



Interuniversity Attraction Poles (IAP) Phase VI

2007-2011

Call for Proposals

Information document

May 2006

Deadlines :

Expressions of interest : 28 April 2006 by 12:00 p.m. (noon)

Research proposals : 15 June 2006 by 12:00 p.m. (noon)

PREAMBLE

- This document provides the information needed by teams wishing to participate in the call for proposals under phase 6 of the “Interuniversity Attraction Poles” Programme (IAP).
- The participants must follow the rules set out in this document. If they fail to do so, the PPS Science Policy will be unable to take their proposal into consideration.
- This call for proposals is aimed at Belgian universities, federal scientific institutions, the Royal Military Academy and the Institute of Tropical Diseases.
- The PPS Science Policy handles scientific and administrative coordination for the IAP programme.

**Expressions of interest must be received by the PPS Science Policy
no later than 28 April 2006 by 12:00 p.m. (noon)**

**Proposals must be received by the PPS Science Policy
no later than 15 June 2006 by 12:00 p.m. (noon)**

For additional information regarding this call for proposals, please contact directly :

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DOCUMENT CONTENTS

PREAMBLE	2
1. introduction	4
1.1. OBJECTIVES	4
1.2. BACKGROUND	4
1.3. TOWARDS PHASE VI	5
1.4. IMPLEMENTATION.....	5
2. profile of the proposals.....	7
2.1. ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS.....	7
2.2. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	8
2.3. BUDGET DISTRIBUTION (PER PARTNER)	8
2.4. CO-OPERATION WITH A NON BELGIAN INSTITUTION	9
3. submission and selection procedures	10
3.1. SUBMISSION PROCEDURE	10
3.2. EVALUATION AND SELECTION.....	11
3.3. SUBMISSION FORMS	12

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Objectives

The “Interuniversity Attraction Poles” (IAP) Programme aims to provide support for outstanding basic research teams from Belgium’s various (linguistic) communities that are working in networks to increase their joint contribution to general scientific advances and, where applicable, to international scientific networks.

The programme’s aims to :

- grant teams already recognised in the international scientific community additional human and material resources to enable them to reunite the critical amount of resources;
- encourage interactions between Belgium’s (linguistic) communities and consolidate ties between universities belonging to these various communities in order to form lasting networks;
- develop or establish collaborative efforts between teams from different institutions and promote the sharing of complementary skills and fields of expertise;
- enable young teams to benefit from the outstanding environment generated within a network as well as from its international influence in order to ensure continued excellence in basic research in Belgium;
- facilitate the insertion of Belgian research teams into European and international networks.

1.2. Background

The Belgian Government first launched the IAP programme in 1987 at the initiative of its then Minister for Scientific Policy.

This action has been developed in 5 phases, each lasting for 5 years :

- Phase one (IAP-I) covered the years 1987 to 1991, had an annual budget of 7,780,000 Euros and included 14 networks.
- As a result of the system’s success, the Council of Ministers decided to launch a second phase (IAP-II) covering the period 1990-1995, with 23 additional networks and an annual budget of 9,484,000 Euros.
- A third phase (IAP-III) enabled phase one to be continued by expanding it to 16 networks for a further 5-year period (1992-1996) and assigning it an annual budget of 9,790,000 Euros.
- Phase two was extended by 13 months (IAP-IIb) in order to bring all IAPs from phases II and III into alignment and allow the launch of a new, single IAP phase.
- Phase four (IAP-IV) funded 35 networks between 1997 and 2001 with an annual budget of 22,062,000 Euros.

- Phase five (IAP-V) covers the period from 2002 to 2006 with an annual budget of 22,328,000 Euros spread out among 36 networks including 261 teams. This last phase was the first to include 48 non Belgian research teams from the European Union in the IAP Programme.

1.3. Towards Phase VI

Through their major financial commitment and by placing emphasis on interuniversity collaboration, IAPs are currently one of the most significant factors in encouraging basic research in Belgium. Moreover, they are one of the last structural possibilities for contacts between French-speaking and Dutch-speaking teams in Belgium and allow scientists from Belgium's different (linguistic) communities to work together.

Continuation of the IAP programme also helps to meet the 3% Barcelona objective and follows the recommendations of Belgium's High Level Group 3% that advocates the allocation of major public financing for national public research.

The European Commission considers support for basic research to be highly crucial for the economic and social development of countries in the Union and for the training of researchers. It has also stressed that the cooperative network needs are greater than ever.

Furthermore, the High Level Group 3% recommends the creation of a "Belgian Research Space" that would group together a maximum of active forces to stimulate world-class research.

Scientific co-operation on a Belgian scale, like that procured by IAPs, provides Belgian researchers with favourable conditions under which they can play an important role in scientific research networking that is increasing at the European level, as recommended by the Council of the European Union.

