New RV Belgica

Specific call for research proposals 2021

Information document including submission and evaluation guidelines and budget rules

Deadlines:
Expression of interest: **27/07/2021 - 14h00**
Full proposals: **14/09/2021 - 14h00**

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I NEW RV BELGICA

https://www.belspo.be/belspo/NewRV/index_en.stm

I.1 CONTEXT

After more than 36 years of service the time had come to replace the RV Belgica. To that end a new modern research vessel, the new RV BELGICA, was built at Freire Shipyard in Vigo (Spain).

The new research vessel is owned by the Belgian State represented by the Belgian Science Policy Office (BELSPO). The OD Nature of the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS), in collaboration with the Ministry of Defense and a private operator, will be responsible for the management of the ship.

It will be operational end-2021 and will be able to further support the marine research community for the next 30 years.

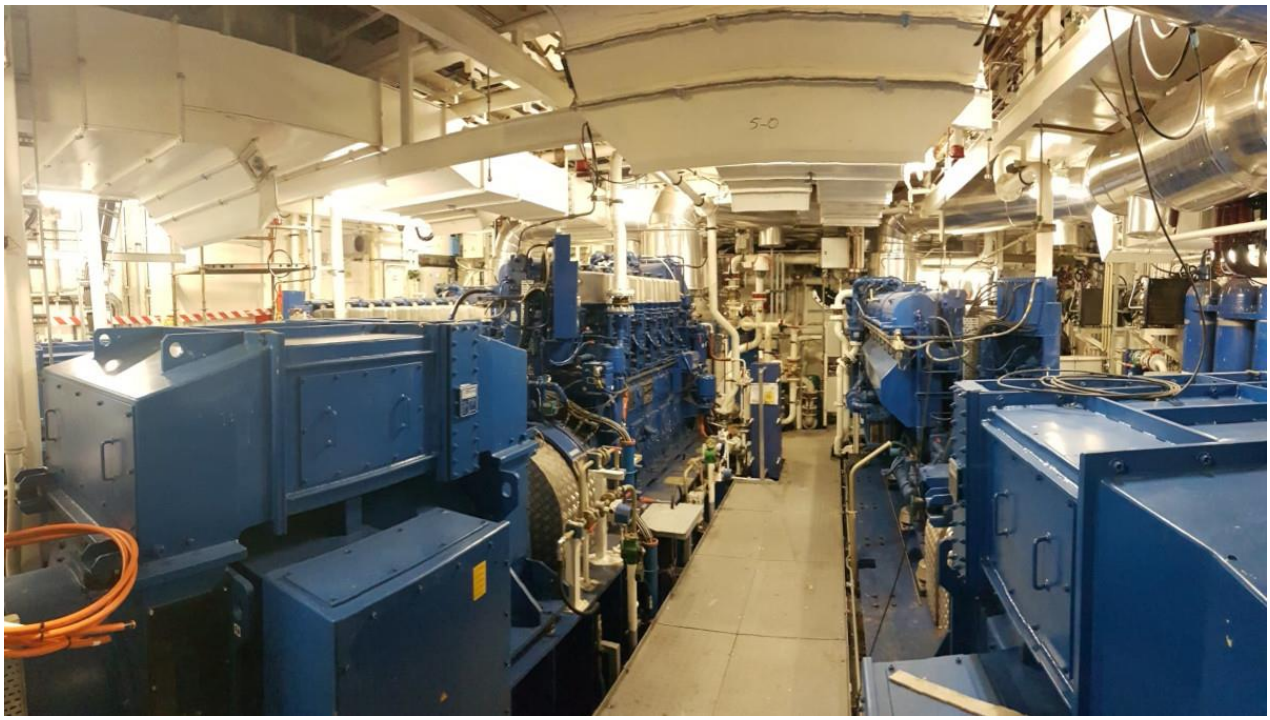
It will spend more time at sea each year (about 300 days a year) and cover a wider research area (North Sea, Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean Sea and Arctic area in summer).

I.2 RESEARCH VESSEL SPECIFICATIONS

I.2.1 TECHNICAL

The new RV Belgica is an optimal acoustic platform, with limited influence on the environment, built to the highest standards of energy consumption, emissions (ecological ship) and noise production (acoustic silence):

- Energy efficient & Low emission
- MARPOL TIER III
- Waste-heat recovery
- Diesel-electric (AC) propulsion
    - ABC - Rolls - Royce - Indar
    - twin-screw - 5-blade - fixed pitch
- Research silent Class



It is a full ocean research vessel:

- 71.4 m length
- 16.8 m beam
- 4.8 m draft
- 11 kn operational speed (max. 13+ kn)
- Instrumentation adapted to water depths of 5000 m
- Ice Class for summer operations in Arctic areas

With new capabilities compared to the 'old' RV Belgica:

- Dynamic Positioning Class 2 (DP-2):
  - 2 aft thrusters
  - 2 bow thrusters
- 2 integrated drop keels
- Hoppe roll stabilization System
- Space for 12 crew, 28 scientists & marine technicians
  - 14 single cabins
  - 13 double cabins
- 30-day autonomy

The Research area of the ship is a sea area that extends between 80° North latitude (Spitsbergen) and 28° North latitude, bounded in the West by the central Atlantic ridge and in the East up to 36° East longitude including the Mediterranean Sea. The Arctic areas only from 2023 onwards.

I.2.2 SPACE FOR RESEARCH

The characteristics of the research vessel were determined based on a survey of the marine scientific community and (potential) users of the vessel.

The new research vessel is multidisciplinary, suitable for offshore research, survey and exploration, equipped with state-of-the-art scientific equipment and able to support various research disciplines (fisheries, biology, chemistry, ...).

Compared to the old RV Belgica, it offers more space for scientists and for research.

