



Call for Projects 2022

Short Initiatives

Benin, Bolivia, Burundi, Cuba, DR Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Vietnam

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Summary

Aim	Short Initiatives (SI) projects are short-term projects that aim to explore, build and deepen academic/scientific collaborations among diverse teams of academics and researchers. SI projects focus on a specific sustainable development challenge. With SI projects, VLIR-UOS aims to strengthen the research and educational capacities of higher education and science institutions in partner countries. In addition, SI 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.
Key features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term results to be achieved within the project duration of two years • Easy access, particularly addressing new/young project promoters that were sensitized via the Global Minds framework, or via collaboration in ongoing projects, and/or are eager to go for a first experience as promoter of a VLIR-UOS project • Allows for differentiated aims (exploration, innovation, valorisation, etc) and approaches (education, research, policies, outreach, people, networks) • The partnership can vary in terms of size and composition: one or more Flemish higher education institutions and one or more local higher education and science institutions and/or other actors; one or more disciplines; young/new and/or more experienced academics,
Who can apply?	<p><u>Affiliation of the promoters:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flemish promoter: employed as a professor/lecturer/specialist at a Flemish university or university of applied sciences and arts; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partner promoter: employed at a recognized higher education institution or national public (not for profit) research institute located in a VLIR-UOS project partner country <p><u>Additional criteria:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applicants (Flemish/local) can have a maximum of two ongoing SI/TEAM projects, which means they can submit a maximum of two projects (two SI, two TEAM or one SI and one TEAM) in case they have no ongoing projects after 1 September 2022. With almost all VLIR-UOS projects coming to an end on 31 August 2022, only TEAM 2019 projects should be considered as ongoing projects. TEAM 2019 promoters can submit only one new SI or TEAM - At the level of the partner institutions, no further criteria apply. Former and present IUC partner institutions are fully eligible, without any restriction.
Project partner countries	Higher education and science institutions located in 17 project partner countries: Benin, Bolivia, Burundi, Cuba, DR Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam
Budgetary Framework	<p>The project budget amounts to a maximum of 70.000 EUR for two years</p> <p>The overall budget for SI 2022 amounts to 2.030.000 EUR (indicative 29 projects).</p>
Project duration	Maximum 2 years
Launch date of call for proposals	30 November 2021
Deadline for submission to VLIR-UOS	18 March 2022

How to submit a proposal?	<p>Who? An application involves a Flemish and local promoter but it is the Flemish promoter who submits to the ICOS of the Flemish university (association) for quality control. The ICOS will validate and submit to VLIR-UOS.</p> <p>How? Project applications are submitted online.</p>
Assessment procedure	<p>All project proposals will be assessed and selected based on four standard selection criteria: Relevance and coherence of the project; Quality of the project design; Implementation set-up of the project; Potential impact and sustainability.</p> <p>Project proposals are assessed by Regional Selection Commissions (Africa, Asia, Latin America) in May 2022.</p> <p>The selection decision will be communicated shortly after the ratification of the decision by the Bureau UOS, ultimately in June 2022.</p>
Possible start of the project	<p>Selected projects will be able to start as of 1 September 2022 at the earliest.</p>

1. Introduction and context

1.1. FYP 2 ambitions, what's new?

We are glad to launch this call for Short Initiatives (SI) 2022 projects in the framework of the Five-Year-Programme 2 2022-2027 (FYP2) of VLIR-UOS.

Since VLIR-UOS has not launched any calls since 2019, the SI and TEAM 2022 calls are the first ones within the new FYP2, guided by the new FYP2 ambitions and lessons learned from Covid-19.

Covid-19 changed the world drastically, highlighting the role of science and international cooperation to tackle global and local problems, with data and digitalization creating new opportunities for equal partnerships.

Similar to the previous FYP, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serve as the main reference point. VLIR-UOS is committed to meaningfully mainstreaming the 3 SDG principles of leaving no one behind, interconnectedness and multi-stakeholder partnerships, throughout its ambitions, policies, programme, portfolio, partnerships and scholarships. The universal nature of Agenda 2030 provides entry points for HE&SIs to incorporate global citizenship education, decolonization & equal partnerships, and a broader understanding of sustainable development into their threefold mission: research, education, and service to society. Policy themes have become more important: the VLIR-UOS gender policy was translated into a guiding framework for these calls aiming at mainstreaming gender throughout all new projects. A similar policy framework will be developed for environmental sustainability. The focus of Agenda 2030 on meaningful impact through multi-stakeholder partnerships resonates with the FYP2 ambition "Connect4Change" to focus on cooperation among and beyond academic actors (CONNECT), societal impact (valorisation), and collective learning.

These policy ambitions have been translated in the project selection criteria and descriptors for all programmes. VLIR-UOS wants new projects to **capitalize** on former and/or other relevant projects in the same context or topic, and to stimulate **interinstitutional cooperation** among and beyond academic actors. It will be an added value in the competitive selection of projects if different Flemish or partner HE&SIs will be involved in a proposal, either universities, universities of applied sciences and arts or both and when collaborations are sought beyond the academic actors.

As of now, each call will be accompanied by a list of ideas & request for advice and/or partnership from third parties (other development actors (e.g. NGOs, VVOB, Enabel, ...), private sector, ...) addressed to academic stakeholders, whereby VLIR-UOS will function as platform and broker to stimulate **multi-actor partnerships**.

We expect all projects to be based on a genuine and evidence-based context and stakeholder analysis with attention to **gender, vulnerable people and the environmental impact**. In their approach projects should have attention for gender and vulnerable groups and respect for decent work and human rights. Projects should address the interconnectedness of the sustainable development challenges through e.g. multidisciplinary or systems approaches, and have a clear valorisation strategy focussing not only on scientific impact, but more importantly also on societal impact.

Specific objective of FYP2 is to mobilize young/new academics to engage in "sharing minds, changing lives". This is why the number of project (proposals) per promoter has been limited for SI and TEAM. In case of ex aequo ranking in the selection of projects, preference will be given to academics without prior experience with VLIR-UOS, to projects coordinated by academics from the underrepresented sex in their sector and / or to gender specific projects.

