# **CROSS-DISCIPLINARY PROJECTS**

**Answers to frequently asked questions**

**BUILDING THE PROJECT**

Can the project be a "portfolio of projects"?

It's important for the project to have a coherent objective to which all players contribute. The project can be built up in separate work packages, but they must have a clearly stated common objective. Work packages must be defined when the project is submitted (they must not be the subject of subsequent internal calls for proposals).

Can the project be a continuation of an existing one?

Yes, a CDP can build on existing skills and know-how, but it must demonstrate an evolution, a new approach compared to what already exists. A project that involves a degree of "risk" or "breakthrough" will be better evaluated than an "incremental" project.

What does it mean to differentiate a project?

The aim is to specify how the project stands out from approaches taken by other teams on a national or international scale. This may involve a particular approach or skill, or the original combination of several skills, or the presence of exceptional equipment.

What are the expected criteria for an interdisciplinary project? How will they be assessed?

An interdisciplinary project combines complementary disciplines to provide a joint answer to a scientific question. A multidisciplinary project involves several disciplines participating in the project, but with distinct and complementary responses.

We recommend reading the recent book "L'interdisciplinarité, voyage au-delà des disciplines" (Interdisciplinarity, a journey beyond disciplines), which brings together a large number of initiatives supported by the CNRS Mission for Transversal and Interdisciplinary Initiatives (MITI) [CNRS Editions, 2022]. The foreword states: "Interdisciplinarity is essential today to build holistic, multi-scale approaches that take into account the complexity of a problem or issue as a whole".

One way of showing interdisciplinarity is to display the ERC domains of the teams participating in the projects, but this is not enough: it is essential to explain how interdisciplinarity will be implemented within the project.

Depending on the project's ERC panels, the evaluation of projects will involve experts from different panels, and they will be asked specifically about the relevance of the proposed interdisciplinary approach.

How can a project contribute to strengthening Lille's signature on transitions?

Transitions are the central theme of the University of Lille. All transitions are concerned: ecological, climatic, societal, economic, technological... The project will have to provide answers to *the* resulting challenges.

How many people should be in the consortium? How many research units should be involved?

CDP projects will vary in format to reflect the diversity of expectations and research practices. There is therefore no predefined format. As research units vary greatly in size, it is not possible to define a minimum number of research units for a project. The project will involve most of the strengths available on the site in the area concerned. However, the project must be realistic in its objectives, particularly in terms of the budget requested.

Should all staff from participating research units be involved?

No, this is not a research federation format, but a project in which all those involved are expected to make a contribution. The project may, however, request funding for a scientific animation component to organize events aimed at C-ECs on the Lille site and/or the general public.

Can I submit a project involving only one research unit?

This is not out of the question, given that some RUs are very large, but it will have to be clearly justified.

What's the difference between a CDP and an ANR project?

A CDP is intended to be on a larger scale than an ANR project, involving a wider group, and not requiring a consortium beyond the Lille site.

Can there be partners outside the University of Lille?

External partners (including international ones) may be involved if clearly justified, in limited numbers, and will not be funded. All research units under joint supervision with ULille are eligible, including all staff. This includes in particular partner establishments of the Initiative of Excellence (CNRS, INSERM, INRAE, INRIA, CHU de Lille, Institut Pasteur de Lille, Centrale Lille, IMT Nord-Europe).

In what language should the response to the call for tenders be written?

The response to the call for proposals must be in English, because of the international expertise involved, unless the language of the project is clearly different and justified.

What degree of precision is expected in terms of training involvement?

It is advisable to contact the teaching teams concerned, so as to be able to present a credible involvement. It is essential to inform the relevant departments. A letter of recommendation is possible but not compulsory. Participation in a graduate program is not a prerequisite; any other course may be involved. The project may aim to build a new thematic graduate program. It could also involve thematic schools or lecture series for students. Involvement in continuing education is particularly welcome, for example as part of the Exist program [(https://exist.univ-lille.fr/](https://exist.univ-lille.fr/) ).

