Bilateral Scientific Research Cooperation Projects

between

FWO (Flanders) and NAFOSTED (Vietnam)

**Guidelines 2017**

**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. 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 out 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 2017 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 any of the following disciplines:

* 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

**Project duration**

The projects, all starting on January 1st 2018, 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 determined in the framework agreement with NAFOSTED.

**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) at FWO and a Vietnamese PI at NAFOSTED;
* 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 first of June 2017;
* It must be submitted in English, using the appropriate application forms, which are available through the website of FWO for Flanders and through the website of NAFOSTED for Vietnam.
* Each PI and co-promotor of **both the Flemish and Vietnamese research team** must have an online profile including an updated list of publications on the [FWO E-portal](http://www.fwo-eloket.be/FWO.ELoket.WebUI/Login.aspx) 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.
* In Flanders, a researcher may participate in only one project submitted in this call.

Proposals should be submitted to FWO using [FWO E-portal](http://www.fwo-eloket.be/fwo.eloket.webui/login.aspx), and to NAFOSTED using the dedicated application forms available on the NAFOSTED website. Proposals should always involve both a Vietnamese and a Flemish PI.

After the deadline, the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) and the National Foundation for Science and Technology Development (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 one central issue to be investigated, 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 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.

In the frame of this bilateral collaboration with NAFOSTED the budget for **staff and consumables** on the Flemish side is minimally 45.000 EUR and **maximally 75.000 EUR annually per project**. In case one of the project partners requests only funding for consumables, the lower limit for this partner is set at 20.000 EUR. For equipment a maximum of 150.000 EUR in the first year can be applied for with matching funding also up to 150.000 EUR. No overhead costs may be charged by the host institutions on the Flemish budgets.

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

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

During its stay abroad and travel from and to Belgium/Vietnam, taking place in the frame of an approved joint NAFOSTED-FWO project, all researchers involved on an allocated NAFOSTED-FWO project and independent of nationality, can rely on a travel and assistance insurance and repatriation covered by FWO. This insurance is NOT a health insurance. Social security remains a responsibility of the home country.

*3.3. Application timeline*

The call for 2017 will be published in March 2017; the timeline is as follows:

* 6 March 2017 opening of the call
* 1 June 2017 deadline for proposals
* June-October 2017 eligibility check and peer review
* October-November 2017 joint scientific committee appointed by NAFOSTED/FWO
* January 2018 start of the projects

**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.

Each eligible application submitted at FWO will be peer-reviewed by international external referees. The Flemish applicant is requested to provide a list of 10 potential referees that are eligible according to [the FWO regulations for external peer-review](http://www.fwo.be/en/the-fwo/organisation/fwo-expertpanels/regulations-fwo-internal-and-external-peer-review/): Please carefully read and respect these regulations. E.g. **the proposed international referees cannot be appointed to a Belgian university, research institute or other organization. Moreover, the proposed international referees cannot be appointed to similar institutions and organizations in Vietnam. Please note that there can also not be a conflict of interest between the external referees and both the Flemish and Vietnamese partner(s).**

2. A joint selection panel comprising of experts designated by the FWO and the NAFOSTED will evaluate all eligible proposals and allocate the funding.

3. Ratification of the joint decision by the FWO and NAFOSTED boards.

*4.2 Evaluation criteria*

* international scientific level of the research groups including the composition of the research team
* methodology
* originality and innovative nature of the project
* importance of the project
* purposefulness of the project
* feasibility/focus of the project
* collaboration and coordination between research departments
* scientific context (appropriateness, expertise, and infrastructure) of the research departments
* necessity for the budgeted resources

In addition, great importance is attached to the added value of the international collaboration, the complementarity/synergy between the partners, the contribution/coordination of research tasks, and the exchange of researchers.