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## Guidelines for Applicants

BEL-SME call 2017

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# 1 Background and Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide interested parties with information about participation in the BEL-SME Call for proposals. It is targeted at interregional technological development projects between small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

The main objective of the BEL-SME programme is to strengthen the competitive capacity of SMEs by:

- increasing collaboration between SMEs from different regions,
- increasing the cooperative and competitive capability of SMEs to work in interregional R&D networks,
- helping them to develop new products, processes or technical services that exceed the existing state of the art and have good market opportunities by lowering the economical risks.

BEL-SME is an initiative of the following funding agencies: Innoviris, Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship (ex-IWT) and SPW.

Participants from the participating regions can be funded according to the rules of the respective regional funding programme.

## 2 Basic Requirements

BEL-SME is a programme which encourages Belgian SME's to collaborate through the pooling of expertise in order to develop a joint project. However, since the funding will be granted at regional level (each funding agency will fund the partners from its own region), individual application forms will have to be introduced by each partner. A very short umbrella form will have to be provided at the same time to explain the collaboration and the joint project.

As a consequence, in addition to the basic BEL-SME requirements, regional rules may apply at individual level. Please check the rules relevant for your project and get in contact with your local regional agency.

### 2.1 Requirements for Projects

To be selected as BEL-SME projects, projects must be innovative and must aim at developing new or to significantly improve existing products, processes or technical services that in their parameters exceed the existing state of the art.

Projects must have significant technical risks.

The outcome of the project must be concrete and demonstrate real market potential.

The project cannot, only in a reduced form or only with significant delay be carried out without public funding.

General conditions for projects are:

- at least 2 SMEs from 2 different regions
- participation of RTOs is possible but not mandatory, they can only participate as subcontractors of the participating SMEs
- balanced participation of the partners within the project,
- clear participation of all participating SMEs in the economic results of the project,
- every participant has a defined role in the project (subproject) that contains research and development tasks with significant technical risks, that can be delimited from the other subprojects (no redundancy) and is necessary for the project success,
- part of the work may be outsourced to subcontractors, however at least 50% of the work in the complete project has to be performed by the participating companies,
- regional rules will prevail, see regional funding schemes for details.
- other partners (large companies, other SMEs, RTOs, etc.) from other countries which do not take part in this call or partners from the participating regions that cannot be funded in the respective regional programmes may be part of the project consortium if their contribution is essential to reach the project goals. However, funding will not be available for them.

### **Regional rules:**

#### **Brussels-Capital Region:**

To be funded the applicant must be a company which fulfils the following conditions:

- develop all or some of its activities within the territory of the Brussels-Capital Region
- present an innovative experimental development project (no industrial research)
- show that the project is likely to have a favourable impact on the economy, employment and/or sustainable development of the Brussels-Capital Region (demonstrate the valorization and exploitation potential in Brussels)
- show one's ability to finance one's share in the project
- have fulfilled its obligations in the context of previous support initiatives allocated by the Region.

Funding rate:

- Small Enterprise : 45%
- Medium sized enterprise :35%

The basic rate may be increased by 15% if none of the partners is participating for more than 70% of the costs

### Wallonia:

- Funding budget of the Walloon partners cannot exceed 250.000 euro / project proposal
- The intensity of the funding (grant) for industrial research is: 70% for small businesses and 60% for medium-sized enterprises
- The intensity of the recoverable loan for experimental development is: 60% for small businesses and 50% for medium-sized enterprises
- For each Walloon SME, at least 50% of the research budget is destined for its own services
- The project falls under a competence of Wallonia in economic development
- The research has not been subject to public funding
- When the introduction of the project, the company is not in difficulty

### Flanders:

- The basic subsidy rate is 35% (maximum funding of € 250,000), an extra 10% because of the European collaboration within BELSME is possible if none of the partners is participating for more than 70% of the costs, an extra 10% is possible when the company is a Small Enterprise.
- Applicants comply with the European SME-definition
- Convincing extent of innovation and the related knowledge acquisition.
- Convincing quality of the proposal.
- Demonstration of valorization potential and potential share for Flanders in terms of labor and investments
- RTOs can participate if at least one SME from their region is part of the consortium. They are treated as subcontractors.

## **2.2 Project Duration**

The duration of projects must be between 12 and 24 months.

### 3 Time Schedule BEL-SME Call

Joint call announcement – opening of the call

April 2017	Joint call announcement – opening of the call Documents available on the websites of the participating agencies
<b>August 25th, 2017 noon</b>	<b>Call deadline- The joint application form must be submitted and the regional application forms must be introduced to the respective funding agencies.</b>
Early Sept 2017	Communication of the results of the eligibility checks (e-mail to project coordinators). The project applications which does not fulfil the minimum requirements will not be evaluated
Early Nov 2017	Communication of funding decisions (e-mail to project coordinators).