I.2.2.1.1 LAB SPACE

The RV has 410 m² lab surface, a hangar surface of 101 m² and a deck surface of 218 m² + 34 m² + 83 m²:

- Crow's Nest (8 m²)
- Operational Center (60 m²)
- Scientific Lab / Conference room (51 m²)
- Science Hangar (78m², place for 2 ISO 20' containers)
- Large AFT & STBD decks (place for 5 ISO 20' containers)
- ICT Room (26 m2)
- Wet Lab (46 m²)
- 3 Dry Labs (19 & 40 & 33 m²)
- CTD hangar (23 m²)
- Diver Store (7 m²)
- Seismic Room (6 m²)
- Wet and Dry Fish Lab (68 & 21 m²)
- Cold & Freeze Rooms (14 & 14 m²)
- Aerosol Lab (9 m²)
- AUMS Lab (16 m²)




I.2.2.1.2 HEAVY DUTY

The vessel is equipped with heavy duty capabilities and able to deploy wide range of scientific gear up to 5000 m water depth:

- 3 Cranes (fwd, mid, aft)
- 2 CTD Winches (stbd)
- Multifunctional Winch (stbd)
- Hydrographic Winch (aft/stbd)
- 2 Trawl Winches
- Net Drum Winch
- Split Net Drum Winch
- Net Sonde Winch
- 2 Gilson Winches
- CTD Gantry & LARS (stbd)
- 2 stbdT-frames
- Aft A-frame
- LARS incl. 15 m piston corer
- 7 m Work Boat

I.2.2.1.3 FULL ACOUSTIC UNDERWATER INSTRUMENTATION

Instrumentation is available for mapping and analyses of the full water column (incl. fauna), the seafloor and subsurface:

- Shallow (EM2040) and deep-water (EM304) bathymetric multibeam echosounders (600 m & 8000 m)
- Parametric sub bottom profiler (Topas PS18) (11000 m)
- Scientific multibeam (ME70) & split-beam wideband echosounder (EK80) (>5000 m)
- Omnidirectional fish sonar (SU90) (4500m)
- Net- and catch monitoring system (PX & FX80)
- Underwater position-reference system (USBL) (HiPAP 502) (5000 m)
- Acoustic Doppler Current Profilers (Ocean Surveyor 75kHz & Workhorse 600 kHz) (1000 m & 50 m)

I.2.3 EUROPEAN RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES

The vessel is adapted to the existing European modern, large (and expensive) marine research infrastructures.

- Autonomous Underway Vehicles (AUVs)
- Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs)
- Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)
- 2D & 3D seismic systems
- Scientific sediment coring and rock drill devices
- Storage space for 7 ISO 20’ containers AFT + 2 ISO 20’ container FWD
- 2 integrated drop keels
- UAV platform FWD

The technical capabilities of the new RV Belgica can be found on the following webpage:
https://www.belspo.be/belspo/NewRV/specification_en.stm

I.2.4 SHIPTIME REQUEST

Shiptime on the new RV Belgica needs to be requested separately to RBINS following the defined procedure.

II CALL INFORMATION

Further information about this call can be obtained by contacting the **secretariat: belgica_call@belspo.be**

II.1 DOCUMENTATION RELATED TO THIS CALL

The following documents are available on the RV BELGICA-be website

(https://www.belspo.be/belspo/NewRV/index_en.stm):

- Information document (the present document)
- Full proposals template
- Gantt chart template
- Evaluators eligibility: eligibility rules of proposed experts for the evaluation of the proposal
- Evaluation matrix: overview of the evaluation ratings
- Platform Submission guidelines: information on the use of the submission platform
- Platform Evaluation guidelines: information on the use of the evaluation platform
- FAQ
- Institution request form

II.2 SCOPE OF THIS CALL

II.2.1 CALL FRAMEWORK

This non-thematic call is intended to give an impulse to the launch of research on the new RV Belgica and allow researchers to get acquainted with the ship and its potential - improved research facilities and instruments, expanded navigation programme and larger research area - by funding a wide range of projects that use the research vessel, the numerous research instruments on board and the maritime areas as a starting point for their research.

Where possible, it is asked to link with existing national and international research initiatives in which BELSPO is active, including BRAIN-be 2.0, FED-tWIN, JPI Oceans (f.ex. initiatives concerning deep-sea mining, impact of plastics, good environmental status, sea level rise, ...), JPI Climate, the EU partnership "A climate neutral, sustainable and productive blue economy", UNESCO-IOC "SDG 14 Life below water", "The Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development", ...

This call is open to the whole Belgian scientific community: universities, colleges of higher education, public scientific institutions, and non-profit research centres.

II.2.2 CALL BUDGET

The maximum available budget for this call is 5 million €.

II.2.3 PROJECT TYPES

Projects can be submitted by a **network** of researchers or by a **single team** from one research institution.

II.2.3.1 NETWORK PROJECTS

Network projects are submitted by a **network**, composed of at least two partners from different eligible Belgian scientific institutions.

The project may require specific or punctual expertise, which can be delivered in the form of **subcontracting**.

Networks jointly share obligations and responsibilities during the implementation of the project. The project should be fairly balanced (see budget rules), even if different partners may have different tasks and subsequently different budgets.

The participation of **Federal Scientific Institutions** and the cooperation between research partners of **different Communities or Regions** is encouraged. At equal scientific quality between the proposals submitted, priority will be given to networks in which one or more FSIs are involved. In addition, preference will be given to proposals composed of partners from different communities and/or that cover the Belgian territory.

If it offers an added value to the project and to the development of Belgian expertise, applicants may propose a **cooperation with non-Belgian universities or public research institutes** (except for international institutions such as the Joint Research Centre). The international collaboration (all international partners together) is limited to a maximum of 15% of the total proposal budget and will take place on a co-funding basis of maximum 15% financed by BELSPO. The non-Belgian partner is responsible for the rest of the co-funding, from other sources, for at least 85%.

Note: in the implementation of the project (one of) the Belgian project partner(s) will be responsible for the follow-up of the tasks carried out by the international partner(s) and will also be responsible for the flow of information to and from the international partner(s). The budget allocated for the international partner will contractually be added to the budget of this Belgian partner.

It is the responsibility of the Belgian partner(s) to check the eligibility of the international research partner(s).

The programme promotes **equality between men and women in research**. The projects should therefore seek for a balanced network composition.
A **coordinator** (belonging to a Belgian research institute) must be appointed in each proposal. The coordinator shall:

- Coordinate all activities to be carried out in the framework of the project;
- Coordinate the internal meetings between the network members;
- Coordinate the meetings with the Follow-up Committee and write the reports of these meetings;
- Coordinate the production of the interim and final project reports intended for BELSPO;
- Inform BELSPO of any problems that might hinder the implementation of the project;
- Coordinate the synthesis and translation of the research results, with a view to applications and support for decision-making;
- Coordinate the publication and dissemination of the research results;
- Organise meetings related to the project's progress between the network and BELSPO.

