



ESFRI-FED PROGRAMME

IN SUPPORT OF THE VALORISATION OF FEDERAL
COMPONENTS IN ESFRI DISTRIBUTED AND
VIRTUAL INFRASTRUCTURES
PHASE 1 – [2021-2025]

CALL FOR PROPOSALS | 2023-2024

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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1. PARTNERS

Please contact esfri-fed@belspo.be if you have questions concerning **specific partners**.

1.1. What are the possible types of partners in my proposal?

There are **two types of partners** in ESFRI-FED proposals: Funded by the project and non-funded by the project.

- **(P) Partners:** These Belgian partners are the ones who, if the proposal is selected for funding, **will sign the project's contract**. They **are paid by the project** and must at least list staff or specific operation costs. (The Coordinator of the proposal is a special case of (P) partner, since it needs to compulsorily list staff costs and perform the tasks related to the coordination of the project.
- **(O) Partners:** These 'other partners' are the ones who, if the proposal is selected for funding, **will NOT sign the project's contract**. They are **NOT paid by the project**. These partners can formalise their participation to the project by signing a **Contribution Commitment letter** (template available on the website). (O) partners are included in the Gantt chart, but do not appear in the Budget table.

Besides from having partners it is also possible to have **subcontractors**.

1.2. How many partners can a proposal have?

There may be as many partners as necessary in the proposal. The programme encourages finding synergies among institutions. Note however that the aim of the ESFRI-FED programme is not to create consortiums/networks, but to anchor the federal component of a given ESFRI within it. In this sense, when submitting a proposal with various partners, you will have to explain why these partners are crucial to the achievement of the project.

In other words, the ESFRI-FED programme intends to fund '*must-have*' partners, meaning '*nice-to-have*' partners will not be positively considered in the evaluation.

1.3. How do you count the number of partners?

This question concerns (P) partners.

For more information on the type of partners, please see [question 1.1](#).

Only (P) partners are counted. The (P) partners in the proposal are the teams involved in the proposal, represented by a promotor, not the ESFRIs addressed:

- Two partners are two different teams submitting a joint proposal for one ESFRI
- Two partners are two different teams submitting a joint proposal for two (or more) ESFRIs
- If one team submits a proposal that includes various ESFRIs, then it is considered a single partner.

1.4. May non-FSIs be considered as partners in a proposal?

*This question concerns (P) partners, (O) partners and subcontractors.
For more information on the type of partners, please see [question 1.1](#).*

Yes, but under different conditions:

- **As (P) partners funded by the project that can only hold the role of coordinators if there are no FSI involved in the ESFRI research infrastructure:**
 - Belgian Federated Research Institutions
 - Belgian Federal Research Institutions
- **As (O) partners not funded by the project:**
 - Belgian Federal Research Institutions
 - BELNET
 - ...
- **As Subcontractors:**
 - Belgian Federal Research Institutions
 - Belgian Federated Research Institutions
 - BELNET
 - ...

1.5. May a non-FSI coordinate a proposal?

Yes, a non-FSI may hold the role of coordinator:

- If there are no FSI involved in the ESFRI addressed by the proposal, and,
- Provided that the non-FSI is a Belgian university or Belgian public research institution of federal interest (dependant from a federated entity).

1.6. Is it possible to have international partners?

*This question concerns (O) partners.
For more information on the type of partners, please see [question 1.1](#).*

It is possible to have international partners, only as (O) partners; this is, non-financed partners.

2. ESFRIs

2.1. Why are only the following ESFRIs addressed in this call?

Domain	Acronym	Name
Environment	ACTRIS	Aerosols, Clouds and Trace gases Research Infrastructure
	DiSSCo	Distributed System of Scientific Collections
Health & Food	METROFOOD	Infrastructure for Promoting Metrology in Food and Nutrition
Social & Cultural Innovation	CESSDA	Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives
	E-RIHS	European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science
Digit	EBRAINS	European Brain ReseArch INfrastructures

The ESFRI infrastructures selected for this call, meet all the conditions specified in the Information File (Point 2.1. Eligible ESFRI research Infrastructures) and **have been selected by the Strategic Committee of the ESFRI-FED programme**, as part of the programme’s roadmap.

3. BUDGET

3.1. What is the max. budget I can ask for in the proposal?

This question concerns (P) partners.

For more information on the type of partners, please see [question 1.1](#).

When it comes to budget, the only partners counted are (P) partners

- The maximum budget for a single-partner proposal is 400 000€.
- The maximum budget for a multiple-partner proposal is 750 000€.

This means that:

Max. Budget / proposal	Network composition
400 000€	Coordinator
	Coordinator + m* [(O) partner]
750 000€	Coordinator + n* [(P) partner]
	Coordinator + n* [(P) partner] + m* [(O) partner]

Where: m, n = positive integer (1, 2, 3...).

3.2. What is the budget repartition in a proposal where there are several partners?

This question concerns (P) partners.

For more information on the type of partners, please see [question 1.1](#).

The budget repartition is explained in the document 'Budget Rules' (see website)

Applicants have also access to one of the Full proposal’s templates: Template 4 ‘Budget Table’ (see website).

4. PROJECT CONFIGURATION

4.1. Can a FSI submit a proposal addressing an ESFRI in which it does not participate, but that has a Federal Component in which another FSI takes part?

Technically, any **FSI "A"** can submit a proposal for any of the ESFRIs addressed in the call, including those with an established Federal Component where a second **FSI "B"** is present.