We're asking for indicators, but how precise should they be?

Indicators are quantitative or qualitative estimates of the project's objectives. They may be a concept to be established, a characteristic of a material to be achieved for a targeted application, a public policy proposal, and so on. There may be bibliometric indicators, but these are not exclusive of other, more qualitative indicators. The essential thing is that they exist, that they are stated and credible.

How precise is the description of the project organization expected to be? The same goes for the schedule of project phases?

It will be necessary to show that the organization of the project will enable it to be completed within 4 years. The same applies to the schedule of project phases. For 8-year projects, the first phase should be detailed, but an overall timetable is essential.

What do we mean by project governance?

In addition to the project coordinators and the work programs, the project must include a monitoring committee made up of the project coordinators, the coordinators of the hubs concerned, and representatives of the components and establishments involved. This committee will meet at least twice during the four years of the project. An external scientific committee (whose composition will be validated by the hub coordinators) will be asked by the project coordinators to give an opinion at mid-term and at the end of the four-year project.

What degree of precision is expected for impacts?

You need to propose reasonable and credible impacts. Avoid general phrases such as "the project will enable us to obtain funding from external AAPs (ANR, EU...)", but propose concrete actions, such as "the project meets the criteria of the Pathfinder AAP because... a consortium will be set up to respond to it".

On the question of financing levers external to the project, how precise do you need to be?

Ultimately, the project should enable us to respond to calls for proposals in order to increase funding. European projects should be particularly targeted. For example, it may be possible to identify a European call for proposals that corresponds to the project's objectives, and in which part of the team could become involved. It is advisable to seek advice from the project engineering departments to which the RUs belong. This criterion will not be a decisive factor in the selection process, but it will be for the mid-term evaluation of the project and its possible renewal.

Why do we need to specify the role of the young researchers involved in the project?

The project could have a major impact on the start of C-ECs' careers, so their involvement will be welcome. The young C-ECs must not simply be on display, but must be genuinely involved, and to this end we need to explain how they will contribute specifically to the project. Be careful to respect the criterion: they must have been tenured for less than 7 years at the date of submission of the response to the AAP (November 30, 2024, i.e. tenure (including the probationary period) after November 30, 2017).

Can 2 CDPs share the same WP?

This situation is not to be recommended, as it adds complexity, or else the reason for it must be well argued to show its added value. Plan a fallback if one of the CDPs fails.

Is it possible to share a CDP-funded PhD student with a foreign laboratory?

Co-supervision with co-financing is possible. If this is the case (with formal confirmation from the partner), it may appear in the complementary funds but not in the ULille budget breakdown.

Can a researcher be ported in the name of a research federation?

Yes, this can be seen as a structuring effect.

Is it necessary to quantify FTEs? Is it possible to participate in several CDPs? Should the % of involvement be indicated?

It is important to show that the human potential will be sufficient to successfully complete the project. It is possible to apply for more than one CDP. An EC will be counted at 50% maximum and a C at 100% maximum.

**THE BUDGET**

What is the minimum financial requirement for a project?

The AAP mentions aid of between 0.2 and 0.8M€/year over 4 or 8 years. Projects may request less, but must justify this. Projects do not have to correspond to the ANR format.

Does the budget need to be detailed?

The budget must be detailed in its broad outlines, as the appraiser will have to assess whether the budget is appropriate for the project.

Are there any constraints on budget breakdown?

No for payroll and operating costs. For investment, see next question.

Can we request equipment?

The AAP specifies that it is not possible to finance medium-heavy investments (the equipment budget must not exceed 100k€), notably because of the time required for procurement procedures. If the purchase of equipment is planned for less than €100k, it must be demonstrated that it is essential to the project, and that it is not possible to finance it through another scheme (CPER in particular). Total investment must not exceed 15% of the CDP's annual budget.

