



Closing Seminar of the ACROPOLIS group 'Aid Effectiveness with a focus on Fragile Contexts' (2017)

Short-Term Policy Supporting Research (PSR)

2020

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ACADÉMIE
DE RECHERCHE ET
D'ENSEIGNEMENT
SUPÉRIEUR



Belgium
partner in development

Summary

Budget	€ 150.000 (€ 100.000 ARES part, € 50.000 VLIR-UOS part)
Implementation period	50 working days during the period September 2020 – February 2021 Because of the importance of international mobility in the projects, the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis on starting up the projects will be evaluated during the month of September, after the proposals have been received and the selection has been made. DGD will then consider whether projects should be postponed, adapted or reoriented.
Eligibility	Researchers of Belgian higher education institutions, both universities and university colleges Participation of an individual researcher is limited to maximum of 1 proposal per theme For ARES: minimum 75% of the budget for institutions of Federation Wallonia-Brussels. For VLIR-UOS: minimum 75% of the budget for Flemish higher education institutions.
Country & themes	Belgium (with case studies in countries in the South). Selected themes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Private Sector Development Opportunities targeting smallholder farmers' cooperatives/ micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in rural areas (Uganda); 2. Concept note on the triangular cooperation : which approach to adopt in the Belgian development cooperation in Morocco and beyond? (Morocco); 3. An institutional analysis of the cashew value chain in Benin (Benin); 4. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 : challenges and opportunities for the Belgian Development Cooperation (Brussels); 5. Comprehensive approach to risk analysis and management in Niger (Niger).
Launch of the call	10 June 2020
Deadline submission proposals	17 August 2020, 17.00 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For ARES: noemie.nyst@ares-ac.be - For VLIR-UOS: inge.vandevyvere@vliruos.be (ICOS/GEO of your institution in cc)
Approval of selected proposals	Beginning of September 2020

Table of contents

1. Context	4
<i>Framework of the Policy Supporting Research (PSR) programme</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Call 2020 for short-term PSR.....</i>	<i>5</i>
2. Objectives.....	5
3. Budget	5
4. Eligibility.....	6
5. Selection.....	6
6. Application and submission modalities	7
<i>Proposal.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Support during the formulation.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Submission.....</i>	<i>8</i>
7. Timeline	9
Annexes.....	10
Abbreviations.....	11

1. Context

Framework of the Policy Supporting Research (PSR) programme

Policy supporting research delivers research output on specific themes of interest to Belgian development cooperation on demand of the Belgian government. The goal is to **improve the relevance and performance of Belgian development cooperation policy** with regard to the international framework of sustainable and inclusive development.

As from 1 January 2019 and upon request from the government, the previous ACROPOLIS policy supporting research programme of ARES and VLIR-UOS were adjusted into the **Policy Supporting Research (PSR) programme** for a period of three years (2019-2021). The new approach to PSR remains an integral part of the 5 - year programme (2017-2021) for university cooperation for development of the umbrella organizations VLIR-UOS and ARES. This has been validated by the Minister of Development Cooperation on the 11th of June 2018.

The three-year period is regarded as an **experiment** in which new ways of working can be tried out broadening the expertise, opening up competition, varying the nature of questions, and varying funding modalities. The new approach will be assessed before the end of 2021 to determine whether the objectives of the new approach of policy support to the Belgian Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD) were met and whether the new approach is effective, as compared to other forms of policy supporting research from the past. This evaluation will serve as an input for the preparation of the next programme for university cooperation for development (2022-2026).

PSR is set up to meet the needs of the **Belgian development cooperation administration**, DGD. The aim is to deepen the knowledge on themes that are of prime importance for the Belgian development cooperation, linked to building knowledge and capacity of DGD. The PSR therefore also takes into account the inventory of the training needs and the training plans of DGD. Knowledge and capacity building in the universities in the subjects, is a positive element, but is not an end in itself of the PSR. The PSR is conducted in a hands-on and user-friendly way that enables practical applications in DGD (uptake), as well as dissemination and use by third parties (outreach).

