

Bilateral Scientific Research Cooperation Projects
between
FWO (Flanders) and NAFOSTED (Vietnam)

Guidelines 2020

1. Introduction

Science is increasingly global. Many research questions and “grand challenges” cannot be resolved without cross-border collaboration between scientists. Vietnam and Flanders wish to invest in joint research projects, creating a leverage for scientific excellence.

This intention will be realized through the implementation of a call for proposals, to be launched jointly in Vietnam and Flanders by respectively the National Foundation for Science and Technology Development (NAFOSTED) and Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO). **Each proposal should be an integrated Flemish-Vietnamese research project with both partners from Vietnam and Flanders that join their strengths to execute a joint research project.** Applicants are expected to propose a coherent research project, in which the added value of both the Vietnamese and the Flemish partner, and the complementariness of both teams, is clearly shown. The research should be carried out both in Vietnam and in Flanders.

The research proposal must be submitted both at FWO and NAFOSTED according to each agency’s own regulations and procedures. The evaluation will be organised by FWO and NAFOSTED together. In a first step, both NAFOSTED and FWO will invite external referees to assess the applications. In a second step, a joint scientific committee consisting of Vietnamese and Flemish experts will rank the proposals based on their scientific value. The boards of NAFOSTED and FWO will thereafter ratify the ranking made by the joint evaluation panel. The Vietnamese part will be funded by NAFOSTED according to its own rules and procedures; the Flemish part by FWO according to its rules and procedures.

This document describes the procedures for the call 2020 of the bilateral scientific cooperation programme NAFOSTED – FWO.

2. Scope of funding

Proposals for bilateral research projects between researchers from Vietnam and Flanders can be submitted in all scientific domains:

- Mathematics, computer sciences and informatics
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Biological sciences
- Medical sciences
- Engineering
- Materials research
- Agricultural sciences
- Environmental science, ecology and earth sciences
- Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

and should cover **fundamental scientific research**.

Project duration

The projects, all starting on January 1st 2021, have a **duration of two or three years**. Please note that the project duration must be the same on both sides.

At FWO, the projects are subject to the general regulations on FWO research projects, except for certain specific modalities as specified in these guidelines and on the [FWO website](#).

3. Guidelines for applicants

3.1. How to apply

In order to be eligible, a proposal must meet the following criteria:

- It must be submitted both by a Flemish principle investigator (PI – also named supervisor-spokesperson) at FWO and a Vietnamese PI at NAFOSTED:
 - At NAFOSTED: To check the eligibility requirements for Vietnamese researchers, applicants should refer to Part 2 Section 10 of the [Circular no.37/2014/TT-BKHHCN](#) dated on 12th February 2014.
 - At FWO:
 - Eligible applicants need to comply with the [FWO Regulations for research projects](#): Your research will be carried out at an eligible Flemish main host institution, possibly in collaboration with other Flemish and/or federal research institutions ([Article 7](#)) and under the supervision of a supervisor-spokesperson, possible in collaboration with other (co-supervisors ([Article 10 - 12](#))).
 - **In Flanders, a researcher may participate in only one project submitted in this call.**
- In Flanders it can only be submitted according to the regulations of the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO); in Vietnam it can only be submitted according to the regulations of NAFOSTED;

- It must be submitted by the **deadline, the 18th of May 2020** (5PM Brussels/Hanoi time for FWO/NAFOSTED submission respectively);
- It must be submitted in English (in Flanders) and both in English and Vietnamese (in Vietnam), using the appropriate application forms, which are available through the website of FWO ([FWO E-portal](#)) for Flanders and through the website of NAFOSTED (OMS) for Vietnam.
- Each PI and co-promotor (also named co-supervisor) of **both the Flemish and Vietnamese research team** must have an online profile including an updated list of publications on the [FWO E-portal](#) before the submission deadline. Please note that the registration of your login/password takes 24 hours. It is therefore strongly advised to start well in advance.

After the deadline, FWO and NAFOSTED will check whether the proposals have been submitted simultaneously in Flanders and Vietnam. They will inform each other of the results. If a proposal is submitted only in one country and/or received after the deadline, it is *ipso facto* ineligible.

The proposal should be clearly integrated and contain clear scientific goals, as well as a methodology and an implementation plan. **The project description in the proposal submitted by the Vietnamese and the Flemish research team should be identical**; the work packages and budget should be specified clearly and separately for respectively the Vietnamese and the Flemish part of the project. At FWO the Vietnamese budget (in Vietnamese Dong) must be added in the online application tool by adding the foreign host institution(s) and subsequently allocating budget to it.

3.2. What can be applied for?

The **Flemish part** of the project budget can only be used for one or more of the following cost categories:

- scientific staff
- equipment
- travel costs of Flemish researchers going to Vietnam;
- to cover accommodation, daily allowances and local travel costs of Vietnamese researchers staying in Flanders;
- to cover production costs of joint publications;
- to cover expenses for material and consumables.