The maximum project budget set for this type of projects is 1M€.

II.2.3.2 SINGLE TEAM PROJECTS

Single team projects are submitted by a partner from one eligible Belgian scientific institution.

The project may require specific or punctual expertise, which can be delivered in the form of **subcontracting**.

The maximum project budget set for this type of projects is 500 K€.

II.2.4 PROJECT START AND DURATION

The projects selected within the context of the current call will start 15 December 2021.

Projects can have a duration of 2, 3 or 4 years.

II.2.5 INDICATIVE CALENDAR OF THE CALL

The calendar for the call for proposals is as follows:

Launch of the call	end June - beginning July 2021
Deadline expression of interest	Tuesday 27 July 2021 @ 14h00
Deadline full proposals	Tuesday 14 September 2021 @ 14h00
Evaluation (remote + panel)	mid September - mid November 2021
Start projects	15 December 2021

III CALL PROCEDURE

III.1 SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

III.1.1 PHASE 1 – EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

An **Expression of Interest** must be submitted**.**

Prior to submitting a proposal, applicants **must first submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) via the online SUBMISSION Platform (https://belgica.belspo.be/).** If the EoI has not been submitted in time, it will be impossible to submit a full proposal. EoIs do not constitute a step in the evaluation process; they will be used by BELSPO to seek foreign experts for the evaluation of the research proposals.

The EoI will contain:

- The title and acronym of the project
- A brief description of the intended project
- The name and contact details of the foreseen partner(s) (if applicable)
- The name and contact details of 4-6 scientific experts capable of assessing the proposal. See also document 'Evaluators eligibility'.
- The name and contact details of 2 non-grata scientific experts that will be excluded from the evaluation of the proposal (optional).
- 6 keywords

The description of the project is understood as an early stage of reflexion. The content of the description in the full proposal may vary from that of the EoI to some extent. However, it cannot diverge to the point that the expertise mobilised for the evaluation of the proposal will become irrelevant. Changes concerning the partners (including the coordinator) are accepted. Acronym and keywords must remain the same.

Deadline for the Expression of Interest:

Tuesday 27 July 2021 @ 14h00

Submitting an EoI before the deadline is a mandatory condition to submit a full proposal.

III.1.2 PHASE 2 – FULL PROPOSAL

Applicants **must submit the Full Proposal using the templates via the online SUBMISSION Platform (https://belgica.belspo.be/)**. If the Full Proposal does not comply with the submission rules or has not been submitted in time, it will not be taken into account for evaluation.

The proposal will contain (see templates):

- The title, acronym and summary of the project
- The name and contact details of the project partner(s)
- The proposal description (including data management plan, gender and ethic aspects, budgets)
- Follow-up committee letter of intent – optional
- GANTT chart

Deadline for Full proposals:

Tuesday 14 September 2021 @ 14h00

III.2 EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

The selection of proposals is based on an international peer-review evaluation that guarantees scientific excellence and the alignment of the projects with priorities and research strategies.

III.2.1 SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW EVALUATION

BELSPO organises and coordinates a scientific peer review evaluation of each proposal for which the evaluation takes place in two steps:

- An individual remote written evaluation
- A physical Panel meeting

III.2.1.1 WRITTEN EVALUATION

For each proposal, an individual written evaluation is performed by a set of 3 international independent experts having an adequate combined expertise to evaluate the research proposal. BELSPO is responsible for composing this remote 'written evaluation team' with experts from BELSPO's own database and experts suggested by the applicants.

The written evaluation takes place remotely, via the **online EVALUATION Platform**, based on an evaluation form. During this assessment, the experts will only have access to the proposals they will

evaluate. They will not know who the other 3 reviewers are for that proposal, nor will they have access to each other's evaluations.

Each reviewer will assess the proposal and provide comments taking into account a variety of (sub)criteria, namely in the following categories:

- In/out of scope
- Scientific quality
- Quality and efficiency of the implementation
- Impact

Information regarding the **written evaluation criteria** is given within this document:

Section: Submission content for applicants vs. evaluation criteria for remote evaluators.

Information regarding the scale used to assess the criteria is given in document **Evaluation Matrix**

Once all written evaluations have been introduced, a **Consensus Report** will be produced. The report will consist of appreciations and comments for the different (sub)criteria.

The individual evaluations are **not communicated to the applicants**.

For the sake of transparency and to provide the opportunity to improve their proposal(s) in the future, **applicants will receive an anonymised version of their corresponding Consensus Report(s)**

III.2.1.2 PREPARATION OF THE PANEL EVALUATION

BELSPO will translate the outcome of each proposal's evaluation into numeric scores. In practice, this will be done as follows:

1. Translating the appreciations given to each sub-criterion into scores;
2. Adding the scores of the sub-criteria to obtain a total for each criterion;
3. Performing a weighted sum of the criteria in the following way:

WEIGHT OF THE DIFFERENT CRITERIA[1]	
Scientific quality	50%
Quality and efficiency of the implementation (incl budget)	25%
Impact	25%

1 In/out of scope serves only to discard proposals that are not within the scope of the Call and will not be counted as criterion for the 'scientific ranking'.

According to the scores obtained, the proposals will be ranked in a list (**Proposal Ranking**) that will serve as a base for the Panel discussion.

III.2.1.3 PANEL EVALUATION

A (**physical) Panel meeting** will be organised at BELSPO. The Panel will receive the corresponding **Proposal Rankings**, and will have access, via the **online EVALUATION Platform**, to the proposals as well as the **anonymised Consensus Reports**. The **Consensus Reports** shall not be modified by the Panel.

The Panel will be composed of experts having the broadest possible expertise on the research addressed in the call. These will have not participated to the remote evaluation in the Call[2]. The number of experts in the Panel will depend on the topics and expertise that need to be covered.

The Panel will classify the proposals into (a) **Panel Funding Scenario**(s) according to specific criteria:

- Budget availability
- Complementarities and/or overlaps between proposals
- The coverage in terms of participating research institutions[3]
- Critical mass

The **Panel Funding Scenario(s)** will classify all proposals in:

- Highly recommended for funding
- Recommended for funding
- Not recommended for funding

The Panel may list the proposals within each category by order of preference for funding or put them in alphabetic order within each category.

III.2.2 FINAL SELECTION OF PROPOSALS BY THE MINISTER

The final selection decision of proposals to be funded is made by the **Belgian Federal Minister** in charge of **Science Policy** on the basis of the **Panel Funding Scenario**.