Once projects will be running, VLIR-UOS will act as a platform and connect projects with one another in order to share and pool knowledge, experiences, tools & approaches, networks and results, and to stimulate cooperation, knowledge dissemination and valorisation, and collective learning. VLIR-UOS will connect Flemish and/or Belgian (ARES/ITM) academic partners on the one hand, and academic partners with non-academic public, private and civil society actors, on the other, to improve access to and use of academic expertise; and provide scientific (policy) support to enhance the capacity of the Belgian government and other actors in the field of sustainable development.

Over the course of FYP2 VLIR-UOS will contribute - through platform-initiated and policy support projects – to capacity and knowledge strengthening in priority themes both within the VLIR-UOS community and the thematic Joint Strategic Framework with ARES and ITM, as with DGD and other development actors. Priority themes include climate change and environmental topics but also human rights, gender, decent work, decolonisation and global citizenship education.

1.2. Higher Education and Science for SD context

As highlighted in chapter two of the thematic Joint Strategic Framework on Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development (tJSF HES4SD), there is an increasing consensus on the role of strong higher education institutions and systems in addressing sustainable development challenges. Through their threefold mission, higher education institutes (HEIs) play a key role in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SD) and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aiming to end poverty, protect the planet, foster gender equality, defend and promote cultures and cultural understanding, and ensure prosperity for all. In this respect, the Global Sustainable Development Report calls upon all stakeholders to facilitate multidirectional collaboration in science and (transfer of) technology for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It considers academic and scientific capacity strengthening and partnerships as one of the four main levers for achieving the 2030 Agenda and implies a strengthened link between higher education institutes, governments, civil society organisations and the private sector (the quadruple helix). Furthermore, the 2019 UN Global Sustainable Development Report highlights the indispensable role of higher education and science institutions in the creation, exchange and transfer of knowledge to inform the achievement of six systemic transformations for sustainable development, namely (1) human well-being and capabilities, (2) sustainable and just economies, (3) food systems and nutrition patterns, (4) energy decarbonization with universal access, (5) urban and peri-urban development and (6) global environmental commons. Each of the six transformations is synergistic with others and constitutes an entry point into the underlying systems needed for the achievement of the Agenda 2030. The framework underscores the need for complexity-oriented, cross-sectoral and holistic approaches that pay due attention to the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda and the interlinkages between the goals.

In Flanders and elsewhere, higher education institutions are increasingly acknowledging their pivotal role in contributing to the necessary changes for the global goal of sustainable development. HE offers disciplinary and transdisciplinary teaching and research and HEIs generate and contribute to the development of new and innovative approaches to global, regional and local issues. Through research, HEIs play a unique role, as drivers of change, by producing new knowledge and innovation to address global challenges, by transferring knowledge through training, by providing evidence for informed (public) policy and implementation, and by knowledge mobilization. Through teaching, universities develop generations of new leaders and skilled professionals who will drive sustainable development. HEIs provide lifelong learning, and train today's students, decision-makers and professionals to think both critically and ethically, to learn to cope with ethical dilemmas and apply systems-thinking approaches to serious and complex societal problems. HEIs have also taken up a central role in the provision of global citizenship education to nurture a global understanding, intercultural awareness and values that enable students to assume active roles in resolving global challenges. Through

service delivery and community engagement, HEIs work with a rich variety of stakeholders – including governments, the private sector, and civil society – for local, national, regional and global impact. As such, higher education has a direct impact on the development of every country. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will not be achieved without partnerships with and contributions from HEIs.

Globally, however, Higher Education Institutes and their stakeholders (i.e. staff, students and alumni) still face challenges among others in terms of access, capacity and uptake to unlock the full potential of higher education for sustainable development. Scholarship programmes and global partnerships in the field of higher education are considered essential in mitigating various of these challenges. They offer opportunities to improve the quality of teaching and research, strengthen the organisational capacities of higher education institutions, foster political and economic relationships through their scholars, mitigate financial and capacity constraints and accommodate the growing demand for equitable access to higher education services.

