



Next Generation Combat Aircraft Technologies Research and Development

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

NETWORK COMPOSITION

- 01** Is there an obligation to include (a) defence research institute(s) in a proposal?
- The Belgian Defence research institutes (Royal Military Academy (RMA), the Military Hospital Queen Astrid (MHQA) and the Defence Laboratories (DLD)) can be a coordinator/partner in a proposal. It is not mandatory to have one of these institutes as a project partner. Their involvement will not impact the evaluation outcome positively or negatively (no bonus effect).*
- 02** Is there a restriction to the number of project proposals a given institute/company/researcher/person may participate in as partner and/or coordinator?
- No, there is no limitation to the number of proposals a given Institute/company/researcher/person may participate in as partner and/or coordinator.*
- 03** Will the fact that a given researcher acts as coordinator of several project 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.*
- 04** Can someone who is hired as subcontractor also appear as staff?
- No. Someone engaged as a subcontractor cannot appear as staff.*

05 Is it necessary to identify the subcontractor in the proposal?

No, only the subcontracted task(s) need(s) to be described. The specification of the particular company/institute is not mandatory. It is recommended not to mention the name unless it is certain.

06 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 the candidate's tasks must be included in the Gantt chart and Work Plan (under Other sources). If the PhD student is to be financed by the NGCAT programme via the project, then the candidate must be included within the budget as staff, and his/her tasks included in the Gantt chart and Work Plan. Remark: tax free doctoral scholarships are not accepted for PhD students in charge of the NGCAT call.

07 Is it possible to include a civil society organisation as financed partner?

No, civil society organisations cannot be included as official financed partners to the project. They can only be financed as a subcontractor.

08 Can we add a partner in the Full Proposal that was not mentioned in the Expression of Interest?

Once the eligibility of your Expression of Interest is confirmed, the data of the partners will appear by default in the Full proposal. Changes in the partnership (i.e. removing or adding partners) require the explicit approval of the RHID. In case other companies, a(i)sbl and foundations join the network, they must provide the extract of the Ultimate Beneficial Owner (UBO) register to the call secretariat ngcat@belspo.be. The extract of the UBO register will be submitted for opinion to the General Intelligence and Security Service. New partners will undergo a security screening as described in section 2.5.1. of the [information document](#).

09 Must the project partners be Belgian institutes / companies?

Indeed, the call is open to Belgian public and private non-profit research institutes and private companies.

*From the **public research sector**, all Belgian universities, colleges of higher education, federal scientific institutions, defence research institutes and other public research institutes are eligible partners.*

***Private non-profit research centres** must have operational and/or research activities in Belgium. They must have legal personality and their registered office in Belgium.*

*From the **private sector**, companies complying with the following criteria are eligible partners:*

- The company must have a legal personality and its registered office in Belgium. The legal personality is required when providing the extract of the UBO register with the submission of the Expression of Interest;*
- The company must be actively engaged in operational and/or research activities on the Belgian territory;*
- It must hold the intellectual property rights for the R&D activities they are engaged in. This criterion is to ensure that the applicant has the legal right and*

authority to use and valorise the research and innovations for commercial or non-commercial purposes;

- It must have fulfilled its obligations to pay its taxes and social security contributions at the moment of signing the contract.

10 Which rules are applied to classify a company as a small, medium-size or large enterprise?

To discriminate between small, medium-size and large enterprises article 2 of the Annex to Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 is applied.

- **Small enterprises:** enterprises which employ fewer than 50 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 10 million.
- **Medium-size enterprises:** enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.
- **Large enterprises:** enterprises that employ more than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover that exceeds EUR 50 million.

This SME User Guide (version 2020) serves as general guidelines for entrepreneurs and other stakeholders when applying the SME definition: [User guide to the SME definition - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](#)

Participants can do the assessment following the guidelines in the User Guide.

11 Must subcontractors be Belgian as well?

Subcontractors can be foreign but should preferably come from a European country.

12 Why must some partners submit an extract of the Ultimate Beneficial Owner (UBO) register?

The extract of the UBO register will be submitted for opinion to the General Intelligence and Security Service. Depending on the outcome of this opinion, partners may be excluded from participation.

13 Must all partners submit an extract from the UBO register?

No, only companies, a(i)sbl and foundations have to submit an extract of the UBO register.

14 How can an applicant obtain a security clearance?

Applicants can request the RHID to provide a “need to know” document. This document is required to initiate the security clearance application with the National Security Authority.

In the phase of submission of an Expression of Interest, the request for such “need to know” document can be done through the online submission platform.

The “need to know”-document will only be provided after the eligibility check of the Eol.

15 Do universities also have to obtain a security clearance and does that have to be obtained at for every campus individually?

Yes, universities also have to obtain a security clearance. They can decide internally on what level (department, faculty, campus) they request the security clearance.

BUDGET

- 01** Can personnel hired under the project be ‘shared’ between two partners in terms of time and budget?
Yes. The time and cost of personnel 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.
- 02** 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 budget shifts between partners.
- 03** 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.
- 04** How many proposals will be awarded per theme?
The number of selected and funded proposals per theme will depend on the quality of the proposals and the budget requested per proposal. RHID aims to fund at least one proposal per theme and more if the overall NGCAT budget allows it.
- 05** Will private companies be fully paid for the project?
*See section 2.8. of the [information document](#). This call is subject to the European legislation on State Funding (Art 107 (1) TFEU and the General Block Exemption Regulation in particular.
Eligible project costs for fundamental research and project coordination costs incurred by the project coordinator from an effective collaboration with minimum four entities are paid at 100%.
Eligible costs for applied research (industrial research of experimental development) conducted within the framework of an effective collaboration with at least one SME and a research organisation are paid at 100% for small enterprises, 90% for medium-sized enterprises and 85% for large enterprises.*
- 06** Must VAT be included in the budget?
Yes, all amounts must be VAT included if applicable. In no case, the budget of your proposal will be increased to cover VAT expenses.