Two types of policy supporting research are implemented: long-term PSR and short-term PSR. The current call considers the **short-term PSR**, which allows to get advice quickly, without extensive research. The products may include background notes, comments and recommendations, possibly supplemented with presentations, short-term studies, expertise that is accessible to DGD, courses and workshops, etc. It mobilizes higher education institutions to give punctual support in the short term (maximum 50 working days). Long-term PSR support serves to delve deeper into a subject. This type of research is closely related to the training, research and overall support needs of DGD and offers a wider range of services such as detailed advice, practical guidelines, complete training modules, scientific advisory services, etc.

In principal once a year, a PSR **policy commission** (consisting of DGD, VLIR-UOS, ARES and the cabinet) meets to discuss current PSR projects, results and uptake, and discusses matters of general interest for PSR. The policy committee annually evaluates the functioning of the PSR and proposes adjustments if necessary.

Gender-balanced and diverse research teams are encouraged by ARES and VLIR-UOS. Research shows that diversity makes a research team stronger. Gender-mixed academic teams seem to be developing more creative and innovative solutions, achieving better results and producing more interdisciplinary and cited publications.

Call 2020 for short-term PSR

After an internal consultation of DGD, VLIR-UOS and ARES received the **Terms of Reference** elaborated by DGD for short-term PSR regarding the following **five themes** (ToR included in annex 1 up to 5):

1. **Private Sector Development** Opportunities targeting smallholder farmers' cooperatives/ micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in rural areas – **Uganda**;
2. Concept note on the **triangular cooperation** : which approach to adopt in the Belgian development cooperation in **Morocco** and beyond?;
3. An institutional analysis of the cashew **value chain** in **Benin**;
4. **SDG16** : challenges and opportunities for the Belgian Development Cooperation – Brussels;
5. **Comprehensive approach** to risk analysis and management in **Niger**.

The term of the short-term PSR is **50 working days** in a period of **6 months maximum**.

2. Objectives

Policy supporting research delivers research output on specific themes of interest to Belgian development cooperation on demand of the Belgian government. The goal of PSR is to deepen the knowledge on themes that are of prime importance for the Belgian development cooperation, linked to building knowledge and capacity of DGD.

3. Budget

The available budget for this call is **€ 150.000**, of which € 100.000 is contributed by ARES and € 50.000 is contributed by VLIR-UOS.

A **daily fee of 1.000 EUR all-inclusive** is agreed upon. The PSR funding system is based on the daily fee, multiplied by the number of days which are deemed necessary for the implementation of the project. The number of days are to be explicitly justified in the project proposal on the basis of the plan of action and research methodology, and also need to be approved formally by DGD. All-inclusive means that the implementing university receives the calculated budget (daily fee * number of days), from which all corresponding costs need to be paid : salaries, operational costs, mission related costs, possible institutional overhead, etc.

These costs are considered a **lump sum** amount in both budgeting and reporting, whereby the latter implies that, in principle, these expenses do not need to be accounted for by detailed supporting documents for individual expenses, since the PSR funding system has formally been accepted by DGD. The Belgian higher education institutions are accountable for these amounts and, if required during an external audit or control by DGD, supporting documents need to be available at the level of the Belgian

higher education institutions in order to justify this type of costs. Specific costs, however, cannot be rejected since the DGD funding is a lump sum payment. Financial reporting will consist of a declaration of receipt and an extract from the institution's analytical accounting system. The extract may follow the budget lines for investments, operational and personnel costs as used by the institution. The overhead cannot exceed 10% of the total expenditure.

4. Eligibility

Researchers of Belgian higher education institutions, both universities and university colleges, are eligible to submit for this call.

New in this call is that an individual researcher may participate in a maximum of 1 proposal and consortium per theme.

The proposal must meet the application and submission requirements as described in section 6.

