**FEDERAL RESEARCH PROGRAMME DRUGS**

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## PARTNER COMPOSITION – INSTITUTION/UNIVERSITY/RESEARCHER

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| 01 | What is a "blue sky" project as opposed to a project responding to a research priority? |
|  | *The call is open for projects in one or more of the seven dimensions of the drug situation. Within each of these 7 dimensions, priorities emerging from policy-makers and other stakeholders are identified. Researchers can therefore either 1) address specifically a given research priority (in the platform, they will click on the corresponding priority when creating an EOI and full proposal). Research can also 2) design a project within a given dimension but outside the priorities. They will then label their project as "blue sky" within the dimension on the platform. And 3) research could embark a given priority within the scope of a broader project, in which the priority would be one element of study, among others. In this case, researcher will flag their project as both "blue sky" and in response to the priority.*  *As an example: I wish to study a wide range of interventions aimed at juvenile delinquents in juvenile detention homes. One of these interventions is the Bengalo project (one of the research priorities). I shall then label my project under the dimension "responses to the drug situation" as both "blue sky and "bengalo".* |

## PARTNER COMPOSITION – INSTITUTION/UNIVERSITY/RESEARCHER

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| 01 | Is there a restriction to the number of project proposals a given institution/university/researcher may participate in as partner and/or coordinator? |
|  | *No, there is no limitation to the number of proposals a given Institution/university/researcher may participate in as partner and/or coordinator.* |

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| 02 | Will the fact that a given researcher acts as coordinator of several proposals be taken into account in the evaluation? |
|  | *The fact that a given researcher acts as coordinator of several proposals may be taken into account in the final strategic selection of projects to be financed.* |

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| 03 | Can two promoters from the same institution (e.g. the same university but from two different research centres) form a network? |
|  | *No, the minimal requirement for a network is to have at least two promoters from two different institutions (two different universities for example). Additionally, each of these two promoters can apply for a max of 60% of the total budget.*  *A few examples illustrate different forms of eligible networks:*  *example 1: prof. X, dpt of criminology from university Y (50% total budget)+ Prof. A, dpt of law, university B (50% total budget)*  *example 2: Ms Q (40% total budget) from NGO S (having research in its statutes) + researcher C from Federal scientific institute Z (60% total budget)*  *example 3: prof. U, dpt of biology(30% total budget), Prof. I, dpt of sociology (30% total budget) from the same university R (60% total budget) + prof. Y, dpt of biodiversity (20% total budget), prof D, dpt of philosophy (10% total budget), and prof. O, dpt of public administration (10% total budget, no personnel cost, only specific working costs), both of university G (40% total budget)* |

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| 04 | Can someone who is hired as subcontractor also appear as staff? |
|  | *No. Someone engaged as a subcontractor cannot appear as staff.* |

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| 05 | Is it necessary to identify the subcontractor in the proposal? |
|  | *No. BELSPO only requires a description of the subcontracted task(s). The specification of the particular company/institute is not mandatory. It is recommended not to mention the name unless it is certain.* |

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| 06 | May a researcher that will obtain the status of PI after the submission deadline be the promoter of a proposal? |
|  | *Yes. It is possible if the researcher achieves said status before or at the time of the elaboration of the research contract. This should be clearly explained in the proposal.* |

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| 07 | Is it possible to link a PhD student from a given university to the proposal? |
|  | *Yes, this is possible. If the PhD student is to be financed by the university, then you must include the candidate’s tasks in the Gantt chart and Work Plan (under Other sources). If the PhD student is to be financed by BELSPO via the project, then you must include the candidate within the budget as staff, and include his/her tasks in the Gantt chart and Work Plan.* |

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| 08 | Where can I find information regarding post-doctoral exchange researchers in? The ‘Information file’ does not mention them. |
|  | *The exchange of post-doctoral researchers is not specified in the information file as such. The Programme allows for promoters to include the exchange of post-doctoral researchers - financing of a Belgian post-doctoral researcher abroad and/or financing of a foreign post-doctoral researcher in Belgium for a period of 6 months to 1 year - in the general project implementation and project budget (under Staff and Specific Operation costs).* |

