



BioAgora and Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA)

CALL for

Science - Policy - Society Interface (SPSI) capacity development initiatives

Grant submission guidelines

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1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE CALL

BioAgora is a collaborative European project funded by the Horizon Europe programme. It aims to connect research results on biodiversity to the needs of decision-making in a targeted dialogue between scientists, other knowledge holders and policy actors. Its main outcome will be the establishment of a fair and functional Science Service for Biodiversity (SSBD), that will orchestrate processes and initiatives at the Science-Policy Interface at the European level.

The SSBD will fully support the ecological transition required by the European Green Deal and the European Union's (EU) Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (BDS2030). It will provide the scientific pillar of the EU's Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity (KCBD).

The Science Service for Biodiversity will respond to the current scattered landscape of actors and knowledge holders in the Science-Policy-Society Interfaces but will also foresee future knowledge and policy needs. This entails the orchestration of science-policy-society interactions (SPSI) within the EU, which link scientific and non-scientific knowledge more efficiently with policymaking and implementation. By bridging the gap between scientific knowledge and policymaking, BioAgora seeks to create an inclusive platform where diverse actors can contribute to biodiversity conservation efforts. To achieve this aim, it is crucial to identify relevant actors and help them participate in science-policy-society interactions in a meaningful way.

To further its mission, BioAgora is launching a new funding call for capacity development initiatives aimed at capacity building across the science-policy-society interface. This call invites proposals for a wide range of capacity development activities which enhance skills and capacities of scientists, policymakers and other actors to collaborate at the science-policy-society interface.

This call also invites proposals designed to empower scientists, policymakers, and other key stakeholders with the skills and competencies needed for effective collaboration.

2. SCOPE OF THE CALL AND EXPECTATIONS FOR FUNDED PROJECTS

BioAgora's deliverable [Typology for challenges that hinder the implementation of BDS 2030](#) has identified eighteen major capacity development needs varying from communication, time management, inclusion, diverse values and worldviews, and bringing people together. To bridge these gaps, the proposed activities need to broaden the capacities towards transdisciplinary collaboration. Because of the mismatch between the demand and supply side of capacity development initiatives, the proposed activities need to highlight which target group is included and which capacities (skills or competencies) are in the focus.

Suggestions of issues which may be covered in the proposed activities:

- Systemic and policy-side challenges in the implementation of the actions of the EU BDS2030
- Contribution to targeted capacity development initiatives
- Inclusion of different actors across sectors and disciplines to collaborate in the SPSI.

Capacity development activities funded by the cascade funding should contribute to bridging the gap between science and policy with active participation of both the science community and the policy side in a co-learning working mode. The activities should contribute to better addressing complex

cross-sectoral issues such as climate change and biodiversity loss, with the active participation of both the science community and the policymakers with a co-learning working mode. Co-learning methods would build relationships, trust and safe exchanges among these target groups to go beyond power point presentation and classic trainings processes.

Capacity development activities may include: 1) general training on SPSI skills and competences (as identified in the JRC-Knowledge4Policy competence framework: https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/projects-activities/competence-frameworks-policy-makers-researchers_en), 2) topical capacity development to enhance the implementation of specific objectives of the BDS2030 by forging collaborations with relevant actors and knowledge holders, 3) training boundary spanners (individuals who bridge across the boundaries of science, policy and society, Bednarek et al. 2018 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-018-0550-9>) to enable exchange of knowledge and practices, and building of shared values on an active and functional SPSI. As the work in BioAgora empowers target groups for transformative change for biodiversity, the third option will be prioritized (i.e. away from the usual collaboration and towards innovative collaboration where established views and working modes are challenged and disrupted using dialogues and co-learning).

The capacity development activities should be open to participants from European countries. We welcome applications that consider socio-cultural diversity across Europe and tailor their planned activities to various contexts. Through transdisciplinary we aim at including social and environmental disciplines and a diversity of stakeholders and/or knowledge holders.

3. PROCEDURES AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Available funding and requirements

Total budget for third parties is 350 000 euros. Applicants can apply for a maximum of 175 000 euros. Based on the size of the proposals, we will fund 2-5 projects.

Applicants should refer to earlier experience from SPSI activities, and activities may also be co-financed with own or other sources (co-funding means financial supplement targeted to this activity, e.g. through new projects, training activities. It cannot be part of already ongoing projects, or financing already ongoing activities).

