

INFORMATION SESSION

19 / 09 / 2022

INFRA-FED 2022 IMPULSE ACTION CALL

to fostering the development of
emerging research infrastructures
within federal research institutions.

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HOW TO ASK QUESTIONS AFTER THIS PRESENTATION

Given the number of persons registered to this Information Session, questions will be addressed as follows:

- Participants will **write the questions in the CHAT** (do not raise hands).
- BELSPO will read them out loud and answer them.
- You may be given the floor to clarify your question.

Any general Q&A that remains unanswered due to lack of time will be included in the FAQ section of the website.

Specific questions will be answered by email, so make sure to **state your name and surname in the chat**.

HOW DOES THIS IMPULSE ACTION FIT WITH OTHER BELSPO FUNDING OF RI?

How is this call different than other RI calls?

Why does the call address 'nascent' RI?

How will the services provided as outcome of this project be supported after the project ends?

The call

- Is part of the **Restart and Transition Plan of the Federal Government** : boost emergence of promising RI within Federal Research Institutions
- Seeks to complement previous and ongoing funding schemes
- ✓ **BRAIN-be** – e.g. Axis 6: management of collections & **BRAIN-be 2.0** (Pillar 2 Heritage Science)
- ✓ **FED-tWIN** – Research profiles building expertise on the development and implementation of RI
- ✓ **2018 Specific call** – 4,3M€ for the upgrading federal components to meet requirements for subsequent integration into 5 ESFRIs. Funding stops in 2022.
- ✓ **ESFRI-FED [2021-2026]** – 3 biennial calls with a total of 9M€ to strengthen the integration of federal components in ESFRI RI which are in implementation or operation phase.

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The call aims to turn **research products** from previous development **into research infrastructures**

The proposals are therefore considered as 'RI in the making', nascent, infancy or embryonic phases or emerging RI with:

- ✓ A strong **development** component (**≠ research** project)
- ✓ **Tangible** expected to serve multiple (types of) users [scientists, policy makers or society]

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INFRA-FED is an **impulse action call**. Limited duration of projects (mid 2023-end 2026)
It is **not** framed in a **long-term support programme**.

Applicants are expected to explore options **to make the provided services sustainable**, i.e. by showing...

- ✓ A prominent role the new RI will have in the research strategy of the Institution
- ✓ A provision of in-kind-contribution or other stable sources of funding
- ✓ Letter(s) of support
- ✓ The payment of provided services by the users
- ✓ ...

WHAT IS A RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE ?

Are Informatic Infrastructures considered as R.I.?

Do infrastructures include models, datasets, population cohorts?

Research infrastructures (RI) are **facilities, resources** and **related services** used by research communities to conduct research and stimulate innovation. Where appropriate, they may be used beyond research, for example for education or public services.

They include

- ✓ major scientific equipment or sets of instruments
- ✓ knowledge resources such as collections, archives, or structures for scientific information
- ✓ **e-infrastructures** such as **data warehouses, computing systems** and **communication networks; software** and **software development; webservice; data(sets)** and **population cohorts.**
- ✓ any other infrastructure of a unique nature, essential for achieving excellence in research and innovation.

WHICH RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THIS CALL ?

Is the call intended to create entirely new infrastructures, or also to support physical equipment or growth of existing infrastructure?

Is it allowed that the project proposal connects with and builds further on BELSPO projects that are currently implemented or will start soon?

Are existing infrastructures envisioning new services/products eligible?

IF an ESFRI -RI



IF NOT an ESFRI-RI

Infrastructures that are **not sufficiently developed** or used at their optimal capacity and to deliver fit for purpose services to their stakeholders.

Can be at different levels of maturity.

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More concretely:

- ✓ ESFRI and non-ESFRI Research Infrastructures
- ✓ Based on **existing building blocks** issued from previous, ongoing developments or expertise within the Federal Research Institutes
- ✓ RI flagging societal, scientific or political **priorities**
- ✓ Likely to play **key/unique role (inter)nationally**; have **potential to be anchored in international/EU** RI or be used by EU/International (scientific) initiatives
- ✓ 'Nice to have' excluded

WHAT IS THE AIM OF THE CALL ?

Is the call intended to create entirely new infrastructures, or also to support physical equipment or growth of existing infrastructure?

To which extent needs a proposal be linked at or embedded in ongoing activities?

