

INTERUNIVERSITY ATTRACTION POLES (IAP)

PHASE VII (2012-2017)

“EX-POST” EVALUATION

GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATORS

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1. Context of the ex-post evaluation

The objective of the “Interuniversity Attraction Poles” (IAP) programme funded by the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (hereafter referred to as BELSPO) is to promote the formation of interuniversity networks of excellence in basic research. More information about the IAP programme can be found in Annex 1.

The seventh phase of the IAP Programme (2012-2017) is ongoing and BELSPO organises in 2016 an “ex-post” evaluation of the 47 IAP networks of phase VII that will enter into their last contractual year in 2017.

The “ex-post” evaluation will be conducted by BELSPO with the assistance of independent experts according to the principles of remote peer review. Each IAP network will be evaluated by four independent foreign experts in the scientific field of the network.

This ex-post evaluation is organised in preparation for the new IAP phase (2018-2022), for which the call for proposals, in principle, will be launched in September 2016.

The phase VII networks that wish to introduce a proposal for the next phase will be required to take into consideration the results and recommendations from the ex-post evaluation. Also, all proposals for the next phase will be submitted to an ex-ante evaluation process by peer review.

2. Remote evaluation

2.1. Objectives

- Assessment of the scientific results of the ongoing IAP projects;
- Appreciation of network organisation (dynamics and management);
- External feedback to the researchers

2.2. Methodology

The evaluators will be chosen by BELSPO among those proposed by the IAP network and from a list prepared by BELSPO.

Input

- Each IAP-network is asked to prepare a review report of the network’s activities and results from the start of the IAP project (01/04/2012 or 01/10/2012) till 01/06/2016. The guidelines for the review report are described in Annex 2. This report is due by 1 June 2016.
- Several other documents are available to the evaluators : description of the project, annual reports (see chapter 3).

Output

Each evaluator is asked to fill out an evaluation form.

This completed evaluation form has to be sent electronically to BELSPO to iap-secretariat@belspo.be.

Upon receipt of the completed evaluation forms, BELSPO will send the forms **anonymously** (pdf-format) by email to the IAP-network. **In case of factual errors**, the IAP-network has two weeks to send its comments on the evaluation report to BELSPO.

Then, BELSPO will forward these evaluation reports and where appropriate with the comments of the networks, to the involved research institutes.

3. Overview of the documents

3.1. General documents

- a) Guidelines for the evaluators (this document) and its 2 annexes
 - General presentation of the IAP programme – phase VII (Annex 1)
 - Guidelines for preparation of the review report (2012-mid 2016) for the “ex-post” evaluation (Annex 2)
- b) Evaluation form to be completed by the evaluators

3.2. Administrative documents

- Declaration of confidentiality and no conflict of interest : each expert must sign the declaration of confidentiality and no conflict of interest form and return it to BELSPO
- Note of credence : this document is required for ensuring the payment of the expert fee. It needs to be returned to BELSPO together with the completed evaluation form.

3.3. Project information

- The initial description of the project: Technical specifications (Annex I to the IAP-contract)
- The activity reports of the first three years of the project
- The review report (2012- mid 2016)

4. Practical information

The general and administrative documents concerning the ex-post evaluation are available on the IAP-website :

http://www.belspo.be/belspo/iap/expostevaluation_en.stm

The project information is only accessible with a login at the ex-post evaluation e-workspace:

<https://www.belspo.be/e-iap/list>

After accepting to perform the evaluation, each evaluator will receive by email a username and password to access the e-workspace where the project information and the other documents related to the evaluation are available.

Please use the following e-mail address when sending the completed forms to BELSPO:

iap-secretariat@belspo.be

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE

“INTERUNIVERSITY ATTRACTION POLES – PHASE VII”

- Budget : 156,5 million EUR
- Duration : 2012-2017
- Organisation : 47 networks of 4 to 11 Belgian teams per network
- Participants : universities, federal scientific institutions
- Open to participation of teams from non-Belgian universities and public research institutions
- Research fields : life sciences, exact and applied sciences, and human sciences.
- <http://www.belspo.be/iap>

The « Interuniversity Attraction Poles » (IAP) programme funded by the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office aims to give a temporary impulse at the formation of interuniversity networks of excellence in basic research.