2. Theory of change and objectives

2.1. Theory of Change for SI/TEAM projects

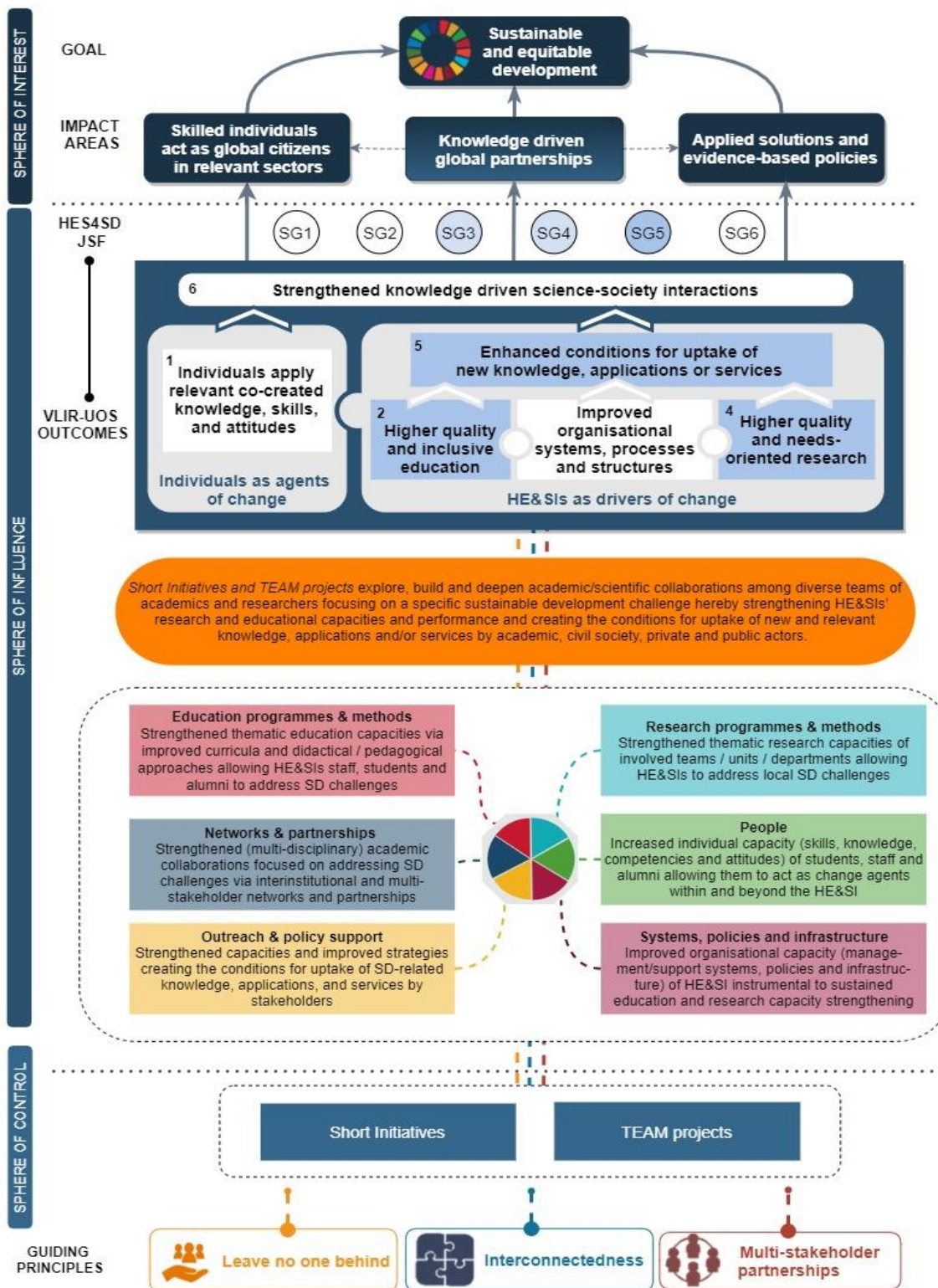


Figure 1 Schematic representation Theory of Change associated with Short Initiatives and TEAM projects

The above Theory of Change reflects the generic Theory of Change for the VLIR-UOS portfolio and shows how the generic objectives of SI and TEAM projects fit.

VLIR-UOS considers global engagement for higher education as a goal (SDG 4: Quality Education) and a means for attaining other SDGs through knowledge co-creation, transfer and valorisation. In the long run, Short Initiatives and TEAM projects are expected to contribute to more sustainable and equitable development by fostering:

- Application of solutions and evidence-based policies
- A global community of skilled individuals who act as global citizens in relevant sectors
- Knowledge-driven global partnerships

To effectively contribute to these generic objectives, VLIR-UOS focuses on **two strategic axes**:

- Enabling HE&SIs to strengthen and take up their role as *Drivers of Change*
- Enabling individuals to act as *Agents of Change*

Both strategic axes can reinforce one another. For instance, the extent to which HE&SIs take up their role as development actor is likely to affect the embedded scholarship students' development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that should enable them to effectively act as agents of change within and beyond the setting of the HE&SI.

Along these strategic axes, VLIR-UOS identifies **six outcomes**, namely:

- (1) **Individuals apply relevant co-created knowledge, skills, and attitudes.** This outcome indicates the co-creation and transfer of state-of-the-art knowledge and skills to individuals who then apply these in their own organisation. The skills and knowledge also include critical thinking, global citizenship skills and attitudes, leadership skills, etc.
- (2) **HE&SIs provide higher quality and more inclusive education.** This outcome concerns the improved quality and inclusiveness of education resulting from strengthened educational capacities available at HE&SIs.
- (3) **HE&SIs make use of improved organisational systems, processes, and structures.** This outcome was formulated to highlight the importance of organisational capacity of HE&SIs in enabling changes in terms of research and education capacities (see impact evaluation of UDC [21]). It encompasses improved organisational processes (e.g. ICT/digitalisation), support systems (e.g. quality assurance) and structures as well as human capacities that contribute to HE&SIs' enhanced institutional performance.
- (4) **HE&SIs conduct higher quality and needs-oriented research.** This outcome reflects the VLIR-UOS strive to strengthen research capacities in order to enable HE&SIs to develop higher quality and needs-oriented research processes and results. This outcome signifies HE&SIs becoming (more) research active and innovative and being enabled to produce solutions to local and global challenges. It also refers to research which is gender sensitive and equity focused as a means for achieving excellence in research.
- (5) **HE&SIs create enhanced conditions for uptake of new knowledge, applications or services.** VLIR-UOS identifies this outcome to refer to the production of new knowledge, applications and services and the creation of conditions for uptake by relevant external stakeholders. It may involve strategic, uptake-oriented stakeholder management, targeted dissemination, and capacity strengthening of end-users (or intermediaries).
- (6) **HE&SIs and their stakeholders engage in knowledge driven science-society interactions.** This outcome responds to the growing awareness of the importance of the science-society interface which has been identified as a weakness in recent VLIR-UOS evaluations. It reflects the VLIR-UOS ambition to support networks, partnerships or platforms which can constitute an eco-system where academic (HE&SI's staff, students and alumni) and non-academic stakeholders (policymakers, ANGCs, donor organisations, private sector, embassies etc.) interact to facilitate the valorisation and uptake of knowledge.

When referring to the outcomes in SI and TEAM projects particularly aim at contributing to VLIR-UOS outcomes (2) *higher quality and more inclusive education*, (4) *higher quality and needs-oriented research* and (5) *improved conditions for uptake of new knowledge, applications or services*. While it is not VLIR-UOS intention to impose restrictions on individual projects, all *SI and TEAM* projects are mandated to ensure that their change process contributes to the enhanced conditions for uptake of the knowledge, applications or services generated in relation to the specific developmental challenge the project aims to address (VLIR-UOS outcome 5). Thus, besides VLIR-UOS outcome 5, individual projects may choose to focus on a sub-selection depending on priorities and needs of local stakeholders. Yet, projects are required to document their choices through their project-specific Theory of Change to ensure alignment with the programme's vision towards change as set out in this document.

More detail can be found in the generic Theory of Change for SI and TEAM projects (see Background Annex 4)

2.2. Specific Objectives and Key Features of SI projects

Aim (Specific Objectives)

Short Initiatives (SI) projects are short-term projects that aim to explore, build and deepen academic/scientific collaborations among diverse teams of academics and researchers. SI projects focus on a specific sustainable development challenge. With SI projects, VLIR-UOS aims to strengthen the research and educational capacities of higher education and science institutions in partner countries. In addition, SI 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.

