Call for Projects 2024

International Training Programmes (ITP)

10 November 2023

Summary

Aim	ITP are projects that focus on short- to medium-term, intensive, interactive, and practice-oriented training courses. These topics can be about sustainable development, transversal skills for higher education management, transversal or priority themes (e.g., gender, sustainable development, human rights, digital 4 development, decent work). Through International Training Programme projects, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) aim to systematically integrate global perspectives. In doing so, they create a supportive, inclusive, and networked learning environment in which individual scholars, professionals, and academics acquire transversal skills and state-of-the-art knowledge on sustainable development. This enables them to become experts and critical global citizens, motivated to act as change agents in their network.
Key features	- Short-term and medium-term results to be achieved within the project duration of 3 years, including training modules for short-term periods of a minimum of 7 consecutive days and a maximum of 6 months. - Organised (i) at a Flemish HEI, (ii) in one of the 17 VLIR-UOS project partner countries, or (iii) in a hybrid format. - Online and blended training can also be integrated into an ITP. - The ITP format allows flexibility in approaches, including preparatory and follow-up activities on top of the actual training. - Two types of projects are targeted in this ITP 2024 Call: - Academic training programmes, dealing with topics related to sustainable development challenges, Agenda 2030, transversal or priority themes. Directed towards professionals from civil society, private, or public sector. - Transversal organisational capacity building training programmes, oriented towards professionals of HEIs (digitisation in higher education, change management, scientific writing, QA, how to set up an international relations office, tech transfer, etcetera). - A minimum of 8 scholarships per training edition– no maximum
Target group	Professionals from civil society, private, or public sector and/or academics, scientists, and researchers at HEIs with relevant professional experience in the subject of the organised training.
Who can apply?	<u>Affiliation and statute of the promoters:</u> Flemish promoter: professor/specialist employed at a Flemish university or a professor/lecturer at a Flemish university of applied sciences and arts. Details on the eligibility requirements can be found in section '2.1 *Eligibility of applicants: who can apply?'*

	• Optional: in case there is a partner promoter: employed at a recognised higher education institution or national public (not for profit) research institute located in a VLIR-UOS project partner country. Additional criteria: • Only 1 project proposal per applicant (Flemish/partner) can be submitted. • Promoters of an ITP 2022 or ITP 2023 project cannot submit any new ITP project. • Promoters of an ITP 2023 project proposal that was not selected, can resubmit their proposal. • At the level of the partner institutions, no further criteria apply. Former and present IUC partner institutions are fully eligible, without any restriction.
Eligible countries	• In case the ITP project includes a partnership with a partner institution, it should concern a higher education or science institution located in one of our 17 project partner countries. • An ITP training can be organised in Belgium and/or in one of the 17 project partner countries, with the option of it being held online or blended: *Benin, Bolivia, Burundi, Cuba, DR Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam*
Budgetary Framework	The project budget amounts to a maximum of 150,000 EUR for a duration of 3 years. This period can include multiple training modules and should include a minimum of 8 scholarships per training edition. The overall budget for ITP 2024 allows for a maximum of 7 selectable projects.
Project duration	3 years

Important Dates	
	ITP 2024 Timeline **10 November 2023** Launch date of the call for proposals **16 November 2023** Online information session **1 February 2024 - 17h00 CET** Deadline for submission to VLIR-UOS **Second half of May 2024** Notification of selection decision **Start of the ITP projects** Selected projects will be able to start as of 1 September 2024 vliruos
How to submit a proposal?	**Who?** An application involves a Flemish and a partner promoter in one of the project partner countries, or can be limited to a Flemish promotor (with no partner promotor). In both cases, it is the (main) Flemish promoter who submits to the ICOS (Institutional Coordinators for Development Cooperation) of the Flemish university (association) for quality control. The ICOS will validate and submit your project to VLIR-UOS. Each Flemish institution has its own internal deadlines. Please reach out to the respective ICOS. **How?** Project applications are submitted via the VLIR-UOS online submission tool.
Assessment procedure	All project proposals will be assessed and selected by the VLIR-UOS Selection Commission for ICP Connect/ITP, 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. The selection decision will be communicated ultimately by the end of May 2024.
Start of the project	Selected projects will be able to start as of 1 September 2024.

1. Introduction

1.1. Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development

There is an increasing consensus on the importance of strong higher education and science institutions (HE&SIs) and systems in addressing sustainable development challenges. Higher education and science institutions play a key role in achieving the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SD) and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the aim 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 to achieve the SDGs. It considers academic and scientific capacity strengthening and partnerships as one of the four main levers to achieve the 2030 Agenda and implies a strengthened link between higher education institutions, governments, civil society organisations, and the private sector. Higher education institutions offer disciplinary and transdisciplinary teaching and research as they generate and contribute to the development of new and innovative approaches to global, regional, and local issues.

Through research, HE&SIs 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 mobilisation. Through their teaching, universities and universities of applied sciences and arts empower generations of new leaders and skilled professionals to drive sustainable development. Today's students are the decision-makers and professionals of tomorrow, who think both critically and ethically, who have learnt to cope with ethical dilemmas, and who can apply systems thinking approaches to serious and complex societal problems.

HE&SIs have also taken up a central role in providing global citizenship education to nurture a global understanding and a more profound intercultural awareness. Through service delivery and community engagement, HE&SIs work with a rich variety of stakeholders – including governments, the private sector, and civil society – for local, national, regional, and global impact.

1.2. FYP2 ambitions

VLIR-UOS outlined new ambitions for its Five-Year Programme 2022-2027 where the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development serves as the main reference point. VLIR-UOS is committed to purposefully mainstream the 3 SDG principles of 'Leave No One Behind (LNOB)', 'Interconnectedness' and 'Multi-stakeholder partnerships', throughout its ambitions, policies, programmes, portfolio, partnerships, and scholarships. The focus of Agenda 2030 on meaningful impact through multi-stakeholder partnerships resonates with the ambition of our FYP2, called "Connect4Change". It is our goal to focus on cooperation among and beyond academic actors, on collective learning and mutual inspiration (Connect, Learn, Inspire) and on societal impact (valorisation).

These policy ambitions have been translated into the project selection criteria and descriptors for all our programmes. VLIR-UOS wants new projects to **capitalise** on former and/or other relevant projects as a stepping stone, and to stimulate **multi-institutional partnerships** among academic actors and multistakeholder partnerships with non-academic actors. It is an added value in the competitive selection of projects when collaborations are sought beyond the academic sector and/or when different Flemish or partner HE&SIs are involved in a project proposal, be it universities, universities of applied sciences and arts, or both.

A specific objective of VLIR-UOS is to mobilise academics who have no prior experience with VLIR-UOS to engage in "sharing minds, changing lives", with a specific focus on young academics, female academics, and academics with expertise in disciplines that are underrepresented in VLIR-UOS projects (e.g. social sciences). This is why the number of projects (proposals) per promoter has been limited for ITP. In case of an 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.