2 In case of need and as a last resource BELSPO may call upon Panel members to perform remote evaluations, in the same way that if some Panel member finds him/herself unable to attend, we may invite a remote expert to the Panel.

3 Priority will be given to proposals in which one or more FSIs are involved. In addition, preference will be given to proposals composed of partners from different communities and/or that cover the Belgian territory.

III.3 SUBMISSION CONTENT FOR APPLICANTS VERSUS EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR REMOTE EVALUATORS

These guidelines consist of two columns, describing the required submission content and the criteria for the evaluation of project proposals.

- If you are an **APPLICANT**, you will find the submission content guidelines on the **LEFT**
- If you are an **EVALUATOR**, you will find the evaluation criteria guidelines on the **RIGHT**

SUBMISSION CONTENT GUIDELINES FOR THE APPLICANTS	**EVALUATION CRITERIA GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATORS**
• **Applicants are required to fill in the corresponding sections of the proposal** • **The different sections can be found as online fields and downloadable templates within the online Submission Platform** • **Texts have to be comprehensive, to the point, and focused on the specific criteria**	• **Evaluators are required to mark the specified criteria** • **Specific comments must be provided for each selection criteria** • **The comments have to be comprehensive, to the point and focused on specific positive and/or negative aspects explaining/justifying the attributed appreciation** • **The comments must avoid summarising the research proposal content**

To be filled in online in the platform:

Information detail	
Title of the proposal (ONLINE) **Acronym of the proposal (ONLINE)** **Proposal summary (ONLINE)** Briefly describe: • The context and motivation of the project	**Note**: This section does not require an evaluation.

• Expected results and how these will impact science, economy, civil society, culture/heritage, public policy or services, environment and/or quality of life • Brief explanation of how the project will be carried out **Keywords (ONLINE)**	

To be filled in in the proposal template except for pt 4.3.2 in the GANT chart template:

0. PROMOTOR/PARTNERSHIP	**0. PROMOTOR/PARTNERSHIP**
Proposal can be introduced by a single team from a Belgian scientific institution or by a network, composed of at least two partners from different eligible Belgian scientific institutions. Type of organisation: to choose from: universities, colleges of higher education, public scientific institutions, and non-profit research centres	**Note**: This section does not require an evaluation.

1. PROPOSAL SUMMARY (max 2 pages)	**1. PROPOSAL SUMMARY**
Briefly describe: • The context and motivation of the project • Expected results • Brief explanation of how the project will be carried out	**Note**: This section does not require an evaluation.

2. COMPLIANCE WITH THE SCOPE OF THE CALL (max 0.5 pages)	2. COMPLIANCE WITH THE SCOPE OF THE CALL
Explain how the proposal answers to the call	**IN / OUT of scope evaluation** Please indicate whether the project proposal is in scope, partially out of scope or totally out of scope. **Note:** - If you consider the proposal as 'OUT of scope', your evaluation ends here. - If you consider the proposal 'IN scope' OR 'partially OUT of scope', you must complete the rest of the evaluation. - Proposals 'partially OUT of scope' may only be financed based upon the agreement of the Panel, who may impose adequate adjustments for it to be 'IN scope'.

3. RESEARCH DESCRIPTION	3. SCIENTIFIC QUALITY
3.1 Objectives and state of the art (max. 3 pages without references)	**3.1 Objectives and state of the art**
3.1.1 Research objectives and state of the art Explain: • The aim of the project and break it down in research objectives • The state of current knowledge at national and international level on your topic • The position of the project within the state of the art • Describe why the use of the RV Belgica is essential for your research • Describe the opportunities for (new) national and/or international collaborations and links with (inter)national research initiatives • Include relevant publications (A reference section must be provided!)	**a. Research objectives** Are the research objectives clear and coherent? **b. Knowledge of the state of the art** Does the proposal provide an accurate overview of the state of the art? **c. Position of the project with respect to the state of the art** How is the project positioned in relation to the state of the art?

3.1.2 Scientific risk of the project in relation to its objectives State the possible major risks that the ideas on which your project is based might not be verified (excluding caveats in implementation; this will be treated in **Point 4.3.3**) • List and argument the risk(s) or lack thereof • Provide some 'fall-back' options, or explain the absence thereof	**d. Scientific risk of the project in relation to its objectives** How well are the scientific risks evaluated by the applicants? Do they provide an adequate 'fall-back' plan, if needed?
3.2 Translation of the research objectives into appropriate and well-described methodology (max. 10 pages)	**3.2 Coherence between research objectives and methodology**
3.2.1 Methodological approach • Describe the overall methodological approach of your project • Explain why your proposal is original and innovative in terms of methodology OR why you are not seeking originality and innovation methodology	**a. Methodological approach** Evaluate the approach undertaken. Not all projects need to be original or innovative, but the approach undertaken must be adequately explained → *E.g. A non-original project can be deemed 'exceptional' even if it is not innovative, provided there is adequate argumentation.*
3.2.2 Methodology • Translate your research objectives into a methodology (used methods, techniques, systems and/or way of working) in order to achieve the results, taking into account the different disciplines mobilized regarding the project approach as described above • Describe the kind, scope, availability and possible cost of the data-sets needed for the project. In case new data needs to be gathered, describe and justify its necessity, added value and methodology • Detail the results your approach will enable to gather (expected outcomes) **Data:** • If the project needs earth observation data, please contact the STEREO team (Pieter ROTTIERS, Tel.: +32 (0)2 238 35 83, pieter.rottiers@belspo.be). Some of these images can be downloaded free of charge and there's even the possibility to purchase new acquisitions at bottom prices. A justified request must	**b. Methodology** Assess the chosen methodology (taking into account the different disciplines mobilized) and the articulation of the objectives-methodology-expected outcomes.

however be submitted. Instructions for image acquisition and the form to be completed can be found at https://eo.belspo.be/en/stereo-iii-project-management - under data acquisition. **Note:** If, after the start of the research, it appears that due to partner negligence or insufficient knowledge of the field, the needed data(bases)/collections/samples will not be available in time, this may constitute a reason for BELSPO to cancel the contract.	
3.2.3 Gender Gender should be seriously considered in the content of the project and dissemination of results when appropriate/relevant: • If the research involves humans as research objects, explain how the relevance of gender to the research topic is analysed. • Explain how the methodology ensures that (possible) gender differences will be investigated; that sex/gender differentiated data will be collected and analysed throughout the research project. • Explain how gender issues will be handled? • Elaborate how possible differentiated outcomes and impacts of the research on women and men have been considered. • Explain how questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, etc. have been designed to unravel potentially relevant sex and/or gender differences in your data. • Explain how you make sure the groups involved in the project (e.g. samples, testing groups) are gender-balanced and that data will be analysed according to the sex variable.	**c. Gender** Assess the gender aspects and/or issues in the proposed research
3.2.4 Ethic aspects: Fill in the ethical issues checklist.	**d. Ethic aspects:** Assess the awareness of ethical issues of the project and ways to deal with these using appropriate channels.

