

## PROJECT FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE: ROLE, MANDATE AND FUNCTIONING

### PRINCIPLE

In order to maximise the impact of the funded research, a users' committee - known as the *Follow-up Committee* - should be setup for each research project.

This *Committee* should be understood as a forum for exchanges between project promoters and potential users of the project results (academic and non-academic), a meeting place for scientific expertise and field knowledge. It therefore consists of the scientific team of the project, external Belgian or foreign researchers, competent in the field of the project financed, experts from federal administrations and institutions and, where appropriate, from non-federal administrations, representatives of civil society (NGOs, non-governmental organisations, various associations, etc.).

The aim is, by pooling expertise, exchanging and making available data/samples/materials and equipment or access to the field... to consolidate the work of the scientific team, to co-create the stages and results of the project, to ensure dissemination and integration among the users concerned, both inside and outside the scientific field. In this context, it is also advisable to submit to the *Committee*, for its opinion, the actions and outputs of the project.

The *Follow-up Committee* aims to promote dialogue and external communication on the project. The research team must take the *Committee's* opinion into account, insofar as this is possible given the constraints imposed by the contract, whether in terms of time and/or budget. If this is not the case, however, the BELSPO Programme Manager may take up these recommendations and, in consultation with the research team, consider how they might be implemented.

### COMPOSITION AND FUNCTIONING

#### COMPOSITION

It is up to the project team to contact the members of the *Follow-up Committee* and to arrange their participation in the *Committee*, in consultation with the BELSPO Programme Manager.

Since the aim is to bring together the appropriate external expertise around the project, the number of people who make up a *Follow-up Committee* is variable and depends on the subject of the project and the potential exploitation of the results. The final composition is approved by the BELSPO Programme Manager, upon proposal of the research team and additional suggestion from BELSPO. Any changes along the way are to be reported and approved by the Programme Manager.

The members of the *Follow-up Committee* agree to participate free of charge in the meetings of the *Committee* and to spend the time necessary to read the documents proposed by the team. This

constitutes an in-kind contribution on their part. Experts from foreign countries may be members of the *Follow-up Committee* if this is practically possible. Their possible travel and/or subsistence expenses may be charged to the project's current operating budget.

The list of members of the *Follow-up Committee* is made public on the BELSPO web page, as well as in the final research reports, subject to the explicit agreement of the members in compliance with the legal provisions in force.

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## FUNCTIONING

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### MEETING ORGANISATION

It is the responsibility of the Project Coordinator, in consultation with the BELSPO Programme Manager, to organise the meetings and to draft the minutes of the meetings (meeting documents, meeting minutes, etc.). A minimum of one meeting per year must be organised. In all cases, a project start-up meeting and a closing meeting to discuss the final report and possible activities for the restitution of results (valorisation) will be organised. It is the responsibility of the Project Coordinator to convene the members of the *Follow-up Committee* when substantial progress needs to be presented and discussed with them, taking into account the agenda/planning of the project.

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### FUNCTIONING

The research team and the members of the *Follow-up Committee* jointly lay down the rules governing their functioning (use of languages, internal communication, confidentiality, frequency of meetings, etc.).

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### MEETING PLACE

The first and last meeting of the *Follow-up Committee* will be organised (unless the rooms are unavailable) at BELSPO. The other meetings will be organised by the research team where this is agreed by the majority of the members of the *Follow-up Committee*.

Physical meetings with members are not necessary. Videoconferencing platforms can be used to involve all or some of the members in discussions on the progress of the project. Ad hoc meetings with members during other (inter)national consultation moments can also be used as an opportunity to obtain input from members.

BELSPO makes its rooms available to the team to host the meetings of the *Follow-up Committee*.

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### DOCUMENTS FOR THE FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE

Conference papers, Powerpoint presentations etc... prepared by the research team should be written in an understandable and synthetic language. They will be sent within 2-3 working days prior to the meeting.

The draft of the final research report must also be submitted to the *Follow-up Committee* for review, after which the team may submit it to the BELSPO Programme Manager for advice before submitting the final version.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

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The members of the *Follow-up Committee* are obliged to respect the confidentiality of the information received by the research team and not to divulge it within their organisation/institution or outside without the prior agreement of the research team and BELSPO. Similarly, in the event that the research team receives sensitive research information from members of the *Follow-up Committee*, any clauses on the use of such information must be respected.

## OTHER ARRANGEMENTS

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- it is important to stress that the *Follow-up Committee*, in order to remain in place throughout the duration of the project, must be actively mobilised by the team. Indeed, it is a lever on which the team must be able to rely. For example, the team may be asked to examine sampling results, questionnaires that the team wishes to submit to respondents, to compare analytical methods, to help it formulate policy recommendations in line with the scientific results obtained, to reflect together on ways of valorising the results at the end of the project, and,
- At the beginning of the research, the presentation of the state of the art on the subject of the research is an important moment for the *Follow-up Committee*. This state of the art makes it possible to present both what science already knows on the subject and the questions that have not yet been scientifically resolved. Such an overview becomes a resource for non-scientific stakeholders,
- it is the responsibility of the members of the *Follow-up Committee* to inform their organisation/institution of research advances and thus ensure maximum dissemination of information within their department, in order to enhance exchanges between stakeholders and the scientific team.