

## Agropolis Fondation FUNDING FRAMEWORK

*As approved by the Board 26 November 2009*

As stated in its statutes, the aim of Agropolis Fondation is *“to promote and support the development of international level projects (programmes for research and training by research) in agricultural sciences and sustainable development on themes and issues concerning both the North and the South...”* Further, *“...the Foundation aims at providing complementary resources for research units of the RTRA in order to enhance their scientific interaction and their international influence, in particular by enabling them to attract the best scientists at the global level.”*

### **A. General principles for funding support by Agropolis Fondation**

1. Financial support by the Foundation will be based on two types of complementary procedures:
  - a. Call for proposals (CfP)
  - b. Urgent funds (UF)
2. Eligibility of proposals shall be restricted to projects led by one RTRA unit, unless otherwise specified in the Terms of Reference of the support action (e.g., CfP or UF).
3. Submitted proposals should focus on at least one of the following thematic focus of the Foundation:
  - a. Integrative Plant Biology (IPB)
    - i. IPB1: genetics and genomics, plant improvement, ecophysiology
    - ii. IPB2: plant pests and diseases, integrated crop protection, population ecology
  - b. Socio-technical Dynamics of Innovations (STDI)
    - i. STDI 1: agri-environmental innovations
    - ii. STDI 2: agrifood innovations
    - iii. STDI 3: social innovations and the social management of innovations
4. Selected proposals shall meet the following requirements:
  - a. Consistency with the goals of the Foundation, i.e., to promote scientific excellence, innovation, structuring effect, interdisciplinarity, reinforcement of international partnerships, relevance of the socio-economic and sustainable development issues;
  - b. Value addition of the funding with respect to founding organizations and existing funding agency (e.g. ANR)
5. The Foundation will particularly take into account proposals that (a) involve several of the Foundation's research units and external partners, and/or (b) center on a strategic issue or topic that enhances the network's international visibility, and/or (c) are exploratory, “risky” and innovative (e.g., proof-of-concept studies, new frontier research, etc.).
6. Procedures shall be kept simple in order to promote efficiency and responsiveness.

## B. Categories of funding support (See attached Table)

1. The Foundation provides the following categories of funding support:

- Category 1: Senior Fellowship
- Category 2: Junior Fellowship
- Category 3: Post-doctoral Fellowship
- Category 4: Doctoral Fellowship
- Category 5: Visiting Fellowship for short period of stay
- Category 6: Grants for scientific platforms
- Category 7: Sponsorship of international training courses
- Category 8: Small grants (should not include any type of support under Categories 1 to 7 above)
  - 8a. Support for the organization of high-level scientific events (conferences, seminars, workshops, etc.)
  - 8b. Support for the preparation of application to international calls for Proposals
  - 8c. Overseas travel grants for Doctoral and Post-doctoral scientists
  - 8d. "Release from teaching duties" with a view to contributing to the attainment of Foundation's objectives
  - 8e. Support for publication and dissemination of research results
  - 8f. Support for small exploratory, risky and innovative projects (proof-of-concept studies, new frontier research)- concerning either research or training by research
  - 8g. Support to hosting pre-doctoral students

2. These categories are further defined in the attached table which also outlines the selection and specific eligibility criteria per category, the required counterpart funding from the research units as well as the corresponding level of financial support that can be provided by the Foundation.

3. Proponents can submit their application for funding which combine several support categories. Such "**Packages**" are expected to create a strong leverage effect on the promotion or strengthening of strategic scientific themes and international visibility.

4. Candidatures will be encouraged from scientists from or having worked in developing, emerging, southern or Mediterranean countries.

5. Candidates should not have resided or carried out their main activities<sup>1</sup> (work, studies, etc) in France for no longer than 12 months within a three-year period prior to the date of submission of the proposal.

## C. Call for Proposals (CfP)- General principles

1. The launching of Calls for Proposals (CfP) is decided by the Foundation's Board upon recommendation of the Science Council (SC).

2. The evaluation procedure of the submitted proposals is defined in section E.

3. Calls for proposals may be « thematic » or « non thematic». Permanent or semi-permanent Calls can be organized in accordance with the SC and Board meeting calendar.

4. Depending on funding category, a proposal will undergo either a one-stage or two-stage evaluation process.

- a. "*Two-stage process*" involves the submission of a Concept Note (CN). Proponents receiving positive evaluation will be requested to submit a Full Proposal (FP) which will be subjected to a second round of review. This is the case for Senior Fellowship Programme

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<sup>1</sup> Short stays such as holidays do not count.

and Grants for Scientific Platform as well as those classified as **“Package”** being referred to in item B3.