Research involving activities marked with an asterisk (*) in the first column require the advice of the ad hoc Board at the level of their institution and an official agreement delivered by the Belgian competent authorities. OR Explain the absence of ethical issues within the proposal. All relevant authorisations from the specific ethics committee have to be obtained before the beginning of the project. When conducting surveys, interviews, or focus groups where personal information is gathered and stored, data storage, protection, and other relevant issues have to be explained in the data management plan.	

4. IMPLEMENTATION	**4. QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION**
4.1. Single team project expertise (only for single team project) (max. 3 pages)	**4.1. Single team project expertise** (only for single team project)
Provide a short description of expertise and skills of the promotor: • Its professional background • Maximum 5 top publications relevant for the proposal (indicate clearly the international peer reviewed publications) • A list of the research projects carried out over the past five years in the field under consideration or related areas (specify the duration of the work and funding source). • A list of her/his (inter)national contacts and the (inter)national networks to which she/he belongs within the context of the proposal. • The scientific quality, management, synthesis and communication skills • If possible, include web links for all the information above.	Assess the scientific quality and expertise of the promotor within the frame of the project. Competence regarding project management should be taken into account, including management, synthesis and communication skills.
4.1 Network expertise (only for network project)	**4.1 Network expertise** (only for network project)
4.1.1 Individual quality of the partners (max. 3 pages /partner)	**a. Individual quality of the partners**

Provide a short description of expertise and skills for each partner: • Their professional background • Maximum 5 top publications relevant for the proposal (indicate clearly the international peer reviewed publications) • A list of the research projects carried out over the past five years in the field under consideration or related areas (specify the duration of the work and funding source). • A list of their (inter)national contacts and the (inter)national networks to which they belong within the context of the proposal. • The scientific quality, management, synthesis and communication skills of the coordinator. • If possible, include web links for all the information above.	Assess the scientific quality and expertise of the individual partners within the frame of the project. Competence regarding project management and coordination of work packages should be taken into account, including management, synthesis and communication skills of the coordinator.
4.1.2 Adequacy and added value of the partnership in addressing the topic (max. 1.5 pages) Argument the motivation of choosing this network in addressing the topic of the proposal. The different dimensions of the added value in a partnership can be seen as (non-exhaustive list): • Complementarity of expertise among partners • Complementarity of disciplines and way of working (multi, inter) to properly cover the project objectives • Coverage of the Belgian territory, its population and institutions (whenever relevant) • Development of new expertise and competences (new techniques, knowledge, way of working…) in Belgium or within Belgian Scientific Institutions • Integration of the contributions If applicable: Added value of the contribution of the international research partners and/or academic, non-academic experts, commercial subcontractors…	**b. Adequacy and added value of the proposed partnership in addressing the topic** This part evaluates the adequacy of the partnership as reasoned by the applicants in relation to the project objectives, including gender aspects and/or issues.
4.2 Gender (max 0.5 page)	**4.2 Gender**

The gender balance should be seriously considered in the research team(s) and (if applicable) the network. Hereunder are some questions to help the applicants to ensure the gender aspect is taken into account in their proposal. Gender in the research project: • Are there equal opportunities for women and men to participate to the research project? • Are there mechanisms in place to manage and monitor gender equality aspects?	Assess the gender aspects and/or issues in the research team(s) and (if applicable) the network.
4.3 Detailed description of the work plan	**4.3 Adequacy of the work plan**
4.3.1 Detailed description of the work plan (max. 0.5 page/work package) Please provide a description of the project in terms of work packages, tasks, and deliverables in accordance with the **GANTT chart (see Point 4.3.2)**. Refer to: • Number and title of Work Package, Work Package leader (financed, non-financed) • Number, title and timing of tasks, task leader, participants to the task (financed, non-financed, subcontractors…) • Timing of deliverables • Number of person-months for each task • Means, tools, procedures, techniques to carry out the tasks **Notes:** • The work plan must be detailed to the level of work packages (WP) and tasks (Tasks). The definition of subtasks is not possible. • Compulsory work packages: - Coordination, project management and reporting - Data management - Valorisation / Dissemination / Exploitation	**a. Relation of the work packages to the proposal theme(s) and aim(s)** Notwithstanding work intensity and duration of tasks and WP, assess the way the breakdown of the work plan in work packages and tasks enables the realization of the project. **Note:** The WP valorisation is not evaluated here, but later in **Point 5.4**

• Work packages or tasks necessary for the implementation of the project but not financed by BELSPO must also be described and added to the GANTT chart. • The WP valorisation will be detailed in Point 5.4 • In the implementation of the project, (one of) the Belgian project partner(s) must ensure the follow-up of the tasks carried out by the international partner(s) and will also be responsible for the flow of information to and from the international research partner(s). It is therefore requested to clearly indicate in the work plan which Belgian partner will be responsible for the link with the international research partner.	
separate document to be filled in GANTT Chart **4.3.2 Work planning and time schedule: GANTT chart** Complete BELSPO's **GANTT chart** in accordance with the description of the detailed work plan, tasks and deliverables above: • Work intensity of each partner within each task (expressed in person-month [PM]) • Include for each partner the person-months funded by the BELSPO project and the person-months funded by other sources (see notes). **Notes:** • Partners include: financed, non-financed and subcontractors. • 1 Person-month [PM] = 1 full-time equivalent [FTE] or 2 half-time equivalents over 1 month… • Other sources of financing may include: salary payment by institutions other than BELSPO and/or via other projects, voluntary contributions… If a given task requires 7 person-months, and 6 months will be financed by the BELSPO project, the 7th month must appear under 'other sources of financing'. • Compulsory work packages: - Coordination (for network project), project management and reporting - Data management - Valorisation / Dissemination / Exploitation	separate document GANTT Chart **b. Work planning: GANTT chart** Is the work planning (time schedule, duration and person-power effort per task) appropriate and feasible to run the project? Is it well-distributed among partners in function of their expertise? (horizontal lecture of the GANTT chart, not going into detail for each partner, with recommendations regarding the length and pertinence of the activities within the calendar) If the proposal is deemed 'reasonable - good', please describe the necessary/possible improvements within the comments.

