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**AGORA Programme**



**Information dossier for respondents**

#### Call for proposals 2011

Closing dates:

* part 1: 14 September 2011
* part 2: 10 October 2011

**Foreword**

The Council of Ministers approved the launching of a new call in 2011 for the AGORA programme. This information dossier is destined to provide applicants with all the necessary information in order to submit a proposal in this call. In this call, a clear distinction is made between:

* a call proposals destined to universities and public research centres aiming at valorising administrative databases held by federal administrations - we will refer to this as **PART 1** of this call
* a call for proposals destined to valorise the collections held by the Federal Scientific Institutions under the authority of the federal Minister of Science Policy. We will refer to this as **PART 2** of this call.

**A SHORT WORD ON** **THE AGORA PROGRAMME**

Background of the programme

In the social sciences, good research needs good data. These data can either be collected by researchers or it can consist of existing administrative records. The AGORA programme, adopted by the Council of Ministers in 1998, aims at supporting both forms of data. The focus has however been put more strongly over the years on the valorisation of administrative records rather than on supporting costly surveys.

Federal authorities have a strong need to make a better use of their own data. But they often require a scientific support to this end. In exchange of this scientific support funded by AGORA, the federal authorities must however guarantee that 1) they will undertake all the necessary actions to implement/follow-up/maintain and eventually update the outcome of the project and 2) ensure that the data can be reused by external research groups at the most appropriate level of detail (e.g. micro data).

As one can understand, AGORA is based on a win/win principle: administrations can make a better use of their own data and the scientific community will access to administrative data already prepared for scientific reuse. AGORA thereby contributes to high quality research infrastructures in the social sciences in Belgium. AGORA is also based on an implicit co-responsibility scheme: scientific activities are funded by Belspo, but all other aspects of the project remain under the responsibility of the federal authorities: implementation, maintenance and updating (e.g. ICT investments...).

Each year, federal public authorities have the possibility to issue AGORA THEMATIC PRIORITIES. The programme committee, composed of representative of these federal authorities, will examine these PRIORITIES and, within the budgetary constraints of the programme, will compose a short list of priorities to be funded by Belspo. Belspo then uses this list to organise a call for proposals. This call is destined to select the teams with the best expertise to implement the selected projects.

**PART 1 OF THE 2011 CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

1. **Introduction**

PART 1 of this call is targeted on the "classical activities" of AGORA described above, i.e. the ***valorisation of administrative socioeconomic databases***.

In 2011, **one** **THEMATIC PRIORITY** from a federal administration has been retained. It is described below. This THEMATIC PRIORITY expresses a knowledge need for which scientific research is required. It constitutes the core of PART 1 of this call.

Applicants from universities and public research centres can submit a **PROJECT** in which they suggest a way to answer the knowledge needs expressed in the THEMATIC PRIORITY. Their PROJECT will be described in their research **PROPOSAL**.

The task of the selection procedure is to select the best PROPOSAL for the THEMATIC PRIORITY. Therefore, only ONE PROPOSAL will be selected.

**2. Description of the THEMATIC PRIORITY**

**1. Title**

Development of a model for prospective data with respect to poverty and social inclusion indicators in the frame of the EU-2020 strategy, with a focus on the impact of migration

**2. Name of the federal authority introducing the THEMATIC PRIORITY**

Federal Public Service Social Security (<http://www.socialsecurity.fgov.be/en/index.htm>)

**3. knowlegde needs**

In the frame of the follow-up of the Belgian National Reform Programme, it is important to stimulate the development of instrument that can simulate, in the medium and the long term, the budgetary and redistributive impact of reforms.

This instrument should take the evolution of the Belgian population and its changing composition into account, in particular focusing on the weight of migration in these evolutions. The instrument should also incorporate expected macroeconomic foresights, including wage formation and the labour market, developments in social security provisions (specifically the pension regime).

In the simulations made and the calculations of the redistributive impact of these simulations, a special attention shall be devoted to incorporate the "at risk of poverty" and "low work intensity" indicators as defined in the social inclusion chapter of the EU-2020 strategy. Other leading indicators should also be considered in the output of the instrument, in order to enable their follow-up and to enlighten policy options with the most information possible. The interest research group that would like to develop such an instrument shall also integrate indicators of budgetary sustainability when simulating the budgetary effects of policy reforms.