Not only is the opening up of the IAP programme to collaborations with institutions in other European countries an important step forward towards integration of Belgian scientific potential into the European research space, but it also reinforces the position of Belgian teams on the international scene as part of the European Research Council.

After almost 20 years of operation, the IAP mechanism is clearly quite exceptional in Europe and fully complies with what the expert panel charged with evaluating the programme in 2000 saw as the very essence of a good scientific policy.

1.4. Implementation

At its meeting on 03/02/2006, the Council of Ministers marked its agreement on the prolongation of the IAP programme and the start up of a sixth phase. This phase, lasting five years, will begin on 1 January 2007 and end on 31 December 2011.

The IAP-VI Programme will be monitored by a "steering committee", the composition of which was the subject of a cooperation agreement between the Federal Government and the Communities.

The budget allocated to the IAP-VI programme will be broken down as follows :

- a minimum of 94% will be reserved for the university institutions. The distribution between institutions of this budget will be conveyed to the rectors of those institutions based on the decisions of the governments concerned.
- a maximum of 6% will be used as follows :
 - a maximum of 3% will be reserved for the participation – as an IAP network partner – of a federal scientific institute, the Royal Military Academy and the Institute of Tropical Diseases.
 - a maximum of 3% will also be reserved for teams from a non Belgian university or public research institution within the European Union (not including international institutions such as the CERN, EMBL, etc.). This participation, which will take the form of 50% co-funding, is fixed at a maximum of 150,000 EUR per network over the 5 years.
 - it will be possible to assign the unused portion of either of these two budgets to the other; any outstanding balance from these two budgets together will be returned to the university budget.

2. PROFILE OF THE PROPOSALS

2.1. Eligibility Conditions

An IAP is an interuniversity network of scientific teams conducting **basic research**. Any scientific field may be the subject of an IAP.

- The partners of the networks must be research teams; under no circumstances may they be institutions, administrative structures (department, faculty, etc.) or services containing several research teams.
- Each network must comprise at least 4 partners belonging to 3 different Belgian institutions :
 - The various partners shall 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 university's team shall act as co-ordinator for the network as a whole and ensure its co-ordination in terms of its scientific and administrative management.
- A minimum funding threshold for each network as a whole is set at 2.5 million EUR for the five-year period (including the budget reserved for foreign collaborations).
- The minimum funding threshold over the 5 years is set at 800,000 EUR for the co-ordinators and at 400,000 EUR for the other partners. A team without IAP funding may never be considered as a network partner.
- Each IAP network must develop and manage its own IAP website.
- Each network must organise at least one international symposium during the IAP contract period in order to increase the network's international visibility.
- 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.
- Each network must write a research project using the proposal submission forms provided by the PPS Science Policy :
 - Networks having already taken part in one or more IAP phases must justify the appropriateness of continuing their research in the current state of the art.
 - Networks having taken part in phase V must take the comments in the *ex-post* evaluation into account. They must explain any network re-organisations and reorientations of research focus.

2.2. Recommendations

- Network proposals should include young emerging teams as partners.
- Networks may develop partnerships with non Belgian universities or public research institutions in the European Union (not including international institutions such as the CERN, EMBL, etc.).
- The networks are invited to create a “graduate training school”.

2.3. Budget distribution (per partner)

2.3.1. 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, in accordance with the Royal Decrees of the 5th of July 1996 and the 26th of March 2003 on the social security of worker, 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.
- The personnel hired must include at least one full-time scientist or the equivalent at part-time.
- The co-ordinators must see to it that at least one post-doctoral researcher is included in their IAP team.
- Employment contracts must be for a minimum length of one year.

2.3.2. 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.

2.3.3. 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.

2.3.4. Subcontracting

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

2.3.5. Overheads

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

2.4. Co-operation with a Non Belgian Institution

- Partnerships with non-Belgian universities or public research institutions in the European Union must produce added value for the network as a whole.
- The IAP-VI programme will only fund the foreign partner in the amount of 50%. The remaining 50% shall be the responsibility of the foreign partner.
- The maximum amount allocated by the IAP programme for the foreign partner will be 150,000 EUR per network over 5 years (i.e. a total of 300,000 EUR when including the 50% from the foreign partner institution). A network may not include more than 4 foreign partners.
- The partnership must be made official through a written agreement binding the institution to which the foreign partner belongs.
- Foreign partners must be chosen in consultation with all network partners.
- Funding of the co-operation will chiefly serve 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.