1.3. Partnership principles

VLIR-UOS expects all parties involved in VLIR-UOS funded partnerships to uphold a number of principles and to apply them throughout the implementation of a project or scholarship.

This consists of:

- respect for human rights and integrity;
- pro-active strategies to ensure diversity, equality, and inclusivity, and that vulnerable groups are included in and benefit from higher education partnerships for sustainable development;
- decent work, research ethics, and research-based education;
- strategies and action to prevent and protect involved people and beneficiaries from risks related to violations in these areas, and adherence to overall fairness, respect, care, and honesty;
- overall, the development of equal and mutually beneficial partnerships.

Human Rights' framework:

Universities are the cornerstones of academic education, scientific research and social services. In recent years, these universities have grown to become some of the largest employers, where internationalisation is the rule rather than the exception. This internationalisation is becoming more and more important and is reflected, among other things, in staff and student exchanges, contributions to capacity building in the Global South, international networking, clustering of research capacity and cross-border research cooperation. Universities are also academic safe havens where students can develop into critical citizens and researchers can freely address fundamental issues, applied scientific research, and valorisation. Respect for human rights is inherent to universities' social role.

On the basis of the human rights' framework, developed at the level of VLIR, all Flemish universities have developed a human rights' policy that focuses on the positive impact that universities can have on their partners, partner countries, and society at large. The issues facing academics are not specific to any one university, nor even to academia in general. These are everyday issues that also confront other educational and research institutions, and companies. The university management boards of the Flemish universities hope that this human rights assessment will inspire other organisations and individuals.

In line herewith, all Flemish universities have an institution-specific operational framework to assess human rights' conditions in view of (potential) partnerships with partner institutions, at pre-contract level, when assessing whether or not to engage in a partnership, and/or at the level of project implementation. Given the cooperation model of VLIR-UOS, whereby a project agreement is signed by the implementing Flemish and partner HE&SIs that identifies the overall guiding principles, roles, and responsibilities of each participating institution and individual, the human rights' check is not only part of the VLIR-UOS selection system (risk analysis and implementation set-up of the project), but will also be performed by the respective human

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rights' commission of the Flemish universities. Promoters are advised to reach out to the ICOS for more information.

1.4. SDG principles as a compass for VLIR-UOS projects

The SDG principles serve as a compass for VLIR-UOS' endeavour of sharing minds, changing lives. As visualised in the Theory of Change (ToC), they are transversally integrated, using a broad interpretation of the principles, to make the activities and change processes SDG-proof. Additionally, VLIR-UOS uses the SDG principles as a compass to integrate the transversal and priority themes of the Belgian Development Cooperation into its operations. Integration of these principles is an important element in the selection of projects.

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 approaching the SDGs from a holistic and integrated viewpoint. 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 that are necessary 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 that moves beyond sectoral and disciplinary borders and should analyse the positive as well as negative interlinkages between the SDG goals. This includes a meaningful integration of the transversal themes gender equality and environmental sustainability.

Regarding **gender**, VLIR-UOS and its partners engage in *fixing the numbers, fixing the knowledge,* and *fixing the organisation,* in line with the theoretical three-fixes model of Londa Schiebinger (See VLIR-UOS gender policy document). Projects are expected to integrate this threefold gender strategy in their proposal.

Regarding **environment**, project applicants are invited to consider the environment and environmental sustainability during the project identification and formulation phase, 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. Besides integration of gender equality and environmental sustainability concerns within project management, the transversal themes can also feature in the projects' content.

Coherence, Multi-institutional partnerships (MIP), and 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 or collaboration by a wide variety of actors. This need for concertation/collaboration is translated to 3 potential approaches. Proposals are invited to explore these.

- **Coherence**: The Agenda 2030 urges actions to be **coherent** with the actions and networks of other actors and/or other HES4SD initiatives. An analysis of complementary actions by academic and non-academic actors is essential for each partnership (to ensure coherence). VLIR-UOS wants to facilitate coherence and connections between different actors and projects present in each country and across borders. With these objectives in mind, Country Reference Framework (CRF) documents[1] support

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[1] 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)

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 and of their ongoing projects and partners, in view of exploration of opportunities to connect and assure coherence.

- **Multi-Institutional Partnership (MIP)**: This concerns a structural collaboration between several higher education institutions at Flemish/Belgian (including the Institute of Tropical Medicine) and/or partner level within the framework of a project, with the aim of obtaining better results by pooling available expertise. The different institutions take up a meaningful and important role in the project. In fact, the Flemish higher education institutions have recently created a platform through their "associatieve projecten" that are dedicatedly fostering these types of cooperation.

- **Multi-Stakeholder Partnership (MSP):** this concerns a structural collaboration with at least 1 non-academic actor (= multi-stakeholder; civil society, private sector, governmental actors, etcetera.) within the framework of a project, in which this actor plays an active role during the project implementation. The actors in the MSP work towards a common goal, with a clear division of roles and responsibilities, which are formalised in, for example, a project agreement. VLIR-UOS takes into account the MSP principle by promoting collaboration between different actors (beyond HEIs) to co-create, share, and mobilise knowledge and expertise across disciplines, sectors, interest groups, and borders. More precisely, VLIR-UOS explicitly puts forward the science-society interface and knowledge uptake, and the importance of strengthening it.

Leave no one behind: VLIR-UOS recognises the need for proactive strategies to ensure that vulnerable and marginalised populations are included 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 what we focus on in projects. VLIR-UOS encourages projects to take gender and vulnerable groups into account, by putting forward partnerships with mid-range or small-scale institutions, by awarding scholarships to a diversified group of beneficiaries, and by promoting transformative or community-based types of research. In fact, from a LNOB perspective, international top higher education institutions in partner countries are more likely to be considered when they play a supporting role in projects, when scholarship attribution is not only based on academic excellence in terms of scientific output, and when mainstreaming approaches are put in place to consider inclusion and (gender) equality in each project. ITP projects in particular, aim to be accessible for academics/researchers in the early stages of their academic career, interested to explore the potential for higher education for sustainable development. As mentioned earlier, regarding **gender**, VLIR-UOS and its partners engage in *fixing the numbers, fixing the knowledge,* and *fixing the organisation* for gender equality. This is also an important dimension of the Leave No One Behind principle.

2. Key features of ITP projects

2.1. Aim

ITPs are projects that focus on short- to medium-term, intensive, interactive and practice-oriented training courses for professionals. This kind of training is unique to an ITP project and should not be mistaken with a workshop focused on information exchange rather than skill development. The unique nature of ITP trainings

is critical and has implications not only for project eligibility but also for the budget. The practice-oriented training courses are distinguished by topic, dealing with sustainable development, transversal skills for Higher Education (HE) management, transversal, or priority themes (e.g., gender, sustainable development, human rights, digital 4 development, decent work, etc). ITP projects systematically integrate global perspectives to create a supportive, inclusive, and networked learning environment in which professionals acquire transversal skills and state-of-the-art knowledge on sustainable development. This enables them to become experts and critical global citizens who are motivated to act as change agents in their network.