### 4 Application Procedure

#### 4.1 Project Proposal

As mentioned here above, BEL-SME projects are joint projects performed by consortiums of SMEs. Each participant must introduce to its regional funding agency an individual description of the work it will perform within the joint project and an additional very light umbrella form must be sent to describe the joint objectives and outline the benefit of the collaboration.

##### 4.1.1 Proposal Submission –Trans-regional Level

###### Application Form

The template “Proposal Application Form” is available on the website of the three participating funding agencies. It includes the following sections:

1. General information
2. Project coordinator
3. Partner(s)
4. Letter of intent

It must be signed by each partner and submitted electronically by the project coordinator before the deadline of **August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017, noon** to [belsme@vlaio.be](mailto:belsme@vlaio.be) .

The application language for this part is English.

In addition the coordinator must submit a **draft Consortium Agreement (not signed)**.

#### **4.1.2 Proposal Submission – Regional Level**

**On August 25th, 2017 – at noon**, regional forms describing the individual work plan, tasks, objectives and the valorization forecast have to be submitted to the regional funding agencies.

An overview of the funding schemes, contact details of funding agencies and submission procedures are available on

**Innoviris (Brussels):**

[http://www.innoviris.be/en/financial-aid-for-companies/inter-regional-aid/bel-sme?set\\_language=en](http://www.innoviris.be/en/financial-aid-for-companies/inter-regional-aid/bel-sme?set_language=en)

**DGO 6 (Wallonia):**

<http://recherche-technologie.wallonie.be/go/belsme>

**Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship (Flanders):**

<http://vlaio.be/themas/kmo-innovatieprojecten>

## **4.2 Evaluation**

A proposal will be evaluated by the respective funding agencies involved following the respective regional evaluation criteria and the joint criteria indicated in the section 2.1 “Requirements of the project”.

A project will be funded when all involved funding agencies achieve a positive evaluation result. The results of the evaluation will be communicated to the project coordinator.

## **4.3 Agreements and Contracts**

### **4.3.1 Consortium Agreement**

A Consortium Agreement between all the project partners is mandatory (only a draft at the submission stage). It will regulate, inter alia, the following:

- identity of the partners,
- IPR ownership, IPR use and exploitation of the results, subcontracting to third parties,
- contributions of each partner to the project,
- confidentiality,
- publications,
- duty for every partner to participate in a final report on the overall project, which will be signed by all partners in the consortium.

The Consortium Agreement should be signed after the funding decision has been communicated. Signature of the Consortium Agreement is a prerequisite for funding.

### 4.3.2 Funding Procedure and Agreement

After the communication of the evaluation results, the partners of the selected projects will be invited to contact their funding agencies to launch the process that will lead to the signature of the regional funding agreement. The procedure and the modalities related to funding will be determined following the respective regional agencies rules. For more details, we strongly advise you to contact your regional agency.

## 5 Project Reporting and Monitoring

Projects will be monitored according to the rules of the respective region. Hence, technical as well as financial reporting according to regional rules will be required.

The project coordinator will be required, in addition, to deliver a final report on the overall project, which will be signed by all partners in the consortium.

## 6 Contact with regional Funding Agencies

For additional information and support, it is strongly recommended to contact the respective regional agencies. Please refer to the list of contacts on the websites of the regional funding agencies.



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## 7 Definitions

**Consortium Agreement:** A contract between all project partners regulating the terms of their cooperation, including the handling of IPR and the dissemination plan

**Funding agencies:** Agencies which manage the relevant funding program(s) in the respective region

**Funding agreement:** Agreement between the funding agency and the funded project partner(s) in the respective region

**IPR:** Intellectual property rights

**Project coordinator:** One of the project partners. The coordinator submits the proposal, leads the project and reports on progress

**Project partners:** All the participants/partners involved in a project consortium

**Proposal:** A project description plus annexes (Letters of Intent of all project partners; draft Consortium Agreement) submitted by the project coordinator

**RTO:** Research and Technology Organisation. An organisation which conducts research or development as a main activity, e.g. university, higher education institute, research institute, technology centre, etc

**SME:** See the definition of the European Commission dated January 1, 2005:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise\\_policy/sme\\_definition/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/sme_definition/index_en.htm)

An overview of the definition is given in the following table:

Headcount (Full time equivalents)	Turnover (€)	or	Balance sheet total (€)
< 250	<= 50 million		<= 43 million

**Transregional project:** A project that includes partners from at least two regions.