1. Objectives

The programme's objectives are multiple:

- to give teams that are already recognised within the international scientific community additional human and material resources for building a sufficient critical mass.
- to promote long-term, structured collaboration among university research teams of both Belgium's linguistic Communities and teams belonging to the federal scientific institutions ;
- to foster complementarity and interdisciplinarity among these teams ;
- to enable young teams to benefit from the environment of excellence provided by a network and its international renown and influence ;
- to facilitate the insertion of Belgian research teams into European and International networks ;

2. History

The IAP programme was first launched by the Belgian Federal Authority in 1987. It has developed over seven 5-year periods.

IAP-phase	Period	Budget	Number of networks
Phase-I	1987 - 1991	40 million EUR	14
Phase-II + prolongation	1990 – 1995 1995 - 1996	50 million EUR 10 million EUR	23
Phase-III	1992 - 1996	50 million EUR	16
Phase-IV	1997 - 2001	110 million EUR	35
Phase-V	2002 - 2006	112 million EUR	36
Phase-VI	2007 - 2011	143 million EUR	44
Phase-VII	2012-2017	156,5 million EUR	47

Today the IAP networks have become a hallmark of excellence on the Belgian science policy scene. The IAP programme represents a structural possibility of funding in which French- and Dutch-speaking scientists from Belgium's different Communities have the opportunity to cooperate.

The Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (BELSPO) is in charge of the operational and daily administrative and financial management of the 47 networks of phase VII (see chapter 8 for the list of the current IAP-VII projects).

3. Cooperation with a non-Belgian University or public research institution

3 % of the budget of the programme has been set aside for the participation of teams belonging to non-Belgian universities or public research institutions. This participation takes the form of co-funding amounting to 50%. This initiative has made it possible to fund the participation of 112 foreign teams in the 47 IAP networks.

This opening of the IAP programme to collaborations with foreign institutions reinforces the position of Belgian teams on the international scene.

4. Profile of the networks

4.1. Eligibility Conditions

- An IAP network is an interuniversity network of scientific teams conducting basic research. Any scientific field may be the subject of an IAP.
- Each network must comprise at least 4 partners belonging to 3 different Belgian institutions :
 - The various partners belong to a Belgian university, a federal scientific institution, the Royal Military Academy or the Institute of Tropical Diseases.
 - Each network must include at least one partner belonging to a university from Belgium's French-speaking Community and one partner belonging to a university from the Flemish Community.
 - A partner may only belong to one single IAP.
 - A network may include several partners belonging to the same university.
- The promoter of a team acts as coordinator for the network as a whole and ensures its coordination in terms of its scientific and administrative management.
- The minimum funding threshold over the 5 years is set at 900,000 EUR for the coordinators and at 500,000 EUR for the other partners.

4.2. Recommendations

- Network proposals are invited to include, if possible, young emerging teams as partners. These are recently established independent teams led by young promising researchers.
- Networks are invited to develop partnerships with non-Belgian universities or public research institutions.
- The networks are invited to create "network-driven training activities" for PhD students and/or post-docs.

4.3. Budget distribution (per partner)

4.3.1. Personnel

- A minimum of 60% of the total budget for each partner must be set aside for the recruitment of personnel. Doctoral and post-doctoral grant-holders exempt from tax and benefiting from social security may be accepted.
- The total compensation for doctoral and post-doctoral grants as mentioned above is limited to 60% of the total personnel budget for the 5 years.
- Employment contracts must be of a minimum length of one year.
- The personnel hired must include at least one full-time scientist or the equivalent at part-time.
- The coordinators are invited to include at least one post-doctoral researcher in their IAP team.

4.3.2. Operating Costs

- In addition to general operating costs, the programme may also cover supplemental compensation for visiting researchers and professors (travel and housing costs) still on the payroll of their home institution.

4.3.3. Equipment

- Preference will be given to the acquisition of material for shared use between the partners of a network.
- The "equipment" item in the budget cannot be used beyond year four of the programme.

4.3.4. Subcontracting

- Subcontracting may not exceed 25 % of the total IAP budget.

4.3.5. Overheads

- Overheads may not represent more than 5% of the total personnel and operating costs.

4.4. Cooperation with a non-Belgian research institution

- Partnerships with non-Belgian universities or public research institutions must produce added value for the network as a whole.

