Lives](#), and if you need inspiration for [cooperation with an external actor](#) then you could have a look at some ideas from other actors (e.g. Belgian non-governmental actors) for collaboration with Higher Education and Science Institutes in the framework of VLIR-UOS projects in the framework of a VLIR-UOS project.



# Abbreviations

ANGC	Belgian Actor of Non-Governmental Cooperation
ATP	Administratief en technisch personeel (Administrative and Technical Personnel)
DGD	Directorate General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid
FYP	Five-Year Programme
GEO	Global Engagement Officer at level of a Flemish university of applied sciences and arts
HE&SI	Higher Education and Science Institution(s)
HEI	Higher Education Institution(s)
ICOS	Institutional Coordinator for Development Cooperation
IUC	Institutional University Cooperation
JSF	Joint Strategic Framework
MIP	Multi-Institutional Partnership
MSP	Multi-Stakeholder Partnership
SI	Short Initiative project
TEAM	TEAM project
ToC	Theory of Change
tJSF	Thematic Joint Strategic Framework
UASA	Universities of Applied Sciences and Arts
UOS	Universitaire Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (University Cooperation for Development)
VLIR	Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad (Flemish Interuniversity Council)
VLIR-UOS	VLIR-Universitaire Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (VLIR-University Cooperation for Development)
ZAP	Zelfstandig Academisch Personeel (Independent Academic Personnel)