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| 09 | Is the way a previous project was run taken into account in the evaluation of a new proposal? |
|  | *No, BELSPO does not disclose information on the way past projects were run to the evaluators.* |

## ELIGIBLE PARTNERS

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| 01 | The non-for-profit institution to be included in the proposal does not appear in the list of non-for-profit research centres of the online submission platform. What can I do? |
|  | *If the non-for-profit research centre does not appear in the list, you may send an Institution Request Form to BELSPO, available on the Drugs Programme website, so BELSPO can check whether it can be included.* |

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| 02 | Is it possible to include a social partner (employer of organisation of employees) under the category of ‘others’? |
|  | *No, social partners cannot be included as official financed partners to the project. The only way to finance the contribution of social partners within the project is as subcontractor.*  *The project participation of a social partner other then as subcontractor can be confirmed via the completion of the Cash or in-kind commitment letter available on the online submission platform.*  *Social partners can also be included within the user’s committee.* |

## BUDGET

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| 01 | Is it possible to hire staff with a given degree for more than the stipulated maximum (4200€/month technician, 5500€/month master, 7500€/month PhD)? |
|  | *Yes. It can be done, provided the person to be hired is identified by name in the proposal. Then, the platform will accept a higher salary.* |

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| 02 | Is it possible to hire a doctoral student or a post-doc via a grant instead of a contract? |
|  | *BELSPO prefers staff to be hired under a labour contract. However tax-free doctoral or post-doctoral scholarships can be exceptionally accepted under the following restricted conditions. The total number of tax-free scholarships per project is limited to max. 50% of the number of staff financed by the Drugs Programme within said project. In any case, there shall not be more than 2 tax-free scholarships/project. Tax-free scholarships refer to a grant subject to tax exemption under the tax laws. The costs for scholarships are limited to a maximum amount of:*   * *3 750 €/month FTE for a tax-free doctoral scholarship (regardless of years of experience)* * *5 250 €/month FTE for a tax-free postdoctoral scholarship (regardless of years of experience)* |

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| 03 | Can a PhD student hired under the project be ‘shared’ between two institutions in terms of time and budget? |
|  | *Yes. The time and cost of a PhD student can be shared by two institutions, but it must be explained within the proposal. Should the proposal be funded, the institutions are responsible for how they apply this arrangement; including the correct inscription of the PhD student to the corresponding university.* |

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| 04 | What rules apply if there are staff changes along the way during the execution of the project? Is it possible to affect part of the staff budget to other partners/budget category? |
|  | *Once the contract of the project has been signed, changes can be made via an amendment to the contract. Amendments can include shifts in budget categories and also - in case of a network project - budget shifts between partners.* |

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| 05 | Within which budget category should Follow-up Committee members be included? |
|  | *Follow-up Committee members cannot be funded for their work, but their travel and accommodation expenses can be covered by the ‘General Operating costs’.* |

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| 06 | Can African academics from Least Developed African Countries be financed by a project Partner in the category of ‘Specific operating Budget’ instead of including them as African Research Partner? |
|  | *Yes. It is possible to cover the African academics’ expenses from Least Developed African Countries (travel costs, per-diem) using the ‘specific operating budget’, if it is justified in the project proposal. Note however that this cannot cover salary costs. African academics financed via the ‘specific operating budget’ cannot be considered ‘African Research Partners’.* |

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| 07 | Is it possible to include salary, operating and / or equipment costs under ‘Subcontracting budget’? |
|  | *It is possible to include salary and operating costs under ‘Subcontracting budget’, including the budget for equipment use/hiring. The purchase of equipment is not allowed.* |

## ANNEXES TO THE PROPOSAL

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| 01 | Is it possible to annex the Follow-up Committee member’s CVs to the proposal? |
|  | *No, annexed CVs of the Follow-up Committee members are not accepted. However, you may join a Follow-up Committee Letter of intent using the form provided within the online Submission Platform.* |