The VLIR-UOS ITP vision goes well beyond the organisation of trainings. Through ITP, VLIR-UOS wants to create change agents who can contribute to the development of their home country or other countries after having participated in an ITP. This impact is realised by the target group after the training, as they implement the acquired knowledge and skills in their professional lives. The individual skillset of the trainees has been improved and, because of this, they act as agents of change who effect change in their professional domains, e.g., a more efficient private sector, better policy, leadership, entrepreneurship, social engagement, innovation, better higher education, better research, local technologies, etc.

Two types of programmes are targeted in this ITP 2024 Call:

- Academic training programmes, dealing with topics related to sustainable development challenges, Agenda 2030, and transversal or priority themes, directed towards professionals from civil society, private, or public sector.
- Transversal organisational capacity building training programmes, oriented towards professionals of HEI (digitisation in higher education, research communication, change management, scientific writing, QA, how to set up an international relations office, tech transfer, etc.)

An ITP should address **development relevant themes and** challenges and thereby contribute to the general objectives as stated under section 5.1.1 of this call.

There are no a priori thematic restrictions concerning the scientific fields in which ITPs should be situated. Which **developmental challenges** the proposed ITP claims to address and how it intends to do this for the targeted group of VLIR-UOS scholarship awardees, **should be clearly motivated in the application**. Whether the arguments provided are sound and sufficient, however, is to be assessed by the selection commission.

2.2. Key Features

- Short-term and medium-term results to be achieved within the project duration of 3 years, including training modules for short-term periods of a maximum of 6 months.
- Organised (i) at a Flemish HEI, (ii) in one of the 17 VLIR-UOS project partner countries, or (iii) in a hybrid format.
- Online and blended training can also be integrated into an ITP.
- The ITP format allows flexibility in approaches, including preparatory and follow-up activities on top of the actual training.
- Two types of projects are targeted in this ITP 2024 Call:
  - Academic training programmes, dealing with topics related to sustainable development challenges, Agenda 2030, transversal or priority themes, directed towards professionals from civil society, private or public sector.

- o Transversal organisational capacity building training programmes, oriented towards profession-
     nals of HEIs (digitisation in higher education, change management, scientific writing, QA, how to
     set up an international relations office, tech transfer, etc.)
- A minimum of 8 scholarships per training/edition – no maximum. These can be the same scholars during
  several editions.
- ITP projects integrate Global Citizenship in raising awareness for the link between the specific content of
  the ITP and the global challenges of the SDGs; with those acquired transversal skills, trainees will be
  equipped to become agents of change, stimulating their professional organisations to become drivers of
  change.
- Well-defined strategies towards selection of trainees, including multi-stakeholder partnerships (rather than
  open selection procedures) and the 'Leave no one behind' (LNOB) principle.
- ITP projects seek multi-institutional partnerships (between HEI in Flanders) or synergy and complementa-
  rity with other (Belgian) development actors whenever possible to increase the impact potential.
- Applying strategies to link the ITP with the local context of one or more partner countries by e.g. (partial)
  delocalisation of the programme to (one or more) partner institutions.
- Envisioning modalities to engage the participation of international trainees.

2.3. Target groups, recruitment strategy, and selection procedure

The precise target group(s) (and criteria) an ITP project wants to address, needs to be specified in the appli-
cation, together with preliminary information on the possible participants and a description of the recruitment
strategies that will be used (incl. the partners/stakeholders that will be involved in this strategy). The selection
criteria must match with the content of the training and must consider the professional and country context of
the potential trainees (with a specific attention for the extent to which the newly acquired knowledge can be
applied).

The ITP project is responsible for the organisation of the application and selection of the participants and of
the scholarship candidates by defining a selection procedure. When elaborating the specific ITP project target
groups, the recruitment strategy and the selection procedure, following important points of attention have to
be considered:

- The target group of an ITP project are professionals from civil society, private or public sector and/or
  academics, scientists, researchers at HEI with relevant professional experience in the subject of the
  organised ITP. The ITP candidate should be employed at the time of selection and should be able to
  proof that they will remain to be employed after the training (for example by a commitment letter of the
  employer).
- A 40-60% balance between male and female candidates awarded ITP scholarships is targeted. VLIR-
  UOS strongly encourages female candidates to apply. Read more about our gender policy here. An
  ITP proposal needs to identify clear mechanisms to realise this balance.
- There are no age limitations for participants of the training programmes.
- A reasonable cross-section of trainees from different countries and regions is targeted, provided there
  are sufficient qualified candidates.
- In case of equally qualified candidates, preference should be given to candidates from vulnerable
  groups.
- Scholarship candidates must be:
  - a national and resident of one of the **29** VLIR-UOS scholarship countries

- OR an employee of a target organisation (e.g., HEI, NGO, SME) in one of the **17** VLIR-UOS **partner countries** (candidates can have a different nationality, needs to be an exception).
- Trainees who do not receive a scholarship but who are enrolled in an ITP can also receive limited financial support in the framework of the ITP project (e.g., operational costs such as transport costs or activity-based costs).
- There is no formal limit on the number of VLIR-UOS scholarships one person can receive. However, based on the 'Leave no one behind' principle, we want to give as many new applicants (not having received earlier VLIR-UOS scholarships) as possible a chance to receive a scholarship.

2.1. Next ITP calls

The ITP call is launched three times within FYP2. This is the third and last ITP call.

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 its clear eligibility criteria, using the following sections where applicable. This practice is common within the academic community.

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

3.1. Eligibility of applicants: who can apply?

The project always includes one promotor from one Flemish university or university of applied sciences and arts. A partner promotor of a recognised higher education institution or national public (not for profit) research institute located in a VLIR-UOS project partner country is recommended but not mandatory. **These institutions are contracted by VLIR-UOS in case of selection (not any spin-offs, foundations, or other types of organisations affiliated to the institution as main contractor).**

3.1.1. Affiliation and statute of the promoters

Flemish institutions

When submitting a project proposal, a promoter must meet both the internal criteria and regulations as to project promotership of their institution and the minimum conditions set by VLIR-UOS.
The minimum conditions set by VLIR-UOS for a lead promoter **from a Flemish university** to submit a proposal are the following:
- o one must be able to be an account holder within one's own institution;
- o one must have a ZAP statute (Independent Academic Personnel) at the time of submission, with a minimum appointment level of 10%;
- o postdocs can also submit, depending on the Flemish institution's internal criteria and on condition that a ZAP member with at least 50% appointment of the institution with whom the contract will be signed is included in the project team as co-promoter;
- o ATP members (Administrative and Technical Personnel) can also submit, depending on the nature of the project and provided they can be account holders within their own institution, without a ZAP member with minimum 50% appointment as co-promoter being part of the project team.