**4. Expected output**

The end result of this project should be a model that enables the calculations of the redistributive impact of policy measures, especially considering the impact on the indicators on poverty and social inclusion that Belgium needs to monitor in the frame of the EU-2020 strategy. The functioning of the model shall be illustrated by simulating a few policy measures with possible alternative scenarios. Each scenario will include indicators of budgetary sustainability and redistributive impacts. Scenarios will account for possible changes in the policy (especially in the pension regime) and the foreseen demographic changes that are driven by migration.

**5. Budget**

The maximum budget allocated to the selected PROPOSAL is 300.000€, of which 70.000€ are based on a co-funding by the FPS Social Security.

**3. Important elements to bear in mind before submitting a PROPOSAL**

Interested applicants shall comply with the following principles of the AGORA programme when submitting their PROPOSAL.

1. international dimension

In this research programme, the international/European dimension should be clearly present in the PROPOSAL.

* + In terms of **content**, PROPOSALS should at least sketch the international/European context of the theme (see annex for the description of the theme for this year's call). If possible and if foreseen in the theme’s description, comparisons with and best practices from other countries should be envisaged;
  + In terms of **scientific collaboration**, researchers are invited to collaborate with their peers in other countries to strengthen their contribution. This collaboration can take many forms. BELSPO is therefore accepting to fund –partially - foreign partners in the Belgian research networks up to a maximum of 20% of the total budget of the proposal (see further detail below).

1. Geographic coverage

Within the AGORA Programme, PROPOSALS shall cover the whole Belgian territory. Proposals addressing a topic on a single geographical zone or with unjustified discrepancy between regions will not be accepted.

1. Support to the federal decision-making

This aspect is essential. In this programme, decision makers should be understood very broadly: politicians and civil servants, but also NGO’s, citizens’ organisations....

The consequence is that PROPOSALS addressing the THEMATIC PRIORITY in a purely theoretical way or on the basis of a purely qualitative approach (not allowing any inference) cannot be accepted in this programme.

The funded PROJECT will have its own steering committee. This committee is composed of civil servants from all concerned authorities and all other stakeholders interested in the project. No decisions are taken in this committee. Its objective is to enable researchers to confront their results to the reality of the field and enable stakeholders to be informed of the project during its course, to give input and eventually new orientations to the project.

Teams are invited in their PROPOSAL to think of ways to valorise their project to decision-makers and a larger public.

1. Gender dimension

The gender dimension shall be integrated in the research PROPOSAL. This can be done at various levels and stages of the project, i.e. in the content of the project itself but also in its valorisation... One can a priori not exclude that the gender dimension might prove irrelevant for the theme at hand in the call, but teams are invited to demonstrate this in their submission form.

1. Research network

The scientific excellence pursued in AGORA means that researchers are **recommended** to form networks. In this programme, a network means that at least two research centres from different institutions are collaborating. By "Institution", one should understand a *non-profit organisation for which scientific research is explicitly mentioned in its missions or legal statutes*. Universities and public research institutions are clearly eligible for funding.

This research programme imposed no limit to the number of partners allowed in a network. However, should foreign partners be included, the network should then at least count two Belgian promoters. In case of equal score in the scientific evaluation stage, the proposal issued by networks combining researchers from the south and the north of the country will be favoured in the final evaluation stage.

Foreign partners are welcome to join networks. In the pursuit of scientific excellence, collaboration with foreign researchers is encouraged when this can contribute to the project. However, the foreign partner must benefit from a national funding which can then be topped up for part of his time by Belspo to participate in the AGORA project. The amount of the “topping up” is limited to 50% of the foreign researcher's monthly FTE cost. Collaborations in which a foreign partner will be fully funded (i.e. having no funding from his national authority) by Belspo is therefore excluded. Forms of distant and occasional consultancy by an internationally recognised researcher will not be admitted in the programme; foreign partners must actively participate in the project. The total budget that can be dedicated to fund the participation of foreign partners is limited to 20% of the total budget of the proposal. This enables Belgian networks to join and fully collaborate with foreign research centres and eventually larger international networks. Belgian researchers are thus invited to verify whether such a possibility exists prior to issuing their submission form. No specific contract will bind the foreign researchers with BELSPO and they will therefore be subject to a specific bilateral contract binding their University and that of the Coordinator of the project (see also the section on budget below). It should be stressed again that foreign partners shall actively participate in the activities of the network. At least one meeting with the entire network, including the foreign partners, shall be organised in Belgium.