Key Features:

- Short term results to be achieved within the project duration of two years
- Easy access, particularly addressing new/young project promoters that were sensitized via the Global Minds framework, or via collaboration in ongoing projects, and/or are eager to go for a first experience as promoter of a VLIR-UOS project
- Allows for differentiated aims (exploration, innovation, valorisation, etc) and approaches (education, research, policies, outreach, people, networks)
- The partnership can vary in terms of size and composition: one or more Flemish higher education institutions and one or more local higher education and science institutions and/or other actors; one or more disciplines; young/new and/or more experienced academics,




2.3. Domains of intermediate change / outputs

In general, SI projects are expected to bring about outputs in **six (project) domains of intermediate change**: *Research programmes and methods, Education programmes and methods, Outreach and policy support, People, Systems, policies and infrastructure, Networks and partnerships*.

The table below presents a non-exhaustive and indicative list of deliverables and activities that individual projects can undertake within the six domains through partnerships between HE&SIs and other local, national or global stakeholders. The deliverables, processes and changes in these domains are interlinked and not mutually exclusive. Thereby, it is important to keep in mind that expectations in relation to these domains should

vary for SI projects in view of their distinct scope (in terms of time and budget). It is important to state that the SI projects will document their choices and envisaged changes through a project-specific ToC.

Domain	General description (VLIR-UOS ToC)	Activities (examples)
Research programmes and methods	Improved (interdisciplinary) methodologies and strengthened quality and relevance of research to allow for better knowledge management and high-quality research results serving societal needs	<p>Research components are developed and implemented to contribute to developmental change in the region, especially for vulnerable groups in society (👥).</p> <p><u>Examples:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New knowledge and technologies are developed on sustainable development relevant topics, responding to local needs (prioritizing vulnerable groups 👥) • High quality research publications and training manuals for academic use are produced, contributing to increased research output and university reputation • Gender balanced participation is promoted in research programmes • Research takes into account the impact on gender issues (how the results positively/negatively impact men/women) and environment 🌱 • Integration of new research methods, training lab techniques in optimized research practices • Improved data collection methods and analysis techniques • Practice-based research leading to an improvement/innovation in the professional practice/work field (e.g. university colleges projects)
Education programmes and methods	Improved, innovative and inclusive teaching methods, didactics, and digital approaches. Improved curriculum content to support knowledge co-creation and equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge ensuring their employability after graduation and ability to tackle global challenges from a holistic, interdisciplinary perspective	<p>(research-based) Educational components are developed and implemented to contribute to developmental change in the region, especially for vulnerable groups in society (👥).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Master programmes are implemented • New courses were included in the curricula • New trainings were developed for academic and non-academic stakeholders 🧑 (e.g. in hospitals, child care centers) of mentors for trainees (students) in order to enhance the work placement/internship of students (e.g. Flemish university colleges and partner HE&SIs and workplaces) • New didactical, pedagogic and teaching methodologies are introduced, adapted and implemented by staff • Research-based educational programmes are developed and implemented, connecting MSc students to research • Courses and trainings content created with improved integration of equity and equality, e.g. gender concepts, intersectionality, inclusion, (implicit) bias,... 👥 • STEM-programmes are promoted among female students

<p>Outreach and policy support</p>	<p>Enhanced interaction with relevant public, private and academic stakeholders to share knowledge, create the conditions for uptake and provide policy advice/support</p>	<p><u>Examples:</u> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities to facilitate and contribute to the use of research evidence by policymakers, private sector, civil society and other development actors • Guidelines are developed and made available for uptake by stakeholders (with attention for gender issues related to uptake by women and men) • Collaboration in spin offs, commercialisation of new knowledge products, registration of IP, pilot initiatives • Policy briefs are published for policy advice • Stakeholder engagement strategies are developed • Platform for regular exchanges with stakeholders (incl. women/vulnerable groups) • Demonstration workshops for stakeholders are organised (participation of women is promoted) • Improved scientific communication methods and strategies to share results with broader audience • Seminars with industry, government agencies and development partners are organised on a regular basis  • Attendance of SD-relevant academic conference by project team members
<p>Systems, policies, and infrastructure</p>	<p>Better management, information systems, educational and research policies to improve functioning of HE&SIs, including policies on gender and diversity, research integrity and uptake. Improved equipment, laboratories and offices for education and research</p>	<p>Organisational and institutional capacity is strengthened</p> <p><u>Examples:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of efficient structures, processes and procedures (e.g. introduction of lab procedures) • Integration of structures, processes and procedures in the daily workflows (e.g. well-functioning lab) • Establishment of adequate “institutions”, policies, rules and regulations (e.g. development of a new research/ accreditation/ HR policy, gender policy, environmental policy, technology transfer, a research procurement desk, Grants Directorate, Extension office, etc.) • Adequate policies are in place to support/improve access for students from vulnerable groups and ensure gender-balance among students and staff • Enforcement of rules and regulations for good governance (e.g. implementation of new research, accreditation/ HR policy, ..) • Regular adaptation of institutions, rules and regulations (e.g. evaluation mechanisms for research, curricula, HR, ..) • Improvements in the laboratory and other supporting infrastructure (library, ICT) • Improved software technologies for data collection and analysis • Support systems such as management system, quality assurance, accounting are implemented and used • Governance/management structures of the partner institutions are strengthened • Measures are taken to reduce environmental impact (CO₂ compensation, less paper-based, limited travel, recycling, etc.)  • Upgrade of research and education facilities
<p>People</p>	<p>Students, alumni, staff, researchers are trained/sensitised in a supportive learning environment to strengthen their knowledge, skills & attitudes in</p>	<p><u>Examples:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of adequate skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes (e.g. PhD scholarships) • Application of skills, knowledge, competencies on the workplace (e.g. PhD holder applies new knowledge and skills)

	<p>diverse domains (e.g. leadership, global citizenship).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of staff turnover, facilitation of skills and knowledge transfer within institutions (e.g. PhD remains staff member) • Team building and trainings to improve collaboration spirit, leadership skills, research attitudes, communication skills • Transversal competencies (skills, knowledge, attitudes) for becoming critical global citizens and change agents are strengthened, awareness about gender and environmental issues, human rights, global sustainability challenges. (transversal integration of global citizenship in VLIR-UOS portfolio) 📌
<p>Networks and partnerships</p>	<p>Strengthened interactions within reciprocal partnerships and engagements at local, regional and global levels between HE&SIs, researchers, staff, students and other stakeholders in society (public actors, private actors, other civil society organisations (CSOs), communities, etc.) for sustainable development</p>	<p><u>Examples:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional and international HE cooperation on a specific topic is facilitated (e.g. joint research, exchanges, new master programme, etc.) • Expertise is exchanged with different Flemish HEIs and partner HE&SIs • Multi-disciplinary and interconnectivity is implemented by collaborating with different teams/units/departments in the HE&SI, i.e. not be limited to one department (e.g. different projects along the value chain of an agricultural product, strong complementarity & synergy with other projects) 📌 • New research partnerships with private and public actors or civil society are developed to have more societal impact 🌐 and attract new funding to ensure sustainability • A stakeholder platform concept (e.g. stakeholder advisory board) and associated stakeholder workshops are developed to build a network with local private sector, policy-makers and civil society (e.g. women groups, communities, marginalised groups) 🌐 • Alumni network events are organised to keep alumni connected to HE&SIs • Exploration of partnership potential/formulation missions (matchmaking sessions, seminars, exchange meetings)

