



NORFACE
NETWORK



Project no.: 730211

Frequently Asked Questions Outline Proposal T2S

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Please note that this document will be up-dated regularly. If your question is not answered here, please contact the Coordination Office Agency at T2S@nwo.nl or HHAPKE@nsf.gov. For questions about national eligibility issues, please contact the national contact persons listed in the Call of Proposals.

What is Belmont Forum?

The Belmont Forum was established in 2009 as an informal forum of funding agencies across the world which support global environmental change research. It aims to accelerate delivery of the environmental research needed to remove critical barriers to sustainability by aligning and mobilising international resources. It pursues the goals set in the Belmont Challenge by adding value to existing national investments and supporting international partnerships in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary scientific endeavours.

What is NORFACE?

NORFACE (New Opportunities for Research Funding Agency Co-operation in Europe) is a collaborative partnership of national research funding agencies from European countries in the realm of social and behavioural sciences. The Network develops common research funding instruments, and acts as a forum for discussion and knowledge exchange. Since its launch in 2004, NORFACE has expanded, achieving a great deal in terms of coordination and collaboration.

What is the ISSC?

The ISSC is an independent, non-governmental, membership-based organization created in 1952 and representing the social, economic and behavioural sciences at a global level. The mission of the ISSC is to increase the production and use of social science knowledge to help solve global problems. It launched the original Transformations to Sustainability Programme in January 2014 with funding from Sida.

Which countries/regions participate as a funder in this T2S call?

The programme is supported by funding agencies from the following countries: Belgium (Flanders and Wallonia Brussels Federation), Brazil, Chinese Taipei, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the USA. The ISSC will fund research teams in low or lower-middle-income countries¹ only. Support from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme is also available for this programme. Researchers from the above countries are encouraged to submit an application.

¹ Covering 83 low- and lower-middle-income countries, according to the World Bank Country and Lending Groups on the date of the publication of the call. See: <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups>

Not all of the NORFACE or Belmont Forum partner countries are in the list of possible participants of the T2S Call; why?

Funding agencies have been invited to join the preparation and funding of this research programme. In order to participate they need to contribute their share into the budget for the funding of transnational collaborative research projects. Funding agencies in the countries listed in the Call for Proposals make that financial commitment. Other countries were unable to make such a commitment. This was mostly due to financial reasons (no funding available) or legal reasons, thus preventing them from participating this time.

Can a partner from a country/region not participating as funder in this call participate in a consortium?

Yes, a partner from a country/region not participating in this call can join a consortium as a co-operation partner. In this case, the activities of the co-operation partner are likely to be financed by own sources, since these cannot be funded by the T2S action (see Appendix 1 of the Call for Proposals). For researchers based in Lithuania and participating as a Cooperation partner in a T2S proposal, the Research Council of Lithuania (RCL) has decided to allocate funding (see Specific Annex for Lithuania at the end of Appendix 1 of the Call for Proposals).

The applicants invited to submit a Full Proposal will be asked to specify the sources from which the participation of the Co-operation partners will be funded. A letter of commitment must then be included as an annex to the proposal summarising the commitment of the Co-operation partner to the project and the source of funding.

Is there an opportunity to engage researchers from low/middle income countries?

Yes, the programme aims to tap into and develop existing knowledge by facilitating new collaborations between countries which are not frequently involved in large-scale international collaborative research efforts, notably low- and middle-income countries. The ISSC will fund research teams in low or lower-middle-income countries only, and researchers from low and middle income countries are also eligible as co-investigators on projects funded by the ESRC. For an overview of funding opportunities please refer to Table 1 and Appendix 1 of the Call for Proposals.

How many national partners should there be in a project? Is it the case that a project with a high number will be given preference?

At least three national research teams, based in three different countries, eligible for the funding from three different T2S funders² should take part. It is strongly encouraged that consortia contain at least two national research teams eligible for funding from two different EU member states or associated countries and at least one applicant from another country participating in this call in order to be able to take advantage of the funds provided by the European Commission. The eligibility of national teams is subject to national eligibility rules, or to ISSC eligibility rules, as appropriate (see Appendix 1 of the Call for Proposals).

The precise configuration should be determined by the research question and project design. There is no optimum number, and applicants should not add partners for the sake of it. All partners should have a significant role in the research. The added value resulting from transnational cooperation must be addressed in the proposal.

What is a balanced transnational consortium?

A balanced consortium must have a reasonable division of academic labour over the partner countries which fits the research goals of the Call. It is not encouraged that one partner takes the majority of the funding, only allowing a small budget to reimburse travel for the other partners. Consortia are also

² Subject to eligibility rules. For further information cf. Appendix I Eligibility criteria per funding agency

encouraged to take the equality and diversity dimension into consideration. Consortia may consist of partners active across several positions within the research and development system (i.e. innovation, applied research, fundamental research) and across disciplines (e.g. natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, and engineering).

Why should the project be led by a Main Applicant from social sciences/humanities (SSH)?