Projects may start in May 2025 at the earliest. The activities shall be completed at the latest by December 2026.

Submission of proposals per email

- Call announcement is on the EC portal: [Calls for proposals | EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#)
- Instructions on how to find the Call for grant: [Find a call - IT How To - Funding Tenders Opportunities](#)
- Grant applications shall only be submitted by the main applicant (coordinator, as applicable) per email to:
 - calls@bioagora.eu
- The grant application must be received by the following deadline: *27 January 2025 at 21:00 UCT*

Eligibility criteria for projects and partners

Applications can be submitted by one legal entity or a consortium of legal entities.

Applicants must meet the following criteria to be eligible for the grant:

- 1) The main applicant is a legal entity (legal person). The application may be submitted by a consortium (grouping of legal persons represented by a coordinator), and the criterion of being a legal entity applies to all consortium participants.
- 2) The applicant is eligible for funding under the EU Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Programme. If the application is submitted by a consortium, this criterion applies to all the consortium participants.

Applications not fulfilling the above-stated eligibility criteria will be rejected.

Furthermore, the following legal entities (legal persons) will not be eligible for funding:

- Entities subject to EU restrictive measures.
- Restrictive measures imposed by the EU may target governments of third countries, or non-state entities (e.g. companies) and individuals (such as terrorist groups and terrorists). For overview see more at [European Union sanctions | EEAS \(europa.eu\)](#)
- Organizations which are consortium members of BioAgora cannot submit grant applications nor can they be a partner in the grant applications. Check partners in the [BioAgora website](#).

All applications must apply the following proposal structure:

I. Administrative information

- Application Form - Part A, using the template provided in Annex I

II. Technical Description

- Application Form - Part B, using the template provided in Annex II
- The technical description will be submitted as one single PDF document (this does not include the instructions and guidance provided in Annex II)
- Technical description must be written in English and be max 6000 words
- Formatting rules for the documentation:

- Page size A4, all margins (top, bottom, left, right) should be at least 2 cm (not including any footers or headers)
- Font type: Calibri
- Minimum font size: 11 pt (except for tables and figures where it should be minimum 10 pt)
- Line spacing: 1
- Orientation: Portrait. For the tables or any Gantt/Pert chart, landscape orientation can be used if necessary for the purpose of fitting the tables or for legibility.

Power of Attorney for Coordinator, as applicable, using the template provided in Annex III.

All the documents (Application forms – Part A and Part B and Power of Attorney) must be submitted in PDF format.

4. ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated by an evaluation committee. Each application is evaluated by three reviewers and applications will receive a score of 0-5 for each of the criteria noted in Table 1. The final scores of each criterion are average scores of three evaluations. Applications must receive a score of at least 3 points in each of the categories A1, A2 and A3, with an overall minimum score of 12 points, to be considered for the award of a grant.

Table 1: Evaluation criteria for awarding the grants:

A1	Excellence	Structure, relevance and clarity of the proposal.
		The applicants' experience with developing SPSI-activities which create enthusiasm, engagement and future based discussions.
		The proposed activities involve diverse actors (e.g., politicians, researchers, other stakeholders) that have the power to halt the loss of biodiversity.
		The proposed activities use innovative and creative knowledge co-creation practices (i.e. peer-to-peer, experiential, transformative learning, etc.)
		The proposal clearly defines target group(s) and capacities (skills-competences) to be improved by the proposed activities.
A2	Implementation	Quality and effectiveness of the working plan.
		The activities and aims are structured in efficient and appropriate methods tailored to the needs of the target group(s).
		Efforts made to ensure the inclusivity of the proposed activities (i.e. gender and regional balance, representation of different career stages etc.).
		Efficient communication and outreach, i.e. actions to ensure that the target group(s) will respond to, and take part in, the proposed activities.
A3	Impact	The proposal includes a plan on how the activities will be able to continue after the BioAgora project funding ends.
		The proposal concretely describes how it improves the SPSI.
		SPSI-activities can be adapted to a regional, national and international level.
		SPSI-activities provide a roadmap on SPSI contribution to halting the loss of biodiversity.

In case of equal scores, the following will apply:

- 1) Applications will be prioritized according to the score under criteria A1, then A2, and thereafter A3.
- 2) In case of equal scores under A1, A2, and A3, applications that address additional relevant aspects of the call which have not been covered by an equally ranked application will be prioritized.