2.4. SDG principles and transversal themes

The SDG principles serve as a compass in VLIR-UOS endeavour of sharing minds, changing lives. As visualised in the ToC, they are transversally integrated to render the activities and change processes SDG-proof.



Interconnectedness: VLIR-UOS recognises that given the complexity, scale and interconnectedness of current societal challenges, meaningful social, economic and ecological transformations can only be realised by starting from a holistic and integrated approach to the SDGs. More precisely, VLIR-UOS strives for holistic transformations by encouraging projects to reflect on their position in the interplay of global challenges and national needs, and to bring together the different types of expertise needed to successfully implement the project. As an essential first step in considering the complexity of societal change, all VLIR-UOS supported projects develop a holistic context analysis which moves beyond sectoral and disciplinary borders, and should analyse the positive as well as negative interlinkages between the SDG goals (see also risk analysis in annex 2).



Multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSP): The complexity, scale, and interconnectedness of the current societal challenges that the SDG framework is seeking to address, requires a concerted effort of a wide variety of different stakeholders. As such, the principle of multistakeholder partnership – which promotes cooperation and partnerships at different stages and spanning the boundaries of civil society, private sector, government, and academia – is ubiquitous across the 2030 Agenda. An analysis of academic as well as non-academic stakeholders (private sector, government, NGO/Civil Society, international donors...) is essential for each partnership. VLIR-UOS takes into account the MSP principle by promoting collaboration between different partners and stakeholders to co-create, share and mobilize knowledge and expertise across disciplines, sectors, interest groups, and borders. More precisely, VLIR-UOS explicitly puts forward the science-society interface and the importance of strengthening this. *Short Initiatives and TEAM* projects, in particular, are expected to seek for synergy and complementarity with various academic and non-academic stakeholders (state actors, community organisations, private sector, NGOs, ..) when generating and facilitating the uptake of the development-relevant knowledge. All individual projects are therefore required to submit a thorough stakeholder analysis and management strategy as an essential step. In addition, for TEAM projects, interinstitutional collaboration involving researchers and/or academics from several HE&SIs in the partner country and in Flanders is (financially) encouraged.



Leave no one behind: VLIR-UOS recognises the need for pro-active strategies to ensure that vulnerable and marginalised populations are included in and benefit from higher education partnerships for sustainable development. The LNOB principle is taken into account by looking at partners with whom we work, at beneficiaries for whom we work and at what we focus on in projects. VLIR-UOS encourages that projects take gender and vulnerable groups into account, by putting forward partnerships with mid-range or weaker institutions, by awarding scholarships to a diversity of beneficiaries and by promoting transformative or community-based types of research. More precisely, international top higher education institutions are considered only when participating as supporting partners in projects, scholarship attribution is not only based on academic excellence in terms of scientific output, and

mainstreaming approaches are put in place to consider inclusion and (gender) equality in each project. Short Initiatives, in particular, aim to be accessible for academics/researchers at the early stages of their academic career who are interested to explore the potential for higher education for sustainable development.

As to reach sustainable and inclusive development, *SI and TEAM* projects are expected to take gender and the protection of the environment and natural resources into account as transversal themes (see optional annex 20). With regards to **gender**, VLIR-UOS has developed a gender policy reflecting how to contribute to gender equality by mainstreaming gender in higher education for sustainable development. Upon advice of the gender expert group, VLIR-UOS and its partners engage in fixing the numbers, fixing the knowledge and fixing the organisation for gender in line with the theoretical three-fixes model of Londa Schiebinger. To operationalise this threefold strategy, guidance and tools will be offered to our partners and promoters (e.g. checklist for scholarship selection, information sheet for gender mainstreaming, training on gender analysis in research, training for selection commission members). With regards to **environment**, VLIR-UOS adheres to the strong and active sustainability model (also known as the Doughnut model of social and planetary boundaries) which aims to ensure meeting the needs of all people within the means of the planet. This implies that *SI and TEAM* project proposals and reporting formats urge project applicants to consider environment and environmental sustainability during project identification & formulation as well as to monitor and reflect upon the project's effects on the environment and the risks posed by the environment on their project. Thereby, projects should be guided by the 'do no harm' principle to prevent, reduce and control the risk of environmental harm. Further, VLIR-UOS retains the possibility to develop measures related to environment, in line with its environmental policy which will be updated during the next FYP 2022-2026. Besides integration of gender and environmental concerns within project management, the transversal themes can also feature in the projects' content. To this purpose, VLIR-UOS may consider launching project calls which primarily target projects with content focused on gender and/or environment.

In addition to integrating these transversal themes as put forward by the Belgian regulatory framework for development cooperation, VLIR-UOS identifies **Digital for Development (D4D)**, **decolonisation** and **global citizenship** as priority themes which play an important role in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. Respect for **decent work and human rights** are also important policy areas for the entire VLIR-UOS portfolio and projects, calling for action to prevent and protect involved people and beneficiaries from risks related to violations in these areas. Specifically for Digital for development (D4D) a [D4D flash card](#) was developed during FYP1 to support project promoters in formulating project proposals and annual reports. These aspects will be further explored during the coming five year programme 2022-2026.

2.5. Synergy and complementarity (S&C)

Synergy and complementarity (S&C) can improve the impact of development cooperation interventions and is a top priority of the Belgian minister of Development Cooperation and encouraged by the reform of non-governmental cooperation in 2016.

The focus of Agenda 2030 on meaningful impact through multi-stakeholder partnerships resonates with the FYP2 ambition "Connect4Change" to focus on cooperation among and beyond academic actors (CONNECT), societal impact (valorisation), and collective learning.

