Page "FAQ" (Frequently Asked Questions)

1. How do I apply for the call?

1) First, applicants have to **submit pre-registrations** (in English): they have to provide information about the project consortia, a 5-pages description of the project, a data management overview and the required budget for each partner through the Electronic Proposal Submission System (EPSS) **before the 01st of December 2017 – 17:00 CET** (Local time in Brussels).

Submission of pre-registrations is MANDATORY; it is not possible to enter the procedure at a later stage.

2) Then, as a second step, eligible applicants will be invited to **submit their full proposal** (in English) through the EPSS **before the 09th of March 2018 – 17:00 CET** (Local time in Brussels).

Please note that it is an **ONLINE SUBMISSION.** The online form is the only format that will be accepted. NO project can be sent by email.

However, please note that some funding organisations will require the submission of further documents and/or supporting information before the submission deadline. Each Partner is requested to consult the funding organisation rules and to contact their funding organisation contact point (FCP). See the list [here].

You can have access to the FCP list and download the pre-registration and proposal application forms for information on both [Belmont Forum] and [BiodivERsA] websites. Please note that their format might be slightly modified to fit the online EPSS.

2. In which language(s) can the pre-registrations and full-proposals be written?

Proposals must be written in English only.

3. What is the timetable for the call?

01 December 2017 – 17:00 CET: Deadline for the submission of pre-registrations (MANDATORY).

09 March 2018 – 17:00 CET: Deadline for the submission of the full-proposals.

In July 2018: Recommendation for funding projects by the Group of funding organisations participating in this call (GPC).

The deadlines for submission of pre-registrations and full-proposals are fixed.

4. Is the information entered in the pre-proposal form binding?

The information given in the pre-registrations is binding.

The eligibility of pre-registrations will be checked by the Group of funding organisations (GPC). No changes regarding the proposals contents will thus be allowed between the pre-registrations and full proposals.

A limited number of changes in Partners can be allowed by the GPC (maximum 2). Regarding the budget, a maximum change of 10% can be allowed, except if the changes are requested by the funding organisation contact point (FCP), in which case the cap does not apply. **A detailed justification of the changes will have to be**

communicated to the theme program office (TPO, Call Secretariat) by the project coordinator as soon as possible.

5. Which document should be submitted for pre-registration and full proposal?
Please note that only one .PDF file can be uploaded (i.e. in both cases it should contain the project description including CVs, and data management section; for full-proposals it should also include the time schedule and working programme). If you upload more than one file, the first file uploaded will be erased and will not be evaluated. Other file's types than .PDF are not accepted.

Letters of support are not requested (except for self-financed partner who have to provide evidence that their organisations will support their activities - see question 8.)

6. Who can apply?
The call is **open for any eligible research organisations**. National/regional eligibility criteria (see funding organisations' rules on Belmont Forum and BiodivERsA websites) apply to research organisations and for participation by the private sector (profit and non-profit).
The main applicant (project coordinator) must be employed by an eligible organisation in one of the countries participating in the call.

We draw your attention on the fact that **compliance with funding organisation eligibility criteria and rules (e.g. eligible budget items) is mandatory**; it is thus strongly recommended that applicants approach their respective Funding organisation Contact Point to make sure they respect all the eligibility criteria and rules (contact list and main Funding organisations' rules are available in the call documents published on the Belmont Forum and BiodivERsA websites).

Only eligible pre-registrations will be invited to submit full-proposals and only eligible full-proposals will be evaluated by an independent Panel of experts (PoE) and international external reviewers.

7. Can a researcher participate in several proposals submitted?
There are no rules at the level of the Call regarding the number of proposals in which a partner can be included.
However, we draw you attention on the fact that some Funding Organisations have specific rules for this aspect. Please make sure that each national team will follow its relevant national rules. Specific questions should be addressed to the Funding organisation Contact Points (list available on the Belmont Forum and BiodivERsA websites).

8. What is the minimum size of the Consortium?
The project proposal have to involve teams from **at least three different countries participating in the joint call** and have to be supported by at least three different funders.

In addition **consortia are highly encouraged to involve at least two teams from two different EU Member States or H2020 Associated Countries to be eligible for EC funding** (here: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey).

9. What should be the size of a project (in terms of partners and resources)? Is there a maximum budget per project?

Apart from the obligation to form consortia of teams from a sufficient number of countries participating to the call (see question 8.), there are no pre-requisite regarding the size of the projects. However, keep in mind that such transnational programme aims at supporting medium size research projects (here typically 5-6 countries) though this remains flexible.

There are no rules regarding a minimum or maximum budget per proposal. Projects will be evaluated on their general coherence, and on the adequacy of the funding request compared to the scientific objectives. However, funding requirements for a given project should be reasonable as compared to total amount of funding planned for a given funding organisation.

Moreover, please note that some Funding Organisations have defined minimum and/or maximum amount per partners or per project in their Funding Organisations' rules. Please make sure to follow these rules. Specific questions should be addressed to the Funding organisation Contact Points (list available on the [Belmont Forum](#) and [BiodivERsA](#) websites).

In case of a too high financial pressure on a participating country due to the high number of teams from this country in the submitted applications, the applicants may be asked to adjust downward their budget.

10. Which countries/regions can participate to the Belmont Forum and BiodivERsA joint call?

The Belmont Forum and BiodivERsA joint call is open to Partners from the countries/regions with a national/regional funding organisation participating to the call, namely **Argentina, Austria, Belgium#, Brazil (State of Sao Paulo only), Bulgaria, Canada, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Ivory Coast, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United States of America.**
 # confirmed for the Wallonia-Brussels Federation; decision for the federal level still pending

Each funding organisation participating to the call will fund its national/regional research groups.