Co-financing (up to a maximum of €100k) of equipment is possible, subject to the same justification requirements as mentioned above.

Should management fees be displayed? What if management is not ULille?

There are no management fees to take into account. The budget must be entirely dedicated to the project.

Who will manage the project?

This aspect will be managed once the project has been accepted, and need not be specified in the submission file. The management mandate rules agreed between the establishments will prevail.

Can we have 1 co-sponsorship of 2 carriers from 2 different labs? How would management work?

Yes, if several research units from different institutions are involved, the institutions concerned will work together to propose the best management method for the project.

Should platforms be listed as partners or service providers?

It is important that a budget is set aside for the use of approved platforms, in line with the pricing principles agreed at the time of approval. Both situations are possible, depending on the level of involvement of the platform and its staff.

**Project presentation (October 2024)**

What is the purpose of the presentation?

The project will be presented to hub coordinators, VPs, heads of graduate programs, heads of components and partner institutions. There will be no report following these presentations.

How long will the presentation last?

Approx. 30 min, including questions. Exact conditions to be specified.

Will all projects be auditioned?

Yes

Will participation be compulsory?

No

Will the audition be in French or English?

Both languages are available.

**Project appraisal and selection**

How will the international experts be selected?

International expertise will be entrusted to the ESF (European Science Foundation), which will select experts on the basis of keywords provided by project sponsors. *It is therefore very important to select the right keywords for your project!*

Will external evaluators be informed of ULille's site perimeter for the call? Will they be made aware of the differentiating/external concept?

External experts will be provided with background documents explaining the context. However, they will be questioned on the scientific content of the project (see evaluation grid), while the contextual aspect (site strategy) will be examined by the partnership steering committee.

How will the international jury be selected? Will its composition be known in advance?

The jury will be made up of 12 members of international stature, with good experience of evaluations and more particularly of interdisciplinary projects. The working language will be English. Each HUB office will be consulted to propose a prioritized list of jury members, who will be invited in order of priority. At least some of the experts on the jury for the first wave should be invited for the second wave. Particular care will be taken to avoid any conflict of interest, which is one of the reasons why a letter of intent is requested by the end of June in order to know the applicants. The list of jury members will be made public as soon as the jury is constituted, at the latest before the jury hearings.

What is its mission?

 Within this jury, rapporteurs will be appointed (at least 2 per project), who will summarize the 3 ESF expertises and explain the specific disciplinary features of the projects to the other members of the jury. The jury will then select a panel of projects that meet the AAP's criteria and that it wishes to interview for more in-depth opinions. The number of projects auditioned will be decided by the jury, but may not be less than half the number of projects submitted. Following the hearings, the jury will deliberate to propose a selection of projects that best meet the criteria of the call for projects. This selection will be sent in the form of an unranked list to the partnership steering committee. At the end of its deliberations, the jury will draw up a detailed report on each of the projects (selected or not). This report will be forwarded to the members of the Partnership Steering Committee as soon as the auditions have been completed, but will not be sent to the project promoters until the end of the entire selection process.

What is the role of the partnership management committee (Codir-partenarial)?

The partnership steering committee is made up of the deans and directors of the component institutions, the president of the University of Lille, the statutory vice-presidents, and representatives of the partner institutions (CNRS, Inserm, Inria, Inrae, CHU-Lille, Institut Pasteur de Lille, Centrale-Lille, IMT-Nord Europe). On the basis of the scientific evaluation and interdisciplinary nature of the projects selected by the international jury, the Codir-partenarial will make the final selection of projects, taking into account the strategies of each entity. Project promoters are therefore advised to contact the components and establishments concerned to obtain information on their strategies. Please note that these elements are not evaluated by the international jury, and are therefore not included in the evaluation grid.

*With regard to the strategic aspects of the University of Lille, it is advisable to consult the "trajectory" document submitted to the HCERES (available on the CDP submission website).*