These policy ambitions have been translated in the project selection criteria and descriptors for all programmes. That way VLIR-UOS wants to stimulate new projects to capitalize on former and/or other relevant projects in the same context or topic, and interinstitutional cooperation among and beyond academic actors. This will be an added value in the competitive selection of projects.

VLIR-UOS revised its country approach towards an 'Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development' centred approach. Moreover, VLIR-UOS wants to facilitate connections between different actors and projects present in a given country, and cross-borders within the broader framework of the thematic Joint Strategic Framework on Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development (tJSF HES4SD). With these objectives in mind, Country Reference Framework (CRF) support teams of academics when identifying and formulating project proposals, by providing a context analysis per country focused on Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the higher education sector, and by providing an overview of Belgian development actors active in the country (Enabel, ANGC), their ongoing projects and partners, in view of exploration of opportunities for synergy and complementarity.

The frameworks have been elaborated based on information available at the time of drafting the VLIR-UOS actor programme (1st half of 2021) and through consultations with both Flemish and local project promoters in 2020-2021, and with geographic JSFs, when applicable, to ensure relevant information for coherent project formulation is included.

When launching competitive calls, the ANGCs active in the country/region will be invited to list a number of research themes/questions that can be addressed by HE&SIs in the framework of VLIR-UOS funded projects or scholarships. Synergy and complementarity will be integrated as an element in the selection of project proposals, more in particular when discussing the relevance and coherence of the proposals and the extent to which the multi-stakeholder partnership principle has been reflected in the project's implementation set-up. By this mode of operation, the thematic JSF on Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development links up with the other geographic JSFs.

Evidently, the frameworks will be updated regularly in consultation with the HEI&SI stakeholders and with the respective geographical JSFs and, where appropriate, also with ARES, and especially prior to the launch of competitive calls by VLIR-UOS, to be compatible and responsive to evolving/emerging needs and priorities of academic and development actors active in the country/region/sector.

The country reference frameworks were elaborated for the 17 countries + Belgium in the VLIR-UOS project partner country list. . (see links at the end of this document)

3. Eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria define whether a proposal meets the minimum criteria to be accepted to enter the selection process. Each call for proposals defines clear eligibility criteria, using the following sections where appropriate. This practice is common within the academic community.

In case of VLIR-UOS calls for proposals, the following eligibility criteria apply:

Eligibility of applicants (= Who can apply?)	Eligibility of Flemish and local (co)promoters and eligibility of Flemish and local (co)partner institutions.
Eligibility of budget and implementation period	Maximum budget is not exceeded. Maximum implementation period is not exceeded
Eligibility of countries	List of eligible partner countries
Eligibility of submission modalities	Timely and complete submission, and respect for formats and other possible formality guidelines (max. number of pages, font, ...).

3.1. Who can Apply?

Affiliation of the promoters:

- Flemish promoter: employed as a professor/lecturer/specialist at a Flemish university or university of applied sciences and arts;
 - Partner promoter: employed at a recognized higher education institution or national public (not for profit) research institute located in a VLIR-UOS project partner country

Additional criteria:

- Applicants (Flemish/local) can have a maximum of two ongoing SI/TEAM projects, which means they can submit a maximum of two projects (two SI, two TEAM or one SI and one TEAM) in case they have no ongoing projects after 1 September 2022. With almost all VLIR-UOS projects coming to an end on 31 August 2022, only TEAM 2019 projects should be considered as ongoing projects. TEAM 2019 promoters can submit only one new SI or TEAM

At the level of the partner institutions, no further criteria apply. Former and present IUC partner institutions are fully eligible, without any restriction.

It is the responsibility of the Institutional Coordinator for Development Cooperation (ICOS) of the association (see [6.4.1.](#)) to check whether the Flemish project promoter is allowed to act as a project holder within his/her own institution, and to check if the project promoter will be affiliated with the institution for the duration of the project¹. It is also up to the institution to check who will be the budget holder for the

¹ Emeriti professors cannot submit a project proposal. When a professor turn emeritus during the duration of the project, the promotorship needs to be transferred, except if the institution provides an explicit mandate to continue as a promoter/project holder until the end of the project duration. An emeritus professor can also continue to act as a co-promoter.

project (more in particular of relevance for projects submitted by universities of applied sciences and arts.

In terms of the eligibility of the partner institution applicants, the additional criteria cannot be fully checked by the ICOS, as such this is understood as a first check and if so possible it will be built-in in the digital platform that partner promoters cannot submit more than 2 project proposals.

It is the responsibility of promoters or co-promoters who are not only affiliated to a Flemish university or university college, but also to an institution within which DGD funding is or can be provided on a project or structural basis, and in case no rules for inter-institutional cooperation are provided,

- to assess that selection of the proposal by VLIR-UOS would not entail a conflict of interests or overlap with DGD funded projects and hence imply double funding by DGD, and
- to obtain approval of the other institution's management in case the latter would require this, as VLIR-UOS is unable to assess this in the framework of this call.

In case the project promoter is different from the person who is responsible for the execution of the project, this should be clearly specified in the project proposal (see project module [Organisation](#)).

3.2. Eligibility of budget and implementation period

The budget and implementation period will be checked with the included boundaries in the call. The Max. budget is 70.000 EUR and the Max. implementation period is 2 years.

3.3. Eligibility of countries

The following countries are eligible for Short Initiatives:

Country
1. Benin
2. Bolivia
3. Burundi
4. Cuba
5. DR Congo
6. Ecuador
7. Ethiopia
8. Indonesia
9. Kenya
10. Morocco
11. Peru
12. Philippines
13. Rwanda
14. South Africa
15. Tanzania
16. Uganda
17. Vietnam

3.4. Eligibility of submission modalities

The proposal must meet the application and submission requirements as described in [section 6. 'Application modalities'](#). All compulsory annexes are to be enclosed. Non-compliance with the obligatory formats will lead to non-acceptance of the proposal.

4. Budgetary framework and implementation

4.1. Available budget

The budget for this call is 2.030.000 EUR (indicative 29 projects).

4.2. Implementation

After project selection, VLIR-UOS will draft an agreement between VLIR, the local partner institution and the Flemish institution) with which the promoters of the selected project are affiliated, to establish rules governing the management and use of, and responsibility for, the resources allocated.

