

**Call for Experts  
Membership of  
VLIR-UOS  
Selection Commissions**

21 December 2022

*Call open until 27 January 2023*

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# Call for Experts for VLIR-UOS Selection Commissions

## 1. Object of the call for experts

The object of this call is to receive applications for membership of the following VLIR-UOS selection commissions:

- the 4 Regional Selection Commissions for Africa (2 Africa commissions), Asia and Latin America, responsible for the selection of partnership project proposals focusing on capacity building, dealing with either education, research, university management, bridging the science-society interface, or a mix of them;
- the Educational Programmes Selection Commission, responsible for the selection of International Training Programme and ICP Connect project proposals. These are partnership projects focusing on educational capacity building;
- the joint Selection commission for the Policy Supporting Programme.

Each commission has 4 permanent members and 2 substitute members. We aim to recompose the commissions by changing half of the present members. Current commission members will need to re-apply. 30 experts are sought: 4 permanent members and 2 substitute members for each commission.

In the case of the Policy Supporting Programme, VLIR-UOS only nominates 1 expert to participate in the selection commission organised by DGD (see below).

We seek **high profile international experts with relevant expertise from a diversity of scientific backgrounds and working environments, as well as origin.**

## 2. Background

VLIR-UOS – part of the Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR) – is the platform through which Flemish universities and universities of applied sciences and arts<sup>1</sup> pool expertise and efforts, and work together in the context of higher education cooperation for development. VLIR-UOS supports partnerships between higher education and science institutes in Flanders and partner countries that seek answers to global and local challenges. This international network of experienced and committed academics, researchers, institutional coordinators and students works across the boundaries of institutions, disciplines, languages, countries and continents.

Funded by the Belgian Federal Government (DGD), VLIR-UOS is the main sponsor of partnership projects between academics from Flanders and partner countries, as well as scholarships for students and professionals from Flanders and partner countries. These partnership projects aim to improve the research and educational performance of local higher education institutions through capacity building, while at the same time developing innovative solutions (new knowledge, applications or services) to

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<sup>1</sup> Universities of applied sciences and **arts** are higher education institutions with a strong practice-based focus, offering associate degrees, professional bachelor's degrees, advanced bachelor's degrees and postgraduate certificates.

global, developmental problems. Through these partnerships, institutes for higher education evolve into key actors that shape the economic and societal systems in their countries. By supporting relevant, high-quality educational programmes in Flanders and by providing scholarships for students from partner countries, VLIR-UOS invests in future changemakers, and contributes to the globalisation, diversity and quality of Flemish higher education.

VLIR-UOS outlined new ambitions for its Five-Year Programme 2022-2027, for which the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development served 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, "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).

### 3. Mandate and functioning

#### 3.1. Regional Selection Commissions

The geographical coverage is the following :

- Africa 1: Benin, Burundi, DR Congo, Morocco, Rwanda
- Africa 2: Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda
- Latin America: Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Peru
- Asia: Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam.

The regional commissions are responsible for the selection of Short Initiatives (SI) and TEAM projects.

Key characteristics of SI and TEAM projects:

SI	TEAM
<p>SI and TEAM projects aim to explore, build and deepen academic/scientific collaborations among diverse teams of academics and researchers. SI and TEAM projects focus on a sustainable development challenge and aim to strengthen the research and educational capacities of higher education and science institutions in partner countries. In addition, these 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>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Short Initiative (SI) is expected to produce short-term results within the <b>duration of maximum two years. Budget: max. 70.000 EUR.</b></li> <li>• SI projects are very <b>accessible</b>, in particular for <b>new/young project promoters</b>, and/or are eager to go for a first experience as a promoter of a VLIR-UOS project. Also academics with VLIR-UOS experience have access.</li> <li>• Allows for <b>differentiated aims</b> (exploration, innovation, valorisation, etc.) and <b>approaches</b> (education, research, policies, outreach, people, networks).</li> <li>• The partnership can vary in terms of size and composition: one or more Flemish higher education institutions,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TEAM projects have a maximum duration of <b>5 years</b> and allow for medium-term capacity building through e.g. PhD research, curriculum development, network building, etc. <b>Budget: max. 280.000 EUR.</b></li> <li>• 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 training of PhD scholars who take on a role as an agent of change within their home institution.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• TEAM projects allow for differentiated objectives (exploration, innovation, valorisation, etc.) and approaches</li> </ul>