The coordination of the network will be in the hands of a Belgian partner. He can allocate up to 5% of total costs dedicated to personnel to his coordination costs (see also below). The coordinator will also be the sole responsible for the foreign partners.

1. budget

**The maximum budget allocated to the PROPOSAL is indicated in the description of the THEMATIC PRIORITY. This is a maximum budget that cannot be exceeded.**

The budget of a PROPOSAL shall be totally dedicated to the activities of the project. Eligible costs refunded by the Federal Science Policy Office can fall in the following categories:

* *Personnel*: gross indexed salaries, taxes, social security charges and all other charges evolving from the employment which are legally due. Staffs needs to be recruited under a labour contract. So no scholarships can be hired in the frame of the project;
* *General Operation cost*: it includes all current expenditures related to the project implementation such as usual supplies and products for the laboratory, workshop and office, documentation, travel and accommodation, use of computational facility, software.... The total amount of those operation costs is set to a flat rate of maximum 15% of the staff cost for the coordinator and maximum 10% of the staff cost for the other partners. This amount is to be divided prorata over the whole duration of the project.
* *Specific Operation cost* (invoices will be required): it includes all specific operating costs directly linked to the execution of the project such as costs for analysis, organisation of workshops, maintenance and repair of specific equipment purchased by the project ...
* *Overhead*: overheads by the institution, covering administration costs, expenses for telephone, post, maintenance, heating, lighting, electricity, rent, writing off of equipment and insurance policies. The total budget for this post cannot exceed 5% of the sum of *Co-ordination*, *Personnel* and *Operating* budget (*only for Belgian partners*);
* *Equipment*: purchase and installation of scientific and technical tools and equipment, including computer hardware and office equipment;
* *Subcontracting*: expenses for tasks or services by third parties necessitated by technical or scientific competences outside the normal frame of activities of the own institution. The budget for subcontracting can never exceed 25% of the budget of the partner to which the subcontracting expenses are allocated (*only for Belgian partners*). If VAT is due for subcontractors, the amounts have to be included.
* *International cooperation*: The total budget that can be allocated to the foreign partners will not exceed 20% of the total budget of the proposal and will be fully allocated to personnel and working costs. This budget will be embedded in the “international cooperation” budget line in the financial table of the coordinator;

No VAT is due on the contract between the institutions of the partners and the Belgian Science Policy Office.

**4. Selection of the PROPOSALS**

PROPOSALS shall be evaluated by a three-step procedure.

The **first step** consists in an eligibility check of submitted proposals. Eligibility conditions are explained further in the document.

The **second step** consists in a scientific evaluation by foreign experts. In order to ensure equal treatment, all proposals submitted in the theme retained for part 1 will be evaluated by the same panel of experts. This evaluation will be a written procedure in which experts will fill in an evaluation form and, in case of strongly diverging scores for a given proposal, on a re-evaluation form.

The **third step** consists in an advice given by the steering committee of the programme. This advice will be given on a proposal of selection that BELSPO will prepare on the basis of the scientific evaluation. This selection proposal is guided entirely by the pursuit of scientific excellence, meaning:

* 1. proposals who do not reach a minimal score during the scientific evaluation will be discarded from the remaining of the evaluation procedure, i.e. will not be submitted to the advice of the programme committee;
  2. only one proposal per theme can be selected;
  3. The proposal which achieves the best score in the scientific evaluation is retained, taking into account the eventual recommendations of the panel of experts. In case of equal scores, BELSPO will retain the proposal issued by a network combining researchers from both sides of the linguistic barrier;

Comments by the programme committee on this proposal shall be fully guided by considerations on decision-making aspects, not on scientific grounds. The advice shall be circumstantiated. Should this advice overrule the selection proposal issued by BELSPO, it should be motivated in such a way that BELSPO can take the argumentation as its own in its final selection proposal for the Minister.

