

Agropolis Fondation 2021 Call for Proposals (CfP) [Ref. CfP 2101]

"Open Call for Research Projects"

TERMS OF REFERENCE

I- Context and background

Today, our society is facing major crises (climate change, biodiversity loss, economic crisis, food insecurity, epidemics, etc.), the resolution of which will require the full and complete involvement of knowledge institutions, government agencies, civil society and the private sector. Agriculture is at the heart of these global challenges. There is an urgent need to explore new practices and approaches at different spatial, temporal and jurisdictional scales¹ because agricultural, forestry and other land-use activities are among the main drivers of climate change² and biodiversity loss³. Food systems also face increasing societal demand to become more responsible by reducing negative externalities on the environment and human health, among others⁴.

The Covid 19 crisis confirms the urgency of the challenges and reveals the interactions between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the need for new paradigms, models and approaches. Working on societal issues and designing alternatives are key to become a player in the decisions to be taken.

Thus, more and more Science-Policy platforms and think-thanks (e.g., IDDRI, Belmont Forum, One Earth, FAO, Green deal of EU, etc.) advocate for a transformative society to face these multidimensional changes and global challenges.

The consultation process within its research network, initiated by Agropolis Fondation in 2019, led to the collective identification of key research issues and challenges regarding the Foundation's scope. This aligns with the key research questions to guide further development based on scientific certainties and controversies. The consultation helped define the overall objective of promoting agro-ecological transition for tomorrow's agricultures, and the three crosscutting axes, namely:

- Axis 1: Agriculture and climate change: adaptation and mitigation;
- Axis 2: Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;
- Axis 3: Responsible production and consumption.

This overall orientation of the Foundation has been endorsed both by its Charter members and its Science Council.

II- Objectives of the Call

As a result of the above mentioned consultation process, the Foundation launched a first Call for Proposals (primarily targeting research but also including training and innovation) entitled "Climate change, biodiversity, food systems: Agriculture-Based Solutions" which resulted in the selection of nine projects.⁵ As its title implies, the Call underscored the need to implement solutions that hinge on agriculture, particularly on agro-ecology, co-designed with stakeholders in order to address the nexus of SDGs (and not in silos⁶), and which require questioning complex interactions of SDGs (e.g.

¹ Cash, D. W., W. Adger, F. Berkes, P. Garden, L. Lebel, P. Olsson, L. Pritchard, and O. Young. 2006. Scale and cross-scale dynamics: governance and information in a multilevel world. *Ecology and Society* 11(2): 8. [online] URL: <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol11/iss2/art8/>

² The latest Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report (<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/srcl/>) showed that agricultural, forestry and other land-use activities accounted for about 23% of total net anthropogenic GHG emissions.

³ The last Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) report explained that more than a third of the world's land surface and nearly 75% of freshwater resources are now devoted to crop or livestock production (<https://ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment>).

⁴ Mbow, C., C. Rosenzweig, L.G. Barioni, T.G. Benton, M. Herrero, M. Krishnapillai, E. Liwenga, P. Pradhan, M.G. Rivera-Ferre, T. Sapkota, F.N. Tubiello, Y. Xu, 2019: Food Security. In: *Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems*.

⁵ Eligible proposals submitted under this Call were evaluated during the April 2020 meeting of the Foundation's Science Council, the results of which were published in May 2020.

⁶ Wang, C., Guan, D., & Cai, W. (2019). Grand Challenges Cannot Be Treated in Isolation. *One Earth*, 1(1), 24-26. doi:10.1016/j.oneear.2019.08.005

sustainability science⁷, transformative science⁸, integrated, interdisciplinarity or participatory science, problem-oriented solution-driven approaches).

Next, the Foundation launched a second Call for proposals entitled “Innovative co-learning for Agriculture-Based Solutions” which resulted in the selection of six projects⁹ in the first round (a second round is in progress). This Call underscored the need to build new collaborations across disciplines and/or stakeholders for co-learning in order to trigger transformation (i.e. cross-learning between researchers from different disciplines, between academic and non-academic actors, between researchers and PhD students).

Building on the above and in complementarity with Calls issued by the I-Site MUSE¹⁰ and others (ANR, Belmont Forum¹¹, Fondation de France & Fondation Carasso...), **this current “Open Call for Research Projects” aims to allow all scientists of the Foundation’s network to address the aforementioned global stakes.**

As such, this CFP aims at:

- supporting scientific excellence, at the heart and/or at the interface between disciplines, that strengthens synergies among scientists within the Foundation’s network;
- favouring scientific breakthroughs through risk-taking, supporting original ideas and innovative concepts and collaborative partnerships involving, for example, a range of actors, on the themes of the Labex Agro;
- covering potential focused scientific themes and collaborations to balance the portfolio of projects supported by the Labex Agro since its inception in 2011 (cf. following section).