- The IAP-VII programme funds only the foreign partner in the amount of 50%. The remaining 50% is the responsibility of the foreign partner.
- The maximum amount allocated by the IAP programme for the foreign partnership is 104,000 EUR per network over 5 years (i.e. a total of 208,000 EUR when including the 50% from the foreign partner institution). A network may not include more than 4 foreign partners.
- The partnership is made official through a written agreement binding the institution to which the foreign partner belongs.
- Funding of the co-operation serves chiefly for the exchange of researchers and the costs of the research and may not, in any case, be used to fund the purchase of equipment.

5. Contractual obligations

5.1. Contracts

For the selected projects a contract is drawn up between BELSPO and the Institutions of the research teams.

The technical annexes to the contract are drawn up by the partners of the network according to the guidelines of BELSPO. If the composition of the network and / or the budgets of the partners were changed in the final selection of the IAP networks, the original proposal can be adjusted in consultation with BELSPO.

5.2. External evaluation

All research projects are subject to one or more external evaluations. These evaluations, conducted by foreign experts, concern the quality of the scientific results and the quality of the collaboration, in the light of the initial objectives of the project.

5.3. Reports

The contract defines the various reports to be submitted to BELSPO.

5.4. Website

Each IAP network must develop and manage its own IAP website.

5.5 Meetings

During the first 6 months of the contract, each co-ordinator must organise a “kick-off meeting” with all partners in the network and the IAP programme administrator.

The coordinator is also responsible for the organisation of at least one meeting per year between the network partners and the programme administrator.

5.6. International symposium

Each network must organise at least one international symposium during the IAP contract period in order to increase the network’s international visibility.

6. Implementation

A call for proposals was issued at the start of the IAP of phase VII of the programme. The IAP network proposals, submitted by the institutions to BELSPO, underwent remote evaluation by international experts (**ex-ante evaluation**). This evaluation concerned both the cohesion of a proposed network and the scientific quality of its project. Network selection was done on the basis of these evaluations, taking into account the priorities formulated by the university institutions as a whole and the budget envelope allocated at the outset to each.

At the end of the IAP-programme, the networks are evaluated as regards research quality and team synergy (**ex-post evaluation**). The international experts in charge of this evaluation base their assessment on various reports produced by the network.

7. Programme monitoring

The IAP programme is monitored by a Steering Committee which has an advisory role about the shaping and the evolution of the programme.

8. List of the 47 IAP-projects – phase VII

Code	Short title	Code	Short title
P7/01	Literature Media Innovation	P7/25	Microbial Ecosystem Management
P7/02	Electrical Energy Systems	P7/26	City & Society (ca. 1200-ca. 1850)
P7/03	Cancer and stroma regulatory networks	P7/27	Human Rights Integration
P7/04	Urban eco-evolutionary dynamics	P7/28	Microbial developmental processes
P7/05	Functional Supramolecular Systems	P7/29	Maize-Arabidopsis-Root-Shoot growth
P7/06	Crucial Statistical Methods	P7/30	Chronic Airway Diseases
P7/07	Organ development and repair	P7/31	Aquatic systems under stress
P7/08	Heliospheric and Astrophysical models	P7/32	Cell death and inflammation
P7/09	Comparing regional sustainability	P7/33	Conscious & unconscious learning
P7/10	Electrical Excitability	P7/34	Plasma-surface interaction
P7/11	Perception, cognition and action	P7/35	Photonics
P7/12	Nuclear astrophysics	P7/36	Combinatorial Optimization
P7/13	Integrating Cellular Pathways	P7/37	Fundamental Interactions
P7/14	Greater Mesopotamia	P7/38	Microfluidics and micromanipulation
P7/15	Planet Evolution & Habitability	P7/39	T Cell Immunology
P7/16	Pathogenesis of neurodegeneration	P7/40	G Protein-Coupled Receptors
P7/17	Neuroimaging, epigenetics, neuroplasticity	P7/41	Parasite infection
P7/18	Dynamics, Geometry, Physics.	P7/42	Social Enterprise Theory
P7/19	Systems and control	P7/43	Medical Genomics
P7/20	Brain wiring	P7/44	Protein engineering
P7/21	Interface dominated materials mechanics	P7/45	Virus-host interplay
P7/22	Justice and Populations, 1795-2015	P7/46	Participation and Representation
P7/23	Wired and wireless communications	P7/47	Stem cells in liver disease
P7/24	Soils and global change		

Interuniversity attraction poles - phase VII (2012-2017)

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF THE REVIEW REPORT FOR THE “EX POST” EVALUATION

The review report for the “*ex-post*” evaluation **summarizes** the network’s activities and results from the start of the IAP-project (01/04/2012 or 01/10/2012) till 01/06/2016.