ANNEXES TO THE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST OR FULL PROPOSAL

01 Is it possible to annex CV's to the proposal?

No, CV's in annex are not accepted. Space is provided within the full proposal template for the description of the profile of the project partners.

02 Is it possible to include annexes to the Expression of Interest or full proposal description?

For the Expressions of Interest, companies, a(i)sbl and foundations must add the extract of the Ultimate Beneficial Owner (UBO) register as annex.

For the full proposal, 2 compulsory forms are provided to be annexed to the full proposal:

- *GANTT chart*
- *Budget file*

03 Is it possible to annex the agreements for in-kind contributions of the project partners to the proposal?

No, this is not accepted. The in-kind contributions of the official project partners should be mentioned in the proposal description

EVALUATION

01 What are the evaluation criteria for the proposals and the weights of the different criteria?

The evaluation procedure is described in section 4 of the [information document](#). Evaluation criteria and their respective weights are listed in the [evaluation matrix](#) for full proposals.

02 Who will review the proposals? Are reviewers from industry or academia?

Evaluators can be from both academia and industry, as long as they have the appropriate expertise.

03 Can applicants have a “veto” on the experts that will review their proposal (e.g. when they see a conflict of interest)?

The names of the experts will not be communicated to the applicants. Therefore, they cannot directly veto an expert. Experts having a conflict of interest will not be invited to evaluate the proposals.

PLATFORM

- 01** Why can't the partners and/or collaborator of the proposal Log In to the platform?
Only the coordinator of a proposal can create and submit an Expression of Interest (Eoi) and Full proposal. Partners included in a proposal will not have access to the given Eoi or Full proposal.
- 02** Is it possible to have access to the full proposal template without logging in to the platform?
A copy of the [full proposal template](#) is available in PDF-format on the NGCAT website for your information. However, in order to have access to the Word-file of the full proposal template, the other documents (Gantt chart; Budget file) 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.
- 03** How can I delete my proposal?
In order to delete the proposal you must follow the instructions provided within the [Platform Submission Guidelines](#) document.
- 04** 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.
- 05** I've submitted an Expression of Interest and would like to prepare the full proposal. I cannot find the template for the full proposal on the platform.
*Only the Expressions of Interest (Eoi) that comply with the eligibility criteria will be able to submit a full proposal. Only for these Eoi the NGCAT platform will become accessible for the submission of the full proposal.
A copy of the [full proposal template](#) is available in PDF-format for your information on the NGCAT website. Note however that in order to have access to the Word-file of the full proposal template, to the other documents (Gantt chart; Budget file) and online fields that compose the proposal, Log In to the platform is necessary.*
- 06** Can one account be used to submit multiple Expressions of Interest?
Yes, it is possible to submit more than one Expression of Interest with the same account.

DURATION OF THE PROJECT

- 01** Is it possible to submit a 3-year project?
No, projects must have a duration of minimum 24 to maximum 30 months.

LENGTH OF THE PROPOSAL

- 01 Will the proposal be deemed ineligible for evaluation if the 'Proposal description' exceeds the established length limits?
Yes.
- 02 Do the length limits established for the 'Proposal description' include also other online forms (i.e. GANTT chart, Budget file)?
No. The limit is only for the 'Proposal description' template.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- 01 What kind of reporting will be required from the projects?
All mandatory reporting is described in section 5.4 of the [information document](#).

PROJECT RESULTS

- 01 Who owns the intellectual property (IP) at the end of the project?
As described in section 6.1. of the [information document](#) all aspects regarding IPR are covered in [Annex II](#) "General Conditions" of the contract that is available on the NGCAT website.
- 02 How is follow-up R&D / commercialization / implementation based on the results of the projects seen?
For multiple reasons, such as different markets for different themes, there is no "one fits all" answer to this question. This being said, there is a definite interest in valorisation of the project results. Ad hoc solutions will have to be established.

PERMISSION TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

- 01 Do I require the signature of my director/rector/CEO in order to submit the project proposal?
No, the signature of the director/rector/CEO is not mandatory for the funding authority. However, you must have the agreement of your hierarchical authority for the submission of the proposal.
- 02 Are there particular requirements regarding the electronic signature of the documents that must be submitted?
No, there are no signatures required to submit a proposal.
- 03 Must researchers sign specific clearance documents to participate in a project?
A security screening by Belgian Defence might be imposed on all researchers that are actively involved in the project. See section 6.2. of the [information document](#).
- 04 Is there a numerous clausus on the expressions of interest that can proceed to full proposal? Cfr selection of pre-proposals in DEFRA

No, all Expressions of Interest that meet the eligibility criteria will be invited to submit a full proposal.

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ON THE THEMES OF THE CALL

01

ALL THEMES: What's the TRL level of the solutions you're looking for?

The maximum TRL level is 6 for themes 1, 2 and 3 and 7 for theme 4.

NOT FOUND WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR? E-mail to NGCAT@BELSPO.BE