The call aims to stimulate the **development, upgrade and deployment** of emerging **infrastructures** held by Federal Research Institutes with an **impactful potential** for the (inter)national scientific community and/or society.

Thanks to development, the proposal needs to address **actions** that go **beyond catching up on an essential RI service** that the applying federal research institute is supposed to offer.

It **must show improvement of RI services or development of new services** based on specific assets or expertise present within the institution.

In case the proposal is not yet linked or embedded in ongoing (inter)national activities, this must be the target.

WHAT IS THE AIM OF THE CALL ?

*Can the proposal be part of long-term planning?
Should the proposals be multidisciplinary?*

- ✓ Requires **tangible outcome** by the end of the project timespan. This can be part of a long-term planning strategy of a Federal Research Institute. (Outcome of project = milestone in long-term planning).
- ✓ Encourages proposals to **deliver responsive solutions** to broad and **urgent societal challenges**. Only robust and strategic **collaborative approach**, bringing together multiple expertise (not necessary disciplines) is likely to contribute meeting those challenges in agile way.

WHAT IS THE ELIGIBILITY IN TERMS OF PARTNERSHIP?

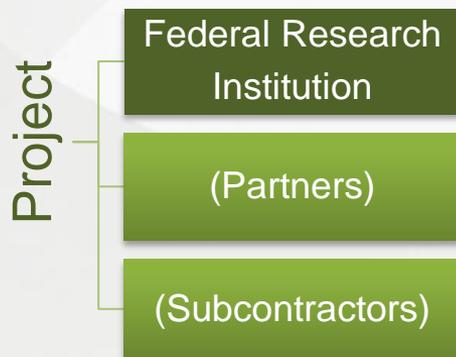
Does the call target only FSI? May only FSI benefit/create/manage products related to the R.I.?

Do proposals require having more than one partner?

Are Belgian university partners available for funding?

Is it possible to have a consortium with an FSI and non-federal institutions where the non-federal institutions take the lead?

Can the same FSI introduced 2 different projects (with 2 different topics)?



- ✓ **Only Federal Research Institutions** eligible to **introduce and coordinate a project** (*FRI list in Annex 1 of Information File*)
- ✓ They may choose to do **with or without partners and/or subcontractors**.

Partners financed by the project will be **Belgian, public and conduct Research**. Other partners (i.e. (inter)national partners) may partake in the project as non-funded partners, contributing with cash or in-kind. Subcontracting is accepted as stated in the budget rules.

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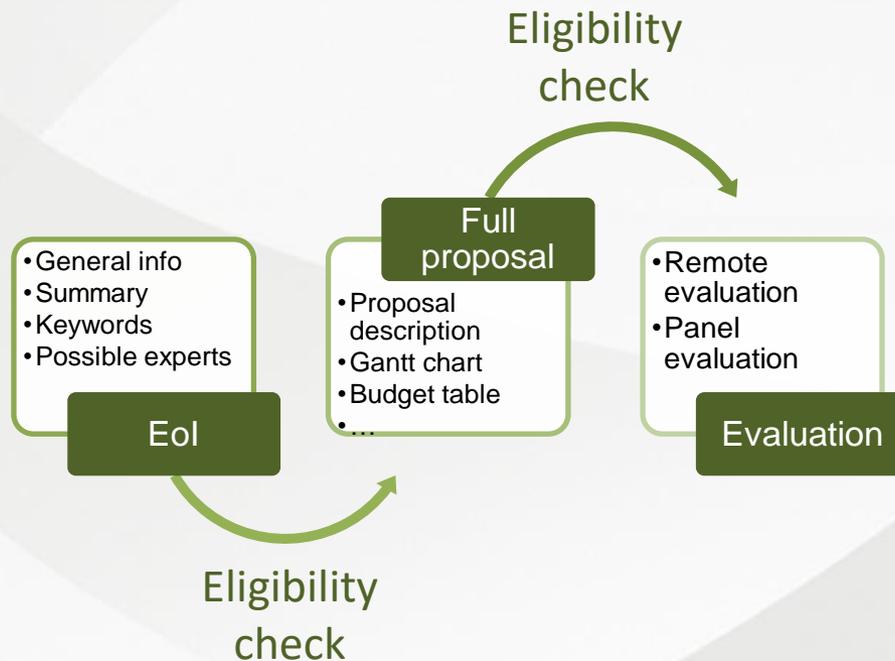
- ✓ The call targets **Federal Research Institutes (not only FSI)**
- ✓ Proposals **may have more than 1 partner institution**
- ✓ Belgian universities and public federated research centres are also eligible as subcontractors.
- ✓ **The same FRI may introduce more than one project.** However, beware that the **Panel criteria refers to the coverage** in terms of domains and types of infrastructure.

