

Please communicate this information to appropriate research groups in your institution to raise awareness and preparedness to a call that Belspo is soon to launch.

Dear all,

We hereby inform you that a call for proposals to the Belgian scientific community will be launched by BELSPO in the frame of the newly adopted *Science 4 Policy* research programme (have a look at the webpage of the programme [here](#)).

The call will open on **25 June and close on 10 October 2024**. The next calls of the programme - 2026, 2028 and 2030 - will be better aligned with the academic calendar. An information session will be organised by Teams on 28 June from 10 AM to 12 PM for interested research groups. Registration is compulsory to receive the Teams invite (s4policy@belspo.be).

The *Science 4 Policy* programme (S4Policy in short) is an 8-year programme that aims at providing a scientific support to the decision-making process in the federal government and its administrations.

The forthcoming call for scientific proposals relates to the “*policy-driven*” projects of the S4Policy programme. These are projects submitted by federal administrations, and approved by the inter-cabinet working group, for which a scientific support from the academic community is requested. The intention is to fund, for each policy-driven project, the best scientific team based on a two-stage peer review followed by a selection stage based solely on the support to federal competences.

These policy-driven projects are based on a co-funding scheme where BELSPO funds max. 90% and the concerned department(s) a min. of 10%. The financial commitment of federal departments ensure that the project seeks maximum impact and supports a strong relation between scientists and federal administrations.

The projects are organised around the following topics that comply with the strategic goals of the federal government:

(note that the drafting of the projects is currently in its final stage and will be ready for June 25)

Digital Transformation

The federal level is in need of scientific support to apprehend the digital transformations (especially Artificial Intelligence) that will impact the functioning of the federal administrations and the Belgian society at large. In the present call, the following policy-driven projects are open to receiving scientific contributions:

- *Impact of new technologies on the federal level: threats, opportunities and the way forward for implementing the use of AI in the federal administrations* (FPS BOSA, including test cases of AI for the FPS Social Security, FPS Employment and the FPS Chancellery, budget €855k).
- *How can AI be an asset for the Belgian Labour market?* (FPS Employment, budget €600k).

Strategic autonomy and resilience of Belgium

The federal level intends to pilot and monitor the strategic autonomy of the Belgian society towards its resilience. In this call, the following policy-driven projects are open to scientific contributions:

- *Evaluation of R&D support measures and investments in the Belgian defence related technological and industrial basis* (Ministry of Defence, total budget of €400k).
- *Strategic deployment of the personnel of Defence towards inclusion of different generations, civil personnel and reservist personnel* (Ministry of Defence, €800k).
- *Strategic autonomy of the Belgian economy - scientific support for a better match between economic concepts and data* (FPS Economy, total budget of €150k).

Inclusion, health and wellbeing

This topic includes projects that support an inclusive and better protected Belgian society through federal policies geared at inclusion, health, wellbeing and diversity. In the present call, scientists are invited to submit proposals in the following topics:

- *Non take up of social policies: ex-ante evaluation for better microsimulation and appraisal of the societal magnitude of the phenomenon* (FPS Social Security and FPP Social Integration, total budget of €800k).
- *Labour market integration of precarious groups: development of an instrument and framework for ex-post evaluation studies, including a case study on people with disabilities* (FPS Social Security, total budget of €900k).
- *Mental health of independent workers in the face of federal policies, appraisal of the magnitude of the phenomenon and best practices abroad* (FPS Social Security, total budget of €700k).
- *New analysis and control methodology adapted to the revised definition of nanomaterials in (novel) foods* (FPS Health, Environment and Protection of the Food Chain, total budget €400k).
- *Hormone-disrupting chemicals: Development of new test methodologies and chemical risk assessment methodologies for thyroid hormone system disruption* (FPS Health, Environment and Protection of the Food Chain, total budget €250k).
- *History of the persecution and social exclusion of people on the basis of their sexual orientation at different periods in our history* (State Secretary for Gender Equality, Equal Opportunities and Diversity, attached to the Minister for Mobility and Institute for the Equality between men and women, total budget of €150k).

Green and societal Transformation

The many environmental crises (climate change, decline in biodiversity, chemical pollution, etc.) call for an in-depth transformation of society and therefore more research aimed at changing our behaviour in order to prevent, adapt to and mitigate risks.

- *Monitoring Circular Economy: indicators and analyses on circular activity* (FPS Economy, total budget of €200k).
- *The transition towards climate neutrality in Belgium: how to activate psycho-sociological levers to foster sobriety? Scoping analysis and sectoral deep dive* (FPS Health, Environment and Protection of the Food Chain, total budget €600k).
- *Research into the interactions between environmental components and their evolution in preparation for environmental risk analyses for Belgium* (Climate Environment Risk Assessment Center – CeRAC €800k).
- *Dispersion modelling of sediments and sand extraction in the North Sea to measure impact on the environment* (FPS Economy, total budget of €240k).
- *Renewable energy in the transport sector in light of the new EU regulation: potential of Belgium to reach the targets (in 2035) and potential of renewable energy sources within Belgium* (FPS Economy, total budget of €200k).