If the proposal is submitted by a lead researcher of an institution from the Federation Wallonia-Brussels (FWB), this additional rule will be applied: at least 75% of the budget will be assigned to HEI members of ARES. The collaboration with non-members of FWB is permitted within the limit of 25% of the budget. If the proposal is submitted by a lead researcher of a Flemish higher education institution, this additional rule will be applied: at least 75% of the budget will be assigned to Flemish HEI members of VLIR-UOS. The collaboration with non-members of Flemish HEI is permitted within the limit of 25% of the budget.

ARES and VLIR-UOS will check the eligibility of the proposals and submit the eligible proposals to DGD in the week of 17 August 2020.

5. Selection

DGD is responsible for the selection of the proposals, whereby the quality of the intended output and the intended impact on development cooperation are the main objectives. Selection criteria include: the expertise and previous experiences, the proposed approach, both research methodology and plan of collaboration with DGD. DGD has elaborated the following evaluation grid:

- Quality of the team and network
 - o General references of the researchers
 - o Experience in the research topic
 - o Knowledge of the Belgian development cooperation, DGD and the partner countries
 - o Interuniversity and interdisciplinary cooperation, repartition of tasks within the team, networking with other instances outside universities, involvement of universities and researchers in the partner countries
- Quality of the research project
 - o Good and clear presentation of the project and the methodology/working methods
 - o Relevance of the project for the knowledge and capacity needs of DGD
 - o Concise description of the results which should be achieved and the deliverable products
 - o Realistic planning and budgeting

Collaborations are encouraged if they are an added value for the intended quality of the PSR: inter-university partnerships within Belgium, links with university partners from the South, collaborations with other partners of the Belgian Development Cooperation and cooperation within global networks. Cooperation between PSR and non-university centres and networks is also encouraged in case it adds on quality. Collaborations are taken into account by DGD in case 2 projects are equally ranked.

The institution of the lead researcher determines whether the proposal should be submitted to ARES or VLIR-UOS, and whether the proposal, if selected, should be funded by ARES or VLIR-UOS.

Selection will be done in the beginning of **September 2020**. DGD will justify the reasons for selection and non-selection. Communication of selection will be done by VLIR-UOS and ARES respectively.

Because of the importance of international mobility in the projects, the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis on starting up the projects will be evaluated during the month of September, after the proposals have been received and the selection has been made. DGD will then consider whether projects should be postponed, adapted or reoriented.

6. Application and submission modalities

Proposal

Proposals are elaborated in English. A proposal needs to be presented in the provided format (see annex 6). The proposal has to elaborate on:

- The presentation of the research team, and, in case of a consortium, the constituent parties (members, relevant expertise);
- The plan of action and the research methodology (objectives, methodology, results, products);
- The strategy for uptake and outreach (practical applications for DGD and use by third parties);
- The collaborations foreseen with other parties (university partners from the South, other partners of the Belgian Development Cooperation, global networks, non-university centres and networks);
- The budget.

Support during the formulation

Contact at DGD

For each theme, responsible persons at DGD are appointed. These persons were responsible for the preparation of the terms of reference and will organize the selection committee that assigns the proposals. They will also supervise the execution (contacts with the researchers, technical guidance committee, organization of activities) and are responsible for quality control of the process and the products.

For more information, please contact:

1. [Erwin Dewandel](#) – Belgian Embassy in Uganda on ToR ‘Private Sector Development Opportunities targeting smallholder farmers’ cooperatives/ micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in rural areas’
2. [Astrid De Laminne de Bex](#) – Belgian Embassy in Morocco on ToR ‘Concept note on the triangular cooperation : which approach to adopt in the Belgian development cooperation in Morocco and beyond?’