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4.3.3 Implementation risk management

Number, identify and explain the main incurring risks that could delay or hinder the project and the contingency plans foreseen to deal with them. (max. 1.5 pages).

Locate the number (R1, R2, Rx) of each risk in terms of its likelihood of occurrence and impact on the project within **Table**.

Table: Risk likelihood vs. impact.

		IMPACT				
		Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Significant	Severe
LIKELIHOOD	Very likely					
	Likely					
	Possible				*R1, R3*	
	Unlikely					*R2*
	Very Unlikely					

→ *E.g:*

Risk 1 (R1): Online survey input insufficient
Risk 2 (R2): Fieldwork postponed for one year
Risk 3 (R3): …

Low
Low-Medium
Medium
Medium-High
Severe

c. Implementation risk management

Assess the implementation risk management and contingency plans.

GANTT Chart **Note**: Information already provided, in the **GANTT chart (Point 4.3.2).**	GANTT Chart **d. Workload intensity in relation to the work packages** Provide an overall assessment of the requested level of person-power of each partner throughout the work packages and tasks (vertical lecture of the **GANTT chart**, with recommendations regarding the intensity of their activities and pertinence of participation in them).
4.4 Data management plan	**4.4 Data management plan**
Data Management Plans (DMPs) are a key element of good data management. As the data collected within the framework of the proposed research must be available to other users for other purposes, the proposal must clearly indicate when and in what format the data will be made accessible, specifying which categories of users are likely to benefit from access to the data. Using the **Data Management Plan form**, develop a Data Management Plan (DMP), in which is specified what data will be open, detailing what data the project will generate, whether and how it will be exploited or made accessible for verification and re-use, and how it will be curated and preserved. **Foreword** a. What is understood as research data? Research data are the evidence that underpin the answer to research questions and can be used to validate findings. Data can be quantitative information or qualitative statements collected by researchers in the course of their work by experimentation, observation, modelling, interview or other methods, or information derived from existing evidence.	**a. Data management plan, and availability of generated data after the research is finalised** Assess the quality of the data management plan and availability of the generated data

For the purpose of BELSPO's data management policy, research data also includes digital information extracted from physical objects such as scientific and archaeological collections, physical arts works or biobanks. Software is not included in the definition. BELSPO recognizes that software (algorithms, scripts and codes developed by researchers in the course of their work) may be necessary to access and interpret data. In such cases, the data management plan needs to address how information about such items will be made available. b. Why is a data management plan necessary? Data Management Plans document and sustain your research project by explaining how it deals with copyright / open access requirements and ethical issues, and describe the plan for acquisition, long-term data preservation and sharing modes. They contribute to increasing the impact and visibility of your research data and ensure that the way you are handling data complies with the Open Data principle applied by BELSPO. c. What is expected from the data management plan? The Data Management Plan (DMP) should describe how you as a researcher **deal with the collected data before, during and after the project.** It is a key element of a good data management. As part of making research data findable, accessible, interoperable and re-usable (**FAIR**), the DMP shall include information on: • how the data will be collected, • the type, size and format of the generated data, • when, where and in what format the data will be made accessible	

• how the data will be curated and preserved for ulterior use (including after the end of the project). It will clearly specify which categories of users are likely to benefit from access to the data. The DPM must also contain information regarding the legal and ethical aspects of data. In this respect, researchers shall use to the maximum existing platforms having the highest standard of preservation, curation, deposit and reuse Take into account that for marine related research see researchers must transfer a copy of the analysis and measurement data and/or metadata to the BMDC (the Belgian Marine Data Centre) (see IV.3 Data, results, intellectual ownership and open access).	
4.4.1 Will data be collected, reused and/or generated? Please select the adequate answer(s) taking into account the following concepts: • Data content: Refers to the type of data regarding what it contains. E.g. numeric (databases, spread sheets), textual (documents), image, audio, video, mixed media… • Data format: Refers to the technical format of data; to the way in which the data is encoded for storage, often reflected by the filename extension. For example: pdf, xls, doc, txt, rdf… Whenever possible, give preference to open and standard formats as they facilitate sharing and long-term re-use of data. • Data volume:	

You may roughly estimate this using the following categories: From 0 – 10GB; From 10 – 100 GB; From 100 – 1000 GB; More than 1000 GB.	
4.4.2 How are legal issues handled? Please answer the statements taking into account the following concepts: Legal issues: This includes personal data and intellectual property issues. Regarding personal data, you must ensure when dealing with personal data that Data Protection Laws (i.e. GDPR) are complied with.	
4.4.3 How is the project data documented Please answer the questions/statements, taking into account the following information: Data must comply, as much as possible with FAIR principles; it must be findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable. For this purpose, data must be accompanied by descriptive information in the form of metadata. Metadata is the information that describes, explains, locates, and /or makes the use of an information source easier to retrieve. Where metadata are in place, researchers are advised to use and mention metadata standards.	
4.4.4 Data storage and backup during the BELSPO project Please answer the statements/questions, taking into account the following information. Note that you may choose one or more answers to statement. Please give preference to the use of robust, managed storage with automatic backup, such as provided by IT support services of your home institution. Most research institutions have networked drives, which offer ample storage space and data security for most purposes. Consider data protection, particularly if your data is sensitive – for example, containing personal data, politically sensitive information or information relating to religion and health. If this is your case, enquire with your institution's research	

support staff whether your intended storage solution meets your institution's data security policy.	
4.4.5 Data preservation in the long term - after the BELSPO project Please answer the questions/statements, taking into account the following information. Note that you may choose one or more answers to statement. BELSPO expects the data generated during the project to be preserved (archived) in the long term, in as far as legal and contractual agreements allow. As rule of thumb, long-term storage is considered to be at least 10 years, unless legal provisions or discipline-specific guidelines dictate otherwise.	
4.4.6. Data sharing and reuse Please answer the questions taking into account the following information: As stated before, data must comply, as much as possible with FAIR principles; it must be findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable. It is thus important that you provide information regarding data sharing and reuse. Data sets will be linked to the scientific publication they underpin and which have either been deposited in, or linked to Orfeo, BELSPO's central Open Access Repository for publications. Note that the data available for sharing and reuse may differ from the preserved data, since there may be legal, IP, privacy or security related reasons preventing or restricting the access to data, or lacking of space for large data volumes to deposit them in a repository in its entirety. This could be the case for part or the entirety of data; in the short, mid or long term. For data requiring protection, BELSPO therefore observes the “as open as possible, as closed as necessary” principle. A staged approach will provide access for communities of certified users, adapting the degree of certification of users to the sensitivity of the data.	