This selection proposal will then be sent for approval to the Minister of Science Policy. Upon approval, contracts can be made with the selected teams and the projects can start.

***Scientific activities should start no later than February 2012***.

**5. Eligibility check-list**

You can use the following check-list to verify the eligibility of your proposal. This check-list is used by Belspo. All criteria must be met.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * The submission dossier contains the full submission form in English and the synthetic form in the language of the Institution of the coordinator of the PROPOSAL. The imposed lay-out is fully respected. |  |
| * The submission dossier has been submitted in electronic form and in a paper version |  |
| * the paper and electronic version of the submission dossier are identical |  |
| * the submission form has been submitted in due time : 14 September at 3 PM |  |
| * the synthetic form is a strict translation of the corresponding parts of the full submission form |  |
| * the PROPOSAL is submitted by a network of at least two different non-profit organisations having scientific research explicitly stated in the mission or legal statutes |  |
| * In case of foreign partners, the network is composed of at least two Belgian promoters |  |
| * the coordinator of the proposal belongs to an eligible institution legally established in Belgium |  |
| * the budget of the proposal does not exceed the maximum allocated budget to the theme (as indicated in the theme's description) |  |

**6. How to participate to this call?**

Interested applicants are invited to:

* fill out the full submission form in English
* fill out the synthetic version in the language of the coordinator of the network (only for proposals submitted in part 1 of this call)

Both documents can be downloaded from the website of BELSPO and should be sent in electronic form at

[secretariat\_is@belspo.be](mailto:secretariat_is@belspo.be)

And in paper version to the following address:

**Programme AGORA**

**Unité Individus et Société**

**SPP Politique scientifique fédérale**

**Avenue Louise 231, 1050 Bruxelles**

The reception receipt that is at the end of the submission form will be signed and completed and sent to applicants; In case the dossier is handed-out at the reception of BELSPO, the receipt will be filled in and delivered immediately.

**Submission dossier should physically be in the hands of BELSPO at the latest by 14 September at 3 PM**

**PART 2 OF THE 2011 CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

**1. Introduction**

As expressed in the decision of the Council of Ministers of 20 July, PART 2 of this call is dedicated to the **valorisation** of **collections** held by the **Federal Scientific Institutions**.

By "**Federal scientific Institutions**", we explicitly refer to the FSIs who are placed under the Authority of the Federal minister for Science Policy (the list of such Institutions can be found on: <http://www.belspo.be/belspo/res/institut/esf_en.stm>). FSI are associated to one of the following four POLES: Nature, Space, Documentation and Arts**[[1]](#footnote-1)**.

A "**collection**" refers in this document to "*any coherent collection of tangible or intangible elements. It can consist of material or immaterial, artistic, scientific or documentary cultural heritage, observation records..".* This broad definition ensures that all collections held by the FSIs are eligible in this call.

"**Valorisation**" is defined as "*the scientific activities that enable acquisition/conservation/restoration/maintenance and valorisation of collections with the aim of enabling a (better) scientific reuse*".

**2. Eligible PROPOSALS**

A **PROPOSAL** shall give the description of *the set of scientific activities that will enable acquisition/conservation/restoration/maintenance and valorisation of a given collections or coherent set of collections with the aim of enabling a (better) scientific reuse*". These scientific activities shall be upstream of the scientific exploitation of a collection. Scientific exploitation is not excluded but cannot constitute the core of the PROPOSAL. Digitalisation activities are covered by another programme of BELSPO and are therefore excluded.

AGORA will only fund the scientific activities associated to a collection. **The FSI must ensure that it will take the necessary steps for the implementation and sustainability of the outcome of the project** (e.g. ICT investments, maintenance and update...). Therefore, PROPOSALS can only be coordinated by FSIs. These PROPOSALS shall also be signed by the head of the FSI.

The **budget** of a PROPOSAL shall be between 150.000€ and maximum 230.000€. With a total budget of 1.850.000€ to fund PROPOSALS in PART 2, this allows to fund **on average two PROPOSALS per POLE**.