11. How can countries from low income and lower middle-income countries participate in a proposal?
Some Funding organisations may define **specific funding rules allowing the funding of teams from low-income and lower-middle income countries** (see World Bank lists).
This information is detailed in the Funding organisations' rules. If you would like to use this opportunity, please make sure to contact your Funding Organisation Contact Point.

Please be aware that the main applicant (coordinator) must be employed by an eligible organisation in one of the countries participating to the call.

12. How long should the project last?
The project duration is 3 years maximum, with no extension possible.

13. I have question about the research themes and call themes
For reasons of fairness and equity, the Theme programme office (TPO, Call Secretariat) and the funding organisation contact points of the call cannot answer questions related to the research themes of the proposals, i.e. whether these are in adequacy with the call text).

Potential applicants are advised to take careful note of the aims and scope of the call as described in the "Announcement of Opportunity" document. Applicants are strongly advised to assess the relevance of their proposed research against the thematic priorities set forth in the scientific text of the call.

Please note that all proposals should
- Explicitly address a scenario dimension, taking into account the following definition of scenarios: "Scenarios of biodiversity and ecosystem services are the outputs of the combination of scenarios of indirect drivers and direct drivers — such as land use change, invasive alien species, overexploitation, climate change or pollution — and models of impacts of these drivers on biodiversity and ecosystem services."
- Address at least one of the two (non-exclusive) priorities of the call, i.e. (1) Development and application of scenarios of biodiversity and ecosystem services across spatial scales of relevance to multiple types of decisions; (2) Consideration of multiple dimensions of biodiversity and ecosystem services in biodiversity scenarios.

14. What is meant by Stakeholder engagement?
While projects will have to be academically excellent, they should also explicitly engage stakeholders (e.g. managers and users in the field, businesses, policy actors, local administrations, citizens…), in order to maximise the societal benefits of this research. This may include co-design of projects with stakeholders, analysing stakeholders' needs and preferences and other relevant societal (e.g. governance) aspects through social/economic science approaches as well as developing practical management tools, guidelines, knowledge bases, etc. to be directly used by or in relation with stakeholders. For this, **it is highly recommended to use the**

BiodivERsA Stakeholder Engagement Handbook as source of guidance (cf. http://www.biodiversa.org/702).

In the proposal, applicants should detail how stakeholders will be engaged in the project: who may benefit from or make use of the research, how they might benefit from and/or make use of the research, and methods for engaging with stakeholders and exchanging / disseminating data/knowledge/skills in the most effective and appropriate manner.

Capacity building and participatory approaches are also encouraged, in particular for scenario building in which multiple stakeholders explore different trajectories of development and adaptation for usefulness, accuracy and appropriation. This should increase the valorisation of research results, including the mobilization of scenarios and models to improve policy interventions and management practices for biodiversity and ecosystem services. In particular, using stakeholder input is critical to define contrasting scenarios, desirable or on the contrary feared endpoints, plausible socio-economic development pathways (e.g., IPCC SRES, MA scenarios, Global Biodiversity Outlook, and IPBES assessments and relevant policy tools), tests of specific policy or management actions, and "back-casting approaches" (i.e., working backwards from defined future endpoints).

15. What is the signification of International Added Value?

International added value is the value resulting from the international research project, which is additional to the value that would have resulted from research projects funded at national level. The added value may vary, depending on the type of project, and there can be various answers to this question.

International added value may include: relevance to international policy statements including IPBES, legislative framework or management plans; clear added value to national research projects across the world by linking expertise and efforts across national teams and across studied areas and research models; bringing about comparisons at the local level between researchers and stakeholders who are not used to work together; standardization of methods; learning from models applied to countries outside of the countries involved; general increase of common knowledge in biodiversity relative to the themes of the call, etc.

16. What is meant by Data policy?

Applicants are required to produce and implement an **open access data management plan** to enable the sharing of research data. Preliminary data management plans are part of the pre-registrations and full proposals and are included in the evaluation as part of the criteria on quality/efficiency of the implementation. Additional details are available in the data policy annex downloadable here.

A recommendation is that the data generated by the projects should be as open as possible, though with restricted or closed access where appropriate and necessary. For more information, please **refer to the Belmont Forum data principles**: https://www.belmontforum.org/news/belmont-forum-adopts-open-data-principles-for-environmental-change-research/

17. Is it necessary to provide a Consortium Agreement with the full-proposal?

No Consortium Agreement must be submitted with the full-proposal form. However, please note that after project selection, some funding organisations may require from the project partners selected for funding to establish a project consortium agreement. The requirement will thus apply to all the project partners, even if their respective funding organisation does not require a project consortium agreement.

18. Who can I contact if I have further question?
First and foremost, please consult all the documents of the call (i.e. complete announcement of opportunity including research priorities and rules and procedures including assessment criteria; pre-registration and submission forms) on the [Belmont Forum](#) and [BiodivERsA](#) websites. You will also find there the lists of Funding organisations' rules and Funding organisation Contact Points (FCPs).

- If you are looking for a Research Partner for your Project or for a Project to join, please do not hesitate to use the BiodivERsA/Belmont Forum [Partner Search Tool](#).

- **For specific questions related to the budget, criteria and rules of your funding organisation**, please consult your Funding organisation's rules. Each research team is highly encouraged to contact its FCP before submitting a proposal.

- **For general information on the call**, please contact the Theme Programme Office (TPO): Sophie GERMANN, sophie.germann@agencerecherche.fr
  Postal address of the Theme Programme Office:
  Agence Nationale de la Recherche
  A l'attention de Sophie Germann
  Département EERB
  50, avenue Daumesnil
  75012 PARIS, FRANCE

- **For technical questions regarding the submission of your proposal**, please contact the TPO or the EPSS technical helpdesk: Taavi Tiirik, biodivscen@etag.ee