

Regulation
Programme *Prospective Research*

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1. PROGRAMME

1.1. OBJECTIVES

With the Prospective Research program, the Brussels-Capital Region wishes to fund research projects with a twofold aim: to provide a solid regional prospective vision of the major issues facing society; and to equip itself with the means to take action to meet the specific challenges it will face in the years ahead. The projects proposed must take account of the urban complexity of Brussels and the Region's environmental, social and economic transition objectives. The development of a foresight approach in research projects is one of the measures in the Brussels-Capital Region's regional Innovation¹ plan.

The program is aimed at the humanities as well as the exact and applied sciences. Projects must pay sufficient attention to making the most of research, focusing on policy and society.

1.2. BENEFICIARIES

Prospective Research is aimed at research organisations with at least one place of business in the Brussels-Capital Region. Point 16. ff² of the Framework for State Aid for Research, Development and Innovation (2022/C 414/01) defines research organisations as follows: "an entity (such as a university or research institute, technology transfer agency, innovation intermediary, real or virtual research-based collaborative entity), irrespective of its legal status (public or private law) or method of funding, the primary objective of which is to carry out, in complete independence, fundamental research, industrial research or experimental development activities, or to disseminate widely the results of these activities by means of teaching, publications or knowledge transfer." Eligible applicants are entities that meet this definition and have at least one place of business in the Brussels-Capital Region.

If the applicant is not a University, University college or Collective research centre, its classification as a research Institute must be certified by means of the appropriate "research body classification form" (available on the Innoviris website in the Prospective Research tool box : <https://innoviris.brussels/program/prospective-research>). This form must only be submitted to Innoviris once per calendar year. Applicants and/or beneficiaries must inform Innoviris of any change to this status. Innoviris also reserves the right to examine the status of any applicant (University, University college, collective research centre or other research body) during the admissibility phase if there are any doubts regarding its classification as a research body. This may take place by supplying the applicant with a "research body classification form", which must be completed in full and returned to Innoviris.

¹ https://innoviris.brussels/sites/default/files/documents/innoviris_plan_regional_innovation_pri_digital_fr.pdf

² https://eurlex.europa.eu/legalcontent/FR/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.C_.2022.414.01.0001.01.FRA&toc=OJ%3AC%3A2022%3A414%3AFULL

1.3. PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH PROJECT SET-UP.

The project may be submitted by an individual researcher or, preferably, by several researchers and/or multidisciplinary³ research groups collaborating on a research project, in order to guarantee the possibility of a systemic analysis of the research subject in its various dimensions and components. In the case of a submission by a consortium of research groups, a promoter-coordinator must be identified. By default, the promoter of the research unit listed first will be considered the coordinator. This person is responsible for the scientific and administrative management of the project. One or more co-promoters may be appointed in addition to the promoter-coordinator. Each promoter is responsible for supervising the researcher(s). The resources allocated to the project must be commensurate with the programme and the objectives pursued.

1.4. GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS

The purpose of the personal data collected by Innoviris, the data controller, by means of this form is to process your application for funding (which implies, in particular, analysis and evaluation by Innoviris and an external evaluation committee). They are processed for the purpose of complying with a legal obligation to which the data controller is subject and for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the data controller. No data is shared with third parties without the prior consent of the data subject or unless Innoviris is required to do so by law. Innoviris makes every effort to guarantee the confidentiality and security of the data processed. The retention time will be that necessary to achieve the purposes of the processing concerned. If you have any questions or wish to apply your rights under Articles 15 to 22 of the GDPR, please contact dpo@innoviris.brussels or consult our "privacy" webpage.

1.5. PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK.

1.5.1. Programme philosophy

Prospective Research is a prospective research program dealing with major societal issues and falling within one of the Strategic Innovation Areas (SIA⁴) of the Regional Innovation Plan (RIP⁵). This means that project proposals can only be submitted in accordance with the following program philosophy. PRB supports solid, original, and innovative scientific and prospective research on major challenges facing the Brussels Region. The proposals submitted must demonstrate these major challenges, their relevance, importance, and uniqueness to Brussels, by placing them in the context of a well-reasoned state of the art and solid problematization work.