The minimum conditions set by VLIR-UOS for a lead promoter **from a Flemish university of applied sciences and arts** to submit a proposal are the following:

- o one must be professor or lecturer. In case the professor/lecturer does not have permission to be budget holder, another person (e.g. the director, research coordinator, unit manager) can be assigned as budget holder for the project. ATP members (Administrative and Technical Personnel) can also submit, provided they can be account holders within their own institution.

The lead promoter will be invited to confirm, when submitting the proposal in the VLIR-UOS tool, to meet both the internal and VLIR-UOS eligibility criteria and regulations.

Partner institutions:

A partner promoter is employed at a recognised higher education institution or national public (not for profit) research institute located in a VLIR-UOS project partner country. For research institutes this implies the institution has a national mandate from its government.

The main signatory of a project agreement is always a recognised higher education institution or national public (not for profit) research institute.

3.1.2. Additional criteria

- Only 1 project proposal per applicant (Flemish/partner) can be submitted.
- Promoters of an ITP 2022 or ITP 2023 project cannot submit a new ITP project.
- Promoters of an ITP 2022/2023 project proposal that was not selected, can resubmit their proposal.
- At the level of the partner institutions (if any), no restrictions apply for present and former IUC (Institutional University Cooperation) and NETWORK partner institutions. These institutions are fully eligible. However, one IUC institution, UMI-Morocco, is currently in an IUC transition stage. Therefore it was decided by the Bureau UOS (confirmed during the meeting of 15 September 2023) that the institution is not eligible in this call.
- At the Flemish level, the application is submitted via a (main) Flemish promoter and institution. Co-promoters can also be part of the project team. At the partner level (if any), multiple partner institutions can be part of the application, as promotor or co-promotor. If important budgets are to be managed by the partner institution(s) (or in case of personnel costs at the partner institute(s)), one partner promotor for that institution needs to be identified for contracting reasons.

3.1.3. Roles and responsibilities during the eligibility check

Concerning the eligibility check, it is to be noted that it is the responsibility of the Institutional Coordinator for Development Cooperation (ICOS) or Global Engagement Officer (GEO) of the association (see 6.2.1):

- to do the final submission of the proposal (please follow internal deadlines),
- to check whether the proposal is complete,
- to verify if a minimum of 8 scholars per training edition are included and each training lasts at least 7 consecutive days, days of travel not included. This applies regardless of whether the training is physical, online, or hybrid. The maximum duration of a consecutive training is 6 months. In case the training is organised in Belgium, the maximum stay (travel days included) of a (scholarship) participant in Belgium cannot exceed 90 days consecutively which is the maximum number of days for a visa type C,
- to check whether the Flemish promoter is allowed to act as a project promoter and as budget holder within their own institution. They do so by performing a check of the respective relevant internal regulations.

However, given the diversity in staff statutes at the different Flemish HEIs and given the time constraints to perform checks, the lead promoter will be invited to confirm to meet both the internal and VLIR-UOS eligibility criteria and regulations when submitting the proposal in the VLIR-UOS tool. In case of a postdoc submitting, they also have to confirm that the ZAP member taking up the role of co-promoter meets the criteria as well.

The importance of transparency of the respective roles and responsibilities of the main actors in the project is key. At the level of the Flemish institutions, the distinction is always made between a promoter (and 'main' Flemish institution via which a proposal is submitted) and co-promoters (linked to the same or multiple Flemish HEIs), whereas at the level of the partner institutions (if any) in the partner countries, the promoter role can be taken up by multiple people and institutions. Next to the role of promoters and co-promoters, a variety of experts can be part of a project team (with team members).

It is the responsibility of promoters or co-promoters who are not only affiliated to a Flemish university or university of applied sciences and arts, but also to an institution which is eligible for DGD funding (e.g. Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp) on a project or structural basis, to assess and confirm that the selection of the

proposal by VLIR-UOS would not contain a conflict of interest or overlap with DGD funded projects and hence imply double funding by DGD.

It is up to the Flemish associations to decide whether only the ICOS or both the ICOS and GEO will be mandated to check and submit project proposals to VLIR-UOS. Please contact your ICOS for more information.

3.2. Eligibility of budget and implementation period

The budget and implementation period will be checked with the included boundaries in the call. The maximum budget is 150,000 EUR and the implementation period is 3 activity years.

3.3. Eligibility of countries

The ITP is organised in Belgium, at one or more Flemish HE&SIs, or in one of VLIR-UOS project partner countries or in both. Online and blended training can also be integrated into an ITP.
Activities can be organised in collaboration with / in the following partner countries:

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

Small expenses for activities in non-VLIR-UOS partner countries (e.g., a field trip) can be allowed if these remain limited and fit the finality of the ITP project.

3.4. Eligibility of submission

The proposal must meet the submission requirements as described below:

- **What?** A project proposal is only eligible when submitted via the project submission tool (online platform), via which all requested sections are filled in, and mandatory annexes (see also sections on 'Application modalities' and 'project formats') were uploaded as prescribed by the call. Without this, a proposal cannot be accepted. VLIR-UOS makes available Word/Excel formats (if applicable) to facilitate the preparation of proposals, but only the online proposal is accepted.
- **Who?** An application involves a Flemish and possibly one or more partner promoters, but it is the (main) Flemish promoter who submits to the ICOS of the Flemish university (association) for quality control and

check of internal regulations related to Flemish promoter eligibility. The ICOS will validate the proposal in the online submission tool and submit it to VLIR-UOS.

- **How?** Project applications must be submitted to the ICOS of the Flemish university association via the [new tool for the submission of project proposals](#).
- **Deadline?**
  - o Proposals must be submitted to the ICOS of the Flemish university association. For specific internal deadlines at the level of the association, check with your ICOS.
  - o The final deadline for submission to VLIR-UOS by the ICOS is **1 February 2024 at 17h00 CET (Central European Time).**

4. Budgetary framework and implementation

4.1. Available budget

The budget for this call allows for a maximum of 7 projects. This is the third and last ITP Call within FYP2.

4.2. Implementation

After project selection, VLIR-UOS will inform the project promoters on the selection decision and perform a check of essential personal and budget data in view of the contracting procedure. During the contracting procedure, VLIR-UOS will draft an agreement between VLIR, the partner institution (if a partner promoter has been indicated), and the Flemish institution the promoters of the selected project are affiliated with, to establish rules governing the management and use of, and responsibility for the allocated resources.

Selected projects will start as of 1 September 2024 and run for 3 activity years, from 1 September 2024 until 31 August 2027. **No extension is possible.** Several editions of a training within an ITP project can be implemented during this period, benefiting at least 8 participants per training module.

