

Flash project

Research on scenarios regarding the affordability of
alcoholic beverages (BET ALC)

Information file for applicants

Submission deadline proposals
26/09/2025 @ 17h00

INTRODUCTION

This document provides specific information for research teams interested in submitting a research proposal in response to a Flash project call in the frame of the "Science4Policy (S4P) programme".

FLASH PROJECTS

FLASH projects are short-term projects with a **maximum duration of 12 months**. The Flash projects are designed to deliver a rapid response to a pressing policy demand for which scientific evidence is requested from the academic community. A call for a Flash project is issued by BELSPO whenever requested by a Federal public administration and its Minister in charge.

Flash projects are not intended to produce new knowledge but use sound existing knowledge to generate scientific grounded evidence for policy action.

CONTENT OF THE STUDY

Objective of the project:

1. Background

Action 68 of the Alcohol Plan 2023 - 2025 to implement the Interfederal Strategy on the harmful Use of alcohol 2023 – 2028, as adopted in March 2023, includes researching the introduction of a minimum unit price for alcohol and/or submitting scenarios on the affordability of alcohol to the federal government. The mission of the aforementioned strategy is to reduce the harmful use of alcohol in Belgium as well as its direct and indirect consequences. In order to achieve this mission, a number of operational objectives have been set within the plan. Action 68 falls within

operational objective G, namely 'Reflection on a pricing policy, followed by proposals of alternatives to reduce harmful alcohol consumption'.

To implement action 68, a working group consisting of representatives of FPS Health, FPS Economy and FPS Finance was set up. This working group has been working on a analysis on the minimum unit price (including a literature study, comparison with other countries and a legal analysis). The Superior Health Council also made some recommendations on the introduction of a minimum unit price for alcohol in its advice no. 9781.

The priority of the current project is to work out a proposal for an alcohol pricing policy based on a minimum unit price and/or the possibility of levying taxes and excise duties, building on the recommendations of the Superior Health Council and the work of the aforementioned working group.

The project should pay particular attention to the introduction of a pricing policy specifically targeting the cheapest alcoholic beverages (e.g. Cara Pils) to reduce alcohol abuse especially among young people and low-income people.

A 3-month period is proposed for the study. This will allow the results of the project to tie in with the aforementioned analysis carried out in accordance with Action 68 and then to be submitted for consideration during the discussions in view of the evaluation of the alcohol plan in 2025.

2. Research domain: Public health

3. Keywords (5 maximum): Alcohol - minimum unit price - excises - taxes - affordability

4. Specific research questions

1. To what extent and how could a minimum unit price for alcohol be implemented in Belgium? (see deliverable I)
2. To what extent can taxes and excise duties play a role in the affordability of alcohol? (see deliverable I)
3. Based on the above questions, what concrete proposal or scenarios around the affordability of alcohol in Belgium can be put forward in order to reduce the consumption of alcohol: MUP and/or tasking and excise duties? What are the pros and cons associated with each scenario? (see deliverable II)

5. Duration and schedule:

The project will last a maximum of 3 months. The deadline for all 3 deliverables is the end of the project.

6. Deliverables

Deliverable 1: Answering research questions 1 and 2.

The aim of deliverable I is to obtain, via research question 1, an analysis of what an MUP entails (definition of the concept, implications of such an MUP, how it could be concretely applied in Belgium (including MUP proposals for the various alcoholic beverages) and the health and economic impact of such an MUP, with a particular focus on the cheapest alcoholic beverages).

Research question 2 involves an identical question but for taxes and excise duties. Here, too, we want to obtain an analysis explaining what taxes and excise duties exactly entail, their implications, concrete proposals for levying taxes and/or excise duties as well as the analysis of the health and economic impact of such a measure, both for the government, citizens and the alcohol sector. This analysis requires identifying the different types of alcoholic beverages to determine the impact of such a policy on each of them.

In the context of research question 3 (see below), it will be necessary to examine which measure(s) is/are the most efficient to achieve the intended goal (= reduction in alcohol consumption with a particular focus on the cheapest alcoholic beverages consumed by young people and people on low incomes). In view of this question, it is appropriate for the contractor to therefore already take stock of the potential advantages and disadvantages of each policy measure, in casu of the MUP and taxes and excise duties, as part of deliverable I.