3. [Melanie Schellens](#) – Belgian Embassy in Benin on ToR ‘An institutional analysis of the cashew value chain in Benin’
4. [Laura Cogels](#) – S0.1 DGD Brussels on ToR ‘SDG16 : challenges and opportunities for the Belgian Development Cooperation’ and ToR ‘Comprehensive approach to risk analysis and management in Niger’

Submission

The proposals are to be sent by mail to the programme managers of VLIR-UOS and ARES (see contact in table below). The institution of the lead researcher determines whether the proposal should be submitted to ARES or VLIR-UOS. The deadline for submission is **17 August 2020, 17.00**.

Contact	Function
noemie.nyst@ares-ac.be	<i>Programme manager ARES</i>
inge.vandevyvere@vliruos.be	<i>Programme manager VLIR-UOS</i>

For the Flemish universities: when submitting a proposal to VLIR-UOS, please add the following ICOS (Institutional Coordinator for Development Cooperation) in cc when submitting the proposal by mail to VLIR-UOS.

Contact	Function
tupac.calfat@kuleuven.be	<i>ICOS KULeuven</i>
jiska.verbouw@uantwerpen.be	<i>ICOS UAntwerpen</i>
nancy.terryn@ugent.be	<i>ICOS UGent</i>
sara.schaeken@uhasselt.be	<i>ICOS UHasselt</i>
francoise.de.cupere@vub.be	<i>ICOS VUB</i>

For the Flemish university colleges: when submitting a proposal to VLIR-UOS, please add Charlotte Christiaens (charlotte.christiaens@vlhora.be) and the following GEO (Global Engagement Officer) in cc when submitting the proposal by mail to VLIR-UOS.

Email	Function
international@hzs.be	<i>GEO Antwerp Maritime Academy</i>
geert.marrin@ap.be	<i>GEO Artesis Plantijn University College Antwerp</i>
severine.vanderstighelen@arteveldehs.be	<i>GEO Artevelde University College Ghent</i>
hilde.van.lindt@ehb.be	<i>GEO Erasmus University College Brussels</i>
goforimpact@howest.be	<i>GEO Hogeschool West-Vlaanderen</i>
maayke.nabuurs@kdg.be	<i>GEO Karel de Grote University College</i>
veerle.vandersluys@luca-arts.be	<i>GEO LUCA School of Arts</i>
nele.vermeulen@odisee.be	<i>GEO Odisee University College</i>

kristien.bauwens@pxl.be	<i>GEO PXL University College</i>
Inge.vervoort@thomasmore.be	<i>GEO Thomas More University of Applied Sciences</i>
international@ucll.be	<i>GEO UC Leuven-Limburg</i>
kathleen.vanheule@hogent.be	<i>GEO University College Ghent</i>
international@vives.be	<i>GEO VIVES University of Applied Sciences</i>

7. Timeline

Description	Deadline
Launch call for proposals by VLIR-UOS and ARES	10 June 2020
Deadline for submission at VLIR-UOS and ARES	17 August 2020, 17h
Selection of proposals by DGD	Beginning of September 2020
Communication of selection results	September 2020
Start of the PSR	Because of the importance of international mobility in the projects, the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis on starting up the projects will be evaluated during the month of September, after the proposals have been received and the selection has been made. DGD will then consider whether projects should be postponed, adapted or reoriented.

Annexes

Annex 1: [Terms of Reference 'Private Sector Uganda'](#)

Annex 2: [Terms of Reference 'Triangular Cooperation Morocco'](#)

Annex 3: [Terms of Reference 'Cashew Value Chain Benin'](#)

Annex 4: [Terms of Reference 'SDG16'](#)

Annex 5: [Terms of Reference 'Comprehensive Approach Risk Niger'](#)

Annex 6: [Proposal Format](#)

Abbreviations

ACROPOLIS	Academic Research Groups for Policy Support
ARES	Académie de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur
DGD	Belgian Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid
GEO	Global Engagement Officer (at University Colleges)
ICOS	Institutional Coordinator for Development Cooperation (at universities)
PSR	Policy Supporting Research
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ToR	Terms of Reference
VLIR-UOS	Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad (Flemish Interuniversity Council) - Universitaire Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (VLIR-University Cooperation for Development)