

Policy Supporting Programme (PSP) Call 2023

Information session – 9 February 2023 – Overview Q&A

Eligibility criteria

1. **Q: Can a university from the partner country, which already has an IUC (Institutional University Cooperation) with VLIR-UOS, be part of the partnership within the PSP?**

A: Yes, it is possible. If a collaboration is already in place through an IUC, the PSP can be a way to further strengthen the partnership. Links with ongoing projects, VLIR-UOS/ARES funded or not, are encouraged and welcomed since this will enable the mobilisation of local expertise

2. **Q: What are the main considerations when collaborating with a partner promoter? Does a junior partner have a preference, or is it better to join this call with existing strong partners?**

A: PSP does not have a capacity building objective, unlike other types of VLIR-UOS and ARES projects. For this programme, especially within the core group, it is preferred to mobilise existing expertise. We expect that the necessary expertise is already available and can be deepened to provide the best possible quality output for DGD.

Core group

3. **Q: Can the core group of the PSP consist of different members from the same institution?**

A: The core group must consist of at least three members, including a Flemish promotor, a French-speaking promotor, and a promotor from a partner country, each of them affiliated to another institution, and the indicative maximum is six members. However, these members can be from different institutions. In other words, a core group of six members can come from six different institutions. At least three institutions need to be involved. More members from the same university can be member, as long as the minimum of three institutions and the maximum of 6 members are respected.

4. **Q: Can research collaborations be set up during the fully-fledged project with a partner in countries not on the list (next to the partner in the core group, which is from a country on the list)?**

A: Within the consortium and the research grant, you are free to collaborate with partners outside the partner country list. *For example, for comparison, you're free to work with experts from other African, Asian, Latin American countries.* However, the core group must be composed only of partners from the listed countries, which means that the higher education institution or the domicile of the expert must be in one of the eligible partner countries.

Here's the complete list of eligible partner countries:

	ARES	VLIR-UOS	DGD
Benin			
Bolivia			
Burkina Faso			
Burundi			
Cambodia			
Cameroon			
Cuba			
DR Congo			
Ecuador			
Ethiopia			
Guinea			
Haiti			
Indonesia			
Kenya			
Madagascar			
Mali			
Morocco			
Mozambique			
Niger			
Palestine			
Peru			
Philippines			
Rwanda			
Senegal			
South Africa			
Tanzania			
Uganda			
Vietnam			

5. Q: How should the roles and responsibilities of the core group members be understood?

A: Several (leading) roles, tasks and responsibilities can be assigned to the different members of the core group. (For example: one liaison officer to DGD, one lead researcher, one project manager, one responsible for dissemination,...). All core groups are free to define their own governance; this will be part of the assessment during the selection process.

6. Q: Can more than 3 members of the core group be included in the concept note format (word document)?

A: Yes, additional lines can be added to the format to accommodate the actual number of members involved. The template was designed with 3 columns as a minimum requirement for eligibility.

Budget

7. Q: What expenses under budget are considered eligible during the inception phase? Or which expenses are not eligible?

A: All expenses are eligible during the project's inception phase as long as they are relevant and can be justified by their contribution to the project's results. The internal financial framework, including salary policy, of your institutions needs to be respected.

- 8. Q: Is it possible to have a 'sandwich' PhD or doctoral stay, and how would this be budgeted? Should the budget come from the Belgian partner or the partner country, or should it be divided between the two?**

A: The aim is an equal distribution of the budget among all the partners involved over the entire implementation period. We will provide a concrete and practical framework of how the budget should be balanced and distributed among the different partners once the fully fledged project begins. As for the 'sandwich' PhD or doctoral stay, it is possible to include this in the project, and the budget for this can be discussed and allocated according to the framework that will be provided later.

- 9. Q: Will the entire budget per theme be transferred to a single coordinating Higher Education Institution (HEI), either Flemish or fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (FWB), or will the budget management be split between VLIR-UOS and ARES?**

A: It's up to the core group to decide how to organise the financial management among the participating institutions. Preferably the entire budget per project is transferred to a single coordinating HEI, whether Flemish or FWB, who will then manage the budget transfers to the other members. This way there is one overall coordination of all expenses by one HEI who is responsible for the reporting to VLIR-UOS/ARES, and there is one single point of contact for the project for DGD, VLIR-UOS and ARES.

The budget management of the PSP will be joint, and either VLIR-UOS or ARES will perform day-to-day coordination of PSP. The concrete implementation of this joint budget management is currently under discussion between VLIR-UOS and ARES. By having a joint budget management, we aim to avoid additional dispatching transactions between the Belgian HEI.

- 10. Q: How should the budget be presented in the concept note and, in the reporting, afterwards?**

A: In the concept note, an indicative budget should be provided based on €1000 per day multiplied by the number of days. This budget should give an overview of the approach and planned activities for the inception phase (i.e. how to link up with other partners for the consortium, workshop planned, start of research activities...) and the expenses related to it, in order to justify the budget requested, calculated on the basis of the number of days multiplied by the fee.

In the reporting, the number of days used should be indicated along with the resulting outputs. An extract of the financial accounting system should also be provided as proof of the expenses for the related activities.

Themes

- 11. Q: Should concept notes for the themes be broad or specific, given the broad scope of the themes?**

A: In the concept note, reflections on the chosen theme are asked. Apart from pure content, it is especially important to define a clear approach towards the inception phase, the way priorities will be defined jointly with DGD and among consortium partners and the uptake strategy.

During the 6-month inception period, the substantive content will be further elaborated in consultation with DGD. When writing the proposal (at the end of the inception phase), it will be important to elaborate the themes in more detail.