By 'major societal challenges', we mean the development of an original approach to the issues, facts and processes that have a profound effect on Brussels society, in terms of its capacity for inclusiveness, prosperity, equal rights and opportunities, social and economic solidarity, justice, harmonious environmental and territorial development, and so on.

By way of example, the research proposed could focus on specific current or future crises, and the

³ By "multidisciplinary", we mean from different complementary academic disciplines (e.g. sociology, economics, demography, anthropology, etc.) that are relevant to an analysis of the research subject in its different dimensions.

⁴ Six areas of strategic innovation have been identified in the Brussels region. One cross-cutting area: Advanced digital technologies and services. And 5 thematic areas: Climate: Resilient Buildings & Infrastructures; Optimum Use of Resources; Efficient and Sustainable Urban Flows for Inclusive Management of Urban Space; Personalised and Integrated Health & Care; Social Innovation, Public Innovation and Social Inclusion.

⁵ <https://innoviris.brussels/regional-innovation-plan>

forks in the road, ruptures, etc. that they engender, whether these crises are pandemic, environmental, social, or economic. Prospective analysis will enable us to design a range of possible futures for society to prepare for them. Alternatively, the proposed research could focus on the series of debts - mental, social, economic, environmental, cultural, infrastructure, etc. - that are undermining the foundations of Brussels society and the living conditions of future generations, whether these debts are built up or increased by crises or whether they have been building up silently for decades. A third example could be a specific socio-technical⁶ lock-in and the impossibility of transforming society over the long term that it shapes. These three examples are not exhaustive. However, they are intended to emphasize that the research topics in the PRB programme for proposals must be 'forward-looking', i.e. they must be able to be thought through from a long-term perspective, in a participatory, systemic and multidisciplinary way, in order to question and design a set of alternatives to the current dominant systems. The foresight approach used will have to open the game, get off the beaten track, take a step backwards, and so on. At the same time, the foresight approach should make it possible to identify the current vulnerabilities of our systems, the bottlenecks or shortcomings that make it impossible for our societies to develop in the light of the possible futures identified and make a whole range of sectors and populations more vulnerable in the long term. The prospective research proposed should make it possible to design new societal models that are more robust, fairer, and more inclusive.

In this respect, the prospective mobilized must be an **exploratory approach** and not a 'backcasting' approach. By 'backcasting', we mean defining a single desirable future, and establishing a set of prior steps to achieve it. The 'backcasting' approach inevitably raises the question of 'for which actor in particular is this future desirable', and what about all the actors in the field concerned. However, the prospective used in the PRB program must be participatory and therefore include a plurality of stakeholders, considering the inevitable power relationships, divergences, and conflicts that different positions in a field entail. The construction of a set of possible futures must be based on all the positions, representations, players, and practices in the field concerned. It is not impossible to propose the construction of a desirable future, if this is done at the end of an exploratory phase which has first explored a range of possible futures, and that this desirable future is constructed with all the stakeholders concerned.

The aim of the PRB program is to help improve public policy and prepare for the future. To this end, the research will feed into the political and with people directly concerned by the subject of the research, bring to light the key development issues facing Brussels society and help regional players to prepare for the major social, economic, and environmental challenges facing the region.

Scientific research, a prospective approach and regional development through improved public policies must be considered together.

1.5.2. Responsible research and innovation

The PRB programme supports projects that meet the criteria of responsible research and innovation, particularly with regard to the following aspects :

- Diversity and inclusion. The search for diversity and inclusion/inclusivity implies taking into account a broad spectrum of stakeholders affected by the subject of the research (from the least heard voices to the most visible stakeholders).
- Taking into account the potential vulnerability of people who provide (fragments of) life stories or personal/private data as part of surveys or research.
- It is important to consider how the results will be reported back to those who have contributed

⁶ In the sense of "science and technology studies", and as presented by Madeleine Akrich: Madeleine Akrich. La construction d'un système socio-technique: Esquisse pour une anthropologie des techniques. Anthropologie et sociétés, 1989.