PROPOSALS will be **submitted in the POLE of the coordinating FSI** and shall be evaluated with the other PROPOSALS in the pole (see point 4 below).

PROPOSALS must be of **duration** of minimum 1.5 years and maximum of 3.5 years.

**3. Additionnal elements to bear in mind before submitting an AGORA proposal**

The specificities of AGORA require that applicants consider the following elements in their PROPOSAL:

1. international dimension

The international/European dimension should clearly be present in all PROPOSALS. Valorising a collection requires at least to examine similar foreign experiences and to envisage harmonisation/comparability possibilities of the final output. However, we cannot exclude that this does not apply for specific collections. In this case, applicants are invited to mention this explicitly in their PROPOSAL.

In terms of scientific collaboration, researchers are encouraged to collaborate with their peers in other countries to strengthen their project. This collaboration can take many forms. BELSPO is therefore accepting to fund –partially - foreign partners in the Belgian research networks up to a maximum of 20% of the total budget of the proposal (see below for further details).

1. Research networks

The scientific excellence pursued in AGORA means that researchers are **encouraged** to form networks.

In this programme, a network means that at least two different institutions are collaborating. By "Institution", one should understand a *non-profit organisation for which scientific research is explicitly mentioned in its missions or legal statutes*. FSIs and universities are clearly eligible for funding.

This research programme imposes no limits to the number of partners allowed in a network.

Foreign partners are equally welcomed to join the FSI(s) who are submitting a PROPOSAL. However, the foreign partner must benefit from a national funding which can then be topped up for part of his time by Belspo to participate to the AGORA PROJECT. The amount of the “topping up” is limited to 50% of the foreign researcher's monthly cost. Collaborations in which a foreign partner will be fully funded (i.e. having no funding from his national authority) by Belspo is therefore excluded. Forms of distant and occasional consultancy by an internationally recognised researcher will not be admitted in the programme; foreign partners must actively participate in the project. The total budget that can be dedicated to fund the participation of foreign partners is limited to 20% of the total budget of the proposal. This enables Belgian networks to join and fully collaborate with foreign research centres and eventually larger international networks. Belgian researchers are thus invited to verify whether such a possibility exists prior to issuing their PROPOSAL. No specific contract will bind the foreign researchers with BELSPO and they will therefore be subject to a specific bilateral contract binding their University and that of the Coordinator of the project (see also the section on budget below). It should be stressed again that foreign partners shall actively participate in the activities of the network. At least one meeting with the entire network, including the foreign partners, shall be organised in Belgium.

The coordination of the network will be in the hands of a Belgian partner. He can allocate up to 5% of total costs dedicated to personnel to his coordination costs (see also below). The coordinator will also be the sole responsible for the foreign partners.

1. budget

The budget of a PROPOSAL shall be totally dedicated to the activities of the project. Eligible costs refunded by the Federal Science Policy Office must fall in the following categories:

* *Personnel*: gross indexed salaries, taxes, social security charges and all other charges evolving from the employment which are legally due. Staffs needs to be recruited under a labour contract. So no scholarships can be hired in the frame of the project. In this programme, personnel costs are **NOT** set as a lump sum per FTE, full labour costs are eligible;
* *General Operation cost*: it includes all current expenditures related to the project implementation such as usual supplies and products for the laboratory, workshop and office, documentation, travel and accommodation, use of computational facility, software.... The total amount of those operation costs is set to a flat rate of maximum 15% of the staff cost for the coordinator and maximum 10% of the staff cost for the other partners. This amount is to be divided prorata over the whole duration of the project.
* *Specific Operation cost* (invoices will be required): it includes all specific operating costs directly linked to the execution of the project such as costs for analysis, organisation of workshops, surveys, maintenance and repair of specific equipment purchased by the project. Refund is based on the presentation of invoices. Specific operation costs shall be justified in the proposal;
* *Overhead*: overheads by the institution, covering administration costs, expenses for telephone, post, maintenance, heating, lighting, electricity, rent, writing off of equipment and insurance policies. The total budget for this post cannot exceed 5% of the sum of *Personnel* and *Operating* budget (*only for Belgian partners*);
* *Equipment*: purchase and installation of scientific and technical tools and equipment, including computer hardware and office equipment;
* *Subcontracting*: expenses for tasks or services by third parties necessitated by technical or scientific competences outside the normal frame of activities of the own institution. The budget for subcontracting can never exceed 25% of the budget of the partner to which the subcontracting expenses are allocated (*only for Belgian partners*). If VAT is due for subcontractors, the amounts have to be included in the proposal.
* *International cooperation*: The total budget that can be allocated to the foreign partners will not exceed 20% of the total budget of the proposal and will be fully allocated to personnel and working costs. This budget will be embedded in the “international cooperation” budget line in the financial table of the coordinator of the proposal;