In case the training is organised in Belgium, the maximum stay (travel days included) of a (scholarship) participant in Belgium cannot exceed 90 days consecutively which is the maximum number of days for a visa type C. The minimum stay is 7 consecutive days.

4.3. Financial guidelines for proposal writing

The [VLIR-UOS financial framework](#) indicates which expenses are allowed in the framework of a project, how budgets are to be determined, and how expenses need to be accounted for. In order to support the project formulation, a basic set of guidelines needed for filling out the budget proposal is published at the website.

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. Coordination costs
    E.1. Coordination cost in Belgium[2] (10% lump sum from A to D). The distribution of the coordination costs within subcategory '*E.1. Flemish HEI*' in case there are multiple partners, is left to the parties involved.

Or[3]

    E.1. Coordination cost at the level of the Flemish institution (5% of the A-D total)

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[2] Contact the Flemish partner university/university college for more information about the application of E.1.
[3] If a partner promoter has been identified, the partner institution will sign the contract as well and the coordination cost will be shared.

E.2. Coordination cost at level of the partner institution(s) (5% of the A-D total)

VLIR-UOS channels all financial transactions via (the main) Flemish contracted higher education institution.

The ITP funding format follows a project logic funding, combining the training and scholars' cost, making it possible to set up one or more editions, both in Belgium and/or in a partner country. While the basic costs for the development of the training are made for the first edition, additional costs can still be made when finetuning and updating the training to differentiate in view of a wider group of students/professionals from/in different regions, when appropriate. Allowing more than one edition within a timeframe of 3 activity years increases the cost-effectiveness. Several mechanisms are in place to ensure optimal and transparent use of the resources, e.g., loss of scholarship entitlement in case of lack of study progress or falsification of information during application, delay or suspension of scholarship for health-related reasons.

4.4. Scholarships

Positive assessment implies an intake of minimum 8 scholarships per edition/training within the ITP. The corresponding scholarship amounts are transferred by VLIR-UOS as part of the project. In case the training takes place in Belgium, the Flemish university is responsible for the payments to the scholarship holders, for their reception, housing, organising of insurance, and their general guidance. The scholars do not need to be newly recruited every edition but can be the same group, having a follow-up training.

The short-term scholarship allowances guidelines are incorporated in the budget file. If local/hybrid/online scholarship allowances are used, this must also be included in the proposal (cf. in the budget file). Local/regional scholarships for trainings organised in partner countries need to make use of amounts adapted to the local/regional context. The maximum amount for the scholarship allowance is the amount envisioned for a training held in Belgium.

5. Theory of change and objectives

5.1. Theory of Change for ITP projects

The ITP projects' Theory of Change below reflects the general Theory of Change for the VLIR-UOS portfolio and how the objectives of ITP fit into the theory. The VLIR-UOS Theory of Change explains how a given project, or set of projects, is expected to lead to long-term development change. The ToC draws on a causal analysis based on available evidence, clarifying the anticipated pathways to impact. It clarifies how VLIR-UOS wants to contribute to Agenda 2030, which changes ITP projects can make, and how they can do so.
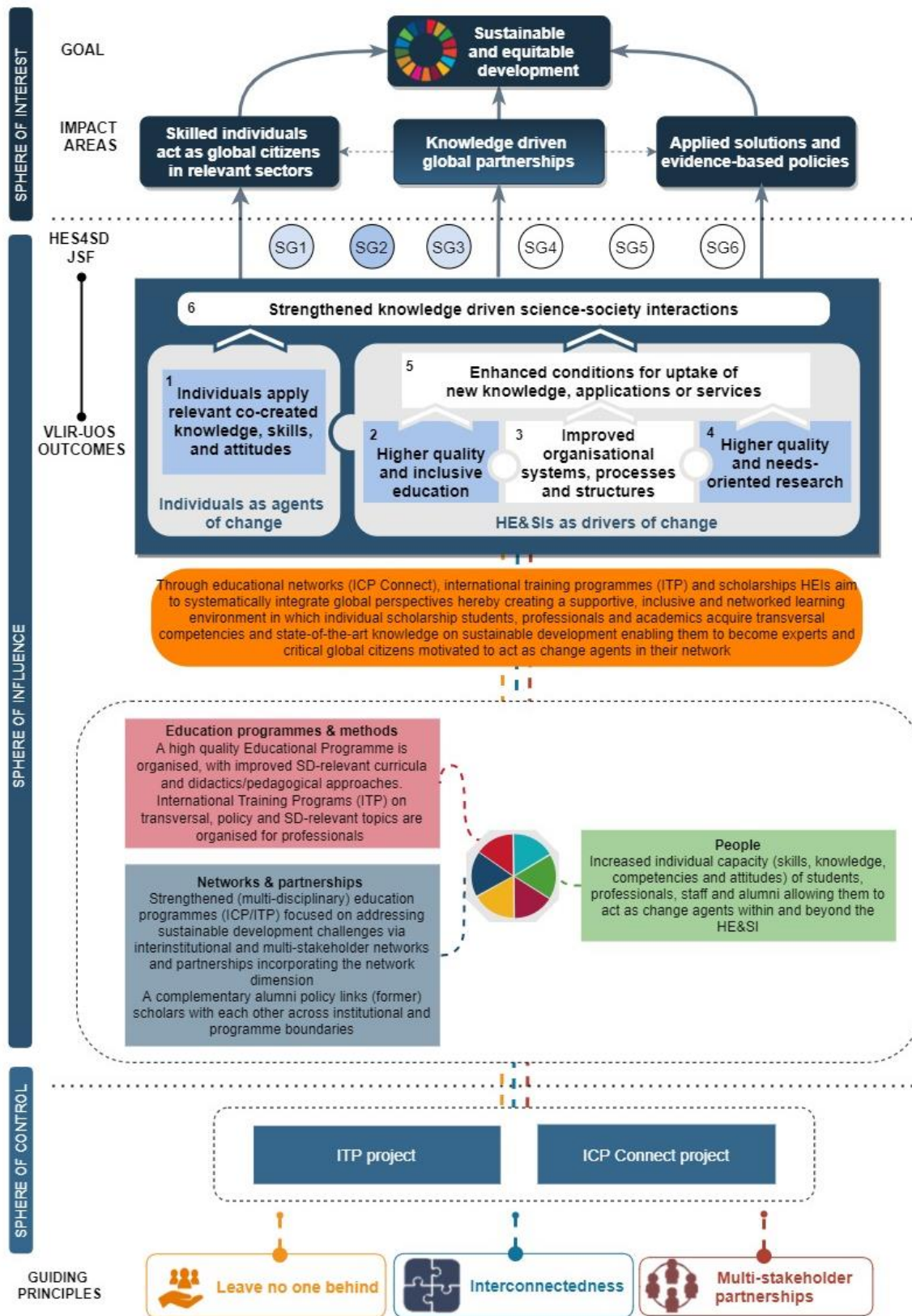
Figure 1 Schematic representation Theory of Change associated with ITP projects

5.1.1. Long-term impact

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, ITP projects are expected to contribute to more sustainable and equitable development by fostering:

- **Application of solutions and evidence-based policies**: In short, this refers to the role of higher education in applying new knowledge, insights and evidence for sustainable development. Effective partnerships are conducive to ensure the relevant stakeholders are engaged and the opportunities for uptake are created. This leads to a broader application of new knowledge by end-users and can include policymakers applying evidence from research in their policies, local communities adapting new practices that address their local needs, and private companies adapting innovative approaches.