- Anticipating and reflecting on the impact (political, social, economic, environmental, etc.), ethical issues, assumptions, values and aims of the research.
- Assessing the negative consequences of results.
- Consideration of different possible strategies and methods for limiting research bias and taking into account the aspects mentioned above.
- Openness and transparency. This involves communicating the methodologies, results, conclusions and implications of the research in a transparent way, in order to allow for public debate and dialogue. This improves the visibility and understanding of the research.

PRB research projects aim to feed into political debate and help improve public policy. Research must be thought through responsibly from the outset, taking these aspects into account.

2. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE PRB PROGRAMME.

Innoviris is responsible for the scientific and administrative coordination of the Prospective Research program. This document contains all the information researchers need to submit a project to the *Prospective Research Brussels* program.

Submission to Innoviris

Applications for funding may be submitted at any time during the year in electronic form, preferably⁷ with a "qualified signature" or, if this is not possible, with a scanned signature, to funding-request@innoviris.brussels (with a copy to epottier@innoviris.brussels).

Applications must be drawn up using the form available on the Innoviris website in the Prospective Research programme toolbox; they must be complete and meet all the criteria defined in these rules.

Projects submitted through other procedures will not be considered.

2.1. ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

After an initial admissibility analysis carried out by Innoviris' scientific advisors, the proposals deemed admissible will be evaluated by an evaluation committee made up of ad hoc multidisciplinary experts, i.e. academic experts, prospective specialists and Innoviris representatives.

2.1.1. Analysis of admissibility

Innoviris will analyse the proposal's admissibility. The proposal is deemed eligible if it meets the following eligibility criteria:

- The researcher(s) identified must hold at least a master's degree at the start of the research.
- The promoter(s) is (are) a full professor(s) or researcher(s) in the beneficiary Brussels research organization(s) or is (are) the organization's research director(s).
- The application has been drawn up in accordance with the formal requirements (use of the correct form, substantiated answers to the various criteria, compliance with the number of

⁷ For definition, see: <https://economie.fgov.be/fr/themes/line/commerce-electronique/signature-electronique-et>

pages requested, completeness of the form, etc.).

- The applicant(s) must have fulfilled all the obligations imposed in the context of any previous aid granted by the Region.
- The project must not have started before the grant application was submitted.
 - *Please note that between the time a project is submitted and its start if selected, several months of appraisal are required. The assessment process, followed by the administrative validation of the project, is organized in several stages. As a rough guide, it can take six months from the time an application is submitted to the time the project starts. Also, a selected project may be postponed to the following budget year if the budget available for the program in the year of submission is exhausted. Innoviris will inform applicants as soon as possible of the processing times and progress of the administrative process for evaluating projects.*
- The project must have at least one indirect link with regional skills.

The project must be fully in line with the program presented above (1.5) and will be subject to rigorous analysis. In this respect, the content and level of detail of the application must enable an evaluation committee made up of experts to assess the project in accordance with the evaluation criteria defined in point 2.1.2 below and considering the elements of the program framework. As part of the admissibility review, the links with other projects investigated by Innoviris or other bodies are also analyzed to avoid any cumulation of funding.

2.1.2. Evaluation of eligible proposals by an evaluation committee

Once the admissibility of the application has been confirmed, a final evaluation will be carried out based on the criteria used to assess the appropriateness of awarding the grant. As part of the evaluation, Innoviris reserves the right to request any additional information required to assess the application properly.