The proposal submitted by **FSI "A"**, must focus in any case on the development, test, strengthening or improving AND anchoring of Federal Components or services (where **FSI "B"** is present) within the ESFRI infrastructure. This means that **FSI "A"** cannot submit a proposal that would result in new services which do not build on previous development already organically linked to the targeted ESFRI infrastructure.

For this reason, BELSPO strongly encourages **FSI "A"** to contact **FSI "B"** to find possible synergies or see if there is a proposal in preparation planned, to which they could contribute. Note, that after the submission of the Expression of Interest, a match-making process will take place, in which BELSPO will examine the Eols to find synergies within them. Eols which address the same ESFRI research infrastructures, will be encouraged to submit a joint proposal.

FSI "A" and **FSI "B"** will be free to take up (or not) BELSPO's match-making suggestion; not doing so, may have a consequence at the level of the selection of proposals by the Strategic Committee of the programme, who will seek to have an equilibrium in terms of ESFRI RI funded in the call. Please check the Information File, Part II, Section 7.2. The Match-Making Process.

BELSPO can put you in contact with the members of the Belgian Federal Components of a given ESFRI prior to the submission of the Expression of Interest. Do not hesitate to contact the ESFRI-FED team in this regard.

4.2. Can a FSI submit 2 different proposals addressing the same ESFRI?

Technically, it is feasible for one same institution to send two proposals for the same ESFRI infrastructure. However, during the match-making process, BELSPO will suggest them to submit a joint proposal. The FSI will be free to take up (or not) BELSPO's match-making suggestion; not doing so may have a consequence at the level of the selection of proposals by the Strategic Committee of the programme, who will seek to have an equilibrium in terms of ESFRI RI funded in the call. Please check the Information File, Part II, Section 7.2. The Match-Making Process.

4.3. Can 2 FSI submit 1 proposal addressing 2 ESFRIs?

Yes. Synergies between components and between infrastructures within and between FSIs are encouraged. However, the proposal must be truly a single 'organic' project, and not an artificial construction. Both partners must be essential for the realisation of the project, and the project must present a solid case in addressing these two different infrastructures in a connected way.

4.4. Can 2 FSI submit 1 proposal addressing 2 different components of the same ESFRI?

Yes. As in the previous question, synergies between FSIs and components are encouraged. However, the proposal must be truly a single 'organic' project, and not an artificial construction. Both partners must be essential for the realisation of the project, and the project must present a solid case in addressing these two different components in a connected way.

5. SUBMISSION-EVALUATION PROCESS

5.1. Is it necessary to introduce an EoI to submit a Full Proposal?

Yes. The submission of an Expression of Interest is a prerequisite for the submission of a Full Proposal.

5.2. Is it possible to modify the idea in the EoI at the level of the Full Proposal?

Full proposals may diverge from EoIs but not to the extent that the proposed experts provided by the applicants will be rendered irrelevant for the purpose of the evaluation of the Full Proposal. Beware that:

- **Acronym:** Must not be modified.
- **Title:** May be modified.
- **Institutions and names of partners:** May be modified.
- **Summary:** May be modified but needs to keep the same general idea as in the EoI.
- **Keywords:** Must not be modified.

There is an exception to this: If the matchmaking process reveals that 2 (or more) EoI could be submitted as a single Full proposal, the Acronym, and the title may be too modified.

5.3. Is it compulsory to follow the indications of BELSPO regarding the matchmaking?

No, it is not compulsory. The teams will be free to take up (or not) BELSPO's suggestions and will be given the opportunity to explain their reasons for (not) following those suggestions in the Panel Evaluation. The information will be communicated to the Strategic Committee, who will make a selection of proposals to be funded, partly based on the balance of the call's eligible ESFRI RI, among other criteria.

5.4. Do applicants who have been suggested to submit joint Full Proposals as a result of the matchmaking process need to draft a new Expression of Interest?

Applicants may be asked to submit a new EoI, on a case-to-case discussion with BELSPO.

5.5. Will proposals that send no Contribution commitment letter or Follow-up Committee letter of intent be scored lower than proposals that do?

No, these documents are not mandatory, therefore their absence cannot have a negative impact on the evaluation.

5.6. Is it compulsory to have a Gender Equality Plan ? Will proposals sent by institutions who do not have one will be scored lower than proposals that do?

No, the GEP is not compulsory. However, if your institution has developed one, it is recommended that you link it in the Proposal Description template or that you send it as a separate document, as indicated in the Information File.

5.7. As coordinator of a proposal, may I attend with another project partner?

Yes, coordinators are allowed to attend with another project partner.

5.8. Will the panel take place in person in Brussels?

No, for this call, the panel will take place online.

6. SUBMISSION – EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1. How do submission-evaluation criteria consider the maturity of the ESFRI RI and the maturity of the (Federal) component?

The differences related to the lifecycle stage of the ESFRI Research Infrastructures (implementation vs. operation phase) and the level of maturity of the (Federal) Components within these infrastructures (promising components vs. established) are addressed by the call holistically.

Applicants are required to state if the ESFRI RI they are addressing in the proposal are in implementation or operation phase, and whether the (federal) component is promising or established. Evaluators must assess the proposals considering these two situations; please check the submission-evaluation criteria in the Information File.

7. OTHER

7.1. Must the proposal deal with activities conducted in Belgian territory?

Not necessarily. Research and monitoring activities (for instance) can be conducted elsewhere, as far as they remain a competence of the ESFRI and they are of Federal interest.