<p>one or more local higher education and science institutions and/or other actors; one or more disciplines; young/new and/or more experienced academics, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection via Regional Selection commissions: 1 selection round</li> </ul>	<p>(education, research, policies, outreach, people, networking)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection via Regional Selection commissions: 2 rounds (Concept note and Fully Fledged proposal Selection)</li> </ul>
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### 3.2. Educational Programmes Selection Commission

The Educational Programmes Selection Commission is responsible for the selection of International Training Programme (ITP) projects and ICP Connect projects.

Key characteristics of ITP and ICP Connect projects:

ITP	ICP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With an ITP project, training courses can be organised for professionals from civil society, private or public sector and/or academics, scientists, and researchers at higher education institutions. The maximum <b>duration of an ITP project is three years. Budget: max. 150.000 EUR.</b></li> <li>• These trainings are short- to medium-term, intensive, interactive and practice-oriented. 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).</li> <li>• Selection via the Educational Programmes Selection Commission: 1 selection round</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICP Connect study programmes are accredited international study programmes organised at one or more Flemish universities. The programmes focus on subjects aligned with the Agenda 2030 and SDG principles. An ICP Connect project runs over 2 phases of 5 years. Funding for ICP Connect projects is foreseen to support ICP Connect study programmes to more systematically integrate global perspectives and strengthen global south and network dimensions into existing master's programmes. <b>Budget: max. 150.000 EUR / year.</b></li> <li>• This implies a strategy that aims to spur the internationalization and networking of the programme. HEIs aim to systematically integrate global perspectives through educational networks and scholarships hereby creating a supportive, inclusive and networked learning environment in which individual scholarship students, professionals and academics acquire transversal competencies and state-of-the-art knowledge on sustainable development enabling them to become experts and critical global citizens motivated to act as change agents in their network.</li> <li>• Selection via the Educational Programmes Selection Commission: 2 rounds (Concept note and Fully Fledged proposal Selection)</li> </ul>

### 3.3. Policy Supporting Programme Selection Commission

The Policy Supporting Programme (PSP) selection commission is responsible for the selection and assessment of PSP project proposals. These PSP projects aim at providing scientific support to our donor, DGD, for the formulation of policy advice and the preparation of cooperation programmes in a number of priority themes, sectors and partner countries. A PSP project has an annual budget of maximum 300.000 EUR, lasting for 4,5 years. For the upcoming call, three themes have been identified:

- Climate & Environment
- Fragility & Resilience
- Social Protection, Inequality & Inclusive Growth.

PSP is a joint programme that VLIR-UOS funds together with ARES, the umbrella organisation for the Belgian French-speaking universities. The Selection Commission consists of DGD staff and 2 independent experts. Both VLIR-UOS and ARES will nominate 1 independent expert with generic expertise, one male and one female expert, in line with our gender and diversity policy. A programme manager of both

VLIR-UOS and ARES will participate in the commission as observers. The commission will in a first phase select 3 concept notes, and will at a later stage assess 3 fully fledged proposals.