Proposals deemed admissible will be evaluated by a multidisciplinary evaluation committee, made up of academic experts and foresight specialists as well as Innoviris representatives. The evaluation will be based on the documents submitted (which will be sent to the members of the evaluation committee after signature of a confidentiality agreement) and during an interview based **on the following evaluation criteria:**

- **The feasibility and scientific quality of the project:**
 - Is the project original and innovative in relation to the state of the art? Are the field of research, the theoretical framework and the research problem clearly defined? Are the objectives, research questions and methodology clear ?
 - Is the work program well developed?
- **The prospective approach^{8 9} :**

⁸ Here are some bibliographical references, including, first of all,
https://www.iwepts.be/faq_prospective/
<https://www.plan.be/uploaded/documents/200808291116040.wp200814.pdf>
https://www.progective.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/GOUXBAUDIMENT_M%C3%A9tam%C3%A9thode_2013.pdf

What is prospective analysis and what is it not?

Prospective is exploratory and allows us to become aware of the multiplicity of possible futures through the construction of alternative and contrasting scenarios. It is constructed by requiring scientific rigor and imagination. It helps to promote the identification of problems, relationships or questions that are ignored or deliberately left aside because they are controversial, and the identification of possible ruptures, uncertainties, etc., which could affect the future. Foresight is a form of anticipation that sheds light on current decisions and actions in the light of possible futures. Foresight allows us to create new ways of reading our socio-economic and environmental worlds to influence the present and the near future. Thus, it is a way of restoring room for maneuver and moving away from “path dependence”. The prospective analysis requires a systemic analysis, a multidisciplinary approach, and a participatory dimension, mobilizing different forms of field expertise. On the other hand, science fiction, planning based on current plans, predicting, or forecasting the future and evaluating public policies do not fall under foresight.

- The base :
 - Is the choice of the time horizon identified¹⁰?
 - Is the preferred type of prospective approach explained and relevant to the research issue?
 - Is the choice of the spatial framework well identified: does the proposal contextualize the region regarding the country, Europe, etc.?
- Scenarios :
 - Does the project propose research that can produce several alternative, opposing, and complementary scenarios?
 - Does the project describe well the method of construction of the scenarios?
 - Are the blindspots well identified and are they taken into consideration

¹⁰ « Il faut que l’horizon choisi soit suffisamment long pour permettre d’infléchir les tendances pour lesquelles un changement est souhaité, mais pas trop long pour rester réaliste et gérable. » dans <https://www.plan.be/uploaded/documents/200808291116040.wp200814.pdf>.

- Does the methodology identify the bifurcations, the breaks, the paths leading to different types of futures?
- Link to regional strategy :
 - Does the project present a methodology to define the strategic options relevant for the Brussels Region?
- **The societal, economic and/or environmental impact on the Brussels-Capital Region:**
 - Do the expected results have the potential to contribute to the social, economic and/or environmental development of the Region?
 - Are there any results that could be implemented by the Region and the public authorities?
 - Do the results of the project feed the political debate and with people directly concerned by the subject of the research?
 - Could the results be made accessible to the general public (popularization)?
- **Quality of the consortium and appropriateness of the resources envisaged :**
 - Do the researchers have the expertise required to carry out this research?
 - Do they have sufficient knowledge of the reality of the situation on the ground?
 - Is the research team multi-disciplinary to ensure a systemic analysis of the research subject?
 - Is there sufficient cohesion and complementarity between the partners of the project?
 - is the requested budget in aligned with the project?

2.2. GRANT DECISION

In the event of a positive evaluation, Innoviris will propose to the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region or to the Minister responsible for Scientific Research to finance the project. Based on the reasoned report provided by Innoviris, the Government or the Minister of the Brussels-Capital Region will decide whether or not to finance the project.

2.3. DURATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS

The project development and execution period cover the entire Project, i.e., a maximum of three years.

A mid-term evaluation will be carried out which will condition the continuation of the project (GO/NO GO). Continuation is conditional on a positive evaluation of the work carried out during the first 18-month phase and any adaptations to the program to be carried out during the additional period. This evaluation will be carried out by an evaluation committee composed of ad hoc experts.

In the event of a negative evaluation, the project ends definitively after 18 months.

2.4. FUNDING AMOUNT

The financing rate of the Brussels Capital Region is 100% of the total budget.

The subsidy covers the entire project, i.e. three years of research.