- **A global community of skilled individuals who act as global citizens in relevant sectors:** This refers to the potential of HE&SIs to develop generations of new leaders and skilled professionals. These skilled individuals are expected to drive social and economic development with their contributions to relevant sectors. As critical global citizens, they are likely to have a multiplier development effect because of (i) their capacity to understand and question global power structures and to communicate and work/study effectively outside one's local environment, (ii) because of their consideration of interdependence and social concern for others, and (iii) because of their civic engagement in the form of pro-environmental and pro-social behaviour.

- **Knowledge-driven global partnerships:** The third impact area refers to the idea that reciprocal partnerships are essential to safeguard knowledge co-creation, exchange, and uptake within and beyond the scope of the supported projects. In line with SDG 17, VLIR-UOS aims for sustainable, effective, and efficient partnerships at various levels, including the individual, institutional, country, and regional levels, both within the HE sector, and with other sectors.

5.1.2. ITP strategic axes and outcomes

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 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. Outcomes refer to the change(s) a project wants to realise by the end of the implementation period.** For ITP projects, the outcomes (1), (2) and (4) are the main ones, 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 professional context. The skills and knowledge also include critical thinking, global citizenship skills and attitudes, leadership skills, etcetera.

(2) HE&SIs provide higher quality and more inclusive education. This outcome concerns the improved quality and inclusiveness of education as a result of strengthened educational capacities available at HE&SIs.

(4) HE&SIs conduct higher quality and needs-oriented research. This outcome reflects the VLIR-UOS ambition 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 that is gender-sensitive and equity-focused as a means for achieving excellence in research.

ITP projects will primarily focus on outcome (1), though may also include outcome (2) and (4) but this will be depending on the priorities and main objectives of each ITP, meaning that some might focus more on (1) and (2) while others focus more on (1) and (4), depending on priorities and needs of the stakeholders. Yet, projects are required to document their choices to ensure alignment with their own strategy. This strategy needs to resonate with the VLIR-UOS vision towards change (= the generic Theory of Change as set out in this document). Because in the long term, all ITP projects combined, should contribute to development changes (cfr. Sustainable and equitable development via the SDGs and Agenda 2030), resonating with the impact areas of the general theory of change of VLIR-UOS.

5.1.3. How do projects deliver on their outcomes: domains of intermediate change/outputs

An ITP project can focus on different **project domains** (=domains of intermediate change) that contribute to the different outcomes, with 'Education programme and methods', 'People' and 'Networks and partnerships' being the main ones. It is possible that ITP projects focus on one or more of the other project domains (outreach and policy support; research programmes and methods; systems, policies and infrastructure) and if this is the case, promoters are invited to clarify their focus on one of these additional domains.

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. Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that expectations in relation to these domains should vary for ITP projects in view of their distinct scope (in terms of time and budget).

Domain	General description (VLIR-UOS ToC)	Activities (examples)
People	Students, alumni, staff, researchers are trained/sensitised in a supportive learning environment to strengthen their knowledge, skills & attitudes in diverse domains (e.g., leadership, global citizenship).	• Scholarships are granted to individuals (from communities) who are typically overlooked, or who are unprepared to participate in traditional educational and scholarship selection processes. • Students are supported to become change agents through a variety of practices (like case studies, field work, internships, etcetera). • Development of adequate skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes • Application of skills, knowledge, competencies to the workplace • 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) 🟧
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 to ensure their career development after the training and their ability to tackle global challenges from a holistic and interdisciplinary perspective.	• New didactical, pedagogic, and teaching methodologies are introduced, adapted, and implemented by staff. • Course and training content created with improved integration of equity and equality, e.g., gender concepts, intersectionality, inclusion, (implicit) bias, etc. • Innovative curricula and teaching methods are developed, often in co-creation with partner institutions. • A supportive, dynamic, interactive and multi-faceted e-learning environment is developed. • Curriculum components that shift away from a 'classical classroom' constellation and introduce students to fieldwork, group-work, collaboration with non-academic actors, etcetera, are developed, often in collaboration with partner institutions and alumni. • Virtual collaborations expand perspectives in classroom discussions and sensitise students to other forms of knowledge production and modes of conducting scientific research.
Networks and partnerships	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 CSOs, communities, etcetera.) for sustainable development.	• 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. • Alumni network events are organised to keep alumni connected to HE&SIs. • Exploration of partnership potential/formulation missions (matchmaking sessions, seminars, exchange meetings) • Equity, diversity, and inclusion in teaching and learning are promoted to professionals. • Blended learning opportunities are initiated, collaboratively planned by partners using their specific expertise when relevant. • A network providing access to facilities, resources (including funding) and ideas is in place. • Innovative practices are developed, tested, exchanged, and implemented in the framework of a network of institutions, students, and alumni. • Alliances to tackle skill gaps and foster innovation in and through higher education together with e.g., the private sector are in place.

Outreach and policy support	Enhanced interaction with relevant public, private, and academic stakeholders to share knowledge, create conditions for uptake, and provide policy advice/support.	• 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.
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.	• Workshops on participatory/transdisciplinary research methods for researchers. • Feed-in from research-based learning methods into research practices of partner HE&SIs.
Systems, policies, and infrastructure	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.	• Establishing adequate policies, rules, and regulations at level of partner HE&SIs (e.g., revision/development of educational policies accreditation systems/ HR policy, gender policy, environmental policy) • Adequate policies are in place to support/improve access for students from vulnerable groups and ensure gender-balance among students and staff. • Measures are taken to reduce environmental impact (CO_2 compensation, less paper-based, limited travel, recycling, etcetera) Upgrade of supporting research and education facilities at level of partner HE&SIs

6. Application modalities and support

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. These principles were translated into an [extensive guide with background information](#), supporting the formulation of VLIR-UOS 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. During the information session, project formulation guidelines will be presented specifically for International Training Programmes (ITP) providing 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 step-by-step process. The modules form the basis for the online project development tool.