This will be carried out by funding two types of projects:

- **Type 1 projects** are those with funding level of 150k€ (minimum) to 200k€ (maximum);
- **Type 2 projects** are small initiatives ranging from 20k€ (minimum) to 30k€ (maximum).

III- Thematic coverage

The present Call covers the three crosscutting axes of the Foundation. The generally broad scope is designed to generate proposals addressing the various themes identified under each of them and which are fully aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDGs 12, 13 and 15.

IV- Eligibility

1. **The lead proponent must be from one of the research units belonging to the Foundation’s scientific network** (Labex Agro)¹²
2. A submitted proposal must tackle at least one of the crosscutting axes presented in Section III above.
3. A submitted proposal must (a) choose just one type of action under this Call; (b) tackle the thematic coverage of the type of action funding is being applied for; and (c) meet the conditions specified for a given type of action (Ref: Section V).
4. Scientists from research units or institutions outside of the Foundation’s scientific network can participate as partners.
5. A scientist can coordinate only one project funded under this specific CFP.

⁷ « Sustainability science is problem-driven, interdisciplinary scholarship that seeks to facilitate the design, implementation, and evaluation of effective interventions that foster shared prosperity and reduced poverty while protecting the environment. It is defined by the problems it addresses rather than the disciplines it employs. It thus draws as needed from multiple disciplines of the natural, social, medical and engineering sciences, from the professions, and from the knowledge of practice ». (*Harvard Univ., 2008*)

⁸ “A specific type of science that does not only observe and describe societal transformation processes, but rather initiates and catalyses them. Transformative science aims to improve our understanding of transformation processes and to simultaneously increase societal capacity to reflect on them” in: Schneidewind U., M. Singer-Brodowski, K. Augenstein, F. Stelzer, 2016, *Pledge for a Transformative Science: A Conceptual Framework*. Wuppertal Papers No. 191. Wuppertal Institut, p. 6.

⁹ Eligible proposals submitted under this Call were evaluated during the October 2020 meeting of the Foundation’s Science Council, the results of which were published in November 2020.

¹⁰ <https://muse.edu.umontpellier.fr/app/>

¹¹ “BiodivERSA”, “Climate, Environment and Health”, “Cultiver et Protéger autrement”

¹² For the list of the Foundation’s research units, please visit <https://www.agropolis-fondation.fr/Research-units-in-the-network>.

V- **Type of actions, conditions, costs and duration**

6. A total of €1.5M is available for this CFP. Co-funding by other partners is highly encouraged.

Type of action, cost and duration	Funding conditions/specific remarks
Type 1 project Overall funding available: 1,2M€ Maximum number of projects to be funded: 7 Funding per project: 150 to 200k€ Project duration: 24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- At least two units of the network must be involved in the project;- PhDs are not relevant under this call as projects are limited to 24 months;- Fundamental and more applied research will be equally considered.
Type 2 projects Overall funding available: 300k€ Maximum number of projects to be funded: 12 Funding per project: 20 to 30k€ Project duration: 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Exploratory, risky and innovative projects (proof-of-concept studies, new frontier research...) would be appreciated.- Project involving one unit of the network are eligible

VI- **Eligible expenditures**

7. Eligible costs for each funding category are restricted to expenditures directly related to the project, such as:
- Personnel recruitment costs (temporary personnel to be specifically involved in the project)
 - Consultancies and services subcontracted specifically for the project
 - Limited consumable items¹³
 - Publication and dissemination costs, including cost related to organization of events
 - Travel expenses
 - Overheads (max 8% of the grant amount for each partner)

All the expenses must comply with ANR Financial Regulation (IDEX).
(<https://anr.fr/fileadmin/documents/ia-rf-idex.pdf>).

8. No more than 30% of the total grant should be transferred to partners outside of the Foundation's scientific network (Labex Agro), to external service providers or to consultants.
9. Non-eligible costs include items such as:
- Expenditures linked to internal services
 - Salaries of staff that are not specifically recruited for the project
 - Expenditures linked to existing infrastructure
 - Expenditures already funded through other sources
10. The project's full cost must be presented including counterparts from the applicants and their partners in the Financial Annex.
11. In the case of a proposal that is only partially funded through this CFP, the proponents should provide all elements concerning funding of the other part of their project (acquired, submitted, and/or planned funding request). Funding under this Call is conditional; subject to the proponents' success in mobilizing the necessary funding required to complete the overall project.
12. In the case of a proposal that is a standalone project contributing to a larger project or programme, the proponents should provide all elements concerning the objectives, organization and overall funding of the larger project (i.e., acquired, submitted, and/or planned funding request).

