

BEL-COO: financial support for interregional industrial R&D collaboration

CONTACT POINTS

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What is BEL-COO?

- Belgian funding program for interregional collaborative industrial research and development projects
- Joint funding on the basis of regional funding programs (at VLAIO, SPW Recherche, Innoviris)
- Bottom-up: no restriction to certain topics
- Goal: stimulate cooperation between Belgian companies and strengthen their competitive capacity

REQUIREMENTS BEL-COO PROJECT

- Submitted by at least 2 companies from at least 2 Belgian regions.
- Research or development project
 - significant technical risks; no routine or implementation activities
 - innovative: goal to develop new or significantly improved products, processes or technical services that exceed the state of the art
- Economic added value for each participating region
- Project duration: 12 - 36 months
- Earliest possible start date: the first day of the month following the submission of the application
 - ! In Wallonia, funding applies only to project activities that are executed after the formal funding decision.

CONSORTIUM - Who is eligible as applicant/beneficiary?

Companies with an exploitation site (with R&D activities) in a Belgian region, that have their own valorization rationale for the project.

- Both large enterprises and sme's
- No 'undertakings in financial difficulty'
- In Flanders and Brussels (but not in Wallonia): non-profit enterprises are eligible.

NO companies/exploitation sites from other countries. These can be a non-funded partner.

NO universities/research centers.

- Universities and research centers are allowed as a subcontractor.
- Exception: in the region of Brussels, universities and research centers are eligible as an applicant/beneficiary, if a Brussels company is present in the consortium.

CONSORTIUM - Who is eligible as subcontractor?

What is a subcontractor?

- Subcontractors do not participate in the strategy of the project. They carry out tasks on behalf of the company and can be replaced by another organization.
- Subcontractors are not the beneficiaries of the subsidy, but their costs can be part of the budget of the applicants.

Who is eligible as a subcontractor?

- All organizations that are needed for the execution of the project: companies/universities/research centers
- Organizations that are not located in the region where the grant is applied for can be accepted, but:
 - for Flanders/VLAIO: maximum 50% of the total costs for the Flemish project part can be non-Flemish
 - for Wallonia/SPW Recherche: when a Walloon organization is able to provide the services, an organization from another region/country will not be accepted.

REQUIREMENTS BEL-COO CONSORTIUM

At least 2 companies are included (as an applicant/beneficiary) from at least 2 Belgian regions:

- The participation of these companies is balanced (no partner > 70% of the project budget)
- Each of these companies is necessary for the project success, performs R&D tasks with technical risks, and clearly participates in the economic results of the project (no subcontractor role)

BUDGET AND SUBSIDY

Acceptable costs

- staffing costs
- overhead
- direct costs
- equipment (depreciation)
- subcontractors

Subsidy

Based on the total acceptable costs and the subsidy percentage (see next page), the total subsidy is calculated.

The maximum subsidy per project is as follows:

- Flanders: max 3 MEUR subsidy per project
- Wallonia: max 500 kEUR subsidy per project
- Brussels: no max.

BUT: keep in mind that no partner can have more than 70% of the project budget. This rule can influence the maximum subsidy per project.

SUBSIDY PERCENTAGE

The subsidy percentage is limited by European legislation: it ranges between 25% and 80% depending on:

- type of project (research/development),
- type of organization (sme/large),
- cooperation between at least two independent companies of which one is an sme?

Within the European boundaries, each agency can set its own limits. At VLAIO, the current subsidy percentages (July 2023) for BEL-COO are as follows:

1. In the situation that an effective cooperation exists between at least two independent companies of which at least 1 is an sme. The cooperation is considered effective if none of the companies has more than 70% of the project budget:

	Subsidy percentage for small company	Subsidy percentage for mid-sized company	Subsidy percentage for large company
Research activities	70%	70%	65%
Development activities	60%	50%	40%

2. In the situation that no effective cooperation exists between at least two independent companies of which at least 1 is an sme:

	Subsidy percentage for small company	Subsidy percentage for mid-sized company	Subsidy percentage for large company
Research activities	70%	60%	50%
Development activities	45%	35%	25%

APPLICATION PROCESS

When and where apply?

- Proposals can be submitted on a continuous basis: no deadlines
- A proposal has to be submitted to each regional funding agency that is involved!
- Flemish companies submit via the e-portal of VLAIO: Please indicate in the portal that it concerns a BEL-COO application.
 - For development projects: <https://vlaio.be/nl/subsidies-financiering/ontwikkelingsproject/aanvraag-en-evaluatieprocedure>
 - For research projects: <https://vlaio.be/nl/subsidies-financiering/onderzoeksproject/aanvraagprocedure-voor-de-subsidie-onderzoeksproject>
- Walloon companies submit via the e-portal of SPW Recherche: <https://recherche.wallonie.be/belcoo>
- Brussels companies submit via e-mail to Innoviris: funding-request@innoviris.brussels

Which documents need to be submitted?

Some documents that need to be submitted are the same in each region:

1. BEL-COO umbrella application form (English)
 - general information
 - goal and work program
 - contribution of each partner
2. (Draft) consortium agreement

Some documents that need to be submitted differ between the regions. These are documents that concern the companies of the particular region:

1. Regional application form 'impact'
2. Regional budget form
3. Documents to assess the size and financial capacity of the company

Templates can be found on the websites of VLAIO, SPW Recherche and Innoviris.

EVALUATION PROCESS

- Each involved funding agency performs its own evaluation, according to regional evaluation criteria. These criteria are slightly different in each region, but in general the following aspects are assessed:
 - Innovation, risks & challenges
 - Team (expertise/resources)
 - Collaboration (quality/balance)
 - Program quality and feasibility
 - Valorization for each company
 - ROI for the Region
 - Financial health of the companies
- Only funding when 'positive evaluation' by all involved agencies.
- The agencies strive for a max evaluation period of 4 months.
- The following steps are included in the process (steps between brackets are only relevant for certain regions):
 - Analysis of eligibility
 - Reading of the proposal
 - (Meeting with applicants)
 - (External jury of experts: written or oral)
 - Discussion with other regions
 - Common decision