The guide consists of 8 Modules[4] , as demonstrated in the figure below:

1: Context / problem analysis

2: Project strategy (impact statement and ToC)

3: Organisation

4: Stakeholders and coherence

5: Planning & budgeting

6: Risk management

7: Monitoring & evaluation

8: Learning and steering

6.2. Application support

The Institutional Coordinators for Development Cooperation (ICOS) are the contacts of VLIR-UOS at the Flemish universities. The Global Engagement Officers (GEO) are our main contacts at the Flemish universities of applied sciences and arts (UASA). ICOS and GEO inform academics, specialists, and lecturers about opportunities for cooperation. They help with formulating project proposals and provide support for the execution of the projects.

Specifically in the framework of project calls, it is to be noted that the main responsibilities related to Application Support (submission, eligibility check internal regulations (see 3.1.3.)) rely on the ICOS of the Flemish university association. The ICOS of the university association functions as liaison between the VLIR-UOS team and the individual Flemish institutions and academics/lecturers. The ICOS are the first line of contact to assist the

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[4] Module 6: Risk management is not included in the application form of an ITP.

promoters with the elaboration of their project proposal (eligibility check, explanation of the financial framework, assistance in filling out the project modules, etcetera).

"Associatieve projecten":

VLIR-UOS provides funding for each Flemish university to set-up a minimum policy framework, organisational structure, and operation of HES4SD at institutional level.

Additionally, through the "associatieve projecten", each Flemish university commits to offer, in principle and as far as possible, the same or comparable services in the context of HES4SD to the lecturers of the UASA that are associated with the university, as is offered to the academics of the university, e.g. support when looking for project partners, when submitting project proposals. In addition, the "associatieve projecten" aim at intensifying cooperation among the university and the UASA. The scope of the "associatieve projecten" is primarily focusing on the UASA of the university's association but should ideally go beyond and also focus on all Flemish UASA, regardless of the association they are affiliated to.

Promoters are advised to reach out to the ICOS for more information.

As a general principle, support will be provided in a multi-stage process, in which applicants first contact the ICOS at the level of their institution/university association. Where needed, the ICOS will cluster and forward the questions they cannot answer to VLIR-UOS. VLIR-UOS will provide a "Questions and Answers" section relating to the ITP call on its website.

Questions related to the VLIR-UOS project tool can be sent or forwarded to info@vliruos.be.

In the case of this call, 1 general online ITP information session will be organised on **16 November 2023, from 10:00 to 12:00 CET** (registration link), focusing on the call info, formats, and guidelines. All relevant information is included in this call document but will also be provided on the call page on the VLIR-UOS website.

6.2.1. Contact addresses of the ICOS

University Association	Name	Address	Phone	Email
KU Leuven Association	Tupac Calfat (KU Leuven) Caroline Deneweth (Associatie Hogescholen)	International Office, VLIR-UOS projects, Naamsestraat 63 - bus 5001, 3000 Leuven	+32 16 37 94 40 +32 16 32 77 45	tupac.calfat@kuleuven.be caroline.deneweth@kuleuven.be
Associatie Universiteit & Hogescholen Antwerpen	Team internationale projecten	International Relations Office Gratiekapelstraat 10, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium	+32 3 265 44 07	icos@uantwerpen.be
Ghent University Association	Tom Broeks Liesbeth Vandepitte	Dienst Onderzoeks-aangelegenheden- Afdeling Onderzoeks-coördinatie	+32 9 264 79 68	Tom.broeks@ugent.be Liesbeth.vandepitte@ugent.be

		Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 25, 9000 Gent		
Associatie Universiteit-Hogescholen Limburg	Sara Schaeken	Dienst Internationalisering en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (DIOS), Campus Hasselt, Martelarenlaan 42, 3500 Hasselt'	+32 11 26 85 76 +32 484 61 70 28	sara.schaeken@uhasselt.be icos@uhasselt.be
Universitaire Associatie Brussel	Annabel Van Damme	Vrije Universiteit Brussel International Relations and Mobility Office Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussel	+32 2 614 80 66	Annabel.Lieselot.van.Damme@vub.be icos@vub.be

Note: if needed, the contact details of the respective GEO per university of applied sciences and arts can be obtained via the website.

6.2.2. Contact at VLIR-UOS

Topic	Name and function	Phone	Email
ITP policy	Geraldine Mabbe *Global Partnerships Manager*	+32 2 550 19 62	geraldine.mabbe@vliruos.be
Scholarship policy	Ise De Smet *Mobility and Scholarships Coordinator*	+32 2 550 19 67	ise.desmet@vliruos.be

7. Timeline

STEP IN PROCESS	RESPONSIBLE	DATE
Launch call	VLIR-UOS Team	10 November 2023
Information session (online) – register here	VLIR-UOS Team	16 November 2023, from 10:00 until 12:00 CET
Deadline for submission to ICOS	Flemish promoters	Most likely around 2 weeks before the VLIR-UOS deadline, but please contact the ICOS or GEO of the Flemish institution (university association level, see contact details)
Deadline for submission by the ICOS to VLIR-UOS	ICOS	1 February 2024 (**17h00 CET**)
Eligibility check and decision, and notification in case of non-eligibility	VLIR-UOS Team and Bureau UOS	9 February 2024
Selection Commission meeting	VLIR-UOS Team	2nd half of April 2024
Notification of selection	VLIR-UOS Team	2nd half of May 2024
Finetuning/data check selected projects	VLIR-UOS Team and promoters/ICOS	2nd half of May 2024
Signing of contract	VLIR-UOS, Flemish and partner institutions	June - July 2024
Start of projects	Project promoters	1 September 2024
End of projects	Project promoters	All projects will end ultimately on 31 August 2027

8. Selection

8.1. 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 commission.[5]

Next to the criteria mentioned in the table below, their underlying values are also important in the VLIR-UOS selection system: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, expected impact, sustainability, partnership strategy, synergies, and learning.

Criteria	Definition	Descriptors
Relevance and coherence of the project	*The extent to which the proposal responds to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution's needs and policies (relevance) and fits within the programme Theory of Change (ToC) and within the institution/context (coherence).*	1.1 The proposal aligns with the Agenda 2030, relevant (inter)national and local policies, as well as with the ITP programme ToC. 1.2 The proposal is based on a genuine and evidence-based context and stakeholder analysis with attention to gender, vulnerable people (LNOB) and the environment. 1.3 The proposal is compatible/links up with or capitalises on other related initiatives in the same context or topic (i.e., earlier/ongoing (VLIR-UOS) projects, other relevant initiatives within the context of HE4SD, etcetera) and addresses/seeks for synergies, complementarities, interlinkages and consistency with these initiatives, including interinstitutional cooperation (INT & MSP). 1.4 If applicable, the proposal demonstrates ownership of the involved local partners, and is in line with the local partners' priorities. 1.5. The proposal meets relevant training needs of well-defined target groups, taking into account the LNOB principle. The proposal demonstrates the ability to attract a diverse group of professionals.
Quality of the project design	*The extent to which a proposal presents a convincing project strategy.*	2.1 The proposal presents a realistic and applicable Theory of Change (ToC) narrative: i.e., a convincing project logic, with a clear and realistic flow between a long-term sustainable development objective (impact level), the outcomes expected from the project, and the envisaged intermediate changes (=results) by formulating activities and identifying deliverables linked to one or more of the six standard VLIR-UOS project domains. 2.2 The proposal is original, creative, innovative (scientific, academic, or pedagogical excellence) in:

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

		(i) its focus on sustainable development and global challenges (ii) its potential for network development (iii) facilitating the effective use of acquired knowledge and skills by the professionals upon return in their professional context by effectively acting as agents of change 2.3 The proposal elaborates an appropriate and feasible (scientific, academic or pedagogical) methodology or approach which recognises/addresses the interconnectedness of the sustainable development challenges such as multidisciplinary or systems approaches.
Implementation set-up of the project	*The extent to which the proposal presents a strong plan and partnership for the execution of the project.*	3.1 The project ToC is translated into a clear planning (which will facilitate effective project execution, follow-up and monitoring through a convincing set of indicators) with a logical and coherent spread of student batches, and adequate measures to deal in an adaptive way with the most important uncertainties (assumptions/risks), with attention to gender, vulnerable groups, and the environment. 3.2 The proposal is cost-effective; the budget is reasonable and justified. 3.3 It is an added value if the proposal involves a mix of stakeholders (people and their organisations) (MSP) with the required profile, experience, and expertise to successfully deliver all aspects of the project (quality of the partnership). 3.4 It is an added value if in the proposal different (Flemish or partner) HE&SIs are involved, either universities, universities of applied sciences and arts, or both (Multi-Institutional Partnership).
Potential impact and sustainability	*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).*	4.1 The proposal has potential to contribute to applications/policies/services responding to the needs of direct and indirect beneficiaries, with attention for gender, vulnerable people (LNOB), and the environmental impact. 4.2 The proposal presents a convincing stakeholder management plan to facilitate stakeholder engagement, with attention to gender and vulnerable people (LNOB). 4.3 The proposal identifies clear target groups within an explicit strategy of knowledge uptake and impact on policies or practices.

8.2. Scoring of the criteria

All proposals are assessed by the commission members, 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

During a selection commission meeting, the selection commission will, based on individual scoring, formulate an agreed-upon score for each criterion. In order to be 'fundable', a proposal should obtain an A or B score on each criterion. For fundable projects, the more As the better, and the following selection criteria are applicable in declining order of priority:

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

More details about the VLIR-UOS selection system can be found on the VLIR-UOS website.

8.3. Selection commission

8.3.1. Composition

The ICP & ITP Selection Commission consists of 4 independent experts. The commission has been partly recomposed for the ITP 2023 selections.

8.3.2. Follow-up of selection commission meeting

The selection meeting will take place in April 2024. During the meeting of the Selection Committee, the promoters are not expected to orally defend their proposal.

All promoters will be informed of the outcome of the selection process and the reasons for approval or rejection of their proposal(s), including an indication of criteria that, if relevant, did not reach a sufficient (A or B) score.

9. Project formats and background information

9.1. Project formats

Formats available on our [website](#) and which have to be submitted:

[Format for a project proposal](#) (offline working document)	*This format is to be followed when drafting the project proposal and includes the guiding questions for the narrative sections per module. All information in this working document will need to be included directly in the online tool for project submission.*
Annex 1: [Format Project Activities and organisation](#)	*This Excel format is used for the input of general project info, details on team members, and the activities per intermediate change domain. It is to be uploaded in the project submission tool.*
Annex 2: [Format Budget proposal](#)	*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 and is to be uploaded in the project submission tool.*

Mandatory annex, as a free format / no template available:

Annex 3: CVs of the promoters	*Please add the CVs of the promoters* - *Flemish promoter (max. 1 Flemish promoter per project proposal): ORCID unique identifier link;* - *In the case of a partner promoter (max. 1 partner promoter per partner institution): link to an accessible online platform (if no ORCID identifier available) and only if not available then upload a pdf version of the short CV.* - *CV links of the co-promoters (Flemish/partner level) are not mandatory, except if the project is submitted by a Flemish postdoc and supported by a Flemish co-promoter with min. 10% ZAP status (see eligibility section).*
Annex 4: Endorsement Letter (free format): mandatory in case a partner promoter has been indicated	*Endorsement letter of a partner institution: institutional support letter, referring to the employment link of the main partner promoter with a (recognised higher education) partner institution, and the support of this same institution to*

	the project. The letter should be signed at least by an authority at Faculty level.

9.2. Background information

The following documents are available on the VLIR-UOS website:

VLIR-UOS financial framework (incl. programme specific rules for ITP projects)	*This document provides an overview of the budget lines that are applicable and indicate what expenses are allowed within the framework of VLIR-UOS projects and has a specific section with rules for ITP projects. The document also refers to the scholarship framework and the current list of Hotel and international per diem allowances (version 15 Feb 2023) available on the VLIR-UOS website.*
On the Country pages on the VLIR-UOS website, you can find informative **Country Reference Framework** documents. These documents provide: (i) an overview of VLIR-UOS projects within the current Five-Year Programme (updated on a Yearly basis) (ii) summary info on a partner country's approach towards Agenda 2030 and the SDGs; (iii) general info on the higher education sector and on proposed activities of Belgian cooperation actors, with a focus on the non-governmental cooperation.	Benin; Bolivia; Burundi; Cuba; DR Congo; Ecuador; Ethiopia; Indonesia; Kenya; Morocco; Peru; Philippines; Rwanda; South Africa; Tanzania; Uganda; Vietnam.

Looking for more inspiration: check out the Community talks, the publication 20 years of Impact - Sharing Minds, changing Lives, and on the integration of the SDG principles via the background document Theory of Change and methodological handbook. If you need inspiration for cooperation with an external actor then you could have a look at some ideas from other actors (e.g. Belgian non-governmental actors) for collaboration with Higher Education and Science Institutes in the framework of VLIR-UOS projects in the framework of a VLIR-UOS project.

Abbreviations

ANGC	Belgian Actor of Non-Governmental Cooperation
ATP	Administratief en technisch personeel (Administrative and Technical Personnel)
DGD	Directorate General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid
FYP	Five-Year Programme
GEO	Global Engagement Officer at level of a Flemish university of applied sciences and arts
HE&SI	Higher Education and Science Institution(s)
HEI	Higher Education Institution(s)
ICOS	Institutional Coordinator for Development Cooperation
ITP	International Training Programmes
IUC	Institutional University Cooperation
JSF	Joint Strategic Framework
MIP	Multi-Institutional Partnership
MSP	Multi-Stakeholder Partnership
ToC	Theory of Change
tJSF	Thematic Joint Strategic Framework
UASA	Universities of Applied sciences and Arts
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)