¹³Only consumables related to the project are eligible. As stipulated in the ANR rules, « only depreciation rates corresponding to the duration of the project are eligible » for the purchase of materials and equipment.

VII- Evaluation process and criteria

13. Eligible **Type 1** proposals shall be evaluated by external experts and shall be reviewed by the Foundation's Science Council (SC) on the basis of the criteria below:
 - Adequacy with the Call
 - Scientific quality, overall coherence and feasibility (i.e., clarity of objectives and expected outputs, robust methodology, proposed timetable, project leadership, past research activities of the partners, etc.)
 - Budget adequacy
 - Originality, innovativeness
 - Quality of partnership and collaboration (i.e., role of partners in the project conception, implementation and management; potential involvement of actors from the South; potential collaborations with other Labexes in Montpellier or elsewhere; clarity and fairness of data and knowledge sharing, exchange and management mechanism across partners)
 - Structuring effect of the project within the Labex Agro community and complementarities with existing initiatives
 - Visibility and international dimension and potential benefits for developing countries (e.g., accessibility, relevance of the topic, etc.)
 - Project trajectory (i.e., strategic positioning and ambition) and sustainability (how will the proposed actions be sustained beyond project funding and how will these be mainstreamed in the activities of the institution) and how the project may adapt to the Covid-19 situation.
 - Strong justification as to why the Foundation, through its Labex Agro programme, should fund the proposed project
 - Project's potential leverage effect
 - Clarity of project management and coordination
 - Gender balance

14. Proposals for **Small initiatives (Type 2)** shall be evaluated by the Foundation's Science Council on the basis of the following criteria:
 - Scientific quality, overall coherence and feasibility (i.e., clarity of objectives and expected outputs, robust methodology, proposed timetable, project leadership, past research activities of the partners, etc.)
 - Budget adequacy
 - Strategic nature of the proposed action (in terms of topic, scientific lock, partnership, etc.)
 - Originality, innovativeness and/or risky nature
 - Strong justification as to why the Foundation, through its Labex Agro programme, should fund the proposed project, potential leverage effect, feasibility
 - Clear explanation on how the project may adapt to the Covid-19 situation

VIII- Submitting proposals, timetable and requirements

15. All submitted proposals must be written in English. Proponents should submit a duly completed Application Form, including applicable annexes.
16. All proposals must be submitted electronically, by the specified deadline, via the link <https://www.agropolis-fondation.fr/Appel-generique-2021>
17. Agropolis Fondation shall not be held responsible for submissions not received due to technical problems preventing the transfer of proposals electronically.
18. By submitting a proposal, the proponents assure that they have obtained the due approval of all the participants involved in the project. The application form should bear the signature of the head of the research unit/institution of the (co-) leaders (use the template provided in the annex).
19. Please note that all proposals received under this Cfp shall be archived and could be used by Agropolis Fondation for analysis in the context of its activities. Except for the Abstract, a proposal shall not be shared with a Third Party without prior consent of its proponent.
20. If the project is selected, the project leader commits to the following, in addition to other contractual obligations to be reflected in the Grant Agreement: (a) **Cite the support of Agropolis Fondation through Labex Agro in any communication coming from the**

project (scientific publications, oral communications, book chapters, etc.)¹⁴; (b) provide the Foundation with all communication materials it may need; and (c) ensure a regular and quality interaction with the Foundation team.

21. Calendar:

01 February 2021	Opening of the Call for Proposals
15 June 2021, 11.59 PM	Deadline for the submission of proposals for the first round Late and/or incomplete submissions will not be accepted.
October 2021	Selection by the Science Council
November 2021	Publication of results (selected proposals)

22. Selected projects may be required to develop a Data Management Plan.

All documents related to the present Call for Proposals are available online at the following website:
<https://www.agropolis-fondation.fr/Appel-generique-2021>

¹⁴ « Ce travail a bénéficié d'une aide de l'État générée par l'Agence nationale de la recherche au titre du programme "Investissements d'avenir" portant la référence ANR-10-LABX-001-01 Labex Agro et coordonnée par Agropolis Fondation / This work/project was publicly funded through ANR (the French National Research Agency) under the "Investissements d'avenir" programme with the reference ANR-10-LABX-001-01 Labex Agro and coordinated by Agropolis Fondation » - Acknowledgment statement to be revisited depending on co-funding arrangements.