Selected projects will be able to start as of 1 September 2022 at the earliest and run for max. 2 years (Sept. 2022- Aug. 2024)

4.3. Financial guidelines for proposal writing

The VLIR-UOS financial guidelines for SI and TEAM projects indicate what expenses are allowed in the framework of a project, how budgets are to be made, and how expenses have to be accounted for. At the time of launching this first call within the new FYP 2 the full guidelines are not yet available, but a basic set of guidelines needed for filling out the budget proposal will be made available. (see [background document 2](#)).

The applicable budget lines are:

- A. Investment costs (durable goods with a long life that can be depreciated in the accounts over several years)
- B. Operational costs (“project-related” costs incurred for the purchase and/or operational use of goods that are not depreciated in the accounts and costs directly related to a specific project activity)
- C. Personnel costs
- D. Scholarship costs
- E.1. Coordination cost in Belgium² (5% lump sum from A to D)
- E.2. Local coordination cost (5% lump sum from A to D)

² Contact the Flemish partner university/university college for more information about the application of E.1.

5. Selection

5.1. Selection criteria

Each call for proposals will apply the same set of four selection criteria. These four criteria are further defined, and translated into a non-exhaustive list of descriptors, that are illustrative but provide an objective interpretation of the criteria, both for the applicant as well as for the selection commissions.³

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>

Also qualitative criteria and their underlying principles are integrated in the VLIR-UOS selection system: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, expected impact, sustainability, partnership strategy, synergies and learning

5.2. Scoring of the criteria

All proposals are assessed by all commission members, thereby 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. Proposal can be remediated towards a next submission)
- D: Very weak

In order to be 'fundable', a proposal should obtain an A or B score on each criterion. The more As the better and the following selection criteria are applicable in declining order of priority:

1. Relevance and coherence

³ Based on the ERC (European Research Council) and OECD-DAC (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee) definitions.

2. Quality of the project
3. Potential impact and sustainability
4. Implementation set-up

More details on the selection criteria, track record and scoring and decision making are to be found in the Selection System (policy & guidelines) document⁴ of VLIR-UOS (see background documents).

5.3. Selection commission

5.3.1. Composition

Considering the high numbers of proposals usually to be expected for SI and TEAM project calls, with a strong focus on thematic sustainable development challenges in relation with country level contextualisation, selection of SI and TEAM projects will be organised separately and via Regional Selection Commissions:

- Regional selection commission Africa for the selection of SI proposals in Africa⁵;
- Regional selection commission Asia for the selection of SI proposals in Asia;
- Regional selection commission Latin America for the selection of SI proposals in Latin America

5.3.2. Peer review

Not relevant for this call.

5.3.3. Follow-up of selection commission meeting

The selection meetings will take place in May 2022. During the meeting of the Regional Selection Committee the promoter is not expected to orally defend his/her proposal. The Bureau UOS will ratify this selection.

Once the Bureau UOS will have taken the final decision as to the selection of the project proposals, all promoters will be informed of the outcome of the selection process and the reasons for approval or rejection of their proposal(s).

6. Application modalities

6.1. Methodological approach and formulation guidelines

All projects need to be identified and formulated following the general principles of the Theory of Change approach and the Managing for Development Results paradigm. The principles of the VLIR-UOS Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy were translated into a basic guide for the formulation of VLIR-UOS

⁴ An updated Selection System policy document is available on the VLIR-UOS website.

⁵ List of VLIR-UOS partner countries 2022-2026:

Africa: Benin, Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda

Asia: Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam

Latin America: Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Peru

supported projects. The formulation of a project is much more than writing a document. It is a participative process in which partners co-create a project based on a shared vision of change, and a shared understanding of the current situation.

A project formulation guide (**background annex 1**) specific for Short Initiatives (SI) and TEAM projects and provides practical and operational support and information on the different modules that need to be developed to arrive at a qualitative project proposal. The development of these interrelated modules is explained in a stepwise process. The modules form the basis for the online project development tool. The guide consists of 8 Modules⁶ as demonstrated below:



The added value is that the modules are linked to each other, for example based on the context analysis in Module 1 a theory of change is formulated, alignment is sought with the generic VLIR-UOS Theory of Change for TEAM/SI projects and the standard project domains (of intermediate change) are selected. In the case of SI projects⁷, these domains are used to plan activities in Module 5 and define the indicators in Module 7. Finally, the modules will make it possible in a future online environment to be used as a tool not only for planning, but also for reporting whereby switching between modules will be possible in a swift manner. These guidelines provide a clear and succinct overview of what is expected from the formulation process and provides ample examples. Use of these guidelines is strongly advised.

See section 8 for the **project formats**.

6.2. Submission Modalities

6.2.1. Who?

An application involves a Flemish and local promoter but it is the Flemish promoter who submits to the ICOS of the Flemish university (association) for quality control. The ICOS will validate and submit to

⁶ The modules are inspired on the PRINCE2 methodology and themes for project management.

⁷ This is a step that at level of the TEAM projects will be part of the 2nd selection stage of fully fledged proposals.

VLIR-UOS. Modalities are to be explained within the framework of the new tool referred to below under 6.2.2.

6.2.2. How?

Project applications are submitted online via the [new tool for the submission of project proposals](#)

6.3. Deadline

This concerns the deadline that applicants should respect when submitting to the ICOS.

Proposals must be submitted to the ICOS of the Flemish university association via the online tool (specific arrangements on how to proceed might be made at the level of the association, check with your ICOS how your institution deals with this internal procedure):

- at the latest on **18 March 2022 at 23h59 CET (Central European Time)**.

6.4. Application support

The ICOS function as liaison between the VLIR-UOS secretariat and the individual Flemish institutions and academics/lecturers. The ICOS are the first line contact persons to assist the promoters with the elaboration of their project proposal (eligibility check, explanation of the financial guidelines, assistance in filling out the project modules, etc).

As a general principle support will be provided in a multi-stage process, in which applicants first contact the ICOS on the level of their institution. Where needed, the ICOS will cluster and forward those questions they cannot answer to VLIR-UOS. Questions related to the VLIR-UOS project tool can be sent or forwarded to data@vliruos.be.

In the case of this call at least 1 general online information session SI and TEAM will be organised on **8 December 2021, from 13 to 15 hours** (invitation link will be placed on the website) focussing on the Call info and formats and guidelines. More detail will be provided on the Call website. Possibly, specific training session(s) on renewed guidelines and formats will also be organised, at level of the universities and VLHORA. Please check our [website](#) or the ICOS for updates.