More detailed information on the progress of the research is described in the scientific activity reports of the first three years of the project.

The review report must be written in English and **may not exceed 50 pages** (excluding the bibliographic and publication lists).

The report must be submitted **by 1 June 2016** at the latest by e-mail to iap-secretariat@belspo.be.

The report will include the following information:

FRONT PAGE : project N°. (P7/xx), project title, project acronym, name of the coordinator, project logo (optional).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

- General information about the network (title of the project, name of the partners and their institution, budget, ...);
- History of the IAP network throughout the different IAP programme phases;
- Summary of the general objectives of the research project;
- Summary of the objectives of the partnership.

2. SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS (01/04/2012 or 01/10/2012 - 01/06/2016)

For each workpackage present the following information:

- the contributing partners;
- a summary description of the objectives;
- a summary description of the scientific activities and results (highlight the scientific input of each partner);
- the main achievements in relation to the initial objectives;
- comments in case of deviations from the initial project workprogramme.

3. NETWORKING

- Give a list of the major joint activities performed as part of the network (joint experiments, transfer of tools, materials and knowledge between partners, common use of equipment and databases, exchanges of researchers, annual and WP meetings, organisation of national and international workshops, organisation of network-driven training activities, newsletters, involvement of an advisory committee, ...);
- Show **the added value** gained through the network activities (give some specific examples).
- Describe briefly the organisation and management of the network.

4. POSITION OF THE IAP NETWORK

4.1. Cutting-edge research

- Show the **scientific highlights** of the network;
- Compare with the mainstream in the scientific domain (Benchmark);
- Discuss the perspectives of the network's research domain for the coming 5 to 10 years;
- Discuss whether this pooling of expertise in the IAP network built a **critical mass** recognised as such at national and international levels.

4.2. International role

A. Collaboration with international partner(s) within the network

- Describe the efforts made to integrate international partner(s) in the network;
- Describe for what kind of activities the budget for international partner(s) was used;
- Describe the added value of having (an) international partner(s) in the network.

B. International activities

Give a list of the most significant international activities in which the **network as a whole** have been involved:

- participation in European and international research projects;
- organisation of international symposia;
- invitations to give lectures at prestigious international conferences.

4.3. Durability of the IAP

Give scientific justification for possible continuation of the network in the next IAP-phase and show how the current organization of the network could be modified (management, themes, partners, ...).

5. OUTPUT

5.1. IAP publications

List the 10 most relevant publications or co-publications directly related to the achievements of the IAP project as a whole.

remark :

- *a complete list of publications is already provided in the scientific activity reports of the first three years of the project.*
- *the complete list of the recent publications (not included in the activity reports of the first three years) is provided in Annex 1 of this review report.*

5.2. Outreach, dissemination and impact to society

Describe eventual initiatives to disseminate the scientific results to non-scientific stakeholders (e.g. press releases, written press, TV interviews, policy brief).

Describe also eventual initiatives that might have impact to society (e.g. patents, spin-offs, involvement in societal issues)

5.3. PhD and postdoc training

- Give per partner the number of (joint) PhD students and postdocs **financed by the IAP and not financed by the IAP** that were trained in the last 4 years and indicate the number of delivered (joint) PhD's. A joint PhD is co-directed by two different partners of the network.
- Describe the special efforts of the network for the careers of the PhD and postdocs and give some training success stories.

5.4. Young emerging research teams (if applicable)

Show to what extent the young emerging teams of the network have been integrated in the network and have contributed to the results of the IAP.

ANNEX 1

The complete list of the recent publications related to the IAP-project (not included in the activity reports of the first three years).

The publications must be presented in two separate lists:

- a. A list of publications from **each team**, showing the articles published by the researchers working on the IAP project. These publications must be classified by team.
- b. A list of **co-publications**, showing publications co-signed by several researchers included in the IAP project and belonging to at least two different research teams which are contractually associated under the IAP project. **The IAP teams involved must be clearly specified for each co-publication (for example: UCL and VUB).**

Only the publications mentioning - as stated by the IAP contract - that the research was performed as part of the "Interuniversity Attraction Poles" programme financed by the Belgian government may be included.

Publications "in press" may also be included here.