**3.4. Functioning of the VLIR-UOS Selection Commissions (incl. PSP)**

Each selection process follows a similar logic. Prior to the selection process, a training/briefing (online) is organised by VLIR-UOS. Next, selection commissions receive a number of project proposals at least 8 weeks prior to the selection commission meeting, through e-mail or a digital platform. Project proposals sent to the Selection Commission members have already been screened by VLIR-UOS as to their eligibility. Each commission member comments and scores each individual proposal and submits his/her assessment to VLIR-UOS prior to the meeting. During a selection meeting (online or in Brussels) the assessments are discussed and a consensus score is agreed upon for each proposal during the Selection Commission meeting. At the end of the meeting, the commission identifies and provides arguments for:

- the selected proposals
- the fundable but not selected proposals
- the non-fundable projects

For TEAM, ICP Connect and PSP, VLIR-UOS currently works with a 2-round system in which round 1 consists of selecting concept notes, and round 2 consists of selecting fully fledged proposals. For SI project, there is only one selection round.

Selection Commission meetings are prepared and coordinated by the VLIR-UOS team, and headed by one of the VLIR-UOS Board (Bureau UOS) members acting as Chairperson. The Bureau UOS validates the selection results. In the case of PSP, the selection/assessment meeting is organised by DGD and headed by DGD.

**3.4.1. Selection criteria**

The table below presents the set of generic assessment criteria that will function as guidelines for the selection of proposals. VLIR-UOS also provides descriptors which serve as an objective interpretation of the criteria, adapted per programme.

Criteria	Definition
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>
Quality of the project design	<i>The extent to which a proposal presents a convincing project strategy.</i>
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>
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>

### 3.4.2. Scoring system

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. The proposal can be remediated towards a next submission)
D: Very weak

## 4. Profile and assignment

### 4.1. General

The VLIR-UOS commissions are composed of **international experts**, with **no affiliation** whatsoever to a Belgian higher education institution (HEI) or research institute, in order to guarantee impartiality and integrity. This means that a commission member cannot have an affiliation with a Belgian HEI or research institute, nor had any kind of structural collaboration with a Belgian HEI or research institute over the past five years, counting backwards from 2022. This only applies for the commission member in question, not for the entire staff of the institution/organisation the commission member is affiliated with.

The commissions consist of four effective members. In addition, substitute members are selected in case an effective member cannot participate due to force majeure or conflict of interest.

VLIR-UOS aims at including experts from different backgrounds and disciplines/fields (alpha, beta, gamma). VLIR-UOS values and encourages participation of commission members from partner countries.

Each commission has to contain a mix of profiles, professional and cultural, regional backgrounds and expertise, and should include:

- international academic and development cooperation expertise;
- in-depth knowledge about the 3 SDG principles, including gender and diversity for the 'leave no one behind' principle, stakeholder management/governance and multi-actor partnerships;
- methodological/technical expertise (OECD-DAC criteria, Theory of Change, intervention modalities, etc.);
- expertise on 'creating the conditions for uptake' and 'science society interface';
- expertise in higher education policy, scientific research policy and practice. At least 50% of the commission members should have expertise in higher education policy, scientific research policy and practice;
- experience with universities of applied sciences and arts or its equivalent in other countries;
- experience with interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary approaches;
- knowledge of the Flemish higher education system;
- a gender balance, minimally 25-75% and preferably 50-50%;
- a mix of experts from the Global North and the Global South

## 4.2. Profile/requirements for each individual member

- Eligibility: a selection commission member cannot be staff of/or be affiliated with a Belgian HEI or research institute (see earlier).
- Each selection commission member should have the following competences:
  - o an international academic background with interest in the broader development challenges or a development cooperation background;
  - o (basic) knowledge of the Agenda 2030, SDGs and the 3 principles ('Leave no one behind', 'Multistakeholder partnerships' and 'interconnectedness'). More in-depth knowledge is an advantage;
  - o experience with interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary approaches;
  - o very good command of English, as all proposals to be assessed are elaborated in English, and all selection meetings will be in English;
  - o experience with interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary approaches.

At the level of **regional commissions**, each member should have specific expertise on the region, preferably with a focus on VLIR-UOS partner countries in that region;

At the level of the **Educational Programmes** Selection Commission demonstrable expertise in Global Citizenship Education<sup>2</sup> is also required.