6.4.1. Contact addresses of the ICOS

University Association	Name	Address	Phone	Email
KU Leuven Association	Tupac Calfat	International Office, VLIR-UOS ondersteunde programma's Naamsestraat 63 - bus 5001, 3000 Leuven	+32 16 37 94 40	Tupac.Calfat@kuleuven.be
Associatie Universiteit Hogescholen Antwerpen &	Katharina Verstraelen	International Relations Office Gratiekapelstraat 10, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium	+32 3 265 44 07	Katharina.Verstraelen@uantwerpen.be
Ghent University Association	Barbara Lobert	Dienst Onderzoeksangelege	+32 (0) 9 264 82 23	Barbara.Lobert@ugent.be

		nheden - Afdeling Onderzoekscöördinatie Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 25, 9000 Gent		
Associatie Universiteit- Hogescholen Limburg	Stephanie Frere	Dienst Internationalisering en Ontwikkelingssamenw erking (DIOS), Campus Hasselt, Martelarenlaan 42, 3500 Hasselt'	+32 (0) 11 26 80 15	Stephanie.Frere@uhasselt.be dios@uhasselt.be
Universitaire Associatie Brussel	Annabel Van Damme	Vrije Universiteit Brussel International Relations and Mobility Office Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussel	+32 (0)2 614 80 66	Annabel.Lieslot.van.Damme@vub.be / icos@vub.be

6.4.2. Contact at VLIR-UOS

Topic	Name and function	Phone	Email
General policy TEAM and SI Country-specific info for Latin America (Cuba, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru) Asia (Indonesia and Vietnam) and Ethiopia	Peter De Lannoy <i>Programme Coordinator</i>	+32 2 550 19 64	Peter.Delannoy@vliruos.be
Country-specific info for Benin, Burundi, DR Congo, Kenya, Morocco, Rwanda, South-Africa, Tanzania, Uganda	Kathleen Wuytack, <i>Programme Manager</i>	+32 2 289 05 55	Kathleen.Wuytack@vliruos.be
Country-specific info for the Philippines	Steven Schoofs <i>Programme Manager</i>	+32 2 550 19 62	Steven.Schoofs@vliruos.be

7. Timeline

STEP IN PROCESS	RESPONSIBLE	DATE
Launch Call	VLIR-UOS Secretariat	30 November 2021
Deadline for Submission to ICOS	Flemish promoters	Indicative around 2 weeks before the deadline, but please contact the ICOS of the Flemish institution (university association level, see contact details)
Deadline for Submission by the ICOS to VLIR-UOS	ICOS	18 March 2022 (23h59 Belgian time)
Eligibility Check and notification in case of non eligibility	VLIR-UOS Secretariat and Bureau UOS	25 March 2022
Selection Commission Meeting	VLIR-UOS Secretariat	1 st week of May 2022
Ratification of Selection	Bureau UOS	20 May 2022
Notification of Selection	VLIR-UOS Secretariat	End of May 2022
Indicative signing of contract	VLIR-UOS and partner institutions	July-August 2022
Start of project	Project promoters	1 September 2022
End of projects	Project promoters	All projects will end ultimately 31 August 2024

8. Annexes and background documents

8.1. Project formats

Formats that are enclosed and which have to be submitted:

Format for a project proposal	<i>This format is to be followed when drafting the project proposal and includes the guiding questions for the narrative sections per module</i>
Annex 1: Format Project proposal	<i>This excel format is used for the input of essential project data and certain project modules.</i>
Annex 2: Format Budget proposal	<i>A project proposal is only complete if a duly completed and detailed budget is added. This document gives you the format of a budget table</i>
CVs of the promoters	<i>Please add the CVs of the promoters in the module 'organisation (via an online link). In a later stage an upload will be made available in the project tool</i>

8.2. Background documents

Following background documents can be downloaded from the VLIR-UOS website when formulating a project proposal:

<p><u>Background document 1:</u> 1.1. Introductory powerpoint formats and guidelines for TEAM/SI project proposal writing 1.2. Formulation Guidelines for SI and TEAM projects</p>	<i>This document provides you with explanation on the M&E concepts that are to be applied when elaborating a project proposal. More information on the transversal and priority themes can also be found in the document</i>
<p><u>Background document 2:</u> Financial and scholarship guidelines for project proposal writing for SI and TEAM projects</p>	<i>This presentation provides an overview of the main VLIR-UOS financial guidelines indicate what expenses are allowed in the framework of SI and TEAM projects, which budget lines are foreseen in the budget plan and the main calculation rates for scholarships and provide a link to the current Hotel and per diem allowances from the 6th of July 2018 on the VLIR-UOS website).</i>
<p><u>Background document 3:</u> VLIR-UOS Selection System – Policy and Guidelines</p>	<i>The selection system document describes the selection modalities for all VLIR-UOS calls for proposals, and relevant here is the chapter on the regional selection commissions and calls for SI and TEAM projects.</i>

<u>Background document 4:</u> Generic Theory of Change for SI and TEAM projects	<i>This document is the generic Theory of Change of VLIR-UOS projects</i>

Background document 5: links to country reference framework documents (with information on the country's SDGs, higher education and Belgian ACNGs) for each project partner country:

Benin
Bolivia
Burundi
Cuba
DR Congo
Ecuador
Ethiopia
Indonesia
Kenya
Morocco
Peru
Philippines
Rwanda
South-Africa
Tanzania
Uganda
Vietnam

Abbreviations

ANGC	Belgian Actor of Non-Governmental Cooperation
DGD	Directorate General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid
FYP	Five-Year Programme
HESI	Higher Education and Science Institution(s)
HEI	Higher Education Institution(s)
ICOS	Institutional Coordinator for Development Cooperation
IUC	Institutional University Cooperation
JSF	Joint Strategic Framework
SI	Short Initiative project
TEAM	TEAM project
ToC	Theory of Change
tJSF	Thematic Joint Strategic Framework
UOS	Universitaire Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (University Cooperation for Development)
VLIR	Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad (Flemish Interuniversity Council)
VLIR-UOS	VLIR-Universitaire Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (VLIR-University Cooperation for Development)
ZAP	Zelfstandig Academisch Personeel (Independent Academic Personnel)