OR

- b. *“One-stage process”* involves a one-time evaluation. Proposals other than the Senior Fellowship, Grants for Scientific Platforms and “Package” will follow this process.
5. The timeframe between the application and the decision for funding should be about eight (8) months for all categories.

#### **D. Urgent funds (UF) - General principles**

1. Urgent funds are meant to provide support to initiatives that need to be treated urgently. The Foundation’s annual budget for this type of funding is limited to €200K per year. It may grant up to €50K per action.
2. The Foundation director studies and submits dossiers and other funding requests for urgent funds for review and decision by the Board’s Bureau.

#### **E. Evaluation**

##### ***E.1 Evaluation criteria***

Quality of proposals shall be assessed according to the criteria listed below:

- a. Scientific quality
  - i. Originality
  - ii. Innovativeness
  - iii. Feasibility
- b. Fostering strong linkages
  - i. Interactions between the scientific axes and sub-axes as defined by the Foundation
  - ii. Interactions between disciplines, and in particular interactions between social and bio-technical sciences
  - iii. Interactions between temperate, Mediterranean and tropical issues to be tackled by the proposed project
  - iv. Partnership strengthening, in particular with Southern and Mediterranean areas
- c. Contribution to international attractiveness and visibility
- d. Relevance to socio-economic and sustainable development issues
- e. Value addition (value addition of the Foundation’s financial support as compared to other sources of funding? is the Foundation the most appropriate funding source for the proposed initiative? What is the leverage effect of the Foundation’s funding to the proposed initiative?)

##### ***E.2 Evaluation process***

1. All the proposals submitted for funding through the regular CfP shall be evaluated under the guidance of the SC.
2. Evaluation of proposals can be carried out by SC members and/or external evaluators, i.e., those external to SC and the research units of the Foundation. Any conflict of interest will be avoided.
3. Evaluation procedures shall be differentiated depending on the category of funding support:
  - a. Senior Fellowships, Grants for scientific platforms and “Packages”: A two-stage evaluation process involving (i) an initial evaluation of the Concept Note by the SC, with possible involvement of external evaluators when necessary, followed by (ii) a

second evaluation of the Full Proposals by the SC on the basis of evaluation made by at least two external evaluators

- b. Junior, Doctoral and Post-doctoral Fellowships: An evaluation process is carried out by SC members if and whenever possible. If expertise among the SC members is not available in evaluating a specific proposal, support of external evaluators will be solicited;
  - c. Small grants: An evaluation process to be carried out by SC upon preliminary analysis by the Director of the Foundation, with possible involvement of external evaluators.
4. Each evaluator will submit his/her evaluation report for each of the proposal reviewed, according to a standard evaluation sheet elaborated by the Foundation. The evaluation report should include an over-all rating following the "ABC rating system" below:

*A = Recommended for funding*

*B = For further discussion*

*C = Not recommended for funding*

5. During SC meetings, the members will discuss the evaluation results in order to have a final consensus recommendation (i.e., whether A, B, or C).
6. After the final selection by the Bureau and upon recommendation by the SC, a feedback shall be sent to applicants whose proposal was not favorably considered for funding. For each project, general comments (which will include a over-all observation with respect to the CfP) and comments specific to the concerned proposal will be sent to the proponents.

#### **F. Application procedure and follow up of funded projects by the Foundation**

1. All Concept Notes (CN) submitted regardless of funding Category must follow the prescribed 4-page format provided by the Foundation (attached in the annex).
2. For submissions selected to go through a second stage evaluation, the full proposal must also be developed following the prescribed format provided by the Foundation.
3. All proposals must be written in English.
4. For Senior Fellowships, the Full Proposal must include the *curriculum vitae* (CV) of the candidate. In the first stage, the CN can be submitted without any pre-identified candidate.
5. For Junior and Post-doc Fellowships, the CN must include the CV of the candidate.

However, Concept Note may be submitted without CV if the candidate could not be identified at the time of application. In this case, proponents will have to propose a process for the identification of candidate(s) (e.g. Call for Candidates). Should this CN be selected, an agreement *in principle* will be accorded by the Foundation but the final decision will be subject to the evaluation of the candidate's CV by the Science Council.

6. For doctoral fellowship and support to pre-doctoral students, the identification of the candidate prior to the submission of the proposals is not compulsory. The CN can be submitted without any identified candidate.
7. Follow up of the projects: The Foundation will set up a Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation system (MRE system) to ensure satisfactory progress of the projects it finances.