The subsidy covers the salary of the researcher(s), instrument and equipment costs, the “other operating costs”, subcontracting and overhead costs. For detailed "Eligible Costs", we refer to the document “GENERAL ACCOUNTING DIRECTIVES 2024”, available via this link: <https://innoviris.brussels/general-accounting-directives>.

There is no maximum amount with regard to the operating and personnel costs that can be requested for a project. There is a funding ceiling for all the projects in this programme. A project's score (based on the above-mentioned criteria), its ranking amongst all the projects and the available budget will determine whether or not the project is funded. The requested budget must correspond to the workload.

3. FOLLOW-UP OF SELECTED PROJECTS

For the selected projects, the promotor-coordinator will ensure that the various stages of the launch and follow-up of the project are respected. This is necessary for the successful progress of the programme. Innoviris will provide the financial and scientific follow-up of the projects based on the documents provided by the coordinator. In this respect, the documents submitted to Innoviris for the project follow-up are very important elements that must be completed correctly. They make it possible to assess the quality of the work carried out and provide a better follow up of the project.

For financial monitoring, the modalities for the introduction of reports will be defined in the agreement.

For the scientific follow-up, the activity reports, reports by the follow-up committees and a final report will be submitted to Innoviris and at the times specified below, which are included in the subsidy agreement. Templates will be provided to the project teams for this purpose. The consortia should also ensure that projects will be represented at *Prospective Research* events during their cycle : kick- off, the final event at the Brussels Parliament, etc.

Once the project is completed, a “policy brief” must be drawn up containing the main results and recommendations of the project. It will be distributed by Innoviris to an audience of political actors and can be discussed in the Brussels Parliament. A proposal for publication of the research must be submitted in Brussels Studies (publication and/or position paper).

After nine months

Innoviris will hold a follow-up committee after the first nine months. This follow-up committee will assess the progress made in the project: a verbal presentation will demonstrate the following elements:

- General project information;
- First research milestones (in relation to the original work programme);
- Possible changes to the program;
- Prospects/applications for the Region.

After 18 months: mid-term evaluation

After 18 months, the continuation of the project is conditional on a positive evaluation of the work carried out during the first phase of 18 months and any adaptations to the program to be carried out during the additional period. This evaluation will be carried out by an evaluation committee composed of ad hoc experts.

A written report has to contain the following elements.

- a non-confidential summary of the project (maximum 20 lines);
- a report on the activities and results achieved in the last 18 months of the project in comparison with the initial work program, and a possible update of the program for the third year of the project.
- a short description of the steps undertaken, and the results obtained to valorize the results of the project.
- a short description of the prospects and potential applications for the Region;

In case of a negative evaluation, the project will be terminated definitively.

After 27 months:

After 27 months a follow-up committee will be held with Innoviris. This follow-up committee will report on the progress made by the project: an oral presentation has to contain the following information:

- a detailed account of the progress of the project and the results obtained in the last nine months, compared with the initial work programme, and a possible update of the programme for the third year of the project;
- a short description of the steps undertaken and the results obtained to valorise the results of the project;
- a short description of the prospects and potential applications for the Region;
- a closure and valorisation plan for the final period.

At 36 months:

The final research report *and* the *Policy Brief*.

After 72 months:

The report will contain an analysis of the social, economic and environmental impact on the Brussels Capital Region:

- Did the results contribute to the social, economic and/or environmental development of the region?
- Were the results applied by the Region and public authorities?
- Did the results of the project contribute to the political and social debate?
- Were the results made accessible to the general public (popularisation)?

4. FORMS AND INFORMATION

The partners take all necessary measures to prevent any situation likely to compromise the impartial and objective execution of the project, including situations constituting conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest may result from economic interests, political or national affinities, family or sentimental ties, or any other common relationships or interests. Any situation constituting a conflict of interest or likely to lead to a conflict of interest during the execution of the project must be reported to Innoviris without delay and in writing.

5. FORMS AND INFORMATION

The application form can be found on this link: <https://innoviris.brussels/program/prospective-research> .

For further information, please contact:

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