4.4.7. Responsibilities Please answer the following questions/statements, taking into account the following information	

5. IMPACT	**5. IMPACT**
5.1 Potential impact of the proposal in light of the expected outcomes (max. 1.5 pages)	**5.1 Potential impact of the project**
Explain and justify in detail the position of the project regarding its expected impact.	Assess the potential impact as described in the proposal
5.2 Follow-up committee (max. 2 pages)	**5.2 Follow-up committee**
• Specify the functioning and role (informed, consulted, involved in research) of the follow-up committee • Provide a motivated list of possible committee members with their role and profiles. **Note**: • Each project is accompanied by a follow-up committee. The objective of this committee is to provide an active follow-up of the project and to assist in the valorisation of the research, via exchange and provision of data and information, giving advice, suggesting means of valorisation, etc. • The follow-up committee is composed of potential users of the results, such as representatives of public authorities at national, regional, European, or international level, social actors, scientists, industrial actors, etc. • The members of the follow-up committee are non-funded. • The final composition of the follow-up committee will be defined in collaboration with BELSPO.	Assess the coherence of the composition of the follow-up committee, its proposed role (informed, consulted, involved) and functioning (number of meetings, method of information exchange, etc.) with the foreseen impact of the project. Evaluate the involvement of non-scientific stakeholders in the early stages of the project (co-creation of results) – where appropriate. **Note**: Bear in mind that the set-up of a follow-up committee composed of possible users of the project results is compulsory. However intentions from committee members are not mandatory.

5.3 Follow-up Committee member intent	
Members can confirm their interest and possible contribution to the committee via the completion of a **Follow-up Committee member intent - non-compulsory**	
5.4 Plans to maximize the impact of the project (science and other) (max 3 pages)	**5.4 Plans to maximize the impact of the project (science and other…)**
Explain the concrete plans of valorisation, dissemination and exploitation of the research and research results to scientific and non-scientific audiences, in accordance to the WP valorisation and **GANTT chart** (**point 4.3.2**), and the expected impact (**point 5.1**). The target groups of these valorisation proposals must be explicitly described.	Assess the capacity of promoting results and knowledge and enabling publication and exploitation of data; the adequacy of the targeted audiences, the appropriateness of communication tools and approaches, ...

6. RESEARCH BUDGET	6. BUDGET ASSESSMENT
6.1 Budget overview	Is the budget realistic, well-balanced among partners (if applicable), and in line with the objectives and expected outcomes of the project?
Fill in the budget tables taking into account the budget guidelines below.	
6.1.1. Single team project To be filled in for single team projects	
6.1.2. Network project To be filled in for network projects Network projects are submitted by a network, composed of at least two financed partners from different eligible Belgian scientific institutions. In order to ensure a balanced participation and budget allocation, the budget of each Belgian financed partner cannot be higher than 60% of the total project budget. The call allows for cooperation with international partners. This cooperation is based on co-funding. A maximum of 15% of the total project budget can be devoted to international cooperation. BELSPO will fund max. 15% of the budget of the international partner(s). At least 85% of the budget of the international partner(s) needs to be provided by other sources.	

Budget guidelines (single team and network projects):

The project budget is reserved exclusively for the project activities. The different categories of expenditure financed by BELSPO are:

Staff: Pre-tax wages associated with increases in the cost of living, employers' social security and statutory insurance contributions, as well as any other compensation or allowance due by law and secondary to the salary itself and tax-free scholarships. BELSPO does not allow cumulative wages for Staff. A researcher bound contractually to an institution - full time or part time cannot apply for him/herself for BELSPO staff budget for that part.

The staff costs (scholarships excluded) are limited to a maximum amount of:

- 4 200 €/month FTE for a technician/bachelor (regardless of years of experience)
- 6 075 €/month FTE for a scientist with a Master's degree (regardless of years of experience)
- 7 500 €/month FTE for a scientist with a PhD (regardless of years of experience)

BELSPO prefers staff to be hired under a labour contract. However tax-free doctoral or post-doctoral scholarships can be exceptionally accepted under the following restricted conditions. The total number of tax-free scholarships per project is limited to max. 50% of the number of staff financed by the project. In any case, there shall not be more than 2 tax-free scholarships/project. Tax-free scholarships refer to a grant subject to tax exemption under the tax laws. The costs for scholarships are limited to a maximum amount of:

- 4 050 €/month FTE for a tax-free doctoral scholarship* (regardless of years of experience)
- 5 250 €/month FTE for a tax-free postdoctoral scholarship* (regardless of years of experience)

These amounts for staff and scholarships are not applicable to persons that are identified by name in the proposal. **At least 60% of the total proposal's budget has to be devoted to staff.** **General operating costs**: this includes day-to-day/usual supplies and products for the laboratory, workshop and office, documentation, shipments, use of day-to-day software and IT facilities, organisation of internal meetings, etc.. The budget envelope for this category may not exceed 15% of the staff budget for the coordinator (for single team and network projects) and 10% of the staff budget for the other partners in network projects. The amounts claimed must correspond to actual expenditures strictly related to the project, even if supporting documents are not requested. The institution must keep these invoices in its accounts in the event of an audit. **Specific operating costs**: this includes operating costs specific to the execution of the project tasks, such as costs for project analyses, maintenance and repair of equipment purchased by the project, use of specific IT facilities and software, costs for surveys, open data publications*, organisation of workshops and events, etc.... **Overheads** (***only for the Belgian partners***): Institutions' general overheads that cover, in one lump sum, administration, telephone, postal, maintenance, heating, lighting, electricity, rent, machine depreciation, and insurance costs. The total amount of this item is set as 5% of the total staff and operating costs. **Equipment** (***only for the Belgian partners***): Purchase and installation of scientific and technical apparatus and instruments, including computer hardware. Equipment needs to be purchased in the first half of the project. **Subcontracting** (***only for the Belgian partners***): Expenses incurred by a third party to carry out tasks or provide services that require special scientific or technical	