Also, as part of deliverable I, it is opportune to calculate the price elasticity of demand for different types of alcoholic beverages for both the MUP and the taxes and excise duties (e.g. by measuring the impact on alcohol consumption as a result of already implemented tax or excise duty increases or MUP for light beers/heavy beers/strong beverages/ wine ...). For this, it is useful to check whether data are available at Belgian level to make such calculations. If such data are not available, an option might be to check whether such calculations were made abroad and extrapolate to Belgium on this basis.

Another element that should also be examined, to the extent possible within the timeframe allocated for the study, under deliverable I is the potential impact that the MUP as well as taxes and excise duties may have on border purchases.

An evaluation of the current alcohol plan will be carried out in 2025. In that context, the results produced for Action 68 (including the research that is the subject of this project application) will be taken into account in proposing any new alcohol policy measures potentially to be implemented in the Alcohol plan.

Deliverable 2: Answering research question 3.

The aim of this deliverable is to arrive at possible scenarios for an adequate alcohol pricing policy in Belgium, based on the analyses conducted in the context of deliverable I (the analysis concerning the MUP and the analysis concerning taxes and/or excise duties). Thus, within this research question, based on the results of research question 1, the most efficient measure(s) to achieve the intended goal (= reduction of alcohol consumption) will need to be identified.

In 2025, the current alcohol plan will be evaluated. In that context, the results obtained for action 68 (including the research that is the subject of this project application) will be taken into account in proposing any new alcohol policy measures potentially to be implemented in the Alcohol plan.

7. Impact, KPIs and objectives

KPI 1: Inclusion of the elaborated proposal or one of the alcohol pricing policy scenarios in the discussions for a future alcohol policy.

KPI 2: Translation of the elaborated proposal or one of the scenarios into a concrete policy action in the next alcohol plan.

8. Specific conditions and implementation

- Interim information and follow-up meetings to be organised by research team.
- The necessary documentation (alcohol plan, HGR opinions, etc.) will be delivered to the researchers. The analysis carried out by the aforementioned working group can also be made available to the researchers.
- Provision of data to the researchers to support the work: data on volumes and excise receipts per excise category (beer, still wine, sparkling wine, still other fermented beverages, sparkling other fermented beverages, still intermediate products, sparkling intermediate products and spirits) based on the consumption.
- In the context of calculating price elasticity, reference can be made as a possible source of data to the household budget surveys conducted biennially (see <https://statbel.fgov.be/nl/themas/huishoudens/huishoudbudget#panel-12>).

BUDGET

The budget allocated to a project is depending on its duration. This one **shall not exceed 3 months**. A **maximum amount of 10.000€/month** can be allocated for a Flash project.

The eligible costs are:

- Personnel costs: Staff costs include the (full) costs relating to staff recruited under employment contracts and to non-salaried staff (lump sum payment per Person/Month);
- Specific operating costs: This includes the cost of goods and services directly related to the implementation of the project and of which the list is included in the proposal.
- Indirect costs: Lump sum to cover the general operating costs set at 15% of personnel and specific operating costs.

APPLICATION

Flash proposals must be written in English and signed electronically. Proposals (in pdf format) should be sent to flash@belspo.be by **mentioning the Flash proposal acronym in the subject line** of the e-mail. Applicants are required to meet the conditions set forth in this information documents and to comply with the scope of the call for the Flash project. The template of the application form can be accessed via the BELSPO website, [Documents for promoters | S4Policy | P4Science & S4Policy \(belspo.be\)](#).

The closing date for this Call is **26/09/2025 at 5.00 p.m.**

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

The Flash proposals are evaluated and recommended for funding by a panel of independent foreign experts under the supervision of BELSPO, within 4 weeks after the submission deadline. The evaluation criteria are the adequacy of the budget and human resources, the skill(s) of the scientific team(s) and the methodological approach.

The evaluation form template can be consulted on the website: [Documents for promoters | S4Policy | P4Science & S4Policy \(belspo.be\)](#)

The final decision is taken by the Chairman of the Board of Directors of BELSPO upon the advice of the Inspector of finances, within the available budget.

CONTACT AND QUESTIONS

For any further questions about this call for Flash proposals, please get in touch with the Belspo Flash team via e-mail: flash@belspo.be.