For the Joint Selection Commission for the Policy Supporting Programme VLIR-UOS seeks an independent expert with a general scientific background and with experience in policy support (Uptake/Getting Research Into Policy and Practice).

## 4.3. Assignment

### 4.3.1. Mandate and workload

The **mandate** of commission members will be limited in time in order to guarantee sufficient dynamism, but long enough to allow stability and continuity. Each new member will be trained and coached by VLIR-UOS. The workload of selection commission members varies. The following number of proposals to be assessed per call are indicative, based on intakes of previous years.

SI	25 to 30 proposals
TEAM	35 concept notes, less than 18 fully fledged
ICP Connect	20 concept notes, less than 20 fully fledged
ITP	25 proposals
PSP	8 proposals

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<sup>2</sup> VLIR-UOS understands global citizenship as a transversal set of competencies, including: (i) the capacity to understand and question global power structures, communicate and work/study effectively outside one's environment, (ii) the consideration of interdependence and social concern for others, and (iii) civic engagement in the form of pro-environmental and pro-social behaviour.



### 4.3.2. Remuneration

The Selection Commission members will be compensated for the delivered services. The workload is calculated in number of reading/assessment days and training/selection commission meeting days.

A day fee of € 400 (excl. VAT) is foreseen both for the training as well as for the preparation of the assessment meeting (reading and assessing the proposals), and the meeting itself.

In case physical presence in Belgium is required for meetings, transport and accommodation will be organised and costs will be reimbursed for Selection Commission members.

A contract will be concluded between VLIR-UOS and the Selection Commission member, with the individual person or with his/her organisation, if so required. No overhead will be paid in case of contract with an organisation.

### 4.4. Deontological code of conduct

The shortlisted commission members will be invited to sign a code of conduct, in which the criteria of eligibility for membership and general rules of conduct will be stated (available upon request).

### 4.5. Indicative planning selection commissions – 2023 - 2026

#### Regional commissions

Call	Submission project proposals	Timing commission meetings
SI 2023	20 March 2023	Between 1 and 12 May 2023
TEAM 2024	January 2024 May 2024	Concept notes: February 2024 Fully fledged proposals: June-July 2024
SI 2024	March 2024	May 2024
TEAM 2025	January 2025 May 2025	Concept notes: February 2025 Fully fledged proposals: June-July 2025
SI 2025	March 2025	May 2025

#### Educational programmes commissions

Call	Submission project proposals	Timing commission meetings
ITP 2023	April 2023	Week of 22 May 2023
ICP Connect 2024-2025	September/October 2023 May 2024	Concept notes: November 2023 Fully fledged proposals: June 2024
ITP 2025	April 2025	May 2025
ICP Connect 2026-2027	September/October 2025	Concept notes: November 2025

	May 2026	Fully fledged: proposals: June 2026
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### Joint Selection Commission for PSP

Call	Submission project proposals	Timing commission meetings
PSP 2023-2027	March 2023	Concept notes: April 2023
	October 2023	Fully fledged proposals: November 2023

## 5. Application modalities

Candidates for membership in a VLIR-UOS selection commission are requested to complete the following [online form](#) (including an upload of your CV).

Deadline for submission is **Friday 27 January 2023, 14 hours CET**. Selection commission members will be appointed by mid-February 2023.

You can apply for multiple commissions. However, in principle you can be member of only one commission. Please indicate the commission of your preference, in case of applying for more than one commission.

For more information on the various commissions, please contact the following persons:

- Regional selection commissions: Peter De Lannoy ([peter.delannoy@vliruos.be](mailto:peter.delannoy@vliruos.be))
- Educational programmes commission: Ise De Smet ([ise.desmet@vliruos.be](mailto:ise.desmet@vliruos.be))
- Policy Supporting Programme: Laura Uwase ([laura.uwase@vliruos.be](mailto:laura.uwase@vliruos.be) )