3. SUBMISSION AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

3.1. Submission Procedure

- Submission will take place in 2 steps, the first is submission of an expression of interest and the second is submission of a research proposal.
- The expressions of interest and research proposals must be submitted by the Rectors of the universities for which a research unit from their institution will act as co-ordinator.
- The paper versions of the dossiers must be sent to the following address :

PPS Science Policy
IAP-VI Programme
Wetenschapsstraat 8 rue de la Science
1000 Brussels

and the electronic versions must be sent to : IAP-PAI@belspo.be

3.1.1. Expressions of Interest

- The expressions of interest may only be submitted using the online form that can be downloaded from the PPS Science Policy website (<http://www.belspo.be>).
- The expressions of interest must be submitted in English. The PPS Science Policy will use them to locate foreign experts to evaluate the research proposals.
- University Rectors are requested to submit the expressions of interest to the PPS Science Policy by no later than

28 April 2006 by 12:00 pm (noon)

- The PPS Science Policy will not accept expressions of interest sent by the teams themselves.

3.1.2. Submission of Proposals

The expressions of interest may only be submitted using the forms that can be downloaded from the PPS Science Policy website (<http://www.belspo.be>).

The proposals must be submitted in English with a summary in French and Dutch.

No annex to the dossier submitted will be considered during the evaluation and selection procedure.

University Rectors are requested to submit proposals for sums that are 2 to 2.5 times the budget allocated to their institution in IAP phase V.

The proposals must be received by the PPS Science Policy no later than

15 June 2006 by 12:00 pm (noon)

University Rectors and directors of federal scientific institutions must provide a list of all research units from their institution proposed as partners of an IAP network.

Foreign partner institutions must show their agreement in writing for 50% co-funding of participation in an IAP network (see section IV of the submission form).

After deadline (15 June 2006 by 12:00 p.m. (noon)), the PPS Science Policy will no longer accept proposals.

Forms : each proposal must be composed of 4 independent sections :

- Section I : The project
- Section II : The partners
- Section III : Summary of the proposal in English, French and Dutch
- Section IV : Declaration of intent from the European partner institution (optional)

3.2. Evaluation and Selection

Proposals remitted by institutions that meet the eligibility conditions will be subjected to an *ex-ante* evaluation, which will be conducted on the basis of a "peer review".

The following general evaluation criteria will be used by the foreign scientific experts :

- The scientific quality of the research proposal :
 - clarity of the objectives and tasks;
 - pertinence of the methodological approach;
 - position relative to the state-of-the-art in the field in question;
 - scientific originality of the research proposed;
 - innovative nature of the expected results;
 - reinforcement of existing expertise;
 - work plan.

- The quality of the proposed partnership and the added value provided by co-operation in a network :
 - complementarity of the partners and interdisciplinarity of their collective expertise;
 - task distribution;
 - collective and bilateral relations;
 - collaborative methods (joint work, exchange of researchers, etc.)
- The potentiality of the network and of the partners in terms of :
 - training of pre/post-doctorate researchers;
 - the emergence of young researchers and/or teams.
- Organisation and management of the network.

The final selection of proposals submitted will be based on the scientific evaluations, university priorities and recommendations from the IAP programme steering committee.

The projects selected will be the subject of a contract effective from 01/01/2007.

3.3. Submission Forms

3.3.1. General

Please read this information document carefully before filling out the submission forms.

The submission forms must be filled out in English so that the proposals may be evaluated by foreign experts (sections I, II). The proposals must also be supplied with a summary in French and Dutch (cf. section III). If deemed necessary by the applicant, a version of the proposal may also be submitted in the language of the co-ordinator.

No annex to the dossier submitted will be considered during the evaluation and selection procedure.

Please show the acronym of the proposal on each page of the submission forms.

Two copies of the proposal must be submitted by the Rector of the university to which the network co-ordinator belongs to the following address :

PPS Science Policy
IAP-VI Programme
Wetenschapsstraat 8 rue de la Science
1000 Brussels

An electronic version of the proposals (MS Word format) must also be sent to the following address :
IAP-PAI@belspo.be

The PPS Science Policy must have received the proposals (paper and electronic versions) by the 15th of June 2006 at 12:00 pm (noon).

3.3.2. Forms

Each proposal must include 4 independent sections (section IV is optional and only applies in cases where a European partner is included).

- **Section I** : Information about the network (to be filled out by the network co-ordinator)
 - A. Network composition
 - B. Proposal summary
 - C. Objectives, motivation and state-of-the-art
 - D. Detailed description of the proposal
 - E. Participation of the partners in the various work packages (WPs)
 - F. Main partner skills
 - G. Network organisation and management
 - H. Budget (global distribution per partner)
 - I. To be filled out for networks having been funded in a previous IAP phase

- **Section II** : Information about the partners (to be filled out by each network partner, including European partners)
 - J. Partner contact details
 - K. Staff members of the partner team
 - L. Personnel working on the project
 - M. Publications
 - N. International contacts in the proposal's research field
 - O. Contracts in progress
 - P. Work packages
 - Q. Budget (distribution per year and per category)

- **Section III** : Summary of the proposal in English, French and Dutch (to be filled out by the network co-ordinator)

- **Section IV** : Declaration of intent for co-funding from the European partner and its institution