5. GRANT DISBURSEMENT

NINA will disburse the grant in lump sum instalments (fixed sums):

- 50% entry into force of the Grant agreement
- 50% upon approval of the final report (NINA-report template).

Applicants must, as part of the Application, include the total amount needed to cover all implementation of the project.

6. GRANT AGREEMENT

Template Grant agreement is provided in Annex IV.

The Grant agreement will be signed by NINA and the successful applicant(s) following the decision by NINA on award of the grant(s).

7. TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION

7.1 In addition to what has been stated in the Call for grant and these Grant submission guidelines, the total application sum must include VAT, and all other costs that the applicant must have covered.

7.2 By submitting an application for a grant, the applicant accepts all the terms and conditions set out in the Call for grant and these Grant submission guidelines (including its annexes) and waives all other terms.

7.3 NINA may reject an application that is not in compliance with the instructions in the Call for grant or these Grant submission guidelines.

7.4 No information communicated in this grant process, including the Call for grant and these Grant submission guidelines (including its annexes), bind NINA in any way to an award or a Grant agreement. NINA will only be bound by written Grant agreements.

7.5 An applicant must be able to prove to the satisfaction of NINA, any information given as part of its application. Failure to do so within a time limit set by NINA, may result in rejection of the application.

7.6 NINA may ask the applicant for clarifications regarding any information submitted as part of the application. NINA may reject any applicant from the grant process that fails to submit the requested clarification.

7.7 Only applications sent via email to calls@bioagora.eu will be considered.

7.8 Applications submitted after the deadline for submission will not be considered.

7.9 An applicant may submit only one application. In case of multiple applications from the same applicant, NINA will consider only the last one received.

7.10 Withdrawal of an application will be done in writing.

7.11 Information provided by the applicants cannot be considered confidential, unless so designated by NINA.

7.12 All applications will be quoted in euros.

7.13 Expenses incurred in the preparation and dispatch of an application will not be reimbursed by NINA.

7.14 Applications must be legible. NINA may reject applications that are not legible.

7.15 NINA will disregard any information given by an applicant outside the format for submission as stated in the Call for Grant or these Grant submission guidelines.

7.16 The application shall be complete when submitted. NINA will disregard additional documentation or information submitted separately from the application, where not requested by NINA. NINA may at its own discretion publicly disclose the contents of any application, as well as information on the beneficiary, as well as any other information of the grant awarded.

7.18 Unless otherwise stated in the Call for grant and these Grant submission guidelines, the application and all correspondence related to it will be in English. NINA retains the right to correspond in English with the applicant even if the application may be submitted in a language other than English.

7.19 Applicants are not entitled to contact NINA staff members, or any other person referred to in the NINA grant rules after the closing date of the receipt of applications to ask for information on the evaluation process. NINA may eliminate from the evaluation any applicant contravening this provision.

8. QUESTIONS

Questions regarding the criteria, rules and procedures of the Call for grant can be sent to the following address:

calls@bioagora.eu

Questions (anonymized) and answers will be published at:

- ✓ [Financial support for third parties - BioAgora](#)
- ✓ Cascade funding Capacity Development - questions and answers

The following schedule will be implemented for publication of questions and answers (Q&A):

- ✓ Answers for questions received will be published first time early December and regularly updated

Individual questions will not be replied to separately and the sender is kindly requested to check the Cascade funding Capacity Development - questions and answers webpage.

Applicants are advised to visit [Financial support for third parties - BioAgora](#) regularly before the deadline for the submission of applications for any Q&A, and updates or modifications regarding this grant process.

Important deadlines and timeline

26 th November 2024	Announcement and official launch of the call
4 th December 2024	1 st Q&A published in the BioAgora website
27 th January 2025 at 21:00 CET	Deadline for submitting the proposal
15 th February 2025	Eligibility check completed by the call secretariat
Feb-March 2025	Evaluation of proposals
4 th April 2025	Recommendation for funding projects published
15 th May 2025	<i>Earliest possible start date of funded projects</i>

9. ANNEXES

- Annex I: Application Form - Part A
- Annex II: Application Form - Part B
- Annex III: Power of Attorney for Main Applicant
- Annex IV: Template Grant agreement