On the Flemish side the following budget regulations apply in the frame of this bilateral collaboration with NAFOSTED:

- The **total project budget for staff and consumables may not exceed 75.000 EUR/year**;
- The budget for **staff and consumables** of the **Flemish main host institution** must be **minimally 45.000 EUR/year**;
- **Per project a maximum amount of 150.000 EUR for equipment** can be applied for. This can take the form of matching funding;
- No overhead costs must be charged on the Flemish budgets.

The **Vietnamese budget** should primarily be used for one or more of the following cost categories:

- scientific staff
- small equipment
- travel costs of Vietnamese researchers going to Flanders;
- accommodation and local travel costs of Flemish researchers staying in Vietnam;
- costs of an accident and health insurance for Vietnamese researchers staying in Flanders;
- production cost of joint publications;
- expenses for material and consumables;
- overhead costs.

The small equipment with a **maximum of 30 million VND** (1,150 EUR) can be applied and the funding limit will also be considered based on the significance and contribution of the proposals to science and technology development (For the precise estimation, please refer to the average budget funding for NAFOSTED – FWO projects in the past [here](#)).

To add value to the collaboration, NAFOSTED encourages all proposals should have a balance in research contents and activities between both sides. All the budget estimation should be prepared in accordance with the [Circular no. 55/2015/TTLT-BTC-BKHCHN](#) of 22rd April 2015 of Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Science and Technology *guiding norms for constructing and allocating cost estimates and settlement for scientific projects using state budget* and [Circular no. 27/2015/TTLT-BKHCHN-BTC](#) dated on 30th December 2015 by Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Science and Technology *regulating funding allocation for conducting scientific projects using state budget*. For production cost of joint publications, please refer to the [Circular no.09/2015/TT-BKCHN](#) dated on 15th May 2015 of Ministry of Science and Technology *regulating the management of research activities funded by National Foundation of Science and Technology Development to enhance national science and technology capacity*.

During their travel and stay abroad, all researchers (from the Flemish as well as from the Vietnamese research teams) involved in FWO-NAFOSTED projects and independent of nationality, can rely on a travel and assistance insurance ('reis- en bijstandsverzekering') and repatriation covered by FWO. This insurance is not a health insurance. Regardless of the aforementioned insurance, all researchers should have a valid health insurance entitling the holder to free emergency medical treatment in the host country. The responsibility for the provision of adequate insurance against accidents that may occur during the stay in the host country ('arbeidsongevallenverzekering') rests with the research institution to which the researcher stays affiliated during the joint exchange project. The research institution to which the researcher is travelling, shall provide the visitor with all indispensable organisational assistance in situations requiring such steps.

3.3. Application timeline

The call for 2020 will be published in March 2020; the timeline is as follows:

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| • 2 nd March 2020 | opening of call |
| • 18th May 2020
(5PM Brussels/Hanoi time for FWO/NAFOSTED submission respectively) | deadline for proposals |
| • May – August 2020 | eligibility check and peer review |
| • October 2020 | joint scientific committee appointed by NAFOSTED/FWO |

- November - December 2020 ratification and communication of evaluation results towards applicants and NAFOSTED budget revise scheme
- December 2020 contract signing for the start of the project in Jan 2021

4. Evaluation

4.1. Evaluation Procedure

The applicants shall respect the evaluation procedure outlined by FWO and NAFOSTED. The projects will be evaluated using a two-step procedure.

1. In a first step the proposals submitted at NAFOSTED will be subjected to the peer-review procedure of NAFOSTED. The proposals at FWO will be peer-reviewed according to the standard procedure at FWO.
2. A joint selection panel comprising of experts designated by the FWO and the NAFOSTED will evaluate all eligible proposals and allocate the funding. The composition of the joint scientific committee is only determined after the submission deadline in order to make sure that the selected panel members can cover the submitted applications. The composition of the joint scientific committee will be openly available after the finalization of the evaluation process.
3. Ratification of the joint decision by the FWO and NAFOSTED boards.

4.2 Evaluation criteria

- Researchers (25%)
 - o Competence of the individual researchers
- Project (50%)
 - o Scientific added value, rationale (relevance) and originality
 - o Quality of the research approach (methodology), feasibility and focus
 - o Work plan
- Collaboration (25%)
 - o Added value of the proposed collaboration
 - o Balance in terms of work contribution amongst the diverse research groups

FWO and NAFOSTED encourage applicants to consult the [Score Grid](#), which can be consulted on the [FWO](#) and [NAFOSTED](#) webpage, prior preparing the proposal.

5. Implementation of the granted project

It is recommended that the involved researchers of a funded FWO-NAFOSTED project enter into a partnership agreement to ensure the effective protection and correct distribution of the intellectual properties resulting from the projects funded under this call.

Flemish and Vietnamese researchers involved in a projects funded under this call, will implement the approved project as laid out in the initial application, following each funding council's regulations (respectively FWO and NAFOSTED), including the regulations on financial and scientific reporting. The joint grant panel's recommendation for budget suggestions of Vietnamese researchers will be considered and revised by NAFOSTED before releasing the evaluation outcomes. In general, with the same research activities and duration, the budget funded by NAFOSTED can have a lower cost norm than it in FWO side.