DOES PROPOSAL SELECTION TAKE PLACE ALREADY DURING SUBMISSION ?

What is/are the mandatory language(s) for submission? EN and/or FR+NL?

Will the main selection be at the level of the Eol or at the Full proposal?

Will only selected projects be invited to submit a Full proposal?



The **evaluation and selection** of proposals takes place **after the Full Proposal submission**.

However, BELSPO conducts **eligibility checks (administrative)** to ensure proposals comply in terms of:

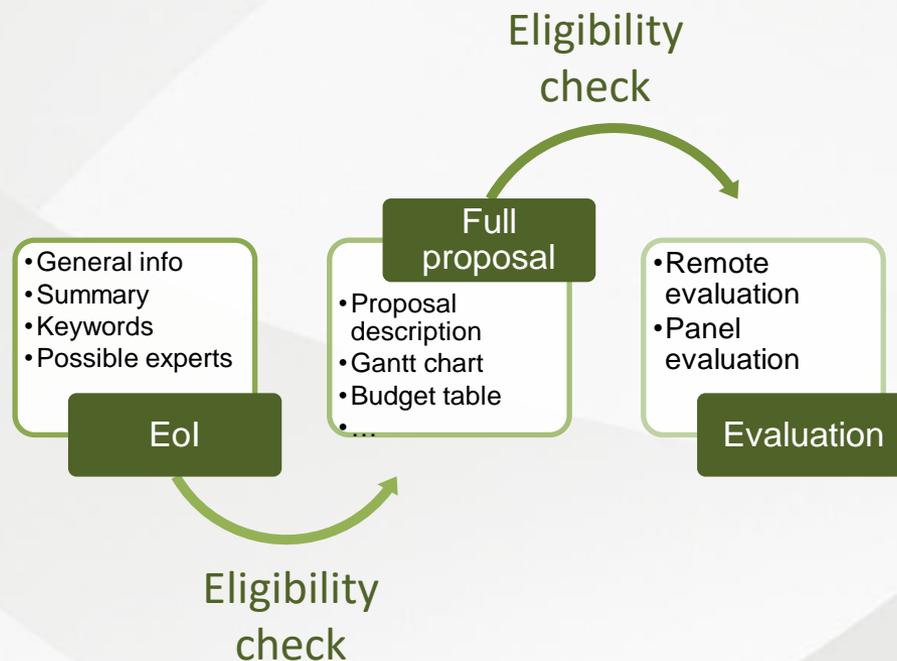
- ✓ The participating institutions
- ✓ The Research Infrastructures foreseen
- ✓ The possible experts
- ✓ The language of the proposals (only English)

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- ✓ No evaluation of EoIs = there is no selection of EoIs
- ✓ EoIs having passed the eligibility check will be allowed to go forward
- ✓ Only Full proposals having passed the eligibility check will be evaluated.

WHAT IS THE PROPOSAL'S BUDGET AND WHAT DOES IT COVER ?

Is the total budget of the call divided in equal parts per project or do we need to estimate a budget for our submitted project? How many projects will be accepted for funding?

What are the maximum, minimum and typical budget/proposal?

Can the obtained budget be freely and equally used for the salary, purchasing scientific material, consultancy...?

What is the max % of the budget of the project that can go into subcontracting?

The **total budget for this call is 11,704M€**, and there is not a fixed number of projects to be accepted for funding; the 11,704M€ will be exhausted according to the quality and cost-effectiveness of the proposals in view of its objectives. **Each proposal must estimate their own budget.**

The **maximum requested budget per project is 1M€**, distributed into Staff, Overheads, Operating costs, Equipment and Subcontracting, according to the Budget Rules (*see Information File and [Budget Table](#)*). There is NO minimum budget, and no 'typical budget'; **all projects must explain their budget and demonstrate 'value for money'**.

Subcontracting is allowed to **max. 25% of the budget of the partner** who lists it.