Each consortium should be led by a Main Applicant from social sciences/humanities (SSH) and bring into being integrated teams of scientists from relevant other academic disciplines (e.g. natural sciences, technical and engineering sciences) as appropriate, and engage with societal stakeholders to produce new knowledge and perspectives that can contribute to finding equitable and durable solutions to the challenges of sustainability in specific contexts.

Against the background of the minor role social sciences and humanities have played in sustainability research up to now, this programme will foster the specific contribution of social sciences and humanities to answering the diverse challenges of sustainability. Research projects should have a societal perspective and therefore social sciences and/or humanities should have a leading role in the research approach. As social dynamics are embedded in the natural and technical context, contributions from other sciences such as natural, engineering, agricultural and health/medical sciences should be included as appropriate.

What is the role of stakeholder or community-based partners?

The inclusion of stakeholder or community-based partners is considered to be critical to the process of societal transformation, and applicants are expected to demonstrate how they engage with stakeholders during the lifespan of the project. Proposals should reflect on how they intend to do so. Such engagement could include co-design or co-production with stakeholder or community-based partners; liaising with non-academic partners about how best to communicate research findings to target audiences; participation of stakeholders in activities where possible. Reimbursement of stakeholder involvement in a project is subject to national eligibility requirements (see Table and Appendix 1 of the Call for Proposals).

What is the role of the Main Applicant?

Every project has one Main Applicant. The Main Applicant will be a social sciences/humanities (SSH) researcher responsible for carrying out and managing the project. (S)he will be the contact point for T2S on behalf of all the applicants and responsible for the administrative and financial management of the overall project, should it be funded. In addition, the Main Applicant is responsible for leading the project activities at her/his own institution. The Main Applicant must be based at an institution eligible for the funding of a participating T2S agency. Main Applicant status is not limited to researchers at any specific career stage, though national/ISSC eligibility rules apply.

What is the Co-applicants' role?

The Co-applicants are responsible for the administrative and financial management for the national part of a project, should this be funded. Each Co-applicant is responsible for leading the project activities at her/his own institution. Each Co-applicant should be based at an institution eligible for the funding of a participating T2S agency. Co-applicant status is not limited to researchers at any specific career stage, though relevant national/ISSC eligibility rules apply.

Can our application include more than one Co-applicant per NORFACE partner country?

Yes, if you see it as appropriate, you may have more than one research team based in the same partner country. For administrative purposes, one of the Applicants in the country needs to be identified as national contact point. If this is not clear, the T2S Coordination Office will consider the first person named as National Contact Point. Communication from the Co-ordination Office or the T2S partners may be sent to this contact point, who will be responsible for distributing the information to the other partners

in the country. Also, please note that your application still has to include research teams based in at least three participating countries subject to eligibility requirements.

Can we list more than one Co-applicant per University/Research Institution?

Please name only one Co-applicant per University/Research Institution. The Co-applicant will be responsible for managing the NORFACE funds in his/her institution. Other members of the research team can be identified in the project description under heading 'other project team members' in the Proposal template, but cannot be included as Co-applicants.

Is the Main / Co-applicant status limited to researchers at any specific career stage after completing PhD?

Applicants, both Main and Co-applicants, should have a PhD degree or possess equivalent competence. They can be a senior or a more junior researcher, but s/he should have the capability of leading a research team. National eligibility requirements apply.

The Call for Proposals state that project teams should strive to include researchers at different stages of their career. Surely, if I include new researchers or people I do not know well, I will weaken my project?

While the principal purpose of the programme is to facilitate excellent research in addressing the topic of, an important but subsidiary purpose is to build research capacity for the future. A sensitively assembled project team, which takes account of its members' different experience and expertise and matches these to the project design, should facilitate the achievement of this aim.

How to describe the transnational added value of the collaboration?

It is important that all proposals make the added value of their proposed project clear, not only how the research is academically excellent, but also how it is essential that this is delivered by transnational collaboration and how the management and communication structures enable collaboration across partners from the beginning; i.e. the research is truly integrated from conception and not just bringing together individual projects at the end.

What happens to a consortium if one of the partners is considered not eligible?

The Call Secretariat will verify the eligibility of the proposals according to the transnational eligibility criteria, while the participating funding agencies will verify the suitability for national funding according to their respective eligibility criteria. Both transnational and funding agencies' eligibility criteria must be met. If one of the research partners in a consortium is not eligible, then the whole consortium is not eligible and the proposal will not be evaluated.

Are T2S proposals similar to Horizon2020 applications?

No, these are different programmes. The T2S programme is designed by the partner agencies. However, the theme corresponds to one of the Horizon 2020 thematic priorities and EC support is also available for this programme.

The Call for proposals states "Each applicant can ask funding for personnel costs, consumables, travel costs, equipment and subcontracting in accordance with the relevant national research funding rules." Does this mean that permanent academic staff can recover their salary costs in accordance with national guidelines?

This depends on national eligibility requirements, please see the document (see Appendix 1 of the Call for Proposals) in question. If you have further questions, contact the relevant national agency.

Can a researcher be involved in more than one project?

One person can be involved in a maximum of two applications in the current call. A person can be involved as a Main Applicant in only one of these applications.