No VAT is due on the contract between the institutions of the partners and the Belgian Science Policy Office.

**3. Selection of the proposals**

PROPOSALS shall be evaluated by a two-step procedure.

The **first step** consists in an eligibility check of submitted PROPOSALS. Eligibility conditions are explained further in this document.

The **second step** consists in a scientific evaluation by foreign experts.

Since PROPOSALS are issued in a given POLE, a panel of 3 to 4 experts will be constituted for each pole. The submission of a **Mark of Interest** shall enable BELSPO to identify potentials experts.

Each panel will evaluate all proposals submitted in its respective pole. This evaluation will be a written procedure in which experts will fill in an evaluation form and, in case of strongly diverging scores for a given PROPOSAL, on a re-evaluation form. PROPOSALS who do not reach a minimal score will be discarded from the remaining of the evaluation procedure.

Then, a new panel of 4 (to 5) members, composed of one appointed expert in each of the 4 panels (and eventually a newly appointed expert), will draft the list of PROPOSALS that are recommended for funding. This panel will base its selection proposal on:

1. Scientific excellence: only the best PROPOSALS identified in the written procedure can be selected for funding;
2. budget constraint : given the total budget allocated (1.85 mio €), two PROPOSALS per pole will be recommended for funding on average;

The panel report, containing a selection of PROPOSALS that are recommended for funding, will then be sent for approval to the Minister of Science Policy. Upon approval, contracts (Royal Decrees) will be concluded with the selected teams and the PROJECTS can start.

***Scientific activities should start no later than April 2012.***

**4. Eligibility criteria**

You can use the following check-list to see if your proposal complies with the criteria of the call. This **check-list** is used by Belspo. All criteria must be met.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * a Mark of Interest has been sent in due time and due form (deadline: 19 September 3PM) |  |
| * The full submission form is completed in English and the imposed lay-out is fully respected. |  |
| * The submission form has been submitted in electronic form and in a paper version. The paper version is signed by the DG of the FSI(s) |  |
| * the paper and electronic version of the submission form are identical |  |
| * the submission form has been submitted in due time (closing date: 10 October 3 PM) |  |
| * in case of a network, all promoters (Belgian and foreign) must belong to at least two different non-profit organisations having scientific research explicitly stated in the missions or legal statutes |  |
| * the budget of the proposal is not lower than 150.000€ and not higher than 230.000€ * the budget for foreign partners does not exceed 20% of the total budget of the proposal |  |
| * the duration of the project in the proposal is not lower than 1.5 years and not higher than 3.5 years |  |

**5. How to participate in this call?**

Interested applicants are invited to send:

* the completed **Mark of Interest** in electronic form at [secretariat\_is@belspo.be](mailto:secretariat_is@belspo.be)

**no later than 19 September 3 PM**

* the **submission form** in English
* This form is to be sent in electronic form at [secretariat\_is@belspo.be](mailto:secretariat_is@belspo.be)
* And in paper version to the following address:

**Programme fédéral de recherches Drogues**

**Unité Individus et Société**

**SPP Politique scientifique fédérale**

**Avenue Louise 231, 1050 Bruxelles**

The reception receipt that is at the end of the submission form will be signed and completed and sent to applicants; In case the dossier is handed-out at the reception of BELSPO, the receipt will be filled in and delivered immediately.

**no later than October 10 at 3 PM**

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1. read how FSIs are associated to the four poles on <http://193.191.208.76/belspo/palace/art_en.stmhttp://193.191.208.76/belspo/palace/art_en.stm> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)