WHAT IS THE PROPOSAL'S BUDGET AND WHAT DOES IT COVER ?

Is there a the budget for 'maintaining' the services/products after the project has ended?

There is no budget foreseen to maintain the services/products. Proposals **need to demonstrate the sustainability** of the project by providing a (light, 5-year) **business plan which includes:**

- ✓ General management and operation of the RI
- ✓ KPIs for the monitoring of the performance of the services delivered by the project (access, data management, feed-back from stakeholders).
- ✓ Embedding of the services in international initiatives.
- ✓ Estimated running costs of the RI
- ✓ In-kind contribution(s) of the partner institution and how it is likely to change over time.
- ✓ External stable sources of (co-)funding, including users' fees.
- ✓ Estimated operation time, network activity plan.
- ✓ Suitability model (location of the RI)

WHICH ARE THE STEPS IN THE EVALUATION PROCEDURE ?

Does the evaluation procedure occur in one step or are there some pre-selection steps (e.g. eligibility check)? Is the evaluation of the proposals done by national reviewers, or international?

The **evaluation** of the **Full proposals** takes place in 2 steps:

- ✓ **Remote individual evaluation** (3 international experts / proposal)
With skills and expertise in the development and use of RI in the domain of the proposal



*There will be NO REBUTTAL
phase in the Evaluation.*



- ✓ **(Physical) panel evaluation** (approx. 6 national and international experts).
Including experts familiar with RI landscape at the national, EU , global scale

HOW WILL THE CRITERIA BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT FOR THE EVALUATION ?

How are the criteria evaluated? How is the score calculated?

Are all the criteria equal in the evaluation procedure? Which elements are relevant to improve the score? How strong does 'Impact of the project' count in the total score?

Full proposals are evaluated against a set of 3 main criteria, divided into sub-criteria (according to an Evaluation Matrix. Evaluators must adhere to the statements in the Matrix in order to score the proposals and provide comments justifying their choice.

| | Poor (1) | Medium (2) | Good (3) | High (4) | Excellent (5) |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1. Project objectives and state of the art | The objectives are not clear and/or coherent in relation to... | The objectives are clear enough to understand the what the project... | The objectives are clear and coherent in relation to... | The objectives are very clear, detailed and concrete... | The objectives are crystal clear, well explained in terms of... |

The **3 main criteria**, which **have the same weight**, are:

- ✓ Quality and relevance of the proposal and potential for international anchoring
- ✓ Quality and efficiency of the implementation (including budget)
- ✓ Impact, added value and sustainability

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SUBMISSION – EVALUATION CRITERIA

2. Compliance with the scope of the call

Quality and relevance of the proposal and potential for international anchoring

3. Scientific, technical, technological description

3.1. Objectives and state of the art

3.2. Translation of objectives into appropriate and well-described methodology

3.3. Quality and relevance of the proposal and potential for international anchoring

Quality of the implementation, incl. pertinence of the requested budget

4. Implementation and budget

4.1. Methodological collaborative approach

4.2. Detailed description of the work plan

4.3. DMP

4.4. Budget

Impact, added value and sustainability

5. Impact, added value and sustainability

5.1. Potential impact of the project

5.2. Sustainability

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SCORES – INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION

- Individual evaluation score = Average of the 3 **assessments** performed by the remote evaluators.
- Score of 1 **assessment** = Average of 3 **main criteria**
- Score of 1 **main criterion** = Average of **sub-criteria** underneath it

1 Main criterion

Sub-criteria

3. Scientific, technical, technological description

3.1. Objectives and state of the art

3.2. Translation of objectives into appropriate and well-described methodology

3.3. Quality and relevance of the proposal and potential for international anchoring

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SCORES – PANEL EVALUATION

QUALITY (Scoring scale)

Threshold 3/5

1 poor

2 medium

3 good

4 very good

5 excellent

*Not selected for funding
Not discussed by the panel*

Discussed by the panel

*Highly recommended for funding
Recommended for funding
(Not recommended for funding)*

| Activity | Deadline |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Launch of the call | 09/09/2022 |
| Info Session | 19/09/2022 |
| Introduction EoI | 04/10/2022 |
| Introduction full proposals | 08/11/2022 |
| Evaluation | Mid-Dec 2022 |
| Communication of Selection | Fin-Jan 2023 |
| Start of Projects | Mid-Feb 2023 |