competences outside the institution's normal area of activity. The amount may not exceed 25% of the total budget allocated to the Belgian partner concerned. * *In the case of an online article published within an Open Access journal, the Article Processing Charge (APC) will be of maximum 1 300 €, and a copy of the Editor's version must be immediately deposited in an institutional repository and made public and free of access*	
6.2. Justification of the requested budget	
6.2.1. Budget justification for the Coordinator (single team project and network project) (P1)	
Justify the requested resources.	
6.2.2. Budget justification for Partner 2 (only for network project) **(P2):**	
Justify the requested resources (for network projects).	
6.2.3. Budget justification for the international Partner 1 (IP1): Name and Institution	
Justify the requested resources (if applicable).	

IV CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS FOR SELECTED PROJECTS

IV.1 CONTRACTS

For the selected proposals, a contract is concluded between BELSPO and the funded team(s).

For this purpose, the submitters of the selected proposal will be asked at the end of the evaluation and selection procedure to concisely formulate the specifications on the basis of which the contract is to be drawn up. This **Technical Annex** to the contract will be drawn up in consultation with BELSPO and will take into account the recommendations formulated by the foreign evaluators.

Adaptations to the original proposal may relate, among other things, to the content of the research, the composition of the project partnership or Follow-up Committee, the budget, the proposals for valorising the research.

BELSPO grants the selected projects the **funds** required for their implementation. BELSPO shall reimburse at most, and up to the amount specified in the granted budget, the actual costs proven by the partners providing these costs are directly related to the implementation of the project.

IV.2 REPORTS AND PROGRESS MEETINGS

The contract foresees the following reports to be submitted to BELSPO:

- Initial report: to be submitted within three months after the start of the project;
- Activity reports: to be submitted annually;
- Final report: to be submitted at the end of the project;
- If deemed useful by BELSPO, an activity report may be requested for an external evaluation of the project;
- BELSPO can ask for a report or other input at any time during the course of the project in order to provide scientific support to valorisation and service actions related to the programme.

These reports are to be included in the project work plan and the cost of preparing them (including possible translations) must be covered by the project budget.

Meetings on the project's progress must be organised - minimum once a year - between the project partner(s), BELSPO and the follow-up committee. The organisation of these meetings must be included in the project work plan and the project budget.

IV.3 DATA, RESULTS, INTELLECTUAL OWNERSHIP AND OPEN ACCESS

Foreground - the results (including information) produced by the project - shall be the property of the institution carrying out the work generating this foreground, as mentioned in article 12 of the General Conditions (Annex II of the contract). As regards existing information and data, ownership remains the same.

Each institution shall ensure that the foreground of which it has ownership, is disseminated as fast as possible and free of charge.

In accordance with the relevant BELSPO Open Research Data Mandate, each Institution undertakes to make the foreground and background relating to research data, available as soon as possible and free of charge in an approved data repository (Open Research Data Repository). This concerns data that supports the research results, with its metadata and other contextualised (curated) and/or raw data mentioned in the Data Management Plan (DMP) submitted by the grant applicant. The data must comply with the FAIR principle (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable) and must be accessible according to the principle "As open as possible, as closed as necessary".

For research areas concerning the marine environment and biodiversity, researchers must transfer a copy of the analysis and measurement data and/or metadata to specific databases such as:

- BMDC (the Belgian Marine Data Centre). The Belgian Marine Data Centre, our federal NODC (National Oceanographic Data Centre), (bmdc@naturalsciences.be), can be contacted for assistance in the development of a DMP for marine applications and/or in choosing the right repository.

- GBIF (Global Biodiversity Information Facility). The Belgian Biodiversity Platform can be contacted for assistance in the development of DMP for biodiversity related applications and/or in choosing the right repository. See also the guidance document.

- The promoters of projects that include tasks in which biological materials are used, must ensure the preservation of this biological material by depositing it in a culture collection (Biological Resource Centre), and preferably one in Belgium. This does not apply to material that promoters can prove has already been deposited in a culture collection or for which existing agreements (Material Transfer Agreement) do not allow it to be deposited. Biological material includes cultivable organisms such as microorganisms, viruses, plant, animal and human cells as well as the replicable parts of these organisms, such as non-modified and recombinant plasmids (including those with DNAc inserts).

IV.4 RESEARCH ETHICS

The first code of ethics for scientific research in Belgium was drawn up in 2009 (see http://www.belspo.be/belspo/organisation/publ/pub_ostc/Eth_code/ethcode_en.pdf).

The "Code of Ethics for Scientific Research in Belgium" is a joint initiative of the Académie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, the Académie Royale de Médecine de Belgique, the Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten and the Koninklijke Academie voor Geneeskunde van België, with the support of BELSPO.

All projects must take this code of ethics into account in their research. If necessary the Ethical Board of the institutions concerned by a project must be consulted before submitting a proposal.

IV.5 GENDER

BELSPO strongly encourages projects to take into account the equality between women and men and to ensure gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the project. The project should include this both in the choice of the researchers and, where relevant, by integrating the gender dimension into their research. All statistics produced, collected and commissioned are, where appropriate, disaggregated by sex and gender indicators are established where relevant.

V COMPLAINTS

BELSPO places great importance on the quality of its service and on improving the way it operates. A special form to handle complaints has been created.

The complaint form is available at the following address:
http://www.belspo.be/belspo/organisation/complaints_en.stm

Complaints submitted anonymously or which are offensive or not related to our organisation will not be processed.

A complaint is handled as follows:

- Once your complaint has been filed, a notification of receipt will be sent;
- The complaint will be forwarded to the relevant departments and individuals and will be processed within one month;
- An answer will be sent by e-mail or letter;
- The complaint will be treated with strict confidentiality.

If you are dissatisfied by the initial response to a complaint, you can always contact the Médiateur Fédéral / Federal Ombudsman, rue Ducale / Hertogstraat 43, 1000 Brussels (email: contact@mediateurfederal.be / contact@federaalombudsman.be).