Thematic call for research projects in the field of the circular economy

Objective & Research Topics

The Policy Note Economy, Science Policy and Innovation contains the transversal objective 'Sustainable growth thanks to a knowledge-driven circular economy' that indicates the use of policy actions for research, innovation and entrepreneurship to support the realisation of the circular economy.

On top of the impulse funding via Vlaamse Veerkracht (Flemish Resilience), €5 million will be allocated annually from 2023 for research projects in the field of the circular economy. Part of these funds will be used by the FWO to organise a thematic project call.

This call will be open to strategic basic research projects within the six work agendas of Vlaanderen Circulair (circular building, chemistry/plastics, circular manufacturing industry, water cycles, bio-economy and food chains).

A total of €3 million is being provided for this biennial call (€1.5 million annually) which will ensure a high success rate.

The aim of the research projects is to start from technological developments with high potential for economic or societal valorisation that still have a low TRL level.

Selection Criteria

Applications are evaluated based on the following criteria:

1° the scientific quality of the project proposal. This is evaluated based on the following criteria:
   a) the proposal includes innovative strategic basic research and has a high potential scientific impact;
   b) the effectiveness and quality of the research approach, the project planning, the work programme and the planned project management;
   c) the expertise and scientific experience of the consortium;
   d) The interdisciplinary project approach makes a convincing contribution to the achievement of the envisaged scientific breakthrough;

2° the utility perspectives of the project proposal, more specifically the potential uses of the results in the longer term and after further research by economic, social or governmental actors. These are evaluated based on the following criteria:
   a) The importance and extent of the anticipated socio-economic valorisation potential in Flanders and internationally;
b) The quality of the proposed strategy and approach to support further economic or societal use of research results;
c) the consortium’s expertise and experience in transferring research results to economic or societal actors.

Applicant Profile and Conditions

- A project proposal is submitted by a principal investigator affiliated with one of the five universities in the Flemish Community or/and a Flemish research institution (e.g. VITO, VIB, IMEC, Vito, VLIZ, Flemish university colleges, Flemish scientific institutions funded by the state, etc.)

- In addition to the above institutions, non-Flemish research institutions can participate in the consortium for up to 20% of the budget, provided it is demonstrated that their participation as partner is necessary to ensure the proper execution of the project and the achievement of the project utilization objectives.

- A project proposal is submitted in a consortium (two or more eligible institutions).

- Each legal entity participating in the consortium must meet the definition of a research institution (i.e. a research and knowledge-dissemination organisation) as set out in Article 2(83) of Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014).

- A researcher can participate in only one consortium, either as principal investigator or as co-investigator. Consequently, your name in as principal investigator or co-investigator can appear only once in this entire call.

Budget

The eligible costs under this call are as follows:

- Personnel costs
- Operational costs (including subcontracting up to 30% of the total budget, and small equipment of less than €20,000).
- The overhead percentage allocated to the research institutions is 17%.

The maximum available budget per project is €425,000 for a maximum project duration of 24 months.

Up to 20% of the budget can be allocated to a non-Flemish partner, provided it is demonstrated that the latter’s participation is necessary to ensure the proper execution of the project and the achievement of the project utilization objectives.

Application procedure flow

Each applicant must be pre-registered by 29 September 2023, 17:00. For this pre-registration, the following fields in the application form are to be completed by the aforementioned date:

- project title in Dutch and English
- a summary of the project objectives
- Names and affiliation of all (co)-investigators.
Pre-registration is required for the application to be valid! This information is needed to allow the FWO staff to prepare the evaluation process as efficiently as possible. The information should be submitted to the main host institution through the e-portal.

The final project proposal must be submitted by the promoter’s main host institution to the FWO by Friday, 13 October 2023, 17:00.

**Intellectual Property Rights**

The project developers remain the owner of the results obtained. Any transfer of intellectual property rights to the results from a research institution to a company must always be carried out at market-compliant conditions.

**What Happens After the Support Decision?**

The FWO regulations concerning ethical aspects of the research also apply in their entirety to this call. After approval of the project, a data management plan must be drawn up.