What is the budget of the call?

The budget available is set at a minimum of €13 Million. EC support is also available for this programme.

What is the available funding per project?

The total funding requested from all T2S partners must not exceed € 1,500,000 across all participating partners.

What are eligible costs?

All costs must be eligible according to the national/ISSC eligibility rules available (see Appendix 1 of the Call for Proposals). The estimated budget must be given in Euros only and be tabulated according to the application template provided. For applicants from countries outside the Euro-zone, please transfer your budget to Euro and indicate the exchange rate used. In the Outline Proposal form only estimated costs need to be specified, but these should still be as realistic as possible.

Can I contact the members of the panel of experts to discuss my proposal?

No, you should not contact any of the members of the panel of experts to discuss your project proposal at any stage of the selection and ranking processes or afterwards. The composition of the evaluation panel will be available on the website after the evaluation of the Full Proposals is finished. The membership of the panel is publicized solely in the interest of transparency. All questions concerning the assessment process should be directed to the Coordination Office (T2S@nwo.nl; HHAPKE@nsf.gov).

The project description should include no more than 2500 words. Does this include a literature list?

The relevant references for the project description fall outside of the maximum of 2500 words that can be used for the research plan itself. All applications must be in English.

Which relevant publications should be cited in the CVs?

The Main Applicant's and Co-applicant's CV may cite a maximum of ten relevant publications. Each Co-Operation Partner's CV may cite a maximum of five relevant publications. The CV of the Main Applicant should include the information on his/her experience leading national or international collaboration research projects. Each CV should have a maximum of 2 pages. Please mark key publications which are directly relevant to the proposed research with an S (the S stands for significant). Please only include manuscripts which have been accepted for publication or which have already been published as part of the recognised literature. Note that CVs are only allowed for the Main Applicant, the Co-applicants and any Co-operation partners – CVs for other team members cannot be included in the application.

If there are ethical issues present, is approval required before submitting a proposal?

No, where specific ethical approvals are required under national arrangements, these do not need to be obtained before submitting a proposal, but must be obtained before work starts on the project.

What is the data management policy?

A data management plan should be included in the Outline Proposal. The plan should include information about the types of data, information, products, model code, or other products being generated by the project. It should outline the accessible archives, data journals, or other open repository where these products and accompanying metadata will be housed. Please clearly delineate the strengths, weaknesses and suitability of secondary data sources and thoroughly justify any new data collection to address the research questions. Please note that the programme may support the collection of new data, be that quantitative or qualitative, but only where data needed to address key questions does not exist. If the research involves primary data collection or acquisition, please indicate how existing datasets have been reviewed and state why currently available datasets are inadequate for this proposed research. If needed, data management plan templates are available from the Belmont Forum website.

Are Outline Proposals submitted to each individual agency?

The Belmont Forum Grant Operations (BFGO) System is the submission and review portal for the T2S NORFACE - Belmont Forum programme. It can be accessed at <https://www.bfgo.org>. This is the only way to submit a T2S proposal; applications sent via other channels will not be eligible. Please check the national eligibility requirements whether submission to other agencies is mandatory or not.

Can I change my application after I have submitted it?

Only completed and applications submitted in Belmont Forum Grant Operations (BFGO) System before the deadline will be considered. Once submitted, the application cannot be changed or added to.

In what language(s) should the proposal be submitted?

All applications must be in English.

Will we receive confirmation that a proposal has been received?

Yes, the Main Applicant will receive a confirmation shortly after the deadline via email. After the deadline the agencies will check the eligibility of each proposal.

When can projects start?

Projects can last up to 36 months. The earliest starting date for successful projects is June 2018, and must have started by December 2018. All national research teams within a given project will be expected to start their projects at the same time. Proposals for projects lasting more than 36 months will be declared ineligible.

Are letters of intent a requirement to the Outline Proposal?

No, including a letter of intent of stakeholders, implementation partners or co-operation partners not eligible for T2S funding is only necessary in the Full Proposal stage.

Can I submit a Full Proposal if I have not submitted an Outline Proposal?

No, if you did not submit an Outline Proposal you cannot submit a Full Proposal.

Can I submit a Full Proposal if my Outline Proposal was not successful and I was not invited to submit a Full Proposal?

No, only those applicants that were selected in the Outline Proposal phase can submit a Full Proposal.

Do the partners in a Full Proposal need to be the same as in the Outline Proposal?

Teams that have submitted an Outline Proposal who are invited to the Full Proposal stage are not allowed to make changes to the core of the proposal or the project team. However, in case of force majeure, changes in the consortium are allowed. Force majeure cases include (a) a Main or Co-applicant changed her/his affiliation and after consultation with the Coordination Office or (b) following an explicit recommendation by the evaluation panel and in line with (national) eligibility requirements. You are advised to consult the contact point at your national funding agency (see Appendix 1) if you have doubts relating to this matter before submitting an Outline Proposal. Adding cooperation partners who are not eligible for funding in the Full Proposal is allowed. At the Full Proposal phase the relevant funding organisations will again check and confirm the eligibility of all applicants involved in a proposal.