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| 02 | Is it possible to annex the CVs of the partners to the proposal? |
|  | *No, CVs in annex are not accepted. Space is provided within the proposal for this purpose.* |

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| 03 | Is it possible to include annexes to the proposal description? |
|  | *No, annexes are not accepted; it is not possible. However note that aside from the proposal description template, other forms are provided to annex to the proposal:*   * *GANTT chart* * *Antarctica campaign form* * *Data Management Plan Form* * *Ethics form* * *Cash or in-kind commitment letter* * *Follow-up committee letter of intent* |

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| 04 | Is it possible to annex the agreements for in-kind contributions of the partners to the proposal? |
|  | *No, this is not accepted. However, the in kind contributions of the official project partners should be included in the proposal description.* |

## EVALUATORS

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| 01 | Is it possible to include a member of the project’s Follow-up Committee within the list of proposed experts for the evaluation of the proposal? |
|  | *No. Members of a project’s Follow-up Committee cannot be proposed as experts to evaluate the proposal.* |

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| 02 | Do proposed evaluators have to be European? |
|  | *By preference evaluators are European. It facilitates the reimbursement of their services.* |

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| 03 | Do I need to have the agreement of the ‘proposed experts’ in order to include them in the Expression of Interest ? |
|  | *No. You do NOT need the agreement of the researchers that you want to include in the Expression of Interest as ‘proposed experts’. In fact you must NOT contact the foreseen experts at all:*   * *You must NOT tell them that you are preparing/sending the proposal* * *You must NOT ask them to be ‘proposed experts’*   *It is the task of BELSPO to contact the experts.* |

## PLATFORM

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| 01 | Why can’t the partners and/or collaborator of the proposal Log In to the platform? |
|  | *Partners are given access to the platform by the coordinator of the proposal. Partners and collaborators must Log In using the same email address that the coordinator has specified in the proposal. If as partner or collaborator you are not able to access the platform, it is most probably because the email address you are using does not correspond to the one given by the coordinator in the proposal. Please check with the coordinator, and if the problem persists, please contact BELSPO.* |

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| 02 | Is it possible to have access to the proposal template without logging in to the platform? |
|  | *No. In order to have access to the template and different documents and online fields that compose the proposal, you need to Log In to the platform. All entered data may be changed (or deleted) at any time before the proposal is submitted. You can always decide not to submit your proposal. Non submitted proposals will not be considered for evaluation.* |

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| 04 | How can I delete my proposal? |
|  | *In order to delete the proposal you must follow the instructions provided within the Platform Submission Guidelines document, section 5.5). Note that only Coordinators can delete proposals.* |

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| 05 | Is it possible to edit my proposal, once submitted? |
|  | *If your proposal is submitted before the deadline, exceptionally, BELSPO will be able to un-submit your proposal, and you may continue to edit it. After the deadline, there will be no possibilities of editing submitted proposals.* |

## DURATION OF THE PROJECT

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| 01 | Is it possible to submit a 4 year project? |
|  | *No, projects must have a duration comprised between 18 and 36 months.* |

## LENGTH OF THE PROPOSAL

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| 01 | Will the proposal be deemed ineligible for evaluation if the ‘Proposal description’ exceeds the established length limits? |
|  | *Yes.* |

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| 02 | Do the length limits established for the ‘Proposal description’ include also other online fields (i.e. budget table) and forms (i.e. GANTT chart, Ethics form, DMP form…)? |
|  | *No. The limit is only for the ‘Proposal description’ template.* |

## PERMISSION TO SUBMIT PROPOSAL

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| 01 | Do I require the signature of my director/rector in order to submit the project proposal? |
|  | *No, the signature of the director/rector is not required. However, you must have the agreement of your hierarchical authority for the submission of the proposal. You must confirm this by crossing the box:*  *I assure that my hierarchical authority agrees with the submission of this proposal.*  *We hereby wish to avoid proposals that are submitted by researchers that are not on legally bound to their university (e.g. a researcher from